ABSTRACT

Ricky Lane Freeman, Jr. A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE PERCEIVED IMPACT ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HAS ON ONLINE ADJUNCT FACULTY AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT. (Under the direction of Dr. William Rouse, Jr.). Department of Educational Leadership, May 2021.

Advances in distance education provide rural and underserved students the opportunity to attend higher education institutions regardless of students' geographic location. With the growth of online programs being offered and the number of adjunct faculty being used, higher education institutions must expand professional development opportunities in a format and delivery method that meet online adjunct faculty's needs.

This qualitative study assessed a professional development model that provides online adjunct faculty with AVID for Higher Education's (AHE) high-engagement strategies in an online asynchronous delivery method. This method allowed flexibility for online adjunct faculty to participate at times and locations of their choice. The Design-Based Research framework allowed the researcher to play an active role within the study. Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development framework assessed the online asynchronous delivery method and the participants perceived this method to be effective in training adjunct faculty. Online adjunct faculty perceived AHE's strategies to increase student engagement and create an environment of inclusiveness. The MEASURE Model was perceived to be effective in providing distance learning facilitators a framework to design an online professional development course.

A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE PERCEIVED IMPACT ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HAS ON ONLINE ADJUNCT FACULTY AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT.

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

Ricky Lane Freeman, Jr.

May, 2021

A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE PERCEIVED IMPACT ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HAS ON ONLINE ADJUNCT FACULTY AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family. First, to my wife, Angela, who allowed me the time, space, and grace to complete this study and supported my decision to pursue this journey. Second, I dedicate this dissertation to my two sons, Will and Parker, who I hope see value in hard work and being a life-long learner; but, will always keep faith and family first. It is my desire Will and Parker always understand that happiness can only be obtained by keeping Christ as their True North. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my mother and father, Ricky and Rita. They have always supported my educational goals and made sacrifices so that I would have an opportunity to pursue happiness.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my Lord, Jesus Christ, who provided the spiritual strength to preserve and complete my doctoral degree. Through His divine intervention, I was able to stay focused during a global pandemic and through so many other events that occurred in 2020. Christ put extraordinary people in place to help guide me throughout the process. This includes Dr. Trent Mohrbutter who saw potential in me and pushed me to be better myself as a professional. Another person the Lord put in place This was my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Art Rouse, who provided me with encouragement and support throughout the dissertation. Dr. Rouse's phone calls often got me over the rough parts of the study. Finally, I thank the Lord for allowing me the opportunity to once again collaborate with my former professor, Dr. Randy Joyner. Dr. Joyner's support and expertise were instrumental in getting me across the finish line.

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PREFACE

At the time of this study, online instruction was often an optional delivery method for faculty. Full-time faculty could teach a portion of their courses on campus and the other portion online; however, many faculty chose to ignore the online environment altogether. In light of Kentor's (2015) findings that online instruction will not flourish at an institution without faculty commitment to quality instruction, educational leadership simply viewed online courses as a response to the higher education market and an easy revenue source. As such, administrators in higher education directed very little attention towards professional development in online instruction. As one faculty member stated, "online courses are the wild, wild west where anything goes." Meanwhile, adjunct faculty were often assigned online courses that the full-time faculty did not want. There was even less opportunity for these adjunct faculty for professional development as their only presence on campus was a virtual presence.

Before 2020, convincing some faculty members to participate in professional development regarding online instruction was challenging. A lack of training creates skepticism among faculty forced into the online arena (Taylor, 2014). Attitudes of faculty improve when given professional development in web-based technology and online pedagogy (Nadelman, 2014). Many faculty members decided online instruction was "not for them," and therefore, faculty dismissed any offers of professional development in the areas of digital teaching and learning. Efforts to persuade faculty to "flip the classroom," where students would engage with content outside of class in efforts to free up instructional time for more robust and engaging conversations within the face-to-face classroom, were dismissed.

Literature provides evidence that all faculty were not convinced of online instruction's relevance or effectiveness in delivering content. For example, 85% of faculty that had never

taught online felt that online education was inferior to traditional teaching in meeting student learning outcomes (Herman, 2012). Some faculty felt that the learning outcomes in online content delivery were inferior to traditional program offerings; however, the perception of quality drastically increased among faculty having actually taught online courses (Lytle, 2012).

In March of 2020, due to a global pandemic, colleges and universities had to immediately move all of their courses to "remote" learning or suffer the consequences of closing their campus door. For some higher education institutions, the pandemic caught them off guard in which many faculty were not prepared for online instruction and were scrambling to learn how to use their college's learning management system to deliver instruction. There was no time to train or prepare for online teaching for classes that were currently underway. Many faculty were scheduling back-to-back sessions with instructional designers to keep their courses afloat.

When this study was conducted, no one could have anticipated the relevance of the educational context's findings, including kindergarten through university graduate programs. The global pandemic highlighted the importance of faculty not only to be prepared for online instruction but to pursue best practices in pedagogy continuously. Faculty must continue to be creative and strive to understand their students and equitably deliver content. Higher education leaders must consider ways to incentivize or require faculty to continue to stay current with instructional practices.

This study focuses on professional development for online adjunct faculty; however, professional developers may adopt this study's framework to design professional development for all faculty and delivery methods. Faculty and leaders in higher education must be prepared for the next seismic shift in instruction, be it a global pandemic or new pedagogical research. How are educational leaders preparing for the next step in the paradigm shift?

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Advances in distance education provides rural and underserved students the opportunity to attend institutions of higher education regardless of students' geographic locations. With the growth of online programs being offered and the number of adjunct faculty being used, higher education institutions must expand opportunities of professional development in a format and delivery method that meet the needs of online adjunct faculty.

Higher education institutions understand the importance of continuous improvement and professional development focused towards pedagogy and best practices in education. Faculty may have the credentials and qualifications to teach courses in higher education as experts in their content area. However, most faculty in higher education have very little training in the areas of pedagogy or andragogy (Shapiro & Cueseo, 2017).

Although institutions of higher education are beginning to understand the importance of training faculty in pedagogy, adjunct faculty are often not included in professional development opportunities for reasons including the time and location the trainings are held. A survey of colleges and universities throughout America found that in some areas that 55% of online faculty are adjunct faculty ("Background Facts on Contingent Faculty Positions | AAUP," n.d.). Therefore, there must be a concerted effort to train online adjunct faculty in best practices in high-engagement online strategies to provide all students with a high-quality educational experience.

Research needs to be conducted to find ways to include adjunct online faculty in professional development in a format and method that adjunct faculty find meaningful and engaging. The Design-Based Research (DBR) method can be used to train online faculty in best practices in online instruction by an online delivery method through asynchronous training using

a learning management system. The overall perceived impact of the professional development training can be assessed by using Guskey's (2016) Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation framework.

Background of the Problem

The community college in this study is located in eastern North Carolina and has witnessed a decline in face-to-face enrollment while experiencing a substantial growth in online enrollment. Like many of the community colleges throughout North Carolina, the decline in enrollment has put the institution in a tight financial position. In order to capitalize on the online enrollment and balance the financial records, the institution has turned to more adjunct faculty to teach online courses. Taylor (2014) describes how institutions are able to be more efficient in online courses because the sections offered online are more efficient and the maximum number of students assigned to an online section can easily be increased because facility space does not need to be considered.

Higher education institutions save additional funds through adjunct faculty because they do not have to pay adjunct faculty retirement benefits or health insurance. Higher education institutions are not contractually obligated to guarantee workload for adjunct faculty, therefore, institutions also have the flexibility to cancel an online section if the cost of the adjunct is higher than the potential income from students enrolled in the course. In the effort of keeping the institution profitable, students can potentially be the ones who suffer if the adjunct faculty are not prepared to teach an online course.

Shapiro and Cueseo (2017) found that faculty in higher education often have expertise in the content area in which they teach but often lack any formal training in pedagogy or andragogy. As online enrollment continues to increase and adjunct faculty rosters to continue to

grow, adjunct faculty must be provided an opportunity to participate in professional development during a timeframe and delivery method that meets their needs. Providing professional development to faculty focus on ways to deliver content using high-engagement strategies is pivotal at any institution that wants to retain students and keep those students from choosing another institution or withdrawing from school. Most kindergarten through 12th (K-12) grade teachers are required to take several courses in their undergraduate studies in pedagogy, developmental psychology, and special needs populations.

Without professional development or individual determination to drastically improve on one's practice, online faculty have no framework from which to determine what defines high quality instruction and, more specifically, high quality online instruction. Faculty members usually teach in the way they were taught throughout their educational experiences. Online instruction is relatively new and many faculty members have no benchmark by which to determine what denotes a quality online educational experience (Schmidt et al., 2016).

Scheduling professional development for full-time faculty is often complicated because most faculty have different class schedules, meetings, and committee obligations. It is difficult to arrange a time for a department or institutions to be in one place at one time to attend a training session in online pedagogy. What further complicates this problem is that according to the American Association of Universities and Professors (AAUP), more than half of faculty are adjunct faculty ("Background Facts on Contingent Faculty Positions | AAUP," n.d.). According to the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness at this college, 59.3% of the faculty were adjunct instructors during the 2017-18 academic year and 36% of online students were taught by adjunct faculty in the 2018-2019 academic year. Adjunct faculty often work full-time jobs that may or may not be close in proximity to campus. Therefore, when professional development sessions are

arranged for the full-time faculty, the likelihood that adjunct faculty would be able to attend the session is very low.

This college is partnered with AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) for Higher Education (AHE). Upon review of the attendance sheets that were available through AHE, there were 569 attendees of the AHE professional development sessions from 2014-2018. After careful review of these attendance sheets, only one adjunct faculty member over the 2014-2018 time period attended the AHE professional development sessions.

Problem Statement

"Nearly three-quarters of American professors are contingent faculty. That's a problem for students (Edmonds, 2015)." According to the Department of Institutional Effectiveness (personal communication, May 17, 2019), this college 2017-18 curriculum faculty was comprised of 59% adjunct instructors. Professional development among adjunct faculty at this college is desperately needed and must be addressed to provide high quality instruction to all students. Faculty at this college need professional development in areas of online pedagogy to maintain an awareness of the ever-evolving online tools and high-engagement activates. There must be a focused effort to train online adjunct faculty since they comprise over one-third of online instructors at this college. The specific problem is that online adjunct faculty need equal access to professional development opportunities in a time and delivery method that meets the needs of the adjunct.

Literature addresses the need for professional development and continuous improvement for faculty. However, there is very little research to offer an option to provide professional development to adjunct faculty and does not consider adjunct faculties' schedules outside of the

higher education institution. The solution must focus on providing high-quality professional development in a way that is accessible to adjunct faculty.

A solution to this problem will have far-reaching ramifications for institutions of higher education. More importantly, the solution will have a huge impact on reaching those students who, in the past, may not had access to high-quality instruction. With all online faculty, full-time and adjunct, being trained in high-engagement strategies in the online environment, students in rural, urban, and suburban will have access to a quality education.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to establish a professional development model that meets the busy schedule of adjunct faculty and record the perceived impact on the professional development has on student engagement in the online classroom. Adjunct will be participating in weekly journals and assessments to capture the adjunct's candid thoughts on the implications of each strategy offered in the professional development modules. Adjunct faculty will also work within a learning community to share ideas with colleagues to improve upon the strategies. The communication within the learning community will be used to gather data on improving the professional development model moving forward.

Although the adjunct faculty that teach at this college located in a southeastern state in the United States of America, these faculty are located across the United States. The adjunct faculty may have full-time jobs outside of teaching and some may be teaching part-time or full-time at other higher education institutions.

Focus group prompts following the professional development session will use Guskey's (2016) five critical stages of professional development to assess the impact the professional development session had on the adjunct faculty's perceptions to be better prepared to meet the

needs of their online students. The professional development session will be offered completely online in an asynchronous format over a series of six weeks to provide flexibility in when and how faculty participate.

Edmonds (2015) shares the sentiment with others in academia that students may not be served properly when taught by adjunct faculty. In order to reduce the disparities in instruction provided between full-time faculty and adjunct faculty, a model of professional development that will improve adjunct's pedagogical skills should be specifically designed for online adjunct faculty. Therefore, the purpose of this study will focus on designing a professional development model that will provide high-quality training for adjunct faculty in an online asynchronous delivery method.

Study Questions

This qualitative study will assess online adjunct faculty's perceptions of the impact of an online asynchronous professional development session may have in improving student engagement and the perceived impact on future student success.

The study questions for this proposed study are:

1. What is the perceived impact an asynchronous online delivery method of professional development has on adjunct faculty?
2. What is the perceived impact the strategies shared in this professional development have on student engagement?
3. What is the perceived impact the MEASURE Model framework have on assessing the implementation of specific instructional strategies and collaboration among professionals?

Theoretical Frameworks

This study will include a combination of two framework designs to appropriately address the design of the professional development seminar as an intervention and the role the researcher plays a facilitator of the professional development seminar. This study will use Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the professional development. The five levels include the following key components:

- Level 1 - Participants' reaction
- Level 2 - Participants' learning
- Level 3 – Organizational Support and Change
- Level 4 – Participants' use of new knowledge and skills
- Level 5 - Student Learning Outcomes

In addition to Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation, I will use the DBR framework. The DBR framework emphasizes the importance of the researcher playing a pivotal role in the implementation of the professional development intervention. DBR allows the researcher to constantly reflect on the current professional development session and make changes during the research phase. DBR is a popular framework within the field of education because it allows for immediate intervention instead of waiting until the end of the research phase to make changes for the next research application (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012; Bell, 2004).

DBR is designed to provide a framework for building theory that will help provide guidance in future educational context and settings. DBR takes place in a real educational setting that includes a significant intervention, such as professional development. DBR focuses on the design and testing of professional development and included ongoing interactions between the

researcher and the participants. DBR also encourages ongoing collaboration between the participants of the study and the research allowing for modification to the design of the intervention followed by assessing the practical impact of the intervention (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012).

The combination of Guskey's framework and DBR will allow me to answer the study questions posed. These frameworks will allow for accessing and analyzing of the participants' perceptions on the professional development's impact on improved online instruction.

Definition of Key Terms

Online Education - The separation of the learners and the teacher that requires computers and Internet access for communication and instruction (Paulsen, 2002).

Learning Management System (LMS) - The technology and platform that handles all aspects of the learning process for online education. The LMS is used to deliver content, provide feedback, tracks progress of students, and collects data on all the users (Watson & Watson, 2007).

Adjunct Faculty - For the purpose of the study, faculty that are not full-time employees for the institution being studied. Adjuncts teach on as-needed basis and are paid an hourly rate according to the contact hours determined by the North Carolina Community College System Common Course Library.

Asynchronous Learning - Communication between online participants that take place at different times and the location is not relevant.

High-Engagement Strategies – Strategies incorporated in the classroom that are specifically designed to increase student engagement through writing, reading, inquiry, collaboration, and critical thinking.

Professional Development - Training or a series of trainings that help professionals and individuals improve on their skills in the workplace.

Assumptions

It is assumed that adjunct online faculty will willingly participate in professional development sessions if it is offered via a delivery method that fits their work and life schedule. Online faculty desire to learn strategies that help their students be successful and progress towards graduation. It is also assumed that online faculty will have the necessary skillset to participate in an online asynchronous professional development session since that is the delivery method by which they teach their online students.

The introduction of high-engagement strategies to online faculty will translate to the adoption of these strategies into the adjunct faculties online courses and used beyond the research period. This is important to the study because if the instructors are introduced to these topics but do not include those high-engagement strategies in their courses moving forward, then the professional development session will have lost its significance.

High-engagement strategies used in an online course will result in students being more active in their learning and this will result in students performing better than they would have if the high-engagement strategies were not used. These strategies will also build a sense of community with the instructor and the fellow classmates. The sense of community will encourage students to ask questions of their instructor and their peers. Online students will be more likely to persist in their online course because they are being engaged at a high level and on a consistent basis.

Scope and Delimitations

This study will focus on adjunct online faculty that only teach online courses for this college and have been hired since the creation of the Department of Online Instruction in the Fall of 2015. Although this college is located in eastern North Carolina, the adjunct online faculty candidates for this study are spread throughout the United States, such as Georgia, Illinois, Texas, West Virginia, and Virginia. In most cases all communications and discussions with these online faculty will be via web-conference, electronic email and a learning management system. This study will include faculty with diverse backgrounds and age ranges.

For this study to have the ability to replicated, the faculty will have very little face-to-face synchronous contact with each other. This study will demonstrate that effective online professional development can be provided to online faculty regardless of demographics, geographic location, or employment status. Any educational institution should be able use this as a model to deliver professional development to adjunct faculty that do not have the ability to visit campus.

Limitations

Encouraging faculty to participate in the professional development course that teaches high-engagement strategies in the online classroom may be difficult. There are no funds to pay instructors for their time and those instructors that volunteer to participate in the professional development course already have a bias towards trying new strategies in the online environment and are intrinsically motivated to improve their craft. This study will involve instructors from various years of experience of online instruction.

Another limitation of the study will be the amount of time to implement the study. Although the instructors will learn new online high-engagement strategies in the professional

development course, they may not see results immediately. The literature review suggests that some of the benefits of online professional development are not seen for some time as instructors learn the best way to implement the strategies within their own courses and build a learning community (Shattuck & Anderson, 2013). Although the instructors may feel that the professional development of high engagement strategies will increase student satisfaction and success, it may be a few semesters until there is data to support their perceptions. Furthermore, one or two semesters of scores may not be indicative in students' academic success as there are several variables that play a role in a student's success beyond the scope of the instructor.

Significance of the Study

This study will demonstrate the ability to provide professional development to any faculty regardless if they are adjunct, full-time, or schedule. Currently, higher education institutions may decide on a time, date, and place for professional development based on the schedules of their full-time faculty. Adjunct faculty that would like to attend professional development sessions may not be able to attend due location or other full-time employment obligations. This model could also be applicable to full-time faculty that are not able to attend due illness, class schedules, clinicals, student conferences, or any other professional obligations.

Advances in Practice

The problem of practice at this college is providing equal access to professional development to online adjunct faculty. In creating a model using the Design-Based Research framework and assessing its effectiveness using Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development, this college will attempt to reach faculty that has had little focus in higher education. This model can be used to provide tools to online faculty to increase the quality of online instruction for students who participate in online courses.

Summary

Higher education has seen growth for decades. However, the economy plays a role on the number of students that are enrolled fulltime. As the unemployment rate declines, so does the enrollment rate, especially for community colleges ("Bureau of Labor Statistics Data", 2018; Johnson, 2015). Therefore, many colleges and universities are turning to online program offerings to reach those students who need the flexibly to continue their careers while also being employed.

Administration and faculty of institutions of higher education have mixed feelings about the quality of online programs (Lytle, 2012). However, those who teach online feel that online and traditional courses are equally rigorous (Herman, 2012; Hines, 2008). Institutions of higher education have recognized the need to have specialized training for online courses. Adjunct faculty need equal access to professional development to provide student the opportunity to be successful regardless of the status of employment of the instructor (Herman, 2012).

This study will test a professional development model that provides online adjunct faculty with high-engagement strategies in an online asynchronous delivery method. This method should allow flexibility of online instructors to participate at times and locations of their choice. The DBR framework allows for me to play an active role within the study. Professional development can be used as an intervention within the DBR framework. Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development framework will be used to guide the data analysis to assess the effectiveness of professional development in an educational setting.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Enrollment in higher education has continued to increase since World War II. Today, with the G. I. Bill, high education institutions in order to remain relevant are adapting to the needs and technological demands of both industry and students. Recent increases in employment have students deciding between continuing educational program choices or go immediately enter the workforce. Distance education allows students to have more choices to pursue educational goals while providing the opportunity to remain employed.

Distance education is not a new concept; however, the manner in which content can be delivered has changed significantly since the 1980s (Zvacek et al., 2014). Fiber-optic communication began in the late 1980s and early 1990s as instruction to be delivered via computers. Advances in two-way live audio and video communication have improved due to the advancement of fiber optic technology. Although the costs associated with early fiber-optic systems for colleges and universities were excessive, the long-term benefits proved to be an effective way to administer distance education (Zvacek et al., 2014).

As access to the Internet has expanded, so has the opportunity to deliver content to students without regard to location. Increasingly more distance education courses and have entered the market giving students more opportunities to participate in higher education to further their careers. Many higher education institutions are preparing to meet the online learning needs of their students while providing industry with an option for employee training. As discussed in an article from Wired.com, "*Impatient with Colleges, Employers Design Their Own Courses*", if higher education does not offer suitable programs, employers will develop in-house solutions (Marcus, 2017).

Each year the cost of high-speed Internet decreases. As a result, higher education institutions have also realized lower costs associated with offering distance education courses. The absence of physical space limitations may allow for class size increases while potentially lowering cost to teach each student. Additional cost savings also have institutions turning to adjunct faculty to teach the online classes. Adjunct faculty do not necessarily have full-time benefits, an office, or related resources. Additionally, institutions may offer specialized courses not traditionally scheduled because there was never enough enrollment to justify a full-time instructor. The institution now has the flexibility to cancel a section without the administrative dilemma of terminating an instructor's position.

As online adjunct faculty have become a larger part of the higher education equation, institutions look to offer a high-quality instructional experience delivering content in a meaningful and engaging manner. Enrollment trends show that online education will continue to be a viable option for students. Recent trends have shown higher education institutions will continue to use adjunct faculty to provide online instruction. Colleges and universities are increasingly providing specialized training in online pedagogy. Thus, online adjunct faculty are becoming a major part of many colleges and universities overall strategic plan. As online offerings grow, many higher education institutions are examining online frameworks to train adjunct faculty who are often unable to attend in a traditional face-to-face setting.

A Brief History of Distance Education

Correspondence Education

Distance education has been used for centuries as a means to deliver content to students who would not typically have the opportunity to participate in higher education. Teaching curriculum content at distance where the student and teacher are separated by time and location

is not new to education. In the beginning, distance education was called originally called "Correspondence Study". In 1833, a Swedish newspaper advertised the opportunity to learn composition through the mail that was delivered by the post office (Schlosser & Anderson, 1994; Zvacek et al., 2014).

Correspondence education was found useful by training individuals in industry with skills necessary to perform the job. In 1891, the *Mining Herald*, a daily newspaper in Pennsylvania, began offering correspondence education in mining safety and ways to prevent accidents in mines. Thomas J. Foster, the editor of *Mining Herald*, established a business called International Correspondence Schools. This school grew from 225,000 students in 1900 to over two million students in 1920 (Schlosser & Anderson, 1994; Zvacek et al., 2014). Foster's International Correspondence Schools demonstrated that correspondence education was useful at universities for more than the traditional offerings, such as religion, Latin, and philosophy.

A review a literature identified two main philosophies emerged in correspondence studies. Students could pace themselves and finish the correspondence program that work best for them, or institutions would provide a strict weekly lesson format (Schlosser & Anderson, 1994; Zvacek et al., 2014). Instructors would assess the student on their understanding via written examination that was delivered using a courier method.

Although using newspapers and a courier system to deliver content may seem primitive and be an extreme version of asynchronous instruction, it provides evidence that individuals will go to great lengths to increase their knowledge and skills. It also demonstrates the willingness of those in the field of education to go to great lengths to spread knowledge to society and future generations.

Higher Education Institutions Adapt to New Technologies

As one researches the history of distance education, one will see that with every advance in technology there is also an opportunity to spread knowledge and content. The invention of the radio allowed for students to sit by a radio waiting to listen to their instructor provide the next lesson. In the 1920s, approximately 200 radio stations were created at educational institutions. Most of these radio stations did not last the decade. In the early 1930s, television programs were tried at University of Iowa, Purdue University, and Kansas State College. College credits were not offered through television until the 1950s where Western Reserve University was the first to offer a series of courses (Schlosser & Anderson, 1994; Zvacek et al., 2014)

These attempts at distance education were not always successful. Correspondence education was a part of University of Chicago's instructional delivery methods from the beginning. Founded in 1890 and opened in 1892, the University of Chicago began the institution with five divisions with one of the divisions of the institution being named "University Extension". Popularity in correspondence education declined as faculty lost interest - the division closed in 1899 (Schlosser & Anderson, 1994). One the first attempts of using television to provide distance education was in the 1930s. However, student interest declined because the instructor would simply read the lecture notes on TV (Smith, 2016).

Instruction Goes Digital

Still in its infancy, fiber-optic communication allowed instruction to be delivered through computers beginning in the late 1980s and early the 1990s (Zvacek et al., 2014). At first glance, fiber-optic communication may seem like the latest trend in distance education that would run its course and fade like its technological predecessors. However, fiber-optic communication and the advances of the Internet begin to offer something the other forms of

distance education did not offer. This technology offered instantaneous two-way communication between the instructor and the student. The student no longer had to wait until the instructor sent out a text-based correspondence, radio broadcast, or television session. The student now has access to the instructor to ask questions and receive answers almost immediately.

Competition for Distance Education Students

Distance education has greatly transformed over the past decades as more and more students have access to affordable computers and the Internet. Distance education is not only surviving, it is thriving as more and more higher education institutions expand the number of programs that are offered completely online. Higher education institutions that have embraced online instruction and intentionally seek the online market have been rewarded with increased enrollment. Higher education institutions that did not intentionally seek the online market have not seen an increase in online enrollment (Allen & Seaman, 2017).

Higher education institutions are finding themselves competing with each other on a national and a global market because students are given the option to attend colleges outside of their geographic location. As previously mentioned, in the 1930s, students lost interest in the television seminars because the instructor would simply read the lecture. In a consumer-driven economy, students expect high-engagement instruction from their online higher education experience. If students do not like the "quality of service," they can shop around for a college that meets their needs as learners.

Higher Education Enrollment Trends

There were almost 21 million students enrolled across all degree-granting institutions in 2012 including individuals taking online offerings (Allen & Seaman, 2017). From 2002 to 2012, a compounded annual growth of 2.7% was reported (Allen & Seaman, 2017). However, a

decrease of 3.2% of college students from Fall 2012 to Fall 2015 was noted (Allen & Seaman, 2017). Two-year higher education institutions saw a more significant decrease from Fall 2012 to Fall 2015. Community colleges realized nearly a 10% drop in enrollment in the 2012-2015 academic period (Allen & Seaman, 2017). The decline in enrollment among community colleges within North Carolina was slightly lower than the national average. In North Carolina, the decline in unduplicated headcount from 2012 to 2015 was 5.2% whereas the decline in full-time equivalency (FTE) was 7.6% (NCCCS, 2013a, 2013b; NCCCS, 2015a, 2015b). The decrease in FTE, or student membership hours, is not parallel to the decrease in unduplicated headcount, as some of the decline was due to students taking fewer classes.

Unemployment and Higher Education Enrollment

An additional cause in the decline of FTE and unduplicated headcount can be contributed to students entering the workforce. According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (Bureau of Labor Statistics Data, 2018), the average unemployment rate in 2012 was 8.1% and the average unemployment rate in 2017 was 4.4%. Johnson (2015), from Postsecondary Analytics, LLC, observed that community colleges often see a significant decrease in enrollment when unemployment rates decline. Using data from 1987 to 2015, the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, Johnson (2015), concluded that community colleges can expect a 2.5% decrease in enrollment for every 1% decrease in the unemployment rate.

Growth of Online Programs

Most recently, many higher education institutions have turned to online instruction in an effort to maintain enrollment. Online offerings have become part of mainstream education (Poulin & Straut, 2016). A 6.3% increase in the number of students taking at least one online

course from 2015 to 2016 was observed and this was the 14th consecutive year of growth in students taking online courses (Friedman, 2018).

Higher education institutions that have embraced online instruction have become intentional in entering the online market and as a result have experienced enrollment increases. Higher education institutions, in general, that have not intentionally placed an emphasis on online program offerings have not realized the same level of enrollment increase. Allen and Seaman (2017) found that 5% of institutions comprise for almost half of all distance education students. Higher education institutions are also using online courses as a way to retain students. Studies show when students "drop out" due to employment, unemployment, health, life changes, it decreases the chance of completion. The online courses allow the students greater enrollment flexibility in terms of where assignments are completed and continuing with college regardless of life circumstances (Betts, 2017).

The number of students enrolling in at least one distance education course increased by 11% from 2012 to 2015 (Allen & Seaman, 2017). Enrollments in 2016 grew by 7% for students taking at least one distance education course and 9% for individuals with an entire online schedule (Poulin, 2017). Four-year public institutions have experienced a 29.8% growth in online enrollment from 2012 to 2015, whereas, public two-year institutions have seen a 0.6% decrease in distance enrollment (Allen & Seaman, 2017). However, the 0.6% decrease in online enrollment does not mirror the 10% drop for two-year institutions during the same time period (Allen & Seaman, 2017).

One in seven students complete an entire higher education program online without registering for any face-to-face courses and nearly the same amount of higher education students took at least one online course - approximately 28.4% of all higher education students (Poulin &

Straut, 2016). The growth of online programs throughout the country is creating a competitive market. Institutions will need to respond by providing quality online instruction in order to maintain long-term survival (Hiltz & Turoff, 2005).

Although the Internet is able to reach across state boundaries, not all students take advantage of the opportunity to take courses or attend out-of-state institutions. Fifty-three percent of students take online courses at institutions located in their home state (Skiba, 2016). Most often, in-state tuition is cheaper than that charged for out-of-state students. Also, certain college regulations do not allow for students to cross state lines. However, the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) has reduced the state lines as a barrier and allows for member states to meet certain criteria allowing students to take out-of-state courses ("Key Attributes of SARA," 2018).

Growth of Online Helps Reach Minorities and Underserved Populations

Regardless of background, race, or ethnicity, most students with a simple Google search can find an online institution. However, African-American and Latino students are historically underrepresented in traditional higher education ("Latinos, Blacks Help Fuel Growth of Online Education," 2010). These individuals are underrepresented for various reasons, including poverty, first-generation college students, supporting spouse and children, lack of information about college enrollment process, and/or sub-standard high school preparation ("Latinos, Blacks Help Fuel Growth of Online Education," 2010). Large online institutions have helped close the gap of access to African-American and Latino students by providing a quality education, competitive prices, and a targeted customer service approach. University of Phoenix is well known and is the largest online institution in the United States and over 27% of the University of

Phoenix baccalaureate degrees awarded were earned by African-American students and 15.7% by Latinos ("Latinos, Blacks Help Fuel Growth of Online Education," 2010).

Reasons Students Choose Online

Employment and Online Education

The use of online education continues to grow. The trend throughout literature is that students have several reasons for choosing online education over traditional education. Online education is expanding access to students who would traditionally not be able to attend college. Studies indicate one of the main reasons for the expansion of online enrollment is because it gives students the opportunity to attend college while also working a full-time or part-time job (Betts, 2017; Hardison, 2007; Hiltz & Turoff, 2005). Employees are realizing that job security may be at risk without continuing to advance personal educational opportunities (Hiltz & Turoff, 2005).

Student Access to Education

Students with disabilities and health concerns are also able to participate in online programs. Traditional place-bound access for these students may present steeper challenges tied to a traditional on-campus classroom (Betts, 2017; Hardison, 2007). Disabilities may include various physical limitations, mental issues, including social anxiety. Students in rural communities are also able to participate in online education without having to worry about transportation and work schedules. Students no longer have to choose between education and family obligations. Online programs are often focused on students that would not otherwise be able to come to campus. In addition, students in rural communities choose online because it allows access to two-year degrees while continuing their employment without jeopardizing their careers. This is no different from any student attempting to advance a career in order to capture

or improve standard of living (Betts, 2017; Hardison, 2007; Hiltz & Turoff, 2005; Keis et al., 2017; Smith, 2016). Higher education institutions that are able to offer more online choices have helped students maintain more acceptable graduation timeframes. Students at many institutions are able to conveniently enroll into gateway courses – courses that are required regardless of the program of study. Online options allow for students to take courses in the proper sequence and allowing students to graduate in the expected time frame (McPherson & Bacow, 2015).

Technology, Adaptive Learning, and Pacing

Technology is not as much of a barrier as it was. Traditionally, working adults were the market for distance education. Now, a greater number of millennials and Generation X's choose online instruction due to its easy access, up-to-date content, tracking, and the ability to control the learning progress (Yousef, 2012). Research indicates that students appreciate the ability to complete assignments in a more flexible timeframe (Hardison, 2017; Keis et al., 2017; McPherson & Bacow, 2015).

A greater number of younger students are choosing online because of familiarity with and exposure to various forms of technology. Technology and online instruction at the high school level is ubiquitous. Seventy-five percent of all school districts across America already incorporate online and blended learning with blended learning be a combination of online and face-to-face instruction. The transition to online courses in higher education is a natural progression (Betts, 2017). Traditional college-aged students have "grown up" with social media and the Internet. These digital natives are comfortable with technology and are open to social interaction with instructors via web-based tools which was not possible in past generations (Smith, 2016). Furthermore, the advancement in technology has allowed software to be more adaptive to varying student abilities. Students are able to receive almost instantaneous feedback

from emerging online assignment tracking. The software is adaptive to individual students based on demonstrated understanding. Students that comprehend material, or have prior learning exposed to online resources in the content area, will be able to progress faster (McPherson & Bacow, 2015).

Faculty Perceptions of Online Education

The growing proliferation of online programs have required administrators and faculty to make choices about shaping student options. The perceptions of administrators and faculty vary among institutions. Administrators at an institution may want to expand the online market; yet, online instruction will not flourish at an institution without faculty commitment to quality instruction (Kentnor, 2015).

According to a study by Bergquist (2005), 85% of higher education administrators see online instruction as a benefit to the institution. Additionally, 79% of those administrators view online instruction as an effective means to deliver content (Bergquist, 2005). Stanley (2012) also confirms that administrators see value in the effectiveness of online education and that it also provides budgetary benefits to the institution.

Faculty perceptions of online instruction can be mixed. Some faculty feel that the learning outcomes in online content delivery are inferior to traditional program offerings; however, the perception in terms of quality drastically increases among faculty having actually taught online courses (Lytle, 2012). Taylor (2014) found that faculty new to the community college environment perceived online education as less difficult than instructors with more than five years of experience.

Hines (2008) found that faculty with both online and face-to-face instructional experience believed that both delivery methods were equal in terms of quality. Complaints from online

faculty often include lack of understanding in the methodology, institutional support, and overall quality of online instruction (Kentnor, 2015). Online education is a main fabric in the higher education landscape and its importance will only continue to increase. Therefore, faculty and higher education administrators must look to embrace online education.

Faculty Perceptions of Job Outlook

Faculty perceptions are shaped by several factors. Online faculty are often under the impression that distance education programs are a way for an institution to increase revenue without considering the longer-term human resource issues. Some institutions have attempted to maximize the profits without investing in quality improvements in online instruction (Kentnor, 2015).

In a report shared by *U.S. News and World Report* (Lytle, 2012), 58% of faculty surveyed indicated more overall fear in online education than the acceptance surrounding the growth of additional courses and programs. Some of the fears of online programs stem from a faculty concern about being replaced by technology (Lytle, 2012). Additionally, a growing fear that technology may displace full-time faculty. It is also a concern that fewer individuals will be offered tenure due to more adjunct faculty being added to the faculty ranks (Nadelman, 2014). Part-time faculty are seen as less expensive to hire and support, and the institution does not have to offer full-time benefits. Lastly, the geographic location of the part-time faculty member may not be as an important factor due to fewer place bound restrictions.

Faculty Workload

Online faculty often perceive course preparation as a greater workload time burden that is not adequately compensated. Faculty see teaching online courses as an entirely different method of teaching traditional courses often requiring specialized preparation (Taylor, 2014). Faculty

perceive online courses as complex requiring time consuming lesson plans. Faculty believe that preparing to teach a successful online course can take two and three times longer than a traditional class (Taylor, 2014). Faculty also believe there is a greater need to "check in" with online students more often than in a traditional setting because of the lack of physical presence (Dolloph, 2007). Online faculty feel that compensation and incentives should be offered for participation in professional development and the extra course preparation required (Taylor, 2014).

Potentially, colleges and universities are able to place students into an online course with fewer seat capacity restrictions than associated with an on-campus classroom. The efficiency in the number of seats offered in the online classroom can benefit an institution financially. Program planners are aware of less restrictions, in terms of space and faculty, are concerned that the maximum number of seats may increase when compared to the traditional classroom. Increasingly, faculty are expressing class sizes be capped at equitable levels, and depending on the course, and sometimes even less than the traditional classroom setting (Taylor, 2014).

The Need for Faculty Training

The transition of faculty to online instruction can be slow because of technological requirements. Anxiety exists that student evaluations rating faculty performance may be linked to issues of technology (Nadelman, 2014). A lack of training creates skepticism among faculty forced to the online arena (Taylor, 2014). Attitudes of faculty improve when given professional development in web-based technology and online pedagogy (Nadelman, 2014).

Online Faculty Need Specialized Professional Development

Faculty and Administrators' Perceptions on Professional Development

It is not unusual to find faculty that have never taught online to develop negative perceptions of online instruction. Eighty percent of faculty that have never taught online feel that online instruction is inferior to traditional instruction in meeting student learning outcomes. However, the majority of faculty that teach online see online instruction as comparable, or superior, to traditional classroom instruction (Herman, 2012).

Sixty-four percent of online faculty believe that online courses require more work to effectively teach. An even 85% believe developing online courses is more difficult than traditional courses. According to Herman (2012), 70% of faculty surveyed relate the difficulty associated with developing and teaching online courses with average or below average distance education support and training. Additionally, 20% of all the institutions surveyed do not offer any professional development in online instruction (Herman, 2012).

Herman (2012) purports that in order for institutions to implement successful online programs, administration must provide greater support of faculty development. A third of Chief Academic Officers (CAO) surveyed found that faculty view online instruction as inferior. However, CAO's at institutions offering online programs are more positive about faculty perceptions. In the same survey, administrators see the lack of faculty will to accept online instruction to be a barrier to growing online programs (Herman, 2012).

Studies have shown that part-time faculty need to be included in professional development activities. Part-time faculty typically teach fewer courses than full-time faculty. However, part-time faculty are more likely to teach an online course than full-time faculty

(Herman, 2012). The specialized requirements of online instruction necessitate adjunct faculty inclusion and evaluation.

Faculty Experience and Online Instruction

Herman (2012) also found that one-third of faculty in higher education have taught, or developed, online courses with one of the most crucial variables of preparing faculty to teach online courses is training or professional development. Even regional accrediting organizations are closely examining at online faculty preparation (Herman, 2012). Faculty members can be slow to adopt new teaching methodologies - online instruction is relatively new and many faculty members have no benchmark by which to determine what denotes a quality distance education experience (Mohr & Shelton, 2017). Thus, professional development for online pedagogy is need throughout all institutions of higher education.

Most organizations, including higher education, strive for continuous improvement and implement various forms of professional development. Boylan et al. (2018) define professional development as "activities or experiences that may lead to professional learning and/or development" (p. 121). Guskey (2002) believes professional development can lead to "enduring change in teachers' attitudes and perceptions" (p. 381) and professional development should be "seen as a process, not an event" (p. 388).

According to Guskey and Sparks (2002), a link appears between effective professional development and student achievement. Exploring the balance of relevant pedagogical preparation with content enhancement will help promote the student-teacher connection. Although professional development can appear to be chaotic or random, it can be effective if properly executed (Boyan et al., 2018; Guskey & Sparks, 2002). Professional development for online instructors can be offered within the institution or outsourced to a third party. Smaller

institutions tend to outsource professional development while larger institutions offer training within the institution. Training may include an internal professional development course, mentoring, or a combination of both (Herman, 2012). Planning targeted student-centered professional development will increase awareness of engagement strategies aimed at online delivery improvement (Guskey, 2016).

AVID for Higher Education

Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) began in 1980 when Mary Catherine Swanson, an English Department Head, believed that the students in the underserved areas of San Diego could be as successful as any other student if the students were willing to put forth an effort (individual determination). Swanson believed she could teach students that were disadvantaged the skills necessary to be college-ready. According to AVID's website ("Our History / About Mary Catherine Swanson | AVID," 2018), the AVID system Swanson created proved that students could be successful regardless of their background and today, AVID's mission is "to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society". AVID is an international organization that is located across 47 states in the United States, including the Department of Defense Education, Canada, and Australia ("Our History / About Mary Catherine Swanson | AVID," 2018).

In 2009, higher education leaders recognized that students who came from schools where AVID was implemented were better prepared for college and these higher education leaders asked for help from AVID (Shapiro & Cueseo, 2017). In 2010, AVID for Higher Education (AHE) was created to help students be more successful by training faculty and staff in higher education with tools and high-engagement strategies using the "Writing to Learn, Inquiry,

Collaboration, Organization, and Reading to Learn" (WICOR) framework (Shapiro & Cueseo, 2017).

AHE addressed the need to prepare students for their first-year experience at college and to prepare faculty, staff, and tutors to support students using high-engagement strategies. Higher education institutes benefit from the partnership with AVID in many ways, including on-site professional development by trained facilitators ("What AVID Is" /AVID for Higher Education, 2019), as AVID Site Teams would visit schools to provide instructional tools to teachers to close the achievement gap and ensure student success. All the instructional tools are within the WICOR framework (Shapiro & Cueseo, 2017).

AVID for Higher Education Professional Development

After much research, Shapiro and Cueseo (2017) identified four areas in higher education that needed to be addressed through professional development:

1. Graduate education did not prepare higher education faculty to teach.
2. Failure of faculty development of college instructors after they began their careers as educators.
3. Lack of communication among faculty of how to improve upon their instructional practices.
4. The overemphasis on faculty being experts in their content area without considering their ability to share their content with others.

AHE developed a resource entitled "AVID for Higher Education: High Engagement Practices for Teaching and Learning" in response to this need to train faculty in pedagogy and best practices. All the strategies within that High Engagement Practices for Teaching and

Learning fall under the proven practice of WICOR high-engagement strategies (Shapiro & Cueseo, 2017).

A Gibson Survey (Shields et al., 2018) found that a vast majority of those who attended and participated in AVID's professional development implemented AVID-based strategies in their classrooms. These AVID professional development sessions also help build the confidence of faculty in implementing the strategies in the classroom and promote more student interaction thus, AVID professional development has had a positive impact on campus climate (Shields et al., 2018). For example, students were more involved in the campus community, study groups, and more confident in the academic abilities. Faculty were also more likely to discuss instructional strategies with one another more frequently. In addition, faculty that attended AVID professional development used more student-centered activities in their classes (Shields et al., 2018). Watt et al. (2012) found that teachers who participate in AVID professional development training develop leadership skills regardless of where the teacher is in their career.

The AVID strategies used in the higher education classroom has had a positive impact on the students, including students in the minority. AVID has shown to increase student attendance among Latino students and was a strong predictor of self-efficacy and GPA among African American students (Pugh & Tschannen-Moran, 2016).

Students who participated in student-centered activities promoted by AVID are more likely to use campus resources, attend office hours, use tutoring services and participate in campus events (Shields et al., 2018; Watt et al., 2012). AVID helped community college students become more focused, organized, and motivated to continue their studies. Students who are part of AVID courses were more engaged and collaborate more than non-AVID courses and those

students who participate in courses with AVID instructors benefit from the strategies implemented within the classroom (Shields et al., 2018; Watt et al., 2012).

Theoretical Framework – Guskey's Approach to Professional Development

Guskey and Sparks (2002) have worked on ways in assessing the success of enrichment activities and have made recommendations for ensuring the professional development sessions have a long-lasting impact on the participants. Guskey and Sparks (2002) proposed a model that identified three factors which must be present to ensure quality professional development. Guskey and Sparks (2002) suggest that professional development must be designed to have a positive impact on student learning, address content and context characteristics, and include instructional process variables. Guskey and Sparks (2002) identify and define key components of professional development which include:

- *Content characteristics* addresses the faculty member being trained in discipline areas, the understanding of how students learn, or pedagogical approaches to deliver content.
- *Process variables* address how the professional development is delivered, including the type of professional development, planning, delivery, and follow-up to assess the perceived effectiveness of the professional development.
- *Context characteristics* addresses the faculty member's teaching location, the students served, the organization, and the teaching environment. Context may also include the standards and level in which the faculty members are held accountable.

Administrators have an indirect responsibility in students achieving identified learning outcomes. The administrative role in successful implementation of quality professional development is to support faculty. Guskey (2002) refers to key elements of support including

resources and faculty evaluation instruments that allow faculty to provide feedback to administration at the higher education institutions. Administrators also provide input regarding institutional policies affecting the working conditions of faculty members (Guskey & Sparks, 2002).

Guskey's Professional Development Model Evolves

As with anything, research provides evidence that helps propagate improvements and adjustments to existing educational models. In 2002, Guskey addresses four aspects of professional development referred to as "the professional development stimuli; teacher beliefs, knowledge and attitudes; teacher practices; and student outcomes" (Boyan et al., 2018, p. 129). Guskey (2016) made further recommendations on best practices in evaluating professional development.

Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation

Guskey (2016) builds upon his previous professional development framework. Guskey's model has been used to affect the beliefs and attitudes of teachers and curriculum developers about professional development. Many secondary educational professionals have used the model across multiple disciplines (Boyan et al., 2018). The Guskey Model is based on five critical stages of professional development and are listed in order of complexity:

- Level 1 – Participant reaction
- Level 2 – Participant learning
- Level 3 – Organizational support and change
- Level 4 – Participant use of new knowledge and skills
- Level 5 – Student learning outcomes.

Evidence indicates that teachers participating in professional development utilizing the Guskey model noticed an improvement in student learning outcomes. It only stands to reason that teachers may look favorably upon shared practices that produce positive results. This may lead to positive attitudes and beliefs when examining content strategies (Boyan et al., 2018).

Level 1: Participant Reaction

Participant reaction involves assessing faculty perceptions based on levels of behavior and engagement to professional development which is a common practice after a professional development session. Such an assessment is designed to judge effectiveness of the facilitator and program content. The reactions may also include non-pedagogical issues, such as the training environment, basic ergonomics, and location as well as temperature, chairs, room layout, and proper technology. Institutions may use the same survey instrument for each training session in order to ensure consistency of environmental evaluation and facilitator effectiveness (Guskey, 2016).

Level 2: Participant Learning

Participant learning may be assessed by completing a paper or electronic survey for evidence of strategies being implemented in a classroom environment. The professional development facilitator should identify the learning objectives and success indicators prior to the training session. Participants should also have an opportunity to share unintended outcomes that were not part of the learning expectations. Unintended outcomes may include collaboration among peers and building a professional learning community—it is also possible that collaboration can create roadblocks as faculty members may share negative perceptions regarding professional development (Guskey, 2016). Faculty often prefer training methods that allows for collaboratively working with other teachers and learning from each other and then

able to apply lessons learned in individual training sessions (Herman, 2012). However, Boyan et al. (2018) noted that Guskey's mode is not particularly effective in addressing learning communities among faculty members participating in professional development.

Level 3: Organization Support and Change

Organizational support and change shifts the professional development focus to structure elements and away from being participant centered in the targeted session(s). Faculty can learn best practices and explore technology in professional development sessions. However, without organizational support faculty may not be able to implement strategies learned in the session due to limitations concerning policy decisions or financial support. The lack of evident supporting student learning outcomes may not be due to ineffective professional development, but due to a lack of organization support or unwillingness to change (Guskey, 2016).

Level 4: Participants Use of New Knowledge and New Skills

Unlike Levels 1 and 2, Level 4 must be assessed over a specific period of time to gauge successful implementation of skills learned during the professional development sessions. Reflection over an identified period of time allows for modifications to professional development recommendations and to offer alternative means of providing instruction.

Level 5: Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes addresses measurable improvement to student scores based on faculty professional development. To assess the success or failure of professional development, based on student learning outcomes, is difficult due to multiple factors influencing student learning. Student learning outcomes may not be realized until a significant amount of time after the faculty member's class has ended. This, in turn, may cause the faculty member to be unable to correlate the success of student learning outcomes to a professional development

event. However, faculty may determine the effectiveness of professional development on formative assessments and student persistence throughout the semester or standardized testing at the end of the course (Guskey, 2016). Student performance can play a role in the perceived success, or failure, in professional development sessions.

Reflection on Guskey's Framework on Professional Development

Guskey's linear-path model was designed to have wide ramifications for applicability and can be powerful in evaluating the quality of professional development (Boylan et al., 2018). Guskey (2016) argues that all five levels must be considered in order to determine the effectiveness of professional development. Utilizing Guskey's approach, organizations should plan professional development beginning with Level 5. The effect on student learning outcomes should be considered first and then work in descending order to determine effectiveness of the training (Guskey, 2016).

Regardless of the results provided through Levels 1 through 5, evidence of the professional development's success may be considered inconclusive because of the reliability or validity of the evaluation instrument or method used to assess outcomes. Student success could also be influenced as a result of changes in institutional leadership, external factors, demographics, changes in pre-requisites, or governmental policies (Guskey, 2016).

Design-Based Research Framework

Measuring Success in Educational Context is Complex

Student learning may be influenced by many external factors that make it difficult to isolate professional development as the primary determinate. It can be difficult to assess the success or failure of professional development if the researcher is only using student learning outcomes to determine effectiveness (Bell, 2004; Guskey, 2016). Students achieving learning

outcomes may can be influenced by pedagogical practices while also being linked to policy factors beyond the control of the faculty member (Guskey, 2016).

With the complexity of assessing learning in research, design-based research (DBR) is an attempt to improve student outcomes that can be applied to everyday settings (Bell, 2004). DBR attempts to provide answers to complex issues. Education and learning are enigmatic and researchers making use of DBR should be cautious due to the varied epistemologies, methodologies, and results. Researchers should be open to DBR as a "fundamental mode of scholarly inquiry that is useful across fields of the academy" (Bell, 2004, p. 251).

Anderson and Shattuck (2012) researched the growth of DBR studies between 2007 and 2011 and found that DBR is growing in popularity. DBR is helping to shift research discussions from the theoretical to a more practical approach. Anderson and Shattuck (2012) noted that 74% of recent educational studies took place in kindergarten to secondary settings with only 26% taking place in post-secondary institutions.

DBR Addresses Real-World Problems of Practice

Scholars and researchers initially begin to use DBR as a way to understand learning experiences among children in everyday interactions. DBR allows scholars to build new theories based on investigative findings, and this approach works well with most scholars given the nature of educators continuing to act as interventionists in daily situations (Bell, 2004).

According O'Neil (2012), psychologists have noted that experimental comparisons in the field of education rarely lead to practical applications in the classroom and transferring experimental findings from the lab to the traditional classroom has not produced substantial validity. This realization has led leaders to develop experiments ultimately known as designed-based research (O'Neill, 2012). Ford et al. (2017) believe DBR is focused on solving real-world

problems in academic settings that connect the researcher and the educators. The experimental design process has led to educational innovations by introducing new methodologies and documenting how well those interventions work. DBR has shown promise for closing the gap between research and practical applications in the classroom (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012).

Anderson and Shattuck (2012) note that research situated in real educational context adds validity because it is being applied in a real-world setting. Confidence is gained by demonstrating it is not merely theory but actual application with documentation of proven results. DBR often relies on the collaboration of instruction designers, instructional technology specialists, subject matter experts, or scholarly practitioners (McKenney & Reeves, 2014). Focusing on the design and testing of a significant intervention allows an institution, or stakeholders, to focus on a problem of practice that can be applied in a local context. The authors go on to state research applied using real students in actual classrooms can produce implications beyond the study participants (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012).

DBR Identifiers

Anderson and Shattuck (2012) define design-based research (also known as design-research and development research) as a proven methodology. Having been designed by, and for, educators seeking to increase the impact, transfer, and translation of education research into improved practice (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012, p. 16). DBR is designed to provide a practical framework for formulating theory that will help provide instructional guidance given the context and setting. Anderson and Shattuck (2012) stated that a quality DBR is defined by (a) “being situated in a real education context” (p. 16); (b) “focusing on the design and testing of a significant intervention” (p. 16); (c) “using mixed methods” (p. 17); (d) “involving multiple interactions” (p. 17); (e) “involving a collaborative partnership between researchers and

practitioners" (p. 17); (f) "evolution to design principles" (p. 17); (g) "comparison to action research" (p. 17); and (h) "practical impact on practice" (p. 18). DBR is appropriate when new approaches to pedagogy may be necessary or a teacher's skill has been determined to be unsatisfactory. DBR is also appropriate when foundations in pedagogy and understanding is inappropriate or actual content may be new to the instructional party (Kelly, 2013).

Potential Problems with Design-Based Research

McKenney and Reeves (2013) agree with Anderson and Shattuck (2012) that DBR has brought about positive change to the field of education. However, McKenney and Reeves (2013) believe that DBR still has much to prove in terms of providing evidence on informed theoretical understanding and improvements in practical applications. McKenney and Reeves (2013) are also skeptical that DBR results actually lead to improved practice. Many of the findings of DBR identify potential impact verses genuine impact which may lead to premature conclusions.

DBR is not appropriate for all research applications and is geared towards educational settings (Kelly, 2013). According to McKenney and Reeves (2013), when DBR is used in an educational context, a clear plan of desired outcomes before launching the DBR. Once initiated, an understanding of how to adapt the findings to the implementation stage also must exist (McKenney & Reeves, 2013). The researcher typically works collaboratively with the subjects, and/or educators, which can have an impact on bias during the discovery process. While the researcher may be enthusiastic or eager to apply an intervention with colleagues, all parties must be prepared to admit if the intervention is, or is not, effective (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012).

Design-Based Research Interventions

Anderson and Shattuck (2012) found that DBR interventions resulted in improved outcomes and helped offer guidance on classroom impact in a local context. DBR successes or

failures, utilizing DBR interventions, are usually assessed using a mixed methods approach. The mixed methods approach allows for educators to gauge the validity of the research before attempting to apply the intervention in a local setting (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012). Interventions can include, but are not limited to, types of assessments, application of technology, or professional development. The design of the intervention is pivotal to DBR and identifying the amount of time and the resources needed to replicate the outcome. Thus, allowing additional educators to accurately gauge if the selected intervention is practical (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012).

When choosing multiple interventions, educators need to be willing to modify the intervention allowing the educator to reflect on the practices, adapt, and adjust to improve implementation strategies. It may be challenging to determine when the research concludes as educators continuously reflect on how to improve (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012).

Most educational research models do not result in an interminable flow of innovation. However, DBR allows the researcher(s) to play an active role regarding continuous improvement (Bell, 2004). A collaborative partnership between research and the practitioner is necessary throughout a DBR experiment where the researcher and the facilitator are one and the same when assessing to the problem of practice. The researcher should use a literature review to help identify potential solutions and select a design intervention that will address the problem. It is then necessary to assess the intervention and to determine success or failure (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012).

Implications of Design-Based Research in Education

The ability to reproduce results is key in basic science; however, in an educational setting it is challenging to expect the same results due to inconsistent variables. Differences may arise

from poor implementation, pedagogical strategies, or other factors such as policy changes as well as limited administration support. Teaching and learning is complex and educators do not always value the failure of an intervention because it did not work as predicted. It is important for the educator not to abandon an intervention if it fails but to reflect on why it failed and improve the plan for the future implementation (O'Neill, 2012).

Evolution of design principles is the process by which the researcher uses the findings from the intervention to make recommendations on possible modifications for future improvement. The reflective researcher can assess what should be shared with others in similar educational settings. This part of DBR is important because the interventions should be continued to be applied, and assessed, once the research phase is complete (Shattuck & Anderson, 2013). The implications of the intervention and research should go far beyond the research phase. Educators should view the DBR intervention as a building block that can help continuous improvement of practice (Shattuck & Anderson, 2013).

Education consists of the science of learning and the art of teaching. DBR makes an effort to define potential classroom solutions to further educational strategies but admits that research is not always complete. Educational models and students evolve along with the culture and societal norms. DBR is a highly effective tool that examines societal factors and is useful in preparing applied solutions in the field of education. DBR can play a role in improving educational practices in addition to supporting educational theory helping to explain student outcomes (O'Neill, 2012).

Professional Development Used for Online Faculty in DBR

Researchers can use DBR as a way to promote professional development in teaching practices or the use of technology over an extended period of time. The complexity of DBR

allow instructional interventions to take many forms including online delivery (Bell, 2004). In the past, professional development has been geared towards full-time faculty that teach in the face-to-face environment (Mueller et al., 2013). With the growth of online programs, higher education institutions are expanding professional development to meet the needs of all distance education faculty. College faculty often learn their pedagogical practices through observation of their high school and college instructors and may not have been formally trained in areas of pedagogy or andragogy. Faculty are also influenced by the online experience making professional development equally important (Shattuck & Anderson, 2013).

Research has shown that online college instructors benefit from participating as students in online professional development (Shattuck & Anderson, 2013). In the state of Maryland, online instructors were asked to participate in a Certificate for Online Adjunct Teaching (COAT). Shattuck and Anderson (2013) completed a DBR study on the COAT training and documented the advantages for online faculty participating asynchronously. As institutions consider additional adjunct faculty for teaching online, economies of scale are being realized (Mueller et al., 2013). Adjuncts are becoming common place and institutions can offer sections and courses not traditionally offered. Profit can be a motivating factor when the institution does not have to worry about contractual obligations associated with full-time employees (Rahman, 2001). The trend seems to favor adding more online adjunct faculty which, in turn, will necessitate more professional development.

It has been observed that online full-time faculty have a higher student satisfaction rate than the adjunct counterpart (Mueller et al., 2013). Full-time faculty are able to focus on instruction and meeting student needs expected as a professional. Adjunct instructors may not have education as the primary career or are journeymen with obligations to more than one

institution. As a result, adjuncts can feel marginalized because of the pay differentials and are not able to embrace the institution in ways that a full-time faculty member that has access to multiple support resources (Gaillard-Kenney, 2006). Online faculty can benefit from high-engagement strategies for the suited to the delivery method. Including adjunct faculty in the professional development sessions may can create a greater connection to the hiring institution. Sessions where the instructor plays the role of the student helps to establish empathy with the intended participants.

Summary

Online instruction and distance education will continue to grow as technology advances and citizens continue to explore viable options for continuing their education. As higher education institutions examine ways to remain profitable, administrators are likely to embrace adjunct faculty. To maintain the quality of instruction, higher education institutions must examine best practices and train adjunct faculty accordingly. Many adjunct faculty have full-time jobs and may live outside the area of the home institution. Instructional preparation is key to prepare college faculty for the online classroom and hiring institutions need to examine alternative training methods such as asynchronous delivery for adjunct faculty. DBR is a method for developing instructional implementation strategies and can assist in preparing faculty. As content is increasingly offered through distance education, high quality online professional development may be offered to adjunct faculty utilizing the same technology thereby enhancing student learning outcomes.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to assess the perceived impact an online asynchronous professional development delivery model has on adjunct faculty and adjunct faculty's perceived impact the professional development has on student engagement in the online classroom. The professional development will be offered over a six-week term that will be offered asynchronously using the institution's learning management system. The study questions for this study will focus on online adjunct faculty perceptions on the potential impact of an online asynchronous professional development session has on student success and engagement.

Study Questions

Below are the study questions that are designed to assess the perceptions of adjunct faculty on an asynchronous online professional development course and the method by which the course is designed:

1. What is the perceived impact an asynchronous online delivery method of professional development have on adjunct faculty?
2. What is the perceived impact the strategies shared in this professional development have on student engagement?
3. What is the perceived impact the MEASURE Model framework have on assessing the implementation of specific instructional strategies and collaboration among professionals?

Study Question 1 (SQ1) is designed to assess the quality of professional development delivery method that is conducive to the schedule needs of adjunct faculty. Study Question 2 (SQ2) will be used to explore the perceived impact the strategies will have on students that are

enrolled in an adjunct's online course. The combination of these two study questions will assess the perceived effectiveness of the professional development delivery method. If the strategies taught within the professional development session are not perceived as relevant to the adjuncts, the perceived impact on the delivery method in which the professional development is offered may not truly reflect the quality of an asynchronous online environment. In addition, if the online asynchronous delivery method does not allow for the participants to learn about the content and apply the knowledge, the perceived impact of the quality of the strategies presented may not be truly reflective of their effectiveness. The strategies taught and the delivery method by which these strategies are delivered must be aligned.

Study Design and Rationale

The problem of practice is that over one-third of this college's online faculty is comprised of adjunct faculty and adjunct faculty do not have access to professional development which has proven to increase student success and retention (Shields et al., 2018; Watt et al., 2012). This qualitative study answers the study questions by assessing online adjunct faculty's perceived impact of an online asynchronous professional development session may have improving the student engagement. There are two approaches to the study's design: (1) Design-Based Research (DBR) to complete the formative evaluation to assess the specific strategies; (2) Program summative evaluation to evaluate the quality of the method by which of the professional development was delivered (see Figure 1).

Formative Assessment - DBR Methodology

A formative program evaluation methodology allows for continuous feedback and modifications throughout the duration of the program and allows the me to focus on the immediate need(s) of the program, or in this case, professional development (Spaulding, 2013).

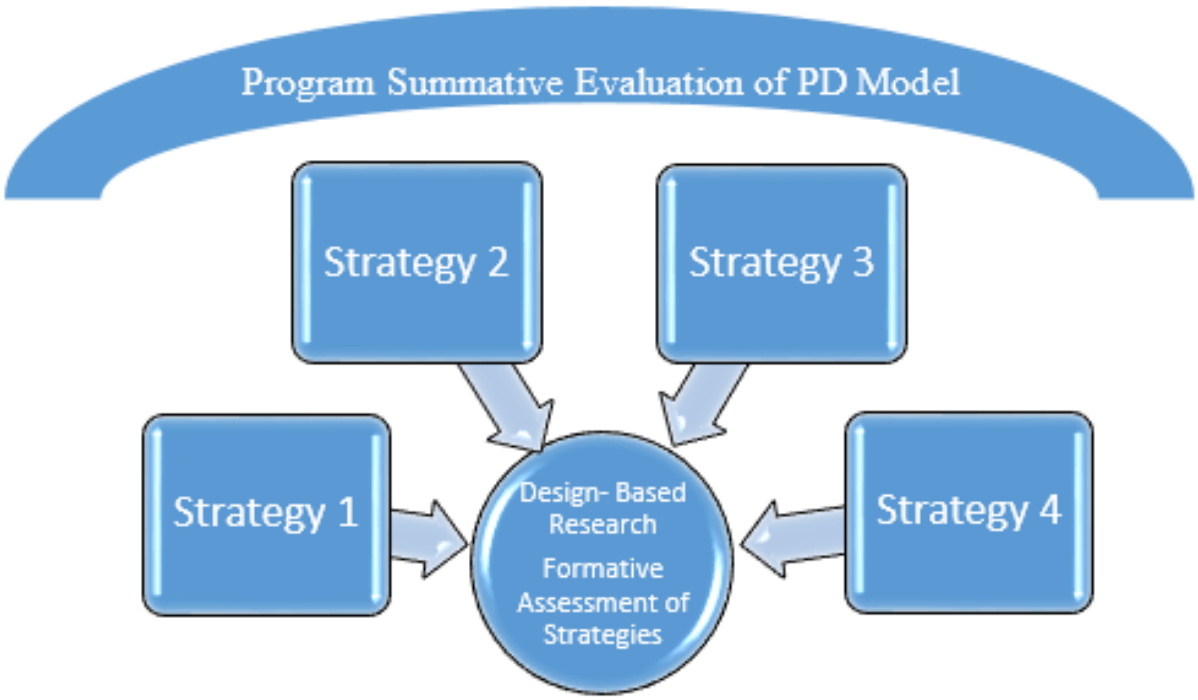

Figure 1. Program Summative Evaluation and DBR Formative Assessment of Strategies.

However, DBR will be used because of its unique approach to assessing an on ongoing study specifically in the field of instructional technology. DBR often relies on the collaboration of instruction designers, instructional technology specialists, subject matter experts, or scholarly practitioners (McKenney & Reeves, 2014). Ford et al. (2017) believe DBR is focused on solving real-world problems in academic settings that connect the researcher and the educators. The experimental design process has led to educational innovations by introducing new methodologies and documenting how well those interventions work. DBR has shown promise for closing the gap between research and practical applications in the classroom (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012).

Summative Assessment - Program Evaluation

According to Fitzpatrick et al. (2011), a program's summative evaluation is best suited to assess the perceived experience after the program has been completed. The summative assessment is used to assess the perceived worthiness of a program and if it should continue to be used in the future (Fizpatrick et al., 2011). Therefore, a summative program evaluation methodology will be the used to assess the perceived impact of the professional development as it relates to the delivery method and meeting the needs of the adjunct's professional growth (see Figure 1).

Introduction of the MEASURE Model

I explored several models to use as a framework for teaching instructional strategies to faculty and then allow an opportunity for faculty to apply the strategies while reflecting on the strategies impact for future use. Frameworks researched in the literature review, such as Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) and Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate (ADDIE),

would require the assumption that faculty already know enough about instruction, pedagogy, strategies, when to use strategies, and how to implement strategies.

As noted in the literature review, faculty often do not have a reference for instructional strategies and often do not know strategies exist. Therefore, faculty cannot be asked to plan or analyze a strategy that they do not know exists to accomplish a certain goal such as increase student engagement or positively affect participants understanding a concept.

I determined that in order for this professional development model to be effective a new instrument must be developed. This new instrument must first model the instructional strategy for the participants in order to demonstrate how the strategy is useful by asking the participants to actively participate as if they were students. Research has shown that college instructors benefit from participating as students in professional development (Shattuck & Anderson, 2013). After participating as a student, the participants need to be allowed to take a metacognitive view at the strategy to see how it could be useful in their classrooms.

Modeling the strategy and asking participants to play the role of students is not enough to elicit faculty implementation of the strategy. Faculty need to know why the strategy is effective, when a strategy could be used, and how to implement the strategy within the classroom. I also believed that an instrument that only models and explains and the rationale of the strategy will not have a lasting impact on the further implementations of the strategy. An effective instrument should also include an opportunity for the facilitator of the professional development to guide the participants through the process of implementing the strategy in an ongoing course with students actively participating. This would help build the instructor's confidence in implementing the strategy and allows the instructor to apply what they have learned in a real-world setting.

To increase the likelihood of further implementation of strategies, faculty should have a platform to share their findings with colleagues. A professional learning network will develop organically within the professional development session as faculty are encouraged to collaborate in discussion forums. An instrument that fosters and encourages the relationship among colleagues may lead to a lasting professional learning network that lasts beyond the professional development session and once the facilitator is no longer actively participating in the training.

There is a need for instrument that encourages a cyclical system that provides a platform for a continuous improvement and reflection among colleagues long after the facilitator is no longer part of the process. Continuous improvement and reflection on best practices should not exist in a vacuum and is more effective if a professional learning network is place.

After I considered the components of an effective instrument for modeling a strategy and encouraging faculty to implement the strategy, a new instrument has been created, the MEASURE Model. This instrument that asks the facilitator to Model, Explain, Apply, Share, Use a Learning Network, Reflect, and Evolve (MEASURE) will provide a framework by which all the above criteria are met and will be used as a guide for training faculty on specific instructional strategies. This instrument also provides a cyclical framework which encourages faculty to Apply, Share, Use a professional learning network, Reflect, and Evolve (ASURE) once the facilitator is no longer part of the training. The MEASURE Model requires an extended period of time to be used and cannot be applied in one-day training.

Model

The facilitator will model the instructional strategy within the professional development session. The facilitator may choose not to let participants know they are being introduced to a new strategy until after the conclusion of the strategy. This may train participants to begin

reviewing everything they do within a professional development session and, maybe more importantly, outside the professional development setting for potential applications and strategies within the classroom.

Explain

During the modeling phase, the participants have actively participated in the strategy and have been exposed to the strategy in the role of a student. The next step is for the facilitator to explain why the strategy is important, when the strategy can be used, and how to implement the strategy. The "how" part may require the facilitator to provide a template, examples, or web-based tools in the online classroom.

Apply

Participants will apply the strategy by implementing the strategy in their active classroom setting. The participants will be responsible creating questions or prompts that are applicable to their content or curriculum area.

Share

The facilitator should provide a platform by which the participants can share their findings after applying the strategy in the classroom. These findings should be candid and should include successes and failures. The platform can be an online asynchronous digital discussion forum or a face-to-face meeting established after others have had an opportunity to apply the strategy.

During the Share phase, participants should share the questions or prompts provided to students, tools used to implement the strategy, and student samples of the applied strategy. This is especially helpful in learning networks where the strategies are being shared across multiple disciplines and curricula.

Use a Professional Learning Network

The facilitator will make the participants aware of the professional learning network that currently exists within the professional development session. The participants will use this learning network to learn best practices from each other. Participants may learn from each other what worked and, sometimes even more importantly, what did not work. Participants should be encouraged to respond to great ideas that were observed by colleagues and provide feedback on ways colleagues could improve on the strategy moving forward.

Reflect

After receiving feedback from the professional learning network, participants will reflect on the strategy's potential impact on student engagement and student learning outcomes. The participants will be asked to address the following prompts in a personal or online journal:

1. What impact do you perceive this strategy will have on student engagement within future courses?
2. Did this strategy have an impact on student learning outcomes within your course?

Participants will have the option to share their reflection using discussion forums with others in the professional learning network as they consider the answer to these questions. Participants will read the reflective posts of their colleagues to learn and observe final thoughts of their colleagues within the professional learning network. This will lead to participants observing on the strategy's implications across multiple disciplines.

Evolve

As evidence of educational practitioners who seek to continuously improve, participants will be asked to describe how they will enhance or adapt this strategy for future implementations.

The facilitator should provide guiding questions to encourage reflection by participants such as, "Will you use this strategy in the future? If so, what will you do differently?"

The facilitator must be open to the participants acknowledging that the strategy is not impactful and may not be useful in further educational settings for some participants. The facilitator must also consider the if strategies should be included in future trainings. Facilitators are not immune to continuous improvement and must be willing to evolve as well.

Evolve is the last phase in which the facilitator plays an active role. It is the role of the facilitator at this point to make the participants aware of the professional learning network that exists and provide a platform for the ASURE cycle to continue for the foreseeable future. The ASURE cycle may exist in the form of an online platform or as part as scheduled departmental meetings. An example of the structure of the MEASURE Model in implementing the "Online Name Tent" can be found in Appendix E.

Participants

The target population for this study will be online adjunct faculty that have been hired since fall of 2016. This study will consist of 10-20 adjunct faculty which is consistent with the defining feature of a qualitative study (Creswell, 1998). With a participant group of approximately 20 people, meaningful discussion should occur throughout the professional development session.

Adjunct faculty in this study will live in various parts of the United States and their age ranges will widely vary. Adjunct faculty may be veteran online instructors or they may be new to online instruction. All the adjunct faculty considered for this study will have a minimum of a master's degree in their content area or a minimum of 18 graduate hours in their field of study.

These credentials are required from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

This study will use a typical case sample sampling by a means of selecting participants for this professional development. Typical case sampling allows the researcher to study an event or program as it relates to a group of individuals and then can be expanded to others with those same characteristics (Crossman, 2018). This sampling procedure will allow for the replication of this study to other adjunct faculty in future studies.

The participants in this study must NOT be full-time instructors at the institution being studied. The participants must be online adjunct faculty hired since 2016 by the Department of Online Instruction at the institution used in this study. The Department of Online Instruction instituted a more rigorous hiring process of online adjunct faculty beginning in 2016. The hiring process included the requirement of a sample lesson offered through a video demonstration along with a formative assessment to assess student understanding in an online setting. Interviews of potential online adjunct faculty would only be conducted after the video demonstration was approved by the department of online instruction. This hiring process was implemented to secure adjunct faculty adjuncts willing to use technology to deliver content as well as demonstrate a basic understanding of the candidate's knowledge of online pedagogy.

This study will require online adjunct faculty to apply new strategies in their ongoing online courses. Therefore, participants in this study must be actively teaching an online course during the semester of the study. Adjunct faculty that are on the faculty roster of the college in this study but are not currently teaching will also be asked to participate as long as they are currently teaching online at another higher education institution. Online instructors from other institution may help provide insights and outside perspectives. However, these instructors must

have had been hired through the Department of Online instruction since the new hiring process was implemented in 2016.

There are 22 online adjunct faculty who are candidates for this study because they are teaching in the semester that will be studied. The 22 adjunct faculty will be asked to volunteer for this study prior to the start of the semester using electronic mail and a Google Form to recruit those who are willing to participate and also ask for basic demographic information and employment status.

Ethical Considerations and Informed Consent

I will seek permission from East Carolina University's Internal Review Board (IRB) for permission to complete this study (see Appendix A). Research methods and questions will be approved by the IRB before the study takes place.

There are ethical considerations that will be considered throughout this study. There are no funds to pay adjunct faculty for their time to complete the training and all participants will volunteer. I will serve as the facilitator of the professional development session during this study. I am the department head of online instruction at the institution in which the adjunct faculty teach. Online adjunct instructors are hired on a semester by semester employment contract and I am the supervisor who determines which adjuncts are contracted to teach the courses.

I will ensure that the directors of the content areas maintain that participation is completely voluntary and refusal to volunteer or to stop participating in the study will have no repercussions. In soliciting volunteers, the directors of the content area will make it clear that adjunct faculty participation and the lack of participation will be reported as part of the findings of this study and that adjunct faculty will not have any undue pressure to participate in the study.

I will email the candidates using the institution's assigned Gmail account. This initial email will contain a video describing the content that will be covered in the professional development activities and potential benefits of learning the strategies being taught. The initial email will also share the ethical considerations and that participating in the study is completely voluntary and that they will not receive any monetary benefits. Adjunct instructor's names will not be used in this study; instead, pseudonyms for this study will be used (see Appendix B).

Instrumentation

To answer the first study question (SQ1) "*What is the perceived impact an asynchronous online delivery method of professional development have on adjunct faculty?*" a focus group will be used. A focus group will allow the adjuncts to share their summarized perceptions of the professional development and delivery method (see Appendix C).

The entire professional development model is based on an asynchronous online environment and the focus group will also be conducted this way. Therefore, I will use an asynchronous focus group as an instrument to answer the SQ1 (see Appendix C). I will use tools within the learning management system to allow an asynchronous conversation between adjunct faculty for the period of one week to allow everyone an opportunity to participate. Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation framework will be used to develop the questions within the focus group.

To answer the second study question (SQ2) *"What is the perceived impact the strategies shared in this professional development have on student engagement?"* I will create an instrument to assess the individual strategies consistently. The instrument was shared with subject matter experts and their input was used to create the final version of the instrument.

The instrument used to assess each strategy is the MEASURE Model. The MEASURE Model was designed to create a model for implementing effective change in professional development by scaffolding instructional strategies in an educational setting (see Figure 2). The MEASURE model will be used to assess the success in each strategy's perceived effectiveness in an educational setting (see Appendix D).

Formative Evaluation of Individual Online Strategies

There are four online strategies that will be taught in the online asynchronous professional development training. These four online strategies are strategies that have been presented in a face-to-face setting by the non-profit organization, AVID for Higher Education (AHE). Each strategy's perceived impact on student engagement and student learning outcomes will be assessed individually by using text-based or video-based discussion forums. The formative evaluation of these individual strategies will use the MEASURE Model. The four strategies being modeled and explained are:

- Online Name Tents
- Online Social Contracts
- Online Frayer Model
- Online 10-2 Lecture

The questions guiding the online discussions of perceived impact of the strategies will be derived from "ASURE" portion of the MEASURE Model. Below are the tasks and discussions that will be used to assess the perceived impact on student engagement and student learning outcomes along with the online strategy.

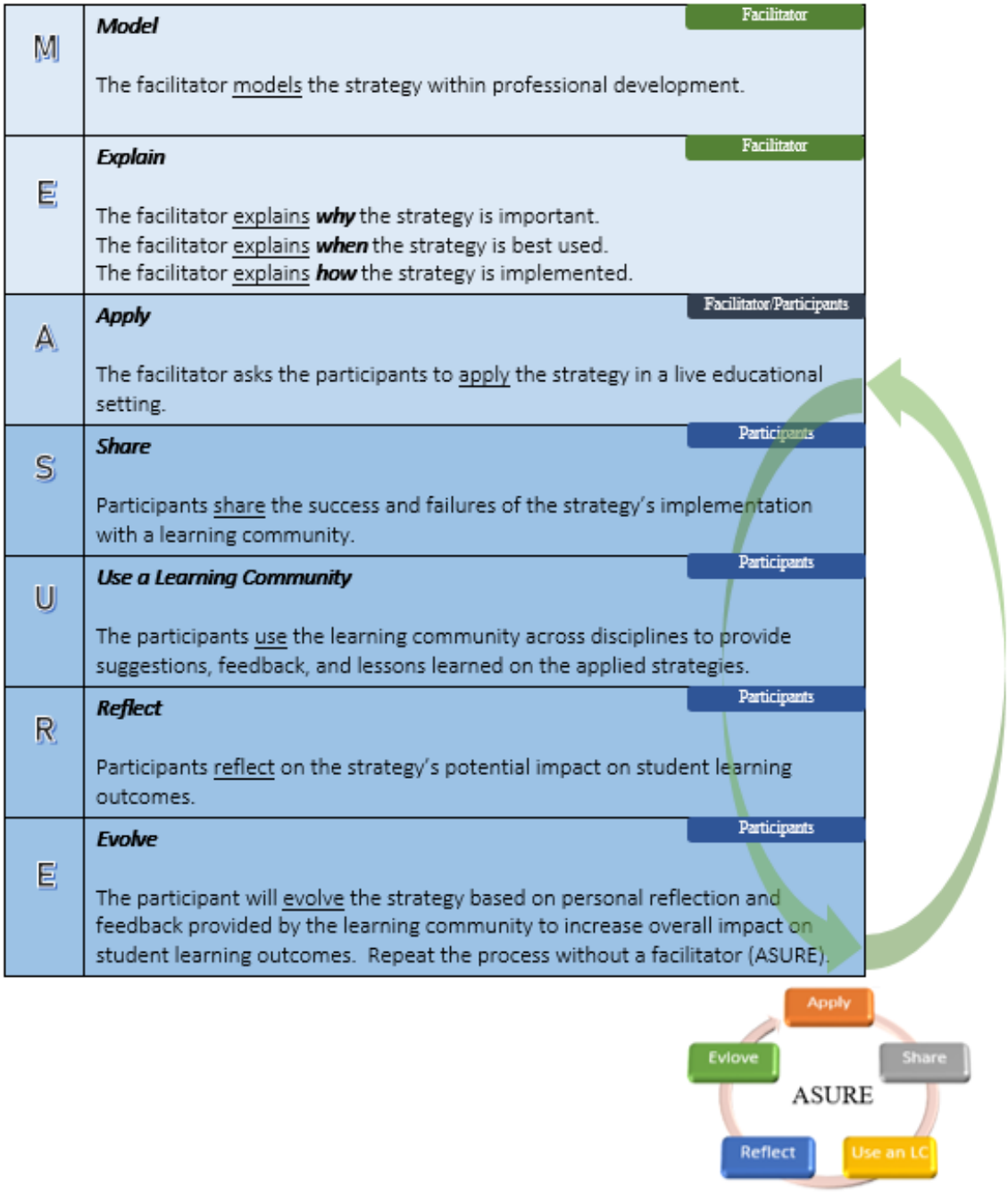

Figure 2. MEASURE Model.

The MEASURE Model Application for this Study

The MEASURE Model will be used to assess the perceived impact on each individual strategy for this study. The perceived impact for the four strategies covered in the professional development will each be addressed using the MEASURE Model. In the designing the professional development online course, the MEASURE Model will be used as a framework for the course design.

There are four online strategies that will be taught in the online asynchronous professional development training. These four online strategies are strategies that have been presented by AVID for Higher Education in a face-to-face setting. Each strategy's perceived impact on student engagement and student learning outcomes will be assessed individually by using text-based or video-based discussion forums. The formative evaluation of these individual strategies will use the MEASURE Model. The four strategies being modeled and explained are:

- Online Name Tents
- Online Social Contracts
- Online Frayer Model
- Online 10-2 Lecture

The questions guiding the online discussions of perceived impact of the strategies will be derived from "ASURE" portion of the MEASURE Model. Below are the tasks and discussions that will be used to assess the perceived impact on student engagement and student learning outcomes along with the online strategy.

Model

The facilitator will model AHE's online strategy. The participants will play the role of the student during the Model phase.

Explain

The facilitator will explain why the strategy is effective in the online classroom, when it is best to use the strategy and how to use a learning management system or web-based tool to implement the strategy.

Apply

Participants will apply AHE's online strategy by implementing this strategy in their active online courses using one a web-based tool or a web-based tool that is recommended.

Share

Participants of this professional development session will post the results in a discussion board in the learning management system. Within the discussion board, participants will post:

- The prompt or questions provided to students.
- The tool used to implement the strategy.
- A screenshot of the results of the online strategy.

Use the Professional Learning Network

Participants will be part of a professional learning network within the course. The participants will use this learning network to learn best practices from each other. Adjunct faculty will read each other's posts along with how the strategy was implemented. Participants will be asked to respond to any great ideas that were observed by colleagues and provide feedback on ways colleagues could improve on the strategy.

Reflect

After receiving feedback from the professional learning network comprised of the adjunct faculty, participants will reflect on the strategy's potential impact on student engagement and

student learning outcomes in online discussion. The participants will be asked to address the following prompts within the online discussion:

- What impact do you perceive this strategy will have on student engagement within your online course?
- What impact do you perceive this strategy will have on student learning outcomes within your online course?

Participants will not be able to see other participants' posts until after the participant post answers to the questions. Participants will read the reflective posts to learn and observe final thoughts of other participants on the strategy and how it can affect students across multiple disciplines.

Procedures

The purpose of this qualitative study is to assess the perceived impact an online asynchronous professional development delivery model has on adjunct faculty and adjunct faculty's perceived impact the professional development has on student engagement in the online classroom. This model allows leaders in professional development to provide professional development to adjunct faculty or other stakeholders. Stakeholders, other than adjunct faculty, may also not be able to participate in professional development due to times the professional development is being offered or the geographic location of the training and participants.

Although the focus of this study is directed towards online adjunct faculty, the model of asynchronous online professional development that is engaging and interactive could be applied to multiple arenas and the ability to replicate this model is imperative. If the model proves to be successful, it is important that this model can be implemented by future researchers and leaders in professional development.

The first step in designing a professional development session is to identify the needs of those being trained. To identify the needs of those being trained, the facilitator should draw on experiences in the field and perform a literature review on possible professional development content in order to establish a curriculum. The curriculum for the professional development session should address the areas that needs to be addressed.

The curriculum should be presented to instructional design specialists and subject matter experts in the content area to design a professional development session comprising of a team that will work to establish a timeframe in which the content can be effectively delivered and curriculum's learning outcomes. This team will take the timeframe and the learning outcomes to backward map and design the course creating modules that meet the timeframe and address all the learning outcomes. The asynchronous online delivery method requires a design that allows participants to participate at which fit their needs and also allows for conversations to occur in different time intervals (asynchronously). For example, a conversation that may traditionally take one hour to take place in a face-to-face setting may require a week of threaded discussions in an online forum.

The instructional design specialists and subject matter experts will work together to design an online course through a learning management system (LMS) where the participants have access. The facilitator of the professional development must have a basic understanding of how to work within a LMS and the basic tools that a LMS uses.

The institution may have a different method of choosing who participates in the training. The findings and recommendations of this study may help stakeholders choose which approach will be best. Once the participants of the professional development session have been identified

they should be enrolled as students in the LMS. The facilitator of the training should provide a syllabus with a schedule and expected learning outcomes prior to the start of the training.

This study will provide a framework for delivering asynchronous online instruction and assessing its perceived impact on the participants in several fields of study. At the conclusion of the study, the facilitator will an asynchronous focus group to solicit feedback from the participants on improvements, feedback, and suggestions on future delivery of the online professional development session. However, if the curriculum has been developed to provide training in an educational setting, the facilitator should use the MEASURE Model (see Figure 2) to help guide the participants in becoming reflective practitioners and to improve on the material that will be presented in the future.

Data Analysis

I will contact the volunteers through the institution's Gmail account to ensure the email accounts being used are secured with passwords and third-party vendors. Adjunct faculty are assigned a username and password upon being hired at the institution. Those who choose to participate will submit their information using Google Forms which is used by institution. The participants will be added to the professional development session within the LMS as students.

Adjunct faculty will be contacted via the institution's Gmail and LMS and participants will be required only to communicate via the LMS. Participants will also be asked to collaborate by using the integrated software, "VoiceThread."

The formative evaluation occurs using the DBR framework and the MEASURE Model on a weekly basis. I will use the closed captions features of VoiceThread to build the transcripts of the conversations and collaboration of the participants. Although the closed captioning feature in VoiceThread will be used to create transcripts, I will review the videos to ensure accurate

audio-to-text transcription. I will use the texts posted by the participants within the LMS and transcripts from videos to build a database of comments to study.

The summative evaluation will be completed by using VoiceThread. Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation framework will be used to ask questions within the focus group, and the questions will be embedded throughout the VoiceThread. VoiceThread will transcribe the video into text, and I will verify the text's accuracy.

Methodological Assumptions and Limitations

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), there are four separate areas used to establish validity, reliability, and trustworthiness. Those four areas are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility is the "truth" of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The threat to credibility in this study is that adjunct faculty may feel a need to provide only positive feedback in efforts to please the researcher who is their direct supervisor. I have previously established an open and honest dialogue with the institution's online adjunct faculty to provide honest feedback on online expectations and course evaluations. The positive relationship established between the adjunct faculty and me will allow for transparent feedback from the participants. In the DBR methodology, the researcher works collaboratively with the educators, which may impact bias during the discovery process. While the researcher may be enthusiastic or eager to apply an intervention with colleagues, **all** parties must be prepared to admit if the intervention is, or is not, effective (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012).

Transferability is the ability to replicate this study to other settings or context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability was addressed in the Procedures section of this text. The online asynchronous delivery method should be applicable to several settings. This study is designed

specifically for training in which the facilitator plays an active role in engaging the students in meaningful thought and collaboration. Additionally, this study should be especially helpful in educational contexts regardless of the content area being discussed.

Dependability is the evidence that the findings are consistent and can be replicated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). At the conclusion of this study, the participants will share feedback and reflect on the overall experience of the professional development model. The feedback provided will be used to improve on the next professional development sessions offered in this format. At the conclusion of each professional development modules, the facilitator should ask for feedback from the participants to continuously improve on the implementation of further online asynchronous professional development sessions. The last offering of a professional development module should be of the best quality as professional practitioners always look to improve.

Confirmability is the ability to confirm the study is neutral in sharing the perceptions of the participants without the researcher affecting their perceived impacts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study is acting as the facilitator of the professional development session as recommended by the DBR framework. Although I am the supervisor of the participants, I will ask for full transparency when seeking their perceptions. This will be reiterated throughout the professional development sessions with the point of view that I would not want to continue a practice that not is not truthfully impactful to online adjunct faculty.

Role of the Researcher

I oversee the department of online instruction at the participating community college. Within this Department of Online instruction there are directors of online content that oversee specific content areas. The directors report to me in the organization and execute the mission in

efforts to maintain quality online instruction and best practices in the online environment. These directors communicate with online adjuncts and evaluate their courses for quality. The directors make decisions regarding online sections that are taught by online adjuncts based on enrollment needs and the adjunct faculty's ability to respond to feedback.

The role of the researcher is this study is a key component to the success of this study. Based on the DBR methodology, the researcher acts as the facilitator (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012). This makes this study unique and different from other methodologies as I will be consistently engaged with the participants within the study.

I will ask the directors of online content to share the opportunity to participate in the study. I will provide the directors with language that will be included in the email that maintains participation in this study is completely voluntary and refusal to volunteer or to stop participating in the study will have no repercussions. The directors will not use participation in this study as a determining when scheduling adjunct faculty for specific teaching assignments in the future and I will not share the list of online adjunct faculty that participate in the study.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study is to assess the perceived impact an online asynchronous professional development delivery model has on adjunct faculty and adjunct faculty's perceived impact the professional development sessions has on student engagement in the online classroom. The problem of practice is that over one-third of this college's online faculty is comprised of adjunct faculty, and adjunct faculty may not have access to professional development sessions which may result in increased student success and retention. The qualitative study will answer the study questions by assessing online adjunct faculty's perceived impact of an online asynchronous professional development session may have on improving

student engagement. The study design will be a combination of DBR for ongoing formative evaluation to assess the specific strategies and a program summative evaluation to evaluate the quality of the method by which of the professional development session was delivered. The findings of this study presented in the following chapters will provide the successes and failures of this approach to professional development session for adjunct faculty. Other researchers will be able to use these findings and the recommendations that follow to design professional development sessions in their setting.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to determine whether and how the model of online asynchronous professional development can be effective in training online adjunct faculty. Chapter 3 provided the methodology in which data would be collected and analyzed. The questions guiding this study were:

1. What is the perceived impact an asynchronous online delivery method of professional development has on adjunct faculty?
2. What is the perceived impact the strategies shared in this professional development have on student engagement?
3. What is the perceived impact the MEASURE Model framework has on assessing the implementation of specific instructional strategies and collaboration among professionals?

This chapter presents the collected data to ascertain the effectiveness of online professional development courses that focus on online instructional strategies and the MEASURE Model designed to structure the training. The data analysis reflects the effectiveness of the online asynchronous professional development session on adjunct faculty, as well as the perceived impact the professional development had on student engagement and student learning outcomes. .

Over one-third of online faculty at the institution in this study are adjunct faculty, and those adjunct faculty have limited access to professional development opportunities due to location and other obligations. In Chapter 1, the lack of access to professional development for online faculty is a problem for the institution located in eastern North Carolina. Chapter 2 provided literature that outlines the need for professional development for faculty to improve and

implement best practices continuously. Chapter 3 presented ways to assess professional development's success using Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development. The five critical stages of professional development and are listed in order of complexity:

- Level 1 – Participant reaction
- Level 2 – Participant learning
- Level 3 – Organizational support and change
- Level 4 – Participant use of new knowledge and skills
- Level 5 – Student learning outcomes.

The online asynchronous professional development was offered over six weeks at the beginning of the 2019 fall semester (September – October). The start date is significant because faculty were asked to implement community building strategies in the active online classes. Data were collected within the institution's learning management system (LMS) as the participants went through online training. Participants provided perceptions of strategies in discussion forums and the web-based tool, VoiceThread. VoiceThread provided online faculty the option to respond to prompts using text, audio, or video. Intelliboard, a data collection tool within the LMS, was used to track the amount of time participants were active in the LMS.

Adjunct faculty who were hired since the department of online instruction instituted a more rigorous hiring process of online adjuncts at the institution were considered and recruited for online asynchronous professional development. The number of recruited participants was consistent with Creswell's (1998) research that noted 10-20 participants is a defining feature of a qualitative study. Nineteen adjunct faculty met the criteria of being hired through a rigorous selection process and were recruited. Eleven adjunct faculty expressed interest by submitting a form consenting to participate in the study. Out of the 11 adjunct faculty who agreed to the

study, 10 registered for professional development course using the institution's enrollment management system. Most of the 10 online adjunct faculty that registered for the professional development course do not live close to campus (see Table 1). The participants vary in their years of experience in instruction with an overall average of 6.2 years and the participants vary in their highest level of degree completion (see Table 2). Those who registered for the professional development course represent multiple areas of content areas (see Table 3).

Only nine of the adjunct faculty completed the first activity in the course which asked the participants to verify their enrollment (see Table 4). This first activity was called "enrollment verification activity." As a result, nine adjunct faculty showed commitment to participate in the course. These nine adjunct faculty were called "active participants" for this study.

Intervention Fidelity

I created an online asynchronous professional development course as an intervention to address the lack of professional development among adjunct faculty and to increase student engagement in online courses. Online adjunct faculty were introduced to four AVID strategies and were asked to implement them within their online classrooms. The MEASURE Model was used to frame the intervention throughout the professional development.

The professional development asynchronous course was offered over a period of six weeks through the institution's learning management system. Participants were assigned due dates to meet learning outcomes and to have meaningful discussions with their colleagues concerning the strategies. The professional development course had three learning outcomes:

- Collaboration with online instructors to implement best practice.
- Critically think about web-based tools.
- Implement four AVID strategies in ongoing online curriculum courses.

Table 1

Active Participants' Location Relative to the Institution's Location

< 50 miles from Institution	> 50 miles from Institution
22%	78%

Note. These numbers reflect the number of active participants

Table 2

Participants' Instructional Experience

Name	College Instructor (years)	Online College Instructor (years)	Highest Level of Education
Andy	3	0	Doctorate
Erin	15	10	Master's
Ron	1	1	Master's
Leslie	6	4	Doctorate
April	16	16	Doctorate
Donna	35	11	Doctorate
Ann	6	6	Master's
Kelly	2	2	Bachelor's
Jill	10	9	Master's
Pam	3	3	Master's

Note. Average online college instructor experience = 6.2 years.

Table 3

Participants' Content Area(s)

Name	Content Area
Andy	Humanities and Social Sciences
Erin	Humanities and Social Sciences
*Ron	Natural Sciences, Business Technologies
Leslie	Humanities and Social Sciences
*April	English, Adult and Higher Education
Donna	Natural Sciences
Ann	Humanities and Social Sciences
Kelly	Computer Information Technology
Jill	Humanities and Social Sciences
Pam	Humanities and Social Sciences

Note. *Some online faculty are qualified to teach in multiple content areas.

Table 4

Online Adjunct Faculty Recruitment, Response Rate, and Completion of Professional Development

Adjunct Faculty	Results
Adjunct Faculty Recruited	19
Consented to Study	11
Registered for Training	10
Completed the Enrollment Verification Activity	9
% Completed the Enrollment Verification Activity	47.4
% *Active Participants* that Successfully Completed All Training Modules	66.7

Note. Active participants are adjunct faculty who registered for the professional development and committed to participate in the training as demonstrated by completing the enrolment verification activity.

The four foundational online strategies are strategies that have been presented in a face-to-face setting by the non-profit organization, AVID for Higher Education (AHE). Each strategy's perceived impact on student engagement and student learning outcomes will be assessed individually by using text-based or video-based discussion forums. The formative evaluation of these individual strategies will use the MEASURE Model. The four strategies being modeled and explained are:

1. Online Name Tents
2. Online Social Contracts
3. Online Frayer Model
4. Online 10-2 Lecture

The MEASURE Model (see Figure 2) was used to design the professional development modules that introduced each AVID foundational strategy. The MEASURE Model provided consistency and a framework to demonstrate learning of each strategy. Appendix D demonstrates how the MEASURE Model was used to design modules teaching how to implement AHE's instructional strategies. Appendix E provides an example of how the MEASURE Model was used to design the module "Online Name Tent".

The professional development course intervention was implemented as planned, and the online course was able to reach online faculty regardless of their location or schedules (see Table 2). The ability to deliver professional development at a time and place convenient to the participant was best demonstrated when Hurricane Dorian created a State of Emergency in North Carolina. The institution's campus was closed; however, the online professional development continued as scheduled.

Data Analysis

Data for this study were collected within the institution's learning management system (LMS). I used tools within the LMS to allow participants to share their perceived impact on student engagement of the professional development activities and strategies discussed within the professional development course. Those participants who implemented three out of four strategies received a "Satisfactory" (S) score. While nine people agreed to participate in the study, only six participants received an "S" from the facilitator. I used the participants' text-based and video responses in discussion forums and VoiceThread to key transcripts into word processing software. The discussion forums were used to collect participants' perceptions of each strategy's effectiveness and impact on student engagement and learning. study concluded with an online asynchronous focus group interview conducted through the use of VoiceThread. VoiceThread is a web-based tool integrated within the institution's LMS that allows participants to post text-based or video responses. The participants were allowed the choice of responding to the prompts embedded in VoiceThread with text, audio, or video. VoiceThread enabled an opportunity for participants to post a response to a prompt, then the participant received an email notification when another participant published a new response or replies to others. I monitored the asynchronous discussion and asked additional questions if warranted. In some instances, an additional prompt was provided. The online asynchronous focus group interview occurred during a 10-day time frame to allow participants an opportunity to respond to each other. The focus group interview was offered online and asynchronously to respect the participants time and continue to demonstrate flexibility as it relates to adjunct faculty.

I transcribed the participants' responses providing raw data to analyze for coding purposes. The descriptive codes were entered into spreadsheet software and the spreadsheet was

named “Descriptive Coding”. Each descriptive code was assigned a separate sheet to help organize the transcripts into patterns and themes that would address the study questions. The themes were organized by study question and outlined in the Findings. For example, the theme “online adjunct faculty prefer the online delivery method” was used to address Study Question One and falls under *Level 1 – Participant’s Reaction* which addresses non-pedagogical aspects of the professional development activity.

Findings

Study Question One

Study Question One (SQ1) asks, “*What is the perceived impact an asynchronous online delivery method of professional development has on adjunct faculty?*” Guskey’s Levels 1 – 5 provided a framework to be used to analyze the focus group transcript. Participants were asked to submit evidence of the strategies introduced in the professional development course in the participant’s ongoing online curriculum course. Analysis of discussion forums and reviewing of the evidence of strategy implementation within the institution’s LMS provided data to answer SQ1.

Level 1 – Participants Reaction

Participant reaction involved assessing faculty levels of behavior and engagement to professional development. Assessing faculty levels of behavior and engagement is standard practice after a professional development session assessing the facilitator’s and program content’s effectiveness. The reactions may also include non-pedagogical issues, such as the training environment, basic ergonomics, and location.

Participant Completion Rate. There were 19 adjunct faculty that met the criteria for participation in this study and were recruited. As a result of reaching out to the candidates and

explaining the study's purpose and professional development, 14 expressed interest, 11 consented to the study, and 9 registered and committed to participating in online professional development course (active participants). Out of the nine that registered and committed to participate in the professional development, six completed all the training modules (see Table 4).

Participant Engagement within the LMS. Using the data tracking software, Intelliboard, data showed that nine adjunct faculty members spent a total of 14 hours and 22 minutes for six weeks (38 days) for an average of 1 hour and 26 minutes per participant. The time the participants were active in the course included participants keying responses, reading text, and watching video demonstrations. Those participants who participated and implemented three out of four strategies received a "Satisfactory" (S) score. There were six active participants that earned an "S" score spent an average of 2 hours and 14 minutes in the professional development course with a range of 59 minutes to 236 minutes. The increased amount of time within the LMS had a direct correlation to those who scored an "S" in the study. Table 5 shows the range of time spent by each participant along with how many times the participant clicked within the professional development course. However, Intelliboard software is limited to tracking the participants' active time within the LMS and professional development course as it does not assess participants' time to plan, design, and apply the strategies in the participants' ongoing curriculum course.

Online Delivery Methods Emerged as a Preferred Training Environment. Level 1 of Guskey's framework includes non-pedagogical issues such as the training environment. Online delivery of professional development was the only option for online adjunct instructors because of campus distance (see Table 1). However, all of those who participated in the online asynchronous focus group interview stated that they preferred the online delivery method for PD.

Table 5

Active Participants' that Provided Evidence of Instructional Strategies Implementation

Name	Online Name Tent	Social Contract	10 – 2 Lesson Structure	Frayer Model	% of Strategies Implemented	Number of Clicks within the LMS	Time Spent in LMS (Minutes)	Received a Satisfactory Score for Professional Development
Andy	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	75	103	111	Yes
Erin	No	No	No	No	0	1	0	No
Ron	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	100	93	59	Yes
Leslie	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	100	197	137	Yes
April	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	100	96	80	Yes
Donna	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	100	264	236	Yes
Kelly	No	No	No	No	0	1	0	No
Jill	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	75	214	207	Yes
Pam	Yes	Yes	No	No	50	26	30	No

Note. Erin and Kelly stopped participating the first week of the professional development course.

Ron stated, “This is only way I could attend professional development at this institution.” Leslie noted that “This online delivery method was much better than traditional face-to-face professional development environment. I have attended face-to-face professional development sessions which included presentations and academic jargon but I was not fully engaged until I could see the strategies modeled.” According to Leslie, the online delivery method engaged her at a higher level. Donna also stated that it was much better than sitting through a face-to-face professional development as she prefers the opportunity to immediately implement what she learned.

Perceptions of Participants Participation by Online Adjunct Faculty. The participants were asked during the online asynchronous focus group, “Why do you think more adjuncts did not participate and those who did participate may not have persisted?” Participants stated that adjunct faculty are often busy with their full-time positions or working multiple adjunct teaching positions at other institutions. Furthermore, Jill stated that “professional development activities were not a priority when compared to fulfilling their commitments to students and other employment obligations.” Participants also reference the rigor of the ongoing online professional development course. Participant perceived the rigor to be more intensive than the traditional face-to-face professional development session because of the time commitment and the need to demonstrate learning as part of the learning process. Participants struggled to meet due dates. For example, Jill stated “Although I persisted, I often did not meet the suggested submission dates.” April stated, “This professional development series was intense and required a lot from adjuncts over a short period of time.”

Participants discussed the challenges in implementing strategies in a course that is already developed and in progress. Participants struggled with the idea of adding activities and

strategies into a course that was currently being taught. Donna stated “It is not fair to the students to add activities that are not in the syllabus to an ongoing course, therefore, I made these new strategies optional for students.” April believed “students will perceive me as unorganized and not competent if I decide to add an activity to the course.”

Level 2 – Participants Learning

Level 2 of Guskey’s Framework examined if the learning objectives for professional development session were met. The learning outcomes listed in the professional development course syllabus that were to be assessed were:

- Implement 4 foundational strategies in ongoing online curriculum courses.
    - Online Name Tent
    - Online Social Contract
    - 10-2 Lesson Structure
    - Frayer Model
- Collaboration with online instructors to implement best practice
- Critically think about web-based tools.

Measurement of Participant Learning Outcomes. The professional development course consisted of four high-engagement strategies utilized by AVID for Higher Education. The desired learning outcomes included participants applying the strategy in an ongoing curriculum course and returning to the professional development course to share evidence of implementation as well as reflecting on each strategy’s effectiveness. The first two strategies, Online Name Tents and Social Contracts, led to 77.8% of the participants met these learning outcomes. The last two strategies’ learning outcomes, 10-2 Lesson Structure and Frayer Model, were met at 55.6% (see Table 6).

Table 6

Immediate Implementation of New Strategies

Strategy	Active Participants	Active Participants that Submitted Evidence of Strategy Implementation	% of Active Participants Submitting Evidence of Use of New Knowledge and Skills
Online Name Tent	9	7	77.8%
Social Contract	9	7	77.8%
10-2 Lesson Structure	9	5	55.6%
Frayer Model	9	5	55.6%

Note. As the training progressed, participants stopped participating. The 10-2 Lesson Structure and Frayer Model were offered later in the course.

As seen in Table 5, 66.7% of active participants who implemented 75% of the strategies received a "Satisfactory" (S) score. Information presented in Table 7 describes the strategies implemented - 83% of active participants having received a satisfactory score.

Participants' Perceptions of Collaborating in a Learning Network. Participants found value in engaging with their online colleagues to establish a professional learning network. The professional learning network consisted of an environment within the LMS for the faculty to collaborate through discussion forums. The majority of the adjunct faculty who completed the training referenced the importance of learning from colleagues throughout the professional development course. Participants noted that sharing how strategies were implemented with colleagues inspired the participants to modify the approach next time or when implementing the strategy. For example, Danny stated "I like the way Leslie used FlipGrid to implement the Name Tent. Next semester, I plan to use FligGrid to present my Name Tent instead of Padlet." Participants also shared seeing colleagues use a variety of web-based educational tools presented ideas on how to execute the strategy in the future. Leslie stated that seeing her colleagues' implementation of the strategy encouraged her to "step up my game" by understanding she could offer high quality instruction just as her colleagues have. Andy, the first-year online instructor, valued learning from online instructor and how they approach their courses and students.

Participants' Perceptions of the Application of Web-Based Tools. I shared web-based tools which allowed for the implementation of strategies in an online environment. I allowed the participants to use any web-based tool that met the objective of applying the strategy introduced. According to the online asynchronous focus group, participants valued the facilitator sharing a web-based tool that enabled the implementation of the strategy in the online environment. For example, I used Padlet as a web-based tool to implement Social Contracts in the online

Table 7

Implementation of New Strategies by Active Participants that Scored Satisfactory

Strategy	Active Participants that Scored Satisfactory	% Active Participants that Scored Satisfactory
Online Name Tent	6	100%
Social Contract	6	100%
10-2 Lesson Structure	5	83%
Frayer Model	5	83%

Note. The 10-2 Lesson Structure and Frayer Model were offered later in the course.

environment. Participants were not aware they had access to Padlet and many used Padlet to implement in the Social Contract in their online courses. Participants were able to use the professional learning network to share ideas of additional web-based tools that would also facilitate the implementation of strategies.

The Emergence of Unintended Learning Outcomes. Level 2 of Guskey's framework included evaluating any unintended learning outcomes from professional development sessions. Participants benefited from the facilitator modeling new web-based tools within the LMS as the facilitator used these tools in monitoring participant engagement. As a result, participants stated they would use these tools in their online courses in the future. For example, Andy stated he planned to use the "Checklist" tool within the LMS that allowed for the instructor and the student to track progress throughout the course.

Another unintended learning outcome was participants reflecting on the role of the student. Participants stated that playing an online student's role increased empathy towards online students and increased understanding of student's perspectives in online courses. Jill noted that she missed submission deadlines and that reminded her of students that miss their submission deadlines. Leslie noted that by the facilitator engaging the participants at a high level, it reminded her that she needs to engage her students at the same high level. Experience and practice with web-based tools helped build confidence for online instructors to incorporate these tools in their online courses. Jill stated her confidence in creating videos for her students increased as a result of being asked to share her reflections via webcam in the professional development course.

Level 3 – Organizational Support and Change

Level 3 of Guskey's professional development framework required me to analyze the organization's support and structure elements outside of the professional development session. This professional development's online delivery method requires the institution's support in personnel and resources, such as the LMS. For this study, the professional development course was offered at no cost to the participants; and the course had the complete support of the institution's administration. However, one participant in the study noted that the institution did not pay for participants to participate in professional development.

The participants in this study stated that this institution's approach to supporting online faculty was outstanding. In addition, the institution has a department chair to oversee online instruction and subject matter experts support online faculty in each content area. Several participants noted the organization's support of online instructors. For example, Jill stated "I have 10 years of teaching experience and have never been offered the opportunity to learn new high engagement strategies to online students. Leslie stated, I teach at five other institutions and I am supported more at this institution than any other school and I have never been invited to participate in professional development." Yet, Andy stated that he would be lost without the institution's support through the online subject matter expert. For example, Andy needed assistance in using Pearson's Revel product for Introduction to Sociology and the subject matter expert was crucial in assisting him navigate those waters. Leslie appreciates the Subject Matter Expert's support and the opportunity to communicate with other online instructors within this professional development. Leslie also appreciated the institution's support in providing course evaluations and providing feedback on how to improve her courses.

Level 4 – Participant Use of New Knowledge and Skills

The professional development course was designed using the MEASURE Model as a course design framework. The MEASURE model asked participants to apply the new strategy and utilize the learning network to share and reflect on the curriculum courses' latest implementation of strategies. As a result, the participants were required to use knowledge and skills to complete professional development.

Immediate Use of Knowledge and Skills. The participants were asked to submit evidence of implementing the four strategies in the LMS. Participants were allowed to submit screenshots or links to evidence of the strategy being applied in ongoing curriculum courses. As seen in Table 7, 77.8% of the 9 active participants provided evidence of implementing the first two strategies (Online Name Tent and Social Contract) and 55.6% of the 9 active participants provided evidence of implementing the last two strategies (10-2 Lesson Structure and Frayer Model). The nine participants included 2 adjunct faculty members that did not participate after the first week of the professional development sessions.

Future Use of Knowledge and Skills. Although evidence of immediate implementation of the strategies introduced existed, the online asynchronous focus group interview provided additional evidence of these participants' intention to use the new knowledge and skills in the future. Donna stated she would use the 10-2 Lesson Structure and the Online Name Tent in her future courses as a graded assignment to increase student engagement. Leslie noted, as a result of the professional development, she will modify her online course to include the Frayer Model in introducing new key terms or concepts. Andy plans to incorporate the new strategies in upcoming semesters, including the Social Contract. Jill believes that these strategies will increase

student engagement and she intends to incorporate all the strategies at all the institutions she teaches.

Level 5 – Student Learning Outcomes

A review of literature concerning Level 5 of Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development revealed that assessing the impact on student learning outcomes can be difficult. Measuring the impact of student learning outcomes may be affected by multiple factors outside of the classroom. The impact of this professional development course on student learning outcomes may not be apparent until a significant time has elapsed after completion of the professional development session (Guskey, 2016). Consequently, assessing the success or failure of professional development activities/courses may be challenging if student learning outcomes are used to assess effectiveness (Bell, 2004; Guskey, 2016). This study concentrated on the participants' perceived impact on student learning outcomes; therefore, strategies that participants perceived to have an impact on student learning outcomes were identified. Leslie stated using the 10-2 Lesson Structure, she saw an immediate positive reaction among students compared to the same concept from the previous semester. Leslie, Andy, and Jill perceived that the Frayer Model implementation would directly impact student learning outcomes by clarifying key concepts and terminology in the online courses.

Participants were asked within the online asynchronous focus group to share the perceived impact these strategies would have on student learning outcomes within participants' online courses. For example, Andy and Jill perceived the strategies would positively impact student learning outcomes as it encourages students to stay engaged in the learning process. Furthermore, Andy and Jill perceived these strategies as creating an environment of inclusivity

and acceptance of diverse backgrounds among students. Thus, it is likely that the strategies would increase student engagement and, ultimately, enhancing student performance outcomes.

Asynchronous online delivery method of professional development had a positive impact on adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty that would not have had the opportunity to participate in the past found the asynchronous online delivery method effective and accommodating to busy schedules. As a result, online adjunct faculty were able to learn apply new strategies and knowledge in active courses.

Study Question Two

Study Question Two (SQ2) asked, "*What is the perceived impact the strategies shared in this professional development have on student engagement?"* This question was addressed by analyzing transcripts from the online asynchronous focus group interviews. Participants perceived an increase in student engagement due to the strategies introduced in the online asynchronous professional development course. For example, Donna teaches Physics online and her perception was that the strategies introduced would increase student engagement as she specifically noted the impact that the 10-2 Lesson Structure would have on engaging students in her online course. In addition, Donna observed that the web-based tools used in the online asynchronous professional development course would be used in all of her online courses. Furthermore, the web-based tools will increase student engagement.

Jill and Andy teach Sociology online courses; and they noted the perceived impact these strategies have on establishing an inclusive learning environment which will likely increase student engagement. As a result of reaching multiple learning styles using diverse teaching methods, Leslie, Jill, and Andy deduced that students are more likely to persist and engage with their classmates. Leslie, an online Music Appreciation instructor, concluded that student

engagement would increase when students have an opportunity to share their knowledge beyond the traditional text-based discussion forums. Leslie also noted that the online asynchronous professional development course design allowed the faciliator to model high-engagement activities. Modeling high-engagement strategies encourages participants to use high-engagement strategies in online courses.

Online adjunct faculty perceived that the AVID for Higher Education strategies used in this study had a positive impact on student engagement. Student engagement and the ability to monitor student activity increased which allowed instructors to assess where students were in their understanding of key concepts.

Study Question Three

Study Question Three (SQ3) asked, "*What is the perceived impact the MEASURE Model framework has on assessing the implementation of specific instructional strategies and collaboration among professionals?"* Analysis of the transcripts from the online asynchronous focus group interview provided the participants' perceptions of the MEASURE model's utility as a professional development instrument.

MEASURE Model Positive Perceptions

Participants found value in the MEASURE Model's effectiveness in teaching online faculty new concepts and strategies. Ron stated the model was useful as the facilitator demonstrated how to implement the new strategy (model) and then allowed an opportunity to reflect on the strategy's results and impact. Donna stated "the MEASURE Model is a useful framework for learning new tools and strategies". Leslie noted that the MEASURE model demonstrated the design of an online curriculum course. Leslie valued the opportunity to reflect on instructional strategies' effectiveness and join a professional learning network to learn from

colleagues. The MEASURE Model represents what an online instructor should be doing in online courses, such as the instructor modeling what the students should be producing or submitting. The MEASURE model encourages the immediate implementation of classroom strategies and directly impacts student engagement and learning.

The participants noted a preference for the MEASURE model in the online environment to the traditional training environment. In the traditional training environments, participants simply observe a presentation without proper modeling of the concepts and participants were not allowed the opportunity to implement new ideas or strategies. The MEASURE Model requires modeling key concepts and asks instructors to implement the concepts immediately.

Participants enjoyed the ability to collaborate with fellow online instructors as they were asked to share the results of the strategy's implementation. The first-year online instructor, Andy, appreciated seeing veteran online instructors share their experience. In addition, the veteran online instructors also valued seeing their colleagues perform. As a result of the learning network established in the MEASURE Model, participants stated they plan to modify strategies' implementation to mirror colleague's implementation.

Areas for Improvement for the MEASURE Model

April and Leslie found the design of the professional development course's implementation of the MEASURE Model to be repetitive. For example, April thought that "Reflect" and "Evolve" should not have been broken down into two activities but into one activity. Leslie stated that "Share" and "Use a Professional Learning Network should be combined into one activity.

Many participants expressed frustration in "Applying" a strategy in an already designed course that was actively being taught. April stated she wanted more time to prepare to implement

the online course strategy before being asked to do so. Also, by adding an activity in a live course, April and Donna did not want to give the students the impression that the online instructor was not prepared for class and did not know how to teach. Participants debated if the new activities implemented in their online classes should be graded since they were not part of the original syllabus shared with the students at the beginning of the semester. The participants' concluded these new activities should not be assigned a grade, and as such, the participants perceived this had a negative impact on student participation with the strategy.

Participants perceived the MEASURE Model framework to have a positive impact on the design of the professional development course. The MEASURE Model allowed for a course design that allowed participants to learn and implement new strategies. Additionally, the MEASURE Model provided the framework that encouraged collaboration among professionals in higher education.

Summary

Study Question One, "*What is the perceived impact an asynchronous online delivery method of professional development has on adjunct faculty?"* demonstrated that online adjunct faculty found online asynchronous professional development an effective method of introducing new strategies and concepts. Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development provided a framework to assess professional development course's effectiveness (see Table 8).

Level 1 assesses the participants' reactions and assesses faculty levels of behavior and engagement to professional development. Participants' responses exhibited they were highly engaged and approved of the online asynchronous delivery method. Level 2 of Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development framework required assessing if the professional development's learning objectives are met. The majority of the participants met the learning

Table 8

Participants' Responses that Align with Guskey's Critical Levels of PD

Guskey's Level	Description	Participant Response Samples
1 - Participant Reaction to PD	Assessing faculty levels of behavior and engagement during the PD session	- Online delivery method is preferred - Adjunct schedules conflict with PD opportunities - Increased flexibility
2 – Participant Learning	Examines if the learning objectives for the PD session were met.	- I was able to use Name Tents to build relationships with my students - The online 10-2 structure had a dramatic increase in student responses compared to last semester - The Frayer Model is a great way to draw attention to new and specific comments
3 – Organizational Support and Change	Analyze the organization's support and structure elements outside of the PD session	- I teach at several other institutions and am supporter at this institution more than any others - This institution is very supporter and willing talk and provide feedback - There is, unlike other institutions, support guidance and input for my PD and learning
4 – Participants Use of New Knowledge and Skills	Assess successful implementation of skills learned during the PD session.	- I liked leaning about the checklist tool and will use it in the future - These strategies definitely increase student engagement and I plan to implement at all the intuitions that I teach - I will use these strategies moving forward
5 – Student Learning Outcomes	Assess the PD's impact on student learning outcomes	- I think the expectations set forth by my students were appropriate and more reasonable than I expected - The social contract helps student take ownership of learning and increases success - The 10-2 increases student engagement and success

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outcomes outlined by the professional development course syllabus. These learning objectives included implementing four high-engagement strategies in an ongoing online curriculum courses, collaborating with online instructors to implement best practices, and critically thinking about web-based tools. Level 3 of Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development framework required me to analyze the organization's support and structure elements outside of the professional development session. Participants in this study stated the institution supported them and that institutional support was a better experience compared to other higher education institutions. Level 4 of Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development addressed if the participants applied new knowledge and skills. Through the implementation of the MEASURE Model, participants were asked to use the new knowledge in ongoing curriculum courses immediately.

Level 5 of Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development asked participants to assess the impact the professional development had on student learning outcomes. This study was conducted over eight weeks and did not allow an opportunity to assess student learning outcomes over an extended period. Therefore, participants noted they perceived the new knowledge gained in this professional development would positively impact student learning outcomes. Participants indicated that the strategies would increase student engagement and positively correlate with students understanding the desired learning outcomes.

Study Question Two asked, *"What is the perceived impact the strategies shared in this professional development have on student engagement?"* A summary of the statements from the participants revealed a perceived positive impact on student engagement. The strategies and web-based tools introduced during the professional development demonstrated new ways to engage with the students at a high level.

Study Question Three asked, *"What is the perceived impact the MEASURE Model framework has on assessing the implementation of specific instructional strategies and collaboration among professionals?"* Although the participants had reservations about how the MEASURE Model was implemented in designing the online professional development course, participants valued each component of the MEASURE Model. As a result of the facilitator modeling the strategy and encouraging participants to apply the strategy in real-world classroom settings, the participants immediately implemented practice of the new strategy into practice. Additionally, the participants valued collaborating and reflecting with fellow online instructors.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Adjunct faculty play a key role in providing instruction to community college students; yet, they have limited professional development access to continuously improve their pedagogical skills. According to the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness at the college used for this study, adjunct faculty taught 36% of the online courses in 2019. Although 36% of curriculum adjunct faculty is a large portion of online instructors, this percentage is less than the findings of the American Association of Universities and Professors' (AAUP) where more than half of the country's faculty were not fully time employees in 2019 ("Background Facts on Contingent Faculty Positions | AAUP," n.d.). Additionally, adjunct faculty at this community college who teach online do not have equal access to professional development opportunities because of distances from the campus as well as the time of day professional development activities are scheduled.

This study was designed to ascertain if the model of online asynchronous professional development may be effective for training online adjunct faculty. Consequently, online adjunct faculty were asked to participate in online asynchronous professional development activities that occurred over a six-week time frame. This professional development activity included four high-engagement strategies intended to increase student engagement and student learning in an online classroom. Also, the MEASURE Model was used as a framework for developing the professional development course structure. Guskey's Five Critical Stages of Professional Development aided in assessing the overall effectiveness of online asynchronous professional development.

In this study, a method of delivering professional development coursework was designed to allow adjunct faculty to participate regardless of geographical location. Furthermore, the

model was designed to allow adjunct faculty to benefit from instructional practices shared and provided an opportunity to collaborate with colleges. Nineteen adjunct online faculty were recruited, and six registered and completed all—four training modules—components of the professional development activity. Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development (Guskey, 2016) served as a guideline for assessing the online professional development asynchronous course's effectiveness.

Guskey's (2016) Five Critical Levels of Professional Development pertain to the professional development activity provider as well as the professional development participants. For example, Level 1 focuses on the participants' reactions to professional development. Yet, Level 2 of Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional requires the facilitator to evaluate the participants learning. Moreover, Level 3 of Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development asks the participants to evaluate the organizational support and change. Level 4 of Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development evaluates the participants' use of new knowledge and skills while Level 5 observes the student learning outcomes resulting from professional development.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of collected data, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Adjunct faculty who participated in this study perceived the online asynchronous professional development model shared new instructional practices, would have a meaningful impact on student learning outcomes, and found value in engaging and collaborating with their colleagues by sharing ideas and feedback throughout the professional development activity.

Eighty-three percent of the active participants provided evidence of implementation of three of the four foundational strategies introduced. Furthermore, participants found value in engaging and collaborating with their colleagues when sharing ideas and feedback throughout professional development activity. In addition, participants perceived the facilitator's modeling the strategies and demonstrating the web-based tools was beneficial in enhancing student engagement and learning. Many participants were employed by other higher education institutions, and these participants indicated the institution used in this study provided unprecedented support for online adjunct faculty. Furthermore, the institution in this study allocated resources to support subject matter experts in multiple content areas—veteran online instructors as well as those new to online instruction appreciated the subject matter experts' expertise provided by the institution. Based on the information provided in Table 8, 77.8% of the nine active participants provided evidence of implementing the first two strategies (Online Name Tent and Social Contract) while 55.6% of the nine active participants provided evidence of implementing the last two strategies (10-2 Lesson Structure and Frayer Model). In addition, participants noted in the online asynchronous focus group interview that they plan to implement these strategies in future courses taught at this institution and other institutions where they are employed. According to Bell (2004) and Guskey (2016), it may be difficult to determine the effect a six-week professional development may have on student learning outcomes during a semester. Yet, the findings of this study do not support Bell and Guskey's results as participants in this study perceived the use of high-engagement strategies would increase student engagement and increase student learning.

2. Adjunct faculty who participated in this study perceived the MEASURE Model was an effective framework for designing online asynchronous professional development activities.

Participants perceived the MEASURE Model's component where the facilitator's "Modeling" of the new strategy helped them understand the new concept(s) as well as provide an example of implementing the new strategies. In addition, participants purported the sharing of results when implementing the strategies with colleagues across multiple disciplines would likely improve online teaching as well as enhance student engagement and learning. Although the participants noted that some portions of the MEASURE Model seemed to be redundant—"Share" and "Use a Learning Network"—the MEASURE Model was an effective instrument for use when designing online professional development activities.

Implications for Future Practice

As a result of this study's findings, there are several considerations practitioners may explore as they work to improve to have a positive impact on student learning. As online educators and educational leaders, it is imperative that providing students an opportunity to be successful in an online environment is critical given that the number of students enrolled in the online course may be the primary objective. Below are recommendations for future practice that are likely to could result in increasing student success.

1. Institutions should empower instructors to implement new strategies that improve student learning in ongoing courses.

In this study, some participants were hesitant to implement a new strategy or activity during an ongoing course because they feared it would give students the impression that they were unorganized or because the assignments were not on the syllabus. However, this study

demonstrated that faculty perceived that student learning would increase when students participated with these high-engagement strategies. Therefore, faculty should not be hesitant to intervene in an online course by engaging students at a higher level they increase student success. Adjunct faculty and faculty, in general, must consider implementing activities and providing incentives for students to participate in new activities and interventions which are likely to yield increased student success.

Higher education institutions must foster an environment and a culture in which faculty feel empowered to intervene when new strategies or teaching techniques are available. As new technologies such as augmented and virtual reality enter the educational environment, educators must feel comfortable taking risks with these technologies to increase student engagement. Teaching is not static but dynamic, and faculty must be willing to adapt to their students and what works best. As educators, faculty must know that it is educational best practice to make changes and take risks when the outcomes may improve teaching and benefit student learning. As one participant, Leslie, stated in this study, "Implementing new strategies did not make it seem I was not prepared; instead, I simply changed how I introduced a new concept by applying a new strategy. The new strategy may have asked the students to participate for a few more minutes, which did not concern me."

2. Institutions should require ongoing professional development for adjunct faculty and perhaps all faculty teaching in the online environment.

This study provides data to support the impact professional development has on faculty and student learning. There is a culture among higher education faculty that professional development is not a high priority. However, Shapiro and Cuseio (2017) found that faculty are hired based on their content knowledge and may have little to no pedagogy training.

In this study, only 31.6% of adjunct faculty recruited completed the online professional development course. Therefore, institutions that value student success should require ongoing professional development for adjunct faculty and perhaps all faculty in the online environment. Few industries allow continuous improvement to be optional, and higher education should not be any different. The participants in this study valued the new strategies they learned. As Andy stated, "This professional development will create a diverse course that reaches different learning styles and will make my course more interactive and engaging."

3. Educational leaders at higher education institutions must explore options that make professional development a priority and require professional development for online adjunct faculty.

Although educational leaders should require professional development among online adjunct faculty, there must be an incentive to do so. Taylor (2014) noted that online faculty feel that institutions should offer compensation and incentives for professional development participation and extra course preparation. The participants in this study agreed with Taylor and believe that more adjunct faculty would have participated if professional development would have been monetary compensation for the time dedicated to the professional development. Adjunct faculty are part-time employees paid by the hour and when these faculty participate in professional development, it is often beyond their required responsibilities.

Educational leaders must advocate for such types of activities by providing support, whether it be monetary or availability/access to such programs. One such method, Design-Based Research (DBR), is well-suited to answer complex questions in the educational setting and is useful in addressing practice problems (Bell, 2004) by using the collected data from professional development activities to develop appropriate teaching and engagement strategies for online. For

the DBR and related professional development activities to be successful, educational leaders must advocate for such activities by funding and providing the appropriate delivery method. Data collected as a result of this study supports Anderson and Shattuck's (2012) belief that DBR is such an appropriate framework.

4. Professional Developers should model the strategies or concepts.

Participants noted in this study the importance of the facilitator modeling strategies that they were being asked to implement. The saying "practice what you preach" or "seeing is believing" can be applied to the importance modeling has in faculty buy-in and future implementation of the strategy. As one participant, Leslie, stated, "I can sit through hours of professional development with academic jargon and discussion, but I am not fully engaged until I see it modeled."

An additional benefit to modeling the strategy and training faculty in a course format that simulates that of the participants' online courses is that it reminds faculty what it was like to be a student. Participants in this study admitted to submitting work late during this professional development course and their late submission reminded them of the expectations they have for their students. Experiencing the professional development course in the student's role should increase the empathy and compassion for students who may be enrolled in their first higher education courses.

Recommendations for Future Research

As with most qualitative research (Creswell, 1998), this study has resulted in several observations and questions. This study supports and adds to current literature related to professional development for faculty in higher education. Additionally, this study's findings prompt many questions and recommendations for future research, discussed below.

1. How much time is required outside the LMS for participants to learn how to implement new strategies including, learning new web-based tools, reading, revising, assessing student engagement.

Although this study documented the amount of time participants were actively engaged in the professional development course (see Table 5), this study did not capture the actual time it took for participants to add these strategies to their ongoing courses. Activities outside of the professional development course may include learning how to use new web-based tools, adding the strategy to their online courses, providing feedback to students as a result of student participation within the added activity, or revising the strategy for future implementation.

According to Taylor (2014), faculty believe that preparing a successful online course may take two and three times longer than a traditional class. Therefore, further research is needed to capture online adjunct faculty's actual time on specific professional development courses. Educational leaders could use this research to guide how to compensate participants for the time dedicated to continuous improvement.

2. How can institutions motivate and ensure adjunct faculty, and perhaps all faculty, participate in professional development?

The implications for future practice suggest that educational leadership require online adjunct faculty to participate in professional development that will improve their instructional skills. The question for future research for institutions of higher education should be, "How do we increase faculty participation in professional development?" Educational leaders have different leadership styles and approaches to motivation. There should be a study directed towards the most effective means to increase faculty participation to ensure continuous improvement occurs.

3. Do online asynchronous professional development activities that incorporate high-engagement strategies enhance student engagement and increase student learning?

In many cases, participants in professional development activities perceive the activities as a waste of time. With that being said, professional development activities must be designed for the participants' benefit. The traditional "dog and pony shows" offered by State Educational Programs are used to document that such activities occurred without participant consideration. Thus, designers of professional development activities should develop programs to assist instructors, both online and face-to-face delivery, to create student engagement and learning strategies to meet student learning goals. One such approach to developing and designing such strategies is to adapt professional development activities used in this study to improve the quality of professional development activities for ALL professional development activities.

4. How have faculty perceptions related to online learning changed as a result of the global pandemic of 2020?

Herman noted in 2012 that 85% of faculty that have never taught online feel that online instruction is inferior to traditional education in meeting student learning outcomes. However, most faculty that teach online see online instruction as comparable or superior to traditional classroom instruction (Herman, 2012). Also, Lytle (2012) found that faculty feel that the learning outcomes in online content delivery are inferior to traditional program offerings; however, the perception of quality drastically increases among faculty having taught online courses.

Given the recent global pandemic and the tidal wave of instruction required to move online, further research is needed to see if Herman and Lytle's findings are indeed relevant today. Post-Covid-19, research that can share faculty's perceptions of online instruction quality would provide insight into how education, holistically, moves forward in the 21st century.

Epilogue

During 2020 and the first two months of 2021, the United States of America as well as the entire Globe has experienced and continues to experience a pandemic which has affected almost every facet of life. Consequently, the educational system was drastically impacted by the pandemic—a majority of elementary and secondary schools, public and private, were closed for on-site, physical learning opportunities. Furthermore, institutions of higher learning also closed traditional on-site learning. In response to the pandemic, a majority of educational providers moved to "remote" learning instead of face-to-face learning.

Before offering "remote" learning opportunities; many teachers, instructors, and professors became "facilitators" of learning rather than the traditional teacher or instructor "delivers" of instruction. "Remote" learning was problematic for both learners and facilitators. Learners had no concept of their role in the process, and facilitators had no conception of designing and implementing "remote" learning for its constituents. Consequently, many institutions provided their faculty with one or two weeks for instructional staff to design and implement "remote" learning without student engagement or participation. Yet, throughout the pandemic, a concern has existed by parents and other individuals connected to educational systems regarding the quality of "remote" learning opportunities and the quality of instructional design. At the time of the writing of this document, the end of the pandemic is uncertain; and it is likely that "remote" learning will continue for some time—it is likely that "remote" learning may become the routine delivery method especially for postsecondary levels. Thus, professional development activities based on Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development combined with the results of this study should be used to plan and design relevant "remote" learning opportunities for students at all educational levels.

Throughout the 2020-2021 pandemic, “remote” learning has become the norm rather than something unique. Thus, “remote” learning will not disappear; but it is likely to become the primary instructional delivery method at all educational levels. Consequently, faculty—permanent and adjunct—will be charged with designing learning opportunities that are “remote” learning opportunities. And, for those faculty to design and develop relevant, “remote” learning activities; thus, coaching opportunities will be needed so facilitators—today’s and tomorrow’s teachers, instructors, and professors – can effectively deliver the quality of instruction needed in today’s pandemic world and beyond. A probable method for the needed coaching opportunities is likely to be online asynchronous professional development activities where all faculty have equal access thereby encouraging participation at the faculty’s convenience. All educational levels are likely to benefit from such focused professional development activities as the quality of instruction and student engagement is likely to be enhanced. Today’s and tomorrow’s educational leaders must be in the forefront by encouraging and emphasizing the need for relevant “in tune with the times” professional development activities—their futures may depend on it!

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** ·
rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/

Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: Ricky Freeman
CC: Art Rouse
Date: 8/27/2019
Re: UMCIRB 19-001948
The Perceived Impact Online Asynchronous Professional Development has on Online Adjunct Faculty

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 8/27/2019. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category #1 & 2ab.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

APPENDIX B: CONSENT AND ONLINE FORM QUESTIONNAIRE

By completing the Google Form below participants are agreeing to participate in the professional development session in the fall of 2019. Participation in the professional development is completely voluntary and you may stop participating at any time during the study without any repercussions.

1. First Name
2. Last Name
3. Years as a college instructor
4. Years as an online college instructor
5. Content area

This is the video that was emailed to the candidates for this study:

https://youtu.be/VbZaQcmPy_A

APPENDIX C: INSTRUMENT FOR ASSESSING STUDY QUESTION 1

Asynchronous Focus Groups Prompts

Directions for participants (directions will be posted in text and video):

"Access the "Professional Development VoiceThread Summary Activity" to participate in an online asynchronous discussion. Each participant is asked to respond to each prompt with a thorough response. Please feel free to speak as long as you need to share all of your thoughts regarding the prompt. The response on each prompt can be an original thought or in response to a colleagues comment regarding the prompt.

This asynchronous focus group activity will be available to participants for 10 days. Please revisit the VoiceThread in three separate intervals provided to listen to your colleague's posts and respond. This will allow for a more robust conversation among colleagues. A suggested date of the intervals will be provided."

Prompts

Prompt 1:

Is there anything that you really valued about the way this professional development was delivered?

Prompt 2:

Are there any recommendations that you would make for future professional development sessions that are offered online to adjunct faculty to improve how the course was delivered?

Prompt 3:

Are there any additional thoughts or perceptions on the way this online professional development was delivered regarding time and online delivery method? Were there any unexpected outcomes from participating in this professional development?

Prompt 4:

Given the opportunity, would you participate another professional development session offered in this delivery method? Why?

Prompt 5:

In what ways do you feel supported or not by the organization?

APPENDIX D: INSTRUMENT FOR ASSESSING STUDY QUESTION 2-3

Formative Evaluation of Individual Online Strategies

There are four online strategies that will be taught in the online asynchronous professional development training. These four online strategies are strategies that have been presented by AVID for Higher Education in a face-to-face setting. Each strategy's perceived impact on student engagement and student learning outcomes will be measured individually by using text-based or video-based discussion forums. The formative evaluation of these individual strategies will use the MEASURE Model. The four strategies being modeled and explained are:

- Online Name Tents
- Online Social Contracts
- Online Frayer Model
- Online 10-2 Lecture

The questions guiding the online discussions of perceived impact of the strategies will be derived from "ASURE" portion of the MEASURE Model. Below are the tasks and discussions that will be used to measure the perceived impact on student engagement and student learning outcomes along with the online strategy.

Apply

Participants will apply the AHE's online strategy by implementing this strategy in their live online courses using one a web-based tool or a web-based tool that is recommended.

Share

Participants of this professional development session will post the results in a discussion board in the learning management system. Within the discussion board, participants will post:

- The prompt or questions provided to students
- The tool used to implement the strategy
- A screenshot of the results of the online strategy

Use the Learning Network

Participants will be part of a learning network within the course. The participants will use this learning network to learn best practices from each other. Adjuncts will read each other's posts along with how the strategy was implemented. Participants will be asked to respond to any great ideas that were observed by colleagues and provide feedback on ways colleagues could improve on the strategy.

Reflect

After receiving feedback from the learning network, participants will reflect on the strategy's potential impact on student engagement and student learning outcomes in online discussion. The participants will be asked to address the following prompts within the online discussion:

3. What impact do you perceive this strategy will have on student engagement within your online course?
4. What impact do you perceive this strategy will have on student learning outcomes within your online course?

Participants will not be able to see other participants' posts until after the participant post answers to these questions. Participants will read the reflective posts to learn and observe final thoughts of other participants on the strategy and how it can affect students across multiple disciplines.

Evolve

As evidence of an educational practitioners who look to continuously improve, participants will be asked to describe how they will evolve this strategy for future implementations. The question used to see how the strategy will evolve for each strategy will be "Will you use this strategy in the future? If so, what will you do differently?

APPENDIX E: MEASURE MODEL USED TO TRAIN ONLINE FACULTY IN USING AHE'S ONLINE NAME TENT

Facilitator: Nash Online Department Chair Participants: Online Adjunct Faculty

Strategy: Online Name Tent – AVID for Higher Education

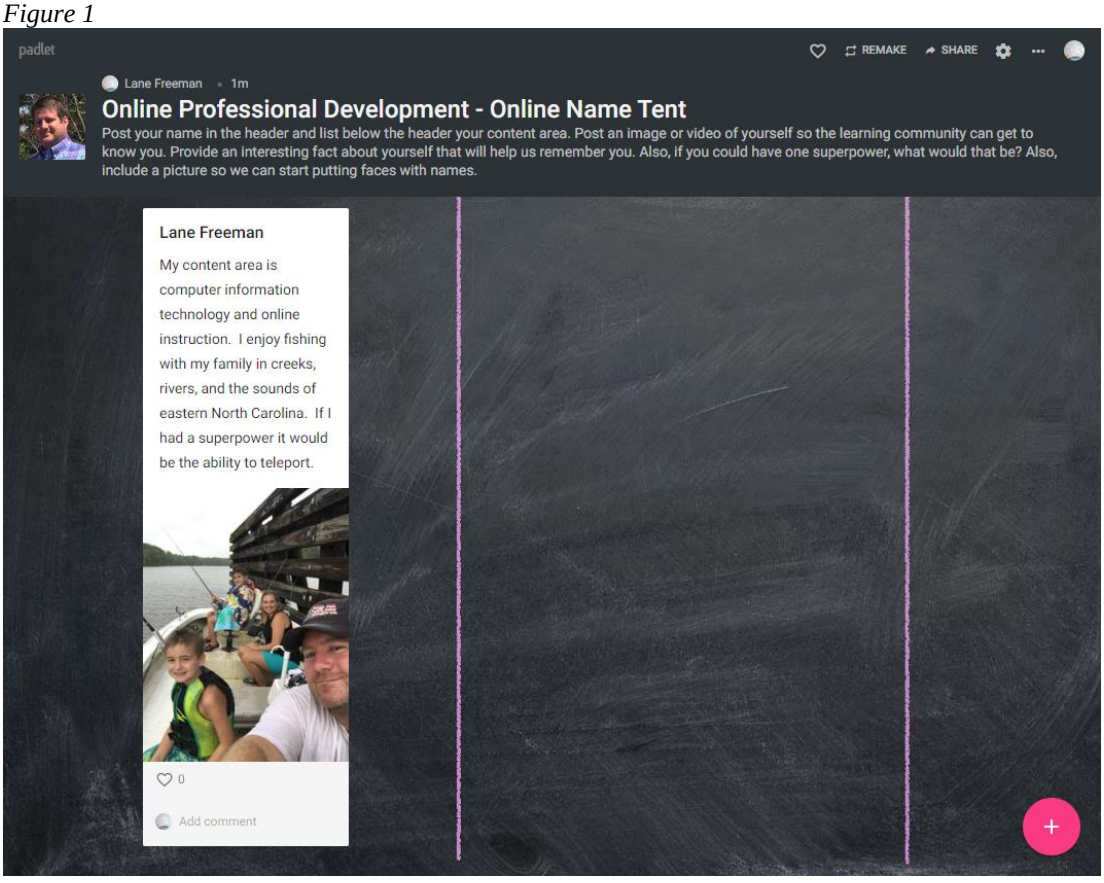
Professional Development Pre/Co-requisites: Instructors must be actively teaching an online course.

Model

The facilitator will model the Online Name Tent using Padlet. The participants will use the online name tent provided by the facilitator to introduce themselves in an online setting. The facilitator will provide the following prompt and provide an example of a Padlet post.

Post your name in the header and list below the header your content area. Post an image or video of yourself so the learning network can get to know you. Provide an interesting fact about yourself that will help us remember you. Also, if you could have one superpower, what would that be?

Figure 1



Explain

Why?

Online name tents allow students to establish initial classroom connections that will benefit them throughout the semester. Research indicates "that enhancing the social culture of an online class goes a long way in allowing students to continue with their e-learning and complete their education" (Bawa, 2016). Name tents can keep students from feeling that they are in a silo. They provide students with a means to interact with peers and instructors through a humanized activity from the start of the course.

Traditional classroom meetings typically begin with icebreakers and encourage student-to-student and student-to-instructor interaction early on and throughout the duration of the course. Name tents offer a simple and fun way for online instructors to provide their students with this same beneficial foundation to ensure academic and social needs are fully considered from day one.

When?

- Online Name Tents should be used at the beginning of the semester, either before the first day of class or during the first week of class.
- Online Name Tents should be used when it is important to build a sense of community and establish relationships and a social presence in an online classroom.
- Refer to the name tent information throughout the semester to add a personal touch to communication with students (e.g., ask about a pet, new job, or other bits of information students shared) or to have students connect with a peer based on their name tents for an activity.

How?

This strategy works well in an asynchronous setting.

Choose an application for creating and sharing the name tents online.

- Padlet (used in this model)
- Note.ly
- Google Slides
- FlipGrid
- VoiceThread

Provide students with a prompt that allows them to share information that lends itself to personal connections, such as:

- hometown
- academic goals
- career goals
- favorite movie, book, food, subject, color, etc.
- other traditional icebreaker-style prompt (e.g., "If you could be any superhero, who would it be and why?")

Provide a model by posting your answer to the prompt and a picture and/or video clip and by responding to students' posts.

Provide clear directions that indicate that the student must provide an answer to the prompt by a particular time and respond to a specified number of peers' posts by a particular time.

Give students the option to post a picture, photo collage, or short video link to showcase who they are.

Apply

Participants will apply the Online Name Tent strategy by creating an Online Name Tent for their online courses using one of the web-based tools shard above. The time to take to implement this strategy should take 1 week.

Share

Participants of this professional development session will post their results in a discussion board in the learning management system.

Within the discussion board, post the prompt you provided your students, the tool you used to implement the online name tent, and a screenshot of your results from the Online Name Tent. Also, consider these questions as a result of implementing the Online Name Tent in your online class:

1. Did this strategy help established relationships among classmates and the instructor?
2. Did you feel this online activity helped humanize the students and the instructor?
3. Do you think this strategy will show students that an online course benefits from peer-to-peer interaction?
4. Do you feel this strategy helped in starting an online community?
5. Did this strategy help establish a social and emotional presence?

Use a Learning Network (Uln)

Take advantage of this learning network and learn from each other. Read and respond to your online colleagues. Be sure to respond to any great ideas that you saw your colleagues attempt and provide feedback on ways your colleagues could improve on their strategy.

Reflect

In a discussion board, reflect on the strategy's potential impact on student learning outcomes on the Online Name Tent's ability to establish a social connection and help students build an online learning network. Will this lead to students being more successful in your online course and could it result in a positive impact on student learning outcomes? Once everyone has posted, the learning network will be able to view each other's reflection to learn what others final thoughts were on this strategy and how it can affect students across multiple disciplines.

Evolve

As evidence of an educational practitioners who look to continuously improve, please describe how you will evolve this strategy for future implementations. Will you use this strategy in the future? If so, what will you do differently?

ASURE

There are no additional requirements to post your findings about this strategy within this professional development session. However, take advantage of this learning network now and in the future for advice and guidance. When implementing this strategy in the future you should **Apply** the strategy, **Share** your findings, **Use** the learning network for feedback, **Reflect** on this most recent implementation, and **Evolve** the strategy for further implementation (ASURE).