Professors as Students: How Faculty Learn to Teach Online

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Growth of Online Education

- Courses
- Degree Programs
The Role of the Instructor

Lecturer → Facilitator
Presenter → Guide or coach
Instructor → Instructional designer

Technology

Relationships
Learning to Teach Online

- We learn to teach the way we were taught
- We often develop coursework based on what was developed for us, as learners
- Those who teach online and are developing courses online may not have any history as online learners.
- Technology skills are critical
- The clock is ticking……
Purpose of the Study

- How do instructors learn to teach online?
- What have online instructors learned about online teaching, and how has that learning shaped their practice?
- What are characteristics of ideal online instructors?
Study Details

- Qualitative study
- Focus groups
- Focus groups of online instructors
  - All had f2f and online teaching experience
  - Variety of levels of experience
  - Variety of different subjects taught

Data
- Transcriptions, notes from participants, notes from researchers/facilitators
Moving to Online Teaching

- Initial feelings: worry, apprehension, unprepared, overwhelmed
- Sense of role ambiguity and confusion
- Struggle to master technology
- Motivation to succeed: concern for student learning
Learning to Teach Online

- Haphazard process
- Mostly informal learning
- Support from colleagues
- Trial and error
- Formal training not helpful
  - Mostly focused on technology rather than teaching
Progression of Online Instructors

As instructors “matured”
- More focus on student needs and individual students’ learning styles
- More focused on improving communication
- More focus on creativity
- More confidence
Ideal Online Instructors

- Content knowledge is critical
- Technology knowledge is important
  - Tends to overshadow content
- Responsiveness is important
- Time commitment is great
Implications

- Understanding experience helps better prepare future online educators

- Roadmap for how to teach online educators
  - What to do
  - What not to do
Special Thanks!

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Questions or Comments?