

# Professors as Students: How Faculty Learn to Teach Online

Dr. Steven W. Schmidt  
ECU Scholar Teacher Symposium  
April 3, 2014

# Growth of Online Education

- ▶ Courses
  - ▶ Degree Programs
- 

# The Role of the Instructor

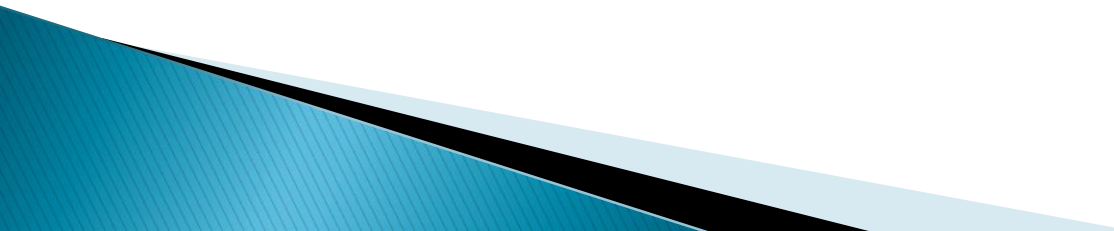
Lecturer	→	Facilitator
Presenter	→	Guide or coach
Instructor	→	Instructional designer

Technology

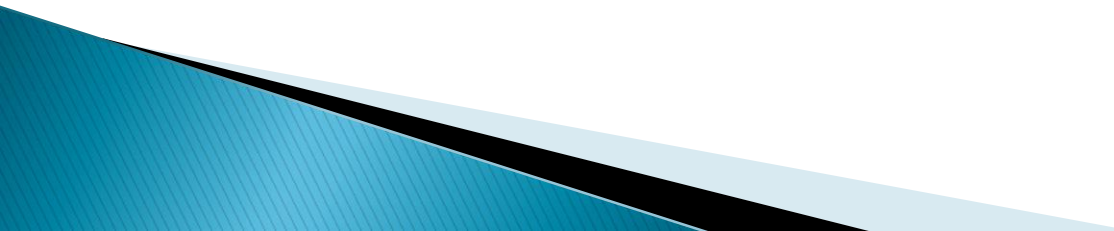
Relationships



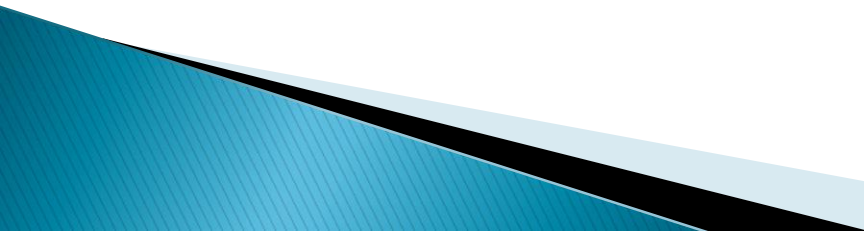
# Learning to Teach Online

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

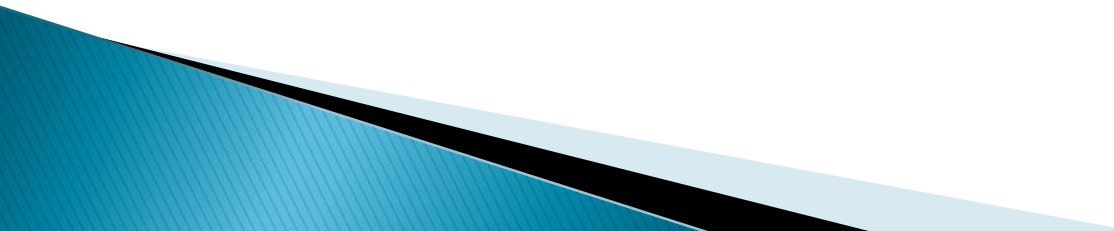
# Purpose of the Study

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

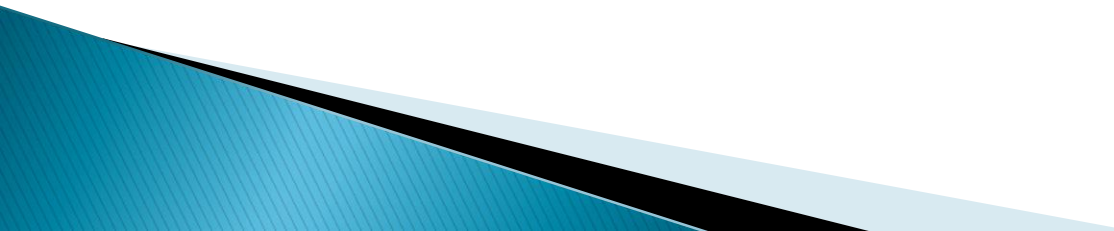
# Study Details

- ▶ Qualitative study
  - ▶ Focus groups
  - ▶ Focus groups of online instructors
    - All had f2f and online teaching experience
    - Variety of levels of experience
    - Variety of different subjects taught
  - ▶ Data
    - Transcriptions, notes from participants, notes from researchers/facilitators
- 

# Moving to Online Teaching

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

# Learning to Teach Online

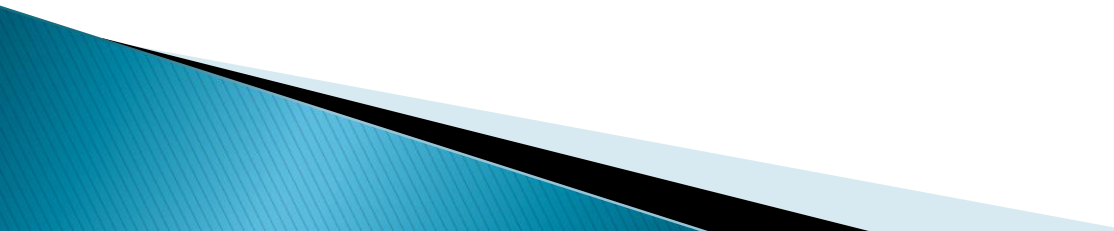
- ▶ Haphazard process
  - ▶ Mostly informal learning
  - ▶ Support from colleagues
  - ▶ Trial and error
  - ▶ Formal training not helpful
    - Mostly focused on technology rather than teaching
- 



# Progression of Online Instructors

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

# Ideal Online Instructors

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

# Implications

- ▶ Understanding experience helps better prepare future online educators
- ▶ Roadmap for how to teach online educators
  - What to do
  - What not to do

# Special Thanks!

- ▶ Dr. Elizabeth Hodge
  - ▶ Dr. Christina Tschida
- 

**Questions or Comments?**

