CHANGING COURSE: EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT FACULTY EXPERIENCES TRANSITIONING FROM
TRADITIONAL TO ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE TEACHING

Dissertation
Submitted to
The School of Education and Health Sciences of the
UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership

By
Jennifer Michelle McVay-Dyche, B.A., M.A. Ed.

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON
Dayton, Ohio
December, 2013
CHANGING COURSE: EARLY CHILDHOOD

DEVELOPMENT FACULTY EXPERIENCES TRANSITIONING FROM
TRADITIONAL TO ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE TEACHING

Name: McVay-Dyche, Jennifer Michelle

APPROVED BY:

________________________________________________
Darla J. Twale, Ph.D.
Committee Chair

________________________________________________
Treavor Bogard, Ph.D.
Committee Member

________________________________________________
C. Daniel Raisch, Ph.D.
Committee Member

________________________________________________
Patrick Sweeney, Ph.D.
Committee Member

________________________________________________
Kevin R. Kelly, Ph.D.
Dean
CHANGING COURSE: EARLY CHILDHOOD

DEVELOPMENT FACULTY EXPERIENCES TRANSITIONING FROM

TRADITIONAL TO ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE TEACHING

Name: McVay-Dyche, Jennifer Michelle
University of Dayton

Advisor: Darla J. Twale, Ph.D.

This case study examined the experiences of five Early Childhood Development (ECD) instructors at a small public, liberal arts university in the Northwest as they transitioned from teaching in a traditional face-to-face baccalaureate degree completion program to teaching in an asynchronous online degree completion program. Data were collected during the 2010-11 academic year, the first year of the fully online program. Meeting minutes, observation notes, transcripts from semi-structured personal and focus group interviews, and program-related documents were analyzed using Miles and Huberman’s (1984) methodology of simultaneous activities of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

Findings revealed that the instructors’ experiences during the transition to teaching in the online program were akin to “flying the plane while building it.” Four themes emerged from the study and were organized around the metaphor of journey to a
foreign land: (a) We can’t get there from here; (b) Where is the GPS? (c) When in Rome…; and (d) Do we need a passport?. The five instructors in this study left the familiar for the unfamiliar and discovered that teaching online was different from teaching face-to-face and that traditional techniques did not transfer directly to the online classroom. The instructors reported that online teaching felt different and led to student and instructor role changes. Lack of institutional policies and administrative processes for online teaching created more challenges and required more time than traditional teaching. Finally, instructor socialization and professionalization contributed to a disruption to what the instructors had learned and valued as professors of early childhood education.

Understanding the experiences of faculty during the transition to online teaching is essential to the development of institutional policies, administrative processes, and systems which accommodate the differences between traditional face-to-face and asynchronous online modalities. The results of this study point to a need for institutions of higher education to discard traditional understanding of teaching and learning and engage in dialogue around the broader implications of online education before implementing new online programs. The results also suggest that systems thinking may be advantageous for supporting the current shift toward online education and to establish a more agile institutional infrastructure to keep pace with rapid changes of the 21st century.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express deep appreciation to my husband, Aron Dyche, for making the journey to a Ph.D. possible. For all the hours I spent sitting in front of a computer screen while you kept everything around us in working order… for all the times you let me talk though my research during dinner, in the car, at the coffee shop, or before falling asleep… thank you. Now it is my turn to return the favor. Let’s tackle your goals together!

To my advisor, Dr. Darla J. Twale, I extend my utmost gratitude for your guidance, patience, and encouragement from start to finish. You were readily available to take phone calls, respond to lengthy emails, and return drafts of chapters faster than I ever expected. Thank you for pulling me out of more than one rabbit hole along the way! I hope to someday serve as a mentor and advisor in the same amazing way you did for me all these years.

To my committee members, Dr. Treavor Bogard, Dr. C. Daniel Raisch, and Dr. Patrick Sweeney, thank you for your time and insight. Your recommendations have been immensely helpful in preparing this document.

Finally, I must thank Pat McVay, Marie McEnry, Shannon Sellars, and Dr. Alison Burke. Across the miles and in-person, you provided strength, encouragement, and even the occasional distraction when I needed it most.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ...................................................................................................................... iv

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ............................................................................................... vi

LIST OF TABLES .......................................................................................................... xii

LIST OF FIGURES ....................................................................................................... xiii

I. INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................... 1

  Statement of the Problem.................................................................................... 1

  Research Questions............................................................................................. 3

  Assumptions........................................................................................................ 3

  Scope and Limitations........................................................................................ 5

  Rationale ............................................................................................................. 7

  Justification ......................................................................................................... 9

  Significance of the Problem.............................................................................. 10

  Operational Definitions..................................................................................... 10

  Summary ........................................................................................................... 12
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ................................................................. 13

History of Distance Education in the United States................................. 13
Defining Distance Education ..................................................................... 19
Course Design in Online Distance Education ....................................... 20
Online Instructor Readiness .................................................................... 24
Faculty Support and Professional Development .................................... 27
Summary .................................................................................................. 29

III. METHODOLOGY ..................................................................................... 31

Research Design ......................................................................................... 31
Participants .................................................................................................. 32
    Alison .................................................................................................... 36
    Amy .................................................................................................... 36
    Michelle ............................................................................................... 37
    Patricia ................................................................................................. 38
    Tatum ................................................................................................. 39
Context ......................................................................................................... 39
Data Collection .......................................................................................... 41
    Documentation .................................................................................... 42
    Interviews ............................................................................................ 43
    Focus group interview ....................................................................... 44
Confidentiality ............................................................................................ 44
Data Analysis ............................................................................................. 45
Trustworthiness .......................................................................................... 47
Credibility .................................................................................................................. 47
Transferability ............................................................................................................ 47
Dependability and confirmability ............................................................................ 48
Researcher Role and Bias ........................................................................................ 48
Summary .................................................................................................................... 50

IV. RESULTS .................................................................................................................. 51

Introduction ................................................................................................................. 51
Overview of the Findings .......................................................................................... 52
Changes to Instructor Dimensions ........................................................................... 54
Pedagogical Dimension ............................................................................................ 55
Asynchronous course designer .................................................................................. 55
Learning facilitator ...................................................................................................... 58
Social Dimension ...................................................................................................... 60
Community coordinator ............................................................................................ 60
Managerial Dimension ............................................................................................. 62
Expectations manager ............................................................................................... 62
Learning director ........................................................................................................ 64
Technical Dimension ................................................................................................ 66
Instructional technologist ......................................................................................... 66
Technical supporter ................................................................................................... 69
Changes to the Program .............................................................................................. 71
Missing a Sense of Wholeness ................................................................................... 71
Less sense of connection with students in the program ........................................ 72
Face-to-face meetings with colleagues become essential .......................... 75
Serving a Different Student Population .................................................. 76
Shift from traditional to nontraditional student type ............................ 77
Students need more support and remediation ....................................... 78
Modifying Online Institutional Teaching Policies and Processes .......... 79
Ongoing need to augment instructor skills and knowledge .................. 81
Face-to-face and online teaching loads are not equivalent.................... 82
Summary .................................................................................................. 88

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS ............................... 90

Summary of the Study ............................................................................. 90
Conclusions and Implications ................................................................. 91
We Can’t Get There from Here ............................................................... 92
Discussion of We Can’t Get There from Here ........................................ 93
Implications of We Can’t Get There from Here ....................................... 97
Where is the GPS? Entering New Territory .......................................... 100
Discussion of Where is the GPS? .......................................................... 100
Implications of Where is the GPS? ....................................................... 104
Do We Need a Passport? Negotiating Boundaries and Borders .......... 105
Discussion of Do We Need a Passport? ................................................. 106
Implications of Do We Need a Passport? ............................................. 109
When in Rome: Socialization and Professionalization ....................... 112
Discussion of When in Rome ............................................................... 113
Implications of When in Rome ............................................................ 115
Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 117

REFERENCES ................................................................................................................... 120

APPENDICES .................................................................................................................... 135

Appendix A: Informed Consent to Participate as a Research Subject- Instructor Participant ................................................................. 136
Appendix B: Informed Consent to Participate as a Research Subject- Administrator Participant ................................................................. 139
Appendix C: Instructor Participant Interview Protocol ................................. 142
Appendix D: Administrator Participant Interview Protocol ...................... 145
Appendix E: Focus Group Interview Protocol .............................................. 146
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of Participant Profiles .......................................................... 35
Table 2: Summary of Berge’s (1995) Four Dimensions ..................................... 53
Table 3: Summary of Findings, Implications, and Future Research ..................... 118
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Changes to instructor roles experienced during the transition from traditional face-to-face teaching to asynchronous online teaching, organized according to Berge’s (1995) dimensions.................................................................55

Figure 2: Changes to the program during the transition from traditional face-to-face delivery to asynchronous online delivery....................................................71

Figure 3: Description of how instructors experience transitioning a traditional face-to-face baccalaureate degree completion program to an asynchronous online degree completion program.........................................................92
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This research contributes to the broader body of knowledge about online distance education by studying the experiences of instructors in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) program at Omars State University as they transitioned a bachelor’s degree completion program from a traditional face-to-face format to asynchronous online delivery.

Statement of the Problem

Enrollments in online courses have increased at higher rates than overall enrollments in American higher education for each of the last 6 years. According to Changing the Course: Ten Years of Tracking Online Education in the United States, (Allen & Seaman, 2013), an annual report, 6.7 million students took at least one online course in fall 2011, up 9.3% from 2010. The overall enrollment rate in higher education was down by 0.1% for the same period. Approximately 69% of public institutions reported online education as a key element in their long-term strategic plans. Those most affected by plans to increase online course offerings are faculty—the heart of higher education-- charged with transitioning traditional courses to online courses, often with minimal support from the institution. Online distance education remains an emerging delivery method, meaning most instructors are not equipped with the skills to immediately transition into online delivery.
What keeps the heart of online distance education beating? What slows it? What nourishes it? Institutional leaders must understand the experiences of instructors transitioning to online delivery in order to provide appropriate support systems for the development of robust online programs. Online distance education research has focused primarily on comparisons of traditional and online delivery, specific skills required of online instructors, motivation of instructors, and barriers to teaching online (Bower, 2001; Crumpacker, 2001; McQuiggan, 2007; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Palloff & Pratt, 2009; Rockwell, Scheuer, Fritz & Marx, 1999). Although the literature acknowledges changes to instructor roles when transitioning from traditional to online delivery, the conclusions have been based on data provided after completing the transition. Missing from the literature is an examination of the ways in which instructors experience role changes during the transition to online delivery (Beaudoin, 2002; Bonk, 2000; Heuer & King, 2004).

A recent federal mandate regarding degree requirements for Head Start teachers (Public Health and Welfare Act of 2009) drastically increased the demand for bachelor’s degrees in early childhood education and equivalent areas. In response to market demand, administrators at Omars State University made the strategic decision to move their Early Childhood Development degree completion program to fully online delivery beginning fall 2010. The ECD program had been previously offered in a hybrid format, combining face-to-face and two-way video course work to fulfill program requirements. With the decision to offer the degree program online, administrators also decided to focus on online delivery and discontinue the face-to-face program.
Although instructors in the ECD program agreed to develop and deliver courses online, literature suggests they, like most instructors, were likely not prepared for the transition (Carroll-Barefield, Smith, Prince, & Campbell, 2005; Covington, Petherbridge, & Warren, 2005; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Rogers, 1995). The lack of research available on instructors’ experiences as they transition to online delivery challenges the ability of OSU administration to provide adequate and appropriate instructional and professional development support during the transition. It is this challenge that influenced the decision to conduct a study that would provide insights into instructors’ experiences during the transition to online delivery.

**Research Questions**

The primary question guiding this research was: How do Early Childhood Education instructors experience transitioning a traditional face-to-face baccalaureate degree completion program to an online degree completion program? In other words:

- How do Early Childhood Education instructors describe changes to their roles as they transition from traditional to online delivery?
- How do Early Childhood Education instructors describe changes to the program while moving from traditional to online delivery?

**Assumptions**

This qualitative study relies on several key assumptions about instructors and online distance education. First, teaching online is different from traditional teaching. Teaching a course online involves more than just converting materials to digital formats for delivery on the Internet; it requires more than possessing a certain degree of technical ability. Teaching online requires changes in teaching methods, course organization,
course materials, and instructional roles (Berge, 1995; Carroll-Barefield et al., 2005; Palloff & Pratt, 2000; Ryan, Hodson Carlton, & Ali, 2004). Online teaching also requires technical skills related to the specific tools used to deliver content and communicate with students.

Online distance education remains an emerging delivery method which means seasoned instructors teaching in traditional settings are not likely equipped with the skills to immediately transfer into online delivery. The second assumption of this study is that online instructors need professional development and course design support to assist with the transition to online delivery (Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Rockwell et al., 1999; Rockwell, Scheuer, Fritz & Marx, 2000). For many instructors, the experience of moving to online delivery is equivalent to starting from scratch; the experienced instructor becomes a novice again (Ali et al., 2005; Diekelmann, Schuster, & Nosek, 1998; Gallant, 2000), a feeling that can be quite disorienting. Keys to instructors’ success in transitioning to online delivery include training and support programs such as (a) an orientation to online teaching, (b) an introduction to online pedagogies, (c) peer coaching and mentoring, (d) establishment of clear policies, (e) access to instructional design specialists, (f) and technical support and training for using the campus learning management system and other tools for course development (Carroll-Barefield et al., 2005; Covington et al., 2005; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Rogers, 1995). The type and frequency of training and support varies by instructor, but remains a necessary element in making a successful transition to online teaching.

Another assumption of this study is that online delivery is a legitimate format for teaching and learning in higher education. Enhanced communication tools, more
collaborative pedagogical models, and more accessible tools for teaching and learning have changed the landscape of distance education in recent years (Mangan, 1999; Schrum, 1998; Schrum & Hong, 2002). According to the 2009 annual report by The Sloan Consortium and Babson Survey Research Group, 68% of chief academic officers reported that learning outcomes for online courses compared to face-to-face courses were equivalent or superior (Allen & Seaman, 2010). Palloff and Pratt (2009) suggested online courses accomplish more than just learning outcomes:

… students learn about technology through its use… they become increasingly confident in their abilities, feel empowered to work in a manner that best suits them, and seek out the information they need for the task at hand. All of these skills are transferable to the world of work and gained through participation in an online learning community. (p. 235)

The strategic decision to offer the Early Childhood Development degree completion program in an online-only format suggested that the Dean, Chair, and Program Coordinators for the program on which this study focused shared the belief in online delivery as a legitimate pathway to degree completion. Additionally, this study assumed the full-time and part-time instructors in this program acknowledged the legitimacy of online delivery as they continued employment and participation in the program.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of this research was limited to studying instructors in an Early Childhood Development baccalaureate degree completion program at Omars State University between September 2010 and June 2011. This study focused on the
experiences of ECD instructors as they transitioned their program to online delivery over the course of an academic year.

Creswell (2009) described limitations as potential weaknesses to qualitative inquiry. Identifying weaknesses prior to engaging in a study is challenging, but necessary. The weaknesses in this research study were:

- Participants were limited to one specific population. The selected case study was a small department of full-time and part-time instructors at a regional public institution of higher education. According to Merriam and Simpson (1995), “findings from case studies cannot be generalized in the same manner as findings from random samples; generalizability is related to what each user is trying to learn from the study” (p. 111). The findings in this study are not generalizable to all higher education providers transitioning to teaching in the online modality.

- This was a qualitative research study that depended on the researcher as instrument. I acknowledged and checked my role as researcher throughout the study. The nature of researcher as instrument was a threat to the trustworthiness, so specific measures were taken during data collection and data analysis “to increase the probability that a judgment of trustworthiness will eventually be achieved” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 281). Under the guidance of Lincoln and Guba’s criteria, I incorporated strategies to achieve credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Chapter 3 provides an explanation of these strategies.
• Data collection methods included interviews of faculty and administrative staff members. Creswell (2009) identified several limitations to the use of interviews in qualitative research. First, elements of an interview may include information that has been skewed by the informants’ own views of particular situations. Second, informants “are not equally articulate and perceptive” (p. 186). To overcome the limitations of interviews, data collection techniques also included observations, focus group interviews, and document reviews. Data gathered using multiple techniques were triangulated to confirm and clarify meanings derived from interviews (Stake, 1995). Triangulation helped overcome the identified limitations, increasing the trustworthiness of the study.

Rationale

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (Parsad & Lewis, 2008), in 2006-07 Title IV degree-granting post-secondary institutions offered an estimated 11,200 college-level programs delivered entirely through distance education. Of the 11,200 programs offered online, 66% were degree programs and 34% were certificate programs. Reasons cited for offering online courses included increased student demand for more flexible scheduling (68%), expanding access to higher education (67%), and increasing enrollment (45%). Implicit in the demand for online programs is the expectation that instructors are prepared to make the transition online. The reality of the situation, however, is that most instructors are not immediately prepared for the transition process (Carroll-Barefield et al., 2005; Covington et al., 2005; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Rogers, 1995).
A common misconception among administrators is that teaching online is no
different from teaching in traditional settings (Palloff & Pratt, 2000). This disconnect
between what is believed to happen and what actually happens when transitioning to
online delivery challenges the ease with which institutions can expand online offerings.
Studies of traditional instructors who transitioned to online delivery revealed a variety of
changes to roles and teaching experiences in the online milieu. Among the most
frequently cited were changes from old pedagogical models to new pedagogical models,
shifts toward more individualized instruction, a focus on establishing a sense of
community with students, more use of instructional technology and electronic
communication tools, and increased demands on time—all areas in which the instructors
reported needs for increased institutional support and professional development
opportunities (Carroll-Barefield et al., 2005; Palloff & Pratt, 2000; Schrum & Hong,
2002).

The literature repeatedly points to the importance of ongoing faculty development
and support programs for online instructors (Bower, 2001; Ali et al., 2005; Carroll-
Barefield et al., 2005; Jones, Lindner, Murphy & Dooley, 2002; Kampov-Polevoi, 2010;
Miller, Martineau & Clark, 2000; Palloff & Pratt, 2000; Schrum & Hong, 2002). Missing
from the literature is an examination of how faculty within specific fields or disciplines
experiences the transition from face-to-face to online teaching.

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of education
instructors transitioning from traditional face-to-face to online delivery. Using a
descriptive approach, the focus was on the experiences of five Early Childhood
Development instructors at Omars State University as they transitioned from a traditional face-to-face baccalaureate degree completion program to the online modality.

**Justification**

According to a 2006-07 NCES study (Parsad & Lewis, 2008), 94% of Title IV degree-granting post-secondary institutions reported online course development was completed within their individual institutions. However, in a study of more than 2,500 American institutions of higher education, Allen and Seaman (2010) discovered nearly 20% of all institutions did not provide formal training or mentoring for instructors teaching online. The same study revealed 65% of institutions designed and delivered training courses for instructors while 59% of institutions offered informal instructor mentoring and 40% offered formal instructor mentoring. If faculty is expected to teach online, institutional leaders must provide appropriate faculty support programs to ensure those teaching online courses are adequately skilled in online course design and delivery (Cyrs, 1997; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Schoenfield-Tacher & Perischitte, 2000).

The selection of appropriate faculty support programs is not as simple as adding a few technology workshops to the professional development calendar. Administrators must acquire understanding of the shared experiences of instructors, particularly role changes, during the transition to online delivery (Diekelmann et al., 1998; Ryan, Hodson Carlton, & Ali, 2004) before planning professional development programs and providing support services. Increased understanding provides a foundation on which institutions can build support systems that assist instructors in making effective and efficient transitions to online delivery.
This study also has implications for faculty. In particular, early childhood and elementary education faculty will benefit from an enhanced understanding of the specific changes in roles and teaching methods unique to their field. This new knowledge has potential to ease anxiety among new online instructors and assist colleges and universities with establishing policies and procedures that support faculty moving into this relatively new teaching modality.

**Significance of the Problem**

Results of this research study will contribute to what faculty development directors, deans, chairs, and other higher education administrators understand about instructors’ experiences during the transition to online delivery. An increased understanding of those experiences will help administrators provide more effective leadership in creating faculty development programs and resources in support of the transition to teaching online. Finally, this research can be used to establish institutional strategies that enhance instructors’ experiences when implementing online courses and programs.

**Operational Definitions**

*Asynchronous learning* is based on the Asynchronous Learning Network (ALN) model promoted by The Sloan Consortium. It refers to the design of flexible online classrooms to support anytime, anyplace access to learning (Crumpacker, 2001; Mayadas, 1997).

*Degree completion program* refers to a program that offers a bachelor’s degree upon completion of all requirements set by the awarding institution for the fulfillment of
the degree. Students must complete all general education and prerequisite course requirements prior to applying for admission to the degree completion program.

*Distance education* is defined as formal higher education that connects students and instructors using Web-based communication tools (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2009). Distance education assumes a geographic separation of instructor and students (Ayers Schlosser & Simonson, 2010). The terms *online distance education* and *online learning* are used interchangeably in the research in reference to distance education that is offered via Web-based tools.

*Learning management system (LMS)* refers to Web-based software that supports the delivery of online courses. At the start of the study, the participants used Blackboard Basic, but the institution migrated to a new system, Moodle, later in the study.

*Nontraditional students*, more commonly labeled as *nontraditional, commuter*, or *reentry* students (Sissel, Hansman, & Kasworm, 2001) are defined as postsecondary education students 25 years old or older (Aslanian, 2001; Maehl, 2000; Paulson & Boeke, 2006). Nontraditional students typically attend part-time for at least part of the year, work 35 or more hours per week while enrolled in postsecondary education, are financially independent of their parents, and may have a spouse and/or dependents at home (Choy, 2002).

*Online delivery* is a method of instruction that uses Web-based tools. Instructional tasks are completed at a distance; the instructor and students are separated by geographic location and time. This paper uses *online delivery* and *online modality* interchangeably.
Screencasting refers to a technique that records actions or visuals on the computer screen, accompanied by audio, presented as a digital video.

Traditional delivery is a method of instruction provided in a face-to-face setting; instructional tasks are completed at the same time, in the same physical space.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the study through discussion of the problem, the research questions, and the operational definitions. The second chapter provides a review of relevant literature and research. The third chapter describes the research methodology, case study design, data collection, and data analysis. The fourth chapter reviews the findings and the fifth provides a discussion of the findings as well as implications for future research.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Online distance education remains an emerging delivery method, meaning most instructors are not equipped with the skills to immediately transition into online delivery. For many instructors, the experience of moving to online delivery is equivalent to starting from scratch; the experienced instructor becomes a novice again (Ali et al., 2005; Diekelmann et al., 1998; Gallant, 2000), a feeling that can be quite disorienting. Keys to instructors’ success in transitioning to online delivery include an introduction to online distance education, an overview of online pedagogy, faculty support and mentoring programs, and technical training (Carroll-Barefield et al., 2005; Covington, Petherbridge, & Warren, 2005; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Rogers, 1995).

This chapter establishes a framework for exploring instructors’ experiences transitioning to online delivery with a review of the literature that includes a brief history of distance education in the United States, definitions of online distance education, online course design, instructor readiness, and faculty support and professional development in higher education.

History of Distance Education in the United States

Modern adult and distance education programs trace their roots to a religious education movement that started at Lake Chautauqua, New York in the last half of the nineteenth century. Designed for the purpose of providing liberal education to people of
all backgrounds, the Chautauqua Movement opened doors to educational opportunities that had previously been closed to a large number of rural and nontraditional students. At Chautauqua’s origin, the United States was a young nation of rural and immigrant populations with limited educational background. The Chautauqua Movement, based on the idea of self-improvement through alternative education methods, resolved to produce a more educated citizenry, thus reducing social and political ills that plagued the nation.

The Chautauqua Movement began in the summer of 1874 as a 2-week Sunday school institute held at Fair Point on Chautauqua Lake in western New York (Gould, 1961). The co-founders were John Heyle Vincent, a Methodist minister and secretary of the Sunday School Union, and Lewis Miller, a successful manufacturer and Sunday school superintendent from Akron, Ohio. Over 2,500 participants attended the first Chautauqua Lake Sunday School Assembly which featured Bible instruction, musical entertainment, lectures, and devotional exercises (Mathews Bendiksen, n.d.). The success of the first Chautauqua meeting confirmed public interest in continuing education and prompted Vincent and Miller to plan annual assemblies at Chautauqua Lake.

Demand for educational opportunities among groups who could not leave home and personal obligations behind to attend college led Vincent to develop a correspondence program that became the legacy of Chautauqua. After 4 years of successful assemblies at Lake Chautauqua, Vincent established a study group to participate in a 4-year program of guided reading formally known as the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, but more commonly called the CLSC (Gould, 1961).
According to Vincent (1886),

This organization aims to promote habits of reading and study in nature, art, science, and in secular and sacred literature, in connection with the routine of daily life…so as to secure to them the college student’s general outlook upon the world and life, and to develop the habit of close, connected, persistent thinking.

(p. 75)

The CLSC program was designed to reach a class of adults who did not have the means of acquiring advanced education through traditional channels. The program was offered via correspondence, with study groups located in cities around the world. Using primers of science and literature, written communication with professors, and assigned readings, participants could study independently and meet regularly with a circle for local support (Vincent, 1886). The four areas of literature studied were English, American, Continental European, and Classical (Knowles, 1962; Scott, 2005). It was believed that this curriculum would fill the void of knowledge separating traditional college students and everyday citizens.

The Chautauqua Movement was a leading event in the development of new forms and methods of delivering continuing education to adult learners. Between 1883 and 1891, the state of New York authorized Chautauqua to award bachelor’s degrees through the Chautauqua College of Liberal Arts. The College was “a college for one’s own home” (Vincent, 1886, p. 15) that required the completion of a residential summer program as well as correspondence courses (Ayers Schlosser & Simonson, 2010; Simonson et al., 2009). According to Knowles (1962), Chautauqua pioneered correspondence courses, summer school, university extensions, and book clubs for
American colleges and universities. In fact, William Rainey Harper, a leading instructor at Chautauqua, established a correspondence study program within the extension division when he became president of University of Chicago. Other institutions in the United States soon followed the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle’s model of offering distance education through the mail.

Outside of institutions of higher education, for-profit institutions captured a large part of the adult market with a focus on vocational preparation. The most successful and well-known correspondence institution was the International Correspondence Schools (ICS) (Knowles, 1962). Thomas J. Foster, editor of the Mining Herald, offered a correspondence course in mining safety that quickly developed into a conglomeration of schools offering correspondence study for a variety of vocations. Kett (1994) posited that Americans were attracted to for-profit correspondence programs because they provided knowledge necessary to pass licensing exams for vocations such as mine inspector, embalmer, plumber, electrician, or secretary.

ICS targeted what is now called the nontraditional student, those typically over the age of 25. Such students were adults with work, social, and family obligations that prohibited them from attending institutions as full-time residential students (Kett, 1994; Simonson et al., 2009). ICS was set apart from traditional degree-granting institutions in the way it could quickly respond to the special needs of nontraditional students, many who did not possess the basic skills and knowledge to begin vocational education. To address students’ lack of basic knowledge and skills, ICS developed a curriculum that “assumed nothing beyond the ability of its clients to read simple English” (Kett, 1994, p. 238).
ICS courses were broken into small modules of content and included activities similar to those used in a traditional classroom. After finishing a reading assignment, the student would complete a written examination and mail it to ICS headquarters in Scranton, Pennsylvania. An instructor graded the examination, wrote comments where necessary, and mailed the graded work back to the student. Incorrect answers were marked with the page numbers where the student could locate the correct answer from the reading assignment (Kett, 1994; Tracey & Richey, 2005). This instructional model continues in today’s distance education courses, with mail communication being replaced by email or Internet-based communication.

The proliferation of correspondence programs at the turn of the 20th century was a major step forward for the fields of adult and distance education. The practice of educating adults gained credibility as a profession; correspondence courses gained credibility as a feasible means of education. Additionally, correspondence programs extended educational opportunities, thus breaking down the elitist educational system that had characterized the United States in previous years (Kett, 1994; Knowles, 1962; Tracey & Richey, 2005).

The correspondence course was further enhanced by the development of new communications technologies. A few institutions such as Cornell University, University of Iowa, Loyola University, and The Ohio State University experimented with distributing educational programming via radio telegraph and radio telephone but their efforts were halted during World War I because of national security concerns (Kittross, 2004). After the war, these institutions and others began offering extension courses by radio transmission. Over 170 radio stations operated from educational institutions in the
United States, but expensive technical requirements imposed by the Federal Radio
Commission forced all but a few stations on land grant campuses to close (Kittross, 2004;
Simonson et al., 2009).

Television transmission brought the next wave of innovations in distance
education. In the 1930s, University of Iowa, Purdue University, and Kansas State
College experimented with teaching through television transmission (Ayers Schlosser &
Simonson, 2010; Simonson et al., 2009). The technology was not readily available to
Americans until around 1945. At that time, the Federal Communications Commission
began allocating channels for commercial and non-commercial purposes. Western
Reserve University offered the first college credit courses via television broadcast in
1951, followed by New York University in 1957. Harting and Erthal (2005) reported that
educational programs using television increased from 17 in the late 1950s to 233 in 1972.
Students could participate in these programs for credit or no credit, the latter category
producing the highest enrollment figures (Knowles, 1962).

Satellite technology emerged in the 1960s, thereby increasing the spread of
educational programming available through television. The earliest federally funded
experiments on the viability of satellite technology for distance education were not
successful. However, in 1980, Learn/Alaska, the first state educational satellite system,
began offering six hours of daily instructional television to 100 villages in Alaska (Ayers
Schlosser & Simonson, 2010; Simonson et al., 2009). The TI-IN Network, based in San
Antonio, Texas, followed in 1985 with a wide range of courses available to high schools
across the nation.
Today, the primary method of delivering distance education courses is via the Internet. In a recent survey by the National Center for Education Statistics (Waits & Lewis, 2003), 59% of all 2-year and 4-year institutions offered distance education courses during the 2001-02 academic year. Ninety percent of institutions offering distance education courses reported their primary course delivery method was online asynchronous instruction. Just over half of all these institutions reported using two-way audio/video transmission while 41% used pre-recorded one-way videos. All methods, of course, require Internet access to participate.

**Defining Distance Education**

The emergence of the Internet as a delivery system for distance education has led scholars of recent decades to redefine *distance education*. On the cusp of online distance education, Delling (as cited in Simonson et al., 2009) described distance education as “planned and systematic activity…achieved by bridging the physical distance between student and teacher by means of at least one appropriate technical medium” (p. 20). Willis (n.d.) defined distance education as “the process of providing instruction when students and instructors are separated…and technology is used to bridge the gap.” Most recently, Ayers Schlosser and Simonson (2010) defined distance education as “the application of information technology (and infrastructure) to educational and student-related activities linking teachers and students in differing places” (p. 129).

Increased technological improvements and greater accessibility have moved distance education from a traditionally passive milieu to a dynamic and collaborative milieu made possible by online teaching and learning tools (Mangel, 1999; Saba, 1999; Schrum, 1998). Faculty and administrators frequently maintain the incorrect assumption
that the technology is a critical component of online distance education and is the powerhouse for reducing the geographic separation of students and instructor. Instructional technology research suggests otherwise. In online distance education, instructional design and pedagogy are most influential in bridging the gap between students and instructor (Phipps & Merisotis, 1999). The role of technology in the online milieu is that of delivery mechanism for the content and activities necessary to successfully achieve course objectives; technology should be secondary to teaching and learning (Parker, 2003; Gunawardena, 1992; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Saba, 1999).

Creating an environment in which technology is secondary to instructional activities requires faculty to rethink assumptions about teaching and learning (Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). Saba (1999) suggested defining online distance education by the amount of structure and discourse rather than the geographic separation of students and instructor. According to Saba, a highly-structured online course increases distance between students and instructor, while an online course that includes extensive interaction reduces the separation of students and instructor.

**Course Design in Online Distance Education**

Variations of constructivist learning theory are frequently applied to online instructional design to address the need for discourse and student engagement (Conrad & Donaldson, 2004; Duffy & Kirkley, 2004; Myers-Wylie, Mangieri & Hardy, 2009). The origin of constructivism is generally traced to the work of Jean Piaget (1932). Constructivist learning theory posits that learners seek to make meaning of the world and to overcome ambiguity by drawing connections with previous experiences (Ayers Schlosser & Simonson, 2010; Duffy & Kirkley, 2004; Knowles, 1984; Piaget, 1932).
Duffy and Kirkley (2004) offered five key pedagogical goals of constructivist learning theory, all of which apply to face-to-face and online classrooms:

- Engage students in inquiry by linking course goals to student interests;
- Provide structure that supports problem-solving and critical reflection among students;
- Support collaborative inquiry;
- Use performance-based assessments to demonstrate meaningful understanding;
- Promote critical thinking and knowledge transfer.

Online classrooms especially benefit from instructional approaches based on constructivist learning theory. Increased developments and technological advances have overcome “traditional passive distance learning environments” (Schrum & Hong, 2002, p. 58) and now include more robust and accessible communication tools for teaching and learning online (Mangan, 1999; Schrum, 1998). The student-centered Asynchronous Learning Networks (ALN) model promoted by The Sloan Consortium is a constructivist approach that draws from the interactive possibilities of online tools to support discourse and engagement (Mayadas, 1997). Using technological tools to unite self-study with asynchronous activities, the ALN model encourages the creation of online environments in which learners have anytime, anyplace access to educational resources (Crumpacker, 2001; Mayadas, 1997).

The various components of online courses are typically managed and distributed using a Web-based system formally known as a “course management system” (CMS) (Ayers Schlosser & Simonson, 2010) or a “learning management system” (LMS). The
CMS or LMS functions as a single point of access for course materials, resources, and communication tools. Although course contents vary depending on course objectives, courses designed using the ALN model frequently include text files, spreadsheets, audio or video files, hyperlinks to relevant Web sites, synchronous chat rooms, asynchronous threaded discussion boards, digital assignments, online assessments, and interactive applets such as simulations and self-paced tutorials (Mayadas, 1997; Young Roby, 2002).

Research focused on the intricacies of asynchronous learning networks suggests the development of a community of learners is an integral element of effective learning (Palloff & Pratt, 2009). Today’s students have numerous family, professional, and personal demands on their time, making it difficult for learning communities to spontaneously emerge (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999). The asynchronous aspect of online courses complicates building peer relationships while simultaneously encouraging innovative pedagogical practices for increasing sense of community.

Edelstein and Edwards (2002) presented ideas on building communities online through well-planned threaded discussions. In threaded discussions, participants post responses, or threads, that build on one another and form an online equivalent of group discussion. Learning communities are most effective when “built from ‘the ground up’ with materials provided by each e-learner—thread by thread—until the very structure itself is stable and free-standing” (para. 27). Although Edelstein and Edwards argued for rubrics for discussion board activities to build community, their work stopped short of measuring students’ sense of community after using the activities.

Moule (2006) examined development of online communities for healthcare students through the use of an online module. The online communities that emerged
demonstrated characteristics of mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire—similar to characteristics demonstrated in face-to-face communities. Although the delayed interaction within asynchronous discussions was problematic for students when they had to work in groups and make decisions quickly, the findings suggested online discussion boards were valuable tools for engaging students separated by time and place. Technical difficulties were also cited as barriers to community development. Moule concluded that communities could be established online and could foster the formation of national and international relationships among members of the site.

Determining if students feel a sense of community in an online course can be accomplished through rich qualitative studies like Moule’s (2006). It can also be measured through the use of survey instruments such as Rovai’s (2002) 20-questions Classroom Community Scale (CCS) that measures feeling of connectedness and perception of learning. Rovai reported a statistically significant difference in classroom community based on gender, with women scoring higher than men.

Clear and consistent design of course materials, activities, resources, and assessments is also essential in online course design. Palloff and Pratt (2000) suggested that online courses (a) clearly communicate guidelines and expectations, (b) clearly define expectations for posting and participating in online discussions, (c) maintain a consistent structure, (d) include and encourage collaborative learning opportunities throughout the course, and (e) provide an opportunity for reflection on learning.

Given the extensive planning and design necessary to develop an online course, it comes as no surprise that preparing an online course requires more time than preparing a
face-to-face course. Carroll-Barefield and Murdoch (2004) found that converting a 1 credit hour face-to-face course to an online course required approximately 75% more time for design and development. The study also revealed that instructors sought an additional 80 hours of support from an instructional designer to assist with online course development. These estimates did not account for professional development and technical training required to prepare instructors to teach online.

**Online Instructor Readiness**

Given the rapid advancement and increased accessibility of technology, online distance education remains an emerging delivery method in higher education. Quality online education is hindered by the incorrect assumption that face-to-face content need only be converted into digital content to create online courses (Carroll-Barefield et al., 2005). Neither does effective face-to-face instruction or high technological skill suggest that an instructor is properly equipped to teach online (Crumpacker, 2001; Dillon, 1989; Dillon & Walsh, 1992; Palloff & Pratt, 2000; Schoenfield-Tacher & Perischitte, 2000). Certainly, experience with face-to-face instruction and a high degree of technological skills are transferable to the online environment, but quality online education also demands skills and competencies not usually expected of face-to-face instructors.

In a meta-analysis of distance education literature, Cyrs (1997) identified four areas of faculty competence: (a) course planning and organization, (b) verbal and nonverbal communication, (c) collaborative teaching and learning, and (d) questioning techniques. Additional areas of faculty competence included in the literature are technical skills, design and delivery of engaging online lessons, ability and motivation to provide prompt feedback, and sensitivity to the technical and communications difficulties
students may encounter online (Carroll-Barefield & Murdoch, 2004; Conrad, 2004; Gunawardena, 1992; Hara & Kling, 2000; Schoenfield-Tacher & Perischitte, 2000; Simonson et al., 2009).

Teaching online is a relatively new specialty that challenges instructors to redesign courses, leaving behind more traditional instructional practices used in face-to-face courses. The experience is often disorienting for the expert who becomes a novice again while completing a significant redesign of course outcomes, activities, resources, and assessments for delivery in the online milieu (Ali et al., 2005; Diekelmann et al., 1998; Gallant, 2000; Ryan et al., 2004). While the online course design process has been associated with reverse benefits in face-to-face teaching (Pennington, 2005; Ryan et al., 2004), institutions must ensure faculty have the appropriate skills and competencies to teach in the online milieu.

Advanced course planning and organization is a necessity in online distance education (Gunawardena, 1992; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Saba, 1999; Simonson et al., 2009). In an examination of skills and competencies required of online instructors, Schoenfield-Tacher and Perischitte (2000) suggested faculty obtain “a firm understanding of basic instructional design strategies and learning theory in order to be able to design effective, interactive lessons” (p. 2). Online instructional design strategies encourage a systematic, student-centered approach to teaching and learning. Because students and the instructor are separated by time and geographic location, course materials must be carefully organized; expectations and instructions must be clearly communicated. Breaking course content into smaller modules provides a conceptual structure and assists
students with managing time and tasks in an online course (Johnson, 2003; Palloff & Pratt, 2001).

Instructors must not only be able to organize content and pace the course, but they must also be able to communicate verbally and nonverbally using the tools available in the online milieu. Whether the selected tool is a text file, email message, audio recording, narrated slide presentation, or video recording, instructors must be trained on the strengths, weaknesses, and appropriateness of each for online distance education. Such training can assist instructors with overcoming the “severe reduction in the set of verbal and visual feedback cues received from their students as well as the inherent time delay with asynchronous systems” (Schoenfield-Tacher & Perischitte, 2000, p. 3).

Time required for teaching an online course is more than time required for teaching a traditional course (Carroll-Barefield & Murdoch, 2004). Levy (2003) suggested triple the time commitment for teaching an online course. Much of the time commitment is dedicated to establishing and sustaining a sense of community and keeping up with students’ communications. Because online students are less likely to travel to campus for regular meetings and are unable to easily drop by the instructor’s office, there are increased emails with questions and needs for clarification. Additionally, it takes more time to set up, monitor, and grade online discussions than synchronous face-to-face discussions.

The design and delivery of online courses is technical and time consuming, requiring a specialized set of skills and competencies. The likelihood of current faculty possessing all of these skills and competencies is slim, but institutional support systems
and professional development opportunities can lessen the burden of moving courses online.

**Faculty Support and Professional Development**

Emerging technologies and increased accessibility of communication tools have dramatically transformed the way instructors interact with students. Transitioning to online delivery provides an opportunity for faculty to rethink assumptions about teaching and learning (Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006) as the online environment shifts instruction from a more traditional, instructor-centered model to a student-centered model. Consequently, the transition to online delivery leads to a variety of role changes and challenges for instructors (Cyrs, 1997; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Schoenfield-Tacher & Perischitte, 2000). Institutions of higher education can ease the transition for faculty by providing technical and pedagogical support, professional development, and other resources required for effective online course design and delivery (Rockwell, Furgason, & Marx, 2000).

In a study of the shared experiences of academic staff and faculty at University of Wisconsin, Ryan, Hodson-Carlton and Ali (2004) discovered that moving from face-to-face to online instruction resulted in faculty “losing familiar landmarks and touchstones, challenging conventional pedagogies, awakening new roles, learning from experience, and creating new pedagogies” (p. 74). Participants cited a feeling of starting over in their teaching roles, moving from competent to novice. The study revealed that instructor roles changed as a result of policies, technology, available support systems, and the need to redesign courses for online delivery while maintaining the curriculum and conceptual framework.
Berge (1995) proposed four dimensions, or roles, of effective online instruction: pedagogical, social, managerial, and technical. The pedagogical role includes facilitating learning processes, promoting critical thinking, and encouraging knowledge transfer. The social role promotes collaborative inquiry and peer relationship-building online. The organization, delivery, and administration of teaching and learning are carried out in the managerial role. Finally, the technical role involves training and supporting students on the use of tools required to participate in the online course. Berge noted that the tasks included in each dimension can overlap depending on the needs of students and the instructor. Additionally, the tasks within the different dimensions may be performed by more than one person, most likely by an instructor, an instructional designer, or technical support staff.

In a qualitative study of instructors’ reflections on their first online teaching experience, Conrad (2004) suggested that new online instructors focus primarily on managerial and technical dimensions. The study identified concerns about selecting the most appropriate instructional methods and amounts of work for effective online delivery. Conrad suggested that new online instructors draw connections to face-to-face teaching experiences as a baseline or starting point for discussion of online teaching roles.

Covington, Petherbridge and Warren (2005) found that peer coaching and peer-to-peer support was a valuable element in transitioning courses in a professional writing program to the online environment. The examination of instructors at North Carolina State University revealed that early adopters became leaders in the move to online delivery, providing peer support and adding credibility to the process. During the
transition to online delivery, mentors gave presentations on theoretical and practical topics in online teaching, were open and honest about key issues, and shared scholarly articles about online instruction. Early adopters also served as peer coaches and instructional design consultants for new online instructors. The model was deemed valuable and effective because it allowed for “an evolving experience where administrative support and training would occur at needed points, allowing the process to unfold and not explode” (Covington, Petherbridge & Warren, 2005, p. 6).

Keys to successful development and support of faculty transitioning to online teaching include an orientation to online course design and delivery as well as technical and professional support (Covington et al. 2005; McQuiggan, 2007). The research on effective models for online faculty development and support is frequently based on adaptations of face-to-face models. For example, Hinson and LaPrairie (2005) adapted a face-to-face technology integration model to arrive at five stages of online development: (1) planning, (2) instruction, (3) implementation, (4) refinement, and (5) evaluation. The authors also suggested hosting bi-weekly discussions for online instructors as well as preparing online courses a full term in advance.

Summary

Distance education in American higher education began in the last half of the nineteenth century and has continued to evolve as technological advances have permitted. Despite the steady presence of distance education programs for more than a century, online distance education remains an emerging area. Few instructors are equipped with the skills to immediately transition into online delivery (Ali et al., 2005; Diekelmann et al., 1998; Gallant, 2000). Further complicating the situation is the incorrect assumption
by many faculty and administrators that teaching online is no different from teaching in face-to-face settings (Palloff & Pratt, 2000).

A review of the literature related to online distance education revealed a variety of changes to instructors’ roles and teaching experiences when transitioning to online delivery. The most commonly cited challenges for online instructors included shifting towards student-centered instructional practices, the need for online community-building skills, and learning to use instructional technology and electronic communication tools—all requiring increased institutional support and professional development (Carroll-Barefield et al., 2005; Palloff & Pratt, 2000; Schrum & Hong, 2002).

This review of the literature included a brief history of distance education in the United States, definitions of online distance education, online course design, instructor readiness, and faculty support and professional development for online instructors. Drawing from selected literature, this chapter establishes the framework for exploring instructors’ experiences transitioning to online delivery. The next chapter describes the research methodology used in this study.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology for the study including research design, the participants, sampling, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness, and researcher role.

Research Design

This qualitative study used a case study design. Qualitative research methods are appropriate for gaining new perspectives and uncovering intricate details that cannot be acquired using quantitative methods. In qualitative research, “the value of case study lies in facilitating appreciation of the uniqueness, complexity, and contextual embeddedness of individual events and phenomena” (Schram, 2006, p. 107). Focusing on a unit of analysis known as a bounded system, the researcher examines a unit or program in context over an extended period of time. Case study design allows the researcher to “uncover the interplay of significant factors that is characteristic of the phenomenon” (Merriam & Simpson, 1995), providing an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Simpson, 1995; Schram, 2006; Yin, 2009).

Case study design is one of several commonly used methods in social science research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Simpson, 1995; Yin, 2009). Choosing an appropriate method is a critical step in the research design process. Yin (2009) suggested
case study is a relevant research design when “(a) ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posted; (b) the investigator has little control over events; and (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context” (p. 2).

The primary question guiding this research was: How do Early Childhood Development (ECD) instructors experience transitioning a traditional face-to-face baccalaureate degree completion program to an online degree completion program? More specifically, this study was guided by the following sub-questions:

- How do Early Childhood Development (ECD) instructors describe changes to their roles as they transition from traditional to online delivery?

- How do Early Childhood Development (ECD) instructors describe changes to the program as they move from traditional to online delivery?

Answering these questions required extended study of ECD program to gain an in-depth understanding of instructors’ experiences. Case study design was appropriate for this study because of the nature of the research question (“how”) and because of the lack of control I, the researcher, had on behaviors and events while examining participants within a contemporary context (Yin, 2009). This intensive study of the selected bounded system drew from multiple sources of evidence to develop thick rich descriptions of the participants’ experiences (Creswell, 1998, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Simpson, 1995; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009).

Participants

The bounded system for this case study was the early childhood development program at a regional public liberal arts university in the Northwest. To ensure
The sample for this study was selected using theoretical or purposeful sampling procedures (Krathwohl, 2004; Merriam & Simpson, 1995; Stake, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Purposeful sampling permits the researcher to select sites and participants with specific properties that will inform the researcher on the topic of investigation. For a case study, purposeful sampling ensures the selected case meets the criteria necessary to understand the research problem and answer the research questions (Creswell, 2009; Merriam & Simpson, 1995).

At the start of the research study, only five instructors taught courses in the Early Childhood Development program. All five instructors agreed to participate in the study. Towards the end of the academic year, additional part-time instructors were scheduled to teach in the program, but their service started beyond the time of this study and therefore, did not meet the requirements for the bounded system.

All participants were female; four participants were Caucasian and one was Asian. Participants represented a variety of early childhood and elementary education disciplines, professional experiences, and higher education teaching experiences. Although all participants had some experience with teaching at least one distance
education course, the modalities varied from synchronous two-way video, to a combination of face-to-face meetings and online work, to an asynchronous fully-online course at OSU or another school. Institutional policies and procedures gave instructors full responsibility and control in the design and development of online courses. Instructors were not required to consult with instructional designers or other technical support staff, but did have access to such resources if they chose to utilize them. The varied levels of technological and pedagogical experience provided a glimpse into ways different ECD instructors experience the transition to teaching in a fully online program.

Omars State University faculty was unionized; faculty workload and employment terms were outlined in the collective bargaining agreement. Teaching assignments varied based on instructor rank and the program-specific full-time equivalency. At the time of this study, full-time professorial faculty were assigned up to 12 equated load units (ELUs) per term for a maximum of 36 ELUs per 9-month academic year; full-time instructors were assigned up to 15 ELUs per term or a maximum of 45 ELUs per year. None of the instructors in this study were assigned solely to the ECD program, although three of the instructors were full-time employees at OSU.

According to Yin (2009), case studies typically address contemporary issues and require the protection of participants’ privacy and confidentiality to guard against the likelihood that participants might be “unwittingly put in any undesirable position, even such as being on a roster to receive requests to participate in some future study” (p. 73). Each participant in this study was given a randomly-selected pseudonym for use throughout the study. Table 1 provides an overview of the participants, using their assigned pseudonyms as unique identifiers:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Area of Qualification</th>
<th>Highest Degree</th>
<th>ECDF Full-Time</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>ECDF Equivalency (FTE)</th>
<th>Highest Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Educational Leadership, Family, Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>0.75 FTE</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Educational Leadership, Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>0.67 FTE</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Educational Leadership, Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>2.0 FTE</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Educational Leadership, Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>0.20 FTE</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Educational Leadership, Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>0.40 FTE</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Participant Profiles

Table 1
The following biographical sketches are provided to give context to the instructors’ experiences within the program and during the transition to teaching online.

**Alison.** Alison, a part-time instructor at .40 FTE, taught two to three ECD courses per term. She had over 30 years of experience working with children and families. In her professional career, Alison worked as an aide, teacher, administrator, and consultant in the areas of early intervention and early childhood. She had a master’s of arts degree in education with an emphasis on hearing impairment. At the time of the study, Alison was teaching courses in the areas of children at risk, children with disabilities, and atypical child development. She also taught online courses for a community college approximately 12 miles from the OSU campus.

At the start of the study, Alison emphasized her belief that distance education was inferior to face-to-face education; she was also skeptical about the validity of degrees earned in online programs. Alison’s uncertainty about distance education was tied to her technical skills, which she acknowledged were limited and hindered her ability to consider alternative ways of teaching without a physical classroom.

**Amy.** Amy was a part-time instructor in the ECD program since its earliest days and taught nearly every course offered in the program at some point during her employment. She had over 20 years of experience working in the field of early childhood education, with extensive experience as an early childhood teacher, director, and trainer. Amy had a master’s of arts degree in human development and worked full-time as an administrator for Head Start. At the time of the study, Amy was a .20 FTE appointment, teaching one online course per term for OSU.
Prior to teaching at OSU, Amy was a part-time online instructor at a land grant university, an experience that she noted as dramatically different from her experience at OSU. Online course design at the land grant university required that the instructor, acting as subject matter expert, provide content to an instructional designer and programmer. Although Amy was not technically savvy, she described her experience teaching online at the land grant university as positive because she did not have to worry about designing and programming her online courses. She taught online with a basic set of skills that allowed her to post to the discussion board, download assignment submissions, and post grades and feedback to the online grade book. Amy was nervous about teaching online courses at OSU because she was expected to serve as subject matter expert, designer, and programmer. She was also concerned about her effectiveness and her workload because OSU was in the midst of changing learning management systems and that meant even her basic skills set would need to be rebuilt. Still, Amy remained positive about the transition, seeing it as an opportunity to serve a population of students who would otherwise not be able to obtain degrees needed to continue working in the field.

Michelle. As Adjunct Assistant Professor at OSU, Michelle carried a full-time teaching load with responsibilities divided between the ECD program (.20 FTE) and a graduate program (.80 FTE) in the School of Education. Between the two appointments, she taught between four and five online courses per term. Michelle had a master’s degree in mass communication and a teaching credential and was nationally board certified as a middle childhood specialist. Michelle had over 15 years of experience teaching kindergarten through eighth grade and 3 years of experience teaching in higher education. While working in the K-8 environment, Michelle was a self-identified early-adopter of
instructional technology and assisted colleagues with incorporating technology into the classroom. She continued to experiment with instructional technologies and techniques while working for OSU, but found that her full-time course load and split appointment made it difficult to explore as much as she desired. At the time of the study, Michelle was teaching observation and evaluation and advanced practicum courses in the program.

**Patricia.** One of only two professorial faculty members in the ECD program, Patricia was a full professor who had been teaching at OSU for 11 years. She also served as the ECD Program Coordinator, taught graduate-level courses, and worked as an advisor to ECD students. Patricia’s ECD responsibilities accounted for .67 FTE and her graduate-level teaching responsibilities accounted for .33 FTE. Because of her ECD administrative responsibilities, she typically taught one or two courses ECD courses per term. Patricia had a doctor of philosophy degree in intervention and early childhood special education and over 14 years of experience teaching in higher education. Patricia’s teaching responsibilities for the academic year included courses on the topics of capstone practicum, reflective practice and professional portfolio, observation and evaluation, and educational foundations.

Patricia was less technically savvy than some of her colleagues, but was eager to learn how to use technology to be more efficient and effective. She sought assistance and guidance from campus support personnel regularly and indicated her desire to learn more. Patricia did teach a distance education course while working at another university nearly a decade ago, but noted the experience was unsatisfactory. She recalled working long hours and feeling disconnected from her students. Patricia was nervous about moving the ECD Program online, but she was positive it could be accomplished. As the ECD
Program Coordinator, Patricia wrote the proposal to move the program online because she knew early childhood development professionals needed to complete their bachelor’s degrees to continue working in early childhood development.

**Tatum.** Tatum joined OSU in 2009 as Assistant Professor of Education. She was one of two professorial faculty members in the ECD program and served as an academic advisor to ECD majors. Her primary appointment within the School of Education was the ECD program (.75 FTE) but she also taught in the graduate program (.25 FTE). Tatum typically taught four or five courses per term.

Tatum held a master’s of arts degree in teaching and a doctorate in educational leadership. Prior to OSU, Tatum taught kindergarten and first grade for 3 years and was a teaching assistant for a Montessori classroom. Tatum had no prior experience teaching in higher education or online. Her first year of teaching for OSU, Tatum had five online course preps in addition to several hybrid and on-campus preps. She was technically savvy and enjoyed experimenting with instructional technologies, but as a new faculty member, she had more than the usual first-year faculty challenges because she was adjusting to her new full-time professorial responsibilities in addition to learning to teach online. At the time of the study, Tatum was teaching courses on literacy, capstone research, and leadership.

**Context**

The Early Childhood Development program at Omars State University (OSU) was created in 2003 as a degree completion program in collaboration with a local community college, Caldera Community College (CCC), throughout this study. Early on, students earned an associate’s degree in Early Childhood Education from CCC and
then transferred into the ECD program at OSU for bachelor’s degree completion. OSU established articulation agreements with additional community colleges in OSU’s home state, increasing the pool of prospective students with each agreement. Beginning the fall 2005 term, the ECD program included synchronous two-way video courses supplemented with online course work via Blackboard, but the program was still based on a traditional delivery model. Instructors would meet face-to-face with locally-based students and transmit to select video sites within the state; or, they would meet for classes at a branch campus. As instructors developed familiarity with Blackboard, they moved upper-division and special topics courses to hybrid formats that included two or three face-to-face meetings on Saturdays during a 10-week term. Several courses were then moved to an asynchronous online format, but instructors still had opportunities for face-to-face and synchronous contact with students because of face-to-face requirements for some of the courses.

In October 2009, OSU’s ECD Program Committee, consisting of the coordinator, two instructors, an administrative support person, and department chair, submitted a memorandum to the dean requesting permission to move the entire ECD program online. The memo documented increased market demand for early childhood education degrees among transfer students in OSU’s home state. Additional justification arose from federal legislation that mandated 50% of Head Start instructors earn bachelor’s degrees in early childhood education or an equivalent area by 2013. The Public Health and Welfare Act of 2009 drastically increased the number of early childhood professionals and paraprofessionals in need of a bachelor’s degree within a 3 year period. Most of these
prospective students were place-bound and working full-time, positioning online learning as an appealing option for convenience and access.

The two-page memo to the dean included requests to (a) increase recruitment of transfer students from the state’s community colleges; (b) transition all courses in the program to fully online asynchronous delivery; (c) develop a one-credit online orientation course for ECD students; and (d) establish an ECD-based contact or liaison for online students so that they did not get lost in the traditional campus system. The proposed goal was to complete the transition of courses by 2011, making modifications to “develop new online courses as needed.” During this study, instructors created seven new asynchronous online courses as well as revised existing hybrid courses to fully online asynchronous delivery.

The decision to transition to a fully online degree completion program required that ECD instructors accept teaching online or seek employment elsewhere. All five ECD instructors decided to continue teaching in the program regardless of any reservations about moving completely online. ECD program directors and instructors expressed a commitment to sustaining quality advising and teaching and to developing effective and efficient online student services. Patricia, the program director, referred to the transition process as “flying the plane while building it.” It is this phenomenon of simultaneously building and implementing that is not uncommon in online programming, hence the decision to study faculty experiences during the transition.

Data Collection

Data were collected for 9 months, beginning October 2010 and ending June 2011. Prior to collecting data, I obtained approval from OSU’s Institutional Review Board
(IRB) as well as the Dean of OSU’s School of Education. A copy of the IRB proposal and approval was also submitted to the University of Dayton’s Institutional Review Board. In compliance with applicable IRB guidelines, each participant received, reviewed, and signed an informed consent form designed to communicate the purpose and duration of the research study, the research procedures, anticipated risks and/or discomfort associated with the study, the participant’s rights to terminate participation at any time, and the plan for maintaining participant confidentiality (see Appendix A for instructor informed consent and Appendix B for administrator informed consent).

Well-designed case studies utilize multiple sources of data to complement one another and to elicit data that can be used to corroborate evidence (Creswell, 1998, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). Consistent with case study tradition, this study drew from multiple data sources such as documentation, focused interviews, and participant-observation.

**Documentation.** Documents are rich sources of information that are “contextually relevant and grounded in the contexts they represent” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Common forms of documents include strategic plans, accreditation reports, letters, memoranda, agendas, email communication, meeting minutes, and journals (Creswell, 1998, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009).

The documents collected during the study included the institutional curriculum committee proposal to change the ECD program to the online modality, the program strategic plan, term-by-term course schedules, curriculum plans, new course proposals, syllabi, accreditation reports, memoranda, meeting agendas, and program-related email communications. The primary sources of documents came from email communications.
The ECD program director included me on the ECD Faculty email distribution list, providing access to all electronic program-related communication conducted throughout the academic year. The participants also included me on personal email requests for technical and pedagogical support. I exported information and conversations from email to word processing documents for review and analysis. Finally, during interviews, instructors shared copies of documents and self-created tracking tools used for managing their instructional duties.

**Interviews.** Each instructor participated in two semi-structured individual interviews lasting approximately one hour per interview. The first interview was conducted in the first term of the academic year for the purpose of collecting general background information about the instructors, establishing a sense of trust with each participant, and capturing each instructor’s initial thoughts and experiences about transitioning to online delivery (see Appendix C for instructor interview protocol). The second individual interview was conducted at the end of the academic year and served as an opportunity for me to ask reflective questions as well as follow up on changes in perspectives and/or experiences after one academic year of online teaching experience. I also conducted interviews with the academic dean, department chair, and ECD program coordinator to provide other perspectives for data triangulation (see Appendix D for administrator interview protocol). The interviews were conducted in the second and third months of the study, depending on instructor and administrator availability, in an agreed-upon location on the OSU campus.
Prior to initiating the interview process with each participant, I explained the purpose of the study, outlined the plans for using the results, offered a copy of the completed report or abstract, and obtained written consent to record and use data collected during the study (Creswell, 1998, 2009; Yin, 2009). All instructor and administrator interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed as part of the data collection process (Creswell, 1998, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Merriam & Simpson, 1995; Yin, 2009).

**Focus group interview.** Focus groups expand the levels of meaning in the interview and encourage participants to build upon one another’s responses, revealing data that would likely not emerge from one-on-one interviews (Creswell, 1998, 2009; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). I conducted one 45-minute focus group interview to elicit data related to how changes to the program influenced instructors experiences moving to the online modality (see Appendix E for focus group interview protocol). The focus group interview occurred during the end-of-year ECD program retreat in June, 2011. All five ECD instructors, the ECD program coordinator, and the distance education specialist participated in the focus group interview. The focus group interview was audio-recorded using a digital recording device.

**Confidentiality**

At the time of the study, the ECD program was a small program consisting of five instructors. All five instructors agreed to participate in a study of their experiences for one academic year. Confidentiality was an important element in their agreement to participate. The confidentiality of study participants and their institution was maintained.
in the study. Yin (2009) discouraged researchers from making an entire case and participants anonymous for two reasons:

a. it removes background information that could be important to understanding the case;

b. it complicates writing the case report because identifying information must be “systematically converted from their real identities to fictitious ones” (p. 182) and be tracked consistently throughout the research report.

The program name, Early Childhood Development, was retained to help provide context for the selected case as well as to assist with discussion of findings. Additionally, all participants were given a pseudonym that was attached to all related data throughout the study.

Data Analysis

Individual and focus group interviews were transcribed by an independent, external consultant and then double-checked by the researcher for quality of transcription. All data were uploaded to Dedoose (Lieber & Weisner, 2011), a cloud-based database and data analysis tool. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman’s methodology of (1984) simultaneous activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction involved “selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming” evidence (p. 21). I began the data reduction process at the initial design stage and continued to the completion of the final report, continuously reviewing the growing collection of documents, interview transcripts, and meeting observation notes.
As I collected materials, I uploaded them into Dedoose (Lieber & Weisner, 2011), highlighted chunks of meaningful data, and applied key words and phrases, or metadata, such as challenge, change, learning, support, and time. Each chunk of information was further coded to include the source file name, participant name (pseudonym), program conditions and influences, and the applicable codes from Berge’s (1995) four online instructor dimensions: managerial, pedagogical, social, and technological for the purpose of answering the research questions posed in this study. Frequent review and comparison of the data revealed key themes, connections, and conditions that led to further exploration and explanation of instructors’ experiences transitioning to teaching in an online program.

Data display occurred in conjunction with data reduction. During this process, I focused on the organization of data into visual representations to develop an understanding of what was happening within the context (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Visual representations began as bulleted lists and hand sketches followed by Dedoose word clouds, then tables, and concept maps. I used Dedoose database reports for pattern-checking and identifying exceptions or outliers that emerged during the data display process.

Conclusion drawing/verification occurred simultaneously with data reduction and data display. During this activity, I continuously engaged in drawing conclusions while allowing for changes as more data were available (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Conclusions were also cross-checked using Dedoose (Lieber & Weisner, 2011) database reports to confirm or deny new ideas. The final conclusions were stated once the data
were “tested for their plausibility, their sturdiness, their ‘confirmability’,” thereby
demonstrating validity (p. 22).

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness refers to the validity and reliability of a qualitative study.
Lincoln and Guba (1985) offered four alternative terms for addressing the trustworthiness
of qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

**Credibility.** The researcher is the primary instrument for collecting and
analyzing data in qualitative research, making the practice of triangulation essential to
demonstrating credibility of findings and interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985;
Merriam & Simpson, 1995). Triangulation can be achieved using multiple investigators,
data sources, methods, and theories (Krathwohl, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam
& Simpson, 1995; Stake, 1995).

This study addressed triangulation in three ways. First, the study drew from
multiple data sources including interviews, a focus group, and documents. Second, I
conducted periodic peer-checks by consulting with colleagues about research methods,
data collection, and data analysis. Finally, I provided early conceptual models to the
participants during the data analysis process to verify accuracy of my interpretations. I
used the feedback collected during review of the models to confirm my analysis and
arrive at the final visual representation used to report findings.

**Transferability.** Transferability refers to the degree to which findings can be
applied to other audiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Chapter 4 provides thick rich
description of the case and participants, as well as the unit of analysis, so that readers
may determine the transferability of findings.
**Dependability and confirmability.** According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), dependability and confirmability can be simultaneously addressed by creating an audit trail. I kept all materials collected throughout the study in a series of password-protected folders on a personal computer. Materials were also uploaded to Dedoose, a secure system, for coding and analysis. All interview recordings, transcripts, researcher notes, coding sheets, and concept maps were maintained to provide a mechanism for confirming that the findings were a result of rigorous inquiry rather than researcher bias.

**Researcher Role and Bias**

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing data, a situation that requires the researcher acknowledge his or her values, assumptions, and biases prior to implementing the study (Creswell, 1998, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009; Merriam & Simpson, 1995). To provide insight into my position within the study, I provide the following overview of my background, qualifications, and role at the research site.

My perceptions of online delivery in higher education were shaped by personal experiences with online distance education. At the time of the study, I had worked for 5 years as director of distance education programs, first at a seminary and later at a regional university. I was also a part-time instructor for an online master’s degree program offered at a public research university in the Midwest. My roles as an online instructor and administrator enhanced my knowledge and sensitivity to the challenges of online delivery that provided credibility for working with the participants.

At the time of the study, I held a mid-level administrative role in the Distance Education Center (DEC) at Omars State University (OSU), the public regional university
which was home for the bounded case in this study. OSU operated with a decentralized operations model, meaning the academic units were responsible for all aspects of online programs from concept to delivery. The DEC was a support unit that offered workshops and one-on-one sessions to assist faculty with designing and delivering online courses. With a full-time equivalent of 2.25 staff, we also served as a second-level technical support center for the learning management system (LMS). Online instructors, including the instructors in this study, would often bypass the OSU Help Desk and contact me or my staff directly for LMS-specific support.

My role as director of the DEC was more akin to that of instructional design consultant and advocate for administrative policies and processes pertaining to online education. I had no institutional policy-making authority and had limited involvement with the overall strategic planning process related to online education. As the ECD program staff started preparing for online delivery, I was asked to provide several professional development sessions for the five instructors and to attend some of the early planning meetings to help generate support for particular student services. I was also a regular attendee at ECD program faculty and leadership meetings, answering questions about best practices in online education programs. Finally, likely as a result of my attendance at their meetings, the ECD program staff and instructors would email me directly with technical support questions on evenings and weekends.

My prior experiences with online delivery also contributed certain biases to the study. Every effort was made to objectively collect and analyze the data, but the biases likely shaped the ways in which I viewed and understood the data gathered. I maintained a log of “introspective notations about the state of one’s mind in relation to what is
happening in the field” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as an opportunity to check biases and assumptions during data collection and analysis.

**Summary**

Using case study research, the purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of faculty experiences transitioning to online teaching. In other words, the study explored how instructors in an Early Childhood Development program described changes to their roles and to the degree program as they transitioned from traditional to online delivery. This chapter addressed the research methodology for the case study, including the research design, participants, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness, and researcher role. The next chapter reveals findings from the 9 months of data collection.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of college instructors who transitioned from teaching in a traditional face-to-face format to an online format. More specifically, this study examined the experiences of Early Childhood Development (ECD) instructors as they transitioned from teaching in a face-to-face baccalaureate degree completion program to teaching in a fully online degree completion program. This chapter reveals the findings from documents, participant and focus group interviews, and participant observations collected over the 2010-2011 academic year.

Although instructors in the ECD program agreed to teach in the fully online program, the literature suggested they, like most instructors who shifted from traditional to online instruction, were likely not prepared for the changes they would experience during the transition (Carroll-Barefield et al., 2005; Covington et al., 2005; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Rogers, 1995). The limited research available on instructors’ experiences as they transitioned to the online modality was perceived as a challenge for administrators to adequately provide instructional and professional development support during the transition. Even less is known about the experiences of instructors within specific disciplines. A review of the literature led to the decision to conduct a study that would
provide insights into early childhood development instructors’ experiences with moving a traditional face-to-face program to fully online delivery.

The overarching question guiding this research was: How do Early Childhood Development instructors experience transitioning a traditional face-to-face baccalaureate degree completion program to an online degree completion program? The question was answered using the following sub-questions:

- Question 1: How do Early Childhood Development instructors describe changes to their roles as they transition from traditional to online delivery?
- Question 2: How do Early Childhood Development instructors describe changes to the program as they move from traditional to online delivery?

Answering the research questions required an extended, in-context study of the ECD program to obtain a deeper understanding of the instructors’ experiences. A case study design was appropriate for this study because of the nature of the research question (“how”) and because of the lack of control I had on behaviors and events while examining participants within a contemporary context (Yin, 2009). Understanding the bounded system for this study depended upon the collection of materials from multiple sources for the purpose of providing thick rich descriptions of the participants’ experiences (Creswell, 1998, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Simpson, 1995; Stake, 1995, Yin, 2009).

Overview of the Findings

This research study was guided by Berge’s (1995) four dimensions of online instructor roles. According to Berge, the tasks required for effective online instruction can be grouped into four dimensions: pedagogical, social, managerial, and technical. The
pedagogical dimension includes course design, development of activities which promote critical reflection and higher-order thinking, encouraging knowledge transfer, and providing frequent feedback. The social dimension refers to development of a safe and engaging learning community and maintaining relationships throughout the course. In the managerial dimension, the instructor carries out administrative tasks, keeps the course moving in an organized manner, manages timelines, establishes and communicates expectations, and tracks learner progress. Finally, the technical dimension includes providing training and support on the use of tools and resources required to participate in the online course. Berge noted that the tasks included in each dimension may overlap depending on the needs of students and the instructor. Additionally, the tasks within the different dimensions may be performed by more than one person, most likely by an instructor, an instructional designer, or technical support staff. Table 2 provides an overview of Berge’s four dimensions of online instructor roles.

Table 2

Summary of Berge’s (1995) Four Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Roles or tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical</td>
<td>Designing courses, creating engaging activities, promoting critical reflection and higher-ordering thinking, providing feedback for performance improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Creating a safe and engaging learning community involving instructor and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>Organizing instruction, setting the schedule/agenda, setting and managing expectations, and tracking student progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Providing and/or directing students to technical support, integrating technology into the online course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The protocols for individual and focus group interviews were based on Berge’s (1995) four dimensions as summarized above. Prior research studies confirmed and enhanced the roles within the dimensions, but did not address the experiences of instructors in specific disciplines; nor, did prior research studies address specific program changes that also influenced instructors’ experiences as they transitioned to online teaching. I believed it was necessary to expand upon instructor dimensions by identifying changes to the program while transitioning the entire degree program to fully online delivery as well as examining faculty role changes during the transition.

**Changes to Instructor Dimensions**

Using Berge’s (1995) four dimensions as a framework, I analyzed and interpreted data, looking for changes and experiences the instructors acknowledged most throughout the transition to teaching online. Figure 1 provides a summary of the **role changes** instructors experienced within the four dimensions while transitioning from traditional face-to-face teaching to online teaching; discussion of the changes follows.
Figure 1. Changes to instructor roles experienced during the transition from traditional face-to-face teaching to asynchronous online teaching, organized according to Berge’s (1995) dimensions.

**Pedagogical Dimension**

The pedagogical dimension consisted of roles such as course designer, discussion facilitator, and knowledge transfer promoter. While the roles were similar in traditional and online instruction, the *manner* in which the study’s instructors, Patricia, Tatum, Amy, Michelle, and Alison carried out particular roles changed during the transition to online teaching.

**Asynchronous course designer.** As I anticipated, instructors experienced dramatic changes to the role of course designer. Courses in the online ECD program were designed for asynchronous learning, providing maximum convenience for students with time and location restrictions. This was completely different from the synchronous design of traditional face-to-face courses from which the instructors were transitioning. With years of extensive classroom teaching experience between them, the instructors
tried to directly transfer their traditional classroom skills and knowledge directly into
online teaching with varying degrees of success.

Patricia noted a change to her approach to course design shifting from
“transmission delivery mode to the more constructivist-based and learner-oriented.” The
change was necessitated partially because of the 24/7 availability of the online classroom
and partially because of the instructors’ limited availability. They could not be online at
all hours of the day, every day of the week, so they had to modify their teaching methods
to accommodate the asynchronous aspect of online teaching.

Asynchronous teaching required more advanced planning as well as a more
systematic approach to instruction when compared to traditional teaching. For example,
Patricia organized her course sites in an effort to reduce the anxiety of her learners,
saying, “But I need to be organized, to be a model for them, so I need to have my Moodle
to be organized.” Patricia’s traditional classroom practices were not disorganized or
chaotic; the setting was just more forgiving and accommodating to shifts in instruction.
If something was not clear to students in the traditional classroom, Patricia could clear it
up at once with all students— something that was more difficult when working with
students asynchronously.

For Alison, the organization and asynchronous aspects of teaching online ran
counter to her own teaching style in the traditional classroom setting. Alison believed
that one of her strengths as an instructor was her ability to engage in spontaneous
discussions without advance preparation. In the online classroom, she felt that she had to
“anticipate everything and outline that up front.” The first few terms of teaching online
proved to be quite uncomfortable for Alison because of the advanced preparation and
organization required to carry out asynchronous instruction. She described the difference between how she taught in a traditional classroom versus in an online classroom:

> You know, like [sic] somebody might bring up a really interesting question and in class, you might take-- if it’s a face-to-face class-- I might take half an hour…If it’s okay with the group, I may even ask [the group’s] permission to keep going for 40 minutes on the topic that someone brought up, and it can be valuable. But, if somebody brings something up in writing I’m probably not going to go off on a huge tangent on that topic. In fact, I don’t even always bring it up.

Although Alison felt less spontaneous in the online classroom, she did become more organized and less likely to find herself, as she described it, “going off on a tangent” when responding to students’ questions or inquiries.

With the transition to teaching online, instructors had to plan instructional materials weeks in advance of when they were needed. Gone were the days of photocopying an article minutes before the start of class or grabbing a DVD from the department’s media shelves. When the instructors transitioned to online teaching, they planned instruction well in advance to ensure availability and accessibility of digital materials. Finding digital versions of instructional materials often required time-intensive searches on the Internet. For Alison, the task of searching the Internet for resources seemed daunting. She stated, “I don’t think it’s very fun to search it…going online and reading 35 child development checklists, it’s overwhelming. It’s good stuff, but how do I pick what I want?”

Amy encountered a course design challenge related to instructional materials selection when she attempted to show a documentary video series in one of her online
courses. She used the series in her traditional face-to-face course on teaching diversity in the early childhood classroom and felt it was appropriate for her online course. As she was designing the online course, Amy learned that copyright laws and fair use guidelines required that she obtain the copyright owner’s permission to stream the documentary series online. It took time, but Amy received permission to use the video series online; however, OSU did not have the appropriate resources for converting the videos from VHS to an online format. Amy had to find alternative teaching materials and plan new lessons for the course.

Learning facilitator. Patricia discovered the concept of screencasts while co-teaching the capstone course with Tatum. As she discussed her co-teaching experience, she expressed her excitement about the perceived success of screencasts Tatum created to introduce each weekly module. According to Patricia, Tatum “does it every Monday—actually reads from Moodle; talks about postings, and what she likes. Then she shares an inspirational poem or tells a story that fits with the topics, then, reviews assignments.” Patricia thought the screencasts were integral elements in facilitating student learning and connections with course content. Tatum shared her knowledge and experience using screencast technology with Patricia and encouraged her to try them in her own classes. With technical assistance from Tatum and OSU’s Distance Education Director, Patricia created screencasts for her other courses in the ECD Program.

Instructors found grading and giving feedback to be more difficult and time-consuming in the online modality than in the traditional classroom. For example, the process for reviewing student submissions, assigning grades, and including
individualized feedback within the learning management system proved cumbersome and time-intensive. Michelle described her own experience with the online process saying,

I was creating a document with my feedback, then I would copy and paste the feedback to say, Jennifer, and then I would go to the forum and I’d put your grade in and I’d have to link to you and then go down to send an email and then post the feedback.

The standard process involved multiple clicks through multiple screens for each student, so it was difficult to develop a smooth process flow. Mid-year, OSU implemented an upgrade package to Moodle, which included a new feature that streamlined giving grades and feedback to students. However, the new feature required that instructors recreate specific assignments in their courses if they wanted to take advantage of the update. Michelle learned about the update just before a new term started so she had to use the older process and plan for the revisions in the next term.

Grading felt more rushed in online courses than in traditional ones. With weekly discussion board requirements in every online course, instructors’ workloads increased. The workload was especially difficult towards the end of a term. Amy noted that she felt “overwhelmed by the grading and how quickly the turnaround is at the end of the term” when working as an online instructor. While students posted their last discussion requirements and submitted finals and any late work due, Amy and her colleagues had just one week to grade everything. They then had one week to prepare themselves and their online course sites for the next term.

Instructor roles in the pedagogical dimension were similar in traditional and online instruction, but the execution of those roles changed in the transition to online
Although the instructors anticipated pedagogical changes, they experienced difficulty moving beyond traditional teaching and learning concepts as they designed asynchronous online courses. Initial design and teaching decisions for the new online courses were based on using technology to replicate traditional classroom experiences because that was what the instructors felt and knew about ECD education.

Social Dimension

Going into the first year of the fully online program, the instructors anticipated changes related to separation of instructors and students, but it became clear after the first term that they had underestimated how much they relied on face-to-face meetings to facilitate a sense of community and connection in classes. They noted that community seemed to form almost naturally in traditional face-to-face classes, but required much more instructor effort online. During the transition to online teaching, instructors’ experiences revealed that the role of community coordinator was critical to developing a sense of online community between and with learners.

Community coordinator. Several instructors offered asynchronous conversation areas in their online courses in an attempt to encourage the casual conversation that often occurred before and after on-campus courses. They named these conversation areas “The Café,” “The Coffee House,” or “The Water Cooler” to suggest the type of interactions students might have there. Unfortunately, the students did not utilize the areas as much as instructors anticipated. Amy experienced some success with the online coffee house/café concept one term, but not during the next term. She offered the following reflection:
What I realized I didn’t do this term is-- I have to get in there. I have to, like, [sic] post jokes and funny things and funny videos on YouTube to kind of keep it going, or ask, ‘Did you hear about this?’ And I didn’t-- I wasn’t, um, doing that last term and the Coffee House didn’t have very much participation… I have a whole little file of funky things and YouTube videos and, you know, that marshmallow research that’s so great.

The instructors learned that they had to initiate socializing between students in the online classroom. It was a new responsibility, one they struggled with throughout the transition. When the instructors’ workloads increased, the areas created for socializing became forgotten and informal conversations declined.

Several instructors started using multimedia, such as images, podcasts, and screencasts to share some of their personal characteristics and preferences in order to build community with their online students. For example, Michelle valued shared laughter and wanted to project her sense of humor in the online classroom. She explained the importance of images and screencasts in facilitating shared laughter saying, “…sometimes that helps me feel like [sic] I’m getting some of my personality into the page.” In another example, Tatum and Patricia used weekly screencasts in their online courses to share a sense of connection with students by adding their own faces and voices to the online environment. They encouraged students to also share photos and videos when introducing themselves to classmates or as part of their assignments, when appropriate.

The instructors in this study struggled with social dimension role changes primarily because of the loss of synchronous and face-to-face connections with students.
Without face-to-face interaction, the instructors experienced challenges with knowing their online students, engaging in “shared laughter” in the classroom, and feeling an overall sense of connection and community with students in the program. It seemed that social dimension roles required more effort and design by the instructors if they expected to form strong and meaningful relationships with students in an asynchronous online program.

**Managerial Dimension**

The managerial dimension involved tasks such as developing the agenda for the course, setting due dates, tracking student participation, and providing clear instructions to help students to manage the various requirements in the online course. While tasks were related to the roles in traditional teaching, the instructors reported that the time and effort required for managing an online classroom increased. Instructors experienced several significant changes to their managerial practices in response to the transition to teaching online asynchronous courses.

**Expectations manager.** In the ECD program’s online courses, instructors expected students to participate in weekly asynchronous class discussions as part of their individual participation grades. This was the most challenging aspect of the managerial dimension as instructors discovered early on that few students participated in course discussions unless a significant portion of the final grade depended upon it. Instructors no longer had the opportunity to call on nonparticipating students like they did in traditional classrooms. They had to change the ways they encouraged participation and creativity in student responses.
Amy thought the problem with student participation could be traced to other online courses in which requirements were not given or enforced because students were submitting responses such as “I like that idea” or “Nice post.” Amy felt that she provided “very clear directions” and expectations in the syllabus or in the course site but students did not take the expectations seriously. After some trial and error, she found that strict monitoring of discussions during the first two weeks of a term provided the feedback students needed and set the tone for subsequent participation in class discussions.

Similarly, Alison reported that teaching online required her to be more specific about expectations for assignments. Prior to teaching online, Alison’s assignments were what she called “open-ended.” She would provide basic information in the course syllabus but would fill in missing pieces when meeting face-to-face with students. Alison acknowledged that the lack of clear instructions and expectations in the online classroom led to confusion, anxiety, and lower quality work from students. She recognized that she could improve upon her instruction by providing more details to her students:

See what I’m saying, so in order to up the bar, I think I need to put that in a rubric. They’re doing what I’m asking them now so, doesn’t that deserve an A? …I need to change what I’m asking for. Does that make sense?

After a term of teaching online, Patricia realized how important it was to not only set expectations, but also consistently enforce them with students. She found that some students would post a primary response to a question but would not engage in any secondary discussions with classmates. Although Patricia posted clear expectations about the weekly discussion board requirements, she had to spend the first few weeks of
class thoroughly grading posts and reiterating requirements so that students would meet course expectations.

Michelle conducted online managerial tasks effectively with the use of rubrics and detailed instructions on how students would be graded. Whereas, in a traditional classroom, she had the opportunity to expand upon expectations as she led students in a review of the syllabus and related documents, the grading criteria and class expectations had to be communicated at the start of the course to set the tone. Michelle also invested a great deal of time in the first weeks of the term, as she recalls, “following through, being consistent in grading so that they’re [students] held accountable.” She added that, throughout the year, she remembered “getting better at providing prompts that go to a deeper level but open the door to deeper conversations.”

**Learning director.** Within the managerial dimension, the role of learning director became more prominent in online teaching than in traditional teaching. Instructors became more thorough in communicating deadlines as well as consequences for students not meeting the established deadlines. The instructors agreed that there were times when students might need exceptions to an assignment due date because of unexpected health, work, family, or other issues, but they evaluated each exception on a case-by-case basis. Online, it appeared easier for students to disappear for extended periods of time without notice to the instructor. The instructors tried working with students beyond deadlines and course end dates, but the many exceptions pushed instructors’ boundaries and patience, leading to heavier workloads at end of term. Amy and Tatum became frustrated and expressed feeling “resentful” and “pushed a little too far.”
Tatum, for example, found that collecting assignments from students in an online course required more structure than collecting assignments in a traditional course. When meeting with students face-to-face, she could request that they leave paper copies of assignments in one location for her to retrieve at the end of class; when teaching online, Tatum had to manage digital file submissions from each student. Some students would consistently ignore instructions to post assignments on the learning management system and would email them to her OSU email account. This created headaches for Tatum because she then had to download each file and upload it into the appropriate assignment area on Moodle. She also had to manually override the grade book entry to accommodate an externally-submitted assignment. Tatum revised her assignment submission policy to say, “If you don’t put it through Moodle, you’re not getting any credit.”

Facing a similar issue, Alison indicated that by the end of the first academic year, she accepted no late work from students. “It’s really tough, she admitted. “Their first assignment was to read the syllabus. The no late work policy is in bold and some students are still missing this.” Alison and her colleagues were by no means becoming inflexible, but found that holding students to established deadlines and expectations was essential in online teaching.

The instructors felt that, in transitioning to online teaching, they spent more time repeatedly responding to student questions and writing lengthy instructions for assignments. Michelle captured the general feelings of her colleagues and the challenge of asynchronous teaching:

…I know what I want my students to do and there’s so much more information I have to provide them because I’m not in a face-to-face situation where they can
quickly ask a question and then all 30 of them hear the question and get the answer. So…when there’s a question, I might get the question four or five times before I can get it out to everybody…it just seems like [sic] there’s a lot more that I need to do in terms of the details and my assignments and my expectations.

In the transition to teaching in the asynchronous online program, these instructors experienced managerial role changes that required they take a prominent role in monitoring and enforcing policies and expectations with students. The loosely-stated guidelines and soft due dates used in traditional classroom instruction did not transfer well into online courses. I observed the instructors developing clearer expectations, communicating deadlines, and closely monitoring student work to ensure compliance.

**Technical Dimension**

Making the transition to online teaching required that the instructors develop a baseline skills set for creating online teaching materials as well as to assist with solving technical issues throughout the term. This was quite the change for most, especially because instructors were learning to use applications for online teaching while learning to use tools from the student perspective. The instructors were not trained to provide technical support to students, but as the first points of contact for their students, the instructors took on a new role during the transition to online teaching.

**Instructional technologist.** Moodle was the delivery platform for online courses. Instructors created instructional materials in other software programs and linked or embedded them into Moodle. OSU’s online course development model did not include continuous input and support of multimedia developers and graphic designers, so instructors had to locate existing materials or create their own. The Distance Education
Center staff, however, provided training and support for basic software applications for audio recording, image editing, and lecture capture, screencasts, and video editing. The instructors also used Web-based tutorials and books to teach themselves how to use cloud-based applications for creating wikis, blogs, and other digital resources for instruction.

Learning to teach on Moodle intimidated most instructors. Alison described her first term teaching on Moodle saying, “I felt so incompetent, you know… I was hiding the grades from the students for 3 weeks and I didn’t know… I was mortified. What do they think of me?” Alison sought assistance from one of the Distance Education Center staff members who quickly changed the grade book settings so students could see their grades. Although it seemed like a small problem in the overall scheme of things, Alison and Amy became wary of the learning management system after just a few such instances.

Moodle proved to be a source of frustration for Amy. Less hesitant than Alison to experiment with Moodle settings, Amy often followed up with Distance Education Center (DEC) staff to confirm that she used features correctly. Amy recalled one example when she requested assistance saying:

I did something wrong – one of my settings on one of my forums-- and I had to call Carla [Distance Education Center Staff], but in the meantime I had gone back and somehow I checked something about groups or something and I had actually self-corrected. Carla said I should be able to get on there.

The instructors constantly sought enhancements to their technological skills for the purpose of providing engaging online activities. This constituted a bigger task for
some than for others. On one end of the technical skills spectrum was Alison, the least technologically savvy of the instructors. Technical difficulties created anxiety for Alison and also led to self-doubt. Alison became fearful that her lack of technical skills would reveal itself in her online courses and that it would also negatively influence how students perceived her expertise in early childhood education. Anna, the ECD program coordinator, encouraged Alison to try podcasting. After a few sessions with Anna, Alison seemed comfortable enough to create and upload podcasts from her home computer. Although unable to edit the recordings, Alison learned to record and upload podcasts, a step forward in her online teaching journey. Students responded positively to Alison’s use of podcasts, which alleviated some of her worries and established a level of comfort with teaching technology.

Michelle stood on the opposite end of the technical skills spectrum; she remained comfortable with technology and searched for innovative ways to teach students online. When teaching online, Michelle always had a backup plan in case she or her students encountered technical difficulties. For example, during the spring term, Michelle worked with Distance Education Center staff to create a timed, multiple component assessment on Moodle. Most students completed all components of the assessment without issues. Michelle recalled using the backup plan for students who experienced difficulty:

They hit the wrong thing, they exited out, they didn’t download—um, they didn’t understand the system…I built in, if you have any trouble at all, here’s my Google Voice number, call me…and I would say, “Okay, no problem. If you’re ready…I will email you the test right now and I will write it in my book that you’re starting it right now.”
Michelle thought the assessment setup worked well. She expected that the students who experienced difficulty the first time around would be more familiar with her technique at end of term when she would use the multiple component assessment for the final exam.

**Technical supporter.** The instructors became technical supporters, for themselves and for students, during the transition to teaching online. While learning to use instructional technologies, they reached a point where they knew the basic tasks required to use the various technologies in their classes. These skills proved quite helpful when technical issues arose. The instructors and their students typically completed online course work on evenings and weekends when OSU Help Desk resources were limited. Users needed timely responses and resolutions so, if the Help Desk was not readily available, they struggled on their own. Instructors stepped into the role of technical supporters, drawing from a variety of resources to ensure online teaching and learning could continue at any hour, any day of the week.

According to Tatum, serving as frontline support to online students meant that “You need to know the basics of the program to convey to students why something may not be working.” Tatum noted that most of the students in the ECD program were nontraditional students returning to school after many years away and they often possessed limited technical skills. During the academic year, Tatum developed familiarity with the most common technical issues students encountered and began to feel comfortable as the frontline support person for students:
…I kind of know where they’re going to run into trouble now so I can be a little bit like [sic], ‘Okay, well if you’ve never done YouTube, this is how you do it…So it seems to take care of itself pretty well.

Instructors’ family members became sources of technical support in some cases. For example, one of Amy’s students submitted a final paper in an unfamiliar document format: “I think it was a .wpf document and I never even heard of that!” Amy tried opening the file using a few different programs, but was unsuccessful in her attempts. Fortunately, her supportive and technically savvy spouse often helped her through issues she and her students encountered in the online environment. Amy’s husband happened to be home when she was working with the file and provided a solution that allowed her to open and grade the student’s work.

Making the transition to online teaching required that the instructors develop a baseline skills set for creating online teaching materials as well as to assist with solving technical issues related to the online classroom through the course of the term. This was quite the change for most, especially because instructors were learning to use applications for online teaching while learning to use tools from the student perspective. The instructors were not trained to provide technical support to students, but as the first points of contact for their students, the instructors took on a new role during the transition to online teaching.

As I observed the instructors’ struggle with changing roles in the technical dimension as they transitioned to online asynchronous teaching, it became apparent that they were not accustomed to teaching in a rapidly-changing digital world; they previously adopted technology only when interested and as schedules permitted. Consequently,
these instructors were forced into hastily learning new software, new online instructional techniques, and frontline technical support tools for teaching in the online program.

Changes to the Program

The instructors described changes related to the four instructor dimensions, but to a greater extent, they described experiences related to changes to the Early Childhood Development (ECD) program as it was moved to the online modality. Changes to the program fell into three categories during data analysis: (a) missing a sense of “wholeness;” (b) serving a different student population; and (c) modifying online institutional teaching policies and processes. Figure 2 provides the visual summary of findings followed by discussion of findings for each category.

Figure 2. Changes to the program during the transition from traditional face-to-face delivery to asynchronous online delivery.

Missing a Sense of Wholeness

When discussing how the program changed during the transition to online delivery, the instructors agreed that student-instructor relationships tended to not be
nearly as strong or as satisfying as those they had with students in the traditional setting. Speaking on behalf of the ECD instructors, Michelle described the missing element of the connection as “that wholeness that comes from that face-to-face” time. She and her colleagues tried to engage their online students in relationship building but found that students appeared to be so busy that they had little time to engage in social activities outside of those required for class. Listening to instructors’ comments about “wholeness,” I interpreted that face-to-face interaction, regardless of whether for instructional or social purposes, provided instructors with a sense of connection with others as well as validation of their work as teachers.

**Less sense of connection with students in the program.** Before teaching online, the instructors utilized traditional, location-specific techniques to connect with students. Michelle, Tatum, and Patricia, full-time instructors at the University, scheduled time in their on-campus offices each week for students to drop in and ask questions or engage in conversation. Alison and Amy, the adjunct instructors, did not keep weekly office hours, but often met with students at off-campus locations closer to students’ workplaces or homes. All five instructors became accustomed to students asking questions and seeking clarification before, during, and after traditional classes, but the asynchronous nature of the online classroom essentially eliminated those opportunities from the traditional ECD program. Instructors worried about how students progressed in between assignment submissions because there were few opportunities for direct face-to-face connections.

Patricia wanted to make sure her students knew she continued to be accessible to them so she adopted the practice of reaching out to each student via frequent emails:
I don’t see them often so, I, I’ve been calling them individually, talking to them personally. And I email them individually so there are separate, individual emails going on. And, also, I invite them—if they are local—they can come, for help sessions.

Patricia acknowledged that individual communication became time-intensive and that class size influenced the amount of “nurturing and hand holding” she could provide to her students. With nine students enrolled in Patricia’s first online capstone course, she had considerably more time than she might have had with 20 or more enrolled students.

The instructors continuously struggled with no face-to-face contact with students, not only because of the loss of visual and auditory cues, but also because of the increased reliance on text-based communication. Michelle captured the general concern around text-based communication saying that it was easier for readers to misunderstand print communication “because they don’t have the body language…the eye contact…the facial expression, or the tone of the voice” to go along with the words. Michelle added that, because printed words could be easily misinterpreted without tone and facial expressions, instructors had to spend more time writing online lectures, discussion prompts, and email communication. Michelle and her colleagues also adopted the use of emoticons to indicate humor, sarcasm, and seriousness—emotions typically expressed with bodily gestures and voice inflection when teaching face-to-face classes.

As a non-native English speaker, Patricia was concerned about how mistakes in her written materials would affect students’ perceptions about her competency as an instructor. She did not trust her skills enough to post materials or send email communication without a native speaker’s review so she would have her teen-aged
daughter review her written materials before distributing them online. When her
daughter was unavailable, Patricia resorted to a process she described as “read, write,
revise, and review” before posting or sending materials. It was time-consuming and
unsettling because Patricia did not want to send the wrong message to students.

Amy tried making herself available for questions using the synchronous chat tool
in the learning management system. She planned for a forum in which class participants
would come together for up to one hour to discuss course topics or have a question and
answer session, but found that no one participated. After scheduling and sitting through
several sessions without participants, Amy stopped offering the chat sessions and
concluded, “Some students just do better with a phone call.”

With the transition to the online modality, the instructors also found it more
difficult to know when students struggled personally or academically. Some students
would call or email instructors when they needed assistance, but others operated in
isolation, often emerging late in the term when it was too late to reformulate a plan of
action. Anna, the program coordinator, set up Google documents for program instructors
to review student files as well as communicate about students without having to come to
campus and rifle through papers that could easily get lost. The Google documents
repository caught on quickly and instructors began using it to review prospective student
information, review advising plans, and share concerns with each other about students
they thought needed additional support.

As a compromise for the lack of face-to-face contact in the online program, the
ECD instructors and program coordinator planned quarterly face-to-face, Saturday
workshops. These optional workshops served a dual purpose by providing a chance for
students within driving distance to meet their peers and instructors while earning elective credits. The workshops, offered in partnership with the local chapter of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), also exposed students to the networking and educational benefits of membership in professional organizations such as NAEYC. The instructors thought the quarterly offerings were integral to building connections beyond what was possible from just online communication with students.

**Face-to-face meetings with colleagues become essential.** Outside of connecting with students, instructors also experienced changes to the ways in which they connected with one another once the program was fully online. The ECD program meetings became important sources of connection for the instructors as they met face-to-face for program news and updates, to problem-solve student service concerns, and to engage in a professional development activity. Instructors, both adjuncts and full-time, reported that attending the meetings made them feel supported in their new roles as online instructors.

Tatum described how much she valued meeting with her colleagues saying, “I feel very inspired by them so I think maybe having the conversations with other instructors like we do is a big part of that—just our growth.” She added that she was able to try new techniques and overcome challenges because of the information she obtained during the meetings.

Alison and Amy, the two adjunct instructors, attended the ECD program meetings even though they were not required to do so and were not compensated for their time. Patricia recognized the extra effort both instructors put forth and scheduled the meetings from 3-5 PM so that neither Alison nor Amy would need to miss work at their primary
jobs. I found these adjunct instructors’ commitment to the program intriguing because there was no institutionally-supported incentive for participating at such a level.

With Patricia as facilitator, the ECD program instructors engaged in intentional and focused professional development during program meetings. Patricia solicited ideas from the instructors and worked with the Distance Education Center to arrange a brief training session, lead an exploratory discussion, troubleshoot instructional challenges, or provide an introduction to an emerging technology. The length of professional development opportunities ranged from 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the topic and other meeting agenda items. The meetings often led to additional one-on-one or small group instruction sessions to assist the instructors with digging deeper into topics of choice at times more convenient for them. They later informally shared their newly-acquired knowledge and skills with one another as part of the culture of collaborative learning.

Although the ECD program delivery mode changed from traditional to fully online, the instructors seemed to expect that teaching and learning would not change significantly. I surmised that instructors experienced challenges with relationship-building because they had limited knowledge of online instructional techniques and tools to support asynchronous community-building.

**Serving a Different Student Population**

In the transition from the traditional modality to online, instructors recognized a change in the type of students enrolled in the program. The traditional, campus-based program often attracted younger students than did the online program. Students in the
online program consisted typically of working, nontraditional students who had been out of school for a decade or more.

**Shift from traditional to nontraditional student type.** The instructors indicated a major change in student type was that students in the online program required more assistance with managing priorities and meeting program expectations. Patricia provided some insight into the challenge of working with nontraditional students in the online program:

They’re really hard-working people…they really want to do well…I think there are things in their way…a work schedule, perhaps their lack of foundational skills, or their time management and organization skills. Those kind of come and kind of disrupt their learning, and, so, I can understand those issues more now.

There were more implications to serving an adult population, but there were also personally rewarding aspects the instructors had not anticipated when they began teaching online. The anytime, anyplace characteristics of the ECD online program meant expanded educational opportunities for students who would otherwise not be able to obtain a bachelor’s degree. Tatum shared her own satisfaction with teaching in the online program:

I like that we can reach students that [sic] haven’t previously been served and students that [sic] could be served—students that [sic] wouldn’t be able to get an education…I think it’s such a social justice point, so it’s very rewarding to me to be able to do that.

Alison, the most hesitant to move to online teaching, discovered that the online environment helped students reveal themselves when they might not have done so in a
traditional classroom. She referred to online learning as a “gift” for some students because it enabled them to “share things that they could never share face-to-face.”

Alison observed, in just a few terms of online teaching, that students seemed to feel safer outside of the traditional face-to-face classroom saying,

I think there’s [sic] people who-- women in our society who are afraid to speak up at a class because of body image--…. And they’re more willing to speak up... Or they speak up, and no one says, ‘That’s the skinny one!’ or ‘That was the fat lady!’ and I think that’s huge for some students.

**Students need more support and remediation.** With the gratification that came with expanding educational opportunities also came the challenges of providing instruction to working, nontraditional students who had been out of school for a decade or more. The gap between high school graduation and college also meant that students needed remediation or instruction on basic computer skills, study skills, academic writing, and critical thinking. Instructors found it much harder to design courses for the program because they had to include activities and assessments that would first scaffold learning and then extend students beyond their usual patterns of thinking. Both were tough tasks to complete in 10-week terms.

Michelle noted that her challenge was with students who “obviously didn’t have a strong academic foundation” or an “ability to think critically, to really take things to a much deeper level.” She developed and presented discussion prompts that “opened the door to some real depth,” but found that some students provided “a lot of superficial answers.” Michelle questioned if this was a limitation of the online modality or of her students. With only 10 weeks in a term, she could not teach critical thinking skills in
addition to the course topics, so the students progressed to the next course still perhaps without appropriate skills to engage in higher-order thinking.

In response to serving a different student population in the online program, the director sought and received approval to add a course called “Orientation to ECD Online” to the program requirements. The orientation course was an online, instructor-led course designed to prepare students for the online degree completion program in Early Childhood Development. During the orientation course, students completed a technology needs assessment, developed a plan for overcoming technology deficiencies, learned to use various campus systems (i.e. email, file storage, communication portal), reviewed program requirements and expectations, and practiced using Moodle. After two offerings of the orientation course, instructors perceived fewer gaps in student readiness for the online classroom and greater student awareness of program requirements and expectations. Although time and labor-intensive to maintain the orientation course, the instructors agreed that it was an essential tool for students in the online program.

Although the instructors described changes to the type of students enrolled in the online ECD program, data were not collected on whether or not online students were less prepared for the ECD program in general. In the previous synchronous delivery format, students had opportunities to ask for clarification or support from peers or the instructor so the orientation course may have served as a virtual replacement for those opportunities.

Modifying Online Institutional Teaching Policies and Processes

Interestingly, Omars State University’s (2007) self-study report to Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities acknowledged a need to “provide instructional
support to faculty developing and teaching online courses… document and widely publicize DL [sic] policies regarding course ownership, faculty compensation, copyright issues …course standards… peer review or periodic checks for compliance” (p. 66). In 2009, the Director of Distance Education, in collaboration with faculty and staff who were familiar with best practices in online education, created a *Distance Education Handbook* in response to the self-study and presented to the campus for adoption. OSU faculty was steeped in traditional instruction. The tenured, most senior faculty members—many who also served as Faculty Senate or Association of Professors (teaching faculty collective bargaining unit) representatives—were skeptical of online education; those faculty members also opposed establishing online-specific policies and procedures. The handbook had to be revised to include *recommendations*, not policies or administrative processes. According to OSU’s *Distance Education Handbook* (2010), approved by Faculty Senate and reviewed by collective bargaining unit representatives, …online courses and instructors are subject to the standard practices, procedures, and criteria which have been established for traditional courses…including, but not limited to, faculty involvement in course development and approval, instructor compensation, selection of online instructors, pedagogical determinations about appropriate class size, and oversight of online programs to ensure conformity with existing institutional policies and procedures.

Faculty resistance to modifying institutional teaching policies and procedures had implications for ECD instructors, particularly related to increasing time and effort required for professional development and meeting teaching expectations.
Ongoing need to augment instructor skills and knowledge. In their work preparing future educators, the ECD instructors were expected to maintain knowledge of current and emerging practices in early childhood development. They engaged in professional development more at their own leisure when teaching in a traditional setting, but the transition to teaching online required a core set of skills and knowledge that was new to the instructors. Patricia summarized the significance of teaching in a fully online program saying, “This is not how we learned, nor did we learn how to teach. This is a new way of teaching and learning, still, to many of the instructors.” The instructors were not raised with mobile devices, laptops, podcasts, and YouTube as a part of their daily personal or professional lives. Nearly every aspect of online teaching and learning was unfamiliar to them.

Alison described her initial experience learning to teach online as “pretty overwhelming.” She taught for a local community college and for OSU. She worried about equity of instruction when she taught online and traditional courses during the same term. She knew her traditional students experienced more of her energy and enthusiasm and the online students received what was leftover at the end of the day. Alison felt that she was a “good online teacher” but she wanted to be an “awesome online teacher” so, in the midst of the transition year, she requested only online courses from the community college to parallel her online teaching assignments at OSU.

It made a huge difference in me tackling some of the technology and, because it used to be, when I taught hybrid classes as well as online, hybrids got the attention first… I feel that it’s more equitable. I don’t feel pulled in as many directions.
Even the most user-friendly software programs required training and continued use. Additionally, preparing multimedia lectures and presentations required storyboarding, recording, editing, and production. Each step required time that, in most cases, was not available. The ECD instructors’ schedules were already filled with learning Moodle, learning to teach online, creating new online courses, and managing their teaching load for the term. The expectation that they could easily locate or produce their own digital materials was unrealistic, a challenge the institution had yet to fully recognize.

Software training was available to the instructors through OSU’s Distance Education Center, but with software training, instructors reported that they had to “use it or lose it.” Michelle captured the essence of the ECD instructors’ challenges with learning software as she recalled the training she attended during the academic year saying, “…what I found is that unless I use it then, it’s not--I can’t own it. And I can’t even come back six months later and figure out what my mad notes were about.”

Instructors felt the training and preparation provided was appropriate but, as Tatum noted, “there would be things that came up that I was unaware of or I didn’t know what questions to ask because it was new to me.” Each instructor had a limit for what they could absorb and experiment with in a given quarter, so they had to set boundaries and pursue new knowledge or skills in future quarters.

**Face-to-face and online teaching loads are not equivalent.** Class size became a concern when the program moved to online delivery. Using references from distance education research and best practices, the Director of Distance Education advocated for online class capacity of 24 students, but institutional policies left capacity to the
discretion of the department chair or academic dean. When the state reduced higher education appropriations by millions of dollars, OSU’s financial situation became strained. Campus leadership implemented furlough days, lay-offs, hiring freezes, and discretionary budget cuts to minimize the overall deficit. Class capacity for traditional and online courses increased to accommodate the source of greatest revenue for the institution: students. Distance education programs were referred to as a “cash cow” for the institution because enrollments were not limited to the number of seats that could fit into a physical classroom.

Despite growing enrollment in the ECD program, fiscal limitations prohibited hiring additional instructors or providing compensation for the extra time required to teach an online class of 35 or 40 students. OSU policies were not entirely responsible for large online class sizes. Even when capacity was controlled, ECD instructors had a difficult time turning students away from courses. The program had not yet grown enough to require every course to be offered every term, so instructors often granted exceptions for students to enroll in their already-full online classes because they did not want to interfere with students’ graduation. Amy described the struggle she and her colleagues experienced as she also considered the benefits of smaller online classes saying, “I would like that. To me that’s a more manageable, doable workload. But then again people are graduating and they need the credit so, I always end up allowing them in.”

The more students enrolled in an online course, the more time ECD instructors spent grading assignments and activities. Consequently, assignment and activity selection was no longer based primarily on alignment with course outcomes, but also on
how much instructor time required to review, provide feedback, and return to students. With so much time required for grading weekly discussion board postings and keeping up communication with individual students, the instructors became more cautious about the assignments and activities included in online courses. Instructors admitted that lengthier paper assignments were often replaced with slide presentations; discussion forum postings were not always thoroughly reviewed; or, when teaching online and traditional courses, online courses received less attention during busier weeks. For example, when Alison was managing five online courses between two institutions, she modified the final projects in her OSU courses so that students submitted a slide presentation, not a formal paper. She felt that she could not manage the grading of so many papers in such a short amount of time, so she tightened the requirements and reduced the scope of the final project. She admitted, “And partly it was selfish. They were much more—I was much more—able to stay focused on PowerPoints than 40 papers.”

Without policies specific to online teaching, the instructors also experienced increasing advising loads as enrollment grew. Patricia and Tatum advised the program because the other instructors were adjuncts or dedicated advisors for other programs. Tatum worried about the consequences of rapidly increasing enrollment without appropriate increases in faculty and support staff:

… we’ve created a tight knit group where they can come to us if they need anything which is great but if we continue to expand how do we offer the same level of advising without starting to let things slip just because we’re also teaching and developing and doing all the other things we do in a day…
The Google documents repository facilitated connections with students and helped track students’ progression through the program so that fewer students might fall off the virtual radar screen. Patricia and Tatum, the two program advisors, created individual advising plans using the program template and then shared it with students each term in preparation for the next quarter’s registration. Most students followed up with a quick phone call to confirm they would follow the advising plan. Similar to experiences with traditional programs, a few students consistently required reminders from advisors when registration opened. Tatum described how the Google documents system helped her connect with advisees:

So you just kind of get to know the students and I know the students that [sic] just do everything according to what I write out for them and they’re fine. They don’t have to meet with me. I just check their transcripts, make sure they’re doing okay, because I’ve had that one-on-one conversation with them. I have it in my courses, so I feel like [sic] I have enough of a connection with them to make it more manageable.

It was common for the Distance Education Center staff to receive urgent requests for assistance from the ECD instructors a few days before, and even after, the start of the new term because there was no time to prepare between terms. Last-minute characterized the norm because of the intense workload of teaching an online course in a quarter system. Michelle described the challenge of teaching back-to-back terms:

…we feel like [sic] we’re just going so fast, that you have to say, “Okay, well, next time…I’m going with this.” And I guess that’s what happens… you find that
you just have to go with it because I don’t have time to do better than that right now.

The asynchronous nature of the ECD program courses combined with a general expectation that email is a 24/7 communication line with the instructor, created a whole new set of challenges related to personal and work boundaries. Tatum summarized the challenge of the perceived 24/7 classroom saying, “that’s the one thing I struggle with when I’m teaching online, is, feeling like [sic] I always have to be on and responding.” Michelle shared a similar struggle as she recognized that online instructors had to be willing to work different hours than traditional instructors, but she added, “on the same hand, you have to recognize that you can’t work 24/7.”

As a full-time early childhood practitioner and adjunct instructor, Amy had limited hours of availability during the week. She started her classes with a statement about her availability and expectations for reasonable turnaround time on students’ questions to her. Amy explained,

I kind of remind them that I have two jobs and that I’m not available during the day and sometimes I can’t always get to every email every night so I have to tell them to give me 3 days to respond. And, I don’t like that time frame but it’s the best I can do.

ECD program leadership recognized the 3-day time frame as a reasonable policy and end-of-term teaching evaluations did not indicate student dissatisfaction with Amy’s response time, so the boundary became a constant in Amy’s teaching practices despite her acknowledgement that it was not an ideal time frame.
Tatum and Alison both learned the importance of setting boundaries when they had heavy online teaching loads. Tatum made a joke that her “bottom got flatter” from sitting at her desk all winter term tending to her online courses. She also recognized that she was not spending sufficient time with her young daughters and her husband. After taking a Sloan Consortium course on avoiding faculty burnout, she established clear expectations of herself and for her students. She started blocking off days and times to work on courses just like she would for teaching traditional courses. She provided one example from a current term:

I don’t have to post to every class every day. I know I’m going to sign in a couple of times for the class on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. That’s what my students expect. I think they like knowing when I’m going to be there.

Tatum said that setting the expectations took pressure off of her and gave students “a sense of ownership” in the classroom because they could continue to have class discussions even without her constant input. Setting boundaries required self-discipline because there was always a student with a question, an assignment or discussion to be graded, or simply a desire to experiment with a new tool to make a particular topic come alive in the online modality. Tatum had to learn to balance work and personal life in a way she had not experienced before teaching online.

Alison joked about the downside of working online saying, “I loved sitting in my pajamas, until my stomach started getting bigger [laughter]. This year it’s like [sic], ‘You’re putting on jeans, honey!’” As she reflected on the academic year, she realized that she had neglected to take a full day off from online teaching in nearly six months. She was constantly online responding to students’ emails, grading papers, checking in on
her classes to make sure they were running smoothly. Upon recognizing that she was quickly burning out with online teaching, she rearranged the furniture in her home to create clear boundaries for work and personal life:

I have now moved my office upstairs in my house so that I physically go to work. And I physically come downstairs [laugh]. It’s different. I’m going to work now. And then I turn off the rest of my life and I go up in my office and work and if I want a cup of tea I go down and make it.

The transition to the online modality was time-intensive for all five instructors. It was a condition that spanned the four dimensions as the instructors attempted to manage changes to their roles as well as overcome the challenges presented within the dimensions. From learning to design courses for asynchronous instruction to managing the progression of online courses, the time invested exceeded that required for traditional classroom teaching. Transition experiences were influenced by instructor capacity in terms of knowledge or skills and time required to address online teaching situations.

With minimal institutional policies and processes to support online instructors, Alison, Amy, Michelle, Patricia, and Tatum were forced into teaching online courses in a traditionally-based infrastructure which resulted in their being overwhelmed with the ongoing workload associated with teaching in an online program.

Summary

Using case study research, the purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of faculty experiences transitioning to online teaching. This chapter presented the findings from individual and focus group interviews, documents, and observations collected over 9 months to address the changes in instructor roles and the
ECD degree program as a result of the transition from a face-to-face to an online format. The next chapter discusses the key findings, situates them within the existing scholarly literature, and addresses the implications for current practices and future research.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of the Study

This case study examined the experiences of instructors as they transitioned from traditional face-to-face teaching to online teaching. More specifically, the study focused on the experiences of five Early Childhood Development (ECD) instructors at a public, liberal arts university in the Northwest as they transitioned from teaching in a face-to-face baccalaureate degree completion program to teaching in a fully online degree completion program. Throughout the 2010-11 academic year, I attended ECD program meetings, conducted semi-structured personal and focus group interviews, and collected program-related documents to develop an understanding of the changes the participants experienced. The data provided in-depth insight into instructors’ experiences related to the primary question:

How do Early Childhood Development (ECD) instructors experience transitioning a traditional face-to-face baccalaureate degree completion program to an online degree completion program?

The primary research question was addressed using two secondary questions:

- How do Early Childhood Development (ECD) instructors describe changes to their roles as they transition from traditional to online delivery?
• How do Early Childhood Development (ECD) instructors describe changes to the program while moving from traditional to online delivery?

Chapter 4 presented the findings from 9 months of data collection. Using Miles and Huberman’s (1984) simultaneous activities of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, data were organized into seven major themes and thirteen subthemes. Chapter 5 discusses the administrative importance of these themes and addresses the implications for current practice and offers suggestions for future research.

Conclusions and Implications

At one point in the study, Patricia, the program chair, referred to the ECD instructors’ shared experiences while transitioning the program to online delivery as “flying the plane while building it.” The reference remained in the back of my mind until extracting the salient points for discussion. Using Patricia’s phrase as inspiration, this section draws on the metaphor of journey to a foreign land to discuss the four themes that emerged from the study. Figure 3 provides a summary of the discussion that follows.
Figure 3. Description of how instructors experience transitioning a traditional face-to-face baccalaureate degree completion program to an asynchronous online degree completion program.

We Can’t Get There from Here

The instructors in this study, Alison, Amy, Michelle, Patricia, and Tatum, anticipated some challenges during the transition to teaching online, most of which related to missing face-to-face time with students and not knowing enough about technology. As I observed the instructors, it became clear that they expected what they knew and felt about traditional teaching to be the same for online teaching. The instructors tried to simply use technology to replicate traditional classroom experiences rather than consider technologically rich ways to promote learning outcomes in the uncharted online environment. Unable to discard traditional teaching assumptions, the instructors essentially tried to navigate the sea using a roadmap rather than a sextant; hence, the theme “We Can’t Get There from Here.”
Discussion of *We Can’t Get There from Here*. Nearly every aspect of online teaching and learning remained unfamiliar to the five instructors. Patricia acknowledged that online teaching was “a new way of teaching and learning” for her faculty, just as it has been for the current generation of higher education faculty as evidenced by previous studies (Carroll-Barefield et al., 2005; Covington et al., 2005). Michelle and Alison experienced a startling decrease in opportunities to “scan the room” for verbal and visual cues (Schoenfield-Tacher & Perischitte, 2000) that they consistently depended on in the traditional classroom. This reinforces the notion that traditional instructors essentially lose all “familiar landmarks and touchstones” (p. 75) from the face-to-face classroom when they start teaching online (Ryan et al., 2004). Michelle and Alison transitioned from classroom experts to online novices (Ali et al., 2005; Gallant, 2000) when they started teaching in the unfamiliar asynchronous online environment.

As traditionally-prepared and experienced faculty, Alison, Amy, Michelle, Patricia, and Tatum, associated teaching roles with physical classroom space, specific meeting times, and relationships based on face-to-face interaction. The online ECD program lacked the elements of traditionally-associated physical presence (McQuiggan, 2007). Technology, primarily Moodle learning management system, served as the means of carrying out teaching and learning activities (Kimball, 2002). The teaching methodology also shifted from a traditional, instructor-centered model to a student-centered model to accommodate the 24/7 availability of the online classroom. Tatum was overwhelmed by the realization that teaching and learning activities occurred all the time, even in her absence. Initially, she had a difficult time moving to the sidelines and letting students take control of their own learning. Similarly, Alison struggled with no longer
being the center of attention (Bair & Bair, 2011), later admitting that teaching online was a little easier to accept once she let go of her “ego.”

Although it can be helpful for new online instructors to draw connections to face-to-face teaching experiences as a starting point (Conrad, 2004), the transition to online teaching should also challenge instructors to rethink traditional assumptions about how teaching and learning occur (Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). It became evident that the instructors’ traditional mental models (Senge, 2006) remained tightly associated with the physical aspects of the traditional ECD program, which limited their openness to new ideas. Alison, who wrestled most with the transition to online teaching, clung to the idea that instructors had to see students at least once, “even if you just come and eat lunch with your peers,” to validate the online ECD degree. Alison’s suggestion clearly associated with the traditional concept of physical presence rather than mirror a concern for student achievement of particular learning outcomes. Perhaps she struggled with loss of power (Bair & Bair, 2011; De Gagne & Walters, 2010) that is characteristic of traditional teaching and assumed a face-to-face meeting would restore some essence of the instructor-centered, traditional classroom. Or, maybe face-to-face meetings were so deeply embedded in Alison’s concept of teaching that she was unable to break from her traditional assumptions and explore alternative modes of thinking (Senge, 2006) about teaching and learning.

Amy hosted weekly online synchronous chats in an attempt to replicate traditional office hours. When students did not participate, Amy concluded that her online students preferred a telephone conversation. One explanation might be that students were more comfortable using the telephone, but other more likely explanations existed. Most ECD
online students had professional, family, and community commitments (Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006) and Amy’s office hours conflicted with those other commitments which undermined the convenience of online learning. Another explanation is that Amy’s synchronous chat sessions lacked a clear connection to course content which would spark student interest (Frazee, 2003). It is also possible that, as Bailey, Wilson, and Minadeo (2008) discovered, students did not engage in synchronous chat sessions because the activity was not directly associated with a grade or other incentive. Regardless, Amy unsuccessfully applied assumptions from the familiar traditional environment (here) to the unfamiliar online environment [there].

Instructors frequently changed direction with teaching and learning approaches while on the journey to online teaching. Alison, drawing from face-to-face reference points (McQuiggan, 2007), discovered that her traditional techniques for transmitting content [semi-structured discussion] and checking for understanding (visually scanning the room) were not effective techniques for teaching online. She constantly modified discussion forum techniques and settings in an attempt to replicate the familiarity of the traditional classroom. Although prior studies indicate that instructors must rethink pedagogical approaches when teaching online (Diekelmann et al., 1998; Palloff & Pratt, 2000), Alison had not been informed of what makes asynchronous online teaching so different from traditional face-to-face teaching (Conceição & Lehman, 2011). She responded as most unprepared new online instructors do: by transferring prior knowledge and experience gained from the traditional classroom to what seemed to be nothing more than just a different type of classroom.
For Michelle and Tatum, the change in direction was often attributed to implementation of a new idea obtained from ongoing professional development activities required to stay abreast of rapid changes to software and hardware (De Gagne & Walters, 2010). Tatum noted that instructors could no longer rely on the same lesson plans year after year and that online teaching was just “an extension of that reality.” Michelle found herself being motivated by rapid changes in technology because of the potential to create more engaging online courses (Lackey, 2011). Both instructors constantly changed and rebuilt activities in their courses as they learned about tools and techniques for effective online teaching. However, Michelle and Tatum lacked a systematic approach to revising courses, which introduced potential for misalignment of activities or selected technologies with course outcomes. The “on the fly” method of course design was likely connected to traditional teaching practices in which the instructors would make changes to the course while teaching it.

The lack of a systematic approach to transitioning courses from traditional to online delivery as demonstrated by Alison, Michelle, and Tatum, is likely a consequence of the institutional decision to place faculty into online teaching roles with minimal notice (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010). In this case, instructors received notice one year in advance, which allowed limited alignment of resources and planning in preparation for such a dramatic change to the program and to the instructors’ teaching and learning assignments. The instructors’ struggles with leaving traditional teaching behind emphasize the importance of providing a formal online faculty development and support program to assist with learning to effectively teach online. Further support for this claim comes from Lackey’s (2011) survey of institutional strategies for preparing faculty to
teach online. In a review of the literature, Lackey confirmed a gap in the training and development provided to faculty and proposed that administration’s lack of understanding of online teaching hinders the provision of appropriate support and services.

**Implications of We Can’t Get There from Here.** Under administrative directive, the instructors in this study moved an entire degree completion program online, but with minimal preparation, guidance, and support (Carroll-Barefield et al., 2005; Covington et al., 2005) from the institution. As previously indicated, the instructors were essentially “flying the plane while building it” but without any idea of how to build a plane that would get off the ground. This has far-reaching implications including faculty and student satisfaction, program quality, and institutional effectiveness—critical elements for maintaining institutional accreditation and financial stability. With so much at stake, it seems relevant that, prior to offering online programs, administrators would examine the current state of online education so that such information can be used to inform the development and implementation of a strategic plan, including a clearly articulated vision and adequate administrative support. Administrators must understand the transitional process before asking faculty to undertake the process.

Prior research studies suggest that learning to teach online has the potential to improve traditional teaching (Lackey, 2011; Pennington, 2005) because instructors become more aware of course alignment and student-centered teaching techniques (De Gagne & Walters, 2010). Although this study examined how faculty described changes to their roles and to the program while transitioning to asynchronous online teaching, it did not explore instructional design techniques or student achievement. Future studies
might explore whether or not the instructors in this study became more student-centered in their teaching or if they simply felt that they were more student-centered. Considering the numerous changes the instructors experienced and the challenges associated with “flying the plane while building it,” future studies should also include a review of how program outcomes are addressed in the asynchronous online courses. The ECD program was not a licensure program, but alignment of program and course outcomes with the specific activities, assignments, and assessment would still be essential to maintaining program accreditation.

The current generation of higher education administrators and faculty continue to cling to deeply-embedded assumptions (Senge, 2006) based on a traditional understanding of teaching and learning and presume that asynchronous online instruction is simply the adaptation of face-to-face teaching to a Web based format. Much of the research on traditional faculty experiences with transitioning to online teaching is based on data provided post-transition (Beaudoin, 2002; Heuer & King, 2004). Particular elements of the transition experience may get lost as time passes, making it important to capture experiences during the transition process in an effort to provide more appropriate faculty support when it is needed. While studying instructors in-context, it may also be beneficial to explore how the institutional infrastructure, more specifically, institutional policies and administrative processes, may be modified to accommodate the differences between traditional and online education.

As Alison, Amy, Michelle, Patricia, and Tatum discovered, asynchronous online teaching and learning is not the same as traditional face-to-face teaching and learning (Conceição & Lehman, 2011). The instructors clearly experienced a move from the
familiar to the unfamiliar during the transition from traditional to online teaching. Given the numerous changes faculty experience during the transition, administrators may have to consider modifying parts of the existing infrastructure (here) to ease some of the anxiety and uncertainty associated with moving programs online (there). However, administrators should also be careful not to draw so many connections to traditional teaching that instructors are unable to think beyond traditional model of teaching and learning.

Systems thinking would be advantageous to leading traditionally-informed institutions of higher education through the rapidly changing 21st century (Senge, 2006). It would be interesting to explore ways that institutions can foster shared thinking and planning while establishing sustainable online education programs. To do so requires that institutions abandon linear and separate models of thinking and functioning (here) for more connected models that support the changing paradigm in higher education (there). Systems thinking, more specifically, Senge’s (2006) concept of the learning organization, may provide the necessary framework to support the current shift toward online education and to establish an organizational culture in which faculty and staff demonstrates capacity and shared commitment to continuous learning.

Although 69% of public institutions of higher education indicate that online education is a key element of their long-term strategic plans (Allen & Seaman, 2013), the current body of knowledge lacks established models for integrating online teaching and learning into the existing infrastructure. The experiences of Alison, Amy, Michelle, Patricia, and Tatum contribute to what we know about the difficulties of transitioning to online teaching and learning without adequate planning and support from the
administration. As leaders in the strategic planning process, administrators play an integral role in articulating institutional goals and providing the infrastructure to support achievement of those goals. Quantitative and qualitative studies of implementation plans for online programs may yield useful information on the appropriateness of particular plan elements as they relate to institution type, size, mission, administrative bodies, faculty and staff characteristics, and student body. Additionally, through the examination of online education plans, administrators may acquire a collection of best practices to inform the development of their own strategic plans, perhaps also utilizing systems thinking (Senge, 2006) to guide the implementation process and develop more agile institutional infrastructures.

Where is the GPS? Entering New Territory

Instructor roles in the pedagogical dimension were similar in traditional and online teaching, but the roles in the social, managerial, and technical dimensions became much more pronounced in online teaching. Alison, Amy, Michelle, Patricia, and Tatum had difficulty responding to their role changes, likely because they tried to apply deeply ingrained traditional teaching and learning assumptions (Senge, 2006) to online teaching and learning. Without guidance on how to deal with the changes, the instructors sometimes lost direction as they tried to come to terms with the notion that online teaching “does not feel the same” as traditional teaching. OSU administration issued formal approval to move the ECD program online, but neglected to provide a fully equipped vehicle and direction for navigating the new teaching environment.

Discussion of Where is the GPS? Each of the instructors, except Tatum, had at least a decade of teaching and professional experience and were accustomed to the
continuous learning involved with keeping abreast of developments in their field. It became evident to the instructors that they had to balance the roles of instructor and learner to build an entirely new skill set and knowledge base. Even with some technological savvy and fewer deeply-embedded assumptions, Tatum described the learning curve as “straight up” while her more seasoned colleague, Patricia, similarly reported that challenges doubled in the online classroom. Amy put forth the effort to learn additional software and new teaching techniques, but felt the process was time-intensive and never-ending. These instructors’ experiences align with prior research indicating that professional development is on-going for online instructors (De Gagne & Walters, 2010) primarily because of the rapid changes in software and hardware. Additionally, the instructors’ experiences paralleled other studies suggesting the importance of establishing a level of comfort with the tools required to teach online learning as well as additional learning to properly use technology to support online teaching and learning (Lackey, 2011; Liu, Lee, Bonk, Su, & Magjuka, 2005). The crux of the issue was not so much about having to learn new tools and techniques, but rather about the time and effort involved with learning to teach online.

The instructors in this study reported that designing and teaching online courses requires more organization, extensive planning (Conceição & Lehman, 2011; Simonson et al., 2009), and additional time to locate digital versions of teaching materials. Often, as Alison and Amy discovered when they wanted to use specific videos in their online courses, copyright laws and lack of an institutional infrastructure for digitizing materials hinders what instructors can use in online courses. I got the sense that the instructors were accustomed to sometimes using the same resources from term-to-term, sometimes
making impromptu instructional decisions shortly before walking into the traditional classroom. Although Alison and Amy’s concerns about locating new or digitizing existing materials were legitimate, there were also potential unacknowledged benefits. The need for new instructional materials forced the instructors to move away from traditional teaching practices and consider different ways to teach students. This finding reinforces the notion that learning to teach online has the potential to improve traditional teaching (Lackey, 2011; Pennington, 2005) because instructors become more aware of course alignment and student-centered teaching techniques (De Gagne & Walters, 2010). However, in contrast to these findings, Boettcher and Conrad (2010) suggested that traditional teaching experience leads to better online teaching. It should not be overlooked that prior research studies also indicate that instructors need the opportunity to prepare online courses at least one term in advance of when the course is offered (Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005; Draves, 2007) to provide ample time for planning and building online courses. Administrative foresight and ongoing resources need to be in place to facilitate the change.

According to several instructors, the online ECD program was “missing a sense of wholeness” in comparison to the traditional program. Although the modality changed, it seemed that the instructors expected that teaching and learning practices would not change concomitantly. Lack of face-to-face contact with students seemed to be the root of the challenges instructors experienced. With no in-person contact, Patricia was frequently concerned about how her students were doing without her direct guidance. Michelle wondered if she really knew the students she was teaching online because text-based communication was devoid of the “shared laughter” she valued so much in the
traditional classroom. This is counter to Ryan, Hodson Carlton, and Ali’s (2004) conclusion that, while instructor-student relationships in the online classroom are different from those of traditional classroom, they can remain “strong, comfortable, and, in some cases, enduring” (p. 80). The role of the online instructor requires the use of collaborative teaching and learning strategies and greater prompting of conversations (Palloff & Pratt, 2004). Unfortunately, new online instructors are seldom equipped with the tools to perform their role as connector in the online classroom. Likely, Michelle and Patricia and their colleagues, were missing awareness of ways to establish faculty/student relationships (Muirhead, 2000; Palloff & Pratt, 2004) in the midst of managing other new online teaching responsibilities.

During the transition to online teaching, the instructors became more aware of the need to clearly communicate and consistently manage expectations. Michelle noted that the loosely-stated guidelines and expectations she used in traditional courses generated anxiety and confusion when presented to students in her online course. Michelle spoke to the importance distributing rubrics and detailed expectations in her online courses because she no longer had a captive audience to which she could provide immediate and widespread clarification (Liu et al., 2005).

Tatum and Amy felt “resentful” and “pushed a little too far” when their online students continuously missed deadlines or expectations, but found that the solution was to clearly communicate deadlines (Berry, 2009) and expectations (Draves, 2007; Palloff & Pratt, 2000) and then hold students accountable from the start of the term. The potential benefits of these changes should not be overlooked. In a study of the reverse benefits of teaching online, Pennington (2005) found that online teaching experiences led to
improvements in traditional teaching practices, suggesting that clarifying the importance of particular elements such as outcomes alignment, content, pedagogy, and instructional techniques could lead to development of standards which apply across traditional and online teaching.

Implications of Where is the GPS? In an effort to overcome the ambiguity of the online milieu, new instructors may seek a virtual equivalent to traditional teaching and learning practices when, perhaps, an equivalent does not exist. This suggests that most of today’s faculty is not immediately ready to handle the essential academic, social, and psychological differences between traditional and online teaching (Shelton & Saltsman, 2005). Frequently, instructors are not aware of the differences until they are in the midst of teaching an online course. Most new online instructors would benefit from completion of an orientation to online course design and delivery prior to developing and teaching their own online courses (Covington et al., 2005; Draves, 2007; McQuiggan, 2007). In fact, administrators should make provisions for properly orienting new online instructors as well as for maintaining on-going pedagogical and technological training for existing online instructors. Professional development opportunities may be offered through the campus online education office, the campus teaching and learning center, or online via professional organizations such as The Sloan Consortium (http://sloanconsortium.org).

Clearly, institutions of higher education continue to struggle with integrating online education into current infrastructures and administrative processes, including faculty training and support programs. Several recent studies revealed that collaborating with colleagues and working with mentors are highly valued by faculty when learning to teach online (De Gagne & Walters, 2010; Lackey, 2011). First administrators need to
address their infrastructure prior to transitioning programs to online formats. Administrators should then consider establishing formal mentoring programs as part of the overall institutional plan for online education. Such programs are relatively low-cost investments when compared to hiring and retaining full-time training staff who understand faculty roles and responsibilities as well as institutional priorities. Mentoring programs also encourage cross-unit collaboration and provide another avenue for faculty to demonstrate collegiality, a common component of tenure and promotion requirements. More research is needed to determine what bearing peer training and support has on the quality of online course design and delivery as well as on faculty satisfaction with teaching online. Studies are also needed to identify the common types of training and support provided in mentoring relationships to help with developing effective mentors as well as to bridge the gap between peer training and mentoring programs and other institutional support programs. Because we see instructor roles changing as a result of an imposed transition to online formats, more research is needed to understand the effect those role changes have on job satisfaction, faculty morale, faculty/administrative relations, and tenure and promotion,

**Do We Need a Passport? Negotiating Boundaries and Borders**

Several instructors expressed that they felt supported as they worked within the borders of their own department and school, but found that traditional instructional processes and existing policies were not supportive of online instruction. Interestingly, the departmental support seemed to be more about feeling “inspired,” as Tatum called it, and commiserating, and less about how the institutional system could be transitioned administratively and enhanced to support online instruction. Each instructor articulated
concerns about institutional policies on course load, enrollment capacity, and faculty support during the transition to online teaching. The instructors seemed unable to extend beyond institutional boundaries, likely because of the organization’s inability to suspend current face-to-face mental models and engage in building a shared vision of online delivery (Senge, 2006) to support integrating online education into the larger institutional system administratively.

Discussion of Do We Need a Passport? The instructors reported that teaching online required more work and time than teaching face-to-face. Tatum grew frustrated with colleagues who complained about having just one online course to teach while her course load was completely online. Alison, who seemed to consistently teach large enrollment online courses, felt pressured by the amount of grading she had to do at end of term; she modified a major assignment so that students only submitted a PowerPoint presentation rather than a full paper. Although there was no indication that Alison or her colleagues consistently reduced assignment expectations, this does bring to mind the potential risks to program quality when instructors are pushed beyond capacity. These instructors’ experiences with large online class sizes and online teaching loads adds to prior studies that estimated two to three times more time required for teaching an online course compared to teaching a traditional course (Cavanaugh, 2005; Levy, 2003). With more time required to teach online but no reduction in overall teaching load, online instructors may find themselves in situations that require compromises to instructional quality so that they can keep up with the heavy online teaching workload. It should also be noted, however, that the instructors in this study or prior studies did not track time on task for comparison to traditional course work. While it may have seemed as though they
spent more time teaching online, the work may have just been distributed differently across the term (Andersen & Avery, 2008; Thompson, 2004). Perhaps the amount of time required to teach online is nearly the same once instructors develop a comfort level with the technology and the online modality.

Unable to discard traditional understanding of teaching and learning and engage in dialogue around the broader implications of online education (Senge, 2006), OSU faculty clung to the collegial, advocacy, tangible, and managerial cultures (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2007) which held the assumption that teaching was teaching regardless of modality. OSU Faculty Senate refused to approve the Distance Education Handbook (2010) for implementation until the contents were clearly identified as “best practices” or “suggestions” and the only policy included was the declaration that online teaching was subject to the same policies and processes as traditional teaching (Faculty Senate, 2009).

Additionally, the collective bargaining agreement between the Association of Professors (teaching faculty union) and Omars State University (2009) did not include references to online teaching. Meanwhile, administrators, under pressure to offset decreases in state funding, disregarded research-based online course capacity recommendations of 30 or fewer students (Bates & Poole, 2003; Colwell & Jenks, 2004). Absent any OSU institutional acknowledgement of the differences between traditional and online education, Alison continuously taught course sections with approximately 40 students while Amy longed for “a more manageable, doable workload.”

Consistent with national trends in higher education (Allen & Seaman, 2013), ECD program enrollments rapidly grew during the first year online, meaning Tatum and Patricia’s advising loads quickly grew. According to the one-size-fits-all policies, online
instructors became subject to the same advising and teaching loads as traditional instructors, but Tatum and Patricia were committed to serving their students as much as possible even though they had little or no face-to-face contact. To a great extent, I saw the heavy influence of the collegial and advocacy cultures creating barriers for the ECD instructors, and to a lesser and more surprising extent, I saw the virtual culture emerge (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2007) when Tatum and Patricia streamlined the department’s advising process by moving records and forms to Google documents. Both instructors took the initiative and utilized technology as a means of efficiently communicating with their online students when the current institutional infrastructure and administrative processes did not suffice.

The increasing workload during the transition to online teaching led to blurred boundaries between personal and work lives. Traditional classroom teaching was associated with physical classroom space and specific class times; when instructors were not on campus, they were likely not engaged in teaching activities. Teaching in the online classroom was not defined by those same boundaries, so instructors would log into the online classroom from home, or while traveling, and find themselves in teaching mode. Because online students typically do not have the opportunity to drop by the instructor’s on-campus office, they rely on email communication when they need assistance or have questions (Levy, 2003). Consequently, instructors in the online ECD program spent more time responding to emails from students that would likely be a brief verbal exchange in a traditional setting. This confirms findings from other studies acknowledging that communication with students is one of the most time-intensive
activities noted when instructors transition from traditional face-to-face teaching to online teaching (Lazarus, 2003; Wickstrom, 2003).

As primary points of contact for online students, instructors became technical supporters. They identified people within their personal networks (De Gagne & Walters, 2010; Draves, 2007), especially Amy who relied on her technically savvy spouse, to assist with technical problems that extended beyond their own capabilities. Additionally, working under the incorrect, but commonly-shared assumption that they had to be online in case students needed them (Conceição & Lehman, 2011), the instructors’ work and personal time became overlapped and out of balance. Tatum started blocking off time specifically for online teaching activities and recaptured time to spend with her family while Alison moved her office to a different area of her home to create a sense of “physically going to work”—techniques learned from The Sloan Consortium (http://sloanconsortium.org) online workshop on avoiding online faculty burnout.

**Implications of Do We Need a Passport?** A one-size-fits-all institutional processes and administrative policies system is not adequate enough to address the distinctive characteristics of traditional and online modalities. Data from this study suggest that administrators must examine institutional policies and administrative processes as they relate to online education rather than simply assume existing traditionally-informed processes and policies suffice. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the instructors were essentially “flying the plane while building it” and without adequate support and tools for doing so. This lack of institutional policies and administrative processes addressing the needs of online teaching and learning has implications for faculty productivity and program quality. Additional concerns may arise with faculty
under union contracts and thus may need to be addressed differently on union versus non-
union campuses.

Because of the differences between traditional and online teaching, administrative
policies appear from the data to need resolution before faculty undertakes the task of
teaching online, not as a clarification after the fact. Institutional policies and
administrative processes serve as the boundaries and borders that guide faculty and staff
toward achievement of institutional goals (Shelton & Saltsman, 2005). Poorly-defined
policies and processes, as evidenced in Alison’s decision to reduce assignment
expectations when her online course enrollments exceed her capacity as an instructor,
compromise instructional integrity. Modifications to institutional policies and
administrative processes have implications across units. It would be beneficial for
administrators to establish a standing committee comprised of representatives from
academic and service units throughout the institution to guide decisions about policies
and processes for online education.

Reaping benefits from the earliest adopters of online education as well as the
findings from this study, institutional leaders may draw from a collection of research-
based practices to establish their own institution-appropriate institutional policies and
administrative processes (Conceição & Lehman, 2011; Shelton & Saltsman, 2005). The
experiences of the five instructors in this study suggest that revisions to existing policies
and processes must address areas such as online course load, online course capacity, and
online support. Additionally, institutional leaders should challenge promotion and tenure
committees to address how online teaching fits within the tenure and promotion process
(Conceição & Lehman, 2011) to ensure faculty are not penalized for teaching online

110
courses. Compensation may also need to be adjusted when class size and advising load increase.

Given the relative newness of online teaching for traditionally-prepared faculty, including the instructors in this study, institutional leaders should also consider extrinsic motivators such as release time, overload pay, teaching assistants or stipends for large enrollment courses, and technology packages (Lackey, 2011; Parker, 2003) to support faculty as they transition to teaching online. Prior studies have examined motivators and inhibitors for faculty participation in online education (Maguire, 2005; Parker, 2003), but little is known about the effectiveness of particular types of motivators over others. As more faculty are required to teach online, it would be beneficial to determine if particular motivators are more effective than others and if there are variations by institution type, faculty level, or discipline. Furthermore, quantitative and qualitative studies of motivators and inhibitors may extend administrators’ understanding of faculty needs and inform the design of more appropriate institutional infrastructures to support online teaching. Comparative studies across campuses and disciplines may be helpful to know what administrators are doing in relation to supporting faculty in their efforts to transition programs from face-to-face to online formats as they relate to satisfaction, morale, compensation issues, and tech support.

Conflicting reports about the amount of time required to develop and teach online courses in comparison to traditional courses suggests that more research is needed to identify the actual time instructors spend developing and teaching traditional face-to-face courses and online courses. A quantitative study examining the tasks and actual time spent developing and teaching courses for traditional and online environments would be
helpful in understanding whether or not there are significant differences or if time invested is just distributed differently. This information would be helpful in the planning process and the transition and implementation phases.

Institutions may also benefit from research applying Lean Higher Education (LHE) (Balzer, 2010) practices to examine efficiency and effectiveness in the course development and instructional processes. Derived from a manufacturing model for improving efficiency, LHE provides a research-based framework for reviewing current processes, identifying sources of faculty overload, and implementing solutions that lead to “more enriching and rewarding experiences” for faculty (p. xiv). The LHE framework also supports the creation and maintenance of a learning organization aligned with Senge’s (2006) five disciplines. Lean practices would be helpful in designing a study to track (a) tasks in course development and teaching; (b) actual time spent in course development and teaching; and (c) waste related to overburdened faculty, staff, or equipment. Such information could be used to integrate online education into existing institutional infrastructures through creation of institutional policies and administrative processes that account for the differences and similarities between traditional and online education.

When in Rome: Socialization and Professionalization

The many changes to instructor roles and the ECD program generated feelings of dissonance within each of the study participants. Certainly, the instructors anticipated that teaching online would be different, but their experiences with ECD instructor socialization and professionalization contributed to what turned out to be a disruption to what they had come to learn and value as professors of education.
Discussion of *When in Rome*. As the instructors in this study transitioned from face-to-face to online teaching, they encountered teaching situations that did not align with prior experiences or what they valued (Festinger, 1957) as early childhood education professionals. Patricia became concerned that online teaching would hinder her ability to nurture her students, while Tatum expressed concerns about hindrances to developing a caring community of learners (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Initially, I thought Patricia and Tatum’s concerns were due to an inability to suspend traditional assumptions (Senge, 2006), but I later discovered that “nurturing relationships” that promote “high self-esteem and a strong sense of self-efficacy” (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. 13) and creating a learning community in which members contribute to “one another’s well-being and learning” (p. 16) were tenets of the early childhood profession.

The ECD instructors’ shared commitment to nurturing and establishing such deep connections with students is likely a function of graduate school socialization during which they learned particular knowledge, practices, and values necessary for entrance into the profession (Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001). The instructors’ concepts of socialization were based on traditional face-to-face practices associated with specific types of interaction, integration, and learning that seemed nearly impossible for these instructors to replicate in the online environment. Tatum worried about losing the “tight knit group” that was such an important part of professional norms. It is not surprising that Tatum and her colleagues struggled with the concept of developing instructor and peer relationships online because none of them had experienced online teaching or learning as part of their socialization processes either as graduate students or academic professionals. Likewise, as demonstrated by the quick decision to move the ECD
program online, the early childhood education profession was a newcomer to online education.

The disconnect between what these instructors valued as early childhood education professionals and what they anticipated to happen without regular face-to-face interactions with students created cognitive dissonance. According to Festinger (1957), feelings of dissonance motivate an individual to take action to potentially minimize or eliminate the dissonance. The data were rich with examples of instructors trying to overcome dissonance, including Amy’s attempt to host real-time chats for office hours and Michelle’s extensive processes for grading and providing feedback to individual students. Perhaps the quarterly face-to-face workshops hosted in collaboration with the local chapter of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (www.naeyc.org) were more than attempts to maintain a familiar touchstone from traditional teaching (Ryan et al., 2004). It is quite possible that the workshops helped the instructors to reconcile dissonance (Festinger, 1957) during a time of professional transition.

I would be remiss to ignore the fact that all the instructors in this study are women representing traditional gender roles in their work as faculty. Patricia took on a “mom” role (Lester, 2008, p. 297) when she regularly called and emailed her students just to check up on them. Similarly, in the first term teaching online, Tatum constantly logged into her online course in case her students needed her. One explanation for the nurturing tendencies of these instructors may be the preponderance of women in the field. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), women represent over 98% of preschool and kindergarten instructors. It seems plausible that Patricia, Tatum,
and their colleagues experienced the anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal stages
of graduate student socialization in a predominantly female setting (Weidman et al.,
2001). Likewise, interactions with other early childhood education professionals may
have reinforced particular values and norms stereotypically associated with the caretaker
role of women (Lester, 2008). Had these instructors taught in a male-dominated field,
their socialization and professionalization experiences would probably have been quite
different. As such these women found themselves unable to fulfill the gendered aspect of
their role in the seemingly sterile online environment, ill-equipped to figure out
appropriate ways to negotiate their nurturing tendencies.

Implications of When in Rome. While this study focuses on instructors in an
Early Childhood Development program, it should be replicated in other professional
programs within or outside of OSU. This would provide comparison data to determine if
discipline-specific socialization and professionalization influences instructor experiences
during the transition to online teaching and learning. Additional studies should also
examine how faculty in different colleges or schools and in differently-sized programs
experience changes to instructor dimensions and the program when moving from
traditional face-to-face teaching to online teaching. It would be helpful to determine the
extent to which other instructors’ experiences align with and differ from the instructors in
this study. This information would be useful for academic deans and provosts as they
consider institutional and programmatic readiness for moving degree programs online
anticipating that academic and gender socialization may affect the transition process.

Longitudinal studies of instructors’ experiences beginning with the first term
teaching online and continuing for several academic years would be beneficial in
capturing experiences at specific points throughout the process of developing and transitioning programs to online delivery. Data could be used to determine the feasibility of providing professional development and institutional support systems in stages, at times when new online instructors need specific types of training and support. This lengthier study might also reveal institutional and instructor characteristics which might be used to determine readiness for moving programs to online delivery.

Finally, data from this study suggest a need to examine professionalization of new faculty in preparation for teaching in a rapidly-changing online environment. None of the five instructors in this study learned to teach with the sophisticated technology currently available. They were not taught to teach and learn with YouTube, podcasts, or learning management systems; nor were they professionally prepared to provide technical support, facilitate asynchronous discussions, or work with students they may never see face-to-face. Because of the dramatic changes to traditionally-prepared instructors’ concepts of teaching learning it seems relevant that more research is needed on how instructors experience cognitive dissonance during the transition to online teaching and if their rank and status affects them in any way. Additionally, data from qualitative and quantitative studies on how instructors overcome dissonance may assist administrators with providing appropriate support systems to help the current generation of faculty make a healthy transition to teaching in the digital age (Twale, 2013). The information may also prove valuable in the redesign of socialization and professionalization efforts in graduate education.
Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine how Early Childhood Development (ECD) instructors experience transitioning a traditional face-to-face baccalaureate degree completion program to an asynchronous online degree completion program. This study fills a gap in the literature (Beaudoin, 2002; Bonk, 2000; Heuer & King, 2004) by providing more insight into the way instructors experience changes to roles as they transition to online teaching. Results indicate that instructors struggle with leaving the familiar traditional classroom for the unfamiliar online classroom. Additionally, the experience is more disorienting when appropriate institutional policies and administrative processes are not in place when instructors begin the transition to online teaching. Table 3 provides a synopsis of the four categories of instructor experiences, implications, and future research.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Research</th>
<th>Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of Findings, Implications, and Future Research**

**Table 3**
For the instructors in this study, the administrative decision to move to online-only delivery within a brief period of time was akin to “flying the plane while building it.” The instructors confirmed that online teaching is different from traditional teaching and requires an institutional infrastructure that addresses those differences. Institutional policies and administrative processes should address the on-going need to augment instructor skills and knowledge, online teaching loads, and ways to support online instructors with work-life balance. Changes to instructor and student roles also challenge traditional instructors’ assumptions about teaching and learning during the transition to online teaching. Finally, instructor socialization and professionalization likely contributes to cognitive dissonance as new online instructors work through challenges to what they learned and valued as traditional professors of early childhood education.

Understanding the experiences of faculty during the transition to online teaching is essential to the development of institutional policies, administrative processes, and systems which accommodate the differences between traditional face-to-face and asynchronous online modalities. The results of this study point to a need for institutions of higher education to discard traditional understanding of teaching and learning and engage in dialogue around the broader implications of online education before implementing new online programs. The results also suggest that systems thinking may be advantageous for supporting the current shift toward online education and to establish a more agile institutional infrastructure to keep pace with rapid changes of the 21st century.
REFERENCES


Faculty Senate. (16 November, 2009). *Draft faculty senate minutes*.


McQuiggan, C. A. (2007). The role of faculty development in online teaching’s potential to question teaching beliefs and assumptions. *Online Journal of Distance Education Administration, 10*(3). Retrieved from http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla


Omars State University. (2010). *Distance education handbook*.


distance education: A delphi study. *Online Journal of Distance Education
Administration, 3*(3). Retrieved from http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla

influencing higher education faculty and administrators to teach via distance.
*Online Journal of Distance Education Administration, 2*(4). Retrieved from
http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla

assistance and support to deliver education via distance. *Online Journal of
Distance Education Administration, 3*(2). Retrieved from
http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla


required of faculty teaching distance education courses. *International Journal of
Educational Technology, 2*(1). Retrieved from http://education.illinois.edu/ijet/


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Informed Consent to Participate as a Research Subject

INSTRUCTOR PARTICIPANT

Project Title
A Case Study of Early Childhood Development Faculty Transitioning to Online Teaching

Researcher
Jennifer M. McVay-Dyche, Doctoral Student at University of Dayton, mcvayj1@udayton.edu

Dissertation Chair
Dr. Darla J. Twale, School of Education and Allied Professions, University of Dayton, darla.twale@udayton.edu

Purpose of Research
The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of education instructors transitioning from traditional face-to-face to online delivery. Using a constructivist perspective, the focus will be on the experiences of Early Childhood Development instructors as they transition a face-to-face baccalaureate degree completion program to online delivery.

Expected Duration of Study
The study will be conducted from November 8, 2010 to June 15, 2011.

Procedure
You will be asked to participate in 2 personal interviews (1 hour each) and 1 focus group interview (1 hour). During the interviews, you will be asked to orally respond to questions. To ensure accuracy, the interviews will be digitally recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

You will also be asked to submit personal reflections throughout the duration of the study. The reflections will require approximately 5-7 minutes each to complete. Total time commitment for this task will not exceed 60 minutes. You may record your reflections using Audacity or another digital recording tool and then send files to the researcher for transcription; or, you may enter your reflections into an online form accessible only to the researcher.
**Anticipated Risks and/or Discomfort**

There is no physical risk to participants. Interviews will take place at a time and location that is convenient for you. Some of the questions asked may create some discomfort or feelings of embarrassment as they relate to your profession. You may choose not to answer a question that makes you uncomfortable. Upon your request, the researcher will provide you with a copy of interview transcripts and you may comment on them. Additionally, you may withdraw your consent and/or terminate the interview at any time without providing reason and without penalty to you.

**Benefits to the Participant**

Participation in this study is voluntary; you will not be compensated. By participating in this study you may develop an increased awareness of your teaching philosophies and a better understanding of the transition to online teaching. Other instructors and administrators planning to transition programs from face-to-face to online delivery will be the likely beneficiaries of this study.

**Confidentiality**

No records of your participation in this research will be disclosed to others. You will be assigned a pseudonym upon agreeing to participate. Your name will not appear in reports, presentations, or papers resulting from this research. All materials collected during this study, including the list of participants and pseudonyms, will be kept in a secure location accessible only to the researcher.

**Contact Person for Questions or Problems**

If you have general questions about the research, contact Jennifer McVay-Dyche, mcvayj1@udayton.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant please contact: {PRIVATE}, Grants and Institutional Review Board Administrator at {PRIVATE}

**Consent to Participate**

I have voluntarily decided to participate in this research project. The researcher named above has adequately answered all questions that I have about this research, the procedures involved, and my participation. I understand that the researcher named above will be available to answer any questions about procedures throughout this research. I also understand that I may refuse to participate or voluntarily terminate my participation in this research at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am entitled. The researcher may also terminate my participation in this research if she feels this to be in my best interest. In addition, I certify that I am 18 (eighteen) years of age or older.

____________________________________________
Printed Name of Subject

____________________________________________
Signature of Subject                        Date
APPENDIX B

Informed Consent to Participate as a Research Subject

ADMINISTRATOR PARTICIPANT

Project Title
A Case Study of Early Childhood Development Faculty Transitioning to Online Teaching

Investigator
Jennifer M. McVay-Dyche, Doctoral Student at University of Dayton,
mcvayj1@udayton.edu

Dissertation Chair
Dr. Darla J. Twale, School of Education and Allied Professions, University of Dayton,
darla.twale@udayton.edu

Purpose of Research
The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of education instructors
transitioning from traditional face-to-face to online delivery. Using a constructivist
perspective, the focus will be on the experiences of Early Childhood Development
instructors at Omars State University as they transition a face-to-face baccalaureate
degree completion program to online delivery.

Expected Duration of Study
The study will be conducted from October 8, 2010- June 15, 2011.

Procedure
You will be asked to participate in a 1-hour personal interview. During the interview, you
will be asked to orally respond to questions about online instructors' technical,
professional and institutional support requests or requirements. To ensure accuracy, the
interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

Alternative Procedures
No alternative procedures exist in this research project.
Anticipated Risks and / or Discomfort
There is no physical risk to participants. The interview will take place at a time and location that is convenient for you. Some of the questions asked may create some discomfort as they relate to your professional interactions with instructors. You may choose not to answer a question that makes you uncomfortable. Upon your request, the researcher will provide you with a copy of interview transcript and you may comment on it. Additionally, you may withdraw your consent and/or terminate the interview at any time without providing reason and without penalty to you.

Benefits to the Participant
Your participation in this study is voluntary; you will not be compensated. You will likely derive no direct benefits from your participation. However, your participation may reveal strategies and other information that will benefit other instructors and administrators planning to transition programs from face-to-face to online delivery.

Confidentiality
No records of your participation in this research will be disclosed to others. You will be assigned a pseudonym upon agreeing to participate. Your name will not appear in reports, presentations, or papers resulting from this research. All materials collected during this study, including the list of participants and pseudonyms, will be kept in a secure location accessible only to the researcher.

Contact Person for Questions or Problems
If you have general questions about the research, contact Jennifer McVay-Dyche, mcvayj1@udayton.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant please contact: {PRIVATE}, Grants and Institutional Review Board Administrator at {PRIVATE}.

Consent to Participate
I have voluntarily decided to participate in this research project. The researcher named above has adequately answered all questions that I have about this research, the procedures involved, and my participation. I understand that the researcher named above will be available to answer any questions about procedures throughout this research. I also understand that I may refuse to participate or voluntarily terminate my participation in this research at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am entitled. The researcher may also terminate my participation in this research if she feels this to be in my best interest. In addition, I certify that I am 18 (eighteen) years of age or older.

____________________________________________
Printed Name of Subject

____________________________________________
Signature of Subject

__________________________
Date
APPENDIX C

Instructor Participant Interview Protocol

Instructor Interview 1

Introduction. (Read aloud to participant.)

Hello. Thank you for participating in this study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of education instructors transitioning from traditional face-to-face to online delivery.

This is the first of two personal interviews that I would like to conduct with you during my study. Today I would like to talk with you about your teaching background, teaching philosophy and assumptions, and your readiness for teaching in a fully online program this academic year.

Questions (Note: This is a semi-structured interview. Questions will guide the interview but may not be read verbatim to the participant.)

Professional Background. Tell me about yourself and your professional background.
• What is your teaching position at the university?
• What courses do you teach? In what formats have you previously taught them?
• How long have you been teaching at the university level?

Teaching Philosophy. Please describe your approach to teaching.
• What specific techniques do you rely on to teach your students?
• How do you expect you will translate these techniques to the online environment?
• What is your role as the instructor?

Teaching Assumptions. Please describe your assumptions and beliefs about the students you teach.
• Who are your students? (e.g. needs, preferences, learning styles)
• What is the role of the student in your classroom?
• What are the skills, attitudes, and knowledge you expect students to acquire in your courses?
• How do you anticipate these assumptions will translate into the online environment?
• Readiness/ Preparation for Teaching Online.
• What skills and competencies do you believe online instructors need to be effective?
• How do you describe your readiness/ preparation to teach in a fully online program?
• What specific support (technical, pedagogical, institutional) have you sought or been provided in preparation for this first year of fully online teaching?
• What specific support (technical, pedagogical, institutional) or preparation would you like to have?
• What are some of the assumptions you have about teaching and learning in a fully online program?
• What do you anticipate to be most difficult?
• What do you anticipate to be easier?

Closing. (Read aloud to participant.)
During this interview we explored various dimensions of your professional background, preparation, and teaching assumptions. At this time, is there anything else you would like to say that you feel would be helpful to the study?
Thank you for your time today.

Instructor Interview 2

Introduction. (Read aloud to participant.)
Hello. Thank you, again, for participating in this study. This is the second and final personal interview. Today I would like to talk with you about your experience teaching in the program during the first year it is offered fully online.

Questions (Note: This is a semi-structured interview. Questions will guide the interview but may not be read verbatim to the participant.)

Overall Experience. Tell me about your first year of online teaching.
  • What stands out?
  • What challenged you?
  • What was rewarding?

Teaching Philosophy. During our first interview, you described your teaching philosophy as __________. After teaching online for three quarters, would you say your philosophy has remained the same? Changed? If changed, how?
  • How would you now describe the role of instructor online?
  • What teaching techniques translated easily to the online environment?
  • What teaching techniques did you find more difficult to translate from face-to-face to online? What did you do to overcome that?
**Teaching Assumptions.** During our first interview, you described some assumptions about your students including: (Review key roles, needs, assumptions from first interview.)

- Have any of these assumptions changed? If so, which ones and how?
- What surprised you most about your online students?
- What remained the same?

**Readiness/ Preparation for Teaching Online.** During our first interview, we talked about your readiness to teach online as well as some of skills and competencies you felt important to be an effective online instructor.

You indicated: _______________. Would you add to or take away from this list now that you have more online teaching experience?

- How would you describe your readiness/ preparation to teach in a fully online program?
- In the past three quarters, what specific support (technical, pedagogical, institutional) have you sought or been provided?
- In the past three quarters, what specific support (technical, pedagogical, institutional) or preparation do you wish you could have had?
- During the first interview, you anticipated _________ to be most difficult and _______ to be easier when teaching online. Was your experience consistent with what you anticipated? What was different? The same?
- What advice would you give to an education instructor preparing to teach for the first time in a fully online program?

**Closing.** (Read aloud to participant.)
We have explored various aspects of your first year of fully online teaching. At this time, is there anything else you would like to say that you feel would be helpful to the study?

Thank you for your time today.
APPENDIX D

Administrator Participant Interview Protocol

Administrator/Support Staff Interview

Introduction. (Read aloud to participants.)
Hello. Thank you for participating in this study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of education instructors transitioning from traditional face-to-face to online delivery. Your interactions with and observations of the instructors in the ECD program will be helpful in gaining understanding of the transition to online delivery.

Questions (Note: This is a semi-structured interview. Questions will guide the interview but may not be read verbatim to the participant.)
- Please state your administrator or support position and describe your connection to the ECD program.
- How many years have you worked with the ECD program?
- What types of interactions do you typically have with ECD instructors?
- What types of support did you provide to instructors initially? Over the past year?
- What types of support have instructors sought from you over the past academic year? Are those requests different from previous years? If so, how?
- How would you describe the faculty members’ attitudes towards the support that was available?
- What changes have you seen among the faculty as they transitioned to teaching online this year?
- Can you name any institutional policies or barriers that have limited your ability to support the ECD faculty as transition this program to fully online delivery?
- What changes will you implement in the future to support faculty making the transition to online teaching?

Closing. (Read aloud to participant.)
At this time, is there anything else you would like to say that you feel would be helpful to understanding the experiences of faculty transitioning to online teaching?

Thank you for your time today.
APPENDIX E

Focus Group Interview Protocol

Focus Group Interview

Introduction. (Read aloud to participants.)
Hello. Thank you for participating in this study. As you know, the purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of education instructors transitioning from traditional face-to-face to online delivery. We are here today to share your reflections on the first year of offering your program fully online.

Questions (Note: This is a semi-structured interview. Questions will guide the interview but may not be read verbatim to the participant.)
- What changes to the program can you identify since you began offering the program online?
- Did you seek out one another's help and/or support regarding online teaching during the past year? If yes, in what ways did you help one another?
- How has teaching online affected your interactions with your students? With one another?
- How has the department changed from previous years now that your program is fully online?
- How has teaching online affected your relationship with University administration?
- What has helped or hindered delivering your program online this year?

Closing. (Read aloud to participant.) We have explored various aspects of your first year of fully online teaching. At this time, is there anything else you would like to say that you feel would be helpful to the study?

Thank you for your time today.