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An Analysis of online Faculty Training Practices in the Illinois Community College System

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ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF ONLINE FACULTY TRAINING PRACTICES IN THE ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

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This study investigated existing training practices for online faculty and instructors in the Illinois community college system. From 2004 to 2014, higher education showed a 60% increase in online enrollment, with 1.9 million students enrolled nationally in online courses at public two-year institutions. In the state of Illinois, public two-year institutions enrolled 32.9% of all distance education courses . As online learning continues to alter the educational landscape, new issues confront instructors and students. Preparing faculty to teach online is an important component for student success in online programs but professional development for online instructors varies in different universities.

A survey with questions based on best practices in online instructor training was distributed to representatives who were responsible for online instructor training in each of the Illinois community colleges. Survey results provided baseline information about a large system that can be used to analyze and improve existing programs. Results of the study revealed that orientation and professional development programs are widely offered, yet only 50% of programs include information about pedagogy, teaching strategies, and assessment. Faculty are also being asked to design their own online courses, but course design training is not consistently offered.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
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AN ANALYSIS OF ONLINE FACULTY TRAINING PRACTICES IN THE ILLINOIS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

BY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Distance learning in higher education continues to grow as a learning option for students and colleges. In 2006–07, 96% of public two-year colleges reported offering online courses (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2014). From 2004 to 2014, higher education showed a 60% increase in online enrollment, with 1.9 million students enrolled nationally in online courses at public two-year institutions (NCES, 2014). For the 14th straight year, as of the fall of 2016, there was an increase in the number of students taking at least one online course and 31.6% of all higher education enrollments were in distance courses (Seaman, Allen, & Seaman, 2018). In the state of Illinois, public two-year institutions enrolled 32.9% of all distance education courses (Illinois Community College Board [ICCB], 2019). Almost half of all community college students have taken at least one fully online course as part of their postsecondary studies and about 25% of community college students are enrolled in one or more online courses per semester.

In a 2013 report, 90% of academic leaders believed that many higher education students would take at least one online course (Betts & Heaston, 2014). It is also estimated that between one third to one quarter of all faculty are engaged in some type of distance education instruction (Luongo, 2018). These statistics show that even with overall college enrollment decline, enrollment in online programs continues to increase, making the review of course quality and delivery important for colleges to consider (Online Learning Consortium, 2016). As colleges and universities continue to re-evaluate levels of online instructional effectiveness and look for

ways to improve student retention and completion rates, investigating how quality training for online faculty plays a part in those areas is important (Seirup, Tirotta, & Blue, 2016).

In 2017, in the Illinois community college system, there were 113,584 students enrolled in one or more online courses, or one in five college students (ICCB, 2019). In 2018, Illinois community colleges offered 21,508 online courses, which accounted for 16.2% of all courses. In 2017, Illinois community colleges offered 20,795 online courses, which accounted for 15% of all courses. Despite the growth in available online education, 38% of community college administrators reported that student demand for online course offerings exceeded what is currently available (Lokken, 2015). Trends indicated that even though online education is growing in popularity, only 29.1% of academic leaders reported that faculty valued online learning (Luongo, 2018).

As online learning continues to alter the educational landscape, new issues confront instructors and students. Preparing faculty to teach online is an important component for student success in online programs, but professional development for online instructors varies in different universities (Frass, Rucker, & Washington, 2017). Some prepare instructors by providing specific faculty development courses and programs while others inadequately prepare instructors to teach online or fail to provide training opportunities (Frass et al., 2017). In a survey of chief academic officers in 2011, 19% of all institutions reported that there was no training provided for instructors to teach online (Vaill & Testori, 2012). This study explored the possibility that some institutions may not be providing training, which could still be a relevant issue.

In contrast to traditional teaching, instructors also rarely engage in pedagogical dialogue about online instruction and online professors tend to “teach” and “develop” courses in isolation

(Capra, 2011). Online training programs cannot be molded into existing face-to-face training programs that were built for traditional programs and on-campus students (Levy, 2003) and strategies used to prepare instructors to teach online are different from strategies used for teaching face-to-face (Frass et al., 2017). Even though colleges may be required to provide professional development for faculty through regional accreditation commission requirements recognized by the Department of Education such as the Higher Learning Commission, Middle States Commission on Higher , or Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the specificity of what is entailed in those training programs is not uniform (USDE, 2019).

With this tremendous enrollment growth, quick institutional adoption of online education, and increased pressures on faculty and staff to create and teach new courses in an online format, questions about how community college faculty are being trained to teach online courses remain. Best practices found in literature of full-time online teaching preparation were compared to how online full-time faculty are trained within the Illinois community college system. This study aims to provide an accurate profile and analysis of existing professional development practices. A survey was distributed to distance professionals in Illinois community colleges to understand the practices in place.

Statement of Problem

The Illinois Community Colleges Online (ILCCO) is a membership organization available to all Illinois community college districts for the purpose of promoting quality online learning and providing additional online learning opportunities for students through course sharing (ILCCO, 2019). A majority of the community colleges participate in this group and meet regularly to discuss online learning practices. The ILCCO group performed an informal survey of distance learning professionals who are members of the group and representatives of

the member colleges to collect information about the types of professional development and types of training implemented across the community college system. It became apparent after reading the survey responses that online instructor training programs vary greatly from college to college in the Illinois community college system (ILCCO, 2017).

Even though best practices in online instruction training have been identified in some studies, only moderate state guidance has been established as to what these professional development standards should be in Illinois. Because there is little standardization, it then becomes important to determine what type of training faculty are receiving to teach online courses so that some type of uniform training quality standards can be created. Examples of possible models might include the “Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education” provided by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC, 2009), but even these guidelines are not prescriptive in detailing required elements for professional development programs.

Teaching online requires different skills and competencies than teaching in traditional environments (Adnan, Kalelioglu, & Gulbahar, 2017). Few studies have been conducted over the last fifteen years that discuss what types of training instructors should receive. In a 2019 textbook on creating significant teaching and learning experiences online for faculty development, it adds that professional development should include information about course management, instruction, instructional design, research collaboration, coordination and interaction (Gulbahar & Adnan, 2019). These factors and quality of training for online instructors have a significant impact on many student factors such as completion, retention, and learning (Yang & Cornelious, 2005).

Despite increasing enrollment percentages over the last decade, online courses continue to show receding student retention and high attrition rates in fully online programs compared

with traditional classes (Bawa, 2016). Technology-savvy instructors familiar with the internet may have severe limitations in understanding how technology supports learning (Gulbahar & Adnan, 2019). This lack of understanding creates a need for institutional guidance or training (Bawa, 2016). The value of professional development also intensifies at the college level because most faculty have more knowledge about their academic discipline than pedagogical or andragogical approaches (Elliot et al., 2015). This evaluation study investigates existing training practices occurring in Illinois community college faculty training programs. An evaluative survey was distributed to collect information to provide an accurate depiction and inventory of current faculty training practices in community college system across the state. This study is guided by the overarching research question: *What practices are in place for online instructor training in Illinois community colleges?*

Literature Review

As of the fall of 2016, 31.6% of all higher education enrollments were in at least one distance education course (Seaman, Allen, & Seaman, 2018). Institutions that are fully engaged with support strategies for online courses are better prepared to scale up more online offerings and program growth (Allen & Seaman, 2007). This growth, however, leads to increased online faculty responsibilities to provide student supports and quality instruction. Many areas of contention emerge when the quality of online instruction training is discussed. Some early criticisms were that online instructors are not as well trained as traditional instructors, that there are no formalized quality structures in place, and that there is little oversight for instructional quality (Yang & Cornelious, 2005). Other critics opposed to online instruction questioned the academic standards of online courses because students do not attend college in a physical location or have face-to-face interactions with instructors (Yang & Cornelious, 2005).

The difference between online and face-to-face instruction has made specific support for online instructors necessary. Support should emphasize both technological and pedagogical skill development and ongoing support mechanisms, such as instructional design help, mentoring, and continued training (Roman, Kelsey, & Lin, 2010). Online instructors should develop technology skills and learn about pedagogy and andragogy to become effective online instructors (Ching, Hsu, & Rice, 2015; Lane, 2013). Previous research noted that the quality of online instruction training programs, which includes instructor orientation, learning about course delivery skills and how to utilize and embrace technology in instruction, should be included in faculty training programs (Getzlaf et al., 2009). These studies indicated that online instructors with higher student satisfaction rates were often trained to design courses effectively, had access to instructional design or technical support, and provided proper feedback through assessment and communication (Getzlaf et al., 2009). However, much more research is needed to determine the effectiveness of professional development on how it affects practice and student outcomes (Dede et al., 2009). Prior research conducted within these areas is discussed in more detail below..

Standards of Online Program Quality

One concern for institutions was to investigate what “quality” is in online instruction and how rigorous academic standards in online instruction can be maintained (Puzziferro & Shelton, 2009). In *Quality on the Line* (Institute for Higher Education Policy [IHEP], 2000), 24 benchmarks were established from literature on what should be included within an online training program. Benchmarks that were listed as essential for the quality of online instruction were institutional support, course development help, teaching and learning standards, faculty support, student support strategies and evaluation and assessment benchmarks.

Diehl (2016) summarized competencies for online teaching, including institutional context, technology, instructional design, pedagogy, assessment, social presence, and classroom discipline skills. Diehl's study reviewed 120 journal articles from 1995 – 2015 that described information regarding rubrics, guidelines and survey examples to collect information on online training quality indicators (Diehl, 2016). Herman (2012) conducted a study of 25 different faculty development programs and evaluated institutional support. Consistent with Lackey's (2011) and Diehl's (2016) work, faculty perceived a lack of institutional support for online instruction (Herman, 2012). Additionally, Herman (2012) pointed out that there was insufficient data to explore what professional development was offered to faculty in higher education. The review of successful or preferred types of training in different educational settings was useful to identify inventory items for the survey tool and plausible recommendations for different institutional contexts. Herman's (2012) review of literature covered studies of colleges and universities in all sectors and provided an in-depth analysis of program delivery types, such as workshops and formal and informal mentoring. In some institutions, new online faculty receive little to no training and the training that they do receive is often based on traditional classroom pedagogical tools (Ray, 2009). However, professional development opportunities for online faculty are sometimes limited depending on the institution (Lane, 2013).

Several faculty training models described the components of online instructional training: formal, informal, voluntary, and required (Kane, Shaw, Pang, Salley, & Snider, 2016). Frydenberg (2002) listed several training topics that are repeatedly described in literature reviews of what instructors should know when teaching online. These topics include being able to use technology in instruction, being able to provide student support, understanding instructional design and course development standards, and having access to instructional support and

assessment and evaluation methods (Frydenberg, 2002). Research has shown that providing professional development to faculty on how to use appropriate technology eases new-instructor fears (Luongo, 2018). Professional development programs are also essential in helping veteran teachers connect existing content with pedagogy and technology (Luongo, 2018). Effective higher education distance learning professional development experiences provide participants with opportunities for continuous participation and the application of knowledge (Luongo, 2018).

To further support the need for providing educators with instructional design and course development training, Garrett and Legon (2019) conducted the Changing Landscape of Online Education (CHLOE) survey and revealed that incorporating instructional design within a course can significantly affect the quality of online learning. In the survey, chief operating officers from colleges that required instructional design in their course design reported better online student performance compared to traditional students (Garrett & Legon, 2019). The survey also indicated that fewer than half the institutions represented in the survey required instructional design help, with a high proportion of community colleges perceiving it as an unaffordable option (Garrett & Legon, 2019). Levy (2003) considered staff training and support to be a key support to develop an online program. Most instructors are subject to low-quality training programs that lack ongoing support or mentoring (Dede et al., 2009).

A great deal of literature related to online faculty training described the format or way that training is delivered, which varies greatly from institution to institution (Elliot, Rhoades, Jackson, & Mandernach 2015). In the Distance Education Report, Ragan (2017) added that the communication of instructor expectations was a core feature of creating a quality training program. Some elements may include delivering training via a learning management system or

using online forums to improve practice and learning about instructional design principles (Elliot et al., 2015). Each organization or institution evaluates how the communication element could be woven into the structure of training programs. Concerns for providing quality online instructor training included allowing enough time to develop and maintain course material, receiving technical and administrative support, and technical training (Kang, 2012). In the same survey, 65% of online instructors indicated that technical support was a major concern. It was also determined that most training programs were voluntary and contained little pedagogical content. In a 2002 survey, 75% of faculty reported that they had received over 30 hours or more of technology-based training but only one third received training on pedagogy (Puzziferro & Shelton, 2009).

Adoption and Use of Technology

The ability to adapt from teaching as a traditional lecturer to becoming a facilitator of sharing information forces online instructors to change their roles and responsibilities (Yang & Cornelious, 2005). Using technology to support teaching and learning changes the instructor's role to use technology more effectively, adapt pedagogical knowledge into a virtual environment, and use digital content and communication differently (Adnan, Kalelioglu, & Gulbahar, 2017). Recent literature on the effectiveness of online instruction concluded that about 92% of all distance and online education studies find that distance and online education is at least as effective as, if not better than, traditional education (Nguyen, 2015).

Effective online course delivery requires more than simply repurposing or repackaging traditional course content (Fish & Wickersha, 2009). For instructors teaching at least one online class in the fall of 2008 at University of North Carolina, 50% of participants acknowledged that there was some type of training for online instructors (Ray, 2009). Only 27% of institutions in

the same study required faculty training prior to teaching an online course. Another study indicated that 45% of existing training focused on using a learning management system, with little peer evaluation provided for online instructors (Magda, 2019). In a study on faculty perception of online learning at Pennsylvania State University's World Campus, all suggestions regarding moving from traditional to online course delivery involved providing more faculty preparation, such as participating as a student beforehand, having a mentor, learning about technology, and having design support (Ray, 2009).

Faculty adoption of technology takes time and requires the development of new skillsets (Zhen et al., 2008). In a study to determine priority training areas for online instructors, Ching, Hsu, and Rice (2015) asked instructors about their technology experiences prior to teaching. Participants reported having more experiences with overall technology than online-teaching-specific technologies that involved pedagogy, online assessment and course design. Knowledge about accessibility requirements are also something which is required by the law that instructors or instructional designers should be knowledgeable about (Adelstein & Barbour, 2016). Adelstein and Barbour (2016) also suggested that online instructors should be able to add comments, activities and assessments within the learning management system that the college uses and that instructors should explore a learning management system before developing a course. Ray (2009) conducted a literature review of online course development and found that research does not scrutinize the difficulty of moving online courses from traditional delivery to the online format (Ray, 2009). Instructors in the Ray project also did not believe that they received adequate training in pedagogy or in using technology.

Experts agreed that technology adoption by an institution and faculty is critical for the success of online instruction (Zhen et al., 2008). In the future, institutions will have to be willing

to invest in technical support and equipment to provide ongoing professional development and training opportunities that expose instructors to current technologies which is necessary for successful online programs (Fish & Wickersha, 2009). Organizations such as Quality Matters, a leading quality assurance organization for online learning; the International Board of Standards for Training; Performance and Instruction; and the Online Learning Consortium have attempted to provide best practices and research information to increase student engagement, learning, and overall satisfaction in online courses. These organizations are highly regarded for quality standards that have been widely adopted. However, there is still little agreement on what technology standards should be adopted within individual institutions and how certain types or levels of technology will impact online program quality or program and instructor success.

Communication and Feedback Skills as Key Competencies

To be successful online instructors, faculty need to have skills to determine student learning preferences, be able to integrate technology tools, apply appropriate instructional techniques, and design courses (Swan, 2003). Teaching courses online requires faculty to be able to communicate differently with students by establishing relationships (Fish & Wickersha, 2009). Attitudes towards technology, teaching style and knowledge of technology are also very influential in determining student learning outcomes (Yang & Cornelious, 2005). Courses that are designed effectively create learning environments that engage students in higher levels of thinking, promote student involvement, and motivate learners (Fish & Wickersha, 2009).

Meyer and Murrell (2014) conducted a study of training activities commonly used to train faculty. The most common delivery methods were workshops, one-on-one trainings, short sessions less than two hours in length, how to create online courses, and one-time trainings. Online courses to learn about online delivery were the least popular (Meyer & Murrell, 2014).

Structured training programs are the most recommended form of training support that universities can offer instructors to improve online instructional quality since instructors cannot be expected to know how to develop and deliver online courses automatically (Adnan et al., 2017).

Quality training for instructors affects many elements of student success. Several communication practices were listed that should be included in online instruction: contact between faculty and students, cooperation among students, active learning techniques, prompt feedback, communication, and exploration of diverse learning styles (Swan, 2003). Early research on strategies for online course design found that structure, communication and course design heavily influenced student learning (Swan, 2003). In 2017, Adnan, Kalelioglu and Gulbahar still reported that competencies including communication and interaction skills are necessary to plan instructional design, improve relationships with students and to instruct and facilitate deep learning. There were also significant correlations between student learning and instructor feedback, interaction among peers, and instructor guidance through feedback. Giving effective, timely, and frequent online feedback is an important skill for online instructors because it guides the student's learning development. Teacher skills for giving online feedback are different than giving feedback in face-to-face courses because non-verbal communications (tone of voice, facial expressions) are removed in written online feedback (Liebold & Schwarz, 2015).

Instructor feedback including assessment is a crucial element for student success (Getzlaf et al., 2009). The assessment of learning effectiveness by the instructor in online courses is critical for students to understand their mistakes, clarify ideas and participate in the learning community. This study also mentioned that although feedback is important in face-to-face and online courses, some types of informal feedback such as body language, conversations and facial

expressions are difficult to implement (Getzlaf et al., 2009). Additionally, feedback in online courses rarely takes place in real time, which may affect student performance. This delay also makes effective feedback and communication from the instructor extremely important for student success (Getzlaf et al., 2009). Junk, Deringer, and Junk (2007) found that in order to keep learners engaged in a typical 3-4 credit online course, an instructor may spend 18-19 hours per week on activities. Other factors that affect these variables included how many credits the instructor is teaching, how many students are in the course, time spent cultivating relationships with the students through online discussions and feedback (Junk et al., 2007). It is encouraged for instructors to learn pedagogical approaches which will help them diversify learning methods and encourage critical thinking, collaborative learning and problem-based learning skills for students (Yang & Cornelious, 2005).

Professional Development on Online Instruction

Training methods for online instructors have changed very little since the early 2000s. Relevant literature suggested that ways to improve instructional and technical training have also been neglected (Lackey, 2011). Lackey (2011) performed a qualitative analysis of current and effective training strategies for faculty in order to teach online and revealed that faculty prefer collaboration and need more assistance in technical and pedagogical skills. The study suggested that administrators did not understand the level of time or resources required to adequately teach online, which affected the levels of support allocated to train faculty to teach online (Lackey, 2011). Zhen, Garthwait, and Pratt (2008) also surveyed faculty members to identify barriers that prohibited them from teaching successfully online, and responses similar to Lackey's (2011) were found. Faculty again listed major concerns as to why online instruction was difficult such as lack of technological and institutional support, lack of preparation time to develop online

courses, lack of standards in online courses, and lack of training to teach online (Zhen et al., 2008). Teachers need time for in-service training, to revise existing curricula and plans, and to learn and evaluate new teaching practices (Luongo, 2018).

With the increase in distance learning, colleges are being forced to shift pedagogical and technological approaches through adapted and modified instruction (Luongo, 2018). This shift will change learning environments and create new methods of educational delivery (Luongo, 2018). Without proper training on new practices, online instructors may not deliver quality instruction to students, and without this study, we have little collective knowledge of what if any, professional development training is occurring. It is impossible to identify what areas should be addressed without some type of benchmark data.

Research Design

A quantitative research project involves the investigation of observable and measurable variables. It is usually used to test theories, predict outcomes, and determine relationships between and among variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative methods that use surveys are best for measuring, ranking, categorizing, identifying patterns and making generalizations (Ponto, 2015). Quantitative approaches are also used to find the association between key factors, outcomes, and causality (Pluye & Hong, 2014). This study collected and compared information about suggested and existing practices in online instructor training for faculty within the 48 Illinois community colleges. This approach has allowed me to explore and analyze specific variables and any significant relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this project, survey question topics were based on elements from literature findings that should be included in online instructor training. A descriptive evaluation of results established an inventory of existing practices that can be used for future research and possible studies.

Sample and Participants

Respondents were selected based on a predetermined list of distance and online learning professionals responsible for online faculty training in each of the 48 Illinois community colleges. Specifically, based on directories at each college, the participants were identified by their job function and titles, including instructor, administrator or instructional designer. This specific group acts as the representative of each college who can describe activities and practices related to the research question. These individuals are the most knowledgeable about online programs and often responsible for designing and developing online faculty training in institutions.

Only one online administrator from each of the 48 community colleges was invited to complete a survey about their institutional training practices to avoid duplication. The invitation to participate in the survey was sent to the potential participants via email (Appendix A). Because web-based survey returns are 11% lower than other survey modes, several approaches were incorporated to improve survey response, such as targeting a population that has access to the internet and an interest in the survey, personalizing requests for participation, and including a deadline with completion reminders (Salah & Bista, 2017). Since the object of this study was to obtain a representation of the Illinois community college system, a minimum return rate of at least 51% was expected.

Survey Instrument

Quantitative survey research seeks to describe and explore information about groups. By asking targeted questions about individuals, information describing characteristics of a group emerge quickly by using a survey (Ponto, 2015). After reviewing and comparing literature suggestions (Kane, et., al. 2016; Online learning Consortium, 2016; Puzziferro & Shelton, 2009;

Ragan, 2017; Salah & Bista, 2017; Wolf, 2006), a survey for the distance learning professionals in each college was created for this project that includes three sections: 1) orientation, 2) professional training content, and 3) professional development opportunities and support options (Frydenberg, 2002; Shea, 2007; Swan, 2003; Yang & Cornelious, 2005).

Specifically, in 2007, Shea distributed a survey using the Likert scale to 36 colleges examining factors that motivate participation in distance education. Elements of the Shea survey describing professional development content were used as a model for the survey questions designed for this project. The survey consisted of 49 questions broken up into four sections: demographics (4), orientation (13), training content (15), and professional development (17). The survey was designed with many closed-ended and semi-closed-ended questions because it was not meant to collect elaborations on concepts or initiate discussions with practitioners. The goal of this survey was to collect very specific and precise information about the current practices occurring in the Illinois college system and to establish baselines for future research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). No open-ended questions were used at this time to keep responses uniform and standardized across all 48 colleges. A copy of the instrument can be found in Appendix B.

Data Collection

Over the last three decades, online surveys have become a predominant method of collecting information from participants because of the low cost and quick response rates (Saleh & Bista, 2017). Even though the use of online-based surveys has increased, a low response rate has been a concern for researchers. First, an email to each distance learning professional was sent explaining the project and asking for help assessing current practice. Second, an online survey hosted online through Qualtrics was then be emailed to each representative. Finally, a follow-up reminder email was sent due to a lower than expected response rate within the first

two weeks. Respondents answered questions based on what practices were present in their own college.

A single cross-sectional survey can be utilized to collect data at one point in time. This method has the advantage of measuring attitudes and practices (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Survey responses were collected through Qualtrics and downloaded into Excel. Participants were allowed to use some skip logic for certain questions. For example, if the college did not have a formal orientation process in place, questions about orientation process specifics were bypassed. There were similar skips in place for programs with no set benchmarks for course design and no professional development opportunities. Only the skips for benchmarks were utilized by respondents, which is discussed further in subsequent sections. Responses were grouped according to these specific categories for analysis on trends or anomalies to describe the current state of practice in the system. By disaggregating the data, an analysis of responses was performed to identify whether relationships between those factors and practice existed.

Data Analysis

This study attempted to identify baseline responses to what types of training for online instructors is occurring in the Illinois community college system. Based on survey responses, descriptive evaluations have been made about the nature and quality of existing training practices. Several categories of questions were explored. Survey section areas included orientation, training content, instructional strategies, and professional development and support strategies. The questions within this survey were structured to be Likert scale-type questions with ordinal variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The mean on a Likert scale cannot be found because the distance between responses is unknown, so only percentages of responses were used.

The distance between each response variable is constant with no difference between “yes, “no” or other response options (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Calculations were performed to determine the response percentages for certain questions in these areas by dividing the number of responses into the total number of colleges (n = 48). By analyzing response percentages for each question, interesting anomalies emerge that could lead to further exploration of targeted areas and areas for improvement. These response rates also identify current strengths of practice. Areas for improvement include the need for more pedagogical training and investigation of program standards while program strengths include strong existing technology training and strong recognition for orientation programs by colleges.

Validity

Content validity is a nonstatistical type of validity that examines survey content to determine if the behavior you are trying to measure is represented (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997). It becomes important to include several validity checks to ensure that the survey adequately collects relevant information and that the data analysis of results is correctly interpreted. The study was approved by the institution’s review board processes, which served as a validation for research processes (Appendix C). Data was collected in a short timeframe (approximately one month) and only collected at one time, which lessened discrepancies in data quality (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Survey responses should be greater than 24 responses which is half of the 48 community colleges. The survey was tested by five individuals to ensure that questions made sense and that skip logic worked correctly.

Threats to external validity are problems that may interfere with making correct assumptions about sample data so the results can be held true for other cases (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Several factors may affect survey responses. One may be if the person

responsible for survey completion was not available to complete the survey. This may have skewed responses. The ability to replicate the study over time is also a factor. If the study were repeated, the same colleges should be surveyed, making the study replicable and longitudinal. Individuals who filled out the survey may vary but the positions that they hold at the institution would be the same. This becomes important if any type of trending studies to be conducted and repeated.

Limitations

Limitations are the identification of potential weaknesses or problem areas within a research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). There are several limitations related to this study. Overall survey results are dependent on the response rate. The survey was designed to collect this information to serve as a benchmark or baseline for future studies. If it were not completed or filled out by a large percentage of the 48 community colleges in the state, it may not be an appropriate representation of how online instructional training is being conducted and provided. A second limitation was that the respondent on each survey may have different responsibilities at the college even though they are the person listed as the training representative at the college. This person may also have a different perspective and background related to online training which could skew answers to questions. A third limitation may be in the question format within the survey. Many of the questions were yes or no, which limits the ability to explain and define. This does provide an opportunity to collect additional information. However, the purpose of this data collection is primarily to establish what practices are occurring. The study does not seek to understand varied conditions or personal interpretations of practice by practitioners.

Positionality Statement

Our own identities affect our perceptions and expectations of others (Burke, 2014). Our own biases shape and form the research process. By recognizing our own internal biases, it helps make sense of survey results. I currently work at the Illinois Community College Board, which provides oversight and knowledge about the system. I am not a practitioner at one of the individual colleges, which removes some bias. Research was conducted on this subject because I believe through experience, informal surveys and conversation that there is not a uniform standard of training practice within the Illinois community college system. It is also known that there is not a required standard or policy for distance education professional development programs for community colleges in Illinois. Throughout this study, current practice will be discussed regarding the Illinois community college system using comparisons to best practices to make recommendations for quality.

Significance

It is estimated that between one third to one quarter of all faculty are engaged in some type of distance education instruction (Luongo, 2018). In Illinois community colleges in 2017, 20,795 online courses were offered, which accounted for 15% of all community college courses (ICCB, 2019). In the ten years from 2004 to 2014, there was a 60% increase in online enrollments across the country (NCES, 2014). These statistics show that as the overall college enrollment in online programs continues to increase, the review of course delivery and quality becomes important for colleges to consider (Online Learning Consortium, 2016). However, there have been few studies conducted that investigate the training practices needed to help college instructors teach online or that have described large-scale overviews of an institution or system.

Diehl (2016) reviewed all published articles on instructor teaching competencies by year. In 2016, there had been only 196 articles published on the topic since 1993 (Diehl, 2016). Most of these studies had been conducted on a small scale, in individual departments, in one academic discipline or in one college area. The overall lack of consistently conducted scholarly research in this area makes any attempt to identify trends or practices difficult regarding the improvement of training processes across a system (Wolf, 2006). Many current studies still cite studies from ten to fifteen years ago because little comprehensive research has been conducted that is solely about online professional development for instructors. The gaps in research reinforce inconsistencies in faculty online training within higher education and how urgently adopting some type of industry standards or practices is needed. Information from this project serves as a benchmark for further research, contributes to the existing body of research on online instructor training, and provides a template for other college systems to analyze their own internal training practices. The results of this study also provide an overview of training practices in the Illinois community college system which have never been collected and serves as one of the first comprehensive overviews of a large community college system. The study has been able to identify successes as well as discrepancies or anomalies that can be used to improve quality and standardize training practices and provide data that will encourage the Illinois system to consider adopting uniform quality standards for training practices in online instruction.

CHAPTER II

AN ANALYSIS OF ONLINE FACULTY TRAINING PRACTICES IN THE ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Introduction

Distance learning in higher education continues to grow as a learning option for students and colleges. From 2004 to 2014, higher education showed a 60% increase in online enrollment, with 1.9 million students enrolled nationally in online courses at public two-year institutions (NCES, 2014). For the 14th straight year, as of the fall of 2016, there was an increase in the number of students taking at least one online course and 31.6% of all higher education enrollments were in distance courses (Seaman, Allen & Seaman, 2018). In the state of Illinois, public two-year institutions enrolled 32.9% of all distance education courses (Illinois Community College Board [ICCB], 2019). In 2017, in the Illinois community college system, there were 113,584 students enrolled in one or more online courses, or one in five college students (ICCB, 2019). In 2018, Illinois community colleges offered 21,508 online courses, which accounted for 16.2% of all courses.

These statistics show that as the overall college enrollment in online programs continues to increase, the review of course delivery and quality becomes important for colleges to consider (Online Learning Consortium, 2016). Despite the growth in available online education, 38% of community college administrators reported that student demand for online course offerings exceeded what is currently available (Lokken, 2015). Trends indicated that even though online education is growing in popularity, only 29.1% of academic leaders reported that faculty valued online learning (Luongo, 2018). It is estimated that between one third to one quarter of all faculty are engaged in some type of distance education instruction (Luongo, 2018). In the ten years from 2004 to 2014, there was a 60% increase in online enrollments across the country

(NCES, 2014). However, there have been a few studies conducted that investigate the training practices needed to help college instructors teach online or that have described large-scale overviews of an institution or system.

As online learning continues to alter the educational landscape, new issues confront instructors and students. Preparing faculty to teach online is an important component for student success in online programs, but professional development for online instructors varies in different universities (Frass, Rucker & Washington, 2017). Some prepare instructors by providing specific faculty development courses and programs while others inadequately prepare instructors to teach online or fail to provide training opportunities (Frass et al., 2017). A survey, based on best practices found in literature, was distributed to distance professionals in Illinois community colleges to understand existing training practices that are in place. The study aims to provide an accurate profile and analysis of existing professional development practices.

The Current Study

Even though best practices in online instruction training have been identified in some studies, only moderate state guidance has been established as to what these professional development standards should be in Illinois. Because there is little standardization, it then becomes important to determine what type of training faculty are receiving to teach online courses so that some type of uniform training quality standards can be created. Diehl (2016) reviewed all published articles on instructor teaching competencies by year. In 2016, there had been only 196 articles published on the topic since 1993 (Diehl, 2016). Most of these studies had been conducted on a small scale, in individual departments, in one academic discipline or in one college area. The overall lack of consistently conducted scholarly research in this area makes any attempt to identify trends or practices difficult regarding the improvement of training

processes across a system (Wolf, 2006). Many current studies still cite studies from ten to fifteen years ago because little comprehensive research has been conducted that is solely about online professional development for instructors. The gaps in research reinforce inconsistencies in faculty online training within higher education and how urgently adopting some type of industry standards or practices is needed.

Teaching online requires different skills and competencies than teaching in traditional environments (Adnan, Kalelioglu, & Gulbahar, 2017). In a 2019 textbook on creating significant teaching and learning experiences online for faculty development, it adds that professional development should include information about course management, instruction, instructional design, research collaboration, coordination and interaction (Gulbahar & Adnan, 2019). These factors and quality of training for online instructors have a significant impact on many student factors such as completion, retention, and learning (Yang & Cornelious, 2005). Technology savvy instructors familiar with the internet may have severe limitations in understanding how technology supports learning (Gulbahar & Adnan, 2019), which creates a need for institutional guidance or training (Bawa, 2016).

This evaluation study investigates existing training practices occurring in Illinois community college faculty training programs. An evaluative survey was distributed to collect information to provide an accurate depiction and inventory of current faculty training practices in the community college system across the state. Practices that are in place for online instructor training in Illinois community colleges were explored. The study aims to identify successes as well as discrepancies that can be used to improve quality, standardize training practices, develop improvement plans, and provide data that will encourage the Illinois system to consider adopting uniform quality standards for training practices in online instruction. Information from this

project serves as a benchmark for further research, contributes to the existing body of research on online instructor training, and provides a template for other college systems to analyze their own internal training practices. This study also provides an overview of training practices in the Illinois community college system which have not been systematically collected and serves as one of the first comprehensive overviews of a large community college system.

Literature Review

As of the fall of 2016, 31.6% of all higher education enrollments were in at least one distance education course (Seaman, Allen, & Seaman, 2018). Institutions that are fully engaged with support strategies for online courses are better prepared to scale up more online offerings and program growth (Allen & Seaman, 2007). This growth, however, leads to increased online faculty responsibilities to provide student supports and quality instruction. Many areas of contention emerge when the quality of online instruction training is discussed. Some early criticisms of online courses were that online instructors are not as trained as well as traditional instructors, that there are no formalized quality structures in place, and that there is little oversight for instructional quality (Yang & Cornelious, 2005).

The difference between online and face-to-face instruction has made specific support for online instructors necessary. Support should emphasize both technological and pedagogical skill development and ongoing support mechanisms, such as instructional design help, mentoring, and continued training (Roman, Kelsey, & Lin, 2010). Online instructors should develop technology skills and learn about pedagogy and andragogy to become effective online instructors (Ching, Hsu, & Rice, 2015; Lane, 2013). Previous research noted that the quality of online instruction training programs, which includes instructor orientation, learning about course delivery skills, and how to utilize and embrace technology in instruction, should be included in faculty training

programs (Getzlaf et al., 2009). These studies indicated that online instructors with higher student satisfaction rates were often trained to design courses effectively, had access to instructional design or technical support, and provided proper feedback through assessment and communication (Getzlaf et al., 2009). However, much more research is needed to determine the effectiveness of professional development on how it affects practice and student outcomes (Dede et al., 2009). Prior research conducted in these areas are discussed in more detail below.

Online Program Standards

One concern for institutions was to investigate what “quality” is in online instruction and how rigorous academic standards in online instruction can be maintained (Puzziferro & Shelton, 2009). In *Quality on the Line* (Institute for Higher Education Policy [IHEP], 2000), 24 benchmarks were established from literature on what should be included within an online training program. Benchmarks that were listed as essential for the quality of online instruction were institutional support, course development help, teaching and learning standards, faculty support, student support strategies and evaluation and assessment benchmarks.

In some institutions, new online faculty receive little to no training and the training that they do receive is often based on traditional classroom pedagogical tools (Ray, 2009). Diehl (2016) summarized competencies for online teaching, including institutional context, technology, instructional design, pedagogy, assessment, social presence, and classroom discipline skills. Diehl’s study reviewed 120 journal articles from 1995 – 2015 that described information regarding rubrics, guidelines and survey examples to collect information on online training quality indicators (Diehl, 2016). Herman (2012) conducted a study of 25 different faculty development programs and evaluated institutional support. Consistent with Lackey’s (2011) and Diehl’s (2016) work, faculty perceived a lack of institutional support for online instruction

(Herman, 2012). Additionally, Herman (2012) pointed out that there was insufficient data to explore what professional development was offered to faculty in higher education.

Adoption and Use of Technology

Effective online course delivery requires more than simply repurposing or repackaging traditional course content (Fish & Wickersha, 2009), and the ability to adapt from teaching as a traditional lecturer to becoming a facilitator of sharing information forces online instructors to change their roles and responsibilities (Yang & Cornelious, 2005). Using technology to support teaching and learning changes the instructor's role to use technology more effectively, adapt pedagogical knowledge into a virtual environment, and use digital content and communication differently (Adnan et al., 2017). Support should emphasize both technological and pedagogical skill development and ongoing support mechanisms, such as instructional design help, mentoring, and continued training (Roman, Kelsey, & Lin, 2010). Online instructors should develop technology skills and learn about pedagogy and andragogy to become effective online instructors (Ching, Hsu & Rice, 2015; Lane, 2013).

Faculty concerns for providing quality online instructor training often include allowing enough time to develop and maintain course material, receiving technical and administrative support, and receiving technical training. In Kang's (2012) study, 65% of online instructors indicated that technical support was a major concern. It was also determined that most training programs were voluntary and contained little pedagogical content. In a separate 2002 survey of faculty, 75% of faculty reported that they had received over 30 hours or more of technology-based training but only one third received training on pedagogy (Puzziferro & Shelton, 2009). To further support the need for providing educators with instructional design and course development training, the Changing Landscape of Online Education (CHLOE) survey conducted

by Garrett and Legon (2019) revealed that incorporating instructional design within a course can significantly affect the quality of online learning. Chief operating officers from colleges that required instructional design in their course design reported better online student performance compared to traditional students (Garrett & Legon, 2019). The survey indicated that fewer than half the institutions in the survey required instructional design help, with a high proportion of community colleges perceiving it as an unaffordable option (Garrett & Legon, 2019).

Communication and Feedback Skills

Quality training for instructors also affects many elements of student success. Several communication practices have been identified that should be included in online instruction: contact between faculty and students, cooperation among students, active learning techniques, prompt feedback, communication, and exploration of diverse learning styles (Swan, 2003). Early research on strategies for online course design found that structure, communication, and course design heavily influenced student learning (Swan, 2003). In 2017, Adnan, Kalelioglu, and Gulbahar also reported that competencies including communication and interaction skills are necessary to plan instructional design, improve relationships with students, and instruct and facilitate deep learning. There were also significant correlations between student learning and instructor feedback, interaction among peers and instructor guidance through feedback. To be a successful online instructor, faculty need to have skills to determine student learning preferences, be able to integrate technology tools, apply appropriate instructional techniques, and design courses (Swan, 2003). The assessment of learning effectiveness by the instructor in online courses is critical for students to understand their mistakes, clarify ideas and participate in the learning community. This study also mentioned that although feedback is important in face-to-face and online courses, some types of informal feedback such as body language, conversations

and facial expressions are difficult to implement (Getzlaf et al., 2009). Additionally, feedback in online courses rarely takes place in real time, which may affect student performance, making effective feedback and communication from the instructor extremely important for student success (Getzlaf et al., 2009).

Instructional Methods and Professional Development

Training methods for online instructors have changed very little since the early 2000s. Relevant literature suggested that ways to improve instructional and technical training have also been neglected (Lackey, 2011). Lackey (2011) performed a qualitative analysis of current and effective training strategies for faculty in order to teach online and revealed that faculty prefer collaboration and need more assistance in technical and pedagogical skills. The study suggested that administrators did not understand the level of time or resources required to adequately teach online, which affected the levels of support allocated to train faculty to teach online (Lackey, 2011). Zhen, Garthwait, and Pratt (2008) surveyed faculty members to identify barriers that prohibited instructors from teaching successfully online and listed major concerns as a lack of technological and institutional support, lack of preparation time to develop online courses, lack of standards in online courses, and lack of training to teach online (Zhen et al., 2008). Meyer and Murrell (2014) conducted a study of commonly used training activities to train faculty and identified workshops, one-on-one trainings, short sessions less than two hours in length, how to create online courses, and one-time trainings. Online courses to learn about online delivery were the least popular (Meyer & Murrell, 2014). Structured training programs are the most recommended form of training support that universities can offer instructors to improve online instructional quality since instructors cannot be expected to know how to develop and deliver online courses automatically (Adnan, Kalelioglu & Gulbahar, 2017). Much more research is

needed to determine the effectiveness of professional development on how it affects practice and student outcomes, according to a separate literature review of data-based studies (Dede et al., 2009).

Research Design

A quantitative research project involves the investigation of observable and measurable variables. It is usually used to test theories, predict outcomes, and determine relationships between and among variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative approaches are also used to find the association between key factors, outcomes, and causality (Pluye & Hong, 2014). This study collected and compared information about suggested and existing practices in online instructor training for faculty within the 48 Illinois community colleges. This approach has allowed me to explore and analyze specific variables and any significant relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this project, survey questions were constructed based on best practices for online instructor training from the literature review. A descriptive evaluation of results established an inventory of existing practices that can be used for future research and possible studies.

Sample and Participants

Respondents were selected non randomly (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A pre-determined list of online administrators at each institution was created based on directories at each college. Selection was based on job function. This representative from each of the 48 community colleges was invited to complete a survey about their institutional training practices (Appendix A). The invitation to participate in the survey was sent to the person who manages and provides online education for faculty at the college. These individuals are the most knowledgeable about online programs and often responsible for designing and developing online

faculty training in institutions. Targeting a population that has access to the internet and an interest in the survey target is critical for improved survey response (Saleh & Bista, 2017). Since the object of this study was to obtain a representation of the Illinois community college system, a minimum return rate of at least 51% was expected.

Data Collection

Online surveys have become an increasingly popular tool to collect information in academic research because of fast turn-around times and low cost (Sauermann & Roach, 2013). Quantitative methods that use surveys are best for measuring, ranking, categorizing, identifying patterns, and making generalizations (Ponto, 2015). Research has been conducted to determine adequate response rates for the tool used in this project, online-based surveys. For academic credibility, it is important to use tools that help establish norms and measurement such as surveys (Baruch, 1999). Some studies regarding the quality of surveys show that the length of an electronic survey does not affect return rates (Axhausen & Weis, 2007) and returns will be higher if the population is familiar with and has access to the internet and has an interest in the subject area (Saleh & Bista, 2017). Finally, it was also found that people are more likely to fill out a survey if it is addressed from an authority figure or governmental agency (Saleh & Bista, 2017). This last factor is only significant in that I work for the Illinois Community College Board. Results may have been higher if the work were affiliated directly with the agency. An older comparative analysis conducted by Baruch (1999) indicated that the average return rate of a study using an electronic survey in the United States averages approximately 36.1, with a standard deviation of 13.3, making the return rate of this survey project adequate according to these benchmarks, with a 49% return.

By asking targeted questions about individuals, information describing characteristics of a group emerge quickly by using a survey (Ponto, 2015). After reviewing and comparing existing literature, a survey for the distance learning professionals in each college was created for this project that includes sections on orientation, training content, professional development opportunities and support options. The survey was distributed to the distance learning professional responsible for faculty training at each college (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design aimed to measure current institutional practices in real time and required few resources.

A survey questionnaire was electronically mailed to respondents and returned to the researcher within one month (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The survey was designed with many closed-ended and semi-closed-ended questions because it was not meant to collect elaborations on concepts or initiate discussions with practitioners. The full list of survey questions is presented in Appendix B. In 2007, Shea distributed a survey using the Likert scale to 36 colleges examining factors that motivate participation in distance education. Elements of the Shea survey describing professional development content were used as a model for the survey questions designed for this project. A follow-up reminder email was sent to practitioners after two weeks, since the return rate was only 29%. After the reminder, the overall response rate increased to 46%. While it is estimated that web-based survey returns are 11% lower than other survey modes (Saleh & Bista, 2017), the response rate of 46% was acceptable for the current study.

Survey questions were centered on certain areas: orientation, instructors' computer skills, and instructional design support and having access to support services based on repeated themes in literature about best practices in online instructor training (Frydenberg, 2002; Shea, 2007; Swan, 2003; Yang & Cornelious, 2005). Questions were written to ask about and capture

information based on repeated themes, since these are practices that should be occurring when training online instructors. Respondents answered questions based on current practices present in their own college.

Over the last three decades, online surveys have become a predominant method of collecting information from participants because of the low cost and quick response rates (Saleh & Bista, 2017). Even though the use of online-based surveys has increased, a low response rate has been a concern for researchers. An online survey hosted online through Qualtrics (Qualtrics, 2019), was then emailed to each representative. Tables were created to share responses by subject area. The survey, comprised of 49 questions, was emailed to 48 participants on November 15, 2019, with a return date of on or before December 16. On December 5, there were only 14 responses or 29% participation so a reminder email was sent. By the due date of December 16, the return rate had jumped to 49% or 22 of 48 responses from colleges.

Results

Respondents were asked to fill out a basic series of demographic questions. Illustrated in Table 1, 58% of participants had worked in the online training field for 11-16 years, 26% had worked in the field for over 17 years and 65% of respondents listed their background as instructional design. Organizationally, 57% administratively reported to the Information Technology (IT) department. It was important to know the background and expertise levels of survey participants to determine if there was any correlation between responses and functional area within the college and maturity and longevity of online training programs.

TABLE 1

Demographics of Survey Participants

Item	n	Percentage
<i>Years online training has been offered at the institution</i>		
None	0	0%
1-2 years	1	5%
5-10 years	2	11%
11-16 years	11	58%
17-20+ years	5	26%
<i>Person responsible for online faculty training and development at the college's background/experience area.</i>		
IT (Information Technology)	1	5%
Instructor/Faculty	2	15%
Administrative	3	15%
Instructional Design	13	65%
<i>Years you have been responsible for online training at institution.</i>		
0-2 Years	6	30%
5-10 years	4	20%
11-16 years	10	50%
17-20+ years	0	0%
<i>Area of college your department is found organizationally.</i>		
Teaching and Learning Center	1	5%
Information Technology	12	57%
Separate Functional Area	3	14%
Other	5	24%

Orientation

Findings seem to indicate that the system has strong initial orientation processes in place for online faculty. Table 2. Ninety-five percent responded that there was a new-hire orientation that included information about policies and resources, with 80% listing a separate orientation for online faculty specifically. Eighty-eight percent, however, answered that the orientation was a one-time experience and not ongoing. Ninety-four percent of adjunct faculty also participated in orientation experiences.

TABLE 2

Survey Orientation Responses

Item	n	Percentage	
		Yes	No
<i>General new-hire orientation available that includes where to find policies, services and resources at the college</i>	22	95%	5%
<i>Formal and specific orientation available for new online instructors that includes instructional training concepts. This orientation would be different than a new-hire orientation.</i>	18	80%	20%
<i>Orientation as a one-time experience</i>	18	88%	12%
<i>Face-to-face orientation</i>	18	50%	50%
<i>Orientation in online format</i>	18	94%	6%
<i>Part-time instructor participation in instructor specific orientation</i>	18	94%	6%
<i>Mandatory instructional orientation for instructors</i>	18	75%	25%
<i>Instructional orientation offered to certain disciplines only</i>	18	0%	100%
<i>Union or contractual reason why instructor orientation is not mandatory at institution</i>	18	63%	37%
<i>Classroom management training included in orientation</i>	18	38%	62%
<i>Information about pedagogy included in orientation</i>	18	56%	44%
<i>Information about teaching strategies included in orientation</i>	18	56%	44%

An interesting contradiction is revealed by comparing two questions about mandatory orientation. One question asks if orientation is mandatory. Seventy-five percent responded that it was. Another question asked if there is a contractual reason why orientation cannot be required, with 63% answering that there was. Even though the survey was tested, the possible ambiguity of survey question wording may have caused a validity issue by confusing the participant. The survey was reviewed several times by practitioners but not practitioners in the field. The lack of

response for these specific questions may warrant further investigation to see if this is a factor affecting the quality of programming. The most critical revelations come from the questions that address elements covered within orientation programs. Sixty-two percent said that no classroom management information was covered; only 56% said they learned anything about pedagogy or teaching strategies. The responses seem to indicate two important findings. First of all, orientation may not be the right place to receive information about these topics, given that the interpretation of new-hire orientation differs by people's experiences and institutional practices. Additionally, there needs to be a clear definition of what orientation is to determine what types of information is appropriate. Survey questions about orientation were very specific about what was included in that type of program, but some colleges use orientation differently. Some people consider orientation as a mechanism to strictly deliver new-hire information whereas others consider it to be specific to a subject area.

Training Content

The section related to training content also provided many interesting insights about current practice. One hundred percent of respondents felt that technical support services were provided to faculty and that adequate training was provided to learn new systems or software. The results in Tables 3 and 4 support findings where participants reported having more experiences with technology-based training than participating in trainings that taught teaching strategies, pedagogy, or assessment (Fish & Wickersha, 2009). Results also showed that 85% felt that training was provided on student feedback and enhancing student interaction.; 75% felt that there was some form of instructor assessment other than student evaluation for online instructors.

TABLE 3

Training Content Responses

Item	n	Percentage	
		Yes	No
<i>Online technical support services provided to faculty</i>	22	100%	0%
<i>Course pacing strategies included in training</i>	22	50%	50%
<i>Information about pedagogy included in training</i>	22	50%	50%
<i>Strategies and instructional design components included in training and in course design</i>	22	50%	50%
<i>Strategies for student feedback included in training</i>	22	85%	15%
<i>Strategies for student interaction included in training</i>	22	85%	15%
<i>Strategies on assessment included in training</i>	22	50%	50%
<i>Training on course review or course assessment offered</i>	22	75%	25%
<i>Types of instructor assessments used other than student evaluation in courses</i>	22	70%	30%
<i>Minimum instructional benchmarks/standards utilized during course design process</i>	22	75%	25%
<i>Training to learn software changes or changes in delivery systems</i>	22	100%	0%

Training Content Responses

Item	n	Percentage
<i>Faculty design courses that they teach</i>		
Never	7	35%
Rarely	0	0%
Sometimes	2	10%
Frequently	2	10%
Continuously	9	45%
<i>Instructional designers available to help develop courses</i>		
Never	2	10%
Rarely	1	5%
Sometimes	0	0%
Frequently	4	20%
Continuously	13	65%
<i>Standards or benchmarks used by the college in course design and online instruction</i>	4	*N/A
<i>Instructional materials reviewed periodically to meet program standards</i>	5	*N/A
<i>Note. N/A = not available. Responses were not available because the survey question was not answered.</i>		

The next set of questions again highlighted some opportunity areas for the Illinois community college system. Only 50% listed that training included information about pedagogy, course pacing, or instructional design components for course design. This is interesting because 55% said they were frequently or continuously asked to design the courses that they teach. An additional 10% said they were sometimes required to do so. Eighty-five percent responded that instructional design help was available, but there is no way to know if the information provided is enough to help instructors who have to work on projects themselves.

Two questions in this section were not completely answered, with few responses about benchmarks and program review. The lack of provided responses points researchers toward other areas that might need to be investigated or explained in more depth. A separate question

(30) asks if the college uses standards or benchmarks in course design. Answers included course design is not based on industry standards and are independently selected by the college. Eighty-three percent, five out of six of those who answered this question were not instructional designers. These responses also revealed that there is some knowledge provided about course design standards but not necessarily overall college or program quality standards. Another question additionally asked if instructional materials are periodically reviewed to meet any type of program standard. Two colleges responded “no” in the training content section, however, 75% responded that there are minimum instructional benchmarks that are utilized during course design.

Professional Development

Colleges should create a vision and plan for online learning that respects the value and experience for both students and faculty (Levy, 2003). Ninety-five percent of survey participants felt that administration supported online instruction in colleges. This is significant because if training practices are going to be developed or modified, it is critical that administrators support the changes. Survey results indicate that professional development appears to be very strong, with 100% responding that it is provided. Tables 5 and 6 show that 95% responded that they enroll in development courses they are interested in and 85% list that there is an informal mentoring community for support. Seventy-five percent, however, answered that there is no formal mentoring program. Resources as well are shown to be provided (70%) but only 45% said these resources were found within a learning management system. Seventy-five percent felt that there is some type of review before a course goes live. This may contradict the low response rate in earlier questions about quality standards adopted by the college. Again, this may be a disconnect in the understanding of terminology. There is also the possibility that

internal college practices may not be universally adopted among all departments. Finally, throughout the survey, responses indicated that there was very little if any specific training for specialized types of instructors or departments. Professional development about instruction was more of “one-size-fits-all” approach and delivered very generically. One hundred percent responded that there was no specialized orientation and only 55% stated that there was some type of professional development for specific departments.

TABLE 5

Professional Development I

Item	n	Percentage	
		Yes	No
<i>Professional development offered more than initial training to teach</i>	21	100%	0%
<i>Formal professional development center for online faculty on campus</i>	20	22%	78%
<i>Faculty choose to attend professional development based on subjects of interest</i>	22	95%	5%
<i>Self-directed teaching resources available for faculty</i>	21	95%	5%
<i>Collaborative course design training offered</i>	22	85%	15%
<i>Peer support or online support community available</i>	20	85%	15%
<i>College Administration supports online faculty training</i>	20	95%	5%
<i>Formal mentoring program on campus</i>	21	30%	70%
<i>Development resources available on website or through course management system to learn about best practices or standards</i>	20	45%	55%
<i>Training materials available to learn about online instruction</i>	20	70%	30%
<i>Internal or formal professional development workshops available < 4 hours to learn about best practices or standards</i>	21	65%	35%
<i>Formal or informal conference opportunities available to learn about best practices or standards</i>	22	80%	20%
<i>Peer, instructional designer or committee review of finished courses occurring</i>	22	75%	25%
<i>Professional development experiences tailored or created for specific faculty or individual departments</i>	22	55%	45%
<i>Faculty assistance in transitioning traditional classroom course material to an online format is available</i>	22	85%	15%

TABLE 6

Professional Development II

Item	Percentage					
	n	Workshops	Traditional Class	Online		
<i>Format of online instructor trainings delivered</i>	20	35%	5%	60%		
	n	Continuously	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<i>Professional development offerings provided</i>	20	45%	30%	20%	0%	5%

Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this study was to offer a summary view of current training practices for online faculty in the Illinois community college system. Survey questions collected information about what practices are currently being offered to online faculty and what systems are in place at all 48 Illinois colleges. This information had previously not been collected for Illinois, not presented in a summary format, and never based on suggested best practices categories for online training.

There are several major findings from the current study, and each of them provides important implications for practitioners aiming to improve current training programs for online instruction. Demographically, the group of individuals working in the online training and instructional design space at each college had been in place for 10 or more years and fall within the Informational Technology area of the colleges. These demographic results indicate that there is a great deal of working knowledge and experience that can be drawn upon to deliver and develop programs, but respondents may have a heavy technical background.

Under the orientation section, it is evident that orientation is provided for most new hires and new online faculty, including adjuncts. It is surprising that adjuncts are represented so strongly. Adjuncts are often underrepresented due to being located off-campus in many circumstances and, because of this, limited in hours available for training. Orientations, however, are not offered as often beyond the initial experience, which can be in person or in an online format. Orientation does not have to be a one-time event and can be constructed so that training is happening in smaller intervals, giving the learner time to digest information and apply it. A process that spans multiple sessions also gives learners the opportunity to develop mentoring-based relationships over time. The most significant result from the orientation section is that a large percentage of current orientation programs do not include classroom management training, information about pedagogy, and teaching strategies. Orientation may not be the correct forum for this information, but it is worth a content review or discussion.

Under the training content section, many positives about current practice emerge. Online technical support and training about new systems are widely available. Trainings that include content about student feedback and assessment, course review and strategies for student interaction are often provided. However, programs were listed to include information about pedagogy, pacing and instructional design only half of the time. This becomes important because faculty members are being asked to create and design their own courses 65% of the time. Eighty-five percent listed that instructional design help was available as support, which is good, and most colleges also listed that resources were available. The responses raise a potential question about the quality and effectiveness of the instructional design.

A proven characteristic of quality online programs is that instructors infuse higher order thinking activities into their course design (Hannigan & Gonzalez, 2019). Students have also

indicated in studies that how much instructors are prepared to teach online equates to higher satisfaction than in delivery methods or course structure. Ensuring proper quality standards in course design provides basic pieces that students need to be successful. There is still freedom, however, for instructors to add to these pieces, create activities and provide new ways to share information that will encourage learning much like in a traditionally delivered course. Even after the survey results, it is still not evident if instructors are utilizing these resources or if they are comfortable enough with technology to utilize electronic-based sources. All of these areas warrant further exploration.

The final areas of content discussion revolve around program standards, which was not answered consistently by all participants, and professional development. It is very important to note that a clearer definition of standards would probably help, but currently, these standards are adopted and selected by individual colleges. The lack of response indicates that this is still an area where a great deal of work is needed. Finally, under the professional development section, many positives regarding practice can be highlighted. Herman (2012) noted that there was insufficient data to explore what professional development was offered to faculty in higher education. In fact, 100% of respondents stated that professional development opportunities were offered and faculty can choose development based on interests. There is also peer support through online communities, and conferences and trainings are regularly offered internally and externally. Resources were also offered to help instructors transition courses from traditional to online formats. Only 55% reported any specific department-related development opportunities, which mirrored the orientation and training content sections.

In summary, there are clear action steps that the system can take based on survey results. First, colleges should provide an orientation program for online faculty that includes information

on pedagogy, instructional design components and teaching strategies. This could be provided in a separate course and be ongoing. It does not have to be a one-time event. Colleges should also review content in existing training programs to check where and if this information is provided. Finally, a review of program development standards should be performed to share information with faculty and designers about requirements and whether these elements are being considered during the development and training process.

Future Research

This study was meant to provide baseline information about how online faculty are being trained through the state. Expectations for this project included identifying positive practices as well as anomalies or deficiencies so that improvement plans could be explored. The project has accomplished this goal and led to several areas for further exploration. The demographics section of this survey was very limited. No questions were included about gender, the college name, college size or geographical location within the state to see if this was a factor in responses. No clear patterns of response based on the current questions could be identified other than what role the participant had, such as instructional design, information technology, or administrative functionality.

Another area for future research includes the exploration of adjunct training versus full-time faculty. This survey merely asked if it was available to adjuncts, not any specific details about the training itself. Administration is also an area that might be explored further. Ninety-five percent of respondents felt that there was administrative support for online training and programs. Due to the scale of different question topics, this area was not widely investigated. Unions and contractual obligations are also an area that was not fully explored. Seventy-five percent answered that orientation was mandatory at the institution, yet 63% said that there was a

contractual reason why it could not be mandatory. The possible ambiguity of survey question wording may have caused a validity issue by confusing the participant. The lack of response of these specific questions may warrant further investigation to see if this is a factor that is affecting the quality of programming. Finally, the question of quality standards will not be solved via this one basic survey, but questions should be asked about what standards should be adopted and why there is not a standard used throughout the system.

Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, Capra (2011) noted that online instructors rarely engage in pedagogical dialogue about online instruction and online professors tend to “teach” and “develop” courses in isolation. Quality instructional training programs also include instructor orientation, learning about course delivery skills and utilizing technology in instruction (Getzlaf et al., 2009). Eighty percent stated that there was an orientation available for new online instructors that includes instructional training concepts but based on survey responses, only 50% listed receiving information about pedagogy or course design in other training opportunities. However, assessment and feedback strategies were provided that have a significant impact and correlation to student learning (Swan, 2003). Experts also suggest that technology adoption by an institution and faculty is critical for the success of online instruction (Zhen et al., 2008). One hundred percent of respondents said that institutions provided training on software and learning delivery systems. In this study, it is important to consider the significance that a large percentage of online instruction experts report organizationally through IT departments in Illinois community colleges, which may make this possible. Perhaps additional analysis should occur to determine the role of IT in course development and instructional design training. Instructional design and information technology may not be the same in concept. Research has indicated that

faculty in some studies listed lack of technological and institutional support, lack of preparation time to develop online courses, lack of standards in online courses and lack of training to teach online as concerns (Zhen et al., 2008). Per survey responses, professional development clearly is occurring, instructional design help is somewhat available (65%), and technology support is strong. However, more exploration is needed to define and explain benchmarks and standards, since questions were not fully answered by respondents.

This evaluation study investigated existing training practices occurring in the Illinois community college system. Survey questions were based on best practice areas that should be included in quality training programs, and responses yielded information about practice in the areas of orientation, training content and professional development. This information is valuable because it establishes a real-time summary of practices in a large college system, which has never really been collected. The survey contributes to the limited overall body of literature on the subject and offers potential areas for internal content review and discussion about existing practice. This project has also established baseline information that will hopefully warrant continued work in the area of online instructor training within Illinois and other states and to investigate quality in a growing part of the Illinois education system. A summary of the project's findings will be shared with the online representatives at each college in the hope that some type of internal practice review will be conducted in relation to survey content areas. Reviews may lead to revisions in orientation programs and professional development offerings for online instructors. By sharing the results of this study with instructional designers, online development staff, and through the ILCCO groups, it is also hoped that the information will start conversations about adopting universal quality standards throughout the state.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

Best practices in online instruction training have been identified in some studies but there is little standardization in the Illinois community college system. It then becomes important to determine what type of faculty training is provided so that quality standards can be investigated and established. This evaluative study has collected information about current practices in four distinct subject areas: demographics, orientation, training content and professional development. Data from the study can serve as baseline information for future studies, comparison information for individual colleges and states, and tools for administrators to evaluate internal practices. Survey results also provide information for the state to consider creating quality standards and improvement plans in specific areas. The survey, comprised of 49 questions, was emailed to 48 participants at 48 community colleges and campuses, with a return rate of 49% or 22 of 48 responses from colleges. Respondents were asked to fill out a basic series of questions, allowing for a systematic description of the current practices for online faculty training in orientation, program content and professional development at the Illinois community colleges.

Summary of Results

Online surveys have become a good way to identify patterns and make generalizations (Ponto, 2015). Research has been conducted to determine adequate response rates of the online-based survey tool used in this project. For academic credibility, it is important to use tools that help establish norms and measurement such as surveys (Baruch, 1999). Some studies regarding the quality of surveys show that the length of an electronic survey does not affect return rates (Axhausen & Weis, 2007) and returns will be higher if the population is familiar with and has access to the internet and has an interest in the subject-area (Saleh & Bista, 2017). Results may

have been higher if the work were affiliated directly with the agency. An older comparative analysis conducted by Baruch (1999) indicated that the average return rate of a study using an electronic study in the United States averages approximately 36.1, with a standard deviation of 13.3, making the return rate of this survey project adequate according to these benchmarks, with a 49% return.

By reviewing the information in Table 2, it becomes evident that the system has strong initial orientation processes in place for online faculty. Ninety-five percent responded that there was a new-hire orientation that included information about policies and resources, with 80% listing a separate orientation for online faculty specifically. Eighty percent, however, answered that the orientation was a one-time experience and not ongoing. Seventy-four percent responded that orientation was mandatory, with 63% stating that there was a contractual reason why orientation could not be required. Within orientation programs, 62% said that no classroom management information was covered and only 56% said they learned anything about pedagogy or teaching strategies.

In the training content section, 100% of respondents felt that technical support services were provided to faculty and that adequate training was provided to learn new systems or software. The results in Table 3 support findings where participants reported having more experiences with technology-based training than participating in trainings that taught teaching strategies, pedagogy, or assessment (Fish & Wickersha, 2009). Results also showed that 85% felt that training was provided on student feedback and enhancing student interaction. Seventy percent felt that there was some form of instructor assessment other than student evaluation for online instructors. Only 50% listed that training included information about pedagogy, course pacing or instructional design components for course design. This is interesting because 55%

said they were frequently or continuously asked to design the courses that they teach. An additional 10% said they were sometimes required to do so. The good news is that 85% responded that instructional design help was available. Two questions in this section were not completely answered, with a few responses about benchmarks and program review. The lack of provided responses points toward other areas that might need to be investigated or explained in more depth. A separate question asks if the college uses standards or benchmarks in course design. Answers included course design is not based on industry standards and are independently selected by the college. Another question also asked if instructional materials are periodically reviewed to meet any type of program standard. Two colleges responded “no”, in the training content section, however, 75% responded that there are minimum instructional benchmarks that are utilized during course design.

Only 28% listed that a formal professional development center is located on campus. Even with this factor, professional development appears to be very strong, with 100% responding that it is provided. Table 4 shows that 95% responded that they enroll in development courses they are interested in and 85% list that there is an informal mentoring community for support. Seventy percent, however, answered that there is no formal mentoring program. Resources as well are shown to be provided (70%), with 75% reporting some type of review before a course goes live. One hundred percent responded that there was no specialized orientation and only 55% stated that there was some type of professional development for specific departments.

Practical Implications

The purpose of this study was to offer a summary view of current training practices for online faculty in the Illinois community college system. Significant recommendations can be identified from the individual sections of the survey.

Provide Ongoing Training and Development

Faculty development programs need to be designed to meet the needs of online instructors (Vaill & Testori, 2012). Per survey results, the format for orientation delivery can be in person or in online but is often not offered beyond the initial experience. Perhaps institutions should consider enrolling faculty in group sessions of participants that allow for more reflection, interaction and an enhanced learning environment (Vaill & Testori, 2012). Another way to revamp orientation programs is to enroll instructors in a longer program that includes topics on course design, pedagogy, technology skills and teaching strategies (Roman, Kelsey & Lin, 2010). Variations may be multi-week programs; attending a course the semester before an instructor teaches; or providing online weekly tips, mentoring, and access to teaching resources beyond the initial orientation course (Meyer & Murrell, 2014). These changes are significant because orientation does not have to be a one-time event. It can be constructed so that training happens in smaller intervals, giving the learner time to digest information and apply it. A process that spans multiple sessions also gives learners the opportunity to develop mentoring-based relationships over time. Colleges should evaluate orientation structures to provide ongoing faculty support in the form of mentoring or shadowing that is reoccurring and formalized (Wolf, 2006).

Survey results indicated that informal mentoring was occurring but very little if any formalized programs were in place. Based on the literature findings, one-on-one training and

mentoring are considered primary and effective methods of informal training (Lackey, 2011). The Lackey survey also noted that faculty members most often listed that they wanted to gather with colleagues informally through online or face-to-face interaction to share ideas. Based on the success of this method of knowledge sharing, a strategic effort should also be implemented to ensure that mentoring structures are introduced into college development plans and training processes for instructors.

Ensure Content Relevancy in Professional Development

Perhaps the most significant result from the professional development section is that a large percentage of current orientation and professional development programs do not include classroom management training, information about pedagogy, or teaching strategies. It is possible that initial orientation programs are not the correct place to share some of this type of information with instructors. However, orientation programs provide the initial introduction to training practices, procedures, and learning environment for instructors. It is essential for faculty to understand the relationship between pedagogy, course content and technology in order to develop and instruct quality courses (Vaill & Testori, 2012). Content should be evaluated so that programs provide, at a minimum, the basics to ensure instructor success and quality, especially if ongoing training is not required or expected. Comprehensive faculty training programs should start with orientation and provide continued layers of additional training that helps instructors build skills over time.

Under the training content section, results indicate that online technical support and training about new systems are widely available. Trainings that include content about student feedback and assessment, course review and strategies for student interaction are provided often. However, programs again were listed to include information about pedagogy, pacing and

instructional design only half of the time. This becomes important because faculty members are being asked to create and design their own courses 65% of time. Colleges must evaluate the internal processes of how an instructor accesses and utilizes instructional design resources efficiently so that there is time for quality course design.

An additional concern is the evaluation of student learning as a result of quality instruction. This project did not delve deeply into the area of student learning outcomes but the relationship between a student and the instructor in relation to communication, and feedback is a key factor in terms of student satisfaction and persistence in online instruction (Willgeng & Johnson, 2009). An additional study on student retention indicated that the drop-out rate of online students reaches almost 50% if there is a lack of interaction from other students and the instructor (Gravel, 2012). Survey results reflected a high incidence of instructors learning about feedback and communication strategies in programs. Further exploration of how communication strategies and student success are related would be valuable in further research.

Identify Training Program Standards

The final areas of content discussion revolve around program standards, which were not answered consistently by all participants. The lack of response may indicate that respondents did not understand what the standards were or should be within their institutions. Specific quality standards that should be used across the state are also not clear. The lack of response also indicates an additional area that may need further investigation. At a minimum, institutional standards should be identified, adopted and systematically implemented at each college. Online programs flourish when a college provides financial, developmental and other resources necessary to design and support courses (Wolf, 2006). Generally, it is also suggested that the state investigate and possibly adopt some type of universal quality standard. Currently, the

Illinois Community College Board relies on only traditional course format approval criteria and Higher Learning Credential standards, which may or may not be adequate for the type of quality review necessary to ensure quality.

In summary, there are clear action steps that the system can take based on survey results. First, colleges should provide an orientation program for online faculty that includes information on pedagogy, instructional design components and teaching strategies. This could be provided in a separate course and be ongoing. It does not have to be a one-time event. Colleges should also review content in existing training programs to check where and if this information is provided. A review of program development standards should be performed to share information with faculty and designers about requirements and whether these elements are being considered during the development and training process. Finally, conversations need to occur to evaluate quality standards and decide what they should be and how they will be implemented universally in the Illinois system.

Reflection and Conclusion

The results of this study provide benchmark data about the state of current training practices in the Illinois community college system. This information is incredibly valuable because Illinois community colleges adopt and implement training practices independently. In conversations with community college representatives about practices and reflecting on the original ILCCO survey (2017) that highlighted differences in faculty training practices, this project verified that practices are definitely varied across the system. Some institutions adhere to universally accepted industry standards for training, some higher learning commission standards only, and others only internal standards for courses. Prior research studies done in this field of study suggest that these variations at a minimum affect learning and instructional quality for

students (Yang & Cornelious, 2005). This study, even though basic, has initiated some data collection so that more research can be conducted in specific areas where practice seems to be lacking or is unexplained, such as standards, orientation, mentoring opportunities, and training program content. Hopefully this information will be utilized to evaluate internal college practices and eventually help to establish uniform practices for the system.

As mentioned earlier, Capra (2011) noted that online instructors rarely engage in pedagogical dialogue about online instruction and online professors tend to “teach” and “develop” courses in isolation. Research also supports that quality instructional training programs include instructor orientation, learning about course delivery skills, and utilizing technology in instruction (Getzlaf et al., 2009). These facts support findings from the survey that instructors are not receiving information about pedagogy and instructional design consistently in recommended formats. In my current position, this information can be shared with instructional design and professional development staff throughout the system and the ILCCO group to help review content, improve quality standards, and start conversations about developing system guidelines.

This evaluation study investigated existing training practices occurring in the Illinois community college system in these areas to provide a starting point to improve online faculty training practices in the Illinois community college system. This information is valuable because it establishes a real-time summary of practices in a large college system, which has never really been collected. The survey contributes to the overall body of literature on the subject and offers potential areas for internal content review and discussion about existing practice. This project has also established baseline information that will hopefully warrant continued work in the area of online instructor training within Illinois and other states and to investigate quality in a

growing part of the Illinois education system. A summary of the project's findings will be shared with the online representatives at each college in the hope that some type of internal practice review is conducted in relation to survey content areas. It is also hoped that a conversation will start about adopting universal quality standards throughout the state.

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APPENDIX A

EMAIL REQUEST TO PARTICIPANTS

Subject: Existing Online Faculty Training Practices in Illinois Community College System Survey

Dear Distance Learning Professional,

My name is Melissa Andrews. I am a doctoral student in Higher Education/Community College Leadership at NIU. I am conducting my dissertation project on *what practices are in place for online instructor training in the Illinois community college system*. As online enrollment continues to grow, preparing faculty to teach online is an important component for student success. Unfortunately, as many of you know, practices in each college vary. I would like to capture this information because not only is it important for overall quality, there isn't a great deal of research about the impact of professional development on many aspects of the online experience for faculty and students. There also is not a comprehensive overview of practice in a system as large as ours.

I am sending a survey to all the distance learning professionals at each community college with the hope that you will help me collect information about current training practices. (If you aren't the person who handles online training at the college, just let me know and I can forward it to them.) The names of the colleges and administrators will not be used in the presentation of information. It will only be a summary of existing practice. The survey is broken up into subject areas found in literature/trend reports as to what should be included in a quality training courses for online instruction. I apologize for the number of questions, but it should only take you 5-10 minutes to complete. In the Spring, after my project is complete, I will send a summary of the compiled results.

Please complete the survey by December 16th.

Thank you again for your help collecting this information. I really appreciate it.

Melissa Andrews

Follow this link to the Survey:
[Take the Survey](#)

APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Illinois Community College Online Faculty Training Practices Institutional Survey

Q1 How many years has online training been offered at the institution?

- None
- 1-2 Years
- 5-10 Years
- 11-16 Years
- 17-20+ Years

Q2 As the person responsible for online faculty training and development at the college, what is your background/experience area?

- (IT) Information Technology
- Instructor/Faculty
- Industry/Professional
- Administrative
- Instructional Design

Q3 How many years have you been responsible for online faculty training at the institution?

- 0-2 Years
- 5-10 Years
- 11-16 Years
- 17-20+ Years

Q4 What area of the college is your department found organizationally?

- Teaching & Learning Center

- Information Technology
- A separate functional area for online instruction
- Other

Orientation

Q5 Is there a general new-hire orientation for employees that includes topics such as where to find policies, services and resources at the college?

- Yes
- No

Q6 Is there a formal and specific orientation available for new online instructors at the institution that includes instructional training concepts? This orientation would be different than a new-hire orientation.

- Yes
- No

Q7 If there is an orientation, is it a one-time experience?

- Yes
- No

Q8 Is the orientation face-to-face?

- Yes
- No

Q9 Is there an orientation available or offered in online format?

Yes

No

Q10 If there is an online orientation, was it self-paced?

Yes

No

Q11 Do part-time instructors participate in an instructor specific orientation?

Yes

No

Q12 Is an instructional orientation mandatory for instructors?

Yes

No

Q13 Is an instructional orientation offered to certain disciplines only?

Yes

No

Q14 Is there a union or contractual reason why instructor orientation can't be mandatory at your institution?

Yes

No

Q15 If there is an orientation, does it include classroom management training?

Yes

No

Q16 If there is an orientation, does it include information about pedagogy?

Yes

No

Q17 If there is an orientation, does it include information about teaching strategies?

Yes

No

Training Content

Q18 Are online technical support services provided to faculty?

Yes

No

Q19 Does the training include strategies on course pacing?

Yes

No

Q20 Does faculty training include information about pedagogy?

Yes

No

Q21 Does faculty training include strategies about instructional design components in course design?

Yes

No

Q22 Does the training include strategies for providing student feedback?

Yes

No

Q23 Does the training include strategies on student interaction?

Yes

No

Q24 Does the training include strategies on assessment?

Yes

No

Q25 Are faculty expected to design courses that they teach?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Continuously

Q26 Are instructional designers available to help develop courses?

- Never
 - Rarely
 - Sometimes
 - Frequently
 - Continuously
-

Q27 Is there any type of development that includes course review or course assessment?

- Yes
- No

Q28 Is there any type of instructor assessment other than the student evaluation used in courses?

- Yes
- No

Q29 Are there minimum instructional benchmarks/standards utilized during course design process?

Yes

No

Q30 If there are standards or benchmarks used by the college in course design and online instruction, which of the following applies to the standards used?

Standards are independently selected by the college

Department of Education/Federal suggested standards

Course design is not based on industry standards

Guided by State standards

Q31 Are instructional materials reviewed periodically to meet program standards?

Yes

No

Q32 Does the institution provide training to learn software changes or changes in delivery systems?

Yes

No

Professional Development

Q33 Is professional development for online faculty offered more than just the initial setup to teach training?

Yes

No

Q34 Are trainings related to online instruction provided in professional development offerings at the college?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Continuously

Q35 Is there a formal professional development center for online faculty on campus?

- Yes
- No

Q36 Can faculty choose to attend professional development based on subjects that they are interested in?

- Yes
- No

Q37 Are self-directed teaching resources available for faculty?

- Yes
- No

Q38 Is collaborative course design training offered?

- Yes
- No

Q39 Do online instructors have peer support or an online support community?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Q40 Do you feel that the administration in your college supports online faculty training?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Q41 What format are online instructor trainings delivered?

Workshops

Traditional class settings

Online

Q42 Is there a formal mentoring program available for faculty on campus?

Yes

No

Q43 Are development resources available on a website or through a course management system for faculty to learn about best practices or standards?

Yes

No

Q44 Are resource books, journals or printed training materials available for faculty to learn about online instruction?

Yes

No

Q45 Are there internally run formal professional development workshops < 4 hours available for faculty to learn about best practices or standards?

Yes

No

Q46 Are there formal or informal conference opportunities for faculty to attend to learn about best practices or standards?

Yes

No

Q47 Is there peer, instructional designer or committee review of finished courses occurring?

Yes

No

Q48 Are there any professional development experiences that were tailored or created for specific faculty or individual departments only?

Yes

No

Q49 Is there faculty assistance in transitioning traditional classroom course material to an online format?

Yes

No

APPENDIX C

IRB EXEMPTION FORM



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Office of Research Compliance,
Integrity & Safety**

Division of Research & Innovation Partnerships

Exempt Determination

14-Nov-2019

Melissa Andrews (Z1828744)

Counseling, Adult and Higher Education

RE: Protocol # **HS20-0165** "An Analysis of Online Faculty Training Practices in the Illinois Community College system"

Dear Melissa Andrews,

Your application for institutional review of research involving human subjects was reviewed by the Office of Research Compliance, Integrity, and Safety on **14-Nov-2019** and it was determined that it meets the criteria for exemption 2.

Although this research is exempt, you have responsibilities for the ethical conduct of the research and must comply with the following:

Amendments: You are responsible for reporting any amendments or changes to your research protocol that may affect the determination of exemption and/or the specific category. This may result in your research no longer being eligible for the exemption that has been granted.

Record Keeping: You are responsible for maintaining a copy of all research related records in a secure location, in the event future verification is necessary. At a minimum these documents include: the research protocol, all questionnaires, survey instruments, interview questions and/or data collection instruments associated with this research protocol, recruiting or advertising materials, any consent forms or information sheets given to participants, all correspondence to or from the IRB, and any other pertinent documents.

Please include the **protocol number (HS20-0165)** on any documents or correspondence sent to the IRB about this study.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact the Office of Research Compliance, Integrity, and Safety at 815-753-8588.