2009

A phenomenological study of nursing faculty's experiences in transitioning from a classroom to an online teaching role

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A Phenomenological Study of Nursing Faculty's Experiences in Transitioning from a Classroom to an Online Teaching Role

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Adult, Career, and Higher Education
College of Education
University of South Florida

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Date of Approval
October 22, 2009

Keywords: transformative learning, facilitator, mentoring, faculty development, nursing education

DEDICATION

To my parents, George and Betty Passmore, for supporting me through all my travels, especially this one.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, my gratitude is to my co-chairs Dr. Jim Eison and Dr. Bill Young for listening to, commenting on, and throwing out lots of ideas before one finally stuck. Dr. Mary Webb, who is also a colleague, has given me support and advice when I needed it most. A special thanks is due to Dr. Deoksoon Kim, whose encouragement and willingness to step in at the end was invaluable. I also want to thank Dr. Waynne James and Dr. Jeff Kromrey who got it all started.

Beyond my committee, I want to especially thank Dean Patrica Burns and Anne Phillips for their support of me in this endeavor. All my friends and colleagues have shown understanding and concern, even when I abandoned them to finish this project specifically Rhonda Prince, Jeff Hall, and Gloria Jasperse. Additionally, Dr. Pat Maher, who started this endeavor with me many years ago and has continued to provide me guidance and late night phone support has earned my deepest gratitude. I also want to thank my reviewers for taking time to assist. And of course I want to thank my parents who read my drafts, listened to my whining, and even picked up my dry cleaning so that I could pursue this dream.

Finally, I want to thank the 16 men and women who volunteered to be a part of this study. Their time and dedication to their profession was an inspiration, and I am forever honored that they took time out of their schedules to help me and to further the knowledge of the field of online nursing education.

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DENISE PASSMORE

ABSTRACT

As universities increasingly offer online nursing education, the transition that faculty members must make to their new instructional role is often overlooked. This phenomenological qualitative research involved the use of semi-structured interviews with 16 nursing faculty from four Florida public universities, who were asked to describe their experiences transitioning from classroom to online teaching. Interview questions focused on their prior assumptions about online education, their preparation for online teaching, their current teaching methods, and the identification of information they would recommend as vital for successful online teaching. Participants were voluntary and selected by both criterion and network sampling. Interviews were conducted in-person, audio-taped, transcribed, and analyzed for recurring themes. Data were validated using member checks, peer reviews, and Atlas.TI software.

Participants reported that teaching online was more difficult than expected. Most frequently mentioned issues were time and effort required to design and teach due to factors such as students' needs, class sizes, and designing learning activities. Faculty preparation varied among institutions, but regardless of training most reported the significance of mentors or colleagues as critical for success. While some faculty reported

feeling disconnected from students, many reported having better relationships with online students than with their face-to-face counterparts. Over half the faculty discussed the importance of their role as becoming facilitators of learning.

Results support the need for institutions to provide both an adequate technology infrastructure and sufficient faculty support. From this study faculty recommended that mentoring and collegiality are vital components of the faculty development process. Administrators need to address issues of time and effort, and faculty need to learn different ways to work that include team approaches and flexible scheduling.

Suggestions for future research include identifying the degree to which these findings transfer to other disciplines. Identifying strategies for developing, sustaining, and implementing online mentoring programs for faculty, and information on sustaining better communication in the online environment. Finally, looking at cost-efficient models for delivering quality services is a factor often overlooked by administrators.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The growth of online nursing education has provided a number of opportunities for students and faculty members alike. As demand for more online classes increase, the need to ensure that online education is at least as effective as education delivered by "live" classes also becomes an issue. Therefore, it is imperative that faculty members who are moving to this teaching venue are aware of the inherent challenges and the needs that should be addressed to ensure quality of learning and adherence to accreditation standards. Teaching online requires an integrated knowledge of content, technology, and pedagogy beyond that expected of faculty members who teach only live classes (Koehler & Mishra, 2005). Koehler and Mishra contend that without understanding how these factors can effectively integrate, online instruction is less effective than it might otherwise be if all factors are integrated.

The literature has shown that most faculty members do not receive significant preparation when transitioning to the online venue and, therefore, must rely instead on their education and experience as classroom teachers to develop and implement online learning experiences (Johnson, 2008). Faculty members also reported feeling inadequately prepared for the transition from the role of experienced classroom teacher to novice online teacher (Johnson, 2005). In a study by Salinas (2008), faculty members were not able to relate modern pedagogical principles to instructional technology which

indicates that they were not familiar with all the options available through technology. Despite a lack of preparation and support, online faculty members are responsible for teaching the same course content, including higher order thinking skills, expected in traditional classroom experiences. Faculty members at Mississippi State University expressed reservations about presentation of online content, addressing not only their lack of preparation for this venue but also a fear that they would be required to teach online courses in areas that are not appropriate for online delivery (Gammill, 2004).

According to the Sloan Consortium (Sloan-C), faculty members' satisfaction is one of the key elements of an effective online program (Sloan-C, n.d.). Instructors are satisfied with the online teaching experience if they find it personally and professionally beneficial. Institutional supports such as infrastructure, training, technical support and recognition are important to their satisfaction. Faculty members who teach primarily online want to ensure that they are included in governance and other school-related issues. Satisfaction increases when administration acknowledges and places value on the extra effort required in teaching online and, further, commits to studying and enhancing the online faculty members' experience. Sloan-C's research emphasizes the need for online faculty members, despite differences in roles, to experience the same opportunities for research, promotion, and reward as faculty members who teach live classes.

The introduction of online education is altering how faculty members perform their traditional roles, which are identified as "teaching," "research," and "service" (Hartman, Dziuban, & Brophy-Ellison, 2007). Addressing the instructional design issues inherent in online course development may decrease the amount of time faculty members

have to devote to research and publication and my put them at risk when seeking promotion and/or tenure (Crawford & Gannon-Cook, 2002; Hartman et al., 2007; Passmore, 2000). Hopewell (2007) reports that, while academic expectations remain constant, faculty members who teach online must manage their professional and personal lives within a new context. According to Hopewell, faculty members not only expressed having less time for research but also believed that, because they taught online, their schedules were perceived as being more flexible, and they were expected to volunteer more frequently for service activities than were their colleagues who taught face-to-face. In one national survey of nursing faculty members who taught at American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) accredited schools, 80% of respondents reported that the time to develop the online course was significantly more than that required to develop a comparable face-to-face class (Christianson, Tiene, & Luft, 2002). Though most of the faculty members (87%) reported being satisfied with the experience of teaching online, they still rated their lack of time to develop the course as one of the low points.

Online faculty members are expected to teach in ways that are different from how they were taught as students. In a study of faculty roles in online teaching, Conceicao (2006) identified faculty members' general concern with distance education and the specific need to rethink their role by constructing a new instructional paradigm. For example, acquiring knowledge becomes more of a shared activity and information transmission is no longer one-way, as faculty members and students share the responsibility for teaching and learning in online communities. According to Salinas (2008), to utilize technology effectively in education there needs to be a shift from

lecture-based to learner-centered mastery instruction that gives more control to the student. In one study of nursing faculty members, 95% believed they needed to learn new pedagogies, 91% felt they had to learn a new role, and 85% said that the instructor's role \changed from authority figure to facilitator (Ryan, Hodson-Carlton, & Ali, 2005). In Biro's (2005) study of online faculty, participants described their role as "facilitators," rather than "lecturers" and consequently struggled to interact with students in this medium. Faculty members who could not adapt to the facilitator role struggled to communicate with online students and were unable to plan teaching methods that created interaction with their students.

With online teaching, the solitary act of teaching is replaced with interdependency among other institutional agencies such as technical support, faculty developers, and instructional designers. Diekelmann, Schuster, and Nosek (1998) refer to *decentralizing* teacher control as new types of relationships with students are developed and as faculty members collaborate with other faculty members, technical support, and instructional designers in the development and delivery of online courses. Johnson (2008) reports that, in addition to faculty partnerships and collaboration, "three experts were seen as essential to the [online course development] team: a content expert (the faculty member), a web-based pedagogy expert, and a technology expert" (p. 21). The traditional model of face-to-face teaching is largely a solitary task (Twigg, 2003). Twigg reports that institutions continue this tradition when developing online programs results in increased workloads for faculty members. For example, studies by Twigg revealed that the majority of communications from students were not about course content and that technical staff or

assistants could address most of the questions. Faculty members, according to Twigg, need to look at new models of educating students by building on the growing knowledge about best practices in online course development.

Faculty members at the University of Wisconsin expressed the need to learn new communication methods and adjust to time frames different from those with which they typically work. Physical presence – or lack of physical presence – concerns many faculty members, as they are no longer able to see signs of student confusion when presenting course material; consequently, the traditional student-teacher relationship is changed (Diekelmann et al., 1998). Courses, according to the surveyed faculty members, must be prepared early and updated regularly, reflecting new information and new technologies (Ryan et al., 2005). Faculty members who are considered experts in their fields may discover that they are novices in technology compared to their students and that the traditional teacher-student relationship has changed (Diekelmann et al., 1998; Hartman et al., 2007).

Students have expectations that are different from those of previous generations. They expect to communicate continuously with faculty members through electronic resources, and they expect faculty members to provide interactive learning experiences utilizing the latest technologies, consequently, faculty members are required to alter the ways these technologies are used for teaching and communicating with students (Hartman et al., 2007). However, according to Salinas (2008), most faculty members are not being educated to meet these expectations, and this requires a change in how future faculty members are prepared.

A study of nursing faculty members identified the challenge in adopting new roles in online education – particularly the change from authority figure to facilitator of learning (Ryan, Carlton, & Ali, 2004; Ryan et al., 2005). In Johnson's 2008 study, graduate nursing faculty members reported needing to rethink their teaching and learning philosophies in order to make the adjustment to online teaching. Johnson's (2005) previous study of graduate nursing faculty who taught online revealed that online faculty members identified themselves primarily as facilitators and reported feeling less responsible for delivery of content than when teaching face-to-face.

Frese (2006) stated that successful online learning has less to do with the technology and more to do with faculty members' utilization of technology to teach online; however, the transition to online instruction is not intuitive, and it is important that faculty members learn from the experiences of others who have made the transition. In a survey of nursing faculty members, Christianson, et al. (2002) reported that 69% stated that their role was now more collaborative and that they referred to themselves as guides or coaches rather than teachers. Some faculty members have reported losing their identity as teachers as they struggle to cope with the demands, new pedagogies, and use of technology required in online education (Diekelmann et al., 1998). Passmore (2000) reports that faculty members may feel uncomfortable using technology to teach online and that they may be concerned that their scholarly instructional work is on the web for public access.

While the literature has shown that faculty members are not always adequately prepared for the differences in online teaching, there is very little research identifying

how faculty members experience the change from their familiar role as classroom teacher to online facilitator of learning. Passmore (2000) states that most of the literature about delivery of Web instruction is related to technology and instructional design; pedagogical concerns and important faculty issues are not as well researched. Most faculty members did not expect technology to be central to their teaching experiences, when preparing for careers in higher education (Hartman et al., 2007; Passmore, 2000). Many university faculty members learned how to teach through observation and imitation, perfecting their skills through feedback and trial-and-error (Passmore, 2000). In a study of nursing and other applied sciences, faculty members Ali, Hodson-Carlton et al. (2005) reported that redefining faculty roles in online teaching was rated as the highest priority. These new roles included learning about technology, online pedagogy, support systems, and creating new partnerships with colleagues, instructional designers, and support staff. Additionally, it is important that faculty members have opportunities to do research on their experiences with online education (Ali, Hodson-Carlton et al., 2005). Crawford and Gannon-Cook (2002) recommend that more research is needed to identify the specific types of motivation required to increase faculty members' willingness to teach online. Without an adequate understanding of the role of the online educator, nursing faculty members who transition to online teaching are too often ill-prepared for the experience. This insufficient preparation could adversely impact student outcomes.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to apply phenomenological research strategies in the examination of experiences of nursing faculty members who transitioned from face-

to-face classroom to online teaching and to analyze their reported experiences for evidence of transformative learning. The intention was to develop a rich, thick portrait of the participants' experiences to gain greater insight into how faculty members perceive their role in the online environment and to determine whether there were significant differences from their role as classroom teachers. For purposes of this study, "online nursing faculty members" refers to full or part-time faculty members in a university-based nursing program who having begun their career in classroom teaching and have taught online for at least one year.

Research Questions

The following research questions provided the guiding framework for this study:

1. What are the experiences of nursing faculty members in transitioning from live face-to-face classroom teaching to online teaching?
2. What assumptions did nursing faculty members hold about the role of faculty members in online education prior to their initial experience in online teaching?
3. What experiences related to online teaching may have challenged nursing faculty members' perceptions of the role of faculty?
4. To what degree did institutional support and infrastructure impact faculty members' experiences?
5. Based on the framework of transformative learning, what evidence of transformation can be identified through an analysis of the experiences described by nursing faculty members?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was transformative learning. The research will address faculty members' assumptions regarding online teaching and whether their experiences led to the construction of new beliefs and understanding. This study, through the means of reflective discourse, looked at the experiences of transitioning to an online teaching venue to discover whether transformative learning occurred. Drawing from the work of Mezirow (1991), transformative learning occurs when adults experience a disorienting dilemma, such as the move from live to online teaching. Adults' frame of reference for interpretation of their experiences is defined by Mezirow as "meaning perspectives." All learning is filtered through these meaning perspectives, which include our prejudices and misconceptions or lack of knowledge about a particular subject. The three types of meaning perspectives are *epistemic* (our actual knowledge), s*ociolinguistic* (language and culture), and *psychological* (self-concept) (Cranton, 1994). Most people, states Cranton, have not examined their belief systems and even fewer look at all the meaning perspectives that form their beliefs. In this study, faculty members reflected on their experiences in transitioning to the role of online instructor. Faculty members' knowledge of teaching and their perceptions of their role as teachers from a traditional cultural perspective were examined to identify whether their self-concept has been altered in the transition to online facilitator of learning.

Mezirow states that only through critical reflection of previously held beliefs and assumptions will adults go through the process of building new roles and acquiring new skills that integrate into the individual's life as it was prior to the disorienting dilemma.

Memory is key to the reflective process. Remembering is impacted by how well the new experience fits into an individual's meaning perspectives or whether the memory of the experience evokes anxiety. If the experience evokes anxiety, memories may be distorted and more difficult to assimilate. Reflective discourse can enable adults in the process of integrating new information and creating new meaning perspectives.

Significance of the Study

Despite the plethora of literature about teaching online in nursing education, there is little research on the changing role of faculty, particularly nursing faculty, and the transformation from the face-to-face classroom to online educators. This study provides rich qualitative data identifying the needs and challenges of transitioning nursing faculty. The findings, it is hoped, will prompt institutions to better prepare faculty members and to create a model for faculty member development that can be implemented and researched. Better preparation and institutional support will result in improvements in the quality of online education and greater satisfaction among faculty members and students. The degree to which institutional support and infrastructure impact faculty members' experiences was studied by inclusion of participants from nursing programs at four large public universities.

Delimitations

This study included faculty members who teach in baccalaureate or graduate level nursing programs. Although associate degree programs incorporate some online classes, most of these programs are not available entirely online; therefore, these programs were not included in this study. This study included only nursing faculty members who

originally began their teaching careers in live classroom situations and who have taught online for at least one year. Since the data was collected in one-on-one live interviews, this study, as a matter of convenience, only looked at universities that offer online courses and/or programs and that are located within the limited and accessible geographic region of Florida (Creswell, 1998).

Limitations

Transcribed interviews were the primary source of data for this research. Recall of past events as well as re-interpretation or distortion due to subsequent experiences can be a limitation to the accuracy of the interviews and the quality of the data. Because the process of one-on-one interviewing is time consuming, the number of participants included in this study, as well as the geographic restrictions, narrowed the focus of this research.

About the Researcher

The researcher for this study has been an instructional designer and non-nursing faculty for the University South Florida – College of Nursing for over five years. Additionally, she has taught courses and conducted workshops online for both faculty members and students. The researcher's responsibilities have included not only instructional design of online classes, but also faculty training and preparation to teach online, support of faculty members and students, and evaluation of online teaching. Prior to working at the college of nursing, the researcher worked as an instructional designer in a corporate setting. Her experiences and background directly relate to the topic of this study, and this could create bias. Additionally, some potential participants may know, or

know of, the researcher, since she is doing research within the state university system in which she also is currently employed.

Definitions

To clarify how specific terms are used in this study, the following definitions are provided.

Distance Learning: Any type of instruction delivered from a distance and can include videos, teleconference courses, and online instruction. For purposes of this study, distance learning will refer to online and Web-based learning, which is identified as any course that is delivered at least 75% of the time via the Internet. The terms mentioned here are used interchangeably throughout this study.

Hybrid or Blended Classes: Classes in which part of the content is presented online and part in a live face-to-face classroom setting.

Live Classes: Traditional face-to-face classes in which all of the course content is presented in a classroom setting.

Nursing Faculty: For purposes of this study, nursing faculty refers to faculty members who are registered nurses and teach either full- or part-time in a baccalaureate or graduate nursing program.

RN-to-Baccalaureate (RN-to-BS) Programs: Programs that enable registered nurses with associate (two-year) or diploma (three-year) degrees to obtain their baccalaureate degree. These programs differ from traditional baccalaureate programs in that students already have an RN license and most have experience working in clinical situations.

Transformative Learning: An adult learning theory, associated with Jack Mezirow, purporting that adults learn new meanings through reflection and discourse after their basic assumptions are challenged by a disorienting dilemma.

Web-enhanced Classes: Traditional face-to-face classes in which the majority of content is presented in a live classroom setting and is supplemented by online material.

Organization of Remaining Chapters

This chapter includes an overview of the research problem and a statement of the purpose of this study. Specific research questions were listed addressing the qualitative framework. Questions were followed by delimitations and limitations of the study. Definitions of some of the terminology used in this study were provided to readers.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review beginning with an overview of web-based education. This section is followed by a look at Web-based education as it relates to nursing. After reviewing online education, there is a review of the literature describing the role of faculty members, which includes traditional faculty, nursing faculty, and online faculty. Finally, a section introducing transformative learning is provided.

Chapter 3 provides a description of the methods to be used in this study. A specific description of the population of interest is identified, as is the anticipated sample size. A description of phenomenological research methods is included as well, along with a description of the data analysis procedures that were employed.

Chapter 4 presents an analysis and description of the qualitative data.

Chapter 5 features a discussion of the results, as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to apply phenomenological research strategies to examine the experiences of nursing faculty members who transitioned from a face-to-face classroom setting to online teaching and to analyze the reported experiences for evidence of transformative learning. The intention was to develop a rich, thick portrait of the participants' experiences in order to gain insight into how faculty members perceive their role in the online environment and to determine whether there were significant differences from their role as classroom teachers. For purposes of this study, "online nursing faculty member" refers to a member of any level of faculty in a university-based nursing program who, having begun his or her career in classroom teaching, has taught online for at least one year.

The review of literature will provide an overview of online education with a specific look at online nursing education. Faculty roles will be reviewed starting with those within the traditional higher education models, including nursing faculty, and the impact of online education on faculty roles is discussed. This section concludes with a review of the transformational learning model that informs the analysis of the research questions.

Online Education

The Sloan Consortium (Sloan-C), a national consortium of organizations and institutions committed to online learning, defines online courses as "any course where at

least 80% of the content is delivered online" (Allen & Seaman, 2006). Live courses have no more than 30% of their content online, and courses that fall in between those two percentages (30% -80%) are referred to as *hybrid* or *blended*. The Florida Board of Governors, that oversees the operations of the state university system, identifies asynchronous courses as "instruction that is time and space independent 75% or more of the time." This definition encompasses Web-delivered content (Florida Board of Governors, 2007).

Online education has broadened educational opportunities for many students since its start, which is identified as being sometime in the 1990's (Chao, Saj, & Tessler, 2006). The United States Department of Education reported in 2003 that more than 56% of all post-secondary institutions, public and private, offered online courses (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2003). The greatest numbers of students were enrolled in two-year institutions, but 89% of all public universities and colleges had some online offerings. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (2002) states that of 5,655 accredited institutions, 1,979 offer distance education programs.

In a 2006 study of 2,200 institutions Sloan-C reported that 3.2 million students were enrolled in at least one online class (Allen & Seaman, 2006). As identified above, the majority of these were undergraduate students attending community colleges; however, the proportion of online graduate students was greater than that of online undergraduates. Ninety-six percent of institutions with enrollments of more than 15,000 had some online course offerings. This was twice the number of smaller institutions.

To continue making inroads in online education, academic administrators must believe that it is critical for the long-term success of the institution to do so (Allen & Seaman, 2006). When asked in 2006 to identify online education's importance to their institutions, 58% of administrators agreed that it was very important. This represented an increase from 2003. Also reported, 72% believed that online education serves students who might otherwise not be served by traditional programs (Allen & Seaman).

In Sloan-C's 2006 report on the state of online education, 62% of chief academic officers believed that online education was as good as, or better than, live offerings (Allen & Seaman, 2006). However, these same academic officers did believe that online classes require more student discipline and are more difficult and expensive to deliver than live courses. They believe that most faculty members have not yet accepted the potential value of online education; however, only 13% believe that employers might be suspect of the quality of online programs and, therefore, might not be willing to hire individuals with online degrees. Institutions not planning on offering online programs gave as the most frequent reason (44%) that distance education did not fit within the mission of the school, with startup cost following as the second most frequently listed reason (33%) (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2003).

The quality of online education is often questioned, and the ability to validate that outcomes are similar to those of live programs is paramount. Without adherence to quality, online education programs cannot successfully compete with traditional classes (Chao et al., 2006). In a survey of managers (n=101), only 41% reported that they would give equal consideration to students with online degrees, and 58% stated that while an

online degree was acceptable, it was not as credible as a degree obtained through traditional means. Passmore (2000) shares a common concern that many online courses are little more than “shovelware,” incorporating a syllabus, old notes from live classes, a few visuals, and some URLs. Learners need active learning with opportunities for feedback in order to increase their understanding to ensure their online experience is equivalent to that obtained in face-to-face classes.

According to Chao et al. (2006), a meta-analysis of the literature relating to online quality standards revealed the following criteria as most important in evaluating online course quality: “Institutional support; Course development and instructional design; Teaching and learning; Course structure and resources; Student and faculty support; Evaluation and assessment; Use of technology; and e-learning products and services” (p. 33). Regular and consistent review of course quality should be undertaken by an interdisciplinary team (instructors, web designers, and instructional designers). The quality review is also an important part of the course development process, which may include providing faculty members and course developers with a checklist of standards to be evaluated. Though many institutions and organizations develop their own standards based on the literature, there are several nationally recognized rubrics that provide a framework for evaluation of individual courses or entire programs.

Sloan-C identifies “five pillars” that are necessary for a quality online program (Lorenzo & Moore, 2002). The first pillar is learning effectiveness. This includes factors such as active learning and higher order thinking. Without evidence of learning effectiveness, distance education cannot be considered comparable to live education.

Pillar two, student satisfaction, recommends that institutions investigate whether students feel their learning needs have been met by online courses and whether they would enroll in another such class. Support services and a high level of interaction are usually factors that enhance student satisfaction. The third pillar addresses faculty satisfaction. Though many faculty members report increased satisfaction with flexibility and student interactions, they often need recognition and assurance that their efforts are valued. The fourth pillar focuses on the need to ensure that distance education is cost effective. The fifth pillar is access. Students need to be able to access the online programs regardless of location or variations in available technology. Access requires universities to ensure that their technical infrastructures are reliable and accessible by potential students.

According to the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (2002) the nine national and eight regional accrediting organizations use a platform of standards to review the quality of distance education programs. Though the nine national organizations all utilize varying standards, there are seven key areas common to all: institutional mission; institutional organizational structure; institutional resources; curriculum and instruction; faculty support; student support; and student learning outcomes. Accreditors identify three major challenges when evaluating distance education programs: alternative design of instruction, alternative providers of higher education, and expanded focus on training. “Alternative design of instruction” relies on the institution’s ability to provide resources, including instructional design specialists. “Alternative providers of higher education” refers to new institutions that may deliver all education online; accreditors compare these institutions to existing brick-and-mortar

institutions by scrutinizing their ability to provide comparable services. Finally, accreditors look at “expanded training” which needs to be in place in order to prepare and support faculty members and students embarking on distance education.

Battin-Little (2007) evaluated standards that addressed individual courses rather than entire programs. These standards are important for program consistency and quality, as they ensure the effectiveness of each course. Battin-Little’s study reviewed online nursing courses utilizing two standards, or rubrics, for course evaluation based on current research. One set of standards was produced internally, and the other was a nationally recognized standard known as Quality Matters. Quality Matters was developed by Maryland Online, a consortium of universities and colleges in the state of Maryland, as a faculty peer-review rubric. Results of the study showed that the Quality Matters’ standards were easier to follow than the internally-developed standards and results of the course review were more consistent between multiple reviewers. Battin-Little recommended utilizing the national standards and training faculty members to do peer reviews, which, in turn, would aid faculty in the development of their own courses.

Though there is general agreement that standards for courses and programs are important for ensuring quality, there has been little actual research reporting on the effectiveness of utilizing standards. Dietz-Uhler, Fisher, and Han (2008) introduced online standards to improve the quality of their courses, and at the end of six months student retention rates improved by 11% in the classes where standards were incorporated. Success was attributed to the fact that standards ensured that policies and

expectations were clearly stated and students were provided with rich interactive experiences.

Quality and cost effectiveness were addressed in a course redesign project initiated in 1999 and supported by the Pew Charitable Trust. In the project, 30 colleges and universities went through the process of redesigning and evaluating their online learning programs (Twigg, 2003). Based on evaluation of student assessment and outcomes, results as of 2003 showed increases in student learning at 20 of the institutions that instituted the program; the remaining institutions showed no significant difference. Additionally, schools showed improved retention and student satisfaction, better student attitudes, and cost savings averaging 40%.

Though the types of schools ranged from research universities to community colleges, and the projects encompassed entire programs as well as supplemental online offerings, Twigg reported six characteristics shared by each of the institutions. The first characteristic was *whole course redesign*. Participants looked at redesigning the entire course rather than just a portion, even if the course was not online in its entirety. The redesign included an analysis of activities by each of the team members involved in the effort. This exercise enabled the schools to streamline work efforts and to avoid duplication. *Active learning* was the second characteristic identified. All courses worked to replace lectures with activities that engaged students in the coursework. *Computer-based learning resources*, characteristic number three, enabled students to practice and receive immediate feedback for their efforts. The fourth characteristic, *mastery learning*, allowed pacing for students based on mastering objectives in a progressive manner. On-

demand help provided support for, and increased a feeling of community among, students. *Alternate staffing* was the final characteristic identified by Twigg. Analysis of student needs indicated that highly trained professional staff, such as faculty members, are not necessary to meet many of the students' needs. The use of support staff and teaching assistants minimized the time faculty members had to spend in answering questions.

With the increasing population of college-age students, plus the number of nontraditional-age students returning to school, combined with declining tax revenues, Meyer (2008) predicts that universities will turn to the cost-efficiencies of online education. However, transforming the curriculum to be more cost-efficient while continuing to provide acceptable student outcomes can take time and resources as well as a willingness by institutions and faculty members to embrace new methods and means of delivering education. According to Meyer, investing the time and resources could result in greater access to higher education as well as increased revenues for colleges and universities.

To identify processes to ensure that online programs are financially sustainable, Meyer, Bruwelheide, and Poulin (2007) investigated the practices of nine project directors who had received grants to create higher education online programs. Despite the diversity of the projects, there were several overarching principles that were utilized by each of the project directors. *Knowing the market* was identified as the most important principle by all the directors. Advisory boards with content expertise can assist in providing this information. The next step involves *identifying the anticipated costs of the*

online program before setting the price. The program needs a sound marketing plan, including a web identity, in order to recruit students. *Hiring faculty members who have a genuine interest in online teaching* is a crucial principal in program sustainability. *Ongoing training in technology as well as pedagogy* needs to be in place, as well as mentoring and assessment, to improve student outcomes. Measures need to be enacted to enhance retention. These measures should include a good technological infrastructure that creates community among distance education students. Finally, *ongoing program evaluation and improvements* need to be a part of the process to ensure quality. Meyer, Bruwelheide, and Poulin caution that these principles are evolving as changes in technology, costs, and knowledge evolve.

Despite predictions that online education might enable students to have better choices when identifying where to study, students often choose online education because it is seen as a less expensive, easier option (Schwarzman, 2007). For example, many students who enrolled in an undergraduate oral communications class did so because they did not believe that there would be actual public speaking assignments associated with the experience. However, once enrolled, students discovered that requirements were the same as those for the live class; the only difference was that projects were presented online instead of live. In another example, though there is a plethora of quality information available through online databases such as EBSCO, students still frequently turn to Google or other popular search engines that do not provide quality control of content. This indicates that, as students become more experienced with technology, they are still unsophisticated users of that technology (Schwarzman).

Demand for online education is not likely to abate in the foreseeable future (Crawford & Gannon-Cook, 2002). The number of students and institutions who participate is growing yearly. As institutions develop online programs, it is important that they address issues of quality and cost effectiveness. Quality standards such as Sloan-C's Five Pillars, or Maryland Online's Quality Matters have the potential to ensure that programs are comparable to face-to-face programs, but more research is needed to verify the comparability of learning effectiveness. Controlling costs to ensure that the program is sustainable is also an often overlooked component of the online course development process. Online programs have the potential to reach students for whom an education would otherwise not be possible, but institutions need to ensure that their costs, as well as students' costs, are managed and that standards are in place to assure employers that graduates from online programs are as educated as those from face-to-face programs.

Online Nursing Education

Healthcare experts warn of qualified professional nursing shortages in the United States (Stotts, Smith, Edwards-Schafer, Schmidt, & Smith, 2002). The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) predicts that these nursing shortages will intensify as the aging "baby boomer" population increases the need for health care (Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), 2003). A study conducted by the Health Resources and Service Administration, Bureau of Health Professions, National Center for Health Workforce Analysis found that a shortage of registered nurses (RNs) projected for 2007 was already evident in the year 2000. The shortage will be most

prevalent in 44 states, including Florida and the District of Columbia, by 2020 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002).

The U.S. Bureau of Labor estimates one million new and replacement nurses will be needed by 2012 to meet growing demands and to replace retiring RNs (HRSA, 2003). However, the number of nursing school graduates who sat for licensure examinations decreased 10% from 1995 to 2004. In order to meet the demands, schools will need to graduate 40% more nurses than are currently enrolled.

This shortage of qualified nurses is particularly critical because RNs are the primary source of care for patients at the most vulnerable points in their lives (HRSA, 2003). A study of hospitals by Aiken, Clarke, Cheung, Sloane, and Silber (2003) showed that with each new patient added to an RN's workload, chances of patient death after surgery increased by 7%. Consequently, it is necessary to ensure a sufficient supply of nurses to provide quality health care and reduce morbidity (HRSA, 2003).

To alleviate these shortages, much funding and support has focused on graduating nurses more quickly through associate degree programs (Aiken et al., 2003). However, RNs with associate degrees are discovering that opportunities for advancement are not as available as they are for nurses who hold baccalaureate degrees (Maltby & Andrusyszyn, 1997). Even more significant, a study conducted by Aiken et al. (2003) across 168 hospitals found that with every 10% increase of baccalaureate-prepared nurses, there was a 5% reduction in patient deaths. Maltby and Andrusyszyn also discovered that patient mortality was 19% lower in hospitals where 60% of nurses had baccalaureate or higher degrees than in hospitals where only 20% of nurses held baccalaureate or higher degrees.

The study also revealed that years of nursing experience had no significant impact on patient mortality. These results indicate the importance of increasing not only the number of RNs, but increasing, as well, the number of nurses who are baccalaureate-prepared (Aiken et al.). A similar study in Canada showed a reduction of 9 deaths per 1000 patients when the number of baccalaureate-prepared nurses increased by 10% (Tourangeau et al., 2007). In 2008, a study of cancer patients facing surgery showed that outcomes were associated with nursing educational levels. Baccalaureate-prepared nurses were linked with lower mortality and less adverse outcomes for patients (Friese, Lake, Aiken, Silber, & Sochalski, 2008).

Additionally, nurses prepared at the baccalaureate level have higher job satisfaction, which is important for retention (Rambur, Palumbo, McIntosh, & Mongeon, 2003). Nurses, according to AACN, are the individuals who are most directly responsible for patient care (American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), 2008). Nurses increasingly work as part of a team of colleagues, all of whom are educated at the master's or higher level; nurses should not be the least educated members of the health care team. AACN also reports that increased education provides nurses with more in-depth science education and prepares nurses with a better understanding of all the issues that affect patients.

In order to increase access to education, online registered nursing to bachelor or master of science (RN-to-BS/MS) programs have been instituted by many colleges and universities and have resulted in increased student enrollment (Kozlowski, 2004; Ostrow & DiMaria-Ghalili, 2005). Ali, Hodson-Carlton, and Ryan (2005) state that the

phenomenal growth of online education for nurses may help meet the growing need for qualified professional RNs. Steiner (2001) reports that in the five years proceeding a 2001 study there was a 500% increase in distance education courses for nursing. Many courses are web-based. Others are delivered through video conferencing, television, audio/video methods, or by faculty members who travel to multiple locations (Steiner).

Launching a distance education nursing program requires extensive planning and effective infrastructure, and this involves learning from the experiences of institutions that have initiated programs (Potempa et al., 2001). A 1998 survey of nursing schools was an initial attempt to collect and share information for AACN accredited schools and colleges (AACN, 1999). The survey indicated that 74% of schools that responded had some type of distance education program. Of these, only 25% offered extra compensation to faculty for the development of technology-mediated courses, and 46% had development and implementation of distance learning courses as part of the promotion and tenure process. Faculty training and development was offered by 79% of the schools. Over half of the schools reported that courses were developed by faculty members in collaboration with outside resources. The most frequent reason given for not implementing technology-driven education was budget limitations (82%), followed by limited time for training (78%), and then lack of technical support (63%).

The Alliance for Nursing Accreditation, an alliance of major accrediting nursing agencies, issued a statement in 2003 recognizing the continued growth of distance education (AACN, 2003a). The organization stated that all distance education offerings had to provide the same quality and services as face-to-face programs. The statement

addresses consistency in student outcomes, including measuring and reporting professional role socialization and clinical competence. Finally, the statement also underscores the inclusion of faculty development and technical support for faculty members and students (AACN). As increasing demand for online education is being addressed by nursing schools and colleges, it is important to ensure that faculty members collaborate with others to develop effective online classes, provide ongoing technical support, and ensure that the technology itself does not become the focus of the class (Udod & Care, 2002).

Online programs can provide a cost effective option for both institutions and students, enabling RNs who are working or do not have access to traditional academic settings to pursue their education (Bolan, 2003; McAlpine, Lockerbie, Ramsay, & Beaman, 2002; Stotts et al., 2002). Stotts et al. (2002) address the needs of nurses in remote rural areas unable to attend traditional classes. Online education increases educational opportunities for these students and has the added effect of increasing the probability that students will remain in these rural areas rather than pursue relocation, which is often a consequence of attending classes away from their homes (Stotts). This is particularly important in graduate nursing programs, as nurse practitioners may be the only professional health care providers in some rural areas (Udod & Care, 2002). A survey of AACN accredited colleges reveals that three of the priorities for schools that wanted to begin online programs were: to serve rural areas, to remain competitive, and to find the appropriate marketing niche (Steiner, 2001).

In an example of how one school addressed the attempt to provide education to rural areas, McAlpine et al. (2002) described the University of New Brunswick's first Web-based course delivered to graduate nursing students in remote areas. Despite some initial technical challenges, most students indicated in course evaluations that they felt the online experience was positive. Faculty members were able to validate, through discussions and emails, that students in the course achieved high levels of understanding and critical thinking. In fact, they believed that online students were superior to students in a live setting when it came to reflective writing and depth of discussion. The authors recommended adding photographs and a social chat site in order to create a more personal environment.

Online nursing education is not without its challenges. Many nursing students are not necessarily proficient with computer technology and, in RN-to-BS as well as in graduate programs, most are returning to school for the first time after many years and are faced with the challenges of learning, as well as the challenge of adapting to the online environment (Jacobs, Rosenfeld, & Haber, 2003). Online courses can be particularly difficult for those in an RN-to-BS program who come from a community college environment and may not be equipped for the challenges of either the technology or the curriculum (Chaffin & Maddux, 2004). In a 2004 study, Kozlowski reported that nursing students found online work to be more time-consuming than traditional classes and stress was increased by time constraints and technological ability. Students also had increased anxiety when their expectations on how online courses would be conducted did not correspond with reality. However, many online nursing students state that, despite

technological challenges of online classes, the flexibility and convenience outweighed any issues (McAlpine et al., 2002; Udod & Care, 2002).

Wills and Stommel (2002) investigated students of two graduate nursing courses, (i.e., a) research and b) aging studies) regarding their perceptions and preferences in online learning. A pretest-posttest method was used in each of the courses. In the pretest, students were questioned about their learning preferences, their perceptions of student and faculty roles and responsibilities, and whether they expected to learn as much in an online class as they would learn in a live setting. The posttest looked at the students' preferences after completing the class, either live or online, and whether they felt that they had learned. Student satisfaction was also investigated. Analysis between the two classes was done as an independent sample t-test and showed that students in the research course perceived that they were less involved in their own learning process and were less tolerant of technical issues. Students in the aging studies courses indicated that the quality of instruction and learning was greater than expected. They also reported that interactions were better than anticipated and technical problems were not as difficult as had been expected. The aging studies students also perceived that they had learned more than they originally believed they would. Both groups experienced fewer technical difficulties than they had anticipated, though this did not change their beliefs that technical difficulties were the norm. Survey results showed that more students were converted to preferring online courses ($p < .056$) than to not preferring them. Survey responses and anecdotal evidence in this study revealed that the research course students were more negative about online learning. The authors attributed this to the fact that not only was research

one of the first classes introduced in an online venue to students, but that research was a required course, and it was imperative that students passed, while aging studies was an elective offered in the second year. This indicates, according to Wills and Stommel, a need to ensure that beginning students receive adequate training and support before starting their online programs. The researchers also recommend occasional classroom meetings for students who require the support.

The University of Kansas provides incoming graduate nursing students with an online orientation that includes meeting technical requirements and identifying computing resources to prepare them for learning in the online environment (Boyle & Wambach, 2001). In order to ease students' fears about online learning, Boyle and Wambach provide introductory activities that enable students to get familiar with the technology. Such activities include participating on an online discussion board, where they introduce themselves, and subsequent forums related to course content. Use of student facilitators encourages ongoing conversations that need not be led by instructors. As students become more comfortable and skilled with the technology, instructors can allocate to them more control over the modes of communication and interactions, increasing the students' level of responsibility for learning (Boyle & Wambach).

Graduate nursing students return to school because they want to advance their careers, and it is important that they feel the education they receive is applicable to real life situations (Boyle & Wambach, 2001). The inclusion of adult learning principles and constructivist theory in the development of online learning experiences provides a framework for ensuring that online courses meet the needs of graduate nursing students.

Additionally, analysis and understanding of information presented online make up an important step in the development of graduate students' knowledge of evidence-based practice, which is defined as "the ability to access and evaluate information" (Jacobs et al., 2003). Jacobs et al. also state that in order to succeed, practicing nurses must be able to navigate successfully in the technological environment. Online classes provide opportunities for students to hone their computer skills.

Though many schools have instituted online nursing programs, evaluation of program effectiveness is only beginning to be addressed by schools and colleges of nursing (Billings, 2000). A framework for assessing the effectiveness of online nursing program outcomes is recommended. Ali, Hodson-Carlton, and Ryan (2002) developed an evaluation tool based on benchmarks from the Institute for Higher Education Policy. The purpose of this research was to identify whether nursing students valued these benchmarks and to provide an effective method for students to evaluate their satisfaction with different aspects of online programs. Results were gathered over a three-year period, and it was noted that satisfaction increased in all areas as the online program matured. The results were used by the authors to design a model for evaluation of nursing programs that could be used by schools for self-study or by students who want to evaluate online programs before selecting a school.

Billings (2000) and Ali et al. (2005) identified similar online nursing program evaluation frameworks that address outcomes, support, education, faculty, and infrastructure. Outcomes refer to traditional as well as online learning and are made possible in the Web-based environment through means such as computer proficiency and

collaboration techniques that can be utilized in clinical practice. Evaluation and assessment outcomes need to address student satisfaction, employer satisfaction, retention, and pass rates. Educational practices recommended by Billings are those such as active learning and promotion of student-teacher interaction, which are most effective in an online environment. Clinical requirements for the online program also need to be addressed to meet the needs of distance students.

"Faculty and student support" not only refers to technical support and orientation, but also to role adjustment for both groups in the online environment. Student support specifically addresses technology needs and provisions for online socialization, advising, and tutoring. Faculty support includes recognition and reward. Research shows that academic credentials of faculty members and the faculty members' role in developing online courses were criteria deemed important. Faculty members require assistance in developing and understanding instructional design and orientation in the use of technology in order to prepare and plan for their new roles as online educators.

Use of technology is vital to the success of the online program. Institutional context, institutional commitment to the nursing program, and technological infrastructure ensure that the courses run with minimal distractions and that faculty members utilize the technology appropriately so that student learning is efficient and outcomes are effective.

Online programs are seen as an answer to the growing shortage of professional nurses as well as to the need for more nurse practitioners in rural and underserved communities. Programs reviewed in the literature have shown success, particularly if

students and faculty members are appropriately prepared and supported. A successful online program requires the collaboration of a cadre of professionals in addition to a commitment by the institution to ensure that an adequate infrastructure is in place.

Traditional Role and Responsibilities of FacultyMembers

Before understanding the new faculty paradigm created by online education, it is necessary to identify and define what it means to be a faculty member in an institution of higher learning. When identifying the traditional roles and responsibilities of faculty members in the university setting, the most widely recognized is teaching, followed by research. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) (n.d.) lists three areas of responsibility for faculty members: *student-centered work*, *disciplinary (professional) work*, and *community-centered work*. "Student-centered work" includes teaching, advising, course website development, and curriculum development. Faculty members must continually research course content and make updates as needed to the curriculum, serve on master or doctoral student committees, and assist students and alumni with employment issues. "Disciplinary, or professional, work" involves research, publishing, committee work, and tenure review. Interviewing new faculty members, peer evaluation, grant-writing, and review of library resources are also considered part of the faculty professional role. "Community-centered work" focuses on contributions to individuals or institutions beyond the university and includes presentations and professional advising to government and community groups (AAUP).

Integrating all three of these roles in an academic career is challenging (Colbeck, 2002). Faculty members report a variety of ways in which they manage their schedules to

accommodate these roles, often focusing on one role at a time or apportioning their weeks by allocating a specific day and time to each role. Some faculty members, however, admit reducing effort in one or more of these areas. Higher ranked faculty members, such as full professors, were less likely to worry about management of roles and were also likely to address the issue by integrating the roles. They might, for example, make class assignments related to research interests. Less senior faculty members reported working as many as 80 hours per week in order to fulfill their obligations in all three roles (Colbeck).

In addition to the traditional roles ascribed to them, faculty members also share in the responsibility for governance of higher education institutions (American Association of University Professors (AAUP), n.d.). The rise of faculty governance occurred during the time following World War II, when academic disciplines within institutions of higher learning overtook vocationalism in importance (Lazerson, 1998). Responsibility for shaping the curriculum and developing curriculum within the disciplines were the responsibility of the faculty members. AAUP states that faculty members should have the "primary responsibility" for course curriculum and faculty status, e.g., promotion and tenure. Areas of shared governance recommended by AAUP include selection of a president and other academic administrators. Faculty members should have a significant voice in any other areas that have an impact on "the educational and scholarly enterprise" of the institution.

Prior to the 1990's, faculty members primarily focused on delivery of curriculum and research in the discipline (Lazerson, 1998). However, in the 1990's a new focus on

how students learn and interdisciplinary education broadened the scope of faculty responsibilities. Trautmann (2008) writes that preparation for teaching in higher education usually consisted of acquiring subject matter expertise; heightened awareness of how students learn and the response to increased student diversity challenged this norm. Trautmann noted that preparation for faculty positions primarily consists of training assistanceships during which students provide support but rarely gain the type of teaching experience that prepares them for the faculty role. Traditional classrooms have prescribed social roles that incorporate teacher-centered, lecture-based pedagogy (Jaffee, 2003). These traditional elements are reinforced by the physical configuration of most classrooms. For example, a one-to-many configuration depicted by the lecturer facing a group of students in rows reinforces the traditional model of teacher as authority and inhibits efforts to provide more learner-centered educational experiences.

An additional obstacle faced by faculty members at research universities is that teaching is often devalued and faculty members are rewarded for their research output rather than for student outcomes. Faculty members' attitudes toward teaching are influenced by what they believe is most valued by their institutions. Consequently, one survey of faculty members at a research university revealed that most perceived that publishing and getting grants provided them with more recognition and rewards than designing courses. In fact only faculty development and clerical work were perceived as less important (Colbeck, Cabrera, & Marine, 2002). Additionally, faculty members who are not white and male often face challenges to their authority and ability from students, and from their institution, as well (Chesler & Young, 2007). In a study of faculty

members' satisfaction, females were somewhat less satisfied than their male colleagues with authority over their work (Seifert & Umbach, 2008).

Faced with all these obstacles to teaching online and the competing demands of the traditional roles, some institutions have looked for different models in order to ensure faculty success. Link, Swann, and Bozeman (2008) recommended an allocation of faculty time based on a particular university's specific institutional goals, e.g., research or teaching. Their study indicated that once faculty members achieved success, measured by attaining tenure, they were able to devote more time to other areas not as critical to that success. Harvey, Sigerstad, Kuffel, Novicevic, and Keaton (2006), proposed a method of rethinking faculty roles that could lead to increased productivity, moving toward outcome-based results. Their study looked at identifying faculty members by roles, such as "newcomer" or "senior," that reflect their status within the college. This study recommends that administrators assess individual faculty members based on their roles and allocate resources and work in order to meet the needs of individual faculty members as well as those of the institution. For example, newcomers who have been hired based on performance and skills may not have acquired a terminal degree; therefore, they are encouraged and supported in this venture and protected from other institutional demands that may distract them from this goal. The researchers recommend further empirical research in order to determine whether this proposed model will restructure faculty management (Harvey et al.).

Increased pressure by government and students to enhance skill-based education, along with faculty members' interest in learner-centered education and constructivist

pedagogy, may strengthen the call for changes in traditional faculty roles (Goethals et al., 2004; Hughes, 2007). Hughes predicts that faculty members will become more adept in working as part of a team in addition to becoming managers of change. It will be important for faculty members to become more knowledgeable about the design and evaluation of curriculum. Increasingly, faculty members who have these skill sets in addition to the ability to introduce innovative educational models will be the preferred faculty applicants. Faculty members must also become increasingly skilled at making decisions based on evidence. Hughes reports that, for various reasons, faculty members have neglected scholarly research and teaching methods. In order to accomplish all these goals, Hughes recommends that the institution offer faculty development, encouragement, and rewards in order for faculty members to become successful in their new roles (Hughes).

Faculty members are traditionally expected to provide service in multiple areas, specifically: research, education, and service. Pressure to achieve tenure often forces faculty members into focusing on only one of these areas at a time, depending on their institution's focus. The demands of faculty members to secure promotion and tenure are compounded by the increasingly complex needs of students. New ways of prioritizing these responsibilities are being researched as administrators at institutions of higher learning seek to balance the needs of students with those of faculty members.

Traditional Role and Responsibilities of Nursing Educators

The role of the nursing educator is similar to that of other university faculty members and includes teaching, research, and community service. But in addition,

nursing educators are usually required to introduce methods to improve patient care while maintaining their own nursing skills (Gormley, 2003). Nursing educators must be skilled health care providers who maintain professional nursing standards and have advanced degrees that qualify them as a nursing generalist or specialist (Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), 2002). Nursing students must be taught to reconcile their individual needs with the health care needs of society.

SREB (2002) lists three nursing educator roles: *teacher*, *scholar*, and *collaborator*. The *teacher* role requires faculty to be skilled in pedagogy. Additionally, nursing educators must teach students how to provide health care to a diverse population. In 2005, the National League of Nursing (NLN) identified eight core competencies of nursing educators. These competencies include *facilitation of learning*, *socialization*, *use of assessment*, and *acting as an agent of change*, which includes participation in curriculum development and program evaluation. Commitment to quality improvement addresses the need for continuous learning along with the need to pursue scholarship. Finally, nurse educators need to function within the educational environment in which they are currently engaged.

The *scholar* role requires nursing educators to participate in, design, and use research in curriculum and in practice (SREB, 2002). Competencies relate to the nursing educators' ability to conduct research as well as to engage students by participation and by helping them understand how to apply research in clinical practice. Collaboration is vital for nursing educators in order to communicate policy and health care agenda with various constituencies.

The current nursing shortage has been impacted by the concurrent shortage of nursing educators (American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), 2003b). The National League for Nursing (2005) estimates that there are 16,440 full-time faculty members at baccalaureate and higher educational institutions in the United States There are 1,390 unfilled faculty positions for all types of institutions, with 411 unfilled positions within the Southern region, which includes Florida.

Lack of faculty sharply reduces the number of students who can enroll in programs throughout the nation (Kovner, Fairchild, & Jacobson, 2006). Reasons for the shortages include an aging workforce, enticement of doctoral graduates into other employment venues, and salary differentials between educational and clinical positions. Nursing faculty members are often encouraged to have significant clinical careers before committing to teaching, and this raises the age at which nursing educators may embark on an academic career (Yordy, 2006). Other factors cited are the cost and length of time to obtain a doctoral education and the changing student population, which is challenging faculty members to learn new ways of teaching a diverse group of individuals. Often, faculty members who supervise clinical experiences are responsible for very ill patients – a factor that adds to the complications.

One method utilized by a majority of institutions to address the faculty shortage is to hire part-time faculty members (Kovner et al., 2006). Other institutions reported increasing workloads of current faculty members and limiting admission of new students, which could exacerbate the current situation. AACN (2003b) recommends including more strategic support for students pursuing advanced degrees and creating opportunities

for current faculty members to obtain doctoral degrees and to participate in education development programs. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation suggests clinical internships that encourage students at a master's level to train as educators as they participate in clinical experiences (Yordy, 2006).

Nursing faculty members must adhere to the same requirements as faculty members from other disciplines, but they must also maintain their own clinical skills and supervise their students while caring for potentially seriously ill patients. The intense workload, lack of rewards, and the private sector competition have seriously impacted the number of qualified nursing faculty throughout the nation, compounding the already critical nursing shortage.

Role of Faculty in Online Education

The role of both nursing and non-nursing faculty in an online environment differs from the traditional role in that the online instructor is expected to become a facilitator of online learning (Frese, 2006; Jaffee, 2003; Steiner, 2001). Consequently, online faculty members must adapt to a new way of teaching and relate in different ways to their peers, students, and other professionals with whom they previously had little contact. Frequently, all this must be done without significant preparation or training.

The active learning strategies required in an online setting alter how teachers teach and how students learn (Jaffee, 2003). The role of online faculty members requires skillful manipulation of discussions and learning activities in order to engage online learners and ensure they are interacting sufficiently with the content (Frese, 2006). McCrory, Putnam, and Jason (2008) also concluded that students control the learning in

the online environment. Students have the ability to interact with the content and with their peers in their own ways without instructor intervention or control. Consequently, faculty members need instructional design competencies in converting face-to-face courses into an online venue so that students will receive guidance in their interactions. Other instructional skills necessary for effectively teaching online include designing authentic assessments and dealing with plagiarism and cheating. Despite well-developed content, instructional design implementation, and other factors, student interactions were the determining factor in how the class went. In live classes, faculty members can control the information flow of the course, but in online classes, students may not follow the direction identified for them.

Not all traditional teaching methods are lost once faculty members move to online teaching. Johnson (2008) looked at nursing faculty members transitioning to online teaching. These faculty members were part of a consortium of eight universities receiving grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to create online curriculum for nurse practitioner programs. Participants reported concerns that they would not be able to transfer any of their traditional teaching methods to the online venue and were more comfortable once they discovered they could utilize some of their previous methods such as testing and issuing writing assignments (Johnson, 2008). Nursing faculty at University of Wisconsin also reported that while some of their methods were transferable, they had to rethink other teaching methods, such as preparation of handouts and communicating at a distance. (Diekelmann et al., 1998).

Of major concern to all faculty members in several studies was the inability to read students' faces when covering course content; faculty members expressed concern over how they would be able to gauge whether students understood the content (Diekelmann et al., 1998; Frese, 2006; Johnson, 2005; Ryan et al., 2004). New pedagogies, such as interactive multi-media and online synchronous classes, were instituted to compensate for this lack of face-to-face contact, but these took time and training, both of which were often reported as missing by online faculty members (Frese, 2006).

One hundred percent of nursing faculty members surveyed by Ryan et al. (2005) felt the need for development and mentoring when embarking in online teaching. In a 2006 study by Frese, only 25% of faculty members strongly agreed that they received adequate training from their institutions prior to beginning to teach online. Others reported that rarely did training include pedagogical methods for online teaching; although 74% stated that having a mentor was important, only 15% had one. The technical training most desired but lacking, according to faculty members, was content management system training, which addresses subjects such as how to create online assignments and tests (Frese). Despite having had an orientation to technology prior to beginning teaching, nursing faculty members at the University of Wisconsin expressed concern about the lack of thorough technology knowledge as well as an insufficient overall understanding of the process of teaching in an online venue (Diekelmann et al., 1998).

Changes in familiar ways of working and scheduling their time was a concern faculty members reported in a number of studies. In a study of nursing faculty at the University of Wisconsin, members reported that as they began teaching online, they found the experience disrupted schedules that they had been used to for many years (Diekelmann et al., 1998). Primarily, faculty members perceived that there was an increase in the amount of time it takes to teach when instruction is online (Hopewell, 2007). Study participants stated that communication and the grading of assignments were more time-consuming than in face-to-face courses. Specifically, faculty members reported that answering questions via email is more time-consuming than verbally answering a question in the presence of other students who may request the same information. Faculty members in this study felt compelled to respond to emails as soon as they were received and, consequently, this was seen as an interruption that occurred throughout the day. Monitoring discussion boards to ensure students were interacting with the content, as well as providing additional assignments, factored into the increased time spent in teaching online, though this opinion was not universally held by all faculty members within the study. Several participants indicated that once faculty members became familiar with these new methods of grading and communicating, the activities would not be as time-consuming. Responding to students' emails and discussions once or twice a day provides consistency and reliability for the students and enables faculty members to be able to structure their time so they are not feeling the need to respond continuously to student emails (Boyle & Wambach, 2001).

Johnson's (2008) study of graduate nursing faculty members also revealed that, while some indicated there was an increased time commitment, others identified a restructuring of time that was initially unfamiliar, and all agreed up-front time to develop an online class was extensive. Maintaining courses and designing multimedia components increases the time to develop online courses. This factor is not often accounted for in faculty workload assignments, as Schwarzman concludes (2007). Over 80% of nursing faculty members reported that teaching online was more time-consuming than teaching face-to-face, partially because courses were frequently rotated; therefore, compensation, workload, and ownership of online content needed to be addressed prior to delivering online education (Ryan et al., 2005). The number one concern of faculty members at Mississippi State University was time for faculty course development and revision (Gammill, 2004).

The need for administrative support was expressed by all faculty members interviewed in multiple studies (Gammill, 2004; Johnson, 2008; Ryan et al., 2004; Schwarzman, 2007). Administrators frequently believe that faculty members can manage larger numbers of students in online courses, not taking into account the additional number of assignments that will be submitted for grading in performance-based courses (Schwarzman, 2007). In a study of Mississippi State University faculty members who taught online courses, administrative support and faculty workload were rated high as important elements when teaching online (Gammill, 2004). Though questions surrounding intellectual property ownership may create a reluctance for some faculty members to embark in online education (Passmore, 2000), faculty members at

Mississippi State University did not consider this issue particularly significant. Online courses are often created by teams, as opposed to individual faculty members, and these courses designed for the web could be marketed, exposing instructor content to venues outside the classroom. Also of concern is that universities will replace faculty members with less expensive course facilitators once the online content is developed.

Frese (2006) learned that many faculty members felt there was a lack of incentives to teach online, as well as few limits in the size of classes, and almost all lamented the lack of technical support. A lack of incentives was also reported by Gammill (2004) as a major barrier to faculty members' willingness to teach online. In Hopewell's study (2007), faculty members reported risks to the traditional role of educators. These risks included increased time commitment, low student evaluations due to technical issues, and lack of time to do research. Faculty members expressed concern about how this disruption impacted their nonteaching activities, such as research and writing, and how it required them to adjust schedules, as new course development often required them to work over breaks between semesters.

Student expectations are different in online courses. All nursing faculty members surveyed by Ryan et al. (2005) indicated that students expected communication within 48 hours of posting a question. These expectations, reported faculty members, required them to make adjustments in the ways they work, and 65% of faculty members felt that their relationships with students had changed. Faculty members also expressed concerns that students were not aware of their responsibilities as online learners. The importance of students having a thorough understanding of the technology before enrolling in online

courses was an important factor identified by faculty members (Diekelmann et al., 1998). Once students and faculty members feel comfortable with the technology, classes move along at a more appropriate pace. Faculty members reported the need for new relationships with technical support professionals, as they have had to rely on expertise other than their own to develop and support their classes.

Nursing faculty members at University of Wisconsin recommended that partnerships with media specialists and technical training/support staff be in place and well established before undertaking the development and delivery of a distance education program (Diekelmann et al., 1998). They reported that it is important for faculty members to be involved in decisions made about the technology used, but that these individuals should not become too mired in learning all about how everything works; instead, faculty members should use their limited time to focus on distance education pedagogies. Sharing insight with other faculty members was found to be an expedient way of educating themselves on the ever changing landscape of online education (Diekelmann et al.). Faculty members at Mississippi State University also identified the importance of having a technical infrastructure and support in place but found technical expertise to be of little significance (Gammill, 2004). Conceicao (2006) advised the use of instructional designers to reduce the time of development and maintenance of new courses.

Concerns that online faculty members might not receive evaluations comparable to those in face-to-face classes were explored by Kelly (2007). Kelly compared evaluations of 41 faculty members who each taught one online and one face-to-face class and identified 20 topical categories of responses including *rapport*, *attitude*, *ability*,

workload, and *preparedness*, and three appraisal categories identified as *praise*, *constructive criticism*, and *negative criticism*. Results indicated that, while the percentage of responses that praised online courses was slightly higher (41.2% versus 36.3%), the percentage of responses from face-to-face courses praising faculty (14.9%) was slightly higher than the percentage praising of online faculty (9.3%). However, a MANOVA conducted on student perceptions of overall effectiveness of course and faculty showed no statistical difference between online and face-to-face courses and faculty ($p = .321$) (Kelly).

Hopewell's (2007) study, however, provided a less positive outlook of online evaluations. Response rates to online evaluations were usually less than 20%. This raises concerns about the validity of the evaluations and how they would be used to determine promotion, tenure, and retention of faculty members. In addition, faculty members in this study stated that online students were more vocal in their complaints than students who did live evaluations, and some of the negative remarks were based on student frustration with technology rather than on faculty performance. Peer reviewers, though, were more likely to indicate a higher level of competence for those faculty members who taught online. Additionally, faculty members who teach online have the added benefit of being able to print the course content to provide evidence of activities and teaching innovations for performance reviews (Hopewell).

Advantages of online teaching were expressed by 97% of faculty members who enjoyed the ability to schedule their time and work from varying locations (Ryan et al., 2005). Flexibility was seen as a significant advantage by all faculty members interviewed

by Hopewell (2007). “Flexibility” refers to scheduling and the freedom to work in nontraditional areas. Though many faculty members have reported concern at the loss of physical presence, some have embraced new opportunities for interacting with students not available in the traditional face-to-face classroom (Diekelmann et al., 1998). Faculty and students reported feeling that distance education allows them to be more open and to feel less stifled when expressing their views and opinions. Some faculty members have even reported that they have revised their beliefs about their face-to-face classes based on their online teaching experiences; they no longer believe that they always understand how students are reacting to classroom experiences. Getting to know learners in this venue offered a new experience and challenge that enabled them to increase their own knowledge. One faculty member reported that meeting more frequently in an online venue allowed for creating a greater impact on how students learned and provided an increased personal connection with students (Hopewell, 2007).

Faculty members have reported a high degree of satisfaction with being involved in designing and delivering an online course, as this has provided them with the opportunity to enhance their own skills in a new area of study (Conceicao, 2006). As a result of their personal analysis on teaching differences, some faculty members have even reported enhancement of reflective thinking (Diekelmann et al., 1998). The flexibility has also included having more time for research and writing and time away from campus that faculty members could use to collect data. Online tools, reported faculty members, were more efficient for gathering data, and teaching online offered a wealth of opportunities for research. One instructor also stated that, by offering online classes, the institution is

furthering its outreach to students who might not have previously had access to higher education.

Faculty members who choose or are required to teach in online venues are faced with challenges to their traditional methods of teaching. They must learn to collaborate with peers, students, and other professionals in ways that were previously not part of their roles. Often, they are expected to do all this with little training or support. They are expected to work in new ways but are not given time to learn which pedagogical methods are most effective or applicable to their roles. However, there are perceived rewards, such as flexibility and acquisition of new skill sets.

Transformative Learning

Unlike other adult learning theories, transformative learning emphasizes the cognitive processes of learning rather than the learner's characteristics. This theory attempts to define the process for assessing meaning in a relevant and rational manner and for subsequently developing a plan of action (Mezirow, 2000). Transformative learning can be an intensely emotional experience as learners examine their core beliefs and assumptions. The process of transformative learning can support and guide individuals through the emotional responses that may occur.

Adults must continually negotiate an environment defined by new and changing information (King, 2005; Mezirow, 2000). That is why all learning must emphasize the skill of critical reflection and the means of validating information present in the transformative learning process. Suppositions formed uncritically can distort the accuracy of perceptions about our beliefs, knowledge, and even social norms (Mezirow, 1991).

Our beliefs and knowledge should be tested using the process of reflection, discourse, and then action, which are the overarching areas of the transformative learning process. Ultimately, we must make meaning out of our knowledge and beliefs, as this is the core of the learning process.

Through transformative learning, our frames of references become more inclusive and discriminating (Mezirow, 2000). A “frame of reference” refers to the assumptions that we hold about ourselves, our culture, our beliefs, and the resulting point of view. According to Mezirow (1991), transformative learning occurs when adults experience a disorienting dilemma that challenges one of their assumptions. This is followed by self examination and critical assessment of existing beliefs and assumptions. After this reflection, the learner recognizes through discourse that others have shared a similar experience and negotiated a change. Once the individual rejects the existing assumption, there is a period of exploring and researching options, then developing a plan to acquire new skills or knowledge and adjusting to new roles or beliefs. Finally, after the learner becomes confident with the new role or belief, that role or belief is integrated into the individual’s life (Mezirow).

An example of a disorienting event that could prompt transformative learning, according to Williams (2002), was the terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001. The event was momentous enough to precipitate a disorienting dilemma to many individuals, causing them to reassess their current system of beliefs and knowledge. Persons who believed that our country was impenetrable or that our world position kept us safe from these sorts of attacks were faced with a dilemma. Transformative learning, says Williams,

is not comfortable and requires us to readjust our meanings, which determine how we interpret what we think.

Mezirow (2000) states that transformational learning requires emotional maturity. Merriam (2004) carries this further by stating that in order for transformative learning to take place, the individual must have the ability to engage in higher levels of thinking. A potential for transformative learning requires preconditions such as setting aside bias and engaging in rational discussions of one's beliefs and theories. Without mature cognitive development, according to Merriam, transformative learning cannot take place. Merriam expresses the need for more qualitative research on the topic in order to validate this belief. King (2005) cautions that, as adult educators, we must not require that learners engage in transformative learning. Because of the intensity and emotional component of the experience, we cannot decide whether students are at a place in their lives where they can cope with the experience or whether they have the cognitive abilities described by Merriam.

Cranton (1994) states that at the heart of transformation is the ability to identify and describe one's assumptions. Then the learner must decide whether the assumption is valid, and if not, decide to reject it. Context is also a factor that affects the learning process. Beliefs and values often vary based on the context of culture, gender, and socio-economic levels, and it is important not to ascribe a specific set of beliefs and values to transformational learning.

According to Cranton (2006), in order to foster authentic learning, educators' relationships with students is central to the process. To begin this process, the educator

needs a degree of self-awareness. Self-awareness was revealed in Cuddapah's (2005) investigation of the transformative experiences of first year teachers. Of the ten participants in the qualitative study, eight illustrated transformational experiences based on Mezirow's theory. The first step in the research process was to determine whether the teachers had discourse about the experience, possibly indicating a disorienting dilemma. Second, the teachers reported on their critical reflection regarding the experience. This process, which revealed their level of self-awareness, was done either through journaling or through questioning of colleagues. The third phase was to plan action. Cuddapah stated that, while the teachers had identified plans of action, the resulting implementation was less evident.

Kreber's (2005) survey of science teachers found that while many claimed to engage in the processes of transformative learning, they had trouble showing how they were actually performing critical reflection, and similar to Cuddapah's study, were unable to show how they were integrating transformative learning into their teaching careers. Kreber's study also showed that more experienced teachers and teachers who were more focused on learner-centered learning practices were more likely to indicate that they reflected on their practices.

In order to develop a sense of themselves and become genuine educators, teachers must examine their assumptions about the role of traditional faculty members (Cranton, 2006). King (2005) states that teaching starts with critical reflection that addresses "why we engage in teaching and learning day after day, what our assumptions might be" (p. 89). Sockman and Sharma (2008) describe in their experience as instructors moving

toward developing a transformational model of teaching that it was necessary to examine beliefs about education, ensuring that instruction was based on actual needs and not unexamined assumptions. The researchers report that the journey involved concerns that often caused reactions needing to be addressed in emotional terms, not in academic language. Specifically, the instructors discovered that rigid assessments inhibited students' ability to take risks, and the instructor began to incorporate meaningful questioning, rather than lecturing, in order to foster transformative learning (Sockman & Sharma). Students' objectives often reach beyond what is taught and measured in the classroom (King, 2005).

After self awareness, being aware of individual students' learning is necessary (Cranton, 2006). This could be accomplished by the use of learning contracts in which students identify their own learning needs and goals (King, 2005). Students should have the opportunity to explore different frames of reference and new roles within a safe environment, utilizing the educator as a resource. Developing active learning experiences that involve learners and addresses their needs and goals further the process by allowing learners to explore new perspectives (King).

Since, as indicated, it is important to teach students the skills of transformational learning, it is also important to know whether online students are acquiring these skills that presumably are taught in live classes. A study at University of Oklahoma indicated that 38.5% of the online adult students showed evidence of transformative learning based on their responses to the Learning Activity Survey (Wansick, 2007). The survey questioned whether students had changed perceptions and ways of thinking since entering

the online program. Results also indicated that the longer students had been in the online program, the more likely it was that they had experienced transformative learning. This study, according to Wansick, affirms that online education can provide deeper learning experiences as well as live courses can; however, the case could be strengthened by comparisons to live programs and by information regarding how online students are supported in their efforts to acquire and utilize the skills of transformative learning.

The literature reviewed for this study shows how much work has been done in the research of online education. Online teaching methods, course design, and communicating with students are all topics frequently addressed in the literature. However, only a small amount of research was directed at the role of the online educator. Studies that did look at the change in roles included Johnson (2008) and Ryan, et al. (2004; 2005) who both studied graduate nursing faculty members to identify specific concerns and issues relating to the online teaching role. Other studies (Crawford & Gannon-Cook, 2002; Hartman et al., 2007; Passmore, 2000) looked at faculty members' concerns regarding promotion and tenure and how teaching online might affect their traditional faculty role. However, none of these studies looked at the transformative process that faculty members experience when transitioning from live to online teaching.

Conclusion

The literature indicates that online learning is a growing concern in nursing education and in other fields of study, though it is still in its infancy. At this time, most public and many private universities and colleges offer at least some of their course work online. The need for online education, particularly in nursing, is evidenced by the

growing nontraditional populations who are unable to attend traditional college classes but who have an individual need, as well as a community need, to obtain an advanced degree. As administrations in institutions of higher learning decide whether to implement or support existing online programs, the need for standards and quality programs should be addressed at the onset of an online program. Financial and marketing assessments are also an important component that enable an administration to effectively and judiciously plan, identify the needs of the community, and ensure that the infrastructure to support this endeavor is in place.

The needs of faculty members are also an important piece that is often overlooked in the rush to implement online education. Not only must traditional faculty members still fully participate in the mission of the universities at which they serve, but they must also teach in ways that are new to them –ways for which they have never been prepared pedagogically or technologically.

As addressed in the literature, nursing faculty members face the same challenges as traditional faculty, but they must also maintain their nursing practices, make clinical visits, and provide service to the community. Online nursing programs are becoming increasingly popular in order to address the growing shortage of qualified nurses and to provide trained practitioners to serve in rural and other underserved communities. Preparing nursing faculty members for teaching online is vital to the success of these programs. This study addresses the needs of nursing faculty members who are faced with transitioning from traditional faculty to online facilitators and is examined through the framework of transformational learning.

CHAPTER 3 METHODS

The purpose of this study was 1) to apply phenomenological research strategies in the examination of experiences of nursing faculty members who transitioned from face-to-face classroom to online teaching, and 2) to analyze the reported experiences for evidence of transformative learning. The intention was to develop a rich, thick portrait of the participants' experiences in order to gain insight into how faculty members perceive their role in the online environment and to determine whether there were significant differences from their role as classroom teacher. For purposes of this study, "online nursing faculty members" refers to full- and part-time faculty members in a university-based nursing program who, having begun their career in classroom teaching, have taught online for at least one year.

Research Questions

The following research questions provided the framework for this study:

1. What are the experiences of nursing faculty members in transitioning from live face-to-face classroom to online teaching?
2. What assumptions did nursing faculty members hold about the role of faculty in online education prior to their experience in online teaching?
3. What experiences related to online teaching may have challenged nursing faculty members' perceptions?

4. To what degree did institutional support and infrastructure impact faculty members' experiences?
5. Based on the framework of transformational learning, what evidence of transformation can be identified through an analysis of the experiences described by nursing faculty members?

Research Design

A phenomenological method was used to explore the meaning of nursing faculty members' experiences around a specific phenomenon, online teaching. Phenomenology is a method of philosophical inquiry that enables researchers to examine the underlying beliefs and values of individuals within a field of practice (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). Moustakas (1994) states that "Phenomena are the building blocks of human science and the basis of all knowledge. Any phenomenon represents a suitable starting point for investigation" (p. 26).

According to Creswell (1998), when doing phenomenological research there should be one overarching central question that speaks to the issue being studied, followed by topical questions that anticipate the information needed. The central question should focus on a greater understanding of the human experience and is qualitative, rather than quantitative (Moustakas, 1994). In this study, question 1 was the central question and questions 2 through 4 were the topical questions, anticipating the data analysis process. Interviews were analyzed using the transformative learning model to address research question 5.

Through one-on-one interviews, faculty members were asked to describe their experiences, lessons they learned, and their feelings about the role of the online educator. Mezirow (1991) states that research in transformative learning is difficult because the investigator does not have access to the meaning schemes or perspective of the participants. One of the methods recommended is the open-ended interview, which enables participants to convey additional information that may help the researcher when attempting to understand the participant's perspective.

Sample Selection

A purposeful criterion-based sample of individuals was included in this study. Moustakas (1994) advises that qualifications for inclusion are the participant's interest in understanding the phenomenon, willingness to participate in the interview session, and agreement to have the interview taped and included in the dissertation. Creswell (1998) recommends no more than 10 participants for a phenomenological study. In the case of this study, the 16 selected participants teach in an online nursing program and began their teaching career in a live venue. Adjunct faculty were not addressed in this study, since often they do not receive the same type of institutional support and development as full-time faculty (Biro, 2005) and, therefore, may not have similar experiences.

From three to five participants were recruited from each of four public university colleges of nursing in Florida: Florida State University, Florida Atlantic University, University of Central Florida, and University of Florida. The University of South Florida was not included because I am an employee and student at this university. Two other public universities were not included due to a lack of online nursing programs at these

institutions and because the geographical distance was prohibitive. In phenomenological research, all participants do not need to be at a single location but all must have similar experience and must be able to articulate that experience. The sampling strategies used to identify participants were criterion-based; all participants must meet similar criterion and may be selected by snowball sampling, in which individuals were identified by peers familiar with the criteria. In this study, as a starting point, each of the college deans was contacted to request a list of faculty members who met the criterion. Additionally, colleagues and other participants contacted through professional organizations and special interest listservs were utilized. Sampling in qualitative inquiry is based on gathering the most information possible, not on statistical inferences or generalizations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); therefore, the intent here was to find individuals who met the criteria and were able to describe their experiences.

In each situation, the deans of the selected universities were emailed, and these deans forwarded my request to the faculty members. In several cases, faculty members contacted me and recommended other potential participants. Colleagues also gave me names of faculty members and, through them, I was able to identify other participants. A few participants were identified by searching websites and determining who taught in online programs and contacting these individuals directly. In one case, a faculty member from one of the universities attended a conference that I also attended and provided me with a list of faculty members who taught online. I was also able to identify some participants from the university website. All contacted faculty members were able to

participate, with the exception of two members who were out of town during the data collection phase.

Data Collection

Interviews are the primary source of data for phenomenological studies; secondary are artifacts that are related to the context of the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). Data for this study was collected through semi-structured conversational interviews and a review of related materials, such as syllabi and topical outlines of courses, which further describe the experience of teaching online. Syllabi and topical outlines provided information about how courses are taught by faculty members and revealed other information about support and services available to online students. Curriculum vitae were collected in order to assimilate demographic information and to maximize interview time.

The interview offered a forum to interact with each individual and to discuss the phenomenon of interest, which was transitioning from teaching face-to-face to online. It is the responsibility of the researcher to make the interviewee feel comfortable. Moustakas recommends doing this by beginning with a brief social conversation. This was accomplished for this study by asking each of the participants how they came to be a nurse educator, since education is rarely an initial goal of most individuals attending nursing school. This gave individuals an opportunity to describe their early experiences and their perspectives on education. Interview questions were open-ended and left room for flexibility of responses. This provided opportunities for new or unexpected information to emerge. The questions needed to provide an opportunity for participants to

explore the meaning of the online teaching experience and to describe their lived experiences (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). The interview guide that was used in these interviews is included in Appendix A. The interview focused on the phenomenon, though the open-ended nature of the session enabled the participants to discuss related areas not specifically addressed by the researcher. Though an interview guide is important to the process, participants who share their full story may not need interview questions (Moustakas, 1994). Interview questions were as follows:

1. Tell me how you came to be a nurse educator and about your current teaching role.
2. What prompted you to begin teaching online?
3. Think back to when you got your first online teaching assignment. What were your assumptions and expectations about teaching online?
4. Please describe how you went about developing your first online class.
5. What role did your institution play in preparing you to teach online?
6. How do your initial assumptions compare to the actual experience of teaching online?
7. How do your methods for teaching online differ from those in your face-to-face courses?
8. What are the biggest differences you have found between teaching face-to-face classes and teaching online classes?
9. The traditional role of a faculty member is defined as “participation in teaching, research, and service.” How has teaching online impacted that role?
10. Is there anything you would like to add that might help in understanding your experience in transitioning to online teaching?

Potential participants identified through peer nominations were contacted by email first and informed of the study, then were approached by telephone if needed. Faculty members who met the criteria were contacted and invited to participate in the study. Upon their acceptance, an appointment was scheduled for a face-to-face interview at the participant's location. Participants were provided with a written description of the study and an interview guide prior to the appointment. They received a request for syllabi, topical outlines, and a curriculum vita. Each individual was asked to sign a statement of informed consent in the form of a University of South Florida Institutional Review Board approved consent form (see copy in Appendix B). Institutional review boards at each of the participating universities were contacted in order to ensure compliance. Interviews took approximately one to two hours, and, on a few occasions, additional follow-up questions were asked at the time of the interview or later, by email. All participants were emailed a transcription of the interview and were given the option of removing or clarifying information. No faculty members requested that any changes be made.

Additional information was gathered by a search of each institution's website. This information was used to identify what support and training services are available to faculty members and students who are participating in the online program.

Pilot Study

In order to ensure that the interview protocol is appropriate for gathering data that will answer the research questions, a pilot study was implemented. This pilot was undertaken at the University of South Florida – College of Nursing, which is not included

in this study. Two faculty members who met the criteria for inclusion were identified. The interviews followed the guidelines for data collection previously described, however, faculty members were also asked to provide input on the feasibility of the interview guide. The initial interview guide was revised and faculty members at another college within the university were recruited to participate. Finally, a colleague at another university was interviewed at her location in order to practice and refine the entire process. Data collected for the pilot was not used in the data analysis for this study.

Description of Data Collection

Once I was able to schedule at least one faculty interview from each of the institutions, I contacted other faculty members, informed them of my time on campus, and scheduled additional interviews. A few faculty members offered to recruit and schedule their colleagues for me. Locations for the interviews were identified by the participants, and, prior to beginning, I mapped out all the places where I would be meeting faculty so I could be on time for each interview. Interviews at SU1 were accomplished in two separate trips. The remaining interviews were scheduled during a single week during which I traveled to each of the locations. Most of the interviews were conducted in faculty offices or conference rooms. One interview took place at a coffee shop, and one was over lunch at a restaurant. The major disadvantage of these two locations was background noise that was picked up on the digital recorder; however, this was not excessive, due to the placement and the quality of the recorder.

Upon arriving at the interview location and introducing myself, I asked the participant to sign the informed consent form. I offered to send each one a copy, but all

participants declined. Each participant was then informed that the interview would be recorded. Several participants expressed concern about confidentiality. This was of particular concern to one participant, who due to the fact that he was male would be a minority among the participants and therefore more identifiable. Participants were assured that they would not be identified in the final analysis, nor would they be associated with their universities. Because nursing faculty members are fairly well known to one another throughout the state, descriptions of participants in this study were minimized in order to ensure anonymity. Two digital recorders were used to ensure that the interviews were captured successfully. I decided not to take notes in order to focus my attention on the participant. After each session, however, I wrote about my experience in conducting the interview. I included my impressions and feelings about the individual interviewed. Many of the participants indicated they were very busy, and my presence seemed almost like an intrusion. Some seemed uncomfortable in being interviewed. With three of the participants there was an immediate rapport, but in the remaining interviews the conversations were somewhat stilted at the beginning. Once the interviews began, however, the participants became very eager to speak and often went beyond the allotted time. There were only two participants who did not seem to relax during the interview and seemed eager for the session to end.

Each interview began with a question not related to the phenomenon. In the initial question, the participants were asked to describe how they became nurse educators. This question led them to provide me with a brief autobiography and seemed to relax those who seemed uncomfortable or impatient with the process. Additionally, if faculty

members indicated some other particular interest, such as research or service, they were given the opportunity to discuss these interests before the official interview began. The remaining interview questions were all related to their online teaching experiences. When responding to the questions, faculty members often veered into other topics directly related to their experiences, and this frequently provided me with unanticipated information about the phenomenon. When possible, faculty members were asked to actually show me their online classes, and this gave them a chance to illustrate some of the concepts they had addressed.

At the end of each interview, a question was provided for participants to enable them to add anything they thought was important that had not been covered by the interview protocol. This approach did not reveal much new information so the question was amended, and participants were subsequently asked for their advice to faculty members who were just beginning to teach online. Specifically, what they wished they had known before they began to teach online? Participants were very eager to provide advice and to describe what had been missing from their own preparations to teach online or what had been particularly useful. By the end of the interviews, most participants appeared very relaxed and went on to provide details concerning their personal lives. Though participants were not promised any compensation for participation, at the end of each interview a thank you note and gift certificate to a restaurant were presented.

Data Analysis

In phenomenological research, data analysis involves determining complex meaning from direct experiences (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). Looking for the essence of

the experiences, common themes from multiple experiences across cases was the aim of this research. Each interview was transcribed and examined for potential themes pertinent to the research focus. Steps for analysis as identified by Moustakas are as follows and include descriptions of my experience in analyzing the data:

Describe the researcher's experience with the phenomenon. Because it is important for the phenomenological researcher to be as free as possible from preconceptions, the researcher should describe previous experiences with the phenomenon. I have been an instructional designer for over nine years, with six of those years in nursing education. Additionally, I have taught online nursing courses as an adjunct instructor for three years. A journal of my interview experiences was kept regarding each of the interviews. A description of my experience with the phenomenon is included in Chapter 1 of this document.

Search for statements in the interviews identifying how the participants are experiencing the phenomenon. The process is called horizonalization of the data. It ensures that each of the statements related to the phenomenon is initially given equal value. I made the decision, after investigation of the options, to transcribe the interviews myself. Using software that could be downloaded free of charge, I found I could listen closely to each of the discussions and then eliminate some parts of the conversation that were not related to the interviews. Transcribed interviews were then uploaded into the Atlas.ti software system, and statements related to the phenomenon from each interview were highlighted and labeled with initial descriptors. After completing this process once,

I was able to look at each of the statements that were grouped by the descriptors. Only statements that were directly related to the phenomenon were included.

Group statements by meaning and provide a textural description of the experience. In this step the researcher created themes under which to group statements from the interviews that were relevant to the research question. After examining the statements horizontally, it was easier to identify how statements should be grouped, and the initial work was modified to better align statements. The statements that were identified were labeled by themes that emerged as the transcriptions were reviewed. Upon completion of this step, themes were reviewed to determine which ones were duplications that could be combined into other themes. Eventually 17 sub-themes were identified that were subsumed into 6 major themes. The statements were then re-coded by the major themes and sub-themes within the Atlas.ti program. A short definition of each theme was created to help focus the assignment of statements.

Construct a description of how the phenomenon was experienced. These descriptions should provide a clear account of each participant's experience with the phenomenon as well as the underlying structure that motivates the accounts. A detailed description of each of the themes was constructed and is presented in chapter 4. Using the statements identified for each of the themes, I described how the participants experienced the phenomenon based on each of the themes. As much as possible, direct quotes from the participants were used so that the description would be in their own words and more precisely capture their experiences. Due to context, however, some narration was needed to explain why certain statements were related to the theme that was being described. Not

all statements were used, since many were similar, so only statements that best described the phenomenon were included in the description. A table identifying how many times a specific theme was mentioned by the participants and how many individual participants mentioned each theme was included so that the reader could gain a perspective of the importance of a particular theme among the participants.

Construct an overall description of the meaning. The themes identified for each participant were analyzed to depict a composite textural description of the group. From these textural descriptions followed a composite structural description. These textural descriptions of the meaning are identified in chapter 5 through discussion of each of the themes. These descriptions include my analysis of the meaning of the experience as well as interpretations and significance to the field. At this point, though direct quotations were still being utilized to illustrate the analysis, my interpretation of the meaning was included.

After performing these steps for each of the participants, construct an overall composite of the data. This step identifies a way of understanding how the participants experienced the phenomenon as a group. The textural and structural descriptions are synthesized to identify the meaning and essence of the experiences of all the participants. In this step, an overall summary of the phenomenon was provided in the analysis of research question 1, and was based on the descriptions of each of the themes addressed in the previous steps. Research questions 2 through 5 provided a more detailed description and analysis of specific concepts of the phenomenon that were addressed as part of the overall experience.

External Validity

In quantitative research, external validity relates to the ability to generalize findings beyond the sample to the larger population – a process supported by the results of random sampling. Merriam (1998) states that qualitative researchers are not attempting to generalize but to understand specific cases. Generalizability, however, can be improved by selecting multiple cases from multiple sites as described above. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe transferability, which includes rich, thick descriptions of the phenomenon that enable readers to evaluate the information and reach their own conclusions. Other methods include the use of predetermined questions and a specific procedure for analysis of data plus rich, thick descriptions of participants within their context and the selection of cases that closely represent the phenomenon of interest. All of these strategies were applied to this study. In the reporting of data, specific quotes and descriptions were used to support the identification of themes and patterns. A specific set of criteria was applied in choosing each participant.

Internal Validity

Techniques to improve credibility in qualitative research were utilized. The data was analyzed not only the by me, but by the Atlas.ti qualitative data analysis software as well. Using thick, rich descriptions can help to accurately convey the findings and provide readers with a sense of sharing the analytical experience (Creswell, 2003). An audit trail has been maintained, linking themes to corroborating evidence, that is, actual quotations that validate the themes. Another technique applied here is peer examination of findings to further strengthen internal validity. Peer review consisted of the researcher

disseminating interpretations and conclusions to six peers, including nursing and education faculty members not directly related to the research but familiar with the phenomenon being investigated (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Peers were expected to challenge the researcher's findings, require evidence for interpretations or conclusions, and identify whether the researcher's reflections impacted the data analysis.

For this study, four nursing faculty members were each given an interview from one of the participating universities. They were then provided with a list of themes developed by me and asked to check off all themes addressed in the interviews. Three of the peer reviewers responded and indicated that they had found more than 50% of the themes listed in their individual transcriptions. One reviewer did not respond. One reviewer recommended renaming one of the themes.

Two other individuals, one with a doctoral degree in education and one a doctoral candidate in education, were each given two transcripts from two universities, so that one transcript from all four universities was reviewed. The peers were asked to generate a list of themes from the two transcripts. A comparison showed that no new themes were identified.

Dependability

Qualitative research is not an attempt to isolate human behavior; instead, it seeks to describe and explain the world as experienced by those individuals of interest. Rather than using reliability as a measure, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest evaluating the findings in terms of dependability and consistency in reference to the data collected.

Techniques such as qualitative software, peer reviews, and an audit trail were utilized to strengthen the research design.

In this study, the use of qualitative software, peer review, and an audit trail were already mentioned. As the study progressed, each participant was thoroughly described from the standpoint of both responses and the related background information collected. This information was included in the rich, thick description in the reporting of data.

Prior to the collection of data, application was made to the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB). Upon approval, the IRB at each of the participating universities was contacted to ensure compliance within those institutions. All data collected by the researcher is stored at the researcher's home office.

CHAPTER 4 DESCRIPTION OF THEMES

The purpose of this study was to apply phenomenological research strategies to examine the experiences of nursing faculty members who transitioned from face-to-face classroom to online teaching and to analyze their reported experiences for evidence of transformative learning. The intention was to develop a rich, thick portrait of the participants' experiences to gain greater insight into how faculty members perceive their role in the online environment and to determine whether there were significant differences from their role as classroom teachers. For purposes of this study, online nursing faculty refers to full or part-time faculty in a university-based nursing program who having begun their career in classroom teaching and have taught online for at least one year.

Research Questions

The following research questions provided the guiding framework for this study:

1. What are the experiences of nursing faculty in transitioning from live face-to-face classroom to online teaching?
2. What assumptions did nursing faculty hold about the role of faculty in online education prior to their experience in online teaching?
3. What experiences related to online teaching may have challenged nursing faculty's perceptions

4. To what degree did institutional support and infrastructure impact faculty experiences?
5. Based on the framework of transformational learning, what evidence of transformation can be identified through an analysis of the experiences described by nursing faculty?

A set of interview questions based on these research questions was developed to guide discussions with participants. The interview protocol is available in appendix A. Though an interview protocol was used, many of the comments utilized for this study were the result of discussions initiated by the participants. Additionally, other questions were used or refined in subsequent interviews based on initial interviews. While the questions were used to initiate discussion, participants frequently deviated from the topic to describe experiences related to the phenomenon. These conversations provided additional data beyond what was addressed in the interview and contributed to the identification and analysis of the themes.

Participants

For this study, 16 nursing faculty members from four major state universities were interviewed. Interviews were conducted at the participant's location, typically in their offices or nearby conference rooms. In two cases, the participants met the researcher at public locations. Eight of the faculty members interviewed were located at satellite campuses. It is important to note that on the evening before two of these faculty members were to be interviewed, the provost announced tentative plans to close the campus as a cost-saving measure. The interviews lasted from 28 minutes to 1.5 hours, though most of

them were between 45 minutes and one hour. Table 1 shows the number of faculty members from each university. All state universities with an online nursing program were included in this study, with the exception of University of South Florida and one other state university that was eliminated because of distance. Data comprising a description of each of the colleges, the type of support provided, the number of faculty members, and the types of online programs, are presented in chapter 5 under the discussion of research question 4. The college's expectations for those teaching online were identical to faculty teaching face-to-face courses. They were all subject to the same evaluations, workload, and class sizes as in face-to-face courses.

Table 1

Number of Participants from each Site

University	Number of Participants
State University 1 (SU1)	5
State University 2 (SU2)	3
State University 3 (SU3)	4
State University 4 (SU4)	4

All faculty interviewed were registered nurses (RNs) and had experience in patient care prior to beginning their teaching careers. Most of the participants had a doctorate degree but all had at least a master's degree in nursing. Three of the participants were male and only one participant was part-time, though one participant was on a visiting line. To allow them time to talk about themselves and to feel more comfortable with the research, all participants were asked at the beginning of the interview how they

came to be nurse educators. In response, only one of the participants indicated that the career path was planned. All taught online in either an RN-to-BS or graduate program. Some also taught traditional face-to-face undergraduate or Ph.D. courses and clinical courses. Two of the participants had received degrees that were online or partially online, and three others had taken classes or had begun online degrees. Two of the participants had online teaching certificates obtained through other institutions. Though many participants volunteered personal information such as age, marital status, and number of children, this information was not included in this study.

All participants were asked for a curriculum vita and at least one course syllabus. The curriculum vitae of most faculty members were available on the university's website, and these were used in a few cases in which the researcher was unable to get one by other means. In order to preserve anonymity, each of the participants has been given a pseudonym.

In order to provide some background information about the participants, the pseudonym of each one is presented in Table 2, along with the type of degree received, location, and the year each participant graduated from nursing school. The number of years of online teaching by each participant is also included. The final piece of information describes how each of the participants reported being prepared to teach online.

All SU1 faculty members are required to attend to attend formal classes that prepare faculty members to teach online. Pat and Gerry both came from schools that provided mentoring as they began teaching online, and both participated in research

projects related to online education. Ronnie was one of the first faculty members at SU2 to teach online and was sent by administrators to various workshops and seminars. Faye, however, has had no training and began teaching by adapting existing courses and relying on peers for support. Casey and Joey both reported that they were self-taught, though both attended workshops presented by the university to enhance their current skills. Morgan reported beginning to teach by adapting existing courses but stated that the university provided one-on-one training with the technical support staff. Morgan also utilizes the university workshops. Stacey and Chris work together at a satellite campus and began teaching hybrid classes prior to teaching entirely online classes. They work very closely together and attend occasional workshops on the main campus.

All SU4 faculty members receive technical training provided by the learning management system vendor. This was not the case, however, when Tony began teaching online at SU4. At that time, the only training or support available were colleagues at the main campus. Both Ray and Dale earned certificates in online teaching from other colleges. All faculty members who teach at satellite campuses report that they occasionally travel to the main campus for training, but in all cases this was almost a two-hour drive so the faculty members are limited in how often they can attend these sessions. Additional measures to preserve anonymity will preclude inclusion of gender and full-time/part-time status.

Table 2

Participant Description

University	Pseudonym	Year Graduated from Nursing School/ Degrees	# Years Taught Online	Type of Preparation to Teach Online
SU1†	Terry	1974 / BSN, MSN, MEd	11	Mandatory formal training
SU1	Leslie	1970 / BS, MA, PhD	5	Mandatory formal training
SU1	Pat	1972 / BSN, MEd, MSN, PhD	7	Mentored*, research project*, mandatory formal training
SU1	Gerry	1988 / BSN, MSN, PhD	5	Mentored*, research project*, mandatory formal training
SU1	Jesse	1970 / BS, MA, MSN, EdD	2	Mandatory formal training
SU2†	Ronnie	1967 / Diploma, BSN, MSN, DSN	5	Sent to workshops by administration
SU2†	Faye	1973 / BSN, MSN, DSN	1	Existing courses, peers
SU2†	Joey	N/A / BSN, MSN, DSN	8	Self-taught, workshops

Table 2 (Continued)

University	Pseudonym	Year Graduated from Nursing School/ Degrees	# Years Taught Online	Type of Preparation to Teach Online
SU3	Casey	N/A / AS, BS, DN	5	Self-taught, workshops
SU3	Morgan	1970 / BSN, MS, PhD	3	Existing course, 1-on-1 training, workshops
SU3†	Stacey	1977 / ASN, BSN, MSN	1	Existing course, peers, hybrid classes, workshops
SU3†	Chris	1970 / ASN, BSN, MSN	3	Existing course, peers, hybrid classes, workshops
SU4	Ray	1978 / BSN, MSN, PhD	6	Certificate in Online Teaching, vendor technical training
SU4†	Tony	1976 / AA, BSN, MSN, PhD	5	Peers
SU4†	Tyler	1964 / AAS, BHS, MSN, PhD	4	Existing course, vendor technical training
SU4	Dale	1976 / BSN, MSN, PhD	3	Post-graduate certificate in distance teaching, vendor technical training

* Training received at a previous university

† Located at a satellite campus

Description of Themes

To organize the information in a meaningful manner, each interview was transcribed and the steps described in chapter 3, based on Moustakas (1994), were utilized to provide horizontilization of the data in order to identify themes. Transcripts were uploaded into the Atlas.ti software program and the researcher coded all statements related to the phenomenon. A table of all the statements, grouped by themes, was created and re-examined to determine if the initial themes were valid and if the statements were categorized appropriately. This step also provided me with the opportunity to examine each statement equally. Upon analysis, the themes were refined and the statements were re-coded based on the revised schema. Ultimately, 17 themes were identified and these were subsumable under six major themes. The six major themes identified from this study are:

- Faculty Development and Support
- Faculty Issues and Concerns
- Communication in the Online Environment
- Teaching in the Online Environment
- Advantages of Online Education
- Students in the Online Environment

The *Faculty Development and Support* theme refers to the types of training and eductation faculty received prior to teaching online and how they are currently supported in the online environment. Sub-themes include: Preparing Faculty to Teach Online, Institutional Support and Resources, and Faculty Collaboration.

Faculty Issues and Concerns was identified as a theme in which participants described the difficulties and challenges they faced as online educators. Sub-themes include: Time and Effort to Teach Online, Types of Content Taught Online, Student Evaluation of Learning, and Effectiveness of Online Education.

The *Communication in the Online Environment* theme describes how faculty members relate to their students and convey content asynchronously. Sub-themes include: online relationships, assessing student understanding, and communicating effectively in the online environment.

Teaching in the Online Environment provides actual methods that faculty members use in their online classrooms and addresses how teaching online has changed or re-inforced the role as educator. Sub themes include: online teaching methods and faculty as facilitators of learning.

The *Advantages of Online Education* theme presents participants' views on how online education can provide benefits to both students and faculty. Sub-themes include: increased student participation, schedule flexibility, and other miscellaneous advantages.

Participants found that students in the online environment sometimes react differently from students in the face-to-face classes. This theme describes some of the differences attributed to online learners. Sub-themes include: attributes of online students, student learning styles, and student cheating.

The six major themes and 17 sub-themes are listed in Table 3, which indicates how frequently each theme was mentioned throughout all the transcriptions, Also included is information showing frequency by participant, which indicates how many

participants out of the 16 actually mentioned a particular theme. Following the table is a composite textural description of each theme. A discussion and analysis of each of the themes is presented in Chapter 5. Quotations from the transcripts that address each theme are utilized in these descriptions. Many of the quotations were similar to one another in context and meaning, so those utilized in these descriptions are representative of all the participants who commented on a theme.

Table 3

List of Themes and Frequencies

Major Theme/Sub-Theme	Frequency	Frequency by Participant (n-16)
Major Theme One: Faculty Development and Support		
Preparing Faculty to Teach Online	52	12
Institutional Support and Resources	30	11
Faculty Collaboration	26	16
Total	108	
Major Theme Two: Faculty Issues and Concerns		
Time and Effort to Teach Online	70	16
Types of Content Taught Online	13	12
Student Evaluation of Learning	10	6
Effectiveness of Online Education	3	3

Table 3 (Continued)

Major Theme/Sub-Theme	Frequency	Frequency by Participant (n-16)
Total	96	
Major Theme Three: Communication in the Online Environment		
Online Relationships	51	15
Assessing Student Understanding	12	6
Communicating Effectively in the Online Environment	12	7
Total	75	
Major Theme Four: Teaching in the Online Environment		
Online Teaching Methods	37	14
Faculty as Facilitators of Learning	19	8
Total	56	
Major Theme Five: Advantages of Online Education		
Increased Student Participation	21	9
Schedule Flexibility	13	9
Other Miscellaneous Advantages	8	8
Total	42	

Table 3 (Continued)

Major Theme/Sub-Theme	Frequency	Frequency by Participant (n-16)
Major Theme Six: Students in the Online Environment		
Attributes of Online Students	25	11
Student Learning Styles	6	4
Student Cheating	5	4
Total	36	

Major Theme One: Faculty Development and Support

Several questions in the interview protocol were about the type of preparation faculty members received when beginning to teach online and what type of support these individuals currently receive. Preparing Faculty to Teach Online looks at what types of training (formal provided by the institution, or informal, provided by mentors or colleagues) that faculty members received when starting to teach online. Institutional Support and Resources describes what types of ongoing technical support and training are provided by the participants' colleges and universities. Finally, Faculty Collaboration emphasizes the significance of having the daily and ongoing support of peers in addition to, or in place of, formal institutional resources.

Preparing Faculty to Teach Online

Several faculty members admitted to not having had any idea of how to get started teaching online and just more or less guessing at what they believed would work. Ronnie's first impression of online courses at SU2 was that the medium seemed flat and uninviting when she wanted it to be, instead, "interesting to me," assuming it would then be engaging to students, encouraging them to interact and learn the content. Her solution was to learn "how to do PowerPoint presentations and voice over … it was a one-dimensional media so I had to do something with my assignments."

Jesse describes having "no idea how to teach online. I didn't know how to put together a module. I just did what I thought …it would be a good idea. And I learned along the way." Ray thought that "when I actually got to teach my first course, and it was actually this nursing research course, and I kind of thought I've taught this course for a couple of semesters, I've got all the PowerPoints, the quizzes, I'll just load it all on the night before the class." However, the transition from live to online was not as simple as Ray thought it would be.

> So I was sitting there loading it all on the night before the class and realized this PowerPoint makes absolutely no sense, unless I'm standing next to them talking about them. Because you have a slide that says what is a hypothesis. Well in a classroom I put that slide up and I say ok what did you read about a hypothesis and we talk about that and the slide makes lots of sense. But if all you're doing is sitting there with your computer screen and you see a slide that says what is a hypothesis ... this is not going to work. So it was a real quick how do you get that

> piece of the information that you sort of give to students in a classroom, that whole discussion interaction into this screen that's staring at them.

Terry assumed that teaching online would just involve "dumping my PowerPoint in the online class and that would be it that I didn't really need to make any changes. I already really had the course developed so this shouldn't be too much of a problem." However, after meeting with an instructional designer, Terry rethought the whole online class design.

> I can remember the instructional designer met with me, and he let me go on and on and on for about 15 minutes about how I got the PowerPoints down, and I already got the exams down so this should not be too much of a problem. He was very patient with me for about 15 minutes, then all of a sudden he went 'no that's not how web education is. Forget what you did in the live face-to-face classroom. This is a whole different ball-game.' It was like a wake-up call and I said what are you saying? Well I look back now… thank god for him to finally get me to think straight.

Ray was a relatively new faculty member at SU4 when the dean announced that the college would be adding online education. Having no experience in that environment and feeling concerned about the fact that she had just gotten a mortgage, "panic set in. I quickly got on the computer and found the online teaching course at an extension school. I need to take this fast. Because obviously all these people know how to teach online." Ray soon discovered that none of the faculty at SU4 were prepared for this transition, and her extension school education made her the most qualified online educator. At that time,

there was nothing offered at SU4 to prepare faculty to teach online. Now, according to Ray, workshops for teaching online are scheduled regularly for all faculty members. Additionally, technical training on the learning management system utilized by the college is provided at least once per semester. Tony, who works at one of SU4's satellite campuses, also describes the lack of training available when the college originally started offering online classes. The only option was to drive two hours to main campus and meet with Ray and a few others for advice. That situation has changed. Tony reports that "now you can't offer an online course unless you've had training."

At SU2 Ronnie was one of the first faculty members to teach online. At that time, she reported, "they sent me to different web technology courses in the beginning." Now, Ronnie and other faculty at SU2 talk more about helping each other than utilization of faculty development courses. Faye, who was the least experienced of the faculty interviewed at SU2, says she uses models created by other faculty to get started. Prior to coming to SU2, Joey received extensive training from her previous employer and having gotten her doctorate online, utilizes her experiences as an online student.

At SU3, Casey states that, "they offer a variety of classes that are free, obviously, and where they will teach you anything from all of the technical aspects of the platform, the BlackBoard platform, to actual teaching stuff. They teach lots of classes that feed into the online format." However, the availability of the classes is not widely known among faculty members at SU3.

> I was here for a little while before I realized they were available and I started to use them. And SU3, and probably not now with our new budget, but with our old

> budget they'd even pay you to take these classes during the summer to get additional training and to make you better at doing it.

SU1 had the most extensive, formal training program of all the state universities visited for this study. The program, described by Terry, is a requirement for all faculty teaching online courses.

> It lasts an entire semester and you go for 6 hours every Friday the whole semester … You develop a minimum of one, and many times two, modules because at the end of the semester you do a presentation. They invite deans and muckety-muck from SU1 to watch your presentation so you have to produce a product by the end of the semester… Every week you have an assignment, you have postings to do; you have quizzes to take. It's just like a regular class so you're essentially enrolled in a web course the whole time.

Students at the Fine Arts College are also involved in the faculty development program at SU1 and work with individual faculty members developing online courses to design graphics that correspond to the subject matter. Video streaming and a recording studio are also provided, reports Terry. "They have a very structured way that you can put together a class so the finished products is something you and the university can be proud of."

Pat also attended SU1's online development course. "And to be honest, it offers a lot about group work and those kinds of things, but the frustrating part is that it really doesn't offer a lot about the hands-on kinds of things." Pat, however, utilizes an online support group at SU1 that provides answers to some very basic questions that Pat and other faculty members have when setting up courses. Jesse, who has a doctorate in

education, found the SU1 training to be not very helpful. “They taught me nothing about how to effectively engage students in discussion and even how to mechanically set up experiences to maximize student learning.”

Each of the participants at the satellite locations mentioned that they had difficulty in accessing the training. At SU2, faculty members mentioned having to travel to the main campus for additional training; instead, they frequently utilize one another for support and guidance. Tony reports that SU4 does “have workshops that are available now on the main campus and they do bring them to the distance campus when there is a large enough group.” Stacey had a similar experience at SU3.

> So if she and I [reference to colleague at satellite campus] want to travel over there and go to classes then that’s great. However, now and then they'll come over here. But when they do it’s just to teach how to use PowerPoint or something you know. We’re way beyond that now.

Utilizing a mentor when beginning to teach online was one method of learning mentioned by many of the faculty. Tony believes that “people need a mentor. They need someone that has taught online before. I think it’s a good idea to co-teach an online course with someone so you get a sense of how it’s done.” When Leslie went through the faculty development program at SU1, “they had some experienced people and you could ask what did and didn't work.” Now that Leslie and others have taught for some time online “we actually are mentors to everyone else coming in. So I always have a couple coming in talking about how’d you set yours up, why did you do it that way.”

Dale, also an advocate of mentoring, advises approaching the transition to an online teaching role by seeking out "someone or several people that I could perhaps go to. A go-to person to help me so that I'm not alone trying to make that transition from classroom to online." Dale began teaching online with a mentor and now provides that kind of support at SU4 for other faculty members who are just beginning to teach online.

> I do it in various ways. Face-to-face and sometimes I'm in another state actually on their classes looking at things, at the issue. Iis it the electronics, or is it something to do with the teaching learning strategy? So I've actually mentored about 6 or 7 folks since I've been here. It's growing into my regular assignment… You are starting to see some workshops on online education but there's no substitute for having someone there right with you or available right in real time to help you.

Gerry, who received training to teach online at another university prior to coming to SU1, also reports having had a mentor. "You never taught your first class by yourself. You were always co-teaching with someone who had done it before." The mentor provided feedback as needed. Gerry describes how the experience worked:

> Having the co-teacher mirror me in the class so they could jump in when they needed to. They could also give me feedback along the way, you know, 'Give more feedback here, you're giving too much feedback here, you could go shorter and get away with it,' that kind of thing.

Upon being assigned to teach online, Ronnie "approached it from almost the same manner that I did when I converted to synchronous delivery. I looked for role models."

Now, finding a mentor is the number one piece of advice Ronnie provides to new faculty members starting to teach online. Casey recommends that faculty members just starting to teach online find the most highly skilled online teachers from any discipline to use as role models.

> Take a look at what's going on in your school or your department for online teaching. And after you've done that, immediately go to the other colleges on campus that have online programs and ask to sit with faculty members who are – whose programs recommend as a highly skilled online teacher – and have them actually go through their web pages with you to show them the kind of features that they integrated with their courses.

Rubrics, standards, templates, and other guidelines were utilized by some colleges for the development of their online courses. Jesse advises faculty to “look at samples, look at what a lot of other people do, do a template, work off a template and that'll make it easier for students to figure stuff out.” Using templates enabled Pat to create “a fully online course myself and did it in a week and it really wasn't hard with the use of templates.” Gerry had been very involved at a previous university in developing a rubric that identified quality in online courses.

> We were concerned about the rigor more than anything. Because at my previous university, rigor is important, and we were concerned about it. So I spent a full year developing this rubric with the group so the end result of that rubric was a really nice set of questions and thoughts, and questions that you could not only look at an existing course, but as you were developing a new course you could

> say, OK, am I including these really important pieces in it. And those are the things that made the development of that first class much better.

At some institutions, the standards, or templates, are mandatory when developing online courses. According to Terry, when discussing online development courses at SU1, “they do not want a maverick class. In other words they want a standard.” Pat further describes the experience at setting up courses at SU1. “There’s a certain way they want us to do our syllabus. We pick out the skins, the color combination, and then they design the templates.”

Despite some of the advantages to the standards described by faculty members, Joey felt restricted by what can be done at SU2 when she began developing her online courses.

> There were stricter guidelines on what could be put up, what couldn’t, you know. How you could use stuff, that kind of thing. There were tools that the university provided, but you couldn’t necessarily put something new up there and then require the students to do things on their end unless it was sanctioned by the college kind of thing. So there have been some limitations. And what I have found typically here – what’s done is you put up a PowerPoint and reading assignments and it’s very droll and dry and not very productive. So I've become somewhat disillusioned with it over the years.

Stacey’s first online class was tightly restricted in what could and could not be changed. “I do get it. In terms, we got to lay this class out and make sure it accomplishes

what we want, but ... we're all different and I think I want to deliver some of it differently."

Despite the opportunities to learn how to teach online offered at the various universities, some faculty members refused to avail themselves of these opportunities because, with the exception of SU1, the courses and workshops were not required. Consequently, the courses created by the faculty who did not participate in the opportunities to learn how to teach online caused some frustration in faculty members like Casey, who inherited some existing courses at SU3. "When I was first asked to, and then looked over, the courses,a lot of the courses were really correspondence courses." Casey was faced with dissatisfied students who were concerned about the content and the support they were not receiving.

> The students were really not getting what they needed out of the whole thing and a lot of them were not really satisfied. I actually talked to some of them about various courses. Not to get dirt on my colleagues, I wanted to see what they thought they were getting. Because my perception was they weren't getting what I got, where I had access to faculty members and things like that. I am…I was kind of pulled into it because the leadership here made a decision that we needed to do that.

Casey believes that if faculty members were required to participate in online course development workshops and courses, they would improve the quality of the courses and enhance student learning.

Dale is likewise alarmed by “experienced classroom faculty” who claim they “can teach online, but who then do not utilize resources available to help them improve. And I have found that [ability to teach online] not to be the case.” Dale reports having some issues when trying to prepare them for online teaching. “But hey, I’m here to be a mentor. I’m here to facilitate your learning. What you do with that learning is what you do with it.”

Casey feels that lacking background in educational principles is part of the problem with nurse educators whether their teaching is live or online.

> Most nurses don’t have a very big background in educational systems, so they don’t set up very good learning opportunities for people online. Because – and it’s not because they’re lazy or anything like that – it’s just they don’t know what they looked like and they don’t know much about the ways that people actually learn. Because we nurses don’t generally get trained in that sort of thing. And because we don’t even have a very good theoretical background in that area, we stumble around like idiots for a few years until we figure it out.

Institutional Support and Resources

Though all participants reported having institutional support for online education, the most extensive support was at SU4. The college of nursing, along with one other college on the campus, chose to go with an outside vendor to deliver online classes. Since the vendor is a for-profit company, faculty members believe that support is better than it would otherwise have been. Ray reports that “we have 24/7. They respond within 4 hours usually.” The company provides technical support for both faculty and students and is

paid for through a student assessment fee. Ray says that the first semester, “a couple of people complained about it. It’s become a complete non-issue. It just shows up on their bill. They pay it. Some people say, I spend more than 100 dollars driving to campus.”

Faculty members like Tony appreciate having someone available “at 2:30 a.m. When I’m actually getting around to working on my course, I can call and get a live person if I’m having a problem with the grade book.” The format of the learning platform is particularly welcome to those like Tyler, who claims that “my computer skills are not my forte at all” but finds the system to be a “really very user-friendly format.” Dale is migrating a class to the new platform and has had “some issues in the migration. But they’re just a phone call away. boom boom boom. They knew what I wanted. They’re responding to me as a consumer.”

Terry reports that SU1 has a “help desk that is open 24/7 that is manned by computer science students.” There is also “faculty support on weekends I can call; I have a number I can call, on the weekends.” Leslie reports that in addition to technical support, SU1 assigns faculty members an instructional designer.

> I mean they’re always there. Anyway, if you have a question you have someone who is your designer who is pretty much in charge of your courses. … They do have classes all the time; it’s just finding the time to go do it. They have live and online classes. I do better live because I don't know what they’re talking about. Sometimes it’s easier for them to just show me. I’m more visual than some of the younger ones; they’re so good at just kind of going like this and they’ll pull it up and they’ll do it better I’m still kind of old. I’m more visual. Show me what

> button you're hitting. They give you pretty good support as long as you ask. They’re more than happy to help you out or make things easy for you or to show different ways if you have a problem how to do it.

Pat advises everyone to “take advantage of resources on your campus.” In addition to the assigned instructional design consultant though, she also refers to “certain people here, whether they’ve taught the same length of time online or longer or shorter, I know the key people that have mastered certain aspects.” Jesse finds the assigned designer to be an asset in supporting development of the online courses.

> We all have a designer and I’m not sure who they have now next to my name, but the person who is my original designer is still here and is god's gift to anybody teaching on the web. She’s quite wonderful, so when I run into nitty-gritty problems and I've done some other things and I haven't gotten them fixed I can drop her a note. She usually responds around the time I hit *send*. It’s that kind of response, so I get really good stuff. And the faculty support for web courses has improved astronomically, but it depends a little bit on what you expect. I write my own modules. I upload all my own modules. I upload all my own exams, so I’m not asking a lot of web services. Which is a little different from someone who has never uploaded their modules, and their modules really haven't changed in the last three years.

At SU2 Joey reports that “over the past couple of years there have been more and more resources available. So now there are courses that faculty can take.” The College of Nursing at SU2 has their own webmaster, reports Ronnie. “One of our faculty members

was really a techie and he switched over to being the webmaster and helped us." In addition to the webmaster, "we also have another technical person within the college of nursing."

The online development department at SU3, according to Casey, are "the people who run our BlackBoard system. They're available all the times day or night. And they have specialists on hand and who can go into your courses and help you. So we have a lot of technical support." Casey says the college "hired a couple of people internally, but they were sort of part-time educational, PhD students and stuff. They were never here long enough to really help. And a lot of the faculty had already previously developed their courses and didn't want to change them at all." Morgan also concurs that as far as technical support goes "we here at SU3 are absolutely blessed with one of the best application groups. We have our own distance learning technology people here and SU3 is known as one of the most wired universities in the entire country, if not the world." Specific individuals are assigned to help nursing with instructional design and technical support.

> We have our very own person who's earmarked for nursing who works with all of us. She's a PhD in information technology. She works with us. We have continuous seminars where you can go and sit down at the computer and learn the newest updates, newest things like that. They would come to my office, would sit down with me and say, "What do you want to do?" I would say, "I think I would like to do this," and he would sit down and show me how best to do it. It was

> really easy in terms of making that transition because I had such tremendous technical support.

Support and resources at satellite campuses can be not as successful or more difficult to acquire. When referring to the faculty development classes offered on the campus, Joey explains that “we don't necessarily have access to them unless we travel to main campus.” Ronnie admits that “those of us on this campus tend to be fairly independent when it comes to the technology and we help each other. If colleagues cannot help, then we get on the phone and try to ask the [college] web master. And then we can go up to the university level.”

At SU3 Stacey indicates that, “all support is on main campus” but has found the support lines to be especially helpful.

> You use the help line and you can type in or call and I’ve done both. They’re really good. I was trying to – the biggest thing – I had to set up the grade book the first time… So I called and the man said I have an online workshop about that and I found out there’s all kinds of little workshops online. So I opened that and I’m frantically taking little notes; first you do this, and then you do that. And then he said, “No, you watch that and then call me and I’ll walk you through it.” Did it on the phone. So that’s great. They are great. But over here on this campus, there’s a librarian and she’ll help you somewhat, but she’s very busy. She’s got all these disciplines and we get most of our support from over there.

Occasionally, faculty members need to provide support to their students. Ray describes how normally she pops in out of the online class two or three times a day. “All

my big assignments are due on Wednesday. So on Tuesday I'll frequently keep my online course open so that, you know, every two or three hours I can go in and look." Leslie says, "I am on a lot during their first test and I give them my phone number because I don't want them to think they are going to fail. I do think nursing prepares you to anticipate something going wrong at any time."

Morgan recommends that all online programs provide good technical support before anything else.

> If I'd started trying to so some of these things someplace else that I didn't have that support, I think it could have been frustrating, because a lot of people come into distance learning and they know how to use a computer. But there's a whole different…there's so many different ways to approach things. Things you can do in a distance learning that you have to learn those skills and if you don't have that kind of support it can be frustrating, or it could also use up a lot of your time in that learning curve. When you have the kind of technical support that we have here it shortens your learning curve tremendously. Because you could pop right up, pop up to the surface very quickly. But if you didn't have that kind of support, you'd spend a lot of time through trial and error and reading and doing those kinds of things and getting frustrated and frustrating students. And that's one of the things that I think is a real important issue.
>
> And that's another thing is that our students who are distance learners get tremendous support too. They get immediate help and assistance and they can correct their problems without any trouble. And then because it makes that whole

> process very user friendly and that's very important. And if students get frustrated with things it's going to be a very negative experience for them and then it influences your motivation. Well, they don't have to deal with that. If they have a problem they get immediate response. And it really does make a difference. Making sure you have good technical support is a biggie.

Faculty Collaboration

Faculty collaboration and assistance ensured ongoing support and were keys to success for a number of participants when starting to teach online. Tyler reports that one of the more technologically savvy colleagues "started to do some, to hold some sessions for us, like an education session for us. So that was a way to learn." Ronnie has participated in panels and shared advice at faculty council meetings. Additionally, Ronnie has done "consults on other people's websites and web courses and made suggestions and people arrange theirs differently." Joey was identified by other participants at SU2 as the person they go to for assistance.

> I'm called on to help some of the other faculty, which is fine. But it does sometimes get to the point where I got a ton of work and ... and I feel bad for them because it's an easy thing. But it takes me a minute to sit in front of their computer and figure it out. If they would just give me access to the course I could do it from my own desk and have it done in a minute. But I want to teach them to do it so they don't have to keep coming asking me. And that's the nice thing. They don't use me like that once they've learned it – once they've seen me do it.

They're very good about usually taking it on and doing for themselves and they've actually taught me some things.

Though Ronnie has given lots of assistance, including sharing existing courses, with new faculty members who are just getting started, an experienced colleague will now be taking over one of her classes and providing some evaluation. "I'm really looking forward to her input in what she would change – what she thinks best. I've begun to feel like I sort of teach in a vacuum, so I'm really excited about having some meaningful input." Faye is very dependent on her colleagues. "I would say that all of the faculty members that know more about the web than I do or more about online teaching than I do are always supportive, you know." Faye, who is relatively new to online teaching, has one particular colleague who provides her with extensive support. "I have a colleague here who really should be Webmaster. She's really good and she's really patient with those of us who aren't as good as she is."

Casey regularly seeks out more experienced online teachers for guidance and to learn new and innovative methods. "Everything I've learned was from people that are already doing the stuff that I do. I might integrate them all in a different way, but there's nothing really unique about anything that I've done." Casey believes that "at any major university like this one, there are people on campus doing some really neat things and you're only limited by your willingness to contribute time to your courses."

Working as a team to develop online courses was discussed by three faculty members. Stacey and Chris work together on most assigned tasks. Stacy values the team approach on working out issues together. "It needs to be a team. It needs to be, if you're

concerned let's take it back to the group and see what we can do to fix it." Faye describes the time several faculty members collaborated when teaching different sections of the same class.

> I have two comrades that teach the same online course and we've partnered together to make sure that we were using very similar applications, very similar tools. We all use the same text. So far we have used the same quiz and the same practice calculations for the students. So we felt like the three of us together was a stronger group than singly.

Most faculty members interviewed reported that, when beginning to teach online, they were given an existing course, or, if they were early adopters, reported giving their courses to those who followed. Pat's first course "was a cloned course. And I added my two cents worth." Ronnie states that "I kept giving it [the online course] to other section instructors and finally they eliminated me from teaching it. So I don't know where my web course is, all of my lectures and assignments and stuff is out there somewhere. Just passed it on." Chris "was allowed to look into a class that had been offered the semester before and from that I was able to look and see things that I seemed to like and things that seem to not have worked as well."

Ronnie states that "there has not been issues with sharing web content. Being an early producer of it, I give [my classes] away. I figure it's SU2 material basically, they paid me, I give it away." Tony thinks some considerations should be given to the faculty member who created the content.

> I think there are issues related to ownership that should be considered. “Who develops what” should be honored in terms of recognizing that it has been developed. What we try and do, or at least what I try and do in my courses, if someone has done a PowerPoint presentation on something and I’m using it or they've done it at a conference and I’ve asked them to share that with my students. So the course is built over time. So while they may have one faculty member assigned to the course, they’re getting the benefit of the expertise of many of our faculty, particularly in the areas of research and theory.

Summary of Faculty Development and Support

The experiences of faculty members preparation to teach online and receive ongoing support varied by institution. SU1 was the only institution to provide mandatory formal training, though all other universities did provide some type of faculty development. Standards, templates, and rubrics were found to be useful, though a few faculty members resented the lack of freedom the imposition of these guidelines created for their course development. Most faculty members reported being satisfied with the support they received, however, those at SU4, who chose to use an outside vendor for support, reported having the highest level of technical support among all the participants. All faculty members emphasized the importance of utilizing their peers in helping them to get started or to continue teaching online. Though format training was considered helpful, the informal ongoing guidance of their peers or mentors was also seen as necessary. Though this was usually an informal process, one faculty members at SU4 was

beginning to fill the role as mentor in a more formalized way, and faculty members at SU2 reported that one had been appointed to assist with technical initiatives.

Major Theme Two: Faculty Issues and Concerns

Many faculty members expressed concern about the efficacy of online education or its implementation and management. The issues discussed here include student evaluations, the effectiveness of online education, and concern over types of content taught online. However, the most frequently mentioned issue, which was mentioned by all faculty members, was the amount of time and effort required to teach online.

Time and Effort to Teach Online

Time and effort to teach online were mentioned by every single participant, often repeatedly. Time was related to the amount of time it takes to put up an online class as well as the amount of time it took to actually teach the class. The amount of effort required was exacerbated by the class size and demands of students who frequently expected immediate responses at all times.

Ray described what teaching face-to-face was like for most nursing faculty members. “We, here and most other places I’ve taught in nursing, tend to teach classes three hours once a week so you come in to teach your class and it’s Monday morning from 9 to 12. You get here, you teach, you’re done. You really don't see those people again until next Monday.” Tyler points out that “Going into a classroom is a pain in the neck too, but you’re there and you’re out.” Pat thinks that “It’s easier for me to teach face-to-face because I have to just talk to them so many hours a week and that’s it.”

However, faculty members found that teachng online was considerably more time-consuming.

Before starting to teach online, Gerry had been warned by a mentor that it would take three times as long to teach online as it would to teach face-to-face.

> On campus you can walk in with knowledge in your head and pull it out when you need it and everybody will learn from that in one move. Everybody hears it, sees it; the whole class benefits at that moment in time. Doing that online is totally different. Three times – that is a reasonably accurate assessment, that it takes three times as long to do online as it does to do on-campus. But I get no more credit towards my effort, but it takes me three times as long easily, at least three times.

One time-consuming component comprises designing and building the online course. Even learning how to develop or enhance your course takes time, explains Tony. "The university provides training and workshops … but it's always an issue; it's a time issue for faculty in terms of learning how to use the tools in the modalities that are available and incorporating that into your course on top of all of your other assignments." Taking time to develop the course up front was described by several faculty members like Leslie, as an important factor in successful online teaching. "So I think it was really that whole thought process and time content that had to be done before the class even began. That was a lot of time." One of the reasons for this, states Terry, is that once the course starts, your time will be spent "managing the class and keeping up the day-to-day and

grading papers and such … you can't be developing and doing all of that because it will get back to bite you."

Tony also voices concern about the time it takes to develop an online course. "Developing a course, that should be part of your course assignment because developing the shell is time consuming. To do a good job at it is time consuming." Terry describes the experience and how it impacts her current semester teaching load.

> There is no built-in time to develop the course. There is no extra time; I have my shells made up for the summer because I'll be teaching three web classes in the summer. So therefore, I'm already developing them and I'm still teaching this semester and managing a program with 160 students in it. So, no, there isn't any release time to develop a course.

Leslie, however, believes that, as difficult as it is, getting the course done up front, it can save you a lot of time in the future. "Once you tend to get it going a couple of times, like any other course you do, really, once you get it set, you can keep on changing it if you want. But that part is done."

> Demands of online students can become an issue for many faculty members, according to Leslie. "You could be attached to this thing 24/7. Students get very demanding of your time. They just think, well, you're there at their beck and call, and when you have a large class it's not fair … they think I'm wired in like a Borg to the computer." Students are online, Ray reports, "all times of the day and night, every day of the week. Especially with our RN-to-BS population, who are

> working nurses," and they assume that "if they write to you at 9:02 think you should be there to respond at 9:03."

Tony also acknowledges that it is "a lot more time intensive" to keep up with the demands of students. "I email them. I have threaded discussions. I have an icon for each unit of the course for questions, which is very interactive. I have virtual office space where they can go into a live chat with me." Tony tries "to set boundaries with students. I try and protect my weekends and so I tell them that I usually post in my courses that I'm not available during the weekends but usually that's when I have the most time."

Students, says Terry, "expect continual feedback and expect you to post even on weekends." Even Dale, who is an enthusiastic proponent of online learning, feels some frustration with meeting the student needs.

> It's a lot of work though, because I'm online twice a day, sometimes three times a day, seven days a week. Sometimes I don't feel like I get much peace from it, rest from it. Even though I say you can reach me normal business hours ... well sometimes people don't know what that is and my cell does go off.

Gerry describes students' reactions when responses to their emails are not received as soon as they would like. "Students are angry if they don't get an email response almost like it's an instant messenger, certainly within 24 hours. If it goes more than 24 hours, they're pretty miffed about it." This is reflected, explains Gerry, in the evaluations that pressure faculty members to feel as if they must respond continuously rather than face bad evaluations. Additional assignments that are necessary to ensure that

online students are understanding and participating require faculty members to spend more time grading papers, reports Gerry.

One of the major reasons for the additional time and effort was related to the size of the classes in the online environment. Pat tries to teach the live classes the same way as those online; however, class sizes make this more difficult. “The biggest thing, because I do try to follow the seven principles, is the size classes we have.” Terry reports that she has “214 students enrolled in my web classes and it’s 1,000/hours a week.” Ray teaches a writing-intensive course and reports that it is “capped at, it was 24. It’s going up to 27, I think, with the budget issues. Something like the pathophysiology course that I’m teaching in the fall could have probably 50 people in it.” Tyler redid the types of assignments given. “I don't usually give tests in the graduate courses.” However, she made the decision not to assign papers when introducing a new course. “One million students and it was the first time I was teaching the course and I really didn't want to spend my time with papers.” Despite the extra effort, Ronnie continues to assign papers in her courses.

> I’ll tell you one thing. They know how to write a paper – a scholarly paper – by the time they get out of the course. Because faculty members complain about this, and yeah when you’re faced with a class, minimally 30 students, people don't want to assign papers. If they do, they'll assign one paper. Well I assign papers.

Tyler is concerned that administration “don't realize its 24/7. So there is kind of a lack of acknowledgement of how time-consuming it is.” This makes it more difficult when students want to get into one of Tyler’s classes this is already full. “… They’ve

upped our enrollment this semester, so I'm reluctant to take these new students. So we're all in a financial crisis so we have to consider it." Administration's tendency to put more students in web classes was an issue also expressed by Terry. "There is a mentality there that, well, if it's not a live class then we can put more students in the web classes." Terry further elaborates on her feeling of the disconnect between administration and the reality of the situation. "I don't think the mentality in the muckety-muck up there understand. They think, well, you don't have to stand in front of a group and therefore we can dump 50 students in your class, whereas that same live class would be 30."

Ray believes that faculty members cannot just ignore the fact that students, especially nursing students, are working on a different time frame. "You can't only check your course on Mondays. Because if the students are there all week you have to be there at a different time too." So to compensate, some faculty members have found solutions, or at least developed philosophies that help them deal with the situation.

Pat found a more manageable way of dealing with discussion boards with 50 to 70 students. "I put them in groups so it's easier for them, but it's also easier for me to grade because it doesn't seem so daunting to go in and read like a 100." Tony and Gerry set boundaries with students by giving them a set period of time during which they can expect feedback. Leslie also provides strict parameters as to when and how often she will respond. "This is when I'm available, this is when I'm going to answer you, this is the appropriate way to do things, and that has made it a lot easier." Joey retrained herself not to provide immediate responses. "I have to admit when I first started doing this I felt the

need to do that. I was compelled to do that. And now when they come in, I'm always fighting it."

Joey also discovered that once the class was built it was easier to maintain. "I have to admit my health assessment course, while it was a huge course to build, once it's up there's not a whole lot I need to do to it every year." Casey agrees that having the course built, despite the effort, saves time later on. "If you do that up front you tend to develop a really good course up front and then you just have to keep it up."

Leslie recommends managing your time and the students' time by examining what kind of and how many assignments you give. "As much as I want to put online it is there so you have to be aware of how much, what is your assignments, how much you can do if you're going to give them outside things to do and sometimes that takes time." Jesse encourages faculty to "be assertive and attempt not to have huge classes, because when you have huge classes you have to totally automate it to keep sane." The consequence is that you "lose all the benefits of online teaching, which are the interactivity and all those things, really being able to help individual students."

Several faculty members seemed to feel that the additional work was just "part of the territory" and were not particularly concerned about the time and effort it required. Morgan, in fact, doesn't "see teaching at a distance that much different from face-to-face classroom instruction in terms of the time and the work that I put into my teaching." Chris thinks that faculty members need to be open and flexible in this environment because "we're not closed because it's Saturday night at 9 o clock." Stacey wanted to just be there for students whenever they needed something.

> You got to be a lot more flexible, go into your computer multiple times a day. That's what works for me because sometimes people, they need to know what to know, when they need to know it. So when they need to know it, so when they need to know maybe they need to call me on Saturday night at 9 o clock. And I say, I'm not closed, it's OK. Because they need to know right now. Because they work crazy shifts and all that. So listen to what they're really asking you. And be open to be flexible. I think that's what you need to do online, more than anything else.

Finally, Casey offers this advice and warning to potential online faculty members about not expecting it to be easy.

> Online teaching is a heck of a lot more work than teaching face-to-face. And if you want to teach online because you think it's easier, and if you do it and it is easier for you, then you probably shouldn't be doing it because you're not developing the kinds of materials that students need to actually learn online. If you have this "walk in the park" idea, I can't believe their paying me to do it. Online teaching should hurt. It should be painful. Now I don't mean painful in a bad way, but its a lot of work developing all these materials and developing stuff interactive enough that students are forced to dig into it without knowing they're digging into it. Not just trying to memorize things, but using knowledge and applying it and interacting with their classmates. If you're not doing that, you're just not doing the right thing. That's my other big realization was I always thought it would be easier, but it's a lot more work than I thought it would be.

Types of Content Taught Online

Several faculty members expressed doubt that all types of content could be taught equally well online. Gerry stated “that there are courses that lend themselves more easily to an online environment than others.” Jesse, who is a proponent of hybrid courses, advises looking at educational objectives and determining “that there are some things that are best taught using an online modality and some things that are best taught live.”

Ronnie encourages administration “to pick the subjects, not just convenience, but pick the subjects you’re going to deliver via the web because not everything’s a fit.” However, Ronnie admits that what is not appropriate for online can change based on location. “Unless you’re in the middle of Montana, and you can't get to school in under six hours and all of a sudden web becomes an OK thing.”

Whether the course is as good as live, according to Ronnie, depends on the content. “You can't deliver clinical via the web.” However, there was no agreement between faculty members regarding what types of content could be taught effectively on the web. Ronnie believes that statistics is one of those courses that does not do well on the web because nurses “don't have a common solid foundation”; however, Gerry, who teaches statistics, believes it is one of the few courses that does work well on the web.

> I think that there are courses that lend themselves more easily to an online environment than others. And I think statistics is one of those that has the potential to be a much more amenable course to an online environment. Because you can have some of the give and take with the small group discussion boards and still have the learning occur and statistics can have a yes/no right wrong

> answer. Then it makes the grading sometimes easier because you're either right or you're wrong, and I think it lends itself a little bit more to that.

Faye belives that "you just can't replace that live interchange between the students when we're trying to talk about developing your research question." On the other hand, Pat discovered that her online research students "got more out of it because of they had to interact."

Students' likes and dislikes come into play, as well as what is successful on the web. According to Ronnie "subject matters because if it's a subject that catches the interest of the student, like ethics … they like it." However, Ronnie continues with "if it's a subject that they're not particularly enthralled with …they, students say, at least several students a semester, I'd much rather have this material in person."

Casey, who teaches in the nurse practitioner program, expresses concerns regarding the efficacy of an all-online curriculum for that program. "It's taken me a while to develop the way I teach online to the point where I think it's actually somewhat viable. I think it's a tough proposition to train nurse practitioners online, particularly exclusively online."

Morgan doubted that some courses could be taught online but had an experience that made her reconsider whether her beliefs were valid.

> I had some notion that there were certain types of courses, certain types of knowledge that lent itself much more readily to distance learning than other types. For instance I couldn't imagine and I'm still not convinced that health assessment can be taught on distance learning, through distance learning. I think that. And yet

> we have students. In fact I just finished going out to evaluate some of the students who've been taking our advanced health assessment online this semester and was very impressed with their skills.

Student Evaluation of Teaching

Low student evaluations of online courses and faculty were mentioned by six participants. Tony stated that "the *spots*, or student perception of teaching evaluations, are lower for the distant modalities." The belief expressed by Tony and other faculty was that the evaluations are lower "because they don't know you as well as they do live." Ronnie describes the phenomenon as "that charisma or whatever of the seasoned teacher that engages the student to come into their world of content and so on and so forth is lost."

Response rate was another issue with online education evaluations. Tyler stated that they "may get three responses out of 30 and you get the ones who really love it and someone who really hates it and really kind of skews your results." To try and circumvent this issue, Ronnie gives "them this little spiel about, when I know the things coming, this is part of their professional role, professional responsibility." She has even "tried doing competitiveness with the other sections" but has discovered that "nothing really works consistently. Sometimes you know when I've put forth a lot of effort they just don't respond."

According to Morgan, at SU3 evaluations are taken very seriously by the provost and this creates concern, particularly for online faculty members who generally have lower evaluations than the traditional faculty members. "He keeps track of everybody's

evaluations and if you fall below a certain point, you're called in for remediation about your instruction. And that's face-to-face or distance or anything. The provost is very serious here about your teaching abilities. So he's very serious and we know he's very serious about it." Ronnie reports that if faculty are "going up for promotion and tenure, the department chairs I believe are very careful in terms of whether or not they assign you a distance course because student evaluations generally are lower." To account for the variation, Ronnie has "asked for a number of years … to take distance courses, web courses, not just the distance, but take the web courses and construct a college mean for the web courses, because it makes a point." Ronnie also describes how one faculty member overcame the issue.

> We had one faculty member that was going up for tenure and promotion and she taught, actually she taught community nursing at the undergraduate level and those scores, because the same thing [as online classes] students don't like community they want to poke a tube in somewhere you know, see some results, you know at that level of learning. And so she actually did a little survey of notable community programs and so on and so forth and found that yes indeed this was traditional and she got an article out of it plus she put it in her tenure packet and so that just justified. You just have to be creative and you know I don't see, I've heard some colleagues that grade easier and they think that's going to give them ... Well that can backfire on you too because then the students will say to you this is a waste of my time. I worked hard on this. I quit working you know because it didn't matter

At Gerry's previous university, an evaluation tool was created that not only gave students more objective criteria, but also laid out what was required of online faculty. Students then evaluated faculty on actual performance objectives rather than subjective opinions regarding their teaching ability. The following is Gerry's description of how the committee selected the criteria for one specific item that addressed challenges faced by online faculty.

> What we ended up doing at my previous university was we sort of set up college wide, school wide, expectations not only of the student but also of the faculty. Here's what faculty as a whole, we expect from students in an online environment. Here's what students can expect from faculty as a whole in an online environment and we were pretty really realistic I thought. With that you can expect to get a response to an email or posting within 48 hours during normal school. We didn't say anything about the weekend. It was the faculty's time to do what they chose, but we did not put that burden on them. So we ended up doing it that way, so even though they might have gotten someone who is hyper responsive, shall we say, for one semester, someone who was a little bit slower to respond the next one.
>
> You could structure the evaluation of every course based on the expectations that you had for the school. Did the instructor, how often did the instructor respond within 48 hours of the email, and that sets up the realistic expectation that you communicated to the students. We communicated that expectation to the students so by doing that, we also communicated the

expectations to the faculty. Just because you teach online doesn't mean you don't have to check it but once a week. It means you need to be on it on a regular basis and you need to respond in a timely manner to your students. And you know it's not like we pulled this number out of the air and we talked to people and we said, is this realistic? And we pretty much got the thumbs up: 24 hours, no way; 72 hours, too long; 2 days? OK we can do that; 48 hours, and we're pretty cool with that. The students expected that and the faculty were expected to do that and then there was no problem.

Then the evaluations, in that way faculty could evaluate themselves. So a peer could evaluate a course was very clear; everything was time/date stamped. You could randomly pull 10. Did they respond within a reasonable time frame? And the answers were "yes" or "no." And it was pretty easy to do and you could also see if there was a pattern of slow response. So a quick response wasn't bad because there was a built-in expectation for a timeline for responding for both faculty and students and that made it a little bit better.

Effectiveness of Online Education

Though Tony is a proponent of online education and was key to introducing it to the college, she feels that the lack of "data to support that … is something I bring up on a regular basis." Tony questions, "How are we determining if the quality of education is the same across modalities or at least as high quality across modalities?" Tony feels that this is something that should be pursued more rigorously among nurse educators. Gerry thinks in regard to face-to-face education that "students enjoy it more than they do online

and generally speaking, my face-to-face students get it better." The content and activities, explains Gerry, are the same; however, "folks that are face-to-face get it better. They just get it better. So I have to think that the ability to do that is different and whether that's a function of the type of student, that we meet their teaching/learning mode better, or what, I think it's better."

At a previous university, Pat received a grant to study online learning and, though it was a limited study, found that online students were less satisfied but performed higher than students in hybrid classes.

> The ones that have the hybrid teaching style or format were more satisfied but their performance was lower and my belief was because everything was caught online. Its not like "he said, she said" kind of thing; everything was there. They had discussion postings. Their quizzes were online so there wasn't anything very subjective; it was much more objective. Emails could be tracked, so that was really interesting.

Summary of Faculty Issues and Concerns

The single topic most frequently mentioned by all faculty members was related to the time and effort to teach online. Several factors contributed to the increased amount of time to teach online, the amount of time to build the course , the demands of students seeking feedback and answers to questions, additional assignments necessary for online students to ensure comprehension, and, finally, class sizes, which tended to be larger than face-to-face classes. Some faculty members attempted to set boundaries, but others found

this difficult to do, acknowledging that nursing students worked different schedules than other types of adult students.

Another area of concern to faculty members was the types of content taught online. Some faculty had opposing ideas about what was appropriate for the web. Others felt that there was some content that was actually better on the web and proposed hybrid models. There was no consensus about types of content that were successful or not on the web, though most agreed that clinical content should be taught in live situations. This concern led to another issue voiced by faculty members over the effectiveness of online education. While some faculty members were adamant about the ineffectiveness, others were not certain and felt that the research does not sufficiently show whether online learning is comparable to face-to-face.

Student evaluations of learning were also considered by faculty members. They all addressed the tendency for students to rate online courses and faculty members lower than students in similar live situations. Several possible reasons for this were given; one was that students felt emboldened by the anonymity of the web; second, students were not able to know faculty as well and were not influenced by personalities. Several options were offered to remedy the situation. One involved actually having a different mean for distance education courses as opposed to live courses. The other remedy involved creating evaluations that were more objective about the online classes so that faculty were rated on actual performance rather than on subjective opinions.

Major Theme Three: Communication in the Online Environment

How faculty members communicated with students in the online environment was another theme identified by all participants. Creating relationships in online environments was mentioned frequently, and several faculty members described methods they have implemented that result in better relationships. Faculty members also expressed concern regarding whether students understood the concepts being taught online and how to effectively communicate content in a medium where students and instructors are not face-to-face.

Online Relationships

"How do you get to know your students when you can't see them?" is a concern expressed by Ray. It is more difficult, Ray believes, for nurses "because we come from a background of working with patients and you walk in and real quick make a connection. You can't do that same thing over a computer screen. So how do you make that connection?" Terry feels, "the downfall of having a Web class with a lot of students in it because you've never met them face to face." Without a face to put to a name, Terry felt, there was no connection "unless they email you every day, and we do have some of those." Terry does admit that "many of them are very revealing in their postings and you do get to know them somewhat well. But there are still what I call the outliers that you don't know; you don't hear from."

Ronnie worries about presence in the online classroom and how "…I give myself to the students, engage with my teaching personality to engage them in a relationship, learning relationship." Gerry is bothered that someone graduates "with essentially my

name on their transcript, because they took my class" even though they were never seen by the faculty member.

Despite the difficulties and seemingly impossible task of connecting with online students, many faculty members make the effort through various means. Tony states that, "there is a lot more time-intensive work to stay connected to students in an online format." To make better connections with students, Tony added a virtual office online using Skype. Though Tony reported that, no one has utilized it as yet, "there's a lot of discussion about it in the course." Mostly, students use the "questions area; some people call it a nursing lounge or a cyber cafe, but essentially it's a threaded discussion for just an open discussion, as opposed to content-specific threaded discussion."

In some cases, faculty members encourage students who need it to drop by the office for face-to-face contact. Jane states that "I don't need the face-to-face personally. I understand the students' need for it. Because of that I have fairly liberal drop-in hours. That students can just drop by my office to meet and talk with me if they're having issues."

A number of faculty members use introductions about themselves so that students will know who they are. They require students to do likewise. Tyler uses an "announcements page where you could welcome students, this is who I am, and you put up a whole little biography about yourself." Since many of Tyler's students were new to online learning, and Tyler admitted discomfort with the environment as well. "It created a sense of comfort for them, too. And we created this community of unknowing, I think."

Ray tends “to know more about some of my online students then I do about my in-class students. Obviously I don't know their face, and they could walk by this door and I wouldn’t know them.” Use of an icebreaker that goes beyond a typical introduction seems to help at least reveal students’ personalities, which helps build relationships. The icebreaker that Ray uses is described below:

> I’ve got different things: What color are you? What season are you? Where you go? And you take a little five- or ten-question quiz, and then it says I’m blue, and blue people are easy-going and mellow and blah, blah, blah. And I’ll say in your introduction, instead of just saying, ‘Hi I’m Debbie and I’m a nurse who works at XYZ hospital. I practice in this area’, say ‘I’m blue. It says I do these things and that’s really a pretty good mix as to what I do at work.’ So we sort of mesh that.

A number of faculty members report that they come to know their online students as well if not better than their face-to-face students. Tony thinks that, “you can get to know students very well. That’s important from our philosophical perspective, coming to know students. And how can I be helpful to you as a faculty member?” Tyler states that it is much easier to get to know students in an online class of 40 than in a live class of 60 to 90 students. “I get to know them by what they’ve said about themselves. And you can kind of follow … their threads [in online discussion boards] are a reflection of who they are, so you can kind of see who’s saying what. So I feel like I get to know them” even though, Tyler reports, often, “graduation is when I meet them face-to-face.”

Dale also thinks “it’s more effective. I’ve had more people reach out to me as an online educator to talk about career issues, career trajectories. I’m saddened to say I’ve

even had people divulge some very serious personal problems." Dale provides an email address, a cell phone number, and instant messaging options for students and if "they're local (because some of my students are not local), they can come in and be here to meet … I know more about them than when I was in the classroom." Dale has also "counseled people making that decision to drop out or not. More than I ever have in the classroom. I don't think people really ever utilized me that way. They do now." Dale is the only participant who reported having better evaluations online than in the classroom. She attributes this to creating a "presence in the online environment."

Morgan says that, "what I really love about distance learning is I really feel like I get to spend more one-on-one time with each student." Compared to teaching a face-to-face class of 104 students, Morgan asks, "How I can get that kind of one-to-one opportunity to ask the questions, to do those kinds of things with each one of those students that I get to do when I'm working distance?"

Stacey, who admits to liking to talk and being in front of people, was dreading not having that connection with students. "However, it's not as bad as I thought it would be. Because they're nurses, maybe. They email me. They call me. We have a lot more interaction than I expected." Stacey has discovered that students "are not as cautious about what they say. In a way I kind of like that." Students are much more revealing about their personal lives as well. "Like when somebody's in trouble, they'll just be frank with you. They're very candid. My life's falling apart, they'll simply tell you."

Several faculty members described recognizing or being recognized by students they had never met face-to-face. Morgan tells about making clinical visits to students who had been in her classes but whom she had never seen.

> It was like we had known each other all along. It was really funny, because in every situation each one of them knew who I was. You know, I'd walk into the hospital or the clinic and they'd say, 'You're Dr. Morgan,' and it was really fun. We had a real great, I feel like I had a really good, rapport with these students. And, some of them, I hadn't even seen their pictures, which was a very nice, very comfortable feeling.

Chris, who was taking online classes as well as teaching them, had a similar incident recognizing a faculty member with whom she had spoken to on the phone and emailed but had never seen.

> One of my professors in graduate school, I actually had her for a course, and then she was on my thesis committee, so I spent a lot of time back and forth with her, emailing and telephoning her, and I never met her. And then what happened, at sigma theta tau was meeting over in New Orleans, but I knew she was going to be there, and I really wanted to meet her. So I drove over to New Orleans for this event and there must have been 150 people in the room, and I could pick her out. I always wanted to test that theory on my other online students to see if you put us in a room, could I maybe pick you out, because you do get to know people on a deep and emotional level I think. Particularly because (your younger students, this is) they're emotional ... they'll share things that you and I were taught not to.

> Know what I'm saying? So I often wonder if I'd recognize these students; if you were to put them in a room and let me pick them out if I could do that, because I could find my teacher.

Several faculty members stressed the importance of online students developing relationships among themselves as well. Ray calls it "hall talk that happens when you give them a break in their three-hour class and they go out there and they all gossip and you're standing in the classroom and you can sort of hear it." To create this opportunity in the online environment, Ray uses a general discussion board where students can ask questions about assignments or discuss their dogs being on insulin. "There's a discussion going on right now about registration for the summer and who's taking which course and 'oh come on do this with us.' It's fine." Ray does not get involved. "It's what they would be doing if they were seeing each other face to face. So let them do it online." Additionally, Ray has students post their assignments to a discussion board so other students may provide feedback.

> Other students read it and give you feedback as well as I'm reading it and giving you feedback. Now there's different kind of feedback in that I'm actually evaluating and putting the grade on it. But the other students are reading it and saying, 'I don't understand what you're trying to say here, or what about this or what about that' or, where I work, because lots of our students are practicing nurses in our online courses. We do such and such. But it's much more of that kind of peer collegiality sort of interaction that I do in my online courses.

Tyler divides students into groups. “I kind of have resisted grouping students online, especially in threaded discussions. I wanted the whole participation in community, but I’ve decided it’s better to do groups. They get to know each other better.” Each of the groups would select a movie to view related to the course content, and all the students in the group would then rent and view it individually and then discuss it in their groups. “So they have the fun of an experience.” Stacey also puts students in groups. “I put people from all over in one group – people who aren’t in the area – and they’ve become the closest group because they’ve had to overcome the geographical challenges.” Leslie notes that “they are often talking with one another at odd hours. They’ll go on at 1 a.m. and usually there are other students on at the same time so they connect.”

Tyler describes how a television special prompted her to add an interactive unit to enable students to introduce themselves.

> I watched this crazy show on TV that was starring John Cleese, I don't know if you know him; he's this crazy guy from Fawlty Towers. And it’s about seeing people face-to-face and how important that is. And he was doing like an informal stuff on road rage and that driving along in your car with tinted windows and the car in front of you cuts you off, and you really don’t know who it is and you’re banging on the horn and screaming out the window and stuff. As opposed to walking down the street and someone bumps into you but you see them face to face. Iinvariably people say, ‘oh sorry, pardon me, excuse me,’ and move aside. And the whole thing was the importance of our face and who we are and how we're known by our face.

> So I decided that I wanted my students and myself to put up a picture of who we are. So in the first unit students put up a picture of themselves as well. That way at least we see who it is we're talking to. And maybe there's technology available but I don't know that it is, but to have a face to come up each time a student responds in a threaded discussion because I see them in the first unit and then I kind of lose sight of who they are. Sometimes I go back to just see who is this person … because if I feel I know them more by face. I think if every time you respond to them their face would come up.

Assessing Student Understanding

How to ensure that students understand the content was a concern for participants. Gerry believes that there is just "something about looking a faculty member in the face and either agreeing with what they've said or recognizing that you're not doing something that they think is important" that is missing in the online environment. Emails can be deleted or misunderstood and the gestures and tone in an instructor's voice cannot be effectively conveyed.

Ronnie feels that some of the enjoyment and personal satisfaction of the spontaneous dialog is missing in the online environment, and this impacts how well students understand what is being taught.

> You refine how you deliver material [in face-to-face classes] and actually students are amazing. They will come up with examples, you know, that you may never see in a flat medium [online classes]. So you do lose something. Do you lose a lot? Probably not. What you lose, I think you lose something faculty members get

> out of teaching, some personal satisfaction. You lose some of the students' enjoyment, that dialogue, that exchange, so I think it's mostly satisfaction that's lost.

Leslie is concerned that faculty members cannot pick up on body language when answering questions – an important element of teaching. "Am I getting the answer right or not when I'm talking to someone, that they don't understand you, or they need more information, but you don't know unless they tell you." Gerry refers to it as "the deer in the headlights look in the classroom." Wondering whether students "got it" causes Gerry a great deal of frustration.

> A week would pass, a module would pass; I would see things that would look good. But in the back of my mind was always, 'but did this person really understand this? Are they really getting the material? Because it's really important that they learn it and because I just couldn't feel comfortable with that for whatever reason. Whether it was I couldn't see their faces or I couldn't see them doing the work or whatever, my frustration with that feeling was significant and tense. It still…I still get frustrated because every now and then you see one or two who crop up where they just really blew it and you're going like, 'I know they're not the only ones. There's not just two out of 58 that didn't get this. There's more and I just haven't found it yet. Who are they and why cant I find them?'

To address the issue and ensure that students understand the significance of getting the material, Gerry provides something called a *frustration policy* that students are expected to adhere to prior to assignment due dates.

> You'll see in my syllabus I have a frustration policy built in. This is actually my frustration policy, that I expect you to be frustrated with my work. If you're not, then I'm not doing a good job as your teacher. But my expectation is you'll be frustrated with graduate work. I never took a graduate class that was just a sleeper for me. They all had areas where they were frustrating. So I told them, 'For 24 hours you have to wrestle with it alone, and at the end of 24 hours you have to ask for help if you haven't resolved it on your own. But you need to develop the skills of solving problems on your own. Reread the material. Look for three online resources, skim – whatever you have to. Do that and go from there.' So we build in some of those expectations. So when a student doesn't email me in time, well I've been frustrated for three weeks. Why? I remind them there's a frustration policy on my syllabus, it says 24 hours. Why have you been frustrated for three weeks? ... You said everything was cool in February and here we are ready to turn in your final assignment.'

Stacey was concerned with students who "knew the system" and did not really grasp the information but just used models to make it "gorgeous." *The system*, according to Stacey, refers to students who don't actually read or understand the content but know how to submit assignments that look good in a timely manner. However, Stacey did

believe that faculty members can recognize whether students “get it” or not without having them in a face-to-face situation.

> I don't care about gorgeous. I want quality. Let me see the ‘aha’ come on for you. And you could see that online. I’m amazed. That’s something that exceeded my expectations, because I could see it in your face, but I can’t see it in their face. But you can read it When the big ‘aha’ comes on.

Stacey attributes this ability to “having a constant dialog online.” Morgan also feels that students are really challenged by having to provide evidence for statements they make on the discussion boards, but ultimately “you see those light bulbs go on. That’s what teaching’s all about.”

Communicating Effectively in the Online Environment

Communicating with students online is a concern for many faculty members because, as Gerry says, “You can type an email and send it to everybody in the class, but it’s never that easy because it’s crystal clear when you write it, but evidently it has nine different interpretations when it gets sent in an email.” To facilitate understanding, Gerry provides examples of the assignments that students are expected to complete. “And to see people turn in a draft and it be nothing close to what you were looking for and when you ask them what was going on they tell you that they didn't look at it.” Gerry believes this would not happen in a face-to-face class where “I look people in the eye and say has everyone looked at this and if you haven’t you need to.”

The lack of group interaction, according to Faye, affects the class dynamics that affect student understanding of the content. Faye states that she “can think all day long”

on an issue that may come up in class, “but when you’ve got 30 in a room, there are 30 more ideas than I can think of and 30 more variables and 30 more weaknesses and those types of things so I miss that part.”

Ronnie tries to communicate regularly with students so that they will be mindful of the content. “If I don't hear from them in between assignments, I send them information that would be something from one of my distribution lists, or whatever, so I tried to continuously engage them in what’s going on.” Tyler struggles with clarification of content. “They kind of struggle with questions about what’s really required and how much do I need to do and what’s this paper really like.” To address this, Tyler, like most of her colleagues at SU4, sets up an informal discussion board. “Students can get in there and ask questions of just anyone and the students can answer … So that’s helped clarify with the syllabus questions and the assignment questions.”

Despite a belief that there is no substitute for face-to-face communication, Dale has created a variety of ways to circumvent the problem. Creating redundancy is one method, providing “opportunities for students to be able to ask questions every which way.” Dale provides a virtual method for students to “come up to your desk, meet you at in the hallway, on the online platform … you create a class lounge. Up north we called them cyber space cafes.” Dale also creates a discussion thread for every major assignment. Additionally, Dale posts “a document that will help them be successful in the online environment. It really pulls together what we're talking about.” It is a time-consuming process and is customized “to each course so they always have that document to refer to what would be success.” Dale states that students “need to know that that’s the

rules of engagement. So we have to be more careful to articulate the rules of educational engagement in our classroom." Multiple questions about an assignment also indicate to Dale that instructions weren't clear and need to be revised in subsequent classes.

Chris thinks feedback "is even more critical in an online class than it is in a face-to-face class because they know they're going to see you in a face-to-face class. Chris tries to give lots of feedback. "Probably more to my online students than I actually do to my traditional students. Formal feedback I should say." Ronnie uses the technology to ensure accurate and timely feedback though it did require some time and effort to learn how to use the tools.

> Well, you have to because of the software platform. You download it to your computer in order to track changes. I used to download them, hand grade them, and then Xerox them, so I kept a copy and then I'd mail them to the students who weren't on campus. What a time consuming thing. But it was a real skill that I had to develop in order to do track changes and actually my service work where I'm looking at bylaws, I'm looking at policies for different organizations, I began using the track changes for that purpose and then thought, 'This is silly. This is a waste of trees, you know. I'll do the track changes with the students.' And that's turned out well. They get their papers in a timely manner. I know they're delivered and I've got a copy on file. I throw them away the next year, but I've got a copy. If the student calls me, then I've got the paper right in front of me. It's a real evolution, the technology.

Summary of Communicating in the Online Environment

Creating relationships with students in the online environment was deemed as impossible by some, while others reported creating even closer relationships and getting to know students even better than in face-to-face situations. This was partially because of the numbers of students but was also attributed to the fact that students are more forthcoming about their lives and faculty members see more responses from online students than they do in their face-to-face classes.

Faculty members did also worry about whether students actually understood the content and assignments that were online. *Reading body language* was listed as an important factor that was missing when teaching online. However, some faculty members felt that they were able to see whether students got the content online by ongoing dialogue that connected them to the students' thoughts.

To ensure that students are getting all their questions answered and that they have an understanding of the content, faculty have initiated a system in which a variety of students communicate with one another. Faculty members report utilizing the technology to provide multiple methods of communication for students and to provide feedback on assignments in a timely, efficient manner. Faculty members also emphasize the importance of ensuring that instructions and assignments are written in precise language that does not require interpretation for students to understand what is expected.

Major Theme Four: Teaching in the Online Environment

Teaching in the online environment presented challenges to most faculty members as they had to find new ways to present material they had been teaching for years. Many

identified themselves as *facilitators of learning* and discussed how this impacted their online teaching methods. They also described innovative methods they used to teach online. Results for the sub-theme *Online Teaching Methods* came primarily from the interview question that asked participants how they taught online. *Faculty as Facilitators of Learning* emerged from faculty descriptions of their online teaching experience.

Online Teaching Methods

PowerPoint is a tool used by many of the faculty members in creating online lessons. Leslie explained that "we do PowerPoints with voice over, which are the 'quote' lecture content, but the majority of the work is really within the assignment and reading material as well as completing a project or an assignment." Tony presents content using PowerPoint slides but changes them for online presentation. "So in my PowerPoints, for example, I will include video links and audio links and web links that they can use to support some of the content that I'm trying to get across to them." Tony was planning on using authoring software to enhance the PowerPoint slides, "where you add narration for the PowerPoint, you record your lecture with the PowerPoint. What it does is shrink it so it can open more quickly online."

Gerry does not use PowerPoint or any other multi-media presentation tool; instead, she presents all content on PDFs because, "I have zero technology issues with PDFs. Everybody can open them; they can make them as big as they want to, they can print or save them. They can do whatever they want to with them." Gerry utilizes this method rather than any others since participating in a one-year fellowship that studied online education.

> We looked at multi-mode teaching, different teaching learning styles. How do you accommodate with different teaching, learning styles in an online environment? One of the interesting pieces that came out that we saw was that, more often than not, when students were given the option for having a script for the content, they wanted to be able to download the script, read it at their convenience, print it up, and take it with them and read it where they wanted to. They didn't want to be tied to the computer to watch something for two hours. They wanted a script and they could go and they could do it. I tend to – most of my online teaching is based on that philosophy.

Not all faculty members agree with Gerry's philosophy. Jesse advises online faculty to "look for ways to optimize the experience … it shouldn't be an old fashioned correspondence course." Assigning readings and tests to students does not provide a sufficient, satisfactory learning experience. "You could've mailed it to them except you're giving it to them electronically. So it needs to be interactive. So you want to go out and start using some of that stuff that's out there." The importance of including interactivity in online courses became evident to Ray after teaching her first online class. "After I did it that first time, it's like this is not the right way to do this. Lets go back and start over and develop content that's more interactive that keeps the students more engaged." Since that first time, Ray has incorporated activities that require students to "look for information in areas that they're interested in that might not necessarily be my topical area, but it's theirs. And therefore it becomes more productive to the end user in terms of what they can do with it afterwards."

Other faculty members found creative methods that were not “high-tech” but that they felt kept students engaged in the online class. Terry posts controversial current events. “I put that on the discussion board. And I pose some very probing questions about that.” Terry reports that students log on frequently just to see where the controversy is heading. Tyler likes the idea of giving students some visuals that depict what they are reading about. Tyler has students read a book for a multicultural class and then includes discussions of the readings as well as pictures “so they could just get a vision of who are these people of the book that we're talking about.”

Some faculty members report that they had already begun using methods in their face-to-face classes that translated easily into the online environment. Casey states that “very early on I started to sort of modularize my teaching.” To complement the modules, Casey started “taping every word that I say and posting it online” in order to “preserve classroom time for things like test reviews.

Additionally, Casey creates folders with lecture notes and audiovisuals of topics, emphasizing those that students traditionally struggle with. “I’ll have actual tapes of the different murmurs, of the different murmurs that I’ve recorded with an electronic stethoscope in clinic over the years.” Casey also carries “a digital camera to clinical with me. I still practice. And over the years I’ve taken many hundreds of patients not identifying kinds of pictures, and I like to use those in class and kind of work through cases.”

One issue that some faculty members discussed is the tendency to assign too much material to online students. Leslie reports that as a result of her own experience as

an online student, as well as being a parent of online students, “I got really protective about how much homework I gave or how much assignments.” It is easy to “send them to different web pages and go here, jog there, and it becomes extremely time consuming for the students.” So Leslie encourages faculty to be protective of students’ time because “it could be really easy to overload them with assignments and quizzes and ‘read web pages and do all these other things and come back and read your book’.” Instead, Leslie tries to make the assignments manageable by focusing on fewer, more meaningful assignments. “Just more or less applying what they studied so I knew they were getting the general terms.” There are also quizzes that call for short answers that are relevant and not what Leslie calls “jerk work,” which entails “just quoting from the book”.

Stacey’s biggest objection when starting to teach online was the rigidity of the discussion boards in some of the existing courses. Faculty members required students to write in the discussion boards as if they were turning in an APA formatted document. In an online clinical course designed and taught by Stacy, the discussions boards were used for students to describe their home visits. “So it’s not all this brainiac work, and it’s not graded on spelling, and it doesn't have to be referenced and all this kind of ric rac. But they do have to do a group project. It’s a big major paper, so it’s still quite a lot of work, but they enjoyed it.”

Dale does “case studies online, especially if I want the students to apply the knowledge.” Dale assigns a group project to online students.

We do some fairly sophisticated case studies. I can easily do group projects.

Usually my community health course is a four credit course and they do a very

complicated community cultural population assessment in groups because there's a lot of writing in the course. I have them do it via PowerPoint with very specific instructions what they need to demonstrate. So I could do it through document sharing. But I always have a discussion thread. The students need to go back and look at *x* amount of them and not only do they have to talk about what they've learned, they need to have active discussions with someone else and ask some poignant questions about the other culture or whatever it was. So I always, I usually with a major project, I usually have some way in the online environment to have discussion. In the classroom, how many times have you done group presentations, and we don't even encourage discussion of them.

The other thing that I do too, and I had just started to do this at my previous university, was there should be a peer evaluation with group discussions. And I make sure that I have peer evaluations in the online environment, especially within the group and equate that as a small percentage of the group project because I really like to know what people thought about other people's roles.

Several faculty members created assignments that got students out into the community. Terry sends community and women's health online students on "field trips." For example, in women's health "they all have to go to a local drug store and they have to bring back information on three different contraceptions sold over the counter." Then students are required to discuss their experiences and new information they gained from the trip. Additionally, they must visit an agency that provides women's services. "It can be an abortion clinic, a fertility clinic, an ob/gyn, a health department. They have to go

physically face-to-face, have an interview, and they have to have it dripping with adjectives." In another course, students have to "interview someone with a chronic disease, whether it be arthritis, lupus, or diabetes. And they have to include that interview on the discussion board and people comment on it. So everyone learns about everyone else's disease." Sometimes the person interviewed is the student themselves and they report on how the disease impacts "their emotional life, their spiritual life, their physical life. How much do they spend on medications?"

Ronnie, who teaches nursing management courses, also had an assignment that encouraged students to go on "field trips" and interact with the community.

> My assignments for web I tried to think of projects that they had to go out and interview somebody. They had to go out and do something. They could not just be attached to a computer and meet the computer. I made them, by virtue of their assignment, go out and interview nurses, interview nurse managers. One of the assignments is to do a comparison of the medical staff organization chart to the nursing staff organization chart and draw some conclusions about that. That forced them to go talk to other disciplines, other than nursing.

Some activities don't always work as well in practice as they do in theory, as reported by Leslie whose first online course included both pathophysiology and pharmacology.

> What I would do is set up the disease process, so I would set up a case study so they had different types of drugs and then a case study that they would have to work up about the drugs and the mechanism and action. It was really good but it

didn't work as well as I wanted it to mainly because what I did. We have big classes so I figured I had groups, and I'd give a case to each group and each group would post the answers back and then everybody would read everybody else's so you would get five times the amount of information. And I was really good about different scenarios and how to apply it until I realized nobody was reading it except me. So … group *a b c d* would post but nobody from f would go back and see what group *a* was doing, so it became a learning curve for them that you need to go back and look at someone else's postings. Sometimes they go too long. So actually it became like a management; How do you get them to answer questions? Some groups would put too much in it and nobody would want to read that much; some would put too little and it wasn't really a good learning, so it became a lot of work and not a lot of positive feedback. It worked in theory really well. I think the student management of it, and this was their first online course and we hadn't worked out the kinks.

To deal with skills that cannot be taught online, Casey does a blended course to teach clinical procedures. "They have a number of modules that they have to complete. Then they take a test and, assuming they pass everything, they come up here, we put them up in a hotel at our expense using their online fee that they pay." On campus they learn to do "suture and splint and do biopsies and things." It gives faculty an opportunity to "make sure they're actually real people that they're somewhat competent." During this time, faculty also tries to "have them do their check offs for their advanced health

assessment course too. Then after that they go into a clinical rotation and then from then on out each semester we visit them wherever they are in their clinical rotations."

Faculty members have various opinions about whether teaching online was different or the same as teaching face-to-face, and, though most thought there were some differences, the degree of those differences varied by individual faculty member. Ray finds teaching online to be very different. "Somebody asked me … could I teach research in the classroom. And I said no because I'd have to prep a whole new class. I can't just take my online stuff and walk into the classroom for three hours a week." Ray admits to using lecture as her primary method of teaching in live classes, while her online classes utilize discussion boards. Gerry also says that the "teaching methods are dramatically different from live." The ability to change methods at a moment's notice to address student needs is missing, according to Gerry. "In the live class I have the ability to change the teaching method on the fly. I can go from a PowerPoint to pulling up the screen and drawing on the board because I can see the PowerPoints are not cutting it with the students, so I can dramatically change it." Gerry describes how the spontaneity is missing from the online courses and the ability to use some of the techniques, such as collaboration, that are successful in live classes.

Ronnie also believes that the methods are different and describes what she would do in a classroom if she needed to change methods at a moment's notice. "I could put them in a group, I could observe behaviors, we did games…." However, unlike Gerry, she found alternatives. "… and I couldn't do that on the web so it forced me to be

innovative. I think it was just a different way, not better or worse, it made the web three-dimensional."

A very few faculty members disagree that teaching methods are distinctly different on the web. Leslie contends that the teaching "method tends to be similar, whether live or online." As an example, Leslie talks about the importance of the discussion questions, which were used in the live class to keep students engaged during three-hour lectures. The same discussion questions are used in online classes to supplement the lecture notes and the readings. "Where online I like putting out the questions that they have to answer. So it is kind of bringing them into, engaging them into, the class." Pat also uses "some of the same teaching methods online that I do with live, with having the most up-to-date information, providing the resources, making sure everything is pleasing whether it is slides or your pages here online."

A few faculty members found teaching online to be different; however, after developing the skills to teach online, they now believe that those methods should be used in face-to-face classes. After teaching online, Morgan finds that it has altered the way that she teaches face-to-face and her earlier opinion, that they were different, has been changed as she has begun to use online teaching methods for teaching live classes.

> When I first came here, I thought they would be different. I found now, after doing the distance courses and I've had the opportunity to teach, for instance, I taught undergraduate health assessment last spring, that the things I have learned from distance learning affect the way I teach face-to-face. It's changed my whole way that I think and approach students in the classroom. Completely changed.

> Because I virtually forced myself, at first. Say you're going to design this face-to-face course and you’re not going to lecture. You’re not going to lecture anymore. So how are you going to do it? I think the distance learning has changed the way I teach face-to-face. I think it’s had a big difference.

Faculty as Facilitators of Learning

Dale feels that as an online educator “you must be a facilitator. You must see yourself that way or you won't do really well in that environment.” Leslie also sees the online instructor role as being “more of a facilitator.” Particularly when teaching graduate students. “I’ll help you learn. I try to emphasize to graduates that they are in charge of their learning.” Pat stated that “I saw myself as being the facilitator and the person that could be the resource and I tell them from the beginning you are really teaching the course to each other.” Pat compares the online teaching experience to the face-to-face classes:

> I’m there to be your guide, to be your resource, to be your facilitator, to help put you in the right direction, to help get you an article to critique, that you might not be able to find. So I tell them that's my role, where in the face-to-face I assume all the roles and the more you take from them the less you’re going to do.

Tyler acknowledges that adult students all bring expertise to the course so “each of us is learning and teaching simultaneously.” Tyler believes this “egalitarian type of teaching method” can be done from the classroom or online.” Jesse thinks that the faculty members “who would be the major naysayers, which are very few, are probably still people who believe that if the student is not physically sitting in front of you, there is

something wrong with the student. Somehow them ‘being in a room when I’m talking’ is magic.”

Ray explains that “things change so fast in probably any profession that you always have to be learning new things.” Once nursing students graduate, they will need to learn new techniques, new medications, and they will no longer have access to the university library or be able to refer to the text book. Online learning helps them learn to decide “which ones are good sources that we believe versus somebody deciding that we’re the expert on this topic.” Ray thinks, “Some of that translates more to the rest of their life and their careers and their profession.”

Tony describes structuring discussion questions to facilitate learning. “What I have started doing is kind of coaching the students to engage each other in deeper thinking about the content.” To facilitate increased student interaction, Tony has “started using group leaders. I divide my course into groups because we will have 30-60 students in an online course.” Group leaders are required to post early and encourage questions.

> I found that that really helps to engage people and to move away from answering the question. The idea is not to answer the question the idea is to explore the content as opposed to a right or wrong answer to a question. And I also find that, when I respond to the students, they think then the discussion becomes a discussion between students and me. When student leaders run the discussion, it’s a group discussion, as opposed to answering the way they think I want them to answer.

Dale also utilizes “small group discussions” to facilitate students’ learning. The learning platform also permits Dale to provide “direct continuous feedback to my students and I think that’s one thing they need is to be a community of learning and to encourage that active learning.”

Knowing when to facilitate and when to teach is something that concerns Stacey. “Facilitation versus the teaching moment is a biggie … You don’t just react to everything give an answer.” This is true particularly in discussion boards. “Things will come up in discussion boards that you really want to get in and teach. On the other hand, is this the moment when I can facilitate and encourage them to dig a little harder and find and put it together, synthesize it themselves?”

Tyler has found the online environment to be more participative. “You’re not up there lecturing.” Instead, the most important teaching method is the threaded discussion. “I can see where their thinking is and prompt and, you know, sort of direct their thinking in another way or just enhance what they’re already thinking.”

After having taught online, Dale feels that face-to-face teaching would be, and should be, different. “I would never be the “sage on the stage” ever again. I don't think I could run a classroom by just lecturing from a PowerPoint, with heads just kind of like droning like this. I don't think I could do it.” Dale describes how many of the online methods, such as small group discussions, sharing clinical experiences, and debates, could be modified for the classroom.

> I kind of wish maybe I should go back to the classroom now because my class would be transformed. I wouldn't recognize myself. I wouldn’t recognize myself.

> I wouldn't be up there lecturing with a PowerPoint for two hours. I am a facilitator of learning.

Summary of Teaching in the Online Environment

In this theme, faculty described how they taught online students. Through recommendations or trial and error, many had found unique ways to deliver the content. Some felt that they had already begun preparing to teach online in their face-to-face classes and were able to translate those techniques to their online classes. Table 4 presents a list of some of the methods that faculty members reported using to teach online. There were varying opinions as to the differences or similarities to face-to-face teaching and only a minority of respondents were adamant that one was better than the other. Some faculty members felt that teaching online had changed how they taught or would teach face-to-face courses, indicating they would want to include more interactivity and less lecturing. Many of the faculty members now identified themselves as facilitators of learning or described activities that exemplified facilitation. The importance of students taking responsibility for their own learning was seen as necessary, not only as online learners, but as nurses who need to know how to continue learning long after their formal education has concluded.

Table 4

Online Teaching Methods

Class Discussions
• Set up discussions board for students to post their essays. Other students, as well as faculty members, can read the essays and give feedback. • Set up discussion groups and match students according to their specialty area to support each other as they identify research questions. For example, if the topic area is acute care and the instructor only knows basic acute care, there may be others in the acute care setting, working there, so they can be more supportive than the instructor with details. • Post a current event weekly – a controversial current event – and pose some very probing questions about that event. • Set up discussion boards to complement clinical home visits. Focus on the cultural perspective or the values students brought into the relationship, versus the clients. It’s not graded on spelling, and it doesn't have to be referenced. • Assign students to read a book on a particular culture (such as *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Dow*, by Anne Fadiman) and discuss the book. Include pictures of the region and people of Laos.
Multimedia
• Incorporate video, audio, and Web links to support PowerPoints. Use programs such as Impatica to record narration and to make file size manageable.

Table 4 (Continued)

- Incorporate audio files of the different sounds, such as murmurs recorded with an electronic stethoscope. Students can hear the murmur, and click on another audio file and hear the instructor talking about the murmur.
- Carry a digital camera to clinical practice and take photos of patients, not identifying kinds of pictures, and use those in class and work through cases.

Group Projects
• Do a group community cultural population assessment via PowerPoint with very specific instructions concerning what they need to demonstrate. Students look at *x* number of presentations and discuss what they've learned. Include a peer evaluation. • Assign groups to a movie and popcorn. Each group chooses a movie that clearly depicts a cultural phenomenon and discusses it in their group.
Field Trips
• Assign students in women’s health class to go to a local drug store and bring back information on three different contraceptions sold over the counter. Students report on prices and analyze their experiences, answering the following questions: What did they encounter? What did people around them do? How did they feel when they walked in? • Assign students in women’s health class to go to an agency that has women’s

services. It can be an abortion clinic, a fertility clinic, an ob/gyn, or the health department, they have to have an interview, and they have to have it dripping with adjectives. How many parking spaces were there? What was across the street? How many trees did they see, and what kind were they? When they walked into the building, what color were the walls? How many chairs were in the waiting room? What was the name of their receptionist?

- Assign students to do a comparison of the medical staff organization chart to the nursing staff organization chart and draw some conclusions about that.
- Assign students to interview someone with a chronic disease, such as arthritis, lupus, or diabetes. They should include that interview on the discussion board and have people comment on it. What's the impact on their subject's emotional life, their spiritual life, and their physical life? How much do they spend on medications? (Students can interview themselves, if they have a chronic disease. This provides insight from other students' perspectives about chronic diseases in women.)

Assessment

- Utilize case studies that apply what participants studied, to validate that they understand the general terms and principles from the readings.
- Present weekly quizzes that pertain to content that students are assigned to read.

Weekly Summaries/Directions

Table 4 (Continued)

- Present a weekly video so that students see a visual of the instructor. Each week the videos introduce what to expect for the week. These are not pre-recorded, so if the instructor sees a lot of problems with a particular assignment, or a question on a case study or quiz that doesn't work very well, the video can describe the issue.
- Post a summary of the week and point out what was accomplished and where some ideas need to be enhanced.

PDFs
• Place all the content for each module in PDF form. There are no technology issues with PDFs. Everybody can open them, they can make them as big as they want to, and they can print or save them. Include alternate teaching examples, but essentially everything is in one format. • Type out class lectures in a script, so that it is easy to present step by step. For example: here's a *t* test, here's regression, here's a chi square; walk through the process step by step. Turn it into a PDF and put it online for students to read.

Major Theme 5: Advantages of Online Education

Despite issues with online education, over half the faculty members interviewed identified advantages that they had discovered when teaching online. Most of these they had not anticipated. Advantages that emerged from the conversations included schedule

flexibility and increased participation by students. A few faculty member also listed additional advantages related to creativity, scholarship, and increasing enrollment.

Increased Student Participation

Over half of the participants specifically mention that the online environment provided more opportunities for student participation greater than that of the face-to-face classroom. There were several reasons given for this, but the most predominant were related to the security of “hiding behind” a computer and an inability of students to participate as they are able to do in a face-to-face situation, particularly a large class. Ray, who had been an online student prior to beginning to teach online, talked about her experience with students in the online classroom:

> There’s that security piece and I actually get a little too active sometimes on the discussions of my students. I intentionally say I’m not responding yet. Somebody else has to respond first. But I just think it’s a different, it’s a certain sense of security being behind my computer screen versus sitting in a room with 20, 50 people, whatever.

Tony talks about students who are quieter.“You can really engage them more than you can in a class.” She compares this to the classroom where “you'll get one or two people that dominate the discussion and you can't get away with that in an online format. Everybody must participate and you must participate with substance.” According to Tyler, this format may also give those students who dominate a break. “Everyone gets a voice, and I kind of feel that the people feel like compelled in a classroom to shine can also take a sort of backward seat at this. So I think it levels the student participation.” Not

being prepared for class is no longer an option, according to Ray. “Everybody has to do all the work. You can't sit in the classroom with 50 people and go in the back corner today because you know that you didn't read the book and hope that everybody talks a lot because the discussion gets graded by *’Did you participate?’*”

For those who feel that interaction is important, Morgan states “that’s an almost given in a distance course but not necessarily in a classroom with 104 or 200 students.” Pat also talks about large class sizes and the inability to successfully monitor all the students:

> Face-to-face accelerated are 60, and basic students are 120. I feel interactions are the most important thing. And in a class that size even though I walk around and try to get students to take part and I do group things as much as I can, it’s very difficult to get the larger groups to do any kind of interaction. And you tend to worry about the ones. We’ve had an issue with laptops. Are they really on the page at task? – Or that kind of thing. Where online I think you can do a better job.

Because students are required to interact, Ray believes that, “it can result in more learning, better learning, because they have to do the activities there in that course.” Tyler feels that, “its more participative in online, to tell you the truth. You know you’re not up there lecturing away.” This participation enables Tyler to “see where their thinking is and prompt and you know sort of direct their thinking in another way or just enhance what they’re already thinking. So they’re really getting the meaning.” Leslie also thinks that, “students are learning a little bit better. This is not “sign in, sign out.” You can't hide.” Leslie explains that, “we can keep track of them here: how many times you’re on, how

many times you answer. So you can't hide. So it's a big learning curve for them and for us."

Pat likes "the interaction that I see with the students – the wealth of what I see them delve into and respond and answer with their own research, so to speak." Compared with the face-to-face class, "I think the students that took the online got more out of it because of they had to interact." Pat explains the differences when students learn passively as compared to the interaction in the online:

> In the face-to-face one, they can put their learning responsibility on me as opposed to them and they make me responsible. When they don't learn something, you know it's that whole thing that "you didn't tell me that." Well, it's in your book. It doesn't matter you didn't tell me that so how do you expect me to know that. Because my face-to-face students do not have to do discussion postings. It's supposed to be a dialogue between me and them, and it's not that way. It could be something I'm doing wrong, but I hear that from a number of faculty. So I think the online component is more work on them, more work on me. It's more work on me. They have to stay on task as I do, but they get more out of it where the face-to-face its probably easier because it's a more passive learning style than the active participant that the online is.

Jesse describes doing "these case study discussions that are difficult to do in the live classroom." Jesse discovered that "you could get all that kind of discussion going and that allows in-depth discussion of a lot of stuff that is very difficult to do in a classroom. Its problem-based learning. And the web actually really enhances that, and so

that's much better." Jesse discusses the increased productivity that she has found since utilizing the online tools:

> The ability to interact individually with the students and so that's ... you have the opportunity to do it (online). In a classroom, even if you do interactive activities in a classroom you can't engage all 50 in the room at the same time. But if I do case studies in which all 50 must participate and then I get to see the participation types of writing that all 50 people are doing and I'm able to give them some degree of feedback minimally on the grading rubric that they got all the points or they didn't get all the points and they didn't get it because they didn't discuss very much. So I'm able to do that and you can't do that as well in a room with 50 unless you don't really teach unless you're just sitting making checkmarks every time Sally said something, which, I don't think, is productive. And I think that helped me see what could happen from the discussions, which is one of the greatest parts of teaching online. You can…you have the potential to engage everyone in the room to actually get them involved.

The ability to address controversial issues was another advantage for online discussions given by Ronnie. She told a group of colleagues that ethics was not one of the classes that should go online, but her colleagues disagreed, so she rethought the situation.

> I thought about the class that erupted one time over the abortion issue when I had a lot of nurse midwifery students and I had a bunch of acute care nurses in there and they felt another way and literally I thought it was going to come to blows in that class. And I thought, well you know this class, this ethics Web class, they

> may be right. It may be that ethics, because people have such strong feelings about the content, that number one, it separates them physically, and they could actually say what they wanted to say on the web.

Schedule Flexibility

Being able to work anytime from anywhere was identified as a plus for faculty members. Ray responded to faculty members who complained about additional time and effort by stating that, “Yeah it takes me more time, but it’s on my schedule.” Pat also commented on the additional work factor:

> You could pose the argument that it is more work, but then you could look at it the other way and say but its self-directed and self-paced, so I can do that at my speed in my pajamas at three o clock in the morning. So, all in all, it’s probably easier to teach online because I could put it in my schedule the way I want to.

The schedule flexibility enabled faculty to attend conferences, meetings or even take vacations. Ray stated that, “I don't have to worry about, ‘Well, is that conference planned on the day I’m supposed to teach class?’ You work around whatever’s going on in your life.” Leslie appreciated the latitude provided by the flexible schedule. “I have been out of city, out of state; I can be somewhere else and still get my teaching done.” Tyler, who travels every summer to Africa to teach, stated that, “One of the things I like about it in particular is to be able to travel and still get online wherever you’re at and be online with students from all over the world.” Ronnie is active in a number of national and state nursing organizations and felt the schedule provided flexibility for meetings throughout the country. “So that if I was in Washington, or Orlando, or Tampa or

wherever I was, I could sit there and communicate with my students. So over time it just evolved and it works out fine."

In addition to travel, several faculty members liked the ability to work on scholarship activities. Ray offered that she felt it was a "time management issue. I personally like it because I stay home many days and I can work on my scholarship and my writing things and teach my course." Joey reported that by teaching online, "I finished my DNP, I did three presentations. I got a journal article published."

Research was also an important factor in schedule flexibility. Casey, who is involved in a complex, long-term research project, stated that:

> The kind of research I do kind of requires me to be in the lab supervising graduate students. It is nice not to be chained to a particular time of day when class would occur so, in a way, that helps me because I am freer than I used to be to do work in my lab instead of doing work in the classroom. So I basically displaced my teaching workload to late at night and I can do my research and everything else.

The ability to work at all hours and not have to drive into the university was mentioned as a feature that was positive for both faculty members and students. Faye thinks "probably for the students not having to drive, saving them money from driving or moving or that sort of thing is a huge benefit." Ronnie reported that putting all core courses online enabled students to more efficiently schedule their clinical times. Several faculty members reported that they met up with their students late at night. "I like to work late at night, so I can be on the computer grading things. Some of the students are on the

computer at the same time; we can talk; we chat; we can do discussion boards; many things."

Several universities offer reduced seating time courses that are partially online in order to reduce time spent commuting to campus. Stacey and Chris, who teach at a satellite campus, were involved in setting up a reduced-seat time program for students who were a long distance away from the satellite campus.

> (Chris) We had a campus at some distance. And the first semester we started up there, we realized that the students were, in spite of the fact that we were up there, they were still coming 40 and 50 miles to class from these little towns. And they were coming out two or three nights a week. So we first started by saying, 'How would you feel if we stacked your classes? You can stay longer, we start earlier, stay longer, but you'd only have to come one night a week. And then I said, we're on our sixteenth week of multicultural and I feel like I have beat it to death. And said how can we do this different. And then we started researching it and found out about hybrid, blended, and that actually there were some hybrid classes going on at SU3 at the main campus, and there was a lot of literature coming out about it.
>
> (Stacey) I hate this. I mean I'm talking about the changes in an older person's skin. They're sitting there going to sleep falling out of their chair. There's not enough to talk about, it would be so much more valuable. And we started brainstorming and of course she and I communicate really well. We've been so lucky to have each other.

(Chris) It’s worked really well for recruitment, and I think for retention. We have a very high graduation percentage of students who start with us.

Other Miscellaneous Advantages

There were several other advantages listed by a few faculty member that are mentioned here because they seemed to be significant to the individuals who addressed them. They include creativity, increasing enrollment, and advancing the field of nursing.

Four faculty members mentioned the opportunity to be more creative as an advantage to online education. Tony found that it could “be a lot of fun. There are a lot of creative things that you can do in online formats that you can't do in other formats.” Faye and Joey also made similar remarks about the format. Joey, who is one of the more computer-literate participants said that she “found that I could be very creative in the way that I presented the material, and I liked the technology and I liked learning HTML” Jesse also found that it “allowed me to be highly creative.” Jesse described utilizing the course content for portfolios submitted for awards. “I was able to give some really nice illustrations of stuff, of what I've done.”

Gerry and Stacey both identified the ability to increase enrollment in nursing programs as another factor. Gerry addressed the issue of the economy and competition. “There are a handfull of places that don’t do online, but they’re shrinking because of competition. And as the economy gets tougher it’s even going to get more.” Gerry then describes how universities look at competitors and try and provide similar options. “I can’t tell you how many faculty meetings start off with USF has dropped this

requirement; if we're going to compete we have to drop it too." Stacey also addressed the need to increase students in the nurse practitioner program and the decision to go online:

> The university has a good name so it's very saleable and our ability to maintain the kind of graduate FTE we need locally is very limited, because this is a small town. Its not a big town like Tampa where there's a fairly large workforce to draw from. So using online education allows us to pull people in from all over the state we've not otherwise been able to access.

Scholarship and advancement of the field of nursing were also mentioned by two faculty members who came from SU4. Tony talks about the opportunity to utilize her work in online education:

> I also think that you can incorporate some of the other things that you do into your online work. For example, I mentioned earlier that I'm in a faculty learning council so my development of myself as an educator has taken kind of a direction towards distance learning because I do so much of it. So that's one area for my own development and for my service where I can incorporate that. I have done some publication in that area so, for my scholarship, it's not my main area of research but as an educator we have an obligation to do research in the area of education.

Finally, Dale states her belief that, in order to advance the field of nursing, educators need to embrace distance learning. "We're going to get people into nursing and progress their careers within nurse education or lead them from undergraduate to RN to BSN to graduate even RN to PhD".

Summary of Advantages to Online Education

Despite the time and effort that is imposed on faculty members who teach online, many felt there were some benefits both for them and for students. Students were significantly more participative online than they were in live courses. Use of discussion boards and tracking enabled faculty members to ensure that students contributed to dialogues offered online. In live courses, faculty members reported that students could hide and not contribute, and in particularly large classes there was no effective way to ensure that all students participated.

Another factor that faculty members liked was the schedule flexibility. Because they were not tied to certain dates and times that they had to be present, they were able to participate in conferences, professional meetings, and other activities. They also felt this provided a benefit to students who were no longer required to drive into campus or manipulate work schedules. A few other benefits were mentioned by several faculty. These included opportunities for creativity, scholarly work, and the ability to increase enrollments.

Major Theme Six: Students in the Online Environment

Faculty members felt that students in the online environment were somehow different, or at least behaved differently, from their face-to-face peers. They described certain student attributes that were prevalent among online students and teaching methods that were specifically utilized to address some of the challenges then encountered. Cheating and learning styles were mentioned by only a few participants and addressed how they dealt with or ignored the impact of both these issues.

Attributes of Online Students

Many faculty members believe that not all students are a good fit for the online environment. “It’s a fallacy”, states Ray, “that we think everybody should be able to teach in all these different modalities equally well or that all students can learn in these modalities equally well.” Casey reiterates the belief that, “there are some people who just aren’t cut out for online. Whereas I’ve never had the feeling … I never had the feeling in a classroom setting, boy you know this person is not right for the classroom.” According to Casey it has nothing to do with age. Though younger students are better at technology, they “don’t have the experience, the cognitive schema in their skull to do this stuff.” Casey believes that about online education is not for “5 to 10 percent” of the people.”

Jesse also emphasizes that not all students have the ability to learn well in an online environment. Jesse recommends web mediated courses as an option to fully online courses. “What you could do is some activities online which optimizes that mode of learning for that content for that objectives. And then use the face-to-face time for stuff that you can't do as well in the online environment.”

Ray feels that sometimes faculty members who blame a student’s performance on the online class are using that as an excuse rather than acknowledging that the student may just not be a good learner. Ray thinks that the student who lacks self-discipline in the online environment is “the same person who probably looks at the clock at 8 a.m., rolls over and goes back to sleep, and misses their 9:00 class.”

Some faculty members were concerned with the lack of depth seen in online students. Tyler describes how the class she inherited consisted of detailed lectures and

readings. However, she reorganized the content because, “I know they’re used to PowerPoints” and felt that they were not putting the time into the readings, entirely missing the points they needed to learn. Leslie also reports that online students tend to skim material “so its not the depth I want.” Joey, who had been an online student, was eager to utilize some of the interactive methods used in her online program but was disappointed with the outcome.

> I found that all they wanted was a lecture and their assignments, you know their readings. So that part of if has been very disappointing…What we do to force them to do the online content is we have weekly quizzes. That’s the only way we can make them do the readings, watch any lectures, visit the websites to listen to heart sounds. There’s videos. They look at the exam being done. But unless we have the quiz there, they won’t do it.

Stacey’s experience is that students learn a system that enables them to get through online courses without doing any actual work but by delivering the material in a way that appears to have all the components. They are then able to use their skill to succeed in online classes without getting any depth. In a class with students who were getting ready to graduate, as well as some beginners, there was an issue with fairness “because the people who were getting ready to graduate had learned the system and so their performance was up here.” According to Stacey “leaders emerge online.”

> They'll come on and say, ‘Let me help you,’ and I can read exactly how they [the student leaders] can tell them. That’s how I knew that somebody was on to how to

> beat the system. Keep a calendar, do this on Thursday night. They got it down pat; they know all the rules. But the leaders emerge.

Rudeness has been an issue for several faculty members such as Leslie, who reported that students "feel anonymous and, not being known, they just feel they can say what they want." Dale "occasionally sees that [rudeness] and I will tell you I will nip that right in the bud." Upon seeing this behavior, Dale sends a private email that usually stops the incident. Jesse talks about students who are "not the most polite critic of things, and also some students who've been kind of, they've let me know where their issues have been." Joey also reports experiences with rudeness in the online classroom:

> Here, the students have no qualms about being rude about saying what they truly feel in terms of complaints and that kind of stuff, having bitch sessions among themselves on the discussion boards. So they're complaining about ... you certainly don't get that in the classroom.

Motivation and self-directedness were mentioned by faculty as an important attribute for online learners. Pat states that "they have to be motivated to stay on task." Pat opens all her course material "from the beginning because I think these are independent learners. They're self-paced." Joey states that students need to be prepared to take online classes. "Who want to do it? Who are motivated to do it? You know, have the maturity and the time management skills needed to do it. And if you do I find it's a very productive way of learning."

Casey identifies lack of motivation as one of the reasons online learning is not for everyone. "There are just some people who are not self motivated enough." The other

reason for failure, states Casey, is fear. “There are people who also don’t have the right constitution; they’re always so nervous that they’re missing something that they are just a big bundle of nerves the whole time they’re in it.” In order to alleviate student anxiety, Casey produces a weekly video to:

> Tell them what’s going on and it’s not something I prerecord. So if I see a lot of problems with a particular assignment, if I put in a stinky question on a case study that didn’t work very well, I'll tell them it didn’t work and I’ll tell them why and apologize and say I fixed it. But its sort of folksy and I kind of go through and tell them what's going on each week to calm those people.

Pat also posts “a summary of the week and points out what we've done and where some ideas need to be enhanced and that kind of thing.” This is done weekly unless something is wrong that needs immediate attention, then she posts as soon as possible to alleviate student anxiety.

Ronnie sometimes gets frustrated with students’ inability to juggle all their responsibilities and expect that the class requirements will be adjusted. Ronnie describes some of the comments she gets from students: “Don’t you understand I’m busy? I’ve got all these other things, and I’ve got a family too. And you’re just grading too harshly. The other section they’re not being graded this harshly. They’re not being asked to do all this.”

Gerry reports that students get frustrated with what they perceive as additional time spent online; that is, they believe they are doing more work than their face-to-face counterparts.

> There are more assignments online. I use more assignments online because I'm grading the discussion. I'm not always grading the participation in the classroom, you know when students are here. Discussion boards. There are individual assignments rather than just group assignments and I think in terms of the individual assignments those are probably the same that I would use both in the classroom as well as in an online forum. I think its the fact that the online feels like they're doing more. You know, some students want it online because they think it's going to be easier, but in fact I think it's harder and it's more time-consuming for them and for me because I've got more to grade. They get very frustrated and upset by that.

Joey also reported that students complain about how time-consuming assignments could be. "School is second or third or even fourth on their list. So when you start introducing anything that's going to take up their time, they start to rebel and they get very upset by it." Joey compares current students to those worked with in the past at another university:

> It's just a very bizarre differentiation between students that I've worked with in the past and students that I worked with here. And I don't know that it's really geographic, I think it's just a different generation you know the millenials vs. the gen xers and that kind of thing. You know I've had very competitive students in the past who worked to show up someone else, and I like that kind of spirit. I like competition. But students here could care less, so it's discouraging.

According to Morgan, online students express a need for structure. Providing rigorous requirements helps them to succeed as online learners. "There's a tremendous

amount of rigor [in Morgan's classes]. I don't tolerate people turning in papers late. If I say the discussion board is supposed to be up by Sunday at midnight, if not it's a 0." This rigor requires them to perform at a certain level and have clear expectations about what they need to accomplish in an online class.

Student Learning Styles

Incorporating student learning styles into online courses is something, according to Tony, that instructors must be "more aware of" than in a live course. "Because [in a live course] you kind of do that automatically, you have things to present and they can hear you." Jesse likes the way in which online learning can enable the student to "learn different things in different ways." Recognizing the unique learning styles of students can "help me demand of the students' brain that they actually use the content in a way that was honestly difficult/impossible in the classroom."

Gerry, however, does not believe that the time and expense to address multiple learning styles is particularly efficient.

> Why am I not doing a video and an audio and a script because people learn in different ways? I'm a different learner. I learn better with the hands-on reading so I need to have that option available to me. Well, I'm an auditory learner I need to have the audio, or I'm a visual learner I need to see it. Why don't we have all three, its easy to do, right? No its incredibly time-consuming and expensive and, but I think the pressure's there in the online world to be entertaining, to be as good as a TV program or a really good website, and I think the pressure's there to be better than the programs that you think are your competitions.

> The other thing is: Show me a school of nursing that does a teaching learning assessment for their students when they enter and then caters to the students based on their teaching/learning style. I challenge you to find a single one that even does it, so in the absence of doing a teaching/learning evaluation to really best meet the teaching/learning styles of the students in the class, you're either relegated to doing one and saying I'm going to play it by ear based on the feedback on the one or I'm going do eight and they're bound to find one that works well. Doing eight is not time- or cost-effective in my opinion.

Student Cheating

Gerry stated concerns about not knowing who was actually logging in to the course. "All I know is it's someone using that login. I'd posted something, I have no idea if it's this student who did it, I don't know if they mastered the content." A few participants did mention methods in place to circumvent any potential cheating. Ray relies on the content management system support staff to ensure that students follows protocol if something goes wrong with their exam. For example, if a student says that she was unable to access the test or was thrown out, the student is expected to call for support. If the student reports to Ray that she did do that and was still unable to finish, Ray will contact the support desk. "Denise said she tried to contact you on Wednesday and you couldn't help her. Could you please confirm that?"And they'll look and say, "We never heard from Denise," and I'll say, "Thank you very much. That's what I suspected." The support staff can also provide faculty members with detailed logs of student access times. "It automatically times out at 45 minutes. So if I look at somebody who I've got

concerns about and they have a whole lot of 45 minute sessions, I think that maybe they just logged in and walked away."

Terry says that "all of my exams are essay: the final exam, the midterm exam. That reduces any cheating." Terry also gives a writing assignment where students go into community agencies and report on their experiences and give extensive details on the physical surroundings. "When you walked into the building what color were the walls? How many chairs were in the waiting room? What was the name of their receptionist? In other words they can't fake it because I know the agencies."

Casey reported giving a lot of online tests that students were required to pass before doing their clinical rotations. Several colleagues had also broached the subject so Casey did an analysis:

> Regarding cheating. I was also saying they're not doing a very good job of it. I give the tests and randomize and put a time limit on them and so they're random, time limited, they see one question at a time, and I allow them backtracking and I find that works very well. I've actually gone through and done little simple Pearson's correlations between my case study grades and the test grades and they're right on.

Summary of Students in the Online Environment

Faculty reported that students in the online environment behaved differently from face-to-face students and, consequently, had different needs and demands. There were also attributes that were necessary for students to have in the online environment that were not necessarily important to face-to-face students. Faculty members looked for

techniques that would address some of the issues, such as lack of motivation and anxiety. Two themes that were mentioned by only a few faculty members involved *cheating* and *learning styles*. Though several faculty members felt that learning styles should be considered in designing online courses, one faculty member expressed an opinion that designing for multiple learning styles is a waste of resources. Cheating was barely mentioned and one faculty member actually did a study that indicated very little, if any, cheating was going on. Other faculty members resorted to essay tests to ensure students did not cheat.

Summary

The goal of this chapter was to compose a composite textural description of the experiences of nursing faculty members who have transitioned to the online environment. Some of the identified themes were addressed based on direct questioning, and some emerged as part of the conversations that ensued. The issue that all faculty members addressed, and addressed most frequently, was the time and effort it takes to teach online (n = 70). Participants addressed this in reference to not only the actual development of the course, but also the time to teach the course. Included in the discussion was the lack of time that faculty members then had to participate in other activities, such as training and development. Other faculty members were concerned how the time necessary to teach online would impact their ability to do research and other scholarly pursuits deemed necessary to the role of faculty.

The next most frequently addressed issue was faculty preparation for online teaching (n=52). As this was a question posed by the researcher as part of the interview

protocol, it is not surprising that this was mentioned so often. Faculty described available options at each of the universities. SU1 offers an extensive mandatory program that incorporates assistance from other colleges. The importance of mentors was addressed frequently and a number of faculty members identified this as the method they used to learn online teaching. One question that was altered slightly in order to get more information was the final question which asked faculty members to address any other thoughts. Instead, I included a question that asked them to give advice to new faculty members. What do they wish they had known before starting to teach online? It was through this question that many faculty members described the importance of mentoring.

The ability to have relationships with students in an online environment was also frequently mentioned by faculty members (n=51). Some were concerned with the fact that students were evaluated by them but had never been seen. Others felt that without a face there was something lacking, which inhibited the ability for a relationship to take place. However, quite a few faculty members felt that their relationships with online students were much greater than they had ever had with students in face-to-face classes. Faculty members attributed this to the use of biographies and the students' seeming lack of inhibition, which enabled them to share deeply personal thoughts and feelings.

Finding different methods to make the information interactive and engaging to students was frequently described by participants. Creative ways of presenting the material, as well as field trips, were among the methods utilized. However, the most frequently mentioned tool in online teaching was the use of the discussion board. Discussions were seen as valuable in terms of teaching, communicating with, and

building relationships with online students. One faculty member was only concerned with the efficiency of the content delivery and eschewed use of multi-media. Another faculty member had been very creative; however, student lack of interest discouraged further development in that area.

Though faculty members, either through prompting or through ensuing discussion, mentioned the same themes, there was frequent disagreement, as in the example listed in the previous paragraph. There were differing opinions offered regarding the value of the university-provided training and resources. In addition to questioning the efficacy of the training, some felt that adequate time was not given for attending the training sessions. Faculty members also expressed different opinions as to what types of content they believed could be taught successfully online. Specific types of course content were named by various faculty members as being “not effective” or “very effective.”

Though most felt the time and effort were significantly greater, many enjoyed the flexibility the online environment provided them. Some even stated that it was worth the extra time to have that flexibility. Also, while some attempted to set very strict boundaries as to when and how often they would respond to students, several felt that they needed to be available 24/7 in order to encourage students who were struggling. Since most of the students taught by the individuals in this study are working adults, the need for providing support was thought to be especially important, and this was attributed to the types of hours most nurses work.

Despite the fact that one of the universities had recently been involved in a much publicized cheating scandal, this did not seem to be a major issue among most faculty members. Only three mentioned it in passing, and the one faculty member who was directly questioned about it did not believe that it was a significant issue.

Peer Review of Data

In order to provide some measure of internal validity for this study, six peers were requested to review at least one of the transcripts and verify the themes identified. Peer review consists of the researcher disseminating interpretations and conclusions to peers not directly related to the research but who are familiar with the phenomenon being investigated (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Peer reviewers A, B, C, and D are all nursing faculty members. Three hold PhDs in nursing and the fourth is currently working on a PhD in Nursing Education. Peer reviewer E is a doctoral candidate in education and currently works as an instructional designer. Peer reviewer F holds a PhD in Adult and Continuing Education.

Peer reviewers A, B, C, and D were each given a transcript from one of the colleges and a list of 17 sub-themes that included definitions of the sub-themes. They were asked to check whether the sub-themes were present in the transcript they had to review. Since they were only looking at one transcript, it was not assumed that all sub-themes would be present. Reviewers E and F were each given two transcripts and asked to list any themes they identified in the transcripts. The results of reviewers A, B, C, and D are presented in Table 5, which lists the school transcript they reviewed, the number of

sub-themes they found, and comments, if applicable. The peer reviewers confirmed that most, or all, of the themes identified could be located in the transcript they reviewed.

Table 5

Peer Reviewer Confirmation of Themes

Peer Reviewer	School	Number of Sub-themes (n=17)	Comments
A	SU1	14	n/a
B	SU2	Reviewer did not return item	
C	SU3	17	Recommended one additional theme: Overcoming skepticism
D	SU4	12	n/a

Peer reviewers E and F were tasked with identifying themes for the two transcripts they each reviewed. Peer reviewer E reviewed transcripts from SU1 and SU4, and peer reviewer F reviewed transcripts from SU2 and SU3. Each provided a list of quotations from the transcripts identifying specific quotes that identified themes. A table was created, each quotation was analyzed, and a corresponding sub-theme from this study (as shown in table 3), was assigned to each quote. Several themes were not related to the phenomenon and were eliminated from analysis. The table was then sorted by sub-themes and unique instances of each theme were counted. Results showed that 16 out of the 17 sub-themes were identified by the peer reviewers; the only sub-theme not mentioned was cheating. Additionally, only one new theme was identified by the reviewers but was not

included in this study because the theme did not recur among any of the other participants.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Without an adequate understanding of the role of the online educator, nursing faculty members who transition to online teaching are too often ill-prepared for the experience, and this could adversely impact student outcomes. The purpose of this study is to apply phenomenological research strategies to examine the experiences of nursing faculty members who transitioned from face-to-face classroom to online teaching and to analyze their reported experiences for evidence of transformative learning. The intention is to develop a rich, thick portrait of the participants' experiences to gain greater insight into how faculty members perceive their role in the online environment and to determine whether there were significant differences from their role as classroom teachers. For purposes of this study, "online nursing faculty" refers to full or part-time faculty members in a university-based nursing program who having begun their career in classroom teaching and have taught online for at least one year.

Research Questions

The following research questions provide the guiding framework for this study:

1. What are the experiences of nursing faculty members in transitioning from live face-to-face classroom to online teaching?
2. What assumptions did nursing faculty members hold about the role of faculty in online education prior to their initial experience in online teaching?

3. What experiences related to online teaching may have challenged nursing faculty members' perceptions of the role of faculty?

4. To what degree did institutional support and infrastructure impact faculty members' experiences?

5. Based on the framework of transformative learning, what evidence of transformation can be identified through an analysis of the experiences described by nursing faculty members?

The participants for this study were nursing faculty members who taught in online programs at one of four large Florida public universities. Upon approval from each university's IRB, as well as permission from each college of nursings' dean, participants were solicited through emails and phone calls based on recommendations from colleagues. Only two persons contacted were not able to participate due to location, though both offered to reschedule or participate by phone. All interviews took place at the participants' location, usually their office or a nearby conference room. Two interviews were conducted at public facilities. Eight of the participants were located on the main campus of the university, and eight were at satellite campuses.

An interview protocol, a request for curriculum vita, and a course syllabus were emailed to each participant prior to the interview. The purpose of obtaining these artifacts was to gain demographic information, including educational background and types of courses taught, about the participants. Copies of the syllabi enabled me to review the teaching methods described in the interviews.

Transcriptions for the interviews were analyzed and coded for themes. Most of the themes that emerged were identified in the literature review. Six independent reviewers were recruited to validate the themes. Four of the reviewers indicated their concurrence of the themes I identified, and two analyzed the data to identify themes, which were then compared to those identified. A composite textural description of each theme appears in chapter 4. This chapter will provide a discussion of each major theme identified in chapter 4. Following the discussion, the conclusion is presented as answers to the research questions. Implications for practice are presented following the conclusion. Finally, recommendations for further research are identified.

Discussion

Six major themes were identified through the analysis. This section will discuss the meaning and the essence of those themes.

Major Theme One: Faculty Development and Support

Most faculty members for this study reported that they were assigned to teach online rather than choosing to teach online. For many this was a disorienting dilemma because, as identified in the literature, faculty members who are considered experts in their fields may discover that they are novices in technology compared to their students, consequently, changing the traditional teacher-student relationship (Diekelmann et al., 1998; Hartman et al., 2007). Once told they were going to teach online, most faculty members were pro-active in developing their expertise, whether it was in seeking mentors or signing up for internal or external classes. Instructors surveyed by Sloan-C (n.d.) reported that they are satisfied with the online teaching experience if institutional

supports such as infrastructure, training, and technical support are in place. Only one university had a formal online course development program all faculty were required to attend regardless of their location on the main or satellite campuses. The course was lauded by one of the participants, who was the only one without a PhD and the only one located at a satellite campus. Others at SU1 were ambivalent, stating that some parts were helpful but that the course did not go far enough in other areas, such as technical hands-on training.

The other universities offered various classes and attendance was optional. Two faculty members had obtained online teaching certifications from institutions outside the universities, four members reported opportunities for extensive online training at their previous places of employment. Faculty members at the satellite campuses for three of the universities all reported having to travel to participate in the faculty development courses, which was not always possible. Occasionally, courses were offered on the satellite campuses, but this was not consistent or as frequent as needed.

In this study only three faculty members, Gerry, Faye, and Joey, reported being dissatisfied with the experience of online teaching. Gerry had a firm conviction that online education was inherently inadequate as a medium; also. Gerry's previous university had provided much more extensive preparation and support. Faye and Joey both taught at a satellite campus. Faye was one of the least experienced online faculty members in this study and reported relying mostly on colleagues for training and support, as development was offered only on the main campus, which was two hours away. Joey, like Gerry, had received extensive development opportunities at a previous institution,

but the lack of support at SU2 left her feeling discouraged. Though Ronnie, who was also at the SU2 satellite campus, had a more positive attitude, she had received extensive training prior to beginning to teach online. As there were no faculty members interviewed who were located on SU2's main campus, it is difficult to ascertain whether support in general was inadequate.

Regardless of the availability of classes provided by the university, the informal method of using mentors and colleagues in getting started and in providing ongoing support was considered most important by almost all faculty members in developing online teaching skills. Diekelmann, Schuster, and Nosek (1998) refer to "decentralizing" teacher control as new types of relationships with students are developed and as faculty members must collaborate with other faculty, technical support, and instructional designers when developing and delivering online courses. Faculty members in this study reported relying on a variety of "partners" when developing and teaching their online courses, but ultimately, most indicated that they turned to their colleagues for support. Additionally, when asked how did they developed their online course, many reported having taken over or gotten a copy of a colleague's course. Faculty members stated that giving content to other faculty was not an issue: "They paid me [to develop the online course], I give it away." Faculty at SU4 were the only ones that mentioned the importance of giving credit to the faculty member who created it; otherwise, faculty at other universities frequently shared existing courses. Despite SU1's extensive formal training, faculty members still looked to colleagues for input as to what were ultimately the most effective methods to use when teaching online. Terry described the way she

goes back every semester to the course that is taught by instructional designers to offer advice. “I’m one of their Web "vets" and every semester I go back to the class and make a presentation to them. They have three Web vets that come back and, you know, kind of enlighten those and they ask us questions, as we're credible I suppose as opposed to the instructors.” Three other faculty members at SU1 also talk about faculty listservs and faculty mentoring as their preferred resources for help. Casey, at SU3, reported actively seeking exemplars throughout the campus to learn how they effectively teach online.

Faculty members – particularly those at the satellite campuses – reported relying on each other for assistance. Though this was usually an informal arrangement involving individual faculty members seeking the help of colleagues, one faculty described mentoring as one of her roles. Another faculty member was concerned because the time spent helping colleagues often interfered with her schedule. Assistance came in the form of asking someone for technical help, allowing faculty members to copy an existing course, attending faculty led seminars, and co-teaching with an experienced online teacher. Additionally, some faculty members reported seeking out the best online teachers throughout the university and asking for their guidance.

Frese (2006) reported that, though 74% of faculty members surveyed stated that having a mentor was important, only 15% had one. In this study, all faculty indicated the importance of having a mentor or colleague to guide them in teaching online. This was described as actually having someone participate in their class, someone (preferably a colleague) to refer to for questions, or even the ability to look at previously taught courses for ideas on how to proceed. Two faculty members reported they were very

active in the role of mentor/support, one by choice and the other by necessity. Dale at SU4 worked as a mentor to faculty beginning to teach online and considered this part of her assignment. Joey, at SU2, was the most technically savvy faculty member at the satellite campus. She reported that though she was glad to help faculty members, it often took up a large amount of her time. Participants all felt that good technology support and training were important, but most would have preferred a mentor or colleague who had similar experiences to their own to provide that guidance.

Several faculty members mentioned using templates and rubrics and reported how efficient these tools were in the development of their courses. One faculty member who utilized a template reported developing “a fully online course myself and did it in a week and it really wasn't hard with the use of templates.” Others, however, resented the restrictions placed on faculty due to the standards designated by the university or college.

Major Theme Two: Faculty Issues and Concerns

Though most of the faculty members reported that they liked teaching online, there were still concerns and issues. These concerns and issues were consistent across all four universities.

The time and effort to teach online was a concern voiced repeatedly by every participant. Studies have shown that, while faculty members reported being satisfied with the experience of teaching online, they still rated their lack of time to develop the course as one of the low points (Christianson et al., 2002). Most frequently cited issues were *time to develop the course*, *student demands*, and *large class sizes*. Some of the problems

related to student demands were due to the fact that these students are nurses who work 12-hour shifts, nights and weekends.

That the time and effort was a challenge was expressed even by faculty members who held online education in high regard. Primarily, this was due to the needs of students and was consistent with the literature showing that all nursing faculty members surveyed by Ryan et al. (2005) indicated that students expected communication within 48 hours. In this study, though 48 hours was frequently mentioned as a standard that faculty members aspire to, many students wanted even more rapid response. One participant compared what they wanted as closer to “instant messaging.” Another factor was that the time to develop the course was significantly more than that required to develop a comparable face-to-face class (Christianson et al., 2002). Additionaly, faculty members were required to prepare for subsequent semesters while still teaching in the current one. This concurs with the literature reporting that students expect to communicate continuously with faculty through electronic resources and that faculty members are expected to provide interactive learning experiences utilizing the latest technologies, consequently, requiring them to alter the ways they are used to teaching and communicating with students (Hartman et al., 2007). However, in most cases, faculty members stated that once the course was in place it was relatively easy to maintain.

Many faculty members indicated that they did change what they thought about time and what they considered to be normal business hours and familiar ways of working. This concurs with a study of nursing faculty at the University of Wisconsin, that reported as faculty members began teaching online, they found the experience disrupted schedules

that they had been used to for many years (Diekelmann et al., 1998). As a group, SU3 faculty seemed the most accepting and least troubled by the issue. This includes Stacey who only had one year of experience teaching online. Whether this reflects opinions of the individual faculty members who participated in this study or the entire university would be difficult to ascertain. Also, none of the SU3 faculty reported class sizes being an issue. Casey, in fact, emphasized that teaching online was more difficult and, if it wasn't, then you were probably doing something wrong; another felt that it was vital to be available to students when they need you the most.

The need for administrative support was expressed by most or all faculty interviewed in multiple studies, including this one (Gammill, 2004; Johnson, 2008; Ryan et al., 2004; Schwarzman, 2007). Administrators frequently believe that faculty members can manage larger numbers of students in online courses. Faculty at all institutions, except SU3, reported increasing the numbers of students in their classes and seemed to think that administrators were unaware of the issues caused by this move. Ronnie stated that faculty members should fight to maintain their class sizes, but others, such as Tyler, seemed to feel it was a result of the economy and looked for new ways to deliver content to larger groups of students.

Another concern expressed by many faculty members was the inappropriateness of some content that was being taught online. Other studies also indicate that faculty fear being required to teach online courses in areas that are not appropriate for online delivery (Gammill, 2004). However, there was no consensus as to what that content was. Though a number of faculty members did agree that not all content could be taught online,

opinions as to what content worked or didn't work online varied. For example, one participant could not imagine that statistics could be taught online; however, the participant who taught statistics claimed that it was one of the few classes that could be taught online successfully. This was likely based on the advanced knowledge of the topic held by the one faculty members, or perhaps it was related to a method not previously thought of by the other member. Research was another course where opinions varied. The opposing viewpoints were held by faculty members who were both knowledgeable in the topic; however, the one who felt it was less successful also reported struggling with relating to students in the online environment. Several faculty members also reported changing their minds after seeing some of the results that they had not previously believed possible, such as those in health assessment. One member also indicated that if the conditions were extreme, such as being in the "middle of Montana," it was usually possible to make anything work in the online environment.

Sloan-C identifies "five pillars" that are necessary for a quality online program (Lorenzo & Moore, 2002). The first pillar is learning effectiveness and includes factors such as *active learning* and *higher order thinking*. Sloan-C, along with other researchers, have done many studies on the effectiveness of online learning. Despite the extensive research already completed, the concern about rigor and whether students are learning as effectively as in live courses were issues that some faculty members felt were not sufficiently answered by the current research. Some faculty members, however, were comfortable with the learning outcomes exhibited by their online students. Faculty members who were skeptical seemed to feel a need to conduct their own research, not

quite trusting what could be found in the literature. Whether student learning is comparable is probably something that varies on a class-by-class basis, this is likely true of face-to-face classes as well.

Faculty evaluations tend to be lower in online courses than in face-to-face classes (Hopewell, 2007; Ryan et al., 2004). Kelly discovered that the results were comparable; however, Hopewell showed that the larger issue was that fewer students complete online evaluations, thereby minimizing the evaluations' validity. Participants in this study concurred but were at a loss as to how this could be corrected. Several options were offered by participants. These options included recognizing a lower mean in online classes and revising the way online faculty members are evaluated. Gerry described a program at another institution that addressed a new way of looking at online evaluations. The evaluations were more objective and also provided faculty members with standards for developing and teaching their online courses. For example, instead of just asking whether faculty members responded in a timely manner, the evaluation asked whether faculty members responded within 48 hours. These options should be seriously considered, as should ways to increase student participation. Additionally, one faculty member did report that her online evaluations are higher than her face-to-face evaluations. She based this observation on extensive communication with students. This individual expressed a strong desire to connect with her online students and reported having successfully forged relationships, indicating the potential of personality or "charisma" as an influence on how faculty members are evaluated.

Major Theme Three: Communication in the Online Environment

Communicating online, including the inability to gauge whether students understood the content, was addressed frequently in the literature (Diekelmann et al., 1998; Frese, 2006; Johnson, 2005; Ryan et al., 2004). Through the course of the first few conversations and in subsequent interviews that all faculty members, though not originally asked directly about communication, were asked about their relationships with students in the online environment. Many participants in this study validate the findings in the literature that though faculty have reported concern at the loss of physical presence, some have embraced new opportunities for student interaction not available in the traditional face-to-face classroom (Diekelmann et al., 1998). Five of the participants felt that relationships with online students were not possible or were, at best, very limited; however, the remaining faculty members reported having closer relationships with their online students than they had ever had in face-to-face classes.

This latter group included all participants at SU4, whose school philosophy of caring was evident in the way faculty members described their efforts to ensure that students got what they needed from the faculty. Other schools were mixed in their beliefs about this concept. As one SU4 faculty member described it, it is a more intense effort to build those relationships. Of the group who did not report having satisfying relationships, two were also administrators in charge of running satellite campus programs, and the remaining three were heavily involved in research – a factor that may account for the lack of time and focus needed to make the Herculean effort to connect with online students.

While no one indicated that they thought communication in online classes was superior, many found it to be different, and, in some cases, faculty members reported being “closer” to online students. Some participants acknowledged that it could be easier to get to know online students than students in face-to-face classes that numbered 50, or even 100. Faculty members reported concerns that students were not following instructions or even reading all the communication that felt was necessary to be successful in the course.

This inability to connect was also reflected in faculty members’ concerns about ensuring that students understand the content. McCrory, Putnam, and Jason (2008) reported that in live classes, faculty members can control the information flow of the course, but in online classes, students may not follow the direction identified for them. Participants in this study indicated this was a concern. Some, like Gerry, believed that faculty members need to look students in the eye to determine whether they understand the content. Others, such as Stacey, who was relatively new to online teaching, felt that their ongoing dialogue with students provided the same results as face-to-face instruction. Again, the time and effort to maintain this type of communication was massive, and those who reported the most success provided multiple ways for students to connect with them and were usually the ones who were available at all hours for questions and concerns by students. There was an assumption by some of the participants that all faculty members who taught face-to-face made better connections with their students than those who taught online and were aware of students’ comprehension. Perhaps as faculty members taught online they realized the connection was missing, or perhaps these individuals were

always ones who looked for physical clues to gauge student understanding. It is not likely, however, that faculty members who teach large classes are any more aware of how well students are following them than online faculty who do not take an interest in reaching out to their students.

Faculty members who continually communicated with students, whether it was to answer questions, provide feedback, or give instructions, often did so through as many means as possible. This experience was similar to that of faculty members at the University of Wisconsin who expressed the need to learn new communication methods and adjust to different time frames to compensate for their lack of physical presence and the inability to see the visual signs of student confusion when presenting course material, consequently, changing the traditional student-teacher relationship (Diekelmann et al., 1998). Methods that faculty members reported utilizing included not only email, discussions boards, and instant messaging, but also tools such as Skype, videos, and cell phones, to talk with students. Additionally, whenever possible, faculty members encouraged online students to drop by for face-to-face chats. Providing detailed feedback is also a necessity for online students so they can receive guidance for their online learning and, also, to ensure the faculty that individual students understand the content. Though no one is denying that face-to-face contact is the preferred method of communicating, many faculty members found creative means to foster relationships between themselves and students, and among the students themselves.

Writing clear directions was also deemed important when communicating with students. There can be no room for ambiguity when describing instructions. Providing an

information place for students to talk not only to faculty members, but to other students, can cut down on emails and phone calls. Additionally, if many students are reporting confusion over the same issue, faculty members may need to reconsider whether the instructions are clear and accurate and they may need to look at a different way to present information.

Major Theme Four: Teaching in the Online Environment

Faculty members who taught online have various methods and beliefs about how to present content that engages students and encourages active learning. Nursing faculty members at University of Wisconsin reported that while some of their methods were transferable, they had to rethink other teaching methods for online delivery (Diekelmann et al., 1998). In this study, many faculty members originally tried to upload their current course content but learned early on that this was not effective. Though some were able to salvage some of their existing materials and methods for the online environment, they, as did the faculty at Wisconsin, needed to rethink and retool how they taught online. Some relied on posting PowerPoint slides, sometimes with audio, or files for students to download and read. Others presented multi-media that provided students with videos, audios, and graphical depictions. Whether one method was more successful than another seemed to be based on faculty opinion rather than actual data.

One method that was mentioned frequently by most faculty members was the use of discussion boards. Discussion boards were utilized as a method for getting students to engage in the content through open-ended discussions. In one case, the faculty member

also assigned students as discussion leaders because she had discovered that whenever she commented, students stopped their own discussions.

Faculty members tried to find practical methods to assess students and to ensure that they understood the content. Some examples of these methods include short essay exams and group projects. Some faculty members sent students on “field trips” into the community. Students reported on such experiences as purchasing birth control devices and visiting abortion clinics.

There was some debate among participants as to whether teaching online was dramatically different from teaching face-to-face. Several faculty members who thought the experience was entirely different described how the ability to gage whether students understood the content being presented was the biggest obstacle. In a live class, they reported, it was easy to change methods if students needed some information explained in a different way. Other faculty member reported feeling that it was not significantly different. They were presenting the same content and some of the methods varied, but, essentially, they believed there was little difference. One faculty member reported that the experiences were different but there were ways to accomplish the same things in both media. Neither was better or worse; they were just different.

Some faculty members felt that they had already begun the move to teaching online while still teaching their face-to-face classes. They were already beginning to use modules and record their lectures and were providing multi-media files to supplement student learning. Other members reported that the experience of teaching online changed how they taught or how they would teach face-to-face classes. They indicated that instead

of lecturing they would now find ways to incorporate methods of active learning into their face-to-face classes.

The significance of faculty members as facilitators of learning in the online environment was addressed by several studies (Biro, 2005; Johnson, 2008; Ryan et al., 2004; Ryan et al., 2005). According to Salinas (2008), to utilize technology effectively in education there needs to be a shift from lecture-based to learner-centered mastery, and 85% said that the instructor's role had changed from authority figure to facilitator (Ryan et al., 2005). Many of the faculty in this study either identified themselves as facilitators of learning or described activities that indicated that they were facilitating learning. One participant proclaimed that acting as a facilitator was vital to successful online learning. Others addressed the importance of nursing students being able to continue their learning after graduation as they encounter new procedures, equipment, and medications. Sharing the responsibility of learning with students was how one faculty described the process. Another participant felt that most faculty members, especially graduate faculty members, encouraged facilitated learning. "The major naysayers, which are very few, are probably still people who believe that if the student is not physically sitting in front of you, there is something wrong with the student. Somehow to them 'being in a room when I'm talking' is magic."

The online environment was seen as "especially participative" which also encouraged students to be more active in their own learning. The use of discussion boards was a major method in fostering this, but encouraging students to study areas in which

the faculty members were not the experts was another way that faculty and students shared the teaching/learning process.

When examining the faculty members who identified themselves with the concept of facilitators of learning, it is important to note that all faculty at SU4 identified or described themselves that way. Since they have a strong philosophy of caring that is the essence of their program, this validates that they have incorporated that value into their teaching. Similarly, no faculty at SU2 identified themselves or described activities that would identify them as facilitators of learning. In fact, only one participant reported utilizing any teaching methods that extended beyond uploading documents. Faculty members at this institution also reported more issues with students than any other of the participants interviewed for this study. One faculty member at SU2 described being discouraged from utilizing innovative techniques by both students and colleagues. Whether the difference was between philosophies or types of students was not something that could be determined through these interviews. Finding ways to effectively teach students online was important to all participants, though methods and philosophies varied. Most participants prided themselves on finding innovative ways to deliver content and assess learning. The exception was faculty at SU2, who were discouraged from engaging in interactive and innovative learning experiences.

Major Theme Five: Advantages of Online Education

Schedule flexibility and enhanced student participation were the primary online teaching advantages identified by faculty members. These were also reported by Sloan-C as two factors associated with faculty satisfaction (Lorenzo & Moore, 2002). Though

over half of the faculty did report these advantages, this was uncovered by them after having taught for at least one semester. The determination was not something they had expected prior to beginning to teach online. Enhanced participation by students in the online class resulted “in more learning, better learning, because they have to do the activities there in that course.” Other studies show that faculty and students reported feeling that distance education allows them to be more open and feel less stifled when expressing their views and opinions online (Diekelmann et al., 1998). This was reported by faculty members who said that discussions were more in-depth online and that students were able to cover more information than would have been possible in a face-to-face course. The relative anonymity of the online environment seemed to give students more confidence when participating in discussions. Interestingly, this same anonymity was reported by faculty members as one of the concerns because students used this anonymity to express displeasure or provide harsher evaluations.

Flexibility was seen as a significant advantage by all faculty members interviewed by Hopewell (2007). Flexibility includes scheduling and freedom to work in nontraditional areas. Many participants reported enjoying the flexibility they experienced by not being tied to a specific place and time in order to teach students. A faculty member who taught primarily online stated that, “it is more work, but then you could look at it the other way and say, but its self-directed and self-paced, so I can do that at my speed in my pajamas at three o clock in the morning.” Being able to attend conferences, do research, get degrees, and even take vacations were all mentioned as advantages to teaching online. Saving time and money by not commuting was listed as a positive for faculty members as

well as for students. Though faculty members still reported feeling overwhelmed by the demands of teaching online, this ability to schedule their time according to their personal needs and agenda was seen as one of the most personally positive aspects to teaching online.

Several faculty members noted a few other advantages that could be significant when trying to recruit online teachers. Faculty members have reported a high degree of satisfaction with being involved in designing and delivering an online course, as this provided them with the opportunity to enhance their own skills in a new area of study (Conceicao, 2006). This finding was identified by several of the participants. The ability to be creative was discussed by four participants, and though other faculty members did not specifically identify creativity, many were clearly intrigued by the opportunity to design different kinds of learning experiences and to participate in teaching and student relationships in a new way. Increasing student enrollment was mentioned by two of the faculty members; this was identified more as a financial advantage for the university or college.

Major Theme Six: Students in the Online Environment

That students are different in the online environment was a belief held by many of the faculty members who participated in this study. It is validated in the literature, as well. Students have different expectations from those in previous generations; they expect to communicate continuously with faculty members through electronic resources, and they expect faculty members to provide interactive learning experiences utilizing the latest technologies; consequently, faculty members are required to alter their previous

methods of teaching and communicating with students (Hartman et al., 2007). Whether this was due to the venue or to the types of individuals who prefer an online program was questioned by a few of the participants. For example, Gerry believes that students who enroll in online programs are not as motivated or dedicated as students who enroll in face-to-face programs. Generational differences were also voiced by participants, indicating that age and generational values impacted how students behaved in the online environment. Morgan stated that younger students who grew up with Facebook or other online social networking sites are more apt to be outspoken and more apt to form relationships online.

That not all students can be successful in the online environment was mentioned by most of the faculty members. Casey stated that the percentage of students who are not suitable is "five to ten percent." The reason most often given for this was that students frequently lacked motivation or self-directedness. Some were also identified as being too apprehensive and always fearful. Though younger students had better technical skills, older students were more likely to have the discipline needed to pursue online education. Since nursing students in RN completion and graduate programs were most likely employed and had families, school often seemed to be a low priority; "school is second or third or even fourth on their list." Consequently, complaints regarding workload and deadlines were frequently voiced by online students. One participant reported feeling discouraged by students' lack of motivation to engage in innovative interactions or challenging assignments. Several faculty members reported giving frequent quizzes in order to ensure that students actually read the material. Faculty members also

experienced rudeness and, as was mentioned in another theme, lower evaluations that they believed were due to the relative anonymity of the online classroom.

That students expect online education to be easier and more convenient is a concept encouraged by proprietary for-profit institutions that frequently appear in the media was a belief held by one of the participants. Looking for similar convenience at public universities may dissuade students who continue their online education at places where the curriculum is more rigorous and where they do not receive immediate support. A number of the students described by the participants of this study were demanding and were not afraid to voice their displeasure, indicating that perhaps students held faculty members who teach online as less qualified than their face-to-face counterparts. Attempts by faculty members to act as facilitators rather than authority figures may also lead students to view them differently and to resent their efforts to impose conditions and restrictions on the online classroom.

Two themes that were not mentioned by many faculty members, but that are included because of their significance, were *cheating* and *learning styles*. Only three faculty members mentioned the possibility of students cheating, and one other member, when directly asked, did not consider it to be an issue. Though cheating is mentioned frequently in other venues, this topic was of minimal concern to the participants. indicating that this may not be as prevalent as recently reported in the media and discussed among faculty. Student learning styles were likewise mentioned relatively few times. Though three faculty members deemed it a critical consideration when designing online courses, one other member felt that the benefits of designing to multiple learning

styles was not cost- or time-efficient. Since this is a topic mentioned frequently as being important in the literature, it was important to note its lack of mention by the participants in this study.

Summary

Each of the major themes uncovered in this study were identified in the literature reviewed in chapter 2. How the literature relates to this study is incorporated into the discussion of each of the themes. A list of the literature discussed in this section is identified in table 6, which identifies each of the themes/subthemes and a related citation. The only two themes that were not found in the literature reviewed for chapter 2 were learning styles and cheating, which were also two of the least frequently mentioned themes in the interviews.

Despite previously published literature in which many of these issues were addressed, faculty members' voices are still not being adequately heard by administration. The single issue most frequently addressed by faculty members in this study, as well as in other literature, is the time it takes to teach online classes. Administrators continue to overload online classes and do not provide faculty adequate time for preparation. This one issue impacts student outcomes, faculty development, course development, faculty evaluations, and almost all other aspects of faculty life. This study enabled faculty members to describe first-hand what is entailed in the development and delivery of an online class. Through these descriptions, administrators can begin to understand the requirements necessary for effective online education. Additionally, though the literature indicates that a majority of faculty members want mentors, faculty

developers in most public institutions have not yet addressed this need in a satisfactory manner. Finally, several benefits to teaching online, such as schedule flexibility, student participation, and faculty-student relationships, were identified by many of the faculty members. These positive outcomes could be further developed to encourage faculty member participation in online teaching.

Table 6

List of Themes and Citations

Major Theme/Sub-Theme	Citation
Faculty Development and Support	
Preparing Faculty to Teach Online	• Faculty members who are considered experts in their fields may discover that they are novices in technology compared to their students; this may change the traditional teacher-student relationship (Diekelmann et al., 1998; Hartman et al., 2007).
Institutional Support and Resources	• Instructors are satisfied with the online teaching experience if they find it personally and professionally beneficial. Institutional supports such as infrastructure, training, and technical support, as well as recognition, are also important to faculty satisfaction. (Sloan-C, n.d.).

Table 6 (Continued)

Major Theme/Sub-Theme	Citation
Faculty Collaboration	• Diekelmann, Schuster, and Nosek (1998) refer to "decentralizing" teacher control as new types of relationships with students are developed and as faculty members must collaborate with other faculty members, technical support, and instructional designers when, developing, and delivering online courses. • Though 74% stated that having a mentor was important, only 15% had one. (Frese, 2006).
Faculty Issues and Concerns	

Table 6 (Continued)

Major Theme/Sub-Theme	Citation
Time and Effort to Teach Online	• All nursing faculty members surveyed by Ryan et al. (2005) indicated that students expected communication within 48 hours. • The time to develop the course was significantly more than when that needed for developing a comparable face-to-face class (Christianson et al., 2002). • Students expect to communicate continuously with faculty members through electronic resources, and they expect faculty members to provide interactive learning experiences utilizing the latest technologies; this requires faculty members to alter the ways they are used to teaching and communicating with students (Hartman et al., 2007). • A change in familiar ways of working and scheduling of their time was a concern faculty members reported in a number of studies. In a study at the University of Wisconsin, nursing faculty reported that, as they began teaching online, they found the experience disrupted schedules that they had been used to for many years (Diekelmann et al., 1998).

Table 6 (Continued)

Major Theme/Sub-Theme	Citation
	• The need for administrative support was expressed by all faculty members interviewed in multiple studies (Gammill, 2004; Johnson, 2008; Ryan et al., 2004; Schwarzman, 2007). Administrators frequently believe that faculty members can manage larger numbers of students in online courses
Student Evaluation of Learning	• Concerns that online faculty might not receive evaluations comparable to face-to-face classes were explored by Kelly (2007).
Effectiveness of Online Education	• Sloan-C identifies “five pillars” that are necessary for a quality online program (Lorenzo & Moore, 2002). The first pillar is *learning effectiveness* and includes factors such as active learning and higher order thinking.
Communication in the Online Environment	
Online Relationships	• Though many faculty members have reported concern at the loss of physical presence, some have embraced new opportunities for interacting with students not available in the traditional face-to-face classroom (Diekelmann et al., 1998).
Assessing Student Understanding	• McCrory, Putnam, and Jason (2008) report that in live classes faculty members can control the information

Table 6 (Continued)

Major Theme/Sub-Theme	Citation
	flow of the course, but in online classes, students may not follow the direction identified for them.
Communicating Effectively in the Online Environment	• Faculty members at the University of Wisconsin expressed the need to learn new communication methods and adjust to time frames different from those with which they are used to working. Physical presence, or lack of physical presence, concerns many faculty members, as they are no longer able to see visual signs of student confusion when presenting course material. This changes the traditional student-teacher relationship (Diekelmann et al., 1998).
Teaching in the Online Environment	
Online Teaching Methods	• Nursing faculty members at University of Wisconsin also reported that, while some of their methods were transferable, they had to rethink other online teaching methods, such as preparation of handouts and communicating at a distance (Diekelmann et al., 1998).
Faculty as Facilitators of Learning	• According to Salinas (2008), to utilize technology effectively in education there needs to be a shift from lecture-based to learner-centered mastery; 85% said that the instructor's role had changed from authority

Table 6 (Continued)

Major Theme/Sub-Theme	Citation
	figure to facilitator (Ryan et al., 2005). • In Biro's (2005) study of online faculty, participants described their role as facilitators rather than lecturers and consequently struggled to interact with students in this medium.
Advantages of Online Education	
Increased Student Participation	• Faculty and students reported feeling that distance education allows them to be more open and feel less stifled when expressing their views and opinions. (Diekelmann et al., 1998).
Schedule Flexibility	• Flexibility was seen as a significant advantage by all faculty members interviewed by Hopewell (2007). Flexibility includes scheduling and freedom to work in nontraditional areas.
Other Miscellaneous Advantages	• Faculty members have reported a high degree of satisfaction with being involved in designing and delivering an online course, as this provided them with the opportunity to enhance their own skills in a new area of study (Conceicao, 2006).
Students in the Online Environment	
Online Students Attributes	• Students have different expectations from previous

Table 6 (Continued)

Major Theme/Sub-Theme	Citation
	generations. They expect to communicate continuously with faculty members through electronic resources, and they expect faculty members to provide interactive learning experiences utilizing the latest technologies. This requires faculty to alter the ways they are used to teaching and communicating with students (Hartman et al., 2007).
Student Cheating	n/a
Student Learning Styles	n/a

Conclusions and Implications for Practice

Based on the analysis of the data, conclusions are presented as responses to each of the research questions, which guided the direction of this study. Research question 1 is the overarching question for the study and results presented here are a structural description of the experiences for the group as a whole as described by the analysis of the themes. Research questions 2 through 5 provide a synthesis of the meaning and essence of the experiences described by research question 1.

Research Question 1. What are the experiences of nursing faculty in transitioning from live face-to-face classroom to online teaching?

In order to provide a structural description of the results, composites of the participants in this study are used. Lindsey is a composite of the overall faculty

experience described by the participants of this study. The other characters exemplify some of the variations experienced by faculty members. Through the use of imaginative variation, as described by Moustakas (1994), the characters will describe the essence of each of the themes and the relevance to the experience of transitioning to online teaching. The characters are identified as follows:

- Lindsey – an experienced nursing faculty who just received her first online teaching assignment. She is located on the main campus.
- Shelby – an experienced nursing faculty who just received his first online teaching assignment. He is located on a satellite campus.
- Corey – an experienced nursing faculty who completed a post-graduate degree in distance education.
- Christian – an experienced nursing faculty who received extensive training from a previous university to teach online.

Lindsey

Lindsey is a nursing faculty member in her late 40s who has taught face-to-face classes for about 10 years. Recently, her college began offering some classes entirely online through a content management system (CMS), and Lindsey had utilized the CMS to post some documents for her live class. One day, the associate dean approached Lindsey and informed her that next semester she would be teaching the graduate nursing research course online. Lindsey immediately felt a sense of panic. “How many times will the class meet in person?” she asked.

“This is an online class,” explained the associate dean. “Your students, many who live on the other side of the state, will never come on campus.”.

After catching her breath, Lindsey decided to talk to some of the faculty members who had taught online. A colleague who teaches at another state university related that they have an extensive program preparing faculty members to teach online and walk participants through the steps of preparing the first few modules. “Modules,” she thought. “What’s a module?” So Lindsey attempted to find out if there was anything similar at her campus. Through discussions with her colleagues, she found that there was a center on campus that prepares faculty members to teach online. Lindsey looked at the list of offerings and was dismayed to find that many of the classes and workshops were on the same days that she did clinical visits. She was also disappointed that there were not as many technology courses as she would have liked that would have taught her how to utilize the CMS in her teaching strategies. However, she signed up for as many courses as possible. She also researched the university website for information on how to get technical support for both herself and her students. The support hours were somewhat limited, she determined, but her colleagues had told her that they were very helpful, and she could set up one-on-one time with an IT specialist for intensive technical training.

The workshops provided her with some initial confidence, and Lindsey was eager to start working on designing her class. She decided that she should meet with the faculty members who previously taught the course. Each of them taught the course somewhat differently, and as Lindsey looked at their classes she thought of some other teaching methods she wanted to use, while incorporating what the faculty members had already

developed. She asked for copies of the course and one of her colleagues gave her full access, but the other one was reluctant, stating privacy and intellectual property issues, so Lindsey focused instead on what she had been given. Lindsey also met again with the associate dean and asked if she would be workloaded to allow for time to develop the course. After the associate dean stopped laughing hysterically, she explained that was not the policy of the university. Lindsey decided that this was not the time to ask for a teaching assistant.

Armed with all the information she had gathered, Lindsey began developing her course for the following semester. She ran into some roadblocks along the way mostly having to do with the technology, and she had to wait until business hours on the following day to get assistance, which put her slightly behind schedule. Her colleague at another institution reported that they have 24/7 support but that it came at a price to the students, however, most of them – students and faculty – thought that the cost was worth it. Fortunately, Lindsey discovered that one of her colleagues was a real expert at online teaching and had, in fact, completed a post-master's certificate at another university, so she scheduled time with this colleague to discuss the course. The colleague was a real asset, but Lindsey was conscious that the colleague had responsibilities as well and tried not to impose too much on her time. Lindsey learned that there was another faculty member who is also very knowledgeable, but that faculty member was at a satellite campus over two hours away.

As the class began, Lindsey was overwhelmed by the volume of emails sent by students asking for clarification and for help in solving technical problems they were

experiencing. The volume of questions was staggering and Lindsey found that she was spending almost all her time responding to emails. She also noted that on the discussion boards there was some grumbling that questions were not being answered in a timely manner. One student described that in a previous class the adjunct instructor had responded immediately to every email and had given feedback on assignments within 24 hours. Lindsey's colleague recommended that she emphasize her communications policy indicating how quickly she would respond to emails. Lindsey encouraged the students to utilize the discussion board for questions from which the entire class could benefit. She also realized that some of her instructions might not have been as clear as she had originally believed, so based on the questions from students, she restructured how the information was presented.

As the semester progressed, Lindsey began to reconsider whether this class should be taught online. Previously, in her face-to-face version, students could more easily discuss ideas for their papers, and she was more confident that students were actually learning the content and not just copying information from another student. Her colleague explained that almost any class could be taught online given the right set of circumstances and the right method. Lindsey also was struck by how different teaching online was from teaching face-to-face. Fortunately, she had a master's in education so she was more prepared than some of her colleagues in addressing the pedagogical aspects of teaching online; however, she signed up for some online teaching workshops in her spare time.

Lindsey's other primary concern was her inability to get to know her students very well. Though they had signed up for the class and had participated in discussion boards and turned in assignments, she had no idea who the people really were. She also was concerned that they might not be "getting it." In class she could see the look in their eyes that showed whether they understood or not, and she could then more strongly emphasize the importance of particular points, but she wondered how would she know in this online class whether they were getting it? Lindsey approached her friend at another institution and asked how she handled this situation. Lindsey was surprised when she learned that her friend reported knowing her online students better than her face-to-face students. She accomplished this by finding multiple ways for students to communicate with her: email, discussion boards, instant messaging and even phone or face-to-face encounters when possible. Also, she used the information on the discussion boards to formulate an analysis of each student's understanding, and because every one of them had to respond, no student was ever hiding in the back of the class. She let students know that she was available and approachable and willing to meet their needs. Doing this without compromising her own personal space was a delicate balancing act, but the rewards had been well worth the sacrifice.

As the semester came to an end, Lindsey reflected on her experience and decided how she would do things in the upcoming semester. She was disappointed but not surprised to discover that her evaluations were lower than expected. However, she also noted that very few students had responded to the survey and likely the poor evaluations were from the few students who had not done well. The final papers in the class showed

that some of her online students had understood the material as well as, if not better than, her face-to-face students. A few, however, just didn't get it and she believed they might need a live experience in order to point them in the right direction.

As she prepared for the next semester, Lindsey was pleased to see that, since she had spent so much time last semester building the course, it didn't seem to take very long to make the few tweaks that were needed to set up the course. She had spoken with a number of her colleagues who taught online, both in nursing and in other disciplines, and asked them to describe some of their teaching methods. Through her conversations she found some teaching methods that she believed would work better than what she was currently doing. Some of the ideas, such as assigning field trips, appointing students as discussion leaders, and providing case studies to analyze online, were very creative. She also decided that in some cases she was exerting too much control and needed to pull back and let students take the lead. For example, having students write papers on topics with which she was unfamiliar enabled them to take greater responsibility for their own learning. While Lindsey still provided the learning framework, the students' work was often new and interesting to her, and they found the work more compelling.

At a faculty meeting, several of the members who had not taught online expressed their dislike of the medium and wondered how Lindsey could tolerate the additional burden imposed by teaching online. As Lindsey reflected on her experience, she discovered that she actually liked teaching online for several reasons. First, yes, it did take more time, but it was time spent on her own schedule. She didn't have to show up certain days and times anymore, and she had the opportunity to participate in some

conferences and even take a vacation. All the time she was away, she could still manage her online class. She also had the opportunity to do some research without having to worry about stopping her work to go to teach a class.

"What about students?" her colleagues asked. "Aren't they getting away with not doing as much?"

"No," replied Lindsey. "Actually, they participate more than in live classes. Instead of hiding behind their classmates, they are all responsible for substantively participating in online discussions. The work is probably more difficult than in face-to-face. They are sometimes ruder, and they do seem needier than their face-to-face counterparts."

One faculty expressed his belief that students who took online classes were not as dedicated as face-to-face students, and Lindsey acknowledged that in some situations that was probably true. "Some are too anxious as well," she reported, "but I try to find ways to alleviate their anxieties."

Another faculty asked about learning styles and cheating, and Lindsey thought for a time and then stated that neither one seemed like an issue to her. She did try to present materials in multiple ways to students, but doing much more was not practical in her opinion. As for cheating, she agreed that it could exist, but if her students were cheating on exams, they didn't seem to be doing a very good job at it.

Lindsey approached her next semester prepared for a number of contingencies she had not foreseen previously. She found herself relying less on her colleagues for support and even signed up for a few advanced classes on teaching online, though she had to

postpone about half of them. She found the information in the ones she attended to be interesting but was aware that she didn't have time to implement the methods into her online courses. Teaching still took a lot of time, but she found ways to manage it better. However, this did continue to be an ongoing issue for which there was no easy resolution, and then she discovered that her class had been increased by five students. At the end of the semester, she was easily ready to go on to the next semester. She did note that her evaluations were a little improved, but not by much.

Shelby

Shelby had taught for the university about five years and was now teaching at a satellite campus over two hours away from the main campus. Previously he taught for over 12 years at a community college. His first online teaching assignment was to take over an existing class. He had some experience with the system because he had been posting documents and some assignments online in order to reduce class time, since most of his students were rural and had to make lengthy drives to campus to attend class. The biggest concern for him was how much he would miss the social aspects of the classroom.

When Shelby looked at the class he inherited, he was dismayed by the number of assignments and found many of them redundant. He began by reorganizing the class to create what he believed would be a more effective learning opportunity. He had not had any formal training on teaching online, and had been assigned the course two weeks prior to the beginning of the semester. Since the only workshops available were offered at the main campus, which was a two-hour drive, he had little time and no training to prepare

him for the assignment. Two weeks into the class, he was called to a meeting by the associate dean who reprimanded him for changing the class assignments. Shelby was then forced to return the class to its original state and apologize to the students.

Though Shelby was located at a satellite campus, he was fortunate that his school had excellent technical support and most problems were quickly solved by telephone or email. One of his colleagues who taught at another university described her experience with main campus technical support as being anything but supportive. Shelby's biggest asset was his co-worker, Chelsea. The two of them had worked as a team for a number of years and frequently collaborated on courses. Ideas, issues, and concerns could be discussed with her. In addition, Chelsea had more experience with online teaching so her support was invaluable to Shelby.

Like Lindsey, Shelby was overwhelmed with the volume of emails and phone calls from students. Instead of avoiding the students, however, he responded regularly and gave out his cell phone number so that students could call him on their schedules. He also set up discussion boards that allowed students to engage in ongoing discussions with him regarding content and assignments. He learned over time to step back and only respond when necessary, allowing students to take the lead in most conversations. Shelby also discovered that the more experienced an online student was, the easier it was for them to navigate the system, which gave them an advantage over their peers who were new to online learning. They knew how to cut corners and get by with a minimal amount of effort. Shelby believed that the rigid consistency of the university online classes

contributed to this situation and that the work these students provided was technically flawless but not genuine.

The next semester he was given another course to teach and was able to set it up the way he preferred. The structure was less rigid and discussion boards were not as formalized. He would like to learn how to create content that is engaging and interactive, but it was difficult for him to travel to the main campus for workshops. He spent a great deal of time, instead, studying the literature and learned as much as he could on his own about communication and facilitation skills. He still expressed concerns about community and how to get students who live hundreds of miles away involved in community experiences when he was not aware of what possibilities there were that he might encourage. He was happier also that he had the opportunity to design and teach a course that followed his philosophy and beliefs about teaching, regardless of whether it was online or live. Shelby also developed close relationships with students and was knowledgeable about their personal lives as well as their needs as learners.

Corey

Unlike Lindsey or Shelby, Corey accepted a visiting assistant professor position with the university because he knew that he would be teaching online. He had been interested in the medium for a number of years after obtaining his PhD in a partially online program. Because of his interest, he completed a distance education post-master's certificate from the UCLA extension school.

Like his colleagues, he was somewhat dismayed with the amount of time it took to build his courses and deal with student issues. However, his experience and advanced

education provided him with the tools he needed to set boundaries that were not too rigid. Like Shelby, Corey was very involved in student communication issues and maintained a continual dialogue through a variety of high-tech (IMing, Skype, etc.) and low-tech (telephone, office visits) means. He was very sensitive to student needs and abilities and on occasion encouraged students to enroll in face-to-face classes, particularly if they were very nervous about the online environment, not self-directed, or in need of social presence.

Corey attended a few faculty development workshops but found most of them inferior to what he had already learned in his post-master's certificate. Occasionally, he participated in workshops that introduced new technology but often found the pedagogical aspects as to how he would use them to be missing. Frustrated at not getting the kind of help he needed, he helped organize a faculty listserv within the university that gave other online faculty members an opportunity to get answers to problems and learn about new online teaching methods from their colleagues. It was also noted that Corey was the only faculty member to get high online evaluations.

Eventually, several faculty members who were new to online education asked if they could add him to their classes and get some feedback on their teaching methods. Corey readily agreed. Soon administration was requesting that he mentor other faculty members. Some were very eager for his assistance, but several tenured professors, who had been teaching face-to-face for a number of years, expressed their displeasure at his interference, so he politely backed off. However, his reputation among other faculty members continued to grow and the assistant dean began to discuss making mentoring of

new online faculty part of his assignment. He liked this role and continued to make himself available to anyone requesting guidance.

Christian

Like Corey, Christian had initiated the request to teach online. However, her motives were somewhat different. She strongly believed that online education was inherently inferior to traditional teaching and, if left to the “online zealots,” the rigor and quality of the courses would suffer significantly. Christian previously taught at a private university that had a very extensive online teaching development program. After some initial training, she was mentored by experienced, knowledgeable faculty members through her first semester. In addition to technical training, she also received a background in pedagogy that had grounded her in the principals of education. The private university had also provided Christian and a few of her colleagues with a one-year grant to study the best practices of online nursing education. The end result was a set of standards that were published and utilized by the college of nursing, and an online evaluation tool that reflected these standards. As a result of this study, Christian had also developed a strong belief in providing only low-tech content in her online class. She believed that the effort to address multiple learning styles by providing various multimedia was not an efficient use of her time. The majority of students, she believed, were able to utilize her material effectively, and the remaining few adapted. Students found her low-tech methods easy to access without some of the technological glitches that could occur with multimedia presentations. Christian believed that this afforded less stress for students who might otherwise be struggling with the technology.

After all this preparation and research, Christian still doubted the efficacy of online education. Her belief was that students who were serious about their education would make the effort to attend live classes. However, she realized that online education was here to stay for the foreseeable future, and if public and private institutions were going to compete with the University of Phoenix and other for-profit online institutions, they needed to offer online education. Her hope was that the not-for-profit universities would deliver quality courses online that attracted serious students.

Christian found communication with online students to be a major issue. Her inability to read body language and ensure that students were getting the material was particularly frustrating. She tried to emphasize certain aspects of the content and assignments that were important but worried about being offensive or putting off students by language that may come across as harsh and demeaning or by formatting that might seem too aggressive. So, instead, she hoped that students would contact her if they were in need. Generally, the students all seemed like total strangers to her and she wondered how she would be able to effectively evaluate persons she had never seen.

Since Christian was on a tenure track, she also worried that the time commitment to teach online would impact her ability to continue her research. Despite the college's emphasis on the importance of faculty doing research, she felt that she was not sufficiently supported in her efforts due to her teaching load. Christian was also a wife and a mother of two, and her family was a priority. Balancing the demands of teaching, research, and family often was a challenge to her.

Research Question 2. What assumptions did nursing faculty members hold about the role of faculty in online education prior to their initial experience in online teaching?

Initial assumptions about teaching online varied widely among the participants. No participants reporting anticipating that their traditional faculty role would be altered in any way. Very few thought there would be any difference or that adjustments would be needed in their philosophies or ways of working. Early adopters often had very limited exposure to online courses and had no concept of what they would actually be facing. Several faculty members, such as Terry, in fact, assumed that teaching online was not that different from teaching live. “I kind of thought, ‘I’ve taught this course for a couple of semesters, I’ve got all the PowerPoints the quizzes, I’ll just load it all on the night before the class’.”

Ray also described how she had planned to just transfer her materials for her live class to the online course. “I had been teaching this course live and I had just figured I would dump my PowerPoint in the online class and that would be it that, I didn't really need to make any changes. I already really had the course developed, so this shouldn’t be too much of a problem.”

Tony assumed it would be similar to a correspondence course. “I was very familiar with correspondence courses … So my initial thought was that it would be similar to that, but with more interaction using the platforms.” Ronnie also reported that her course was similar to a correspondence course.

> I would say my first online course was more like a reading course with reading assignments and exams. That was probably real similar to a correspondence

course where they would submit their papers they would write, their assignments. We'd have some discussion, but very limited.

These faculty members had been teaching live for a number of years and believed that their expertise would transfer to online without much effort. Most, as students themselves, had been prepared to teach in live and clinical situations. Online education was not a factor in their preparation to move from nurse to nursing educator.

Some faculty members expected that teaching online would be easier. "I thought teaching online was going to be easy, easier… And how involved would the students be? And the students all think it is going to be a piece of cake. I just have to read something and take a quiz and I've got my grade."

Faculty at SU4 had discussed prior to beginning their online program how it would give them more free time. Ray remarked that "I guess we've talked as a faculty here about initially online was presented to us that it would give us more time to do research and scholarship." Where these ideas came from was unclear, but it was apparent that very few faculty members or administrators had done much research about the realities of teaching online.

While some, as described above, thought teaching online was similar to teaching face-to-face, others were concerned with how they would begin teaching online. "I had no idea how to teach online. I didn't know how to put together a module. I just did what I thought it would be a good idea." Ronnie reports that she had some ideas, but no real facts about what it entailed. "Those were my assumptions, that it was a boring media and you had to do something; it was a one-dimensional media so I had to do something with

my assignments." The idea that online education was similar to correspondence courses was pervasive in the minds of inexperienced faculty members.

The most commonly expressed belief that faculty members discussed was that without face-to-face verbal instruction they would not be as effective. They knew there would be a difference between face-to-face and online education regardless of methods but assumed that online education was inherently inferior.

> I chiefly didn't know what to expect. I was very concerned because the course was clinical teaching. That one of the things I think I value in clinical teaching that I'm thinking was very important was the verbal interaction between the teacher and the student. So I was very worried about having an inability to help develop that skill in people who I would never see.

Several discussed the importance of presence and reflecting their personalities in the online classroom. "Prior to teaching online, I never thought about the importance of faculty presence in the same way I do now." That was another faculty's concern as well. "I had over years developed a classroom persona … and I wasn't sure how I was going to do that in this media." Understanding how words or even formatting (bolding, italics, caps, etc.) could be interpreted by students at a distance was a concern of faculty members then and to some extent even now.

"How was I going to communicate with my students?" was a sentiment frequently expressed by faculty members who thought that the personal interaction was going to be missing from the online environment. Several faculty members described enjoying the

relationships with their students and doubted that it could be as fulfilling online or as effective as those with their face-to-face students.

> Well, I had always been very doubtful about online learning. The idea of not being able to interact with the student face-to-face, because I loved that kind of interaction. I was very doubtful as to how much I would enjoy it. How successful – "how effective," I should say, is probably a better term – I would be able to be.

One faculty member even reported dreading the inability to talk to people. "The negative I expected was, I don't get to talk to people. That's what. ... I want the interchange. That I was dreading." Faculty members who were particularly outgoing admitted enjoying the personal exchange they had in the classroom – the feedback, the body language – that helped them gauge how effective they were would all be missing.

Some other faculty members expressed having positive expectations. One who had taken over a class from someone she respected assumed it would be OK. "I didn't really know. I knew the person who developed it … loved the format, and she was really like a mentor to me, and it's obviously doable. She loves it, maybe it's OK for me too." One very technologically skilled faculty member was excited about the prospect that working in the online medium offered.

> I felt like it was limited only by whatever the technology could limit it by. I thought I could do videos, I could do lectures I could… what I wanted was real interactive stuff. That's what I wanted – was interactivity,where you present a patient and the student selects certain options and the care of that patient gets transferred to another screen. I wanted to try and develop some of that stuff but

> just didn't have the time for it but found some reasonable tools out there that we could use.

Most faculty members, however, reported feeling intimidated by the technology and looked only to get by with the basics. Tyler, though, reported that her lack of skills was a means of bonding with her equally clueless graduate students.

Some faculty members felt they completely understood what online teaching would be because they had experienced the medium as students themselves or had researched the literature or had talked with experienced faculty members. Others had been teaching online for close to a decade and remembering what they had initially perceived was confused with their many years of experience. Not having any expectations, assumptions, or thoughts about the process was reported by a few faculty members. They indicated not knowing enough about it to have opinions.

Most faculty members in this study reported that they began teaching online when administration assigned the courses to them. There was no evidence that when these assignments were made discussions ensued about what faculty members could expect or how they needed to prepare, with the exception of the experience at SU1. Even at SU1, some faculty members began the process of teaching online prior to participating in the faculty development program. At the other universities there was no guidance given except on a very informal basis and most faculty members were responsible for preparing themselves to teach online. Time to do so was not usually given to novice online teachers. Faculty members at satellite campuses, except SU1, had similar circumstances but had more difficulty attending development workshops and, in some cases, lacked the

time to do so. Assignment of mentors or discussion regarding what to expect and how to prepare would give faculty members realistic expectations on how to begin teaching online.

Research Question 3. What experiences related to online teaching may have challenged nursing faculty's perceptions of the role of faculty?

One of the most common experiences reported by faculty members was how they learned that the way they had taught in a classroom was not going to work in an online environment. As discussed previously, many thought they would just upload the same material they had used in the classroom for years and often at the last minute discovered that the materials were inadequate without the accompanying lecture.

> So I was sitting there loading it all on the night before the class and realized this PowerPoint makes absolutely no sense unless I'm standing next to them talking about them. Because you have a slide that says, "What is a hypothesis?" Well, in a classroom I put that slide up and I say, "OK. What did you read about a hypothesis?" And we talk about that and the slide makes lots of sense. But if all you're doing is sitting there with your computer screen and you see a slide that says, "What is a hypothesis?"... this is not going to work. So it was a real quick, "How do you get that piece of the information?" that you sort of give to students in a classroom – that whole discussion interaction into this screen that's staring at them.

Faculty members who experienced this were unaware of the dynamics of teaching online. Since all the faculty members in this study were experienced teachers, many felt that they

already knew how to teach and this would not be that different. Shortly after beginning their first class, they usually realized this was not the case.

Several participants discovered that online teaching was more effective than they had believed prior to the experience, and that their ideas about what could be taught online were uninformed. Morgan explained how she felt that clinical skills could not be taught online, however. “I just finished going out to evaluate some of the students who've been taking our advanced health assessment online this semester and was very impressed with their skills.” Ronnie described how she resisted putting an ethics course online until she discovered that the anonymity of the online environment provided a safer place for students to discuss controversial issues.

The most common experience related by participants that challenged their concepts on the role of faculty was relating to the time required to teach online. “When you get into the class you realize you have to do a lot of monitoring. You thought you just had to go in at the end and pick up their grades.” Instead of this scenario, faculty members learned that much more was expected. “You have to go in and see what everyone is doing and keeping track of everybody and see that everything is posted.” Many discovered that “teaching online is a 24/7 proposition,” unlike the typical face-to-face class, which “is done after three hours.” Online students expect faculty members to be available continuously and to work around their schedules. More than one faculty member described “… students who think if they write to you at 9:02 think you should be there to respond at 9:03.” Faculty members soon learn that the traditional educational paradigm no longer works in the online environment.

> We here and most other places I've taught in nursing tend to teach classes three hours once a week so you come in to teach your class and it's Monday morning from 9 to 12. You get here, you teach, you're done. You really don't see those people again until next Monday. There's the "occasional somebody stops by your door," but they're in other classes, they're in clinical. You may not be around a whole lot. Online they're there all times of the day and night, every day of the week.

If faculty members don't learn this lesson, that students are more integrated into their daily lives, that it is not just a one-day a week proposition, then it is likely they are still clinging to their previous methods of teaching and interacting with students – methods that are obsolete in the online environment.

In addition to the constant need by students for feedback, preparing for an online class is different from preparing for a face-to-face class. "So I think the realization is how much planning has to go ahead of time. Because even though you plan with your live course, you got your syllabus and you have that part but you can change easier. Here everything has to be up and running." The additional workload has implication for the traditional role of faculty, explained one of the participants.

> I think that, although you look at your teaching assignment, one: you have so much percentage for this one or that one it's a total joke because what I'm hearing from the full professors is that their research has been dwindled. Why? Because if you do a good job on your Web classes and you have double students in there where does that leave the time to do these other two [research and service]?

Other faculty members were not as negative about the time demands and reported that they were pleasantly surprised by the flexibility, which enabled them to do research or participate in service activities.

Demands made on online students could be somewhat different as well. “We have learned a lot about how much to expect from the students. And how many discussions do you want them to have or how to handle multiple questions?” Faculty members found themselves assigning websites and videos and other readings just because they easily could. Assignments were also easy to assign and faculty members realized not only were they creating more work for themselves, but were overburdening the students as well. For example, students who participate in online class discussions usually have to worry about grammar, spelling, or citing references. “We wouldn’t ask that in a live class. So that’s the biggest difference is I ask them to cite references.” Consequently, students sometimes complain that because of these requirements, online classes are more work. Faculty members reported attempting to balance the work load issues for online students so that work is comparable to live classes.

Faculty members had not anticipated having good, or even much, communication with their online students, but, instead, reported finding themselves working much harder to stay connected than they anticipated. Several believed that, by not actually looking the students in the eye, they were unable to have a significant learning relationship with their students. “So how do you make that connection? How do you get to know your students when you can't see them?” This lack of relationships, according to one faculty member, had affected the faculty evaluations. “I found that the SPOTS or student perception of

teaching evaluations are lower for the distant modalities because they don't know you as well as they do live." However, several faculty members were surprised to discover that, after putting in the extra effort, they actually fostered comparable, or even better, relationships than with their face-to-face students. "I tend to know more about some of my online students then I do about my in-class students." This knowledge included learning processes as well as revelations of personal information.

> I get to know them by what they've said about themselves. And you can kind of follow. Their threads are a reflection of who they are, so you can kind of see who's saying what. So I feel like I get to know them.

In addition to getting to know the students better, many faculty members reported that the online environment encouraged significantly more interaction than they anticipated.

> I think it's the ability to interact individually with the students and so that's ... you have the opportunity to do it (online) in a classroom. Even if you do interactive activities in a classroom you can't engage all 50 in the room at the same time.

An assumption that faculty members who teach face-to-face are always aware of student needs and are always engaging students was addressed by a few individuals. Generally, these were graduate faculty members who felt that without physical presence they were unable to effectively reach students.

Faculty members often found it more difficult to explain the course requirements and determine whether students understood the content. "We have to be more careful to articulate the rules of educational engagement in our classroom, and I don't think we have to be so careful in the classroom itself." Concern about the permanence of what was

written online as well worried some faculty. “I think sometimes when you respond online you’re more careful what you write because once it’s on there it’s on there forever.” Making mistakes online with what faculty members write was also identified by Jesse.

> What I find is a horrible challenge in doing online and online courses is it’s like writing a book without an editor. So there’s nobody in there except me doing this and it might take you five hours to fix up the module for this year, make sure the links work, make sure everything’s OK. You get it all done. Well there's nobody to go in and say, ”Are those diseases that you have on this place the same diseases covered here or are there mismatches?” Which does nothing for confused students and that shouldn’t be.

Faculty members in this study rarely discussed support staff, who, if available, could have assisted in tasks such as the one described above. This same faculty member, however, had indicated preferring to do the work on her own without relying on support staff.

The inability to “switch from one [teaching] format to another” because students are not understanding the content is lost in the online class, and faculty members report that without constant ongoing dialog they are unable to discern potential issues. “How to get students engaged in the course content online. It’s not the same [as in] face-to-face kind of contact.” Addressing student needs to understand assignments and directions challenged some of the faculty. “They kind of struggle with questions about what’s really required and ‘How much do I need to do?’ and ‘What’s this paper really like?’ as opposed to their classroom where they’re right there face-to-face and you can say it,

explain things [questions] that people might have." This assumes that students always understand verbal interactions of faculty.

Some faculty members discovered that, just as there are faculty members who are not appropriate to teach online, there are students who should not be online students. "There are just some people who are not self-motivated enough. There are people who also don't have the right constitution; they're always so nervous that they're missing something." Several faculty members who are strong supporters of online education have counseled certain students away from taking online classes. One participant stated that faculty members would never say a student is not appropriate for live classes, but the opposite is not true. However, another participant believes that the students who do not do well online are the same ones who are not particularly motivated in face-to-face classes. She does, however, advise students not to take online courses if they want a more social experience.

One faculty member's experience of actually teaching online was more disappointing than she anticipated. Believing that she would have opportunities to utilize her extensive technical abilities, she discovered this was not the case in actuality.

> I think the only problem was the realization that there was a limitation to what was available, to what technologically our support people could offer. And that if I didn't know how to do it myself it wasn't going to get done. But I didn't have time to learn java and all that kind of stuff.

Even more discouraging was that when she did attempt to provide something more interactive and interesting, students complained. "What I have found typically here:

what’s done is you put up a PowerPoint and reading assignments and this very droll and dry and not very productive. So I've become somewhat disillusioned with it over the years.” This faculty member was at a satellite campus for SU2, which may have impacted the experience due to lack of sufficient technical support and infrastructure at that institution.

Research Question 4. To what degree did institutional support and infrastructure impact faculty experiences?

In this section, descriptions of the types and extent of support, including technical support and training, are described for each of the colleges included in this study. Support and infrastructure varied among the four universities but was identified as important by all participants. SU1 has 40 full-time nursing faculty members. Participants report that they were the first online nursing program in the Florida state university system. SU1 offers four entirely online program tracks: RN-to-BSN, plus three masters’ degrees. Other master’s degree students can take core courses online. Most classes at SU1 are offered as hybrid or online classes. There are no support staff or instructional designers within the college of nursing. All services are offered through the university.

Of the universities included in this study, SU1 provides the most extensive training and preparation to faculty members prior to their beginning to teach online. All SU1 faculty members must attend this semester-long course prior to teaching online. The course “goes through the mechanics of it and the pedagogy and how to do it.” The program lasts for an entire semester “and you go for six hours every Friday the whole semester. At the end you make a presentation. You have to essentially show at least your

first and second module done completed in a presentation." Upon completion of the training program, each faculty member receives extensive technical support as well as continued support from an instructional designer who is specifically assigned to that individual. Faculty members indicate that they have a number they can call on weekends. The university website indicates that students receive extensive online technical support through a variety of resources. A help desk for phone support is also available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Students who need after-hours support can submit tickets to the help desk.

Upon completion of the online course development program, faculty members are expected to support other faculty who are new to the process. "We actually are mentors to everyone else coming in. So I always have a couple coming in talking about, "How'd you set yours up? "Why did you do it that way?" SU1 also provides templates that faculty members can use to build their courses. This saves time and effort according to members. "I created a fully online course myself and did it in a week and it really wasn't hard with the use of templates."

Of the five persons interviewed from this university, only one reported that the required training was very helpful. She describes her experience with the instructional designer who taught the class as an awakening into how to teach online versus teaching live. "Well, I look back now and thank God for him to finally get me to think straight. In other words, I just once again was going to pour my live class into the web software and that would be the end of it." This faculty member was located at a satellite campus and had an administrative position. She was also the only one who did not have a doctoral

degree, which may have indicated a difference in training or attitude. The other faculty members had mixed feelings about the quality of the training received. Two SU1 nursing faculty members had received extensive training in online teaching prior to coming to SU1 and felt that the course was insufficient compared to their previous experiences. One other participant had a degree in education and, according to her, the course focused on creating educational objectives, in which, as a nurse and an educator, she was already well versed. Instead, she reports that she "…learned along the way because our online course development class gave me absolutely no preparation...They taught me nothing about how to effectively engage students in discussion and even how to mechanically set up experiences to maximize student learning." The most common need expressed by faculty members was more extensive training on the technology. One participant described it as "frustrating." "The frustrating part is that it really doesn't offer a lot about the hands-on kinds of things. So the hands-on kinds of things we learn by helping each other or there is a support group online that you can ask questions." Other faculty members also reported learning from colleagues whenever possible on how to design and build online courses and sharing information on how to teach.

SU2 has 69 full-time faculty members. The only fully online program is the post-master's doctorate of nursing practice (DNP) degree. Other program tracks offer some courses online and preference for enrollment in these courses is given to students who live outside the college area. SU2 does not have a formal program for training faculty members to teach online. However, one faculty member was described as being "a techie, and he switched over to being the webmaster and helped us." That individual is now

assigned full-time to support online teaching and learning within the college as well as to provide online testing and email coordination. Several technical support staff are also available within the college. Various workshops are offered on the college's main campus: "We have live workshops and live classes periodically for faculty where we all go together and we learn about new applications and new programs and so forth." The university also offers workshops for faculty members. "We have the university as a whole offers classes for all the faculty, if you choose to go. You are not required, but it's up to you." These classes are not offered on the satellite campuses. "We don't necessarily have access to them, unless we travel to main campus," was reported by a faculty member who taught at a satellite campus.

One of the participants who was among the first to teach online at SU2's college of nursing was sent by administration to several training programs and was initially given time to prepare online courses. Other faculty members, however, who came later to teaching online, did not receive these options and, instead, relied heavily on co-workers for support and assistance.

Sharing courses was common and most faculty members at SU2 began teaching their first online courses by copying an existing course. One of the participants did have extensive education in online teaching prior to employment at SU2 and was very knowledgeable in technology. The other faculty members relied heavily on this person, which she found somewhat a burden due to her own workload demands. "The thing about my experience is because I do have that experience is why I'm called on to help some of the other faculty. Which is fine, but it does sometimes get to the point where I got a ton

of work and ...” Faculty-led seminars and Q&A sessions were held by the nursing faculty to help orient and update faculty members who taught online.

A search of the website for information about online support showed that phone support was available Monday through Friday from 8 until 5. There were extensive “getting started” pages on the university website that provided tutorials and answers to frequently asked questions for both faculty members and students.

SU3 currently has 31 full- and part-time faculty members. SU3 has a number of online and partially online program tracks. These include the RN-to-BSN, master’s in nursing education, and the nurse practitioner track, which is being phased out in favor of the new DNP track. The DNP track requires 24 hours to be taken on-campus. It was reported by one of the participants at SU3 that they are the most wired campus in the state of Florida. In addition to campus-wide technical support, there were two full-time support persons within the college. Development for faculty members teaching online is provided by the university. “They have a whole list of about 20 seminars that they hold all during the semester. And, for instance, the semester I came in, and they start from the very simplest thing about distance learning.” Another faculty lamented that the courses were not mandatory, indicating that many of the online courses were lacking in quality because of the lack of participation. “I’d say the main catch there is that they’re not required. So a lot of people – that’s why we wind up with these ‘correspondence courses” – a lot of people don’t use any of the classes. I was here for a little while before I realized they were available and I started to use them.” These courses are offered on satellite campuses on a very limited basis and generally only include the most basic offerings.

A review of the website shows that support for online learning is offered until 7:00 p.m. throughout the week and on weekends from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. for students. Faculty, however, receive technical support "all hours of the day and night." Participants reported that the university provides a specific individual for each college. This individual has a PhD in information technology and will come and work one-on-one with faculty members who want to explore new methods and technologies. One faculty member reported that an instructional designer had been hired for the college at one time but was not successful in getting faculty to change existing courses. Two of the faculty members interviewed were at a satellite campus that was over two hours from the main campus, so they relied primarily on phone contact with the main campus but were very pleased with the quality of support they received. "All support is on main campus. You use the help line and you can type in or call and I've done both. They're really good." However, visits from technical personnel for consultation were not available to faculty on the satellite campus either. A librarian offered some support to all disciplines located at the satellite campus.

SU4 has 48 nursing faculty members. The RN-to-BS program is entirely online and master's program tracks are partially online. SU4's college of nursing provides the most extensive technical support for both faculty and students of any of the universities interviewed for this study. The college of nursing, along with one other college at the university, opted to use an outside vendor for their content management system rather than rely on university resources. "The reason at that time was primarily technical support for both faculty and students. Our support here at the university had one person

who did all the BlackBoard, education support, technical stuff. If you sent a thing to the help desk, you could wait two weeks for them to even read them." The vendor provides 24/7 support to students and faculty. All faculty members at SU4 reported being pleased with the support they received. The ability to contact faculty support persons at all hours and the ease of use were mentioned frequently. "My computer skills are not my forte at all. But we were using [outside vendor] format, which is a really very user-friendly format to me. The technicians are available 24/7." Faculty members reported utilizing this service at odd hours when they had actual time to work on their courses.

The system is supported by a $100 fee per online course charged to students who take fully online classes. Faculty reported that students do not object to the fee. "Some people say, "I spend more than 100 dollars driving to campus for 15 weeks in gas and the hassle of parking and the hassle of gas and all that." In addition to support, the vendor also provides on-site technical training as requested but does not provide any online teaching development or instructional design advice. "They did send a person in to initially to do sort of a 'Here's our platform, here's how you get into the edit mode,' real technical, the nuts and bolts how to use it, and it was a technical type person who came, not an educator person. So they couldn't talk to us about how to teach online." Initially there were no workshops or training offered on how to teach online and faculty members relied on other faculty members who had some previous experience with teaching online. The situation, however, has improved. "Now we have quite a bit of support. We have workshops that are available now on the main campus and they do bring them to the

distance campus when there is a large enough group. But now you can't offer an online course unless you've had training.”

The need for institutional resources is vital to effective online education. Having adequate technical support increases satisfaction among faculty and students and enhances the learning experience when students do not have to spend time and effort struggling with the technology. The universities in this study all provided technical support as well as faculty development programs. However, the degree of that support varied at the institutions and also among campuses. Faculty members who had 24/7 technical support reported being satisfied with the online teaching experience, as opposed to some of the other schools where faculty reported being disillusioned with the experience. Since many enjoyed the flexibility of schedule provided by online teaching, the ability to get help when they needed it was seen as invaluable.

At SU2, which did not have extended support hours, some faculty members felt somewhat burdened in their efforts to provide support to their colleagues. This group also reported that students were unwilling to participate in online learning activities that were engaging and went beyond reading or listening to online lectures. Since this behavior was not reported by participants at other universities, it is interesting to note possible differences, the most obvious being the lack of technical support hours available to students. If students are already struggling to deal with the basic technology and not able to get sufficient assistance, engaging in some more complex multi-media experiences might seem overwhelming to them. This may have been even further exacerbated by the fact that support was located at the main campus, and these students were at satellite

locations and did not have face-to-face access if needed. The faculty member who reported this behavior also mentioned that those who managed the system discouraged the use of multi-media tools when developing content and restricted what could be uploaded even though the tools were available to faculty.

Online education, particularly online nursing education, is not confined to standard business hours, and the need to provide extended support should be thoroughly investigated. Additionally, faculty members from SU4, including the faculty members who were at satellite campuses, who used an outside vendor for support were all generally more satisfied than those members who utilized internal resources as they all had access to 24/7 online support for them as well as their students. The response to the needs of both faculty members and students was attributed to the fact that the vendor was a for-profit organization who hired professional, knowledgeable support personnel capable of addressing the needs of faculty members and students. One individual also reported tracking maintained by the vendor that assisted in verifying student activities. Clearly, as technology continues to be a large part of the educational experience, the need for efficient technical support will only grow, and to remain competitive and ensure that students and faculty members are focusing on education rather than technical issues, public universities need to use for-profit organizations as a model.

Faculty development workshops and instructional design resources were also seen as important to participants. SU1, however, was the only university that had a mandatory program for all faculty members who teach online. Several issues were uncovered by faculty members at other institutions with the resources that were available: 1) The time

to attend these workshops was often lacking, and administration did not always promote or even inform faculty of their availability. 2) Faculty members reported needing ongoing support and development in the form of mentoring after completion of the workshops. The need to provide workshops at times and places convenient for all faculty members is an important factor in providing rigorous online education. Faculty members at satellite campuses reported having to drive several hours to a main campus to attend workshops, which inhibited their ability to keep up with the latest techniques and technology. Additionally, the need for utilizing mentors as faculty members begin to practice online teaching is a major factor addressed by participants in this study as well as in the literature in faculty development that is usually overlooked in preparing faculty members to teach online.

Research Question 5. Based on the framework of transformative learning, what evidence of transformation can be identified through an analysis of the experiences described by nursing faculty?

Transformative learning occurs when adults experience a disorienting dilemma that challenges one of their assumptions. In this study, faculty members all faced the experience of being told they were going to teach online. In some cases, the faculty members initiated the move to teach online, but most, when asked what prompted them to teach online, replied with “I was told to.” While many had not anticipated that it would make much difference in their lives and roles as faculty members, they eventually discovered that was not the case. When asked to describe their experience, many found that their previous assumptions and beliefs about online education were challenged. “It’s

a different way of teaching and learning," reported one of the participants. Another shared a similar belief, "I think the whole idea of 'different' is something that people have to know. You can't just move from one format to another." One participant described a transformational experience that came about when meeting with an instructional designer to prepare her first online class:

> So, I can remember, the instructional designer met with me, and he let me go on and on and on for about 15 minutes about how I got the PowerPoints down and I already got the exams down, so this should not be too much of a problem. He was very patient with me for about 15 minutes then all of a sudden he went, 'No, that's not how Web education is. Forget what you did in the live face-to-face classroom. This is a whole different ball game." It was like a wake-up call and I said, 'What are you saying?'

The participant went on to describe how when she looks back now she is almost embarrassed at what her assumptions were about how to teach online. Now she works with the instructional design team to mentor other faculty members new to online teaching.

Another area that was transformative for faculty members was the discovery of the power of giving students the responsibility for their own learning and becoming facilitators rather than authority figures. "It's more participative," stated one faculty member, indicating the egalitarian nature of the online environment. That sentiment was echoed by other faculty members as well. "As an online instructor, I'm more of a facilitator… It puts students more in charge." One veteran online instructor reported that

"I see myself as a facilitator of active learning…When you see it that way, you see that the students have that much more responsibility in their learning and you must create that environment and that community of learners." Faculty members described that after their first experiences teaching online they went back and started over in order to:

> …develop content that's more interactive, that keeps the students more engaged, that makes them go out and look for information in areas that they're interested in that might not necessarily be my topical area but it's theirs. And therefore it becomes more productive to the end user in terms of what they can do with it afterwards.

Other participants also recognized the value in teaching online to foster lifelong self-directed learning in students.

> I sometimes talked to students online about, you know it's lifelong learning, especially in the fields we're in, with nursing. The things we can teach a student today in whatever format in this building, when they graduate in six months and get out in practice, you know there's a new IV pump. There's a different medication. Things change so fast in probably any profession that you always have to be learning new things. You need those basics. But that's ongoing learning, and I think that's one thing you can do more so with the online course. Not relying on a textbook.

That students learned to search out and find information on their own was seen as important by most of the faculty as they evolved into online facilitators. To accomplish this, many relied on threaded discussions to evaluate student understanding and guide

them into becoming independent thinkers. “I can see where their thinking is and prompt, and, you know, sort of direct their thinking in another way or just enhance what they’re already thinking.” One participant reports that when students participate in discussions, she is not as concerned about them repeating information they learned in their books; instead, she was “more concerned about their ability to question, and so I find that it’s very effective in an online format.” To accomplish this, she utilizes “coaching the students to engage each other in deeper thinking about the content… The idea is not to answer the question. The idea is to explore the content, as opposed to a right or wrong answer to a question.” Utilizing these methods was one of the primary ways that faculty members believed that they had become facilitators.

One participant had always favored a style of teaching that involved lecturing but transformed her thinking after teaching online. “My classroom teaching is very much a result of what I, as a student, like. Which is don't ask questions, but that doesn't work online. So it’s much more of a discussion course.” Knowing when to facilitate and when to teach is not always something that online faculty naturally know, but one faculty reported finding the significance of facilitation as he began teaching online.

> Facilitation versus the teaching moment is a biggie. I think you need to learn how to really hear for what they’re asking you. Probably no different than listening orally when people are talking to you what are they really saying, rather than just reacting to you. But I need to be very thoughtful in my responses to students.

Learning to facilitate is something that faculty members need to learn if they are going to be successful as online educators. Not accepting the need to work in this way will likely

create frustration in members who feel that they must control all aspects of student learning. As one participant expressed, “We are each teachers and learners, you all bring expertise to this course, that I may not have.”

Most faculty members recognized through the experience that interactive online learning experiences were necessary to engage online students. One faculty member who reported just uploading PowerPoint presentations at first now adds opportunities for students to take some responsibility for their online learning. “There’s very few slide shows [now] and very few supplemental notes and a lot more discussion and searching for information.” The interactivity has resulted not only in better online learning but in better learning overall, as reported by some of the faculty.

> I think the one thing online; everybody has to do all the work. You can't sit in the classroom with 50 people and go in the back corner today because you know that you didn't read the book and hope that everybody talks a lot because the discussion gets graded by ‘Did you participate?’. So the person who’s sitting in the corner not participating doesn't get any discussion points this week. So I think in some ways it can result in more learning, better learning, because they have to do the activities there in that course.

This was one of the more significant transformative experiences indicated by participants, discovering the power of student participation in online education.

Another area in which faculty members experienced transformation was in discovering that the ways in which they taught before, particularly in relation to time, were not applicable in this environment and in order to be successful, they needed to

restructure their approach to teaching and student interaction. “Because if the students are there all week, you have to be there at a different time too.” In consequence, this entails “breaking out of that mold that we teach once a week.” The tradeoff, according to one participant, was that faculty could have more control of their schedules.

> I think it’s the time management issue. I personally like it because I stay home many days and I can work on my scholarship and my writing things and teach my course. As opposed to you have to stop everything, get dressed, come to campus, teach for three hours, and go home.

Several faculty members talked about time management, and one participant warned that it is important for faculty to be disciplined regarding their own schedules. “If we’re expecting the student to be time-managed and self-directed, then I think we should honor that by being just as self-managed and time-directed as they are.” Faculty members reported developing a whole new paradigm that redefined how they looked at their teaching responsibilities. The time was more flexible and more attuned to the needs of the students.

Faculty members also described that, in addition to time, “the whole idea of presence is very different online than it is live.” Faculty members discovered that even though “there is a lot more time-intensive work to stay connected to students in an online format,” there were ways in which they could relate to students that was almost as effective or, in some cases, more effective than in face-to-face situations. Faculty in this study reported that they discovered how gregarious students could get if the opportunity was present for them to do so. “So it went from a very impersonal online person's name

to all of a sudden you get this chatter going on because they've all introduced themselves. And surprisingly they tell you a lot about themselves and it gives them all personalities."

In this study, several faculty members showed evidence of transformative learning through the experience of teaching online. Though some had no expectations of what it would be like, several had preconceived notions about the simplicity and ease, lack of communication, and lack of rigor that were challenged by their experiences. Several faculty members reported that, not only had they been changed by the experience in their approach to online education, but they had used the acquired knowledge to transform their face-to-face classes, as well. Their belief was that if active learning worked well online and created more independent thinkers who could be responsible for their own learning, this philosophy should also be applied to students who were in their face-to-face classes. A number of the faculty members described themselves as "facilitators of learning" and, while some contended that this had always been one of their principals, a few recognized that they had been changed by the online learning experience.

Facilitation was not the only transformation described by faculty members. The traditional ways in which they were used to teaching and interacting were also challenged. To survive in this new environment, they had to rethink their way of approaching schedules and communicating with students. Some of the participants not only accepted this new paradigm but also embraced it, enjoying the freedom of not having to adhere to a set day and time and actually having new and, in some cases, better relationships with students. Though the issues of time and effort were still present, many

of the participants found themselves moving to a whole new construct regarding the role of faculty member and how they described their methods and values.

Several participants did not appear to have had any transformative learning experiences. There was no relationship among these individuals regarding location, years of experience, or preparation. Two of the faculty members who did not have transformative learning experiences were very experienced online educators who had extensive training. One of these individuals had a strong dislike for online education and felt that faculty, particularly graduate faculty members, needed to be more involved in research than in the preparation it took to teach online. Two other individuals who showed no evidence of transformation were both at SU2's satellite campus. One had extensive experience and training, and the other had been teaching online for a year. Development opportunities, support, and other forms of guidance were lacking. Both also reported issues with difficult students in their online classes.

Other faculty members who reported transformative experiences were all over the spectrum. Two examples include Stacey and Dale. Dale, who was located on a main campus, had a graduate certificate in distance education, a PhD in nursing education, and had taught online for a number of years, described how the experience changed how she perceived herself as an educator and how it would influence her methods if she ever returned to teaching face-to-face classes. Stacey, who was located on a satellite campus, reported having had minimal preparation, had a MS degree, and had been teaching online for a year, also showed evidence of transformative learning. Stacey reported discovering that communication with online students could be meaningful, that facilitating

discussions was a necessary skill to foster learning, and that ongoing dialogue brought awareness of student needs. Stacey also described discovering new ways of working in order to adapt to student schedules. These two extremes indicate that education, preparation, years of experience, and location were not indicators of faculty members' ability to become facilitators of learning. However, both participants did express a strong desire to make themselves available both physically and emotionally to students and to adapt their schedules to meet student needs.

Discussion of Research Questions

Participants in this study described their own experiences and the impact of the institutional framework in how they began and continued to teach online. Experiences vary for faculty members, based on the institutional support and preparation they received to teach online. However, personal philosophies, expectations, and intrinsic motivation of faculty members can also impact the type of experience individuals have when teaching online and determine whether they will learn and grown through a transformative learning experience or whether they will cling to their initial assumptions regardless of their validity. However, the concern is that even the most highly motivated faculty member will eventually "burn out" if basic support and infrastructure needs are not addressed.

Despite significant differences among faculty members and institutions relating to their preparation and support, as well as other factors, there were experiences common to most of the participants, and these were reflected in the discussion of themes and research questions. Time was a major factor that impacted every single faculty member. The

additional time to teach online, the lack of time to participate in training, and the varied schedules of nursing students were all issues that each participant had to confront. The inadequate faculty development and training process evident in most institutions left faculty ill equipped to handle the online environment, and the transition was frequently a bumpy, stressful experience made more difficult by increases in class sizes and lack of support from administration. The desire for peer support or mentors was expressed by most participants, and, when these were lacking, faculty members often sought out their peers for guidance and quasi-mentoring. Though participants from the satellite campuses of all four universities were interviewed, no participants from SU2's main campus were included, due to the inability to recruit individuals from this school. Since the experience of several of the faculty members at the satellite campus was not very positive, it would have been beneficial to determine what differences might be reported by individuals from the main campus.

Many of the participants showed evidence of transformative learning. This came in the form of the move from authority figure to facilitator of learning, the acceptance of new ways to connect with students through a restructuring of their schedules, or utilizing the various tools available in the online environment.

Most of the findings in this study were supported by the literature described in chapter 2. Additionally, a major study conducted by the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities was recently conducted covering 231 interviews with individuals, administrators, faculty members, and students, at 45 public universities; 11,000 responses were received. (McCarthy & Samors, 2009). Comments from the survey were looked at

but were not analyzed, so the data presented is quantitative, as opposed to this study, which provides detailed faculty views and, consequently, provides specifics for identifying the needs of faculty members transitioning to online teaching. Many of the findings in the report are similar to the findings in this study.

The survey concluded that there is a need to address faculty development, adequacy of resources, recognition of time to develop and teach online, and learning outcomes. All these issues emerged as themes from the interviews for this study. Faculty members reported dissatisfaction with administrative support for developing and teaching online courses and programs. In this study, faculty specifically addressed issues such as lack of time, increased student enrollments, and impact on other responsibilities.

The survey revealed that roughly 64% of faculty members believe that online learning takes more effort to teach and 85% report that course development takes more time. In this study, however, all faculty members reported that it takes more time to do both; however, many of the faculty members stated that flexibility was an important factor that helped compensate for the disparity. However, in both studies, the lack of time was identified as one of the barriers to presenting more engaging, interactive online learning experiences. Most of the institutions in the survey provided instructional designers. In this study, only one institution reported working with instructional designers and, overall, this did not seem to be an important factor for the participants.

The survey discussed that campuses have pursued assessing fees for online learning programs. In this study, two of the institutions reported assessing fees for online programs. SU4 utilizes the fees to provide a content management system from an outside

vendor that they believe provides superior support and service. SU3 indicates that the fees are used to house students when they come to campus to participate in clinical courses. Other uses of the fees were not identified.

The survey revealed that faculty members at some institutions noted that the training provided for course development is not mandatory, while at others it is required. In this study, only one institution reported that training is required. All others indicated that training was optional. Faculty members in both studies indicated that professional support is vital.

The survey also addressed intellectual property policies as an area of concern. However, in this study, only one person even mentioned this, and other faculty members who were directly asked said that it was not an issue. Many faculty members in this study reported freely sharing their courses. Similar to the survey, which found that the majority of persons teaching online were more experienced faculty, those who participated in this study were seasoned, experienced faculty members who had taught for a number of years. Faculty members in the survey expressed concern regarding learning outcomes. The survey indicated that 80% of faculty members who had never taught online thought learning outcomes were inferior. In this survey, prior to beginning to teach online, many faculty members also expressed their belief that online education was inherently inferior. The experience, however, led most of them to believe that student outcomes were as good as those of students in face-to-face classes.

A majority of faculty members in the survey reported teaching online because of student needs. Only 12% of those surveyed reported teaching online because they were

required to do so. This is different from the results in this study; however, this study addressed what was the original prompt that had led them to teach online. Had I asked why they continued to do so, the outcome may have been different.

The report indicates three recommendations, which are congruent with the findings of this study as well. However, this study looks at the experiences and needs of individual faculty members; the report addresses other areas, such as administration, university infrastructure, and student experiences:

1. Identifying strategies to acknowledge and recognize the additional time and effort faculty members invest in online education.
2. Developing messages and communications mechanisms that effectively incorporate online learning into the fabric and mission of the institution.
3. Applying effective measures of learning outcomes for online courses.

One major difference in the two studies is that the survey looked at faculty members from each institution without identifying the specific disciplines. Nursing programs have needs and face challenges not addressed in the report. This study focused on the specific needs of nursing faculty and students. However, the basic issues are similar and indicate the impact these factors have on all online learning endeavors. Much has been written about the nursing shortage in the review of literature. This shortage is exacerbated by the shortage of nursing faculty. The need to recruit, train, and retain nursing faculty is greater than ever. Without preparing and supporting them adequately, these numbers will continue to be precarious.

Implications for Practice

In this study, nursing faculty members reported on their successes and issues in the online environment. This section describes some of the lessons learned from analyzing the experiences described by the participants and how these lessons can be utilized to improve the experiences for other nursing faculty. Three different groups, faculty developers, administrators, and faculty members, are addressed in this section and implications for practice are described for each.

Faculty Development Recommendations

Faculty members who are going to teach online need to have training in order to successfully navigate the environment. Most models of faculty development described by the participants were not entirely successful. Traditional models involved a centralized faculty training area that offered a series of classes on a variety of topics related to online teaching. One university offered a mandatory program that all faculty members were required to attend. The program lasted for an entire semester and participants had to produce at least one module by the end of the class. This program, while extensive, was only reported by one participant as being excellent. These programs, at all campuses, were lacking several key components that participants cited as important. The following is a model of faculty development and an ongoing support program that addresses the needs of the nursing faculty members interviewed in this study.

1. Provide workshops that are offered online and at alternative times. Most of the training opportunities provided for faculty members were face-to-face. Though some individuals indicated preferring this, nursing faculty members are frequently

not available to attend these sessions due to clinical and practice responsibilities. Additionally, many faculty members have not experienced an online class themselves and teaching this information live does not give them the learning opportunity of understanding the student perspective. Therefore, workshops for faculty members should be provided online, and live ones should be offered, at least occasionally, during non-standard business hours. Options to meet developers face-to-face are still valuable and, in some cases, may be necessary, but faculty members who are infrequently on campus need alternatives to traditional face-to-face workshops offered during "business hours." Also, content for faculty development workshops should be identified by individuals who are experienced with teaching online. Frequently, faculty development groups are out of touch with the day-to-day issues faced by faculty, particularly nursing faculty members, and workshops do not adequately meet the needs of the participants. Even at SU1, which had such an extensive faculty development program, experienced faculty members were still recruited to validate the lessons delivered by the faculty development staff.

2. Evaluate the educational needs of faculty members who are beginning to teach online, in order to provide them with the types of training they actually need. Do they have an educational background? Are they technologically savvy? Do they know what resources are available to them on campus? Look at these different factors through interviewing or assessing faculty members and recommend a series of workshops that meet the needs of the participants. Many nursing faculty

members do not have backgrounds in education and are in need of basic knowledge on how to teach; others have advanced degrees in education and are likely to feel their time is wasted by a seminar on writing course objectives. Faculty members who are going through a program to teach online could "test out" of modules that address skill sets they already have and focus instead on workshops that meet their specific needs.

3. Provide opportunities for one-on-one training and assessment of faculty skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis. Faculty developers should meet individually at least once per semester with all faculty members who teach online to enable them to address issues they are having and, also, to ensure they are utilizing all the technology in the most efficacious manner. Despite the multiple modes of communication, the volume of emails and announcements frequently "bury" the items that are not immediately identified as necessary. One-on-one sessions enable faculty members to catch up and even enhance their skills. General-skills classes often do not reach those who are either far behind or way ahead.
4. Provide a mentor for all faculty members during their first semester of teaching online. The mentor must be an experienced online educator who can provide guidance and support to the new online teacher without overwhelming or undermining the lead teacher's authority. This individual needs to have some training on how to mentor and must have significant experience successfully teaching online, based on student outcomes or evaluations. Mentors could be retired faculty members, faculty who are compensated for performing this service,

or faculty who work within the college in instructional design capacities. Mentors would be added to the online class and given instructor access. They would consult with the faculty member about the original set up and design of the course, indicating what works. Another important function would be to advise faculty members where they should be spending their time. Are they spending too much time answering technical questions instead of referring these questions to IT? Are they not providing sufficient feedback in a timely manner? Do they need to monitor discussion boards more closely to ensure incorrect information is not being disseminated among students? Do they need to step back and let students take the lead in discussions? Another alternative is to have new faculty co-teach with experienced faculty members or participate in courses in an "assistant teaching" role, giving them the opportunity to follow an experienced teacher in the online environment. If neither one of these options is possible, forming an ongoing support group for new faculty members could be fostered. This group would be led by an experienced faculty or instructional technologist. The group could meet online, either through synchronous technology or phone conferencing or by posting comments via closely monitored discussion boards. The importance is in getting faculty members to teach with someone before actually going it alone or, at least, in providing them with additional guidance during their initial semester of teaching online.

5. Provide a means for faculty members to collaborate with one another. This could include meetings, live or online, but more likely, it will include listserv's, blogs,

or wikis. Faculty members in this survey often felt more comfortable asking their colleagues for advice than referring to instructional designers or technologists. Additionally, this is a place for faculty members to share ideas on teaching methods. Ideally, faculty developers could capture this content into a database to utilize for new faculty members as a resource, which could go into a website as described in the next step.

6. A website with easily accessible and clearly written support documents and/or tutorials should be available and updated regularly for both faculty members and students. Nursing faculty members and students work non-traditional hours, and if they do not have access to 24/7 support, providing them with an online system with guidance and answers to basic questions is the next best thing. Faculty members in this study frequently reported that their work was completed at 2 a.m. on Saturday, and many students were reported being online at 1 a.m., which is when hospital shifts ended.
7. Collaborate with faculty members to design templates and standards for course development. These tools will reduce faculty time to develop courses and ensure continuity for students. Dietz-Uhler, Fisher, and Han (2008) showed that the use of standards improved student retention rates by 11%. Success was attributed to the fact that standards ensured that policies and expectations were clearly stated and that students were provided with rich interactive experiences. In this study, faculty members reported that standards reduced the time to develop their courses. Templates should not be so constricting that they do not allow faculty members to

reflect their personalities within the course but should be a guide that provides a structure that promotes a quality online course. There are existing standards that are evidence-based, such as Quality Matters, or faculty members can collaborate in developing their own branding. Even without templates, standards can provide faculty members with a framework on which to develop a course.

Administrative Recommendations

Infrastructure is necessary in order to not only deliver effective online education, but also to ensure faculty and students are satisfied with the experience, which is key to retaining both. Administrators need to ensure that these factors are accounted for when proposing or maintaining an existing program. Following are recommendations for administrators as they enhance the online experience for faculty members and attempt to ensure successful student outcomes:

1. Faculty members who are teaching online need rewards and recognition for the extra effort they are expending. This can come in the form of compensation or reduction of workload. Faculty members who are developing a new course should be given time or overload pay in order to develop the course. If faculty members are expected to take on large classes, this should also be addressed. One graduate faculty members in this study reported eliminating papers due to the volume of students and resorting to multiple-choice questions, thereby impacting the quality of learning opportunities for these students.
2. Administrators should require that faculty members who teach online receive adequate preparation to do so. Not only should administrators encourage, or even

require, that faculty members get preparation to teach online, but they should also ensure that the faculty members have the time and opportunities to do so. Faculty who go into teaching online without the necessary skills do a disservice to the students as well as to themselves. Having unprepared faculty members teaching online also does not reflect well on the institution.

3. Sufficient support and technological infrastructure should be available to faculty members who teach online. If both faculty and students struggle with the technology and have insufficient resources, then the courses will be more focused on dealing with the technology than on the content. Faculty members will resort to “low-tech” options even if this is not the best method for a particular lesson. Not all institutions can provide 24/7 support as SU4 does, but without some kind of reasonably reliable support and technology, faculty and students will be dissatisfied with the experience.
4. Administrators should take into account the differences in evaluation scores for faculty members who teach online. Those who teach online should not be denied tenure or promotion based on scores that are not only lower, but, usually, smaller in volume than for those of their colleagues who teach face-to-face. Recommendations by some of the participants included using a lower mean or restructuring evaluations so that they are more in line with the online environment. For example, instead of saying, “Did faculty return your email within a timely manner?” which is subjective, say “Did faculty return your email within 48 hours?” At one institution, faculty members who were up for tenure

were discouraged from teaching online, thereby limiting the opportunities for these individuals as well as possibly denying students faculty who may be needed.

5. Recognize and reward lead faculty. Often, one faculty member is responsible for developing a course and sharing it with others who are teaching the same section, or one faculty member is spending significant amounts of time unofficially mentoring those less experienced. Identifying lead faculty members and providing compensation for their extra efforts not only will be more equitable, but will increase their satisfaction and willingness to continue in this role. Though faculty members often complain about their rights to intellectual property, the issue is more often related to the lack of compensation they receive for developing the course to begin with and handing it off to other faculty members who are paid similarly, or even more.
6. Identify which faculty members should not be teaching online, and, whenever possible, make alternative selections. Forcing faculty members who have no desire, interest, or aptitude for teaching online is counter-productive to the mission of the school. Some faculty members in this study reported being very "anti-online" and, consequently, it is possible that students in these courses will not achieve the types of outcomes they might when a faculty member is committed to providing an exceptional learning experience.

Faculty Recommendations

Though, as described above, faculty members need support and recognition to become successful online educators, they also need to look at different ways of working

and thinking about their role as educators. Listed below are some of the areas that faculty, specifically nursing faculty, need to address in order to transition into the role of online educator:

1. Faculty members need to look at time from a different perspective. Standard hours of operation are no longer stable and student needs often dictate when faculty members can and should be available. This fluidity of time also provides faculty members with opportunities to pursue other goals now that they are no longer tied to a structured schedule. In this study, several participants reported major advantages once they were freed from traditional schedules requiring their presence on campus. This recommendation is not implying that faculty members do not need to set boundaries with students, but, rather, that they do need to identify what values, in regard to time, can shift. Attempting to do a 9-to-5 day and then teaching all night or all weekend will likely lead to "burn out." Several faculty members in this study who had once enthusiastically worked 24/7, were beginning to feel the strain of being continually available. One participant stated that she often felt it was a choice between responding to students and mowing her lawn. Another faculty member had stated that she was available only during business hours, only to come to understand that, with nursing students, business hours were not easily defined.
2. Faculty members need to be open to new ways of communicating and interacting with students. This study showed that electronic communication could be very successful, but it did require some innovative dedication by faculty. Those who

were most satisfied with the results referred to having an ongoing dialogue with students and paying attention to what they said in order to know who they were as students and as people. Several used alternative methods, such as IM'ing, Skype, or whatever would make their students feel most comfortable, in order to be available in a variety of venues. Some even logged in at 1 a.m. when many of their students were actually online. Ultimately, many of the participants reported having relationships with students that were stronger than their experiences with their face-to-face students, but it did take effort and involved being available at unusual times and communicating via non-traditional means.

3. Faculty members need to be open to new ways of working with colleagues and support personnel. Teaching has been described as usually a solitary task. In the online environment, however, experts recommend that faculty members work as part of a team. Support staff, instructional designers, and graphic designers can all contribute to the development of an online class, freeing up faculty to focus on teaching and assessment. Some faculty members indicated they were reluctant to give up control of their courses and, at the same time, lamented the time and lack of support they felt they needed. Learning how to let go of the non-teaching elements of the course will alleviate some of the stressors identified by faculty members teaching online. Sharing courses and ideas with colleagues is also important, as many of the participants in this study described beginning to teach online by copying an existing course. Other faculty members passed on their

courses to colleagues and, in turn, received feedback about what was or wasn't working well in the class, giving them an opportunity to improve.

4. Embrace new learning opportunities. Nursing faculty members often are not trained in pedagogical concepts. Doctoral programs in nursing often emphasize research to the exclusion of teaching, and master's educated students are most often practitioners with little experience in classroom education. Though administrators should encourage and support faculty members in acquiring teaching and technology skills, this often does not happen. One faculty member at SU3 reported having been at the school for some time before realizing there were development opportunities. Faculty should ensure that they are able to take advantage of whatever workshops are offered and, if none are available, they should look for other opportunities with the direction of their supervisors. Acquiring these skills will enable faculty members to not only improve student outcomes, but to increase their own satisfaction, as well, as they will have more knowledge and a greater ability to teach online.

Discussion

The recommendations provided in this section are based on the experiences related in this study as well as the literature. Faculty members described what worked for them in their journey from live to online education. They described what was needed, what they wished they had known before starting to teach, and what they advised new faculty members to consider before they began teaching online. The most important lesson to take away from this is the need to include faculty voices in all aspects of

preparing online programs. Faculty members' needs should be identified and acknowledged by administrators, faculty development groups, supporting staff, and technology departments. When online education is approached as a team effort, results can be more satisfying to faculty and students, and student learning outcomes can be addressed more effectively, ensuring that online education is at least as rigorous as face-to-face courses.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study looked at 16 nursing faculty from four Florida state universities. Since nursing students, particularly those in RN-to-BS and graduate programs, tend to be older than traditional students and because they usually work non-traditional hours, expanding this research to other disciplines, such as public health, education, or math, could provide information to determine whether the needs expressed by nursing faculty members are different, based on discipline.

This study identifies the development and preparation needs of faculty members as they transition to online educators. Operationalizing recommendations from this study and identifying their effectiveness either in student outcomes, retention, or faculty/student satisfaction would provide validation for the data and would serve as a model for online program development. Preparing the next generation of nursing faculty members to teach online should be an element of doctoral education in nursing as well as in other disciplines. Determining how to effectively include preparation of online educators in doctoral programs could provide another area of research. This could be accomplished by

identifying programs that have already begun to address how to prepare doctorally prepared nursing educators and reporting on their methods.

Mentoring was an important theme identified in this study. Looking at how mentors can be developed and utilized in nursing programs as well as in other disciplines would enable institutions to formulate effective plans for utilizing and preparing mentoring programs. Research on mentoring could look at factors such as what types of individuals make the best mentors and whether the role could be filled in some other way, such as through retired faculty members or instructional technologists. Whether mentors could be cross-discipline would be another factor in mentor research. Looking at what types of individuals nursing faculty will respect enough to ask for guidance should be part of this research.

Creating presence and communicating with students combined to make up another important factor mentioned by most faculty members in this study. The best, most effective methods of developing relationships with students without burning out faculty would be a topic for research that could enhance the online teaching experience. Ensuring that students are understanding the content and how to do this most efficaciously, creating a unique faculty presence, and identifying student needs are all areas that faculty members in this study struggled with when teaching online. Though several studies in the literature identified this as an issue, there was little written regarding what methods were successful, particularly with nursing students. Several faculty members in this study reported that their relationships with online students were even better than with face-to-face students. Looking at how these faculty members

achieved that level of communication would be a significant area to study in order to identify those methods that were most effective.

Finally, looking at how institutions can achieve academic rigor, faculty/student satisfaction, and adequate infrastructure in a cost-efficient manner should be investigated. If the purpose of online education is to provide a quality education to students who are unable to participate in traditional classes, then administration must also consider how to do this in a way that sufficiently supports faculty members without unduly burdening the students. In today's competitive market, very few institutions of higher learning can avoid delivering online education in order to attract students. However, proprietary schools can offer extensive services to students, though at a cost, and, though academic rigor is often questionable, students are attracted to the programs because of their convenience and support. Researching how to offer these programs at public colleges and universities more efficiently could enable schools to improve their offerings and ensure that students receive affordable, quality online education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Interview Protocol

Study Title: Nursing faculty's experiences in transitioning from a classroom to an online teaching role.

The purpose of this study is to describe the experiences of nursing faculty who transitioned from live to online teaching. I am providing you with the questions that I intend to pursue during our face-to-face interview.

In order to collect demographic information regarding your employment and educational history, I would like to obtain a copy of your current curriculum vita.
I would also like to obtain any copies of your online course syllabi and/or topical outlines in order to learn more about your teaching strategies.

1. Tell me how you came to be a nurse educator and about your current teaching role.

2. What prompted you to begin teaching online?

3. Think back to when you got your first online teaching assignment, what were your assumptions and expectations about teaching online?

4. Please describe how you went about developing your first online class?

5. What role did your institution play in preparing you to teach online?

6. How do your initial assumptions compare to the actual experience of teaching online?

7. How did your methods for teaching online differ from those in your face-to-face courses?

8. What are the biggest differences that you have found between teaching face-to-face classes and teaching online classes?

9. The traditional role of faculty is defined as participation in teaching, research, and service. How has teaching online impacted that role?

10. Is there anything else that you would like to add that might help in understanding your experience transitioning to online teaching?

Appendix B Informed Consent

Social Sciences/Behavioral

Adult Informed Consent

University of South Florida

Information for People Who Take Part in Research Studies

The following information is being presented to help you decide whether or not you want to be a part of a minimal risk research study. Please read carefully. If you do not understand anything, ask the Person in Charge of the Study.

Title of Study:	***Nursing faculty's experiences in transitioning from a classroom to an online teaching role***
Principal Investigator:	Denise Passmore, Doctoral Candidate
Study Location(s):	University of South Florida, Tampa

You are being asked to participate because of your experience in the academic field of online nursing education.

General Information about the Research Study

The purpose of this study is to apply phenomenological research strategies to examine the experiences of nursing faculty who transitioned from face-to-face

classroom to online teaching and to analyze their reported experiences for evidence of transformative learning. The intention is to develop a rich, thick portrait of the participants' experiences to gain greater insight into how faculty perceive their role in the online environment and whether there were significant differences from their role as classroom teachers. For purposes of this study, online nursing faculty refers to full or part-time faculty in a university-based nursing program who having begun their career in classroom teaching and have taught online for at least one year.

Plan of Study

You will be asked to participate in a live face-to-face interview at your location. Depending on the depth you choose to provide; interviews will be completed in 1 – 2 hours. If needed, you may be contacted by telephone or email after the interview to clarify any questions that may arise. Subjects will also be asked to submit a copy of their vita, course syllabi, and/or topical outlines.

Payment for Participation

You will not be paid for participating in this study.

Appendix B (continued)

Benefits of Being a Part of this Research Study

By participating in this research study, participants will have the opportunity to discuss their perspectives on topics related to the field in which they are considered experienced. Their perspective will provide valuable insight for preparing faculty for the role on online facilitator.

Risks of Being a Part of this Research Study

There are no known risks.

Confidentiality of Your Records

Your privacy and research records will be kept confidential to the extent of the law. Authorized research personnel, employees of the Department of Health and Human Services and the USF Institutional Review Board may inspect the records from this research project.

The results of this study may be published. However, the data obtained from you will be combined with data from other people in the publication. The published results will not include your name in the body of the paper.

All interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed. The completed transcription will

be sent to each participant for review, revisions and approval. Audio tapes, transcriptions, and researcher's notes will be maintained by the researcher both during and after the completion of the study. No direct quotations will be published without permission.

Volunteering to Be Part of this Research Study

Your decision to participate in this research study is completely voluntary. You are free to participate in this research study or to withdraw at any time. If you choose not to participate, or if you withdraw, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits that you are entitled to receive.

Questions and Contacts

If you have any questions about this research study, contact

Denise Passmore 813-326-0858 dpassmor@health.usf.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a person who is taking part in a research study, you may contact a member of the Division of Research Compliance of the University of South Florida at 813-974-5638.

Appendix B (continued)

Your Consent—By signing this form I agree that:

I have fully read or have had read and explained to me this informed consent form describing a research project.

I have had the opportunity to question one of the persons in charge of this research and have received satisfactory answers.

I understand that I am being asked to participate in research. I understand the risks and benefits, and I freely give my consent to participate in the research project outlined in this form, under the conditions indicated in it.

I have been given a signed copy of this informed consent form, which is mine to keep.

_____	_____	_____
Signature of Participant	Printed Name of Participant	Date

Investigator Statement

I certify that participants have been provided with an informed consent form that has been approved by the University of South Florida's Institutional Review Board. That

contains the nature, demands, risks and benefits involved in participating in this study. I further certify that a phone number has been provided in the event of additional questions.

	Denise Passmore	
Signature of Investigator Or Authorized research investigators designated by the Principal Investigator	Printed Name of Investigator	Date

Institutional Approval of Study and Informed Consent

This research project/study and informed consent form were reviewed and approved by the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects. This approval is valid until the date provided below. The board may be contacted at (813) 974-5638.

Approval Consent Form Expiration Date:

Revision Date:_____

Appendix C Contact Summary Sheet

Participant	School	Interview Date	Release Signed	Transcript Emailed	Artifacts	File ID

recruitment email to deans

Burns, Patricia

Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2009 5:57 PM

To: deans at targeted universities

Cc: Passmore, Denise

Dean X:

One of my faculty, Ms. Denise Passmore, is currently beginning research for her doctoral dissertation. Her study is called "A phenomenological study of nursing faculty's experiences in transitioning from a classroom to an online teaching role."

She would like to interview three or four nursing faculty from your college who have made the transition from live to online teaching. In support of her endeavor, I am, on her behalf, requesting your permission to conduct this research at your college and would also ask that you provide her with any recommendations of potential candidates from your faculty.

Ms. Passmore's research has been approved through the University of South Florida's IRB and she has gone through the IRB office at your university as well. Following is her contact information should you have any additional questions or concerns.

Denise Passmore, M.A.

College of Nursing - University of South Florida

813-396-9127

dpassmor@health.usf.edu

Thank you. Pat Burns

Patricia A. Burns, PhD,RN, FAAN

Senior Associate Vice President, USF Health

Dean, College of Nursing

University of South Florida

12901 Bruce B. Downs, MDC Box 22

Tampa, Fl 33612-4766

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Denise Passmore received a Bachelor's Degree in Mass Communications from the University of South Florida in 1977 and a M.A. in Adult Education in 1992. She worked as a technical writer and instructional designer/trainer for Nielsen Media Research and several other corporations. She entered the Ph.D. program at the University of South Florida in 1999.

While in the Ph.D. program at the University of South Florida, Denise came to work for the University of South Florida – College of Nursing as an instructional designer. She has also coauthored several publications relating to online and adult education and has presented at AERC, SITE, AERA (state and national), and Sloan-C.