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MULTIPLE REALITIES: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ONLINE

CONTINGENT FACULTY IN CANADIAN STRATEGY AND PRACTICE

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## Approval of Dissertation

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## Dedication

*To my dearest Leisha.* This is your work as much as it is mine. Without your strength, wisdom, and sacrificial support, I would never have finished. I may get the title, but you are still the smartest person I have ever met.

*To Keziah, and Emmet.* You suffered and celebrated with me during this six-year journey. You are my living graces, and I joyfully lived this ludicrous and sublime calling thanks to our adventures together. Thank you for reminding me to play.

*To my mother.* You raised three boys largely by yourself. Two became doctors and one became a soldier, and then he became the hardest-working father to an autistic son who continues to inspire me. You left a great legacy, and you sadly passed shortly before I finished. You taught me there is dignity in poverty, but also injustice. Without your guidance, I could not have reconciled both my poverty and my privilege. Your example of hard work and suffering will always drive my commitment to use the talents and gifts God has given me to help others. May I always follow your teachings and example.

*To Jonathan C. Young, my AA sponsor.* You answered the call when I was at my lowest point and told me what I needed to hear; "I stay sober for me and no one else; they just happen to also reap the benefits." Thanks for helping me to get my life back on track with honesty and laughter.

## Abstract

The growth of contingent faculty and the growth of online education over the first two decades of the 21st century have generated an emergent but overlooked subgroup of faculty – online contingent faculty. These twin dynamics have placed the professional development of online faculty in a strategically important position for Canadian postsecondary institutions to mature online education and enhance instructional effectiveness. This two-phase multimethod research study employs Ursula Franklin's *technology as practice* (1990) as its theoretical orientation to explore the following research questions: *How are online faculty and their professional development represented in current Canadian postsecondary academic plans? How are the professional development needs of contingent online faculty being served by Canadian teaching and learning centres? What gaps, if any, exist between the projected reality of academic plans and the extended reality of teaching and learning centres in Canada?* Phase one consists of a document analysis of 17 academic plans from Canadian colleges and institutes covering the current period and immediate future to reveal how faculty development is described and prioritized in academic strategy (the *projected reality* of the future). The document analysis highlights important strategic purposes of professional development, such as Indigenization and internationalization, but also shows that part-time and online faculty are marginally represented. Email interviews with 12 directors of Canadian teaching and learning centres comprise phase two (the *extended reality* of experience), and they illuminate the contested space of providing educational development services to online contingent faculty. The findings reveal formidable

barriers to providing professional development opportunities to part-time faculty who

teach online, but also innovative solutions to meet the needs of part-time online educators

in Canada.

*Keywords:* online education, professional development, contract faculty,

document analysis, email interviews, academic strategy

**Preface**

I successfully defended my dissertation proposal on December 12, 2018. On December 13, I flew from Medicine Hat to Yuma, Arizona to visit my mother who had undergone Whipple surgery to remove cancer from her liver and pancreas. The surgeon believed he had gotten good margins. Mom's recovery from surgery would still be long and difficult, but personally and professionally, 2019 began with hope and promise. I began collecting and analyzing academic plans, completed my ethics application for phase two, and began interviews in January 2020. At that time, I would have described my research topic – the professional development of part-time online instructors – as one of emerging but overlooked importance.

Disturbing news of a dangerous virus began to emerge, and by mid-March 2020, the province of Alberta announced its first pandemic lockdown, and the team at Medicine Hat College's Centre for Innovation and Teaching Excellence (CITE) had one week to support faculty to accomplish the daunting task before them – transition all faculty teaching face-to-face courses at a predominantly in-person institution to an online delivery method without the proper learning technologies. I watched an incredible team and dedicated faculty across the college accept the brutal and unwanted reality before them and work uncountable hours to make the emergency pivot to online instruction. From the middle of March until the beginning of May, the team assisted 79% of the college's faculty to get as many students to the finish line as possible. We then turned our attention to the condensed Spring term.

After the Spring semester was underway, I experienced what used to be called a nervous breakdown. As a result of budget pressures intensified by the pandemic, the

college was forced to cut 10-15% of its faculty (48 positions in total) and suspended

several academic programs. Good teachers I liked and respected, some of whom I called

friends, were suddenly losing their careers. In addition to permanent cuts, we also had

several COVID-related layoffs. The pandemic positioned CITE very well, but I still

feared for my job and for the people on my team. Due to travel restrictions and work

demands, I was unable to visit to my mom, whose cancer had returned. I feared I would

not see her alive again and give her one last kiss and hug (a fear that would turn out to be

justified. My mother died in May 2021 while I was on my way to see her, two weeks and

two days after I was able to get my first vaccine shot).

For that week in May 2020, I cycled between grief, loss, anger, depression,

anxiety, hopelessness, and crushing self-loathing at my inability to man-up and cope. I

was not alone, and I mean this in several ways. First, I had the loving strength and

support of my wife. Secondly, I was not the only man struggling. In September 2020,

CBC news ran a long-form piece entitled *Life, death and being a man in Medicine Hat*

(Fletcher, 2020), documenting the secondary suicide pandemic of men in our small city.

One of the fallen was a husband to an instructor at the college, but the tragedy most

difficult to bear was news that my wife's 14-year nephew, Levi, had taken his life on

September 3.

I also knew my team and many colleagues were also struggling. Teaching and

learning centres and educational development units had become front-line workers in a

mighty effort to keep the core business of their educational institutions operating.

Throughout the pandemic, teaching and learning centres expanded their reach and

demonstrated the important role they play in educational technology, faculty

development, and educational quality. As one of the directors interviewed for this study put it shortly before the pandemic started, "This institution is about to discover it has a teaching and learning centre. This newfound importance began to take its toll. Staff, especially with those with children, were dually stressed when work and family demands both spiked because schools and daycares were closed. As support services, we worked to support faculty's struggles with technology, but the greater struggle was listening and responding to faculty's affective experience. Burnout became a legitimate professional development topic, but this is not our area of expertise, and how can we help those experiencing burnout when we are burning out ourselves?

Recounting these details has been important because the research study that follows began before the pandemic, and it is not primarily about the pandemic. Still, it became impossible to avoid the impact of the pandemic on professional development for part-time online instructors during this period. The document analysis of academic plans shows that professional development for online instruction was a neglected topic pre-pandemic, and the email interviews demonstrate that professional development for online instruction became the central, all-consuming task for educational developers, spurring unprecedented creativity and innovation. But it also shows that part-time faculty and their unique needs were again lost in the mix. Part-time faculty have been called indispensable but invisible, and part-time online instructors have been dubbed the doubly invisible. If it is actually possible for a group of people to be triply invisible, the pandemic added this layer of invisibility because it was difficult to determine how much attention was paid specifically to contingent faculty who teach online and their unique conditions.

This work attempts to dissipate this fog by grounding its orientation in Ursula Franklin's *The Real World of Technology* (1990), where Franklin defines reality as "the experience of ordinary people in everyday life" (p. 36). The professional development for part-time online instructors is not something I explore from a distance. I know this challenge intimately; this has been the nitty gritty of my day-to-day life for the past several years. My efforts to make sense of this tricky terrain have been guided by Franklin's concerns about how technology affects the quality of our lives, and I hope this work embodies her spirit to solve problems and make the world a better place by employing her concept of redemptive technologies that can arise from a convoluted and tumultuous time such as this one.

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## Discussion of Key Terms

**Academic Plan**

An academic plan is an official postsecondary institutional document articulating an institution's principles, strategic priorities, and future recommendations for continuous academic success (Queen's University, 2011, p. 4). They are time-bound, typically for a four to five-year period, and academic plans often provide a framework to "help all employees, including instructors, staff and administrators, focus on student success and student learning" (Lethbridge College, 2017, p. 3). Academic plans are often but not always differentiated from strategic plans and comprehensive institutional plans insofar as they focus on academic programs, educational quality, and the teaching and learning experience. This does not hold firm in all situations. Reflecting the great diversity within the Canadian postsecondary sector, some institutions possess both strategic plans and academic plans; others will contain academic planning statements within comprehensive institutional plans, whereas others develop supplemental educational technology plans or education action plans. Whatever their variations in name and format, however, plans represent a "ceremony any reputable organization must conduct periodically to maintain legitimacy" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p.242). Academic plans respond to a current state characterized by acute fiscal challenges and heightened pressure for accountability, and the documents must both emphasize stability and show signs of new activity that address changing market and resource conditions (Harmening, 2013). These documents frequently comment upon mission, commitment to learners, curriculum enhancement, strategic partnerships and the development of an inclusive culture (VanWagoner, 2001). While the planning literature is full of strategic

planning models and advice for postsecondary institutions, academic planning literature for community colleges is "almost non-existent" (VanWagoner, 2001, p. 2). This research study is not about the academic planning process or the implementation of the academic plans; it merely analyzes a set of published academic plans because academic plans hold the potential to transcend siloes and nourish connections (Campbell, 2018). A full discussion of the selection criteria for the academic plans included in this research study appears in Chapter Three.

**Assessment of Student Learning –**

The assessment *of* student learning, assessment *for* student learning, and assessment *as* student learning is a core component of pedagogy. When properly integrated into the learning cycle, it is a method of teaching that both reflects and contributes to learning (Conrad & Openo, 2018). There is a growing focus on the assessment of student learning outcomes as a gauge of the value and quality of postsecondary education, and the pandemic forced increased attention upon academic integrity, emerging forms of academic misconduct (such as contract cheating), and types of assessment monitoring systems (such as online proctoring). Assessment is used broadly to cover both formative and summative assessment, but the most common usage of the word *assessment* in this research study corresponds with the way the term assessment is most commonly understood in postsecondary practice – those instructional activities faculty engage in to assign grades or marks to student work produced during the learning process.

**Contingent Faculty –**

There is no Statistics Canada definition of *contingent faculty* in Canada, and there is a need for more and better data about contingent faculty in Canada (Charbonneau, 2014; Pasma & Shaker, 2018). In the first snapshot of university faculty appointments, Pasma and Shaker (2018) use the term *contract faculty* instead of *contingent faculty* to denote non-permanent, not full-time faculty. The Council of Ontario Universities (COU) (2018) suggests that "categorizing academic staff between full-time and part-time describes a diverse group in the simplest terms" (p. 2). This is true, but this crude categorization between full-time and part-time faculty captures the essential nature of contingency – the uncertain and temporary nature of the relationship between the faculty member and the academic institution. For the purposes of this study, contingent faculty are defined as part-time, contract academic staff who "are hired exclusively to teach a course and are almost always exempt from the duties of their full-time colleagues for graduate supervision, program development, research and service. These instructors are commonly hired on a per course basis" (Council of Ontario Universities, 2018, p. 5).

Depending on the institution, contingent faculty may be referred to as "sessional instructors, course directors and instructors, lecturers or adjuncts," and "these part-time instructors are responsible for leading teaching activities of their course – so this group does not include teaching assistants (TA's), markers, or those hired exclusively to do research" (Council of Ontario Universities, 2018, p. 5). This research study adopts COU's definition as the best working definition available in Canada at the present time, and it applies the term broadly to member institutions of Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan). Because of the great variance describing this type of faculty appointment, I use the terms adjunct, part-time, contract, sessional, and contingent faculty interchangeably

throughout, particularly in Chapter One, which provides a further elaboration on the problematic nature of contingent faculty and student performance.  Sessional faculty are a heterogenous group, and the most important distinction may be that not all part-time faculty are precariously employed, but many are.

**Directors of Teaching and Learning Centres –**

This phrase denotes leaders of teaching and learning centres or educational development units. Depending on the size of institution and the maturity of its teaching and learning centre, this position may be called a manager, executive director, or an associate vice provost, and their responsibilities may or may not include specific responsibility for educational technology purchase and implementation. The term director has been selected because director denotes a person who is in charge of an activity, department, or organization, in this case, the teaching and learning centre, units which can also go by wildly different names.

**Online Education –**

Online education is a form of distance education where the primary delivery mechanism is via internet-based technologies. These courses and programs could be delivered synchronously, asynchronously, or employ both delivery modalities so that all instruction is conducted at a distance (Conrad & Openo, 2018). Synonymous phrasing includes e-learning, online learning, and online distance education, but online education is not equivalent to distance learning. As Bates (2005) notes, "distance learning can exist without online learning and online learning is not necessarily distance learning (pp. 14-15)." Some distance learning formats still exist that do not employ the use of internet-based communications technologies.  Bates (2017) captures the endemic definitional

quagmire of online education by saying, "We are trying to describe a very dynamic and fast-changing phenomenon, and the terminology often struggles to keep up with the reality of what's happening" (para. 17). This observation took on new poignancy during the COVID-19 pandemic with the rise of phrases such as *emergency remote instruction, bichronous, polysynchronous,* and *hyflex* learning models.

Online education may include synchronous "face-to-face" technologies such as Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, Zoom, or Google Meet, asynchronous or multi-synchronous platforms such as the learning management system (LMS) and Google Docs, and/or participatory flow technologies such as Twitter, Facebook, and Padlet. The use of online education in this research study denotes learning experiences where students and faculty use "a personal computer or other mobile device connected to the Worldwide Web using either a cable or wireless protocol," and where faculty and students possess "the ability to make use of text-based, audio, and audio-visual communications that afford instructors the opportunity to create multifaceted and multidimensional instructional delivery systems" (Conrad & Openo, 2018, p. 8).

**Professional Development –**

Formal professional development is "a planned process that helps all staff fulfill their professional responsibility to actively develop and maintain currency in their discipline, teaching or professional practice through reflection, professional readings, industry contacts, professional associations, further education and other forms of information exchanges" (Lethbridge College, 2017, p. 28). Informal professional development (Hicks, 2014) may include other forms of information exchanges that include, but are not limited to, participation in professional learning networks, faculty

learning communities, or communities of practice. Many prefer the term *professional learning* because of its emphasis on the learner (O'Brien, 2018).

In the Canadian academic plans analyzed in this research study, *professional development* appears to be the vernacular, and this research study focuses its attention on the formal professional development opportunities offered by teaching and learning centres, such as instructional skills workshops and seminars. Unless specified otherwise, the term professional development is used to refer to formal professional development opportunities offered to postsecondary faculty by teaching and learning centres for the purposes of enhancing instructional quality. Professional development is also sometimes referred to as academic development (most common in Australia), faculty development (most common in the United States), or educational development (most common in Canada). These phrases are also used interchangeably for variance and readability, but also because each variant phrase signifies efforts to engage faculty in planned activities to enhance teaching, learning, and scholarship (Hunt & Chalmers, 2017).

**Chapter 1. A Structural Problem**

**Preamble – The House of Technology**

Because of her mother's Jewish heritage, Ursula Franklin was forced to survive 18 months of internment in a Nazi labour camp. While imprisoned, she suffered frostbite in her feet and the pain never left her, but Franklin and most of her family survived the war. After the war, Franklin went on to earn a PhD in experimental physics from the Technical University of Berlin in 1948, and one year later, Franklin moved to Toronto, and she became the first woman to be honoured with the title of University Professor by the University of Toronto, where she taught in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering and the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology (Ursula Franklin Academy, n.d.). Shortly after moving to Canada, Franklin also became a Quaker (Raymond, 2017). She spoke rarely of her experiences as a Holocaust survivor, but undoubtedly, both Franklin's experience as a Holocaust survivor and her identity as a Quaker shaped her work as a humanitarian and peace activist (Raymond, 2017).

Franklin was also heavily involved with women's issues, and in 1990, the year after she delivered her Massey Lectures entitled *The Real World of Technology* (1990), Franklin was awarded the Order of Ontario. The nomination from the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) read, in part:

> [Dr. Franklin's] concerns about the quality of our lives, particularly as they are affected by science and technology, have always been accompanied by action on behalf of those beliefs to help solve problems…Dr. Franklin is truly an example of someone who lives her convictions, who is not afraid to act on the basis of her

beliefs, and whose presence among us helps us to make this world a better place

to live. (Ursula Franklin Academy, n.d., para. 2)

Franklin's concern about how science and technology define the quality of our lives is

the central theme in *The Real World of Technology* (1990), which she begins by

observing, "we are living in a difficult, very interesting time, a time in which a major

historical period is coming to a convoluted end" (p. 11).

Franklin likened the tumultuous end of the twentieth century to the Protestant

Reformation, but in this epochal change, the social and political upheaval would not be

primarily religious, but technological. She metaphorically sought to capture the

importance and influence of technology by suggesting we all live in a large and

technologically sophisticated "house."

As I see it, technology has built the house in which we all live. The house is

continually being extended and remodeled. More and more of human life takes

place within its walls, so that today there is hardly any human activity that does

not occur within this house. All are affected by the design of the house, by its

division of space, by the location of its doors and walls. Compared to people in

earlier times, we rarely have a chance to live outside this house. And the house is

still changing; it is still being built as well as demolished. (p. 11)

On September 11, 2001, the 20th century came to the convoluted end Franklin presaged

when 19 terrorists weaponized commercial aircraft and flew them into the Twin Towers

and the Pentagon. In very real and metaphorical terms, one part of the house of

technology (involving urbanization, heavier-than-air flight, skyscraper engineering,

modern warfare, and Western financial markets) collapsed as the overall house of technology continued to change and grow larger.

If 9/11 marks the start of a new and even more convoluted historical period, then this period's commencement coincided with the ascendency of Google, Amazon, Microsoft, Facebook, Twitter, the iPhone, the Internet of Things, Reddit, and a panoply of other apps, social networks, and devices. In what the World Economic Forum dubbed the "the fourth industrial revolution" (Schwab, 2016), cyber-physical systems created new capabilities and infrastructures such as genome editing, machine intelligence, and cryptocurrencies. Powerful portable computing devices became globally ubiquitous even in less well-developed economies, though data can still be prohibitively expensive, proving the oft-used quotation attributed to science fiction writer William Gibson, "The future is already here – it's just not very evenly distributed" (Kennedy, 2012).
In Canada, the *device explosion* (Straumsheim, 2013) means that a current postsecondary student may own four wirelessly enabled devices – including a laptop, smartphone, smartwatch, and a networked gaming console or two – reinforcing Franklin's observation that more and more human life takes place within the walls of the technological house.

Others argue this house offers no privacy, and they prefer to call this fourth industrial revolution "the age of surveillance capitalism" (Zuboff, 2015). In 2020, living within the technological house took on new meanings with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as almost all postsecondary instruction transitioned to emergency remote instruction using voice-over PowerPoint, Screencast-o-matic, Zoom, or Microsoft Teams to deliver lectures, and online proctoring software systems such as Proctorio, ProctorU, and Respondus Monitor to host online final exams. To keep teaching during the

pandemic, most postsecondary employees and faculty took up permanent residence

inside the technological house.

This research study concentrates its focus on just one room of this technological house –

the room of online learning. I know the architecture of this room as a doctoral student in

Distance Education at Athabasca University, as an instructor in the University of

Alberta's online Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, and as the Director

of Teaching and Learning at Medicine Hat College. Online education is a room that, like

the house itself, continues to get larger and more ornate. To extend Franklin's metaphor

to its extreme, during the global COVID-19 pandemic, online learning became the most

important and overcrowded room in the house.

**A Brief Look inside the House – Technology as Practice**

   Franklin (1990) defines *technology as practice* broadly as the "models that

underlie our thinking and discussions about technology," and these models impact the

"organization of work and people" (p. 12). Franklin says the scope of *technology as*

*practice* "includes activities as well as a body of knowledge, structures as well as the act

of structuring" (p. 14), and this scope makes it hard to define our talk meaningfully about

technology.

   Our language itself is poorly suited to describe the complexity of technological

   interactions. The interconnectedness of many of those processes, the fact that they

   are so complexly interrelated, defies our normal push-me-pull you, cause-and-

   consequence metaphors. How does one speak about something that is both fish

   and water, means as well as end? That's why I think it is better to examine

   limited settings where one puts technology in context, because context is what

matters most. . . I think it's important to realize that technology defined as

*practice* shows us the deep cultural link of technology, and it saves us from

thinking that technology is the icing on the cake. Technology is part of the cake

itself. (pp. 14-17)

This research study employs Franklin's (1990) *technology as practice* as its foundational

framework to propose an interrelated, two-phase, multimethod qualitative study

exploring academic strategy documents and the experience of educational development

units supporting online faculty in Canadian colleges and institutes. Franklin's work

describes a shift from holistic to prescriptive technologies that holds oracular relevance

for the shift to online education. Franklin's observation that context matters justifies the

parameters to include academic plans covering the current period and immediate future

from member institutions of Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan). Her suggestion that

it is better to examine technology in limited settings also explains the rationale for

focused attention on the lived experience of directors of teaching and learning centres,

leaders of the heroic units who "saved" higher education during the pandemic (Bortolin,

2020; Eaton, 2020).

Franklin's *technology of practice* is conceived as the interplay of four interrelated

and interconnected realities – *projected, constructed, vernacular* and *extended* – that

structures the research approach (Figure 2). Franklin (1990) defines reality as "the

experience of ordinary people in everyday life," (p. 36), and everyday life is lived within

the interplay of these four realities. The first reality is the *vernacular reality,* the nitty

gritty stuff of day-to-day life. "It's bread and butter, soup, work, clothing and shelter, the

reality of everyday life" (p. 36). Franklin, as a feminist, stresses that our daily experience is both private and personal, as well as common and political.

*Extended reality* is "that body of knowledge and emotions we acquire that is based on the experience of others" (p.37). "Experiences of war, of depression, of old age, of foreign travel, of religious experience that those who were gifted enough to put into words have told us about" (p. 37). The extended reality also includes artifacts and the things housed in museums. Encountering realities of other times, places, and people not directly part of our own personal experience creates continuity with the past and extends our understanding of the range of human experience.

Franklin states that "over and above this, we live with what I call a *constructed* reality or *reconstructed reality*" (p. 37). *Constructed reality* is formed, in part, by the daily barrage of advertising and propaganda. These constructed descriptions of reality furnish us with patterns of behaviour, and "we consider these patterns real, even if we know the situations have been constructed in order to make a particular pattern very clear and evident" (p. 37). Archetypes, like Charles Dickens' Ebeneezer Scrooge, are a constructed reality that forms "the fabric that holds the common culture together" (p. 37). Intricately connected to the constructed reality is the *projected reality*, what Franklin calls the reality of the future. The future is influenced by actions in the present, and the strategic plan, according to Franklin, "can influence people's actions and attitudes as much as or more than the price of bread or the level of wages" (p. 38). All four realities are simultaneously present and all have been profoundly affected by technology. Each must be reckoned with separately to fully grasp technology as practice because, Franklin (1990) argues, technology possesses the ability to separate knowledge from experience,

creating a disconnect between the reality of experience and constructed and projected

realities.

**Figure 1**

*Franklin's Four Realities*



## Projected
*The reality of the future, the 5-year plan*

## Constructed
*Archetypes, myths and propaganda*

## Vernacular
*Soup and bread, the reality of daily life*

## Extended
*Autobiographies, histories and museums*
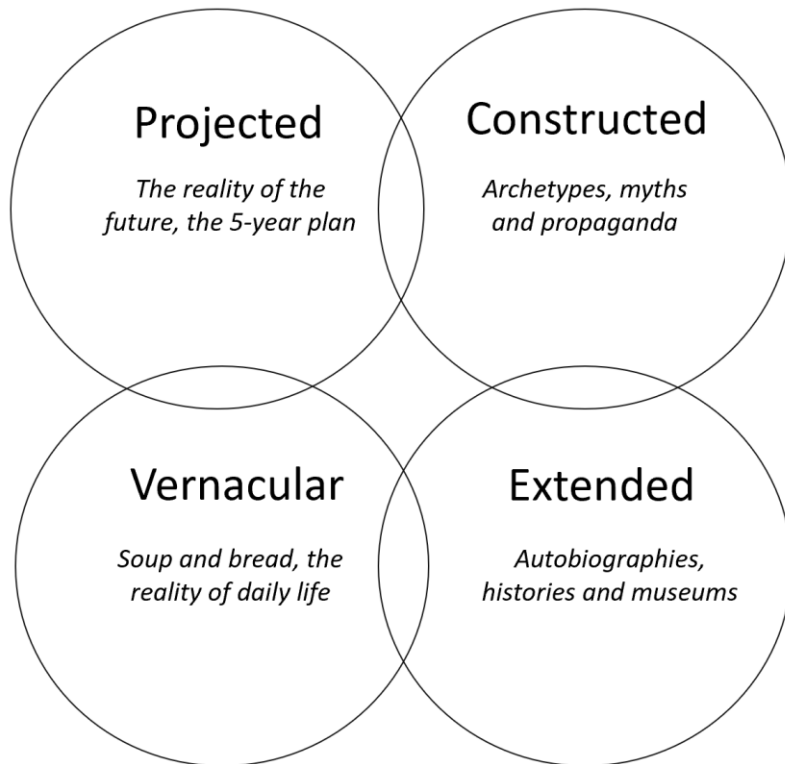
*Note:* This visual adaptation of Franklin's multiple realities is grounded in the vernacular reality

of people in everyday life. The vernacular reality can be informed by extended realities of

people in other times and places. Franklin asserts that "over and above" these experiential

realities are the constructed reality of archetypes, cultural myths, and the daily barrage of

propaganda, which also informs the projected reality five-year plans that can influence daily life

more than the price of bread.

*Technology as practice* operates as a system that "involves organization,

procedures, symbols, new words, equations, and most of all a mindset" (Franklin, 1990,

p. 12). Hashtag, hyflex, bichronous, and polysynchronous delivery are part of a new and emerging teaching and learning lexicon, and academic plans may provide symbolic insight into the mindset guiding organizational activity and procedures. Educational technology also possesses an ideological bent as part of its constructed reality; educational technology "assumes positive impacts and is positioned as the answer to the strains and consternations of administrators, faculty, students, teachers, and learning institutions" (Veletsianos & Moe, 2017, para. 26). Academic plans are a visible part of the constructed reality that form the projected reality of the future. They are often constructed through widespread involvement and stakeholder engagement to set an agenda and a roadmap for future academic success (Britner, 2012). Institutions choose to develop academic plans to respond to challenges and changes and prioritize directions for student learning (George Brown College, 1994), likely containing evidence of the current mindset towards online education and faculty development in Canadian postsecondary education.

Franklin cautions against an overly enthusiastic embrace of the technological mindset, however, by suggesting "many new technologies and their products have entered the public sphere in a cloud of hope, imagination and anticipation" (p. 102) without adequate consideration to how new technologies may reinforce or destroy social structures "in ways that are neither foreseen nor foreseeable" (p. 57). Online education in Canada entered the public sphere with this cloud of hope and anticipation. Before the pandemic, online education was heralded as the "future of higher education" (Contact North, 2016, p.1) that would increase access and student success for many who would otherwise not be able to go to college. Online education would provide students "digital

options to make colleges and universities work for them" (Contact North, 2016, p. 2), and the "widely accepted statements among learning futurists" (Contact North, 2016, p. 7) suggested that learning will no longer be defined by time or place. Instead, learners would be able to create learning playlists that reflected their goals in self-directed, personalized learning experiences where courses become less important than diverse and new forms of credentials (Contact North, 2016, pp. 7-11).

**Structure of Dissertation**

By exploring Canadian academic plans concerning part-time faculty teaching online professional development, and the experiences of directors of teaching and learning centres in Canada, this proposal seeks to examine what conflicts exist, if any, between the projected reality of academic strategy and the extended reality of online faculty development programs in the Canadian college sector during the contemporary period where online education has experienced an unprecedented growth in volume and complexity. The research questions this study seeks to answer are: *How are online faculty and their professional development represented in current Canadian postsecondary academic plans (the projected reality)? How are the professional development needs of contingent online faculty being served by Canadian teaching and learning centres (the extended reality)? What gaps, if any, exist between the projected reality of academic plans and the extended reality of teaching and learning centres in Canada (the integrated analysis of phases one and two)?*

Phase one explores the *projected reality of the future* (Franklin, 1990) as it is expressed in academic strategy documents. This exploration is conducted through a document analysis of academic plans for Canadian postsecondary institutions covering

the current and immediate future. Educational technology and online education are "inherently political in nature [but they are often seen as a] profoundly apolitical aspect of contemporary education provision" (Selwyn, 2014, p. 5). In a broad definition of politics, academic plans can be viewed as political texts engaged in political discourse on behalf of academic institutions and their leadership. These documents may also be responding to a "discourse of crisis" (Openo, 2020; Wall, Hursh & Rodgers, 2014, p. 7) surrounding higher education, supporting a cultural narrative regarding educational technology's promise to provide a necessary disruption to postsecondary education's broken business model (Murphy, 2018).

Selwyn (2014) argues that high-profile proclamations, such as academic plans, reveal "the general belief amongst many powerful interests that digital technologies have the potential to enable fundamental educational change and renewal" (2014, p. 7). This techno-solutionism implies postsecondary education needs to be re-imagined and revolutionized, and that educational technology is the most effective and efficient way to achieve transformation (Veletsianos & Moe, 2017). Phase one looks specifically for recognition of professional development for part-time and online instructors, and for any expressions that "the role of faculty will need to change significantly [in order to play more] facilitative, coaching, mentoring and guiding roles" (Contact North, 2016, p. 11) in the provision of online education.

Phase two of the research approach is comprised of email interviews with 12 directors of teaching and learning centres in Canada to illuminate the barriers and creative approaches of providing educational development services to online contingent faculty. Again, Franklin (1990) describes *extended reality* as "the body of knowledge and

emotions that we acquire based on the experience of others" (p. 37). Franklin argues that experience should lead "to a modification of knowledge, rather than abstract knowledge forcing people to perceive their experience as being unreal or wrong" (p. 40). Personal experiences that contradict the socially constructed reality may lead to Selwyn's (2014) observation that skepticism of educational technology risks being psychopathologized, where individuals are tempted to blame themselves for technological failures without knowing why they are at fault (Selwyn, 2014, p. 11). At the very least, educational technologists would be able to describe the gap between the promise of educational technology and the limitations of its implementation.

The work of teaching and learning centres in Canada is now inextricably intertwined with educational technology. Selwyn notes that "the *de facto* role of the academic educational technologist is understood to be one of finding ways to make these technology-based improvements happen" (Selwyn, 2014, p. 12), or in Franklin's words, the role of educational technology managers is to make the world "safe for technology" (1990, p. 120). COVID-19 forced teaching and learning centres to be central players in a drama where they needed to make education safe for the pandemic through technological means, and most provided assistance to faculty at an unprecedented scale to facilitate emergency remote instruction.

Directors of teaching and learning centres (also called educational development units) were selected as the research population before the pandemic began because they are intimately familiar with the challenges of implementing online education, encountering faculty resistance, and supporting faculty to effectively integrate new educational technologies into teaching practice. Some of the interviews began pre-

pandemic and shifted dramatically over the months that followed. Email interviews enabled the data collection to capture the unfolding situation. Formerly misunderstood and somewhat marginalized units (Bortolin, 2020; Eaton, 2020; Vander Kloet, 2015) found that their knowledge and expertise in online pedagogy were suddenly highly valuable and needed.

Consequently, directors of teaching and learning centres may now be the postsecondary employees most familiar with Selwyn's observation that educational technology is a "site of deliberate conflict and struggle" (2014, p. 147), and they were also best positioned to develop a set of pragmatic, achievable, and grounded interventions for faculty development initiatives that ensure online educational quality. These achievable and grounded interventions reinforce the Deweyan conception of critical pragmatism where shared experiences become social intelligence, the "only reliable vehicle" to develop and pursue democracy (Kadlec, 2008, p. 56). Content analysis is used to analyze the email interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres in Canada to look for evidence of technology as a contested space (Selwyn, 2014), specifically around the challenges of providing educational development programs to online instructors. The interviews explore barriers, obstacles, innovative activities and successful professional development approaches to develop online faculty and support pedagogical innovations in online contexts.

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to capture the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on online education in Canada, and it is likewise impossible to foresee accurately what pandemic innovations will become permanent structural changes, but it is assumed that online education has experienced a watershed moment that has

permanently normalized its presence.  Online education was expanding prior to the

pandemic, and it will continue to expand and become more sophisticated, but not

necessarily more effective. Dron (2014) suggests "emerging systems and their

capabilities for assembly and integration" allow for a "depth of sophistication that we

have not seen before" (p.260) in terms of instructional designs and teaching and learning

activities. If this expansion of sophisticated instructional designs occurs, it generates an

attendant need to provide continual support and development to online instructors. Prior

to the pandemic, however, there was a lack of investment in professional development

and little understanding of instructional design leading to a general scramble that may

have reignited the debate about the superiority face-to-face instruction (Contact North,

2021; Openo, 2021). Before advancing to these more sophisticated adjacent possibles

(Dron, 2014), institutions will need to capitalize on the era of innovation induced by the

pandemic to provide more quality professional development opportunities about

instructional design, engaging online instructional strategies, and designing authentic

assessments.

Franklin (1990) offers another possibility of development, though. She observes

that when a technology and its supporting infrastructures become institutionalized, the

technology may stagnate and improvements may become cosmetic or marginal. This is

noteworthy because prior to the pandemic, many college students expressed difficulty

with basic aspects of online learning, including learning material on their own, using

course technology, and they missed faculty and student interaction (Porter & Umbach,

2019). The pandemic intensified and magnified these barriers (OCUFA, 2020) and

reinforced the perception of online education's quality gap. The hurried move to online

education during the pandemic was dubbed by some as "the McDonaldization of education" (Cohan, 2020), and many faculty found the emergency pivot online to be "painful, worrisome and anxiety-inducing" (Kimmons, et al., 2020, para. 2). Adding Zoom fatigue and the secondary trauma of meeting the emotional needs of students made faculty burnout a chronic condition of the pandemic (Flaherty, 2020). Faculty burnout and Canadian students' widespread dissatisfaction with online learning (Ludlow, 2020; OCUFA, 2020; Sawatzky, 2020) has the potential to "seal the perception of online learning as a weak option" (Hodges, et al., 2020, para. 4). Minimizing the perceived disaster of online education forces educational developers towards a "culture of compliance" where there becomes an orthodoxy of online education and "only one way of doing 'it'" (Franklin, 1990, p. 24).

To hasten the maturation of online education so that it fulfills its potential and promise, the importance of online faculty development will need to be an inseparable part of any excitement for technology-enabled education. For those instructors who have now mastered the basics of online educational provision, there remains an opportunity to move them from basic competence to true proficiency. As Magda (2019) argues, "long-term professional development is equally as important given how quickly strategies and technologies change" (p. 24). Yet, many institutions do not provide professional development funding to part-time online instructors, and many institutions require no online instructional training at all (Magda, 2019). Faculty need to have conceptual models to use tools effectively so that they can drive the use of technology from a position of strength (Laurillard, 2012). Developing online instructors serves the interests

and mission of postsecondary institutions to ensure high-quality student learning experiences.

The rapid transition to remote teaching and learning in March 2020 and the following year of primarily online instruction renewed and heightened interest in professional development for educators new to online instruction (VanLeeuwen, et al., 2020). Teaching and learning centres, often previously discussed as marginalized (Vander Kloet, 2015), suddenly became heroic, front-line saviors engaged in a Herculean effort to keep the core business of educational institutions operating despite the major disruption to face-to-face instruction (Bortolin, 2020; Eaton, 2020). As one of the participants described it, everyone – faculty, educational developers, and students – found themselves caught in the same storm, but they were not all in the same boat. The pandemic intensified and accelerated certain trends and inequities already in existence.

Chapter One, the problem statement, weaves several of these trends together. Massification (Trow, 1973) and stagnant public funding (Usher, 2018) have forced postsecondary educations to operate at an unprecedented scale with declining public resources. Increased tuition and increasing levels of student-loan debt reflect a social shift of postsecondary education from a public to a private good (Bass, 2018), and two approaches over the first two decades of the 21$^{st}$ Century have worked to reshape the nature of postsecondary education provision in Canada – online education and the use of contract faculty. Because these two trends have accelerated over the same time frame, they must be seen in tandem, and both the growth of contingent faculty and online education appear to have negative impacts on student success. The weight of the extant evidence suggests exposure to part-time faculty reduces student persistence in a major,

retention in postsecondary studies, and graduation rates (Bettinger & Long, 2004; Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Jaeger & Eagan, 2009, Ran & Xu, 2017). The negative impacts of part-time faculty on student success appear to be exacerbated in online settings, forcing a recalculation of the costs involved in using part-time faculty and developing online offerings.

Chapter Two, the literature review, expands upon the research done to date on faculty development programs for adjunct faculty and the many remaining research gaps. This research rests on the foundational assumption that faculty can be developed – that faculty can improve their teaching – and that participation in faculty development programs can positively impact the student learning experience. Measuring the impact of professional development programs for faculty is incredibly difficult research to conduct because it involves establishing a causal chain of evidence from participation in a professional development offering, to changed teaching and learning work, to the site of learning, and then to the demonstration of specific student behaviors and/or learning outcomes (Wright, et al., 2018). Despite the complexity involved in designing and conducting research into the effectiveness of faculty development programs, "broadly speaking, faculty development has measurable impacts on teaching" (Condon, et al., 2016, p. 114). The research conducted by Condon, et al., (2016) shows that faculty who participate in professional development opportunities consistently report learning gains and describe changes in their teaching practice. Further, an analysis of their subjects'

> syllabi, assignments, methods and grading scales verifies that their instruction has
> changed as they claimed it had. Just as significant a finding is that these impacts
> are cumulative. Participants who amass a more extensive faculty development

history. . . show measurably larger changes in their teaching than faculty whose

participation is slight. . . In short, formal faculty development produces changes

in the way participants teach. (p. 114)

Chapter Two also details the political history of teaching and learning centres in Canada

and the many research gaps pertaining to professional development for part-time faculty,

best described as an "administrative problem that is ripe for continued investigation"

(Timmerman & Mulvihill, 2017, p. 440).

Franklin's (1990) conception of *technology as practice* is interwoven throughout

the study, but Franklin's relationship to Deweyan critical pragmatism is covered in

Chapter Three, which details the research method to determine what gaps, if any, exist

between strategy and practice in the development of online educators in Canada. This

study aims to generate a more holistic understanding of how Canadian postsecondary

institutions recognize the growing strategic importance of the professional development

of online contingent faculty to the quality and maturation of online education, and how

teaching and learning centres are currently managing the challenges of developing and

supporting this rapidly emerging subgroup of faculty.  Chapter Three outlines my

ontological and epistemological orientation, along with an elaboration of critical theory,

Deweyan critical pragmatism, and the justification for the proposed multimethod

approach.

A description of the findings and limitations from both the document analysis and

email interviews with directors of Canadian teaching and learning centres are contained

in Chapter Four. Chapter Five concludes the study with an integrated analysis of the

findings and gaps, recommendations for conceiving professional development as a

*redemptive technology*, areas for further research, and some thoughts on a potentially darker future for part-time faculty and professional development based on an extrapolation of Franklin's observations.

**Significance of the Study**

Prior to the pandemic, online education was rapidly expanding and evolving at the same time the use of part-time faculty was also accelerating, to the present time where part-time faculty account for more than 50% of all faculty in Canadian postsecondary education. A lack of universal reporting requirements and inconsistent reporting means much remains unknown about the composition, preparation, and experience of online instructors in Canada. What appears to be known, however, is that "training and support for faculty in the delivery of online and digital learning is central to overcoming the primary barriers to the adoption of online education" (Johnson, et al., 2019, slide 22). What also appears to be the case, fully outlined in Chapter One, is that a negative correlation exists between exposure to part-time faculty and student persistence in postsecondary studies, a negative correlation that appears to be exacerbated in online learning environments. One of online education's great promises has been greater access for students, especially low-income students, but moving vulnerable students online may widen educational attainment gaps between students possessing low academic preparation who are studying online and well-prepared students participating in face-to-face offerings (Protopsaltis & Baum, 2019).

Faculty development for online educators could positively impact this negative correlation and better enable online education to fulfill its potential. Professional development appears to be a key ingredient to the successful development and delivery

of digitally-mediated education, so much so that a leading voice in Canadian online education, Dr. Tony Bates (2019b), has called for all instructors to complete a compulsory, 13-week course as a minimal qualification to teach. Bates argues for mandatory teaching training because instructors are facing increased student diversity, students are being called on to demonstrate acquisition of high-level skills like critical thinking, and faculty must possess the ability to effectively integrate emerging teaching technologies. This call for compulsory faculty development is bound to generate "system-wide opposition" (Bates, 2019b, para. 12), emblematic of online education as a contested space.

Increasing attention is being paid to the educational development needs of sessional instructors because sessional teaching is becoming more prevalent at postsecondary institutions across Canada (Sabourin, 2020). Even so, the increase in part-time staff has not been accompanied by an increase in academic development programs targeted for them (Harvey, 2017). This gap between the increase in contract faculty and a lack of targeted faculty development programs is likely even wider for the growing body of Canadian online contingent instructors. As noted by Sabourin (2020), there is an "overwhelming absence of literature pertaining to the educational development of sessionals in Canada" (p. 11), and there is even less about Canadian sessionals who teach primarily online. Echoing Sabourin (2020), more can and should be done to support Canadian online instructors because they directly influence student learning in online learning environments (Kezar, et al., 2019). Quality professional development for part-time instructors recognizes they are a growing and important subgroup of faculty (Biro,

2005), and quality professional development can mature online education to better fulfill its potential and promise (Openo, 2020b).

The second phase of this study sought to examine the lived experience of 12 directors of teaching and learning centres located at CICan membership institutions to analyze the contested space of online education, paying particular attention to the conflict between the technological and pedagogical paradigms in Duus' four ideal-type e-learning paradigms. The academic plans minimized political conflicts through controlled messaging, but the email interviews provide insight into the internal conflicts and negotiations teaching and learning centre's experience when attempting to serve part-time online instructors. As the interviews show, over the past year the pandemic has inspired significant innovation in providing support for online instruction.

**Invisible Faculty Become the Centerpiece of Education**

Contingent faculty are an "indispensable but invisible" workforce in higher education (Allison, Lynn & Hoverman, 2014, p. 1), and since the 1970s, "the principal way in which colleges and universities have tried to lower their expenditures has been through the swelling employment of part-time instructors in place of full-time faculty" (Keller, 2008, p.83). Pasma and Shaker (2018) suggest that "austerity alone" (p. 6) cannot explain the rising use of contract faculty appointments. Rather, the use of sessional instructors is an administrative choice influenced by many factors and social forces. This chapter outlines why the increase of contingent faculty is problematic, starting with the major interconnected forces that have increased the use of contingent faculty, the effect of contingent faculty upon student success, and then to specific

consideration of online education, all to make the case that the professional development for online contingent faculty is a pressing strategic imperative.

**Massification**

Trow (1973) defined *massification* as the end point of a broad pattern of development from higher education as an elite experience for 15% of the population to a universal system where participation exceeded 50% of the population (Marginson, 2016). This growth fundamentally changes the nature of higher education, and massification has been primarily driven by technologically-induced changes in the labour market.

**Figure 2**

*Full-time Equivalent Enrolments by Sector, 1992-93 to 2015-16*
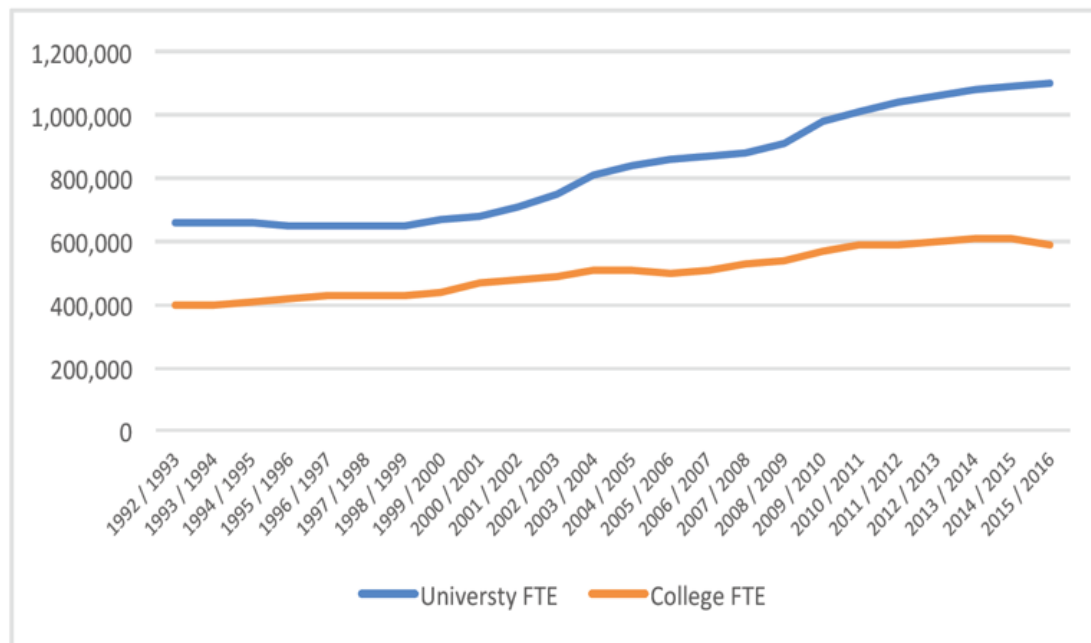


*Note*: Enrollment in Canadian colleges and universities has been steadily rising since the turn of the century (Usher, 2018, p. 11). Reprinted with permission.

Over the past 50 years,

the share of jobs requiring at least some college education has increased from 28

percent to at least 60 percent. By 2020, it is estimated that 65 percent of all jobs

in the United States will require some form of postsecondary education or

training; the fastest-growing sectors of the economy will be those that require

postsecondary education. . . What is driving this transformation?  In a word:

*technology.* (Carnevale, 2016, p. 16)

Advances in technology render some jobs obsolete at the same time these advance create

new jobs (Latchem, 2017), and "40 percent of all new jobs will be in the skilled trades

and technology" (Little, 2017, p.169). As a result of this shift in the job market and the

need for postsecondary education, the failure to participate in postsecondary studies has

transformed from "a mark for some defect of mind or character that has to be explained

or justified or apologized for" (Trow, 1973, as cited in Marginson, 2016, p. 28) to a

handicap on earnings that prevents individuals from achieving meaningful employment

in an increasingly automated economy (OECD, 2019). Figure 2 shows that enrollment in

Canadian colleges and universities have grown significantly over the past 30 years, and

universal participation requires postsecondary institutions to operate at a scale heretofore

unachieved because education is a labour-intensive process.

**From Public to Private Good**

The growth of postsecondary participation, however, has not been matched by

growing public investment. Figure 3 outlines the steady increase in tuition for Canadian

institutions over the past 25 years.

**Figure 3**

*Est. Average Domestic Undergraduate Tuitions and Fees, Canada, 1995-96 to 2018-19*
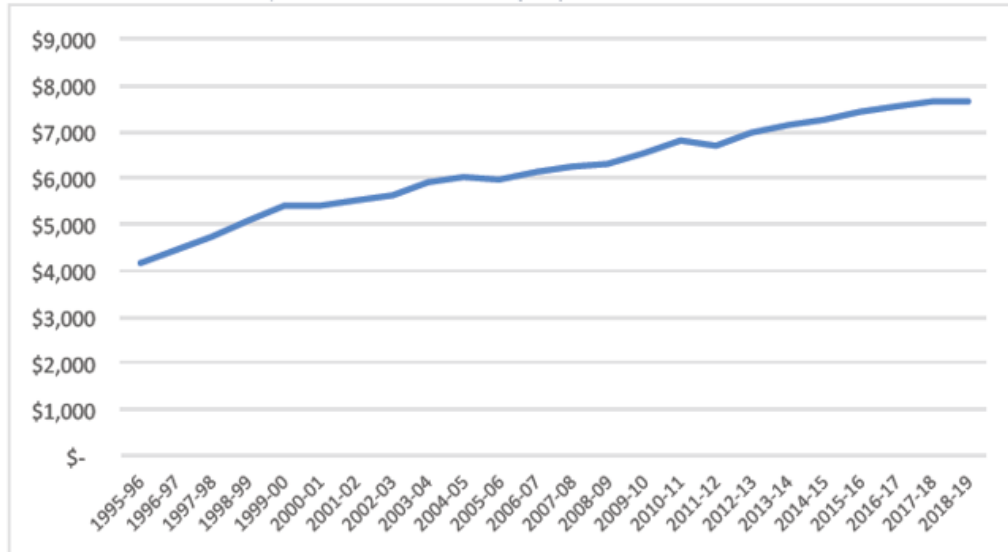


Figures in constant $2018.

*Note:* Tuition increases over the last 25 years have largely been born by students and, increasingly, international students. (Usher, 2018, p. 26). Reprinted with permission.

The pressure of massification has been accompanied and exacerbated by the shift from publicly funded postsecondary institutions to an increased reliance on individual tuition and student loans. Since 2008, government funding "has stagnated and even reversed somewhat in real terms, while income from students has continued to increase" (Usher, 2018, p. 26). The stagnation in public funding for a postsecondary education is reflective of a cultural shift characterized by the "collapse of the 'social compact' between society and higher education, and the narrowing view of higher education as a solely private good" (Bass, 2018, p. 35). Increased demand, stagnant public funding, and student-born tuition have lead institutions to implement cost-control measures while striving to educate more learners.

**The Quest for Scalability**

The need for postsecondary institutions to concomitantly serve increasing numbers of students with stagnant or declining public funds has challenged postsecondary institutions to scale operations. Part-time faculty and educational technology offer a tandem solution to the problematic opportunity presented by the massive expansion of postsecondary education in times of public funding constriction. Franklin's (1990) *technology as practice* outlines how teaching is transformed by the quest for scale. Franklin (1990) describes two types of technology, *holistic* and *prescriptive*.

Holistic technologies are best understood as artisanal technologies where the skilled craftsperson controls the production process from start to finish. Franklin describes teaching as a holistic technology:

> All of us who teach know that the magic moment when teaching turns into learning depends on the human setting and the quality and example of the teacher – on factors that relate to a general environment of growth rather than on any design parameters set down externally. If there ever was a growth process, if there ever was a holistic process, a process that cannot be divided into rigid predetermined steps, it is education (1990, p. 29).

Teaching, to Franklin, is *the* holistic technology. Still, she recognizes "schools and universities operate according to a production model" (1990, p. 28).

*Prescriptive* or *production* technologies break down the holistic process into clearly identifiable steps where a separate worker or group of workers carry out individual jobs. This *division of labour*, or the process of breaking teaching down into a

"sequence of separately executable steps" (Franklin, 1900, p. 23), is now being called the

*unbundling* of education (Bass & Eynon, 2017; Contact North, 2016; Czerniewicz,

2018). It is now possible to disaggregate course development from delivery, assessment

from delivery, and certification from assessment (Contact North, 2016). This

disaggregation is an important aspect of achieving flexibility and scale.

This application of the production model in education may be especially true for

online education, where the quest for scalability based on Peters' industrialized

conception of teaching and learning has profoundly influenced the field (Simonson, et

al., 2012). Teaching online can transform teaching from a holistic technology to a

prescriptive technology, one that is "shaped by scaled instruction, automated practices,

far-reaching, flexible and massive online education, and analytics-powered capacities

that can help students, faculty, and staff monitor and support student learning" (Bass,

2018, p. 35). This quest for scalability has transformed scale from being "a measure of

comparison [to that of] being a figure of merit" (Franklin, 1990, p. 26).  Scalability

explicitly accepts that bigger is always better, and bigger is especially better if scale can

be achieved more efficiently, or more cheaply, which partly explains the increased use of

part-time faculty during the era of massification and funding stagnation.

**The Accelerated Growth of Indispensable but Invisible Faculty**

The growth of contingent faculty appears to be accelerating in tandem with the

increased use and importance of educational technology. "Between 2004 and 2010, total

campus teaching staff in the United States grew by about 200,000. Full-time instructors

increased by about 11%, while part-time adjuncts increased their number by nearly 30%"

(Aoun, 2017, p. 131). These latter years of accelerated growth in the number of contract

faculty have also seen the exponential growth of online education. 2002 marks the first

year the Babson Survey Research Group began tracking online enrollment as a

percentage of total postsecondary enrollment in the United States (Allen & Seaman,

2010), and the increased growth of contingent faculty and the growth of online education

are so intimately connected that these two trends must be viewed together. Figure 4

illustrates the growth trend for contingent faculty in the United States over the past 50

years. The trend is similar in Canada.

**Figure 4**

*Trends in the American Academic Labor Force, 1975-2015*
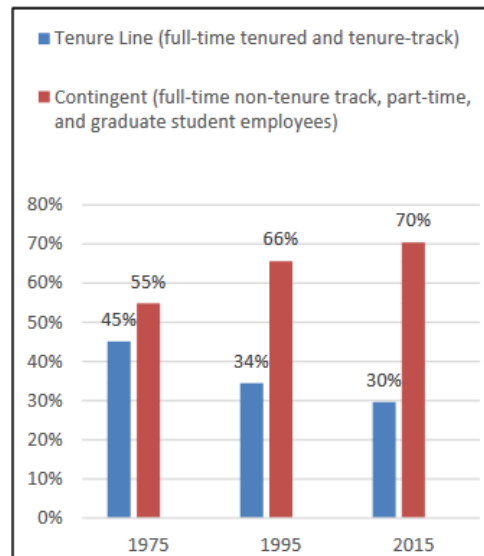


*Note:* Contingent faculty in the United States now comprise a growing majority of the

professoriate (AAUP, 2015). Canadian data is unavailable because of a lack of a consistently

applied Statistics Canada definition, but the Canadian data that does exist suggests faculty

composition trends in Canada are similar to that of the United States.

Nothing universal can be said about any group of people, and this holds true for contingent faculty. According to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), 65% of part-time faculty in the United States would not prefer a full-time position at their current institution (Monks, n.d.). Part-time faculty who do not want a full-time position tend to have higher household incomes and are more likely to be retirees or administrators who rely less upon teaching as their sole source of income (Monks, n.d.). They also tend to be male (58%). The 35% of part-time faculty who would prefer a full-time position are younger, have lower household incomes, and are more likely to hold one or more other jobs that do not involve teaching (Monks, n.d.). Part-time faculty who would like a full-time faculty position are also more likely to be women (52%) with dependent children (47%). Gender plays an important role in the discussion of contingent faculty; female faculty are twice as likely to hold contingent contracts (Monks, n. d.), which is why adjunct professorship is sometimes referred to as "the mommy track" (Kezar & Bernstein-Sierra, 2016, p. 28).

Within these broad categorizations, however, "there appears to be a good deal of diversity in the experiences of part-time faculty" (Monks, n.d., para. 8). This separation of part-time faculty who do not want a full-time faculty position and those who do want one corresponds well to Kezar and Bernstein-Sierra's (2016) two classes of contingent faculty, voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary contingent faculty are more satisfied with their role and do not suffer from "incoherent and conflictive" identities (Levin and Shaker 2011, p. 1475). Involuntary contingent faculty, on the other hand, "are divided selves, chameleon-like: they both accept and reject aspects of their

professional roles and status; they live in the present but also in a future that is projected

as better than the present" (Levin & Shaker, 2011, p. 1475).

The situation for contingent faculty in Canada is similar to those working in the

United States. More than half of all university faculty appointments in Canada are

contract appointments. Among contract faculty, 80% are part-time appointments (Pasma

& Shaker, 2018). Moreover, contract faculty in Canada tend to be younger, a majority are

women, and they are mix of working professionals, retired professors, and those who

cannot find permanent, full-time academic appointments (Pasma & Shaker, 2018). The

Canadian Association of University Teachers' (CAUT) *Faces of Precarity* project

provides evidence of a similar trajectory and composition of part-time faculty in Canada

to those in the United States.

> Data from Statistics Canada's labour force survey shows that since 1999 the
>
> number of contract staff in Canada has increased by 100 per cent, while the
>
> number of regular professors grew by 14 per cent. Contract academics are paid a
>
> third less per course than regular professors. The common contract length for
>
> contract staff is one semester and they teach about 50 per cent of all
>
> undergraduate classes. (CAUT, 2017, para. 7)

In Ontario, where the most reliable statistics exist, debate surrounds both the statistics

and the state of contingent faculty. The Council of Ontario Universities (COU) (2018)

notes that "not all universities collect detailed information on part-time teaching staff;

and among those that do collect data, not all do so in an institutionally centralized way"

(p. 9) or in a consistent manner.

The growing use of contract faculty in Canada is intensely controversial. *Faculty at Work: The Composition and Activities of Ontario Universities' Academic Workforce* (Council of Ontario Universities, 2018) details that in Ontario's universities, 52% of academic staff are part-time instructors, 42% are tenure stream faculty, and 6% are full-time, non-tenure stream. *Faculty at Work* purports to respond to "a public dialogue focusing on part-time instructors in the university sector, reinforcing a perception that most individuals who are teaching part-time hold PhD degrees and would prefer to work as full-time academics" (Council of Ontario Universities, 2018, p. 9). To change this perception and refocus public dialogue, *Faculty at Work* removes from the overall part-time teaching workforce those who are tenured and choosing to teach part-time, graduate students, those who do not have a PhD, and those over 65 (p. 9), thereby significantly reducing the number of part-time faculty represented.

CAUT, the Canadian organization representing faculty, takes issue with these successive removals, arguing COU is "trying to suggest that most contract academic staff are perfectly happy with their status and working conditions" (Compton, 2018, para. 5). CAUT further argues that even though part-time faculty, many of whom are women, are not paid for research, "many strive to maintain their research profiles" (p. 5) at the same time they are "juggling multiple jobs, more temporary work, and more unpaid work," which are "all proportionally on the rise among academic staff in Ontario" (p. 5). *Faculty at Work* shows significant tension in Canada between employers and employees about the chronic and growing use of sessional instructors, partially reflective of the diversity that exists between voluntary and involuntary instructors working within this class.

Canadian college data is unavailable and must be extrapolated from the limited data available for Canadian universities.

      Along with Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia also have high rates of contract appointments, and Pasma and Shaker (2018) argue that "the trend also does not appear to be a result of changing market demand for certain disciplines, nor, on the whole, the result of personal choices by tenured faculty or contract faculty" (Pasma & Shaker, 2018, p. 6). The heavy reliance on part-time faculty is an administrative solution deployed to cope with an era characterized by both massification and stagnant funding, and over half a century, reliance on part-time faculty became a permanent part of the postsecondary structure. The use of contingent faculty also has important bearing on educational quality because the small but growing body of research regarding the relative effectiveness of contract faculty suggests that the employment conditions of contingent faculty have negative consequences for student learning.

**The Negative Impact of Contingent Faculty Working Conditions on Student Success**

      Pasma and Shaker (2018) profile the working conditions that could cause the potentially negative impacts of contract faculty on the quality of the student learning:

> When instructors are only informed a few weeks — and in some cases, only a day or two — before the semester begins that they will be teaching a course, it is difficult for them to ensure that course material is up-to-date and that all necessary resources, such as textbooks, are in place for students. And when research is something that contract faculty have to pursue on their own, with limited time and little to no institutional support or funding, it can require many hours of uncompensated labour for them to remain current in their field. For

students, precarity means less access to faculty. Studies have shown that students

do better when they are able to build relationships with their professors, but

building relationships with contract faculty can be difficult. Cutting off contract

faculty email addresses the moment the semester ends or not being able to track

down a contract professor whose contract was not renewed also makes it more

difficult for students to get reference letters. (pp. 10-11)

Despite this compelling portrait of the structural limitations prohibiting contract faculty

from delivering a high-quality educational experience, Pasma and Shaker (2018) further

remark,

This is not to suggest that contract faculty are poor teachers – in fact, evidence

suggests that they are excellent teachers, but the conditions in which they are

forced to work has an impact on their ability to deliver the highest quality

education. (p. 10)

The evidence Pasma and Shaker (2018) refer to is Figlio, Shapiro and Soter, (2013), and

it is one of only two studies suggesting part-time faculty produce better student learning

outcomes than full-time faculty. It is now necessary to consider the extant research

assessing the impact of part-time faculty on student learning because the wealth of

evidence suggests that Pasma and Shaker's (2018) larger point is more accurate. Contract

faculty may be excellent teachers (or striving to become excellent teachers), but the

conditions in which they work – including uncertainty of appointment, unpreparedness,

precarity, and alienation – impact the student learning experience, whether it be physical

or virtual, negatively impacting contract faculty's ability to deliver the highest quality

educational experience to students. The truism, *faculty working conditions are student learning conditions,* is supported by the available evidence.

This research strives to be a study of the Canadian context, but current research on part-time faculty in Canada is "frustratingly scant" (Charbonneau, 2014, para. 1), and very little is known about the volume, profile, and composition of online educators in Canada. Consequently, it is necessary to leverage research mainly conducted in the United States to suggest that contingent instructors in largely face-to-face learning environments have a negative impact on student learning. Bettinger and Long (2004) first asked, "Do instructors matter?" by comparing the outcomes of students who had different types of instructors in their introductory courses of a given discipline. Their findings suggest that, in general, adjunct and graduate assistant instructors reduce interest in a subject relative to full-time, tenure-track faculty. The authors especially note that it is younger, inexperienced instructors who have not completed doctoral studies who most negatively impact students (p. 4). Their findings have been corroborated in other studies.

Ran and Xu (2017) added a dimension to Bettinger and Long's original study design by recognizing the heterogeneity of contingent faculty. They separated the faculty workforce into three subgroups. The first is tenure-track and tenured faculty. The second is non-tenured, non-tenure-track faculty with employment contracts longer than one year, and finally non-tenure-track, non-tenured faculty who possess employment contracts lasting one year or less (whom they call *short-termers*). By analyzing an anonymous state college system with over 68,000 two-year college students and more than 87,000 four-year students, Ran and Xu (2017) found that students taking introductory courses from non-tenure instructors were likely to get higher grades and had higher course persistence.

This seemingly good news is tempered by the finding that "students taking their introductory courses with short term non-tenure faculty are associated with the lowest probability of attempting another course in the same field in both two-year and four-year colleges" (Ran & Xu, 2017, p. 26). This may occur because an uninspiring experience reduces a students' probability of persisting in that discipline or because they drop out completely. The lack of student persistence beyond introductory courses taught by non-tenure faculty is most pronounced with short-term adjunct instructors. Ran and Xu (2017) are not able to paint portraits of the students affected, but it could be surmised that many are "new majority" students (Bass & Eynon, 2017), including black, Indigenous and people of colour, international, first generation students, mature students and those with lower levels of academic preparation.

Eagan and Jaeger (2008) might dispute this suggestion that new majority students were more adversely impacted because they found that students, regardless of the students' prior academic achievement, major, or course size, are significantly and negatively affected by part-time faculty who teach gatekeeper courses. Similarly, Jaeger and Eagan (2009) examined 1.5 million students in California's community college system over five years and discovered "as students' exposure to part-time faculty members increased, their likelihood of completing an associate's degree significantly decreased" (p.186). This finding is important because contingent faculty tend to teach a high percentage of introductory courses. Jaeger and Eagan (2009) argue this result has nothing to do with pedagogy or course design, but the faculty member's availability and accessibility. Jaeger and Eagan (2011) also discovered a significantly negative relationship between exposure to contingent faculty and student retention.

Ehrenberg and Zhang (2005) analyzed data spanning 15 academic years to assert that, "other factors held constant, increases in either the percentage of faculty that are part-time or the percentage of full-time faculty that are not on tenure tracks, is associated with a reduction in graduate rates" and "the magnitudes of these relationships are larger at public colleges and universities" (p. 651). Umbach (2007) provides a possible explanation for why an increase in exposure to part-time faculty may negatively affect graduation rates. He quantitatively analyzed the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement results from 132 colleges and universities, accounting for approximately 20,000 faculty, and concludes that "part-time faculty interact with students less frequently, use active and collaborative techniques less often, spend less time preparing for class, and have lower academic expectations than their tenured and tenure-track peers" (Umbach, 2007, p. 110). In short, part-time faculty use fewer learner-centred teaching and learning approaches, and this reduces the likelihood they will persist in a specific major or postsecondary studies more generally.

The adverse effects of exposure to contingent faculty may be most pronounced in the assessment of student outcomes. Even though contingent faculty teach the bulk of general education classes, contingent faculty are least likely to understand the whys and hows of assessment (Scott & Danley Scott, 2015). Ran and Xu's (2017) study suggests adjuncts may grade more leniently. These studies suggest that working conditions and instructional inexperience may inhibit the use of effective teaching practices for which the faculty have been hired, and this should concern policymakers and leaders of postsecondary institutions.

Yet not everyone views the adjunctification of the professoriate negatively because adjuncts provide significant benefits to the institution, its students, and the part-time faculty themselves. Part-time faculty enable schools to save money at the same time they provide flexibility for night, weekend and online courses that tenured professors may not want to teach. Working professionals who teach can add real world experience by providing job-related course content that enhances learner motivation at that same time the teachers themselves benefit by using teaching to advance in their fields or gain full-time teaching loads (Morgan, 2012). Hiring adjuncts enables institutions to screen for effective instructors before long-term hire (Autor, 2000), and using practicing experts enables institutions to allow skilled practitioners to drive the learning interactions. Some suggest that not having to do research allows adjuncts to specialize in teaching (Leslie, 1998; Korgan, 2016). These positive attributes hold true for online adjunct instructors as well, explaining why chief academic officers largely turn to adjunct faculty to teach online courses; adjuncts provide a flexible, cost-effective option to fill temporary vacancies with working experts who can improve the quality of education (Magda, 2019).

Despite any benefits accrued by using contract faculty, the unbalanced weight of evidence clearly suggests that part-time instructors have negative effects on student learning, and the two studies asserting part-time faculty perform better than their tenure-track colleagues require closer examination to further demonstrate this point. The first piece of evidence, noted by Pasma and Shaker (2018), is Figlio, Shapiro and Soter (2013). In this study, the researchers found that "non-tenure track faculty at Northwestern not only induce students to take more classes in a given subject than do tenure line

professors, but they also lead the students to do better in subsequent coursework than do their tenure track/tenured colleagues" (p. 15). The "rarified" students at Northwestern coupled with the fact that 99.4% of the untenured faculty members in the study had taught at Northwestern for at least six quarters make the study of limited use for broad generalization of part-time faculty's efficacy (Berrett, 2013). The study's usefulness is its pointing out the important variables of student quality and faculty working conditions as important indicators of learning success, a finding supported by the only other study suggesting part-time faculty are more effective instructors than full-time faculty (Korgan, 2016).

Korgan (2016) is the other researcher to comparatively examine part-time academic appointments with full-time, tenured faculty and conclude that part-time instructors are better instructors than their tenured-track counterparts. Korgan evaluates several outcomes of educator effectiveness, defined as "contact with students to increase habits of mind for lifelong learning, employment of learner-centered assessments, and use of a student-centered pedagogy and experientially-grounded instruction" (Korgan, 2016, p. 127). Korgan developed five constructs of efficacious teaching practice from a secondary analysis of over 37,000 faculty members' responses to the 2010-2011 Faculty Survey, administered by the Cooperative and Institutional Research Program (CIRP). Korgan concludes that "part-time faculty performed significantly better than their tenured colleagues across each of the study's measures of educator efficacy" (p. 129).

This is a bold claim. The constructs Korgan develops are soundly rooted in effective teaching practices, but they view only one-half of the equation of "efficacy." Korgan claims his study provides "a clearer understanding of contingent faculty's effects

on students" (p. 32), but the student perspective of educator effectiveness is not part of the faculty survey. Unlike the numerous studies enumerated above, Korgan's study does not account for the long-term impact on students, such as persistence or graduation. Furthermore, the survey collects information on whether faculty self-report engaging in certain instructional practices. There is no reason to cast doubt on the faculty responses or Korgan's analysis of them, but the survey captures *how often*, not *how well* these instructional practices are employed, and this is an important distinction.

In his study, Korgan notes full-time faculty are over-represented, and only 3,891 part-time faculty were part of the survey sample. This is crucial because Korgan recognizes part-time faculty "as extensions of institutional culture" (p. 32), and he also notes that most institutions do not systematically survey their part-time faculty (p. 60). With approximately 740,000 contingent faculty in the United States at the time of this study, it could be that the relatively few part-time faculty who participated in the survey come from supportive institutional cultures, like Northwestern's, instead of other institutional cultures that do not support part-time faculty in the same way. The part-time respondents to this study may be the most experienced or the most passionate teachers; Korgan fails to note that there is always the possibility of a systematic difference between those who respond to a survey and those who do not (Rutterford, 2012).

The most important value of Korgan's (2016) study is that it returns us to the faculty working conditions and provides a larger frame of reference in which to interpret the studies discussed above (such as Eagan & Jaeger, 2008; Ehrenberg & Zhang, 2005; Ran & Xu, 2017; Umbach, 2007) showing that exposure to contingent faculty has a negative impact on key indicators of undergraduate student success. Korgan does not

attack the research methodologies or findings directly; instead he alters the foundation upon which they rest and expands the conversation space by enumerating external variables unaccounted for in previous research. Korgan (2016) points out that students who take classes from contingent faculty members may differ from those who take classes from tenured faculty, and that schools who use higher proportions of contingent faculty may also tend to enroll students less likely to be retained. As noted, contingent faculty are assigned to introductory courses whereas tenured faculty teach more advanced courses, and the students who do not persist in postsecondary education may differ in important ways from the students who were successful in continuing their studies.

Korgan (2016) also explains that using student-centered assessment practices may not be a successful job-retention strategy for precariously employed instructors who rely upon favourable student evaluations to secure future teaching contracts. Korgan questions the extant research suggesting part-time faculty are less likely to employ practices that have a positive impact on student engagement by stressing that they may not have the time, skill, or inclination to do so.

> While researchers have documented the institutional effects associated with contingent faculty, specifically in the form of negative student outcomes by ways of increased student contact with contingent faculty, then researchers must too, begin to explore the dysfunctional organizational structures sheathing contingent faculty. It might be difficult for contingent faculty to interact with students in high-quality ways if their work conditions impress policies to exclude them,

delegitimize them, or otherwise permit them to experience a stigmatized second-

class status. (Korgan, 2016. p. 36)

Korgan shifts focus to how faculty members' lived experience of precarity may impact

their pedagogical effectiveness, and this move shifts the conversation from the

comparative excellence or ineffectiveness of contingent faculty to the comparative

ineffectiveness of institutions to ensure "dysfunctional organizational structures" do not

spillover into the student experience. Even though Korgan (2016) argues part-time

faculty outperform other faculty, he still concludes that even part-time faculty can

augment their use of best practices through sustained professional development that

focuses on how to improve engagement in terms of frequency and quality of contact. He

also suggests more research is needed into what specific factors inhibit contract faculty

from engaging in effective pedagogical practices (Korgan, 2016, p.140).

Timmerman and Mulvihill (2017) echo Korgan's (2016) argument that "the time

is ripe for more innovative solutions" to build inclusive institutions of higher education

"that simultaneously effect the economic challenges and complications all institutions are

facing while eliminating the second-class-citizen effect of a replaceable, or some would

say disposable, faculty workforce known as contingent faculty" (p. 455). Both the

positive (Figlio, et al., 2013; Korgan, 2016) and negative studies (Ran & Xu, 2017)

affirm the importance of faculty working conditions by highlighting the tension between

the experience of precarity and the quality of educational provision. This is Korgan's

(2016) ultimate argument, that administrators must "consider using their authority to

build and foster environments for part-time faculty" that are "conducive to empowerment

and satisfaction" (p. 141).

Adrianna Kezar (2013), one of North America's leading academics on the use of part-time faculty labour, further substantiates this point. She conducted 107 interviews with non-tenure-track faculty and noted that a lack of learning resources hindered them from achieving peak performance. The contingent faculty in her study lacked sample syllabi and professional development opportunities; they were missing information on institutional goals and student support services. Kezar (2013) suggests that institutions need to examine the way they enhance or constrain performance so that they do not miss opportunities allowing their faculty to perform at the highest possible level. The growth of online contingent faculty makes this strategic recognition more important than ever for both faculty and students because of online education's persistent reputation for lower educational quality.

**The Exponential Growth of Online Education and Its Discontents**

Before the pandemic-induced pivot to online learning commencing in March 2020, more than 5.8 million students in the United States were taking all or some of their courses at a distance, and the number of students *not* taking any distance education courses was decreasing (Allen & Seaman, 2016, p. 4). Prior to the pandemic, online education was maturing from an alternative mode of delivery towards a preferred platform where knowledge is created through "interaction, collaboration, and inquiry" (Latchem, 2014, p. 311). The opportunity to learn online was increasingly recognized – not as a mode of delivery – but as an essential 21st century skill. Some argue blended and online education is fueling a "pedagogical renaissance" (Conrad & Openo, 2018, p. 133) because these new forms of educational provision force a deeper exploration of habitual teaching practice, leading to a more complex understanding of how students learn.

Consequently, it is no coincidence that two-thirds of chief academic leaders say that online education is critical to their long-term strategy, and institutions with distance offerings hold firm that online education is critical to their long-term success (Allen & Seaman, 2016). Others argue that online learning has failed to live up to its promise of improving affordability and access by pointing out that "gaps in student success across socioeconomic groups are larger in online than in classroom courses" (Protopsaltis & Baum, 2019, p. 1). Lingering doubts about the efficacy of online education, however, have not stopped online learning from becoming the fastest growing segment of higher education in the United States (Allen & Seaman, 2016).

The growth of online education in the U.S. mirrors the rate of growth in Canada. In the first portrait of Canadian online learning, 93 percent of Canadian universities offered online courses and programs, and about 1,000 course offerings were being added per year in that three-year review (Global Affairs Canada, 2015, p. 3). In 2015, the forecast was favourable that there would be "worldwide acceleration in the use of digital learning solutions" (p. 6). This prediction has proven true. At the 2017 World Conference on Online Learning (Bates, et al., 2017), another survey of online learning in Canada showed, again, that almost all Canadian colleges and universities offered online courses. Moreover, online enrolments expanded by 10-15 percent per year over a five year period to the point where online learning constituted 12-16 percent of all post-secondary teaching for credit, with further growth projected (Bates, et al., 2017). This growth will likely continue because online learning provides students with greater access and flexibility, but also because online education promises new business models and potentially untapped revenue streams (Bates, et al., 2017).

Prior to the pandemic, making the move towards adoption of online education generated tension and occurred in a contested space (Selwyn, 2014). Many institutions lacked adequate resources to participate in online education, and nearly half of Canadian institutions identified a lack of specialist training and resistance from instructors as barriers and challenges to embracing online education (Figure 5, Bates, et al., 2017, p. 3).

**Figure 5**

*Perceived Barriers/Challenges for Online Learning*
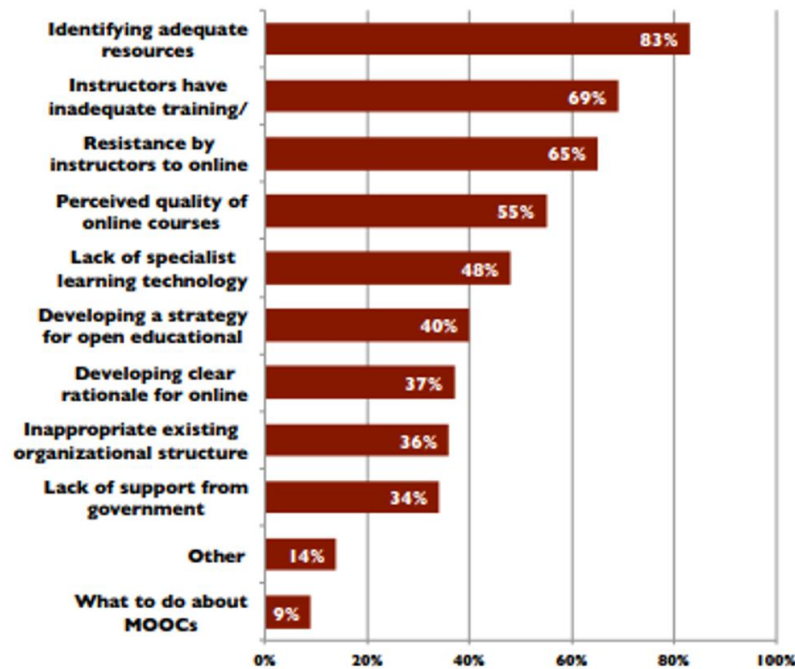


*Note:* The COVID-19 pandemic intensified long-standing barriers and challenges to the adoption and implementation of online education, such as inadequate training, resistance, the perceived quality of the educational experience, and problems with teaching technologies (Bates, et al., 2017).

The pandemic and the shift to emergency remote teaching (ERT) intensified and magnified some of these long-standing concerns about online education. Both students and faculty in Ontario experienced isolation, a lack of community and communication, and both parties suggested that online instruction was a poor substitute for face-to-face courses (OCUFA, 2020). Some of the reasons faculty felt that online teaching decreased quality was a lack of preparation to teach online, struggles with the technological tools, and little to no support for every aspect of the faculty experience, from support with digital tools to faculty mental health (OCUFA, 2020). Students also found learning online to be an unpleasant experience where they were paying the same tuition for education of a lower quality (OCUFA, 2020).

It is not entirely clear how postsecondary education will be permanently changed by the pandemic, but pre-pandemic research and the pandemic experience clearly show that institutions will not be able to manage their online educational futures without substantial new investment in professional development for online faculty. The most significant perceived barriers/challenges to online education include adequate resources, specialized support, and overcoming faculty resistance, much of which relates to the perceived quality of online courses (Bates, et al., 2017).  Government support, organizational structures, and a clear rationale for engaging in or increasing online educational offerings are also areas of conflict and struggle that are explored in both the document analysis and the interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres (Chapter Four).

Online education has generated resistance because it is perceived by some as another way to subvert tenure. The fewer and fewer tenured faculty who remain are incentivized by promotion and tenure structures that tend to devalue teaching, which is "not news to anyone involved in higher education in Canada" (Charbonneau, 2011, para. 2). If teaching has been historically marginalized, teaching online resides on the outer edge of that fringe. "Tenured and tenure-track faculty in research-oriented universities may be reluctant to teach online courses because they view the investment of time required for online course development and maintenance competing with time for pursuing research" (Ortagus & Stedrack, 2013, pp. 31). In short, there are few attractors for tenured professors to consider teaching online and to do it well.

In an ideal world, expansion of postsecondary education would occur with a commensurate level of public funding support that would minimize the use of untrained, involuntary contingent faculty, but that is not the current situation (and may never be again). In the best of all possible worlds, teaching would not be structurally perceived to be of lesser value than research, but these structural inequalities do in fact exist, and higher education needs to address the issues of contingent faculty, and specifically the growing body of online contingent faculty. One way to attempt to amend this situation is by investing in contingent faculty. Faculty development can eradicate some of the most "egregious aspects" of the growing adjunct situation (Kezar, Scott & Yang, 2018, para 6), but quality professional development is a partial solution with increasing popularity that does not resolve the long-term structural issues outlined throughout this chapter. Providing more and better professional development opportunities to contingent faculty does not relieve their economic precarity or social marginality and looks at only a small

aspect of the total working conditions within an organization. This research study does

not look at faculty compensation, the length of contracts, or policies surrounding

inclusion of contingent faculty in other institutional processes, but solely at the

institutional recognition of the need to make strategic investments in teacher

development for online contract faculty to provide a high-quality educational experience.

This investment in part-time faculty who teach online is a partial strategic answer to

another companion trend over the past half decade, the increasing emphasis on quality

assurance.

**The Relationship between Quality Assurance and Precarious Employment**

The rising cost of tuition and student debt have, in turn, occasioned declining

public support for postsecondary institutions. Student-borne tuition increases and

government demands for accountability have brought intensified calls for quality

assurance from funders, parents, and students (Openo, et al, 2017). The 2017 Ontario

faculty strikes unveiled what had been "shrouded in secrecy" (Fitzpatrick, 2017, para.

32), the experience of precarity for this indispensable part-time workforce. To be in a

state of precarity is to be lacking predictability, job security, and material and

psychological welfare (Shaw & Byler, n.d.). Precarity holds the potential to cause long-

term damage to postsecondary education in Canada because it reinforces conceptions of a

broken social trust (Wall, et al., 2014), evidenced by this quote: "Regardless of how the

colleges might try to frame it, any organization that has so much of its staff working

restricted hours for second-tier wages risks providing a second-rate product" (The

Peterborough Examiner, 2017, para. 13). Extending from this quote, online education is

at risk of becoming a third-rate product because it is taught by a growing class of part-

time online educators who have been dubbed the "doubly invisible" (Meloncon, 2017, p. 270) because they are adjuncts who work away from the bricks and mortar institution. Online education is already perceived by many as a second-rate product, compounded by the negative influence of contract faculty.

As distressing as this situation might be, the present structural arrangement shows no signs of going away. As Kezar and Sam (2014) note, "even if tenure became the dominant mode once again, higher education has had and will likely continue to maintain some form of non-tenure track labor (as these individuals existed on campuses before the significant recent growth)" (p.427). It is probable that non-tenure track labour will continue to increase, and that online education will be taught by a significant portion of part-time educators. These social, political, technological, and economic forces create the backdrop for the historical period where higher education has seen a dramatic growth in the number of contingent faculty. Birmingham (2017) now claims that to talk about adjuncts is to talk about the centerpiece of education, and to talk about adjuncts is, in large part, a discussion about how precariously employed academic labour may adversely impact educational quality for students. Franklin (1990) observes:

> Many technological systems, when examined for context and overall design, are basically anti-people. People are seen as sources of problems while technology is seen as a source of solutions . . . The notion that maybe technology constitutes a source of problems and grievances and people might be looked upon as a source of solutions has very rarely entered public policy or even public consciousness. (p. 76)

Franklin (1990) notes that people must be prioritized as the solution, and better professional development prepares educators to use technological tools to their greatest benefit. It is a given that "faculty who teach online require training to ensure they deliver a quality learning experience" (Magda, 2019, p. 20), and yet most institutions in the United States do not require professional development or survey online faculty about their professional development needs or their level of satisfaction with their training or support. The human role in online education is overlooked.

Part-time faculty have expressed concern about keeping students engaged, maximizing the value of students' learning experiences, dealing with unprepared and unmotivated students, policies for classroom management, and meeting students' growing needs on a part-time schedule. They also need specific assistance with changes in technology and their discipline, creating fair tests, developing grading scales and rubrics, and dealing with academic integrity issues (Meixner, et al., 2010). These long-standing professional development needs became more important when online proctoring became a major point of contention during the COVID-19 period. Providing pedagogical and technology training ensures part-time voices are heard within their institutions. Professional development serves faculty, students, and the institution's self-interest, leading Sorcinelli et al., to exclaim that "providing institutional support for faculty members facing changing contexts and new demands becomes an essential strategic choice" (2006, p. xviii). This is true for all faculty, but nowhere is this truer than in online education, where the context is changing very rapidly.

**The Strategic Importance of Professional Development**

The growth of online contingent faculty adds a new dimension to the already perplexing conundrum of providing professional development to part-time faculty. Xu and Jaggars (2013) looked at adaptation to online learning for undergraduate students in Washington State. Most college students receive their primary and secondary education in face-to-face environments and may find adapting to online learning difficult. In a multi-disciplinary study of nearly 40,000 courses taken by over 500,000 students at community and technical colleges in Washington State, Xu and Jaggars (2013) discovered a learning gap between online courses and face-to-face courses for every student subgroup, suggesting most undergraduate students face some difficulty in adapting to online coursework. The negative effects of online learning were more pronounced for males, students of colour, older students, and students with lower levels of academic preparation (p. 23). The authors make several recommendations for improving the quality of online education, but the most notable is a strategic imperative for substantial new investments in faculty professional development and instructor support for those who teach online.

New investment in professional development for online instructors is especially important when considering that, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, online education was becoming the "new normal" in the United States, and the situation in Canada is "basically the same" (Contact North, 2016, p. 2). If the negative correlations in adaptation to online learning holds true in Canadian online learning contexts, the call for substantial new investments in faculty development programs is also warranted for

Canadian colleges. Yet online contingent faculty have historically been "doubly invisible based on their employment status and because they teach online and away from the hustle and bustle of the brick-and-mortar institution" (Meloncon, 2017, p. 270). Zawacki-Richter and Anderson (2014) note that online faculty "bring many of the fears, inhibitions, and bewilderment of students when first exposed to the very different context of teaching in mediated and networked contexts" (p. 22).

Despite significant growth to these classes of faculty, there are "few intentional changes on individual campuses to foster positive working conditions for contingent faculty" (Kezar & Sam, 2014, p. 427), and many institutions provide even less support for online contingent faculty (Magda, 2019). It cannot be stressed enough, high-quality professional development programs cannot resolve the political and economic issues contributing to the growth of a precarious workforce or resolves the stress and anxiety of precarious employment. Still, strategic recognition and specialized, targeted professional development programs are two of the methods that can be used to signal and foster more positive working conditions for faculty at the same time they may positively impact student learning by accounting for the heightened disadvantages faced by part-time instructors (and their students) who teach and learn online.

Just as students demonstrate difficulty in adjusting to online learning, so do faculty. The pronounced difference between adjunct and full-time faculty performance in online contexts may be due to the fact that adjunct faculty develop their skills as teachers through participation in academic departments and past experiences in educational

settings. Professional development may close a gap for part-time faculty who teach online in the following way:

> Due to their time-limited, non-continuous academic appointments, they may lack a connection to the larger academic department. This dissociation is compounded by the geographic remoteness of their position. In addition, the relative novelty of online education may dictate that not all adjunct faculty have extensive personal experience with effective teaching and learning strategies in this modality. . . To address these disparities, universities need to develop specific faculty development initiatives that target remote faculty. (Mueller, et al., 2013, p. 348)

Recognizing these primary sources of professional development and the time limited nature and geographic distance of their appointments, online adjuncts may be at a heightened disadvantage (Mueller, et al., 2013). There is not enough Canadian research to suggest contingent faculty have the same negative consequences in Canada on student course persistence and graduation rates, or if they face the same challenges outlined above. It is highly likely, however, and if the negative impacts holds true or partially true in Canada, it would imply that "the continued increase and heavy reliance on supplemental temporary adjuncts could harm student educational outcomes and labor market opportunities" (Ran & Xu, 2017, p. 43). If so, it is in the postsecondary institution's strategic self-interest to develop specific faculty development initiatives that target remote faculty.

Facing massification and stagnant public funding, the use of both contingent faculty and online education have sought to reduce operating costs, but the negative

correlations with student success demonstrate that cost-savings "may be much more complicated and obscure than expected" (Ran & Xu, 2017, p. 44). Negative correlations in terms of student persistence, graduation rates, or institutional reputation need to be factored into the cost equation as institutions consider building contingent-favorable policies and practices. By advocating for more and better professional development opportunities for online contingent faculty, this research study is one of many to argue for increased regard for quality teaching as one way to respond to diverse pressures from different stakeholder groups. From government funders, there is increasing pressure from policymakers regarding accountability for student outcomes. From below, "as students pay more of the costs of their own education, they demand more in terms of quality, relevance and engagement" (Contact North, 2016, p.4). The move towards learner-centered instruction requires a foundation in learning science, which is a body of knowledge faculty do not usually acquire in the pursuit of mastery in their discipline.

This research study advocates for base standards of teacher preparation in higher education to improve quality and truly make online education accessible. This is especially important in an era where Canadian students are becoming more diverse (McCloy & DeClou, 2013), and when faculty may have achieved excellence in classroom teaching but have no idea how to apply this excellence when teaching online. As Magda (2019) argues, "the case can be made that this training is about achieving better learning outcomes for students and not to inhibit faculty autonomy" (p. 31). At its best, high-quality professional development for online contingent faculty will build instructional autonomy so they can make effective decisions when teaching online.

**Chapter Summary**

Since the 1970s, a confluence of social forces has generated a growth in contingent faculty, and this growth has generated concerns about educational quality. The growth of online education has also created a new subgroup of contingent faculty – online contingent faculty – and concerns about educational quality have been amplified by adjunct faculty and by online learning. Faculty development for online instructors is now of strategic importance to ensure educational quality and help institutions mature their online offerings. The negative consequences of exposure to part-time faculty, especially online, requires a reconsideration of the cost of utilizing part-time academic staff. Almost all postsecondary institutions in Canada are involved in online education with further growth projected; this places the strategic importance of the professional development of online contingent faculty in a prime position. This research study will explore how the recommendation for substantial new investments in faculty professional development for online instructors has made its way into strategic documents in Canadian colleges and institutes and into the program delivery matrix for teaching and learning centres. The analysis and findings may provide informed responses to enduring challenges still requiring creative and innovative solutions.

## Chapter 2. An Integrative Literature Review

**Introduction**

The previous chapter outlined the forces contributing to the expanded use of contingent faculty in an era of rapid expansion in online education, and it argued these twin dynamics – the growth of part-time faculty and the growth of online education – are now inextricably intertwined. It considered the research comparing contingent faculty performance to tenured and tenure-track faculty to show that the weight of existing evidence suggests precarity, alienation, and unpreparedness seep into the learning environment, showing that the working conditions of contract faculty may largely explain why student exposure to part-time faculty tends to have a negative impact on student success. It further suggested these negative impacts may be more pronounced in online learning environments and in the assessment of student learning outcomes. The main argument stresses that meeting the professional development needs of online contingent faculty is now a strategic imperative for postsecondary institutions in Canada to cope with the trends of massification and stagnant public funding so that they can mature online learning and fulfill the mission of providing high-quality, accessible educational opportunities in multiple modalities. By outlining the problem, the opening chapter put forth a rationale for the strategic recognition for part-time faculty and targeted professional development programs for online instructors as part of an institution's overall working conditions that can lead to positive impacts on faculty inclusion and student learning. The growth of online education, increasing numbers of online contingent faculty, and evolving instructional models place the continual

development of all faculty, but especially online contingent faculty, at the peak of an institution's hopes for academic transformation (Educause, 2017).

The following integrative literature review (Torraco, 2016) seeks to generate new knowledge about the professional development of online faculty by reviewing, critiquing, and synthesizing representative literature on this topic. It outlines broad themes and research gaps pertaining to the professional development of online contingent faculty, and it will:

- situate the study as an expansion and deepening of Harrison's (2016) *eLearning in Ontario: Responding to the Winds of Change*,

- briefly consider the intrinsically political role and evolution of teaching and learning centres, and

- summarize research gaps related to faculty development, faculty development models, and consider the extant research on professional development for online faculty, specifically those teaching online.

## Online Education and Canadian Academic Strategy

Institutional strategy documents and professional development provide some indication of the overall working conditions for online contingent faculty. One of the earliest researchers exploring the professional development for online faculty observed, "if *online* adjunct faculty are viewed as a growing and important subgroup of adjunct faculty, it is obvious that a gap in the literature exists concerning their needs, experiences, and issues in this new role" (Biro, 2005, p. 6). More than a decade later, it is inarguable that online faculty *are* a growing and important subgroup of adjunct faculty, but a significant research gap remains about whether online contingent faculty are *viewed*

as an important subgroup in strategic academic documents, and if there are specialized

professional development programs being offered by Canadian colleges and institutes

designed to address the unique challenges presented by this subgroup of "doubly

invisible" faculty (Meloncon, 2017, p. 270). As recent research suggests, extensive

faculty development programs may be key to achieving cost-savings and educational

quality by training and retaining the online adjunct faculty base (Bailey, et al., 2018).

Dr. Laurie Harrison describes the growing importance of e-learning in Ontario by

mapping the conflicts surrounding e-learning's growth in Canada. Harrison (2016)

suggests the shift to online learning and the rise of participatory technologies are forcing

postsecondary educational institutions to adapt to a rapidly changing environment unlike

any before: "The traditionally stable university, which historically required the student to

adjust to institutional requirements, has increasingly been challenged to adapt to external

market pressures" (2016, p. 15). Harrison provides a complex and nuanced description of

the contested space of online education by employing Duus' (2009) four ideal-type e-

learning paradigms.

Both these works are foundational to this research study that seeks to examine a

broader Canadian context that builds upon and deepens Harrison's work. A short

explication of Duus' framework is required to explain how Harrison (2016) employed

this framework to explore the contested space of online educational development in

Ontario. The four ideal-type e-learning paradigms (Duus, 2009) provide a multi-axis

framework allowing Harrison to study the tensions, polarizing stances, and integrative

approaches in Ontario's e-learning strategy development. Her work accounts for multiple

viewpoints and relationships between key stakeholder groups within the sector, and she presents a layered interpretation of the dynamics at work.

Duus (2009) observes it is difficult to refer to online education as a singular entity, and he makes a critical distinction between "low-end e-learning" and "high-end e-learning" ("Methodological Considerations and Conceptual Subdivisions"). Low-end e-learning is characterized by content transmission and is volume-based. Technology provides the innovation to these popular, mainstream strategies that are "often erroneously made synonymous with e-learning" (Duus, 2009, Figure 1). Duus argues that most of the discourse and academic research has focused on low-end e-learning, and while it is simplistic to categorize it this way, this low-end e-learning is best conceived as content-heavy undergraduate education where low interactivity is a "widely recognized short-coming of current online offerings" (Protopsaltis & Baum, 2019, p. 30).

High-end e-learning, on the other hand, utilizes interactive approaches for the creation of new knowledge via the creative use of internet-based communications technology. This form of e-learning is capital intensive and educational quality is derived from problem-oriented, dialogue-centred pedagogies with virtual coaching that transcends the limitation of time, place, and pace (Duus, 2009). Again, it is too simplistic to categorize it this way, but this form of high-end e-learning is more characteristic of late-stage undergraduate education or graduate education models that go beyond the content-based paradigm. High-end e-learning happens to be where some of the greatest growth in online education is taking place in Canada. At Memorial University, for example, online courses now account for 40 percent of graduate course registrations; the University of Waterloo has seen enrolment in online graduate courses triple between

2009 and 2013, and there is a potentially untapped market for this graduate type of high-end e-learning (Bowness, 2009).

**Figure 6**

*Four Ideal-Type e-Learning Paradigms (Duus, 2009).*
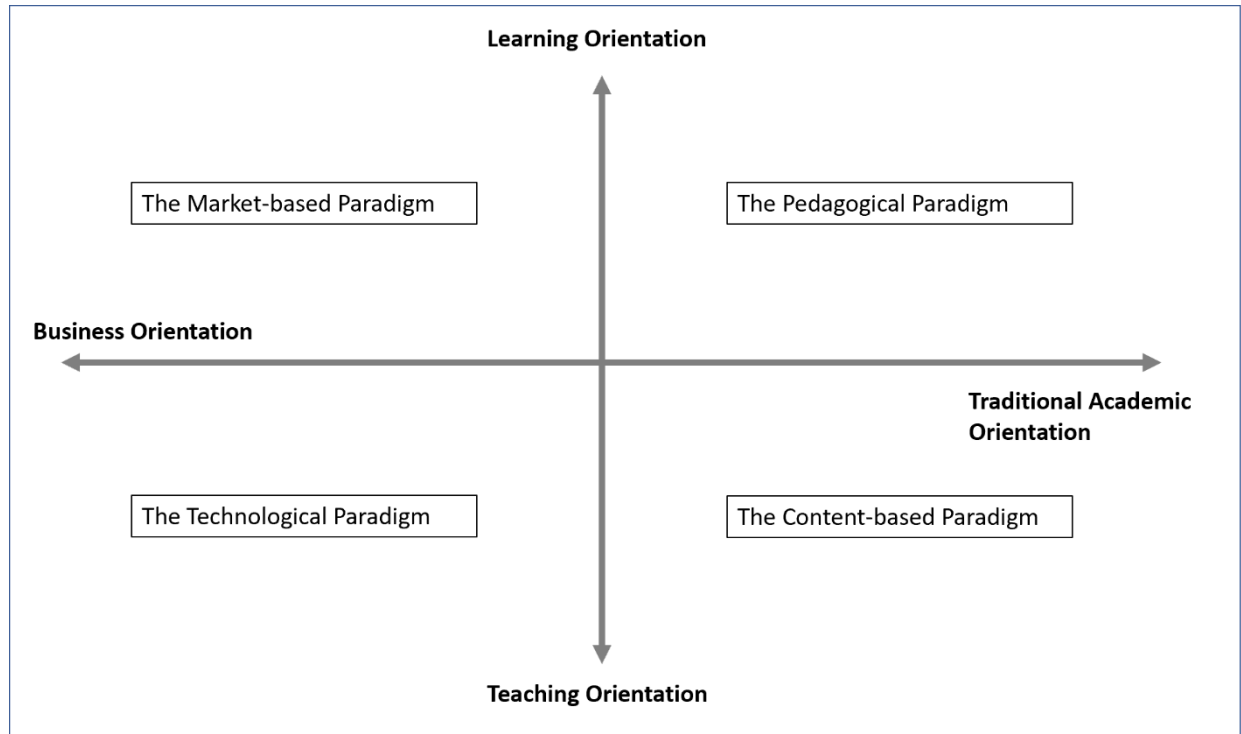


*Note:* Duus (2009) makes an important distinction between low-end and high-end e-learning. Low-end e-learning uses technology to deliver content. High-end e-learning is market-driven, employing problem-centred, knowledge creation pedagogies. Reprinted with permission.

Duus's (2009) categorization into low-end and high-end e-learning partially explains why it is difficult to research online education as a singular thing. Researching e-learning may focus on the technology (hardware and software), or upon the business models of online education, where the difference between industry (supply) and market (demand) may be conflated. Lastly, online education research predominantly focuses on the pedagogical category, primarily preoccupied with learning theory and teaching

methods. The *Pedagogical Paradigm* (Figure 7, top right) includes a focus on how teaching and learning centres support faculty and pedagogical innovation to ensure academic quality and the quality of the student learning experience.

Duus (2009) conceives the contested space of e-learning as existing between four paradigms. The *technological paradigm* views e-learning as a technological challenge. Technological products (software or mobile devices) can provide cost savings whenever technology is used for content transmission. The technological paradigm complements the *content-based paradigm* where education is seen as *delivery*, meaning the act of handing over to another person a piece of content. This is the focus of those looking for inexpensive education, but this is also the form of education characterized by low quality diploma mills.

Within the pedagogical paradigm, Duus (2009) references the *fallacy of transferable competence,* which suggests that teaching competence in face-to-face environments is not immediately transferable to online environments. Developing the ability to transfer teaching competencies and/or build new ones is the area specifically related to faculty development. As one faculty member describes their first experience of teaching online, "online has to be much more rigorously constructed, because it has certain pieces you don't have in a face-to-face course" (Bailey, et al., 2018, p.35). Teaching and learning centres understand the rigorous demands of online education, and they exist primarily within the *pedagogical paradigm* that prioritizes teaching strategies regardless of market, content, or technology. Agents in the pedagogical paradigm view themselves as progressive and avant-garde, but Duus argues that the pedagogical paradigm is theoretically driven, meaning "the pedagogical paradigm is the most distant

from practical application" (Duus, 2009, section 4.3, para. 7). Even though the pedagogical paradigm is the most distant from application, it is the "most popular paradigm amongst politicians and public officials" (section 4.3, para. 8) because of its association with quality.

The popularity of the pedagogical paradigm is not impractical, however. It is grounded in learning science and focused on quality during design and delivery. Very few educators and educational developers fall Duus' *fallacy of pure theory.* Instead, they recognize the value of praxis, phronesis, the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), action research, discipline-based educational research, and design-based research as ways to advance practice, deepen their understanding of theory, and fulfill market demands. Duus' mischaracterization of the pedagogical paradigm fails to recognize that online education is a practice-oriented field more akin to surgery, anthropology, and management, all of which rest upon a foundation of action research not derived from theory alone. When the *pedagogical paradigm* is coupled with the *market-based paradigm,* online learning has the best chance to offer a successful, quality learning experience.

Duus (2009) argues that the *market-based paradigm* holds the most transformative power for online education. The market-based paradigm provides strategic direction to the design process and guides virtual pedagogical practices. The market-based orientation subjugates content, pedagogy, and technology to account for the business demands of online education development. It is the most transformative because "the market-based paradigm advocates nothing less than the radical restructuring of the total research and education system" (Duus, 2009, section 4.4, para. 6). This

radical restructuring of education may be well underway, and attention must be paid to

Duus' observation that a market-based orientation will eliminate those organizations that

are "perceived as unfit to survive globalized competition" (2009, section 4.4, para. 9). As

Franklin (1990) warns, when technologies are grafted onto particular social, economic,

and political contexts, they may destroy social structures in ways that are not foreseen or

foreseeable. Duus (2009) acknowledges that the market-based paradigm is perceived as

being less ethical and having less merit, but "globalized market-based competition

nevertheless remains a reality that is hard to escape" (Duus, 2009, section 4.4, para. 12).

**Figure 7**

*Points of Alignment and Tension at the Institutional Level of e-Learning Implementation*
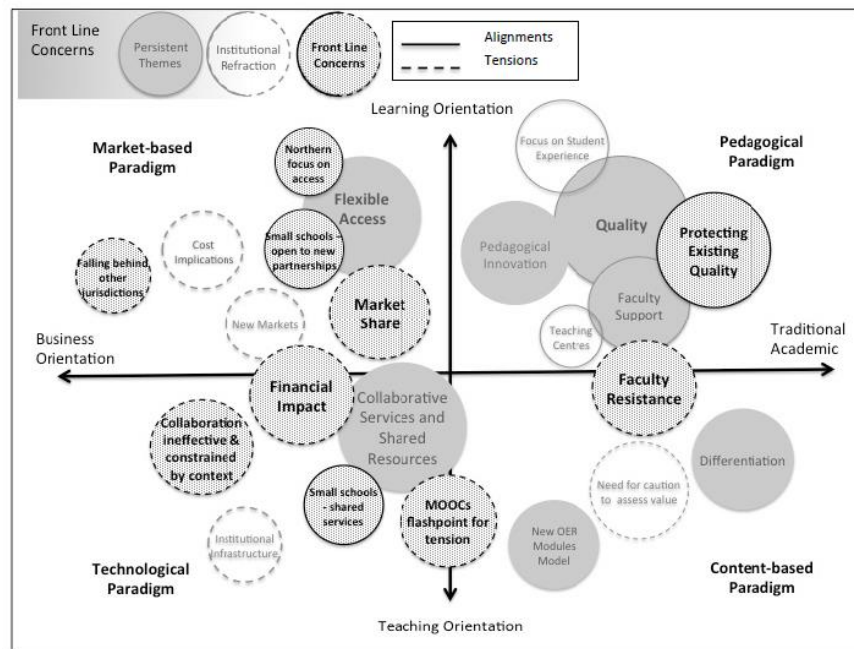


*Note:* Harrison's (2016) mapping presents alignments and tensions overlaid across

Duus' four paradigmatic ideal-types. Reprinted with permission.

Harrison (2016) builds on Duus's four ideal-type elearning paradigms to develop

a useful map for understanding online educational development as a contested space in

Ontario (Figure 7). She articulates this inescapable reality and provides a practically

useful way for speaking about something large and diverse, like online education in

Canada. Her work highlights how useful these paradigms are for understanding different

interests, increased competition, and the inequities that come into play in the

development of e-learning. Harrison (2016) notes that since 2010 in Ontario, several

issues in politics, economics and technology have accelerated the acceptance and

adoption of e-learning.

Online education, once existing on the periphery, has moved toward the "core of

university mission-related activities" (p. 177). This acceleration has brought with it:

- inequities in participation in online education implementation,

- a lack of resources among smaller, teaching-focused institutions which may have

  a marginalizing impact for those institutions, and

- increased competition, rather than collaboration, related to the development of

  curriculum, student, and faculty supports.

Some of the institutions most dissatisfied with Ontario's policy initiatives were those

located in northern geographic locations most committed to providing access to remote

students (Harrison, 2016, pp.142-143). Harrison set her gaze squarely on Ontario, but it

is probable that Harrison's observations about inequities, a lack of resources, and

increased competition hold true in other provinces, as well.

Several of the issues presented in Harrison's map fall within the purview of

academic planning and sphere of activity of teaching and learning centres, including

pedagogical innovation, quality, collaboration, and faculty resistance. Harrison (2016)

asserts that federal and provincial efforts to advance activity in online education have

"left a gap in terms of systematic research mapping policy processes that inform strategic action" (p. 3). While Harrison's work fills a considerable portion of this gap, academic plans were not the sole focus of her investigation, and her study was limited to Ontario. Furthermore, Harrison (2016) did not concentrate on teaching and learning centres, but she does note:

> Many institutions flagged the need for development of online design and teaching skills among faculty as an area of concern, and while most universities already had teaching and learning centres providing faculty development and instructional design support, *additional resources were seen as essential to ensure the quality of course and program design and instruction* [emphasis added] (p.152).

The allocation of resources is the nexus of political conflict (Bolman & Deal, 1997), and because academic plans are part political symbol and an invitation for interaction, these documents are truly Janus-like; they face both externally and internally, articulating a *projected reality* (Franklin, 1990) to both. This dual role communicates to external stakeholders how the institution plans to revitalize itself, and it provides alignment to internal audiences who may "take comfort that issues are getting attention and that better times may lie ahead" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p.242). Academic planning outlines a college's or university's academic goals and how they will be achieved, and at some institutions, these decisions are documented in a formal academic plan (Society for College and University Planning, n.d.). Academic plans provide a coherent institutional vision for how to face current challenges, and they are the documents that will likely hold some evidence of the strategic recognition of professional development for online

faculty, and how this priority interplays with other institutional priorities such as quality, the assessment of student learning, and the growth of online educational provision.

**Online Education and Its Discontents**

Academic plans identify how to match academic offerings with the needs of learners (Society for College and University Planning, n.d.), and online education may be a strategy to position the institution for a successful future. The fight amongst priorities makes for additional resources places online education and professional development in a contested space, and Harrison (2016), like others (Allen & Seaman, 2016; Bates, et al., 2017), notes ongoing faculty resistance to online education that is complex and multi-faceted. Some research suggests faculty resistance can be overcome through exposure and experience to online teaching. Jaschik and Lederman, (2017) discovered that instructors who have taught online are more likely than those who have not taught online to believe online instruction can achieve equivalent outcomes to in-person instruction (p. 6). Those who receive faculty development and experience online education do have a more favorable view, but other data points suggest otherwise. Only 29 percent of chief academic officers, for example, believed faculty accepted the legitimacy of online education (Allen & Seaman, 2016). This is only one percentage point higher than in 2002, highlighting that faculty remain a major barrier to online education, and "a continuing failure of online education has been the inability to convince its most important audience – higher education faculty members – of its worth" (Allen & Seaman, 2016, p. 47) (Figure 8). This faculty resistance appears to have increased during the pandemic (OCUFA, 2020).

**Figure 8**

*Faculty Acceptance of Online Education's Value and Legitimacy*
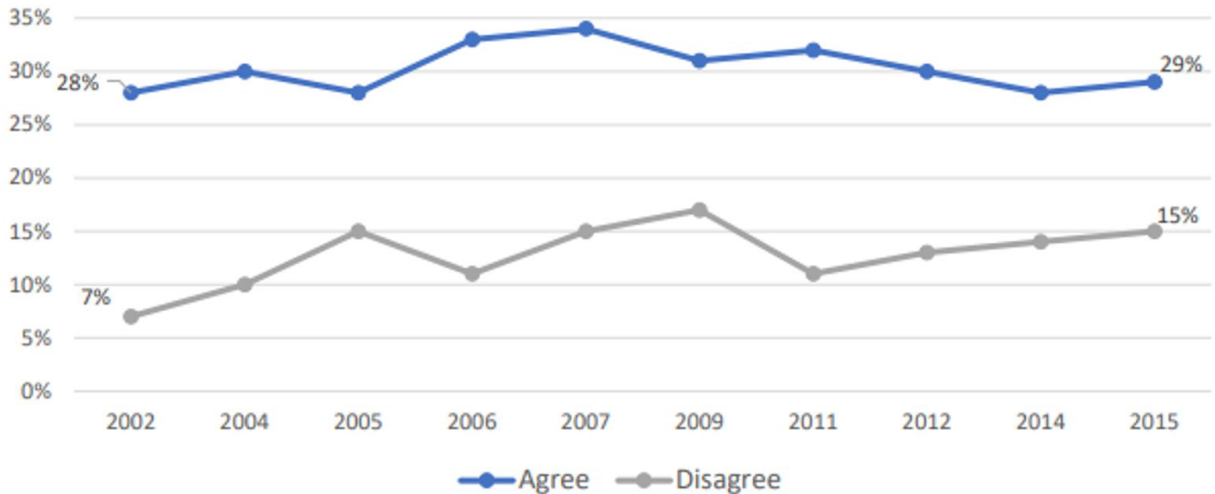


*Note:* Faculty resistance to online education has remained relatively stable over the past decade and a half, despite increased participation and online teaching experience (Allen & Seaman, 2016).

Professional development occurs within the contested space of online education primarily because professional development is often seen as the most effective solution for overcoming faculty resistance. Jaschik and Lederman (2017) note that the proportion of U.S. faculty members who have taught online has increased, but less than 50 percent of faculty received professional development to help them redesign an online or blended course. Faculty members who have taught online, however, still divide evenly as to whether they believe online courses can achieve the same learning outcomes, and they overwhelmingly perceive online instruction to be less effective in terms of interaction with students, especially at-risk students. What is possibly most interesting in the annual faculty perception studies by Jaschik and Lederman is that seven in ten faculty members

who have taught an online course say the experience "helped them develop pedagogical skills that improved their teaching, both online and in the classroom" (Jaschik & Lederman, 2017, p. 6). This finding provides further support that blended and online teaching models are fueling a pedagogical renaissance (Conrad & Openo, 2018) by providing a disruptive and disorienting dilemma leading to a transformative learning experience for faculty (McQuiggan, 2011).

Still, faculty resistance cannot be singularly conceived as discomfort with teaching technologies. 90% of digital learning administrators say online courses *exceed* in-person learning outcomes (Jaschik & Lederman, 2017). Digital learning leaders also view their support for online learning programs more favorably than faculty members do. Additional areas of conflict and struggle include different perceptions around institutional supports for online learning and disagreement about cost versus quality. This perception gap between administrators and faculty persists, even for those with considerable experience in online instruction (Jaschik & Lederman, 2017), showing professional development is not a panacea. A perhaps larger form of resistance originates from the perception that online education will decrease faculty autonomy (Harrison, 2016, p.152), and Harrison also notes that faculty resistance results from the perception that financial constraints, rather than the desire to offer a superior and accessible learning experience, drives implementation of online learning which has been "seen as a possible solution for public funding declines" (Harrison, p. 14). Harrison's work makes clear that to cast faculty resistance to online learning simply as a training problem is one-dimensional. If resistance to online education is seen only in this light, the only solution could be characterized as achieving *professional development-at-scale*. As some have

framed it, "if improving teaching practice is the best way to improve student achievement, the subsequent challenge has been framed as one of going to scale" (Katz & Dack, 2013, p. 24) by utilizing digital teaching technologies to solve the problem that their implementation has, in part, created.

In short, resistance and conflict to online education is multi-faceted, involving pedagogical, technological and political resistance. Regarding internet-based communications technologies, Guri-Rosenblit (2014) has argued it will be difficult to scale online education programs and achieve the productivity gains anticipated because the new technologies are incompatible with large-scale deployment due to their interactive nature. Interactive technologies are labour-intensive, like any other form of quality teaching, and internet-based communications technology tend to work better in smaller, more intimate settings. Harrison (2016) concludes her analysis by suggesting that there is still much work to be done mapping this multi-faceted phenomenon of online education's expansion and the conflicts it generates. The conflictual intersection between the *pedagogical* and *technological* paradigms becomes clearer when exploring the political history and role of teaching and learning centres. In its history, development, and present manifestation, educational development is a political act, and teaching and learning centres operate on the battleground where these various paradigmatic lenses and interests surround online education.

**A Brief History of the Contested Space of Faculty Development**

Teaching and learning centres (educational development units) are a centralized or distributed entity within the college or university dedicated to supporting and developing a deeper understanding of pedagogy, designing learning experiences with

efficacious teaching practices, and supporting educational quality. The Five Ages model (Sorcinelli, et al., 2006) provides a historical timeline for faculty development efforts as well as an evolutionary progression for understanding the present composition, goals, and activities of educational development units.

1. The Age of the Scholar (mid-1950s – 1960s): Faculty development efforts were directed almost entirely toward improving and advancing scholarly competence as measured by research success and publication rates. This original initiative remains core to the work of education developers in the form of teaching and learning enhancement funds and supporting the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development, 2011).

2. The Age of the Teacher (late 1960s – 1970s): Student activism over the quality of their undergraduate learning experience forced a focus on teaching development as a key to faculty vitality and renewal. The Age of the Teacher remains a core activity of teaching and learning centres who provide fundamental faculty development programs and teaching fellowships.

3. The Age of the Developer (1980s): Faculty development comes of age, and research shifts to questions about who participates in faculty development activities, the evaluation of faculty members as teachers, and educational quality. The shift towards quality assurance occurs in tandem with the development of teaching portfolios, teaching dossiers, and teaching philosophy statements. Teaching and learning centre involvement in quality assurance and academic program review begins in this age.

4. The Age of the Learner (1990s): Student learning displaces teaching as the center of attention, and the faculty role shifts from the *sage on the stage* to the *guide on the side.* Students are no longer seen as empty vessels and increasing student diversity requires adaptation towards a greater range in teaching and learning methods, skills, and sensitivities. A growing emphasis on inclusive design, active learning practices and classrooms continues to propel this shift in focus from teaching to learning.

5. The Age of the Network (2000s – Present): Heightened expectations for institutions, faculty, and developers require faculty development programs to account for the role of new technologies in teaching and research in academic environments characterized by shrinking resources and new demands for accountability (Sorcinelli, et al., 2006, pp. 2-5). Teaching and learning centres evolve to also offer teaching with technology programs and facilitate curriculum review and curriculum mapping exercises as part of quality assurance processes and mechanisms.

Grabove, et al., (2012) provide a detailed Canadian history and evolution of teaching and learning centres in Ontario, and their development aligns with the Five Ages.

In the 1960s and 1970s, teaching and learning centres emerged in Ontario in response to student demand for higher quality teaching. Ontario teaching and learning centres (and this likely holds true across Canada) were founded to help Ontario colleges and universities fulfill their mandate of providing a high-quality teaching and learning experience, but also to meet additional challenges, including rising student/faculty ratios and class sizes (massification), an aging faculty population, outdated methods of

instruction, and uneven access to teaching development for new instructors (Grabove, et al., 2012, p. 2). The authors note the intrinsically political nature of educational development when they write:

> Many student associations, faculty and administrators, the general public, as well as provincial government officials have agreed that the quality of the teaching and learning experience available to students at Ontario's colleges and universities is increasing in risk.

This near universal acknowledgement of increasing risk to educational quality could be part of higher education's "discourse of crisis" (Openo, 2020; Wall, et al., 2014, p. 7), but to mitigate real and/or perceived risks, most universities and colleges now have teaching and learning centers providing consultations, workshops, coaching and professional development programs to faculty to enhance educational quality (Grabove, et al., 2012, p. 5).

After the establishment of teaching and learning centres, students continued to exert political pressure to embrace innovative teaching methods, such as inquiry learning, community service learning, and problem-based learning. Student associations also called for teaching fellows programs, improved professional development for new faculty, and the option of teaching-stream appointments (Grabove, et al., 2012, p. 4). Most of the 24 colleges and 20 universities in Ontario now have teaching and learning centres, with many launched in the past few years. From my personal experience in the Educational Developers Network of Alberta (EDNA), this is also true for the 26 postsecondary institutions in Alberta. I was hired in 2014 to develop and build a teaching

and learning centre for Medicine Hat College, one of the few remaining postsecondary institutions in Alberta without one at the time.

A lengthy quote from Grabove, et al.. (2012) captures well the conflict between the pedagogical and technological paradigms.

> In some institutions, technology may be driving changes in educational development despite findings that faculty members and students generally would prefer more face-to-face contact as opposed to webinars, online courses, and other technological forums. Educational developers should advocate for or against online education based on whether it will enhance teaching and learning, as opposed to whether it is simply desired or preferred. If technology is driving the services provided by teaching and learning centres, this is a problem that should be addressed. Of course, the same applies to face-to-face offerings. A good face-to-face course in teaching and learning can be helpful, but much depends on how it is taught, its format, and its learning objectives. In either case, cultural change is likely to depend on the degree to which the learning experience is social and relevant, and involves making powerful connections with people and ideas. (p. 6)

This passage shows a definite bias for the pedagogical paradigm and describes well the contested space teaching and learning centres operate in. Teaching and learning centres are tasked with carrying out institutional strategy and administrative goals in areas such as online education, and they are the entity most likely to be engaged in the struggle to overcome the barriers, challenges, and faculty resistance that exist. Teaching and learning centres often play a role in changing the culture, and so they exist at the fulcrum

of tension when it comes to strategic pedagogical initiatives, such as implementing online education.

The emphasis on teaching quality can be achieved, many educational developers believe, when an institution is able to build a critical mass of faculty with a shared interest in teaching and learning. When this critical mass occurs, teaching becomes a "community property" (Shulman, 1993, p. 6) rather than an idiosyncratic and individual activity, and this community of committed teachers is then able to provide inspiration and mutual support for other faculty. Part-time faculty are noticeably absent from this work, and building community for contingent faculty may be especially difficult for online instructors who may work remotely from another city, province, or country, and have little to no interaction with the teaching and learning centre or the other members of the institution or academic program.

Teaching and learning centres are also involved in quality assurance activities, another highly contentious area, especially when it is exceedingly difficult to show impact. As a result, the evaluation and assessment of faculty development offerings is another area of growing concern for teaching and learning centres (Hicks, 2014). Rigorous assessment of professional development programs is part of engaging in scholarly practice, and when formalized, in participating in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) and the emerging fields of the scholarship of technology-enabled learning (SoTEL) and the scholarship of educational development (SoED). In the professional development assessment model, most evaluation takes place at levels 1-3 (Figure 9).

**Figure 9**

*Professional Development Assessment Model*
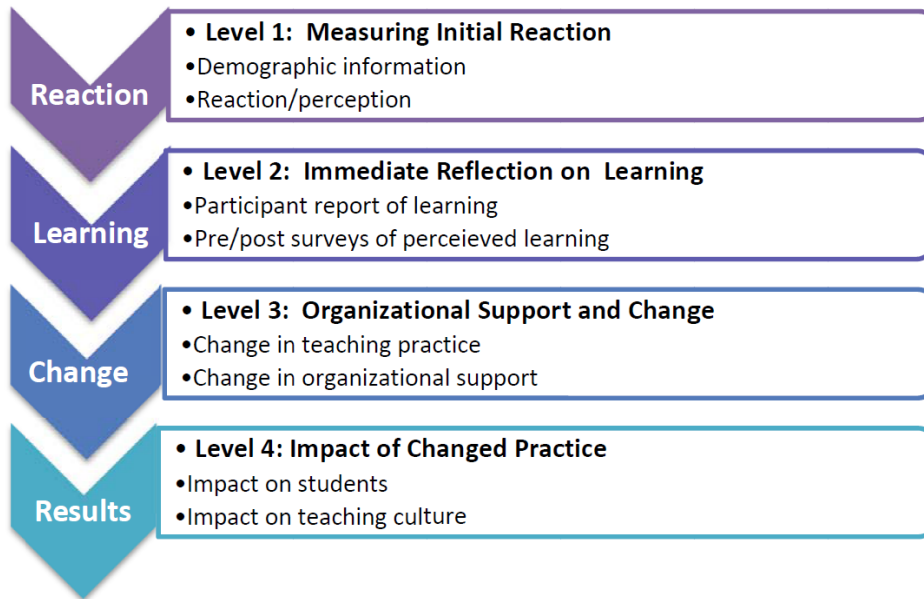


*Note:* Because of the complexities involved in tracing the impact of professional development participation to student learning, very little research occurs at Level 4, which connects professional development activities to impacts on student learning. (Grabove, et al., 2012, p. 9)

Most assessment of professional development activities takes place at levels one and two, tracking who participated in professional development activities and acquiring participant reflections. Level 3 accounts for program enhancement and SoTL, but there are enduring challenges in assessing the impact of teaching and learning centre programs. Educational developers are one-step removed from the teaching practice that occurs in individual courses (Hicks, 2014). The educational developer may consult and recommend, but the teaching and learning centre cannot easily measure the impact on student learning or the change in teaching culture without accounting for research ethics and how scholarly investigation may put faculty in uncomfortable positions by making

their teaching practice visible. Change can also be hard to detect because a change in teaching practice might not fully account for "the myriad variables that effect student performance beyond the teaching behaviours of individual professors" (Grabove, et al., 2012, p. 10). Because of the complexity of research design, there is little research evaluating the effectiveness of professional development programs for online instructors in Canada.

**Figure 10**

*A Framework for the Development of Teaching Expertise*



*Note:* The University of Calgary's Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning highlights five activities for exerting culture change, including professional development. (Chick, et al., 2017). Reprinted with permission.

In addition to promoting more effective teaching practices, the educational development unit also plays a role influencing organizational culture change at multiple levels and through multiple channels to effect both long-term and short-term goals (Grabove, et al., 2012). Teaching and learning centres lead from the middle, and a recent conception of how teaching and learning centres develop a learning culture comes from the University of Calgary's Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning (Chick, et al., 2017) (Figure 10), one of the leading teaching and learning centres in Canada. Through leadership, research, and mentorship, teaching and learning centres can change the operations and cultures of their institutions. Grabove et al., (2012) argue that a culture that values quality teaching "can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, including institutional policies" (p.14), academic plans, and resource allocation (e.g., increased resources for professional development programs targeted at online contingent faculty).

Teaching culture can be evident in whether professional development programs are mandated or voluntary, and the culture is also visible in the curriculum of these professional development programs (e.g. assessment of student learning). Grabove et al., (2012) mention "curriculum planning, design, delivery and evaluation, as well as the integration of instructional technology tools" (p. 14) as essential curricular elements for faculty development. Grabove et al., (2012) also recommend that educational developers should be involved in the early stages of institutional strategic planning and policy development. As will be fully discussed in Bolman and Deal's (1997) four-frame model for understanding organizations in the next chapter, Grabove et al., (2012) make it clear that planning is an inherently political process. If teaching and learning centres are

involved in the planning process, identifying the need to provide services to part-time instructors could find representation within institutional strategies and priorities.

A conspicuous absence from Grabove, et al., (2012), however, is the minimal mention of the unique challenges faced in providing educational development services to contingent, part-time, sessional, and/or adjunct faculty who may receive no compensation for engaging in professional development. The authors mention that most teaching and learning centres offer programs for sessional and part-time instructors, but they show a preference for improving teaching capacity for tenured faculty. They advocate for "greater recognition of teaching excellence in tenure and promotion practices" (p. 10), building "greater currency for teaching in the promotion, tenure and renewal process" (p. 10), and suggest that "teaching must be taken seriously in tenure, promotion, and renewal policies" (p. 12). Grabove et al. also note the "value of teaching can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, including institutional policies and procedures (especially in tenure and promotion)" (p. 14).

Considering a larger and increasing portion of Ontario academic staff are non-tenured, this sole focus on embedding teaching excellence in tenure and promotion practices seems to exclude broad areas where teaching and learning centres can influence recognition for teaching excellence, such as teaching development funds for part-time and contingent faculty, or compensation incentives for part-time faculty to engage in professional development programs. When mentioning that some educational developers would like to see more requests from part-time instructors, the authors immediately point out that "others may be at the limits of what they can provide given prevailing conditions and resources" (Grabove, et al., 2012, p. 6). Teaching and learning centres should

therefore say "no" to new programming unless there is "provision of additional resources" (Grabove, et al., 2012, p. 6). This statement expresses well the contested space for providing professional development for part-time instructors, as well as how teaching and learning centres could exert institutional power within planning processes to build culture.

The concept of power used in this study (fully discussed in Chapter Three), accepts that unequal power relationships exist and are entrenched, but also that there are cracks and fissures which can be exploited to shift power relations. These shifting power relationships are grounded in Bolman and Deal's (1997) suggestion that organizations are "screaming political arenas that host a complex web of individual and group interests" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p.163). As political agents involved in strategic planning and policy development, teaching and learning centres are active agents in decisions involving the allocation of scarce resources, and they possess some amount of institutional influence to effect change through "bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p.163).

Another notable omission in Grabove et al., (2012) is a lack of consideration for how the growth of online education will further evolve the role of teaching and learning centres in Canadian contexts. Even so, the process of enfolding the first Five Ages (Sorcinelli, 2006) in educational development is visible in the five areas of future evolution and growth expressed in the Educational Developers Caucus's (EDC) Living Plan (2016). The EDC is a Special Interest Group of the Society of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), a Canadian not-for-profit corporation striving to be the national voice and world leader for enhancing teaching and learning in higher

education. Core strategic activities include fundamental faculty and course development programs, the valid assessment of teaching and learning programs, the effective use of learner analytics in course design, and building alliances. Similar to the omissions noted in Grabove et al., (2012), missing from EDC's emerging areas of focus (Figure 11) is recognition of faculty development for part-time instructors and specific mention of online education.

**Figure 11**

*Educational Developers Caucus Living Plan 2016*
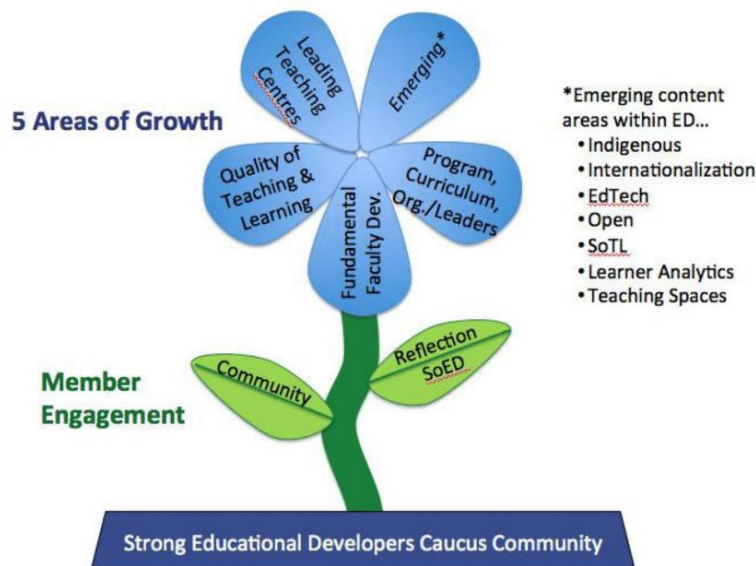


*Note:* The Canadian Educational Developer's Caucus's 5 areas of growth and emerging areas do not include part-time faculty or online education.

Examples of fundamental faculty development programs include administering and facilitating the Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) and the Teaching Improvement Project System (TIPS). These programs are predominantly face-to-face, peer and experiential learning-based instructional development programs. These models are problematic for online contingent faculty. The Educational Developers Caucus,

recognizing this gap, funded a survey examining the current state of post-secondary educational development programming in Canada aimed at those preparing to teach online (Jeppesen, Fulton, & Thomas, 2018). This work sought to provide recommendations for program development, and in a conversation with two of the researchers at EDC 2018 in Victoria, BC, they aimed to gain a sense of what was being offered to online instructors because they believed there was a need for a parallel pathway of faculty development to evolve the story of online education. They also noted a gap in knowledge about who online instructors are, and whether participation in any of the online faculty development programs offered in Canada led to innovations in pedagogy, increased student engagement, or improvement in course assessments (K. Fulton & J. Thomas, personal communication, February 15, 2018). Their work was rejected for publication because the sample size was too small. The lack of a response to their survey may indicate less a flaw in their approach or their conclusions, and more a recognition that, prior to the pandemic, there was not a lot being done to specifically target online educators (Jeppeson, personal communication, February 15, 2021). EDC has also recently established a Teaching and Learning Network for contingent faculty to create awareness and initiate conversation about contingent faculty in Canada. While some within EDC are leading change, there is a notable absence of emphasis on professional development for contingent online faculty in their agendas.

Having situated the research as an extension of Harrison's (2016) mapping of the policyscape in Ontario by outlining Duus' four ideal paradigms and the role of Canadian teaching and learning centres, it is now necessary to briefly summarize the research surrounding contract faculty development and the many research gaps that remain for

adjunct faculty development, especially those for online contingent faculty. The next two sections work from the general to the specific, looking at faculty development needs broadly, the research studies into adjunct faculty development, and then the research regarding online faculty development.

**A Summary of Research Gaps on Contingent Faculty Development**

In 2001, the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD Network), the oldest and largest professional association of faculty development scholars and practitioners in higher education, surveyed 300 institutions in the United States and 31 Canadian institutions regarding professional development needs for faculty. The study over-represents large universities, which have well-established and sophisticated faculty development units and programs. Despite this over-representation and the age of the survey, the findings still provide guidance around enduring areas of importance and research in faculty development.

The researchers sought to identify the top challenges facing faculty and faculty work, and the top challenges were:

- **faculty roles:** balancing multiple roles and learning new roles (such as teaching online and face-to-face).

- **student learning:** teaching for student-centered learning, assessing student outcomes, and teaching underprepared students.

- **technology:** integrating technology strategically into teaching and learning environments.

- **part-time faculty:** training and supporting part-time and adjunct faculty.

- **departmental leadership and management:** increasing effectiveness in the institution by working with department chairs and establishing interdisciplinary collaborations. (Sorcinelli, et al., 2006, p. 102)

This study took place at the beginning of the growth period for online education, but the cluster of top challenges – evolving faculty roles, supporting part-time faculty, effectively integrating educational technology, and assessment of student learning – all remain relevant. The crucial role of leadership and management also remains a major consideration that could be visible within academic strategy documents prioritizing teaching and in learning.

Perhaps taking their cue from the 2001 POD survey, some researchers have explored the challenge of providing faculty development programs to adjunct faculty. Wallin (2007) argues that it is "imperative that administrators be sensitive to the needs of adjunct faculty" (p.68), and they should, at a minimum, make sure that part-time faculty are knowledgeable about student services, financial aid, health services, and library services. Beyond that, "one way to support them is to provide a strong professional development program tailored to their specific needs" (Wallin, 2007, p. 68), and Wallin includes three case studies of exemplary support, including Northeast Texas Community College, Black Hawk College, and Tacoma Community College.

Northeast Texas provided twenty-four hours of training including orientation, online teaching modules, classroom observations, and a self-reflection paper as part of their part-time teaching academy. Those who completed the academy rated higher than those who did not in terms of encouraging students, using time well, preparation, and employing a fair grading system. Wallin (2007) does not detail if this program was

mandatory or if the instructors were compensated for their time and effort, but it is the only one that evaluated the adjunct development program's effectiveness in terms of student impact. Black Hawk College's academy for adjuncts created a stronger network that led adjunct faculty to believe they were valued and appreciated by the college, but this study did not confirm if this feeling of value translated into a change in teaching practices or greater student learning outcomes. Tacoma Community College's faculty institute for adjuncts found that adjunct instructors who participated in the institute were more likely to stay with the college, reducing costs associated with recruitment and retention issues.

Bojarczyk (2008) offers another American glimpse in an interview-based study with four administrators and 16 adjunct faculty. Bojarczyk suggests that, overall, American colleges have responded with an array of inconsistent activities to provide integration, socialization and enculturation into specific academic environments for adjunct facutly. Bojarczyk recognizes the professional development of adjunct faculty as a strategic priority because growing populations of contingent faculty will influence the structure, direction, and quality of higher education. Yet, despite their growth and impact on educational quality, many adjunct faculty in her study felt like had just been "thrown out there" and were "groping around in the dark" when they started teaching (p. 186).

Her findings place additional emphasis on the importance of student assessment by suggesting that assignments and exams are the most useful professional development topic for faculty. Bojarczyk (2008) also echoes the need for better evaluation; this remains an enduring research gap because many teaching and learning centres "do not have any formal processes in place to evaluate the usefulness of development activities in

which the adjunct faculty participated" (p.191). In absence of evaluations, "institutions

cannot validate the effectiveness of the current faculty development programs and

confirm which topics or activities the adjunct faculty perceived as most beneficial" (pp.

191-192). This statement holds particular importance in the wake of a pandemic that

forced teaching and learning centres into a period of intense innovation without time to

determine which activities proved most beneficial.

      Jackson (2012), in another American study, similarly argues that most faculty

development models are piecemeal, voluntary, minimal, and are not assessed for

effectiveness (p. 3). Jackson concurs that sessional faculty are largely groping around in

the dark, and his study aimed to build a comprehensive model to meet the needs of new

adjunct faculty.  He identified the areas of greatest need for faculty professional

development, and assessment of student learning was again the number one issue for

faculty in both urban and rural community colleges. Another emerging area identified by

Jackson is the development of culturally sensitive educators, or what is now being called

the Intercultural/International/Indigenous Interface (Garson, 2016). This interface is

noteworthy because online courses may attract significant numbers of international

students. Jackson (2012) outlines the elements required for a comprehensive approach to

faculty development, including faculty orientation, mentoring programs, self-directed

web-based modules, and training specifically focused on adjunct faculty (p. 41).

      Stes et al., (2010) reviewed 36 studies regarding a change in teacher attitudes,

skills, and the impact on students, and they concluded that "instructional development

interventions over time have more positive behavioral outcomes than one-time events"

(p. 45), confirming Condon et al.'s (2016) observation that a change in teaching practices

occurs incrementally and cumulatively over time. The researchers (Stes, et al., 2010) were surprised to discover that alternative or hybrid delivery formats for faculty development initiatives led to more changes in teaching practice, but "further investigation into the differential impact of initiatives with a varied character (traditional, alternative or hybrid form) is needed" (p. 47). They also found that generic instructional development interventions are "comparable to the impact of discipline-general interventions" (p.46). Most importantly, Stes, et al., (2010) note that "the effect of instructional interventions on specific faculty groups" (p.26), such as online contingent faculty, should be studied. This too remains an area where significantly more research is needed.

**The Development of Online Instructors**

There is scant research in Canada regarding contingent faculty (Charbonneau, 2013), and the state of online educators in Canada is largely unexplored. "Canadian data about faculty orientation, on-boarding for digital education, and on-going professional development are scarce" (VanLeeuwen, et al., 2020), and these information gaps are compounded for online contingent faculty in Canada. It is not known how much online education in Canada is carried out by full-time faculty or how many online contingent faculty in Canada would consider themselves voluntary (retired and enjoying the experience of teaching from home) or involuntary (picking up unlimited teaching gigs from many institutions in order to make ends meet). It is unknown how much of Canadian online instruction is carried out by Canadians living in Canada or by instructors living and working in other countries, and basic demographic data such as age, gender composition, and teaching experience remain largely unknown.

For this study, this information is not essential because of the grounding assumption that whatever the life experience of online faculty, professional development would still be desirable.  Enough studies, many recounted here, suggest that formal professional development programs lead to an improvement in teaching, and these improvements are measurable and cumulative. As detailed in Chapter One, many voices are calling for additional resources to be devoted to faculty development to build high end e-learning experiences, and professional development appears to be a core component of building successful online programs (Bailey, et al., 2018). Still, more and better data about the volume and composition of online educators in Canada would be beneficial, similar in nature to the study conducted by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU).

Magda's (2019) study for AASCU addresses online faculty recruitment, training and support needs. A 25-question survey distributed to 375 Chief Academic Officers (CAO) accompanied by a subset of follow-up interviews found that 67% of online and blended courses in the United States were taught by full-time faculty. Online course development was incentivized, but instruction was not. A surprisingly high percentage (98%) of full-time faculty taught online courses as part of their regular workload. Despite that significant percentage, faculty autonomy and contracts occasionally prevented "the mandating of training and development opportunities for faculty so that they can be aware of the evolving best practices for instructing online" (p. 7). Only about one-third (37%) of institutions required pedagogical training, and 45 percent required training on the learning management system (LMS). These numbers "appear low given how abundant online learning courses have become at AASCU institutions" (p. 7). Magda

(2019) also found that peer evaluations were rare, and faculty-student interactions were unregulated, potentially undermining online learning.

It is unknown if the situation for Canadian institutions is similar to those for AASCU institutions, but because there are so many parallels in faculty composition and the growth of online education in Canada, the findings are likely similar, making the recommendations from this study worth considering. Magda (2019) recommends mandatory or incentivized training that covers LMS basics, how to direct students to available services, and best practices in online pedagogy. Beyond basic training, online faculty should receive regular feedback from multiple sources and continuous professional development opportunities to stay current on emerging practices in online education. Magda (2019) also recommends some standardization for course designs and policies surrounding faculty-student interaction to improve navigation and foster interaction in the virtual environment. The strongest recommendation is that:

> If adjunct faculty are asked to maintain the same standards as full-time faculty, then they should be treated equally in terms of the training and resources that are made available to them. . . adjunct faculty participation can help them feel more invested in the community, which can lead to better retention within the institution. (Magda, 2019, p. 34)

A similar study in Canada would be of great value to determine who is teaching Canada's online courses, and if faculty are incentivized or compensated to participate in professional development. In addition to the many gaps already enumerated, it is presently unknown what are the most effective professional development opportunities are available to online instructors in Canada, and if these opportunities are mandatory,

continuous, and of high-quality where faculty receive regular feedback from multiple

sources. It is also unknown what percentage of online faculty are involved in any of the

decisions regarding course design and delivery, what percentage are actively working to

improve their capabilities, and what impact these activities have on the student

experience.

These numerous gaps confirm Hicks' (2014) conclusion that "professional

development for online teaching faculty is undeveloped and under-researched. It is very

clear that more research is needed on the quality of professional development activities

offered" (p. 282). Hicks (2014) provides an excellent survey of the research on

educational development and support for online faculty, suggesting that the prevalence

and integration of educational technology has blurred the lines between face-to-face and

online. Hicks argues that educational technology has created an era "where all faculty

need to have a level of competence with online learning and technologies. This is no

longer optional but is *core* to the university learning environment" (2014, p. 267).

Faculty development for online instruction is core because "there is now less opportunity

for faculty *not* to have some involvement in online teaching" (p. 268). These prophetic

words certainly came to pass during the COVID-19 pandemic when almost all faculty

were forced to teach online using synchronous and/or asynchronous tools such as the

LMS, Zoom, online proctoring software, and other digital applications.

If successful postsecondary teaching requires *pedagogical content knowledge*

(Shulman, 1986)*,* successfully teaching online requires *technological pedagogical*

*content knowledge* (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Discipline expertise (content) plus

knowledge of educational theory and/or atheoretically effective practices (pedagogy)

needs to be layered upon comfort for maximizing the value of interactive technologies

(technological). The concept of *technological pedagogical content knowledge* unites

three of Duus' (2009) four paradigms, suggesting that quality results from a dynamic

interplay between disciplinary expertise, effective pedagogy, and the appropriate use of

technology. This concept of *technological pedagogical content knowledge* is both useful

and problematic because "developing theory for educational technology is difficult

because it requires a detailed understanding of complex relationships that are

contextually bound" (Mishra & Koehler, 2006, p. 1018). One of the complex,

contextually bound relationships underpinning the teaching and learning transaction

could be the quality of the professional development opportunities available to online

instructors in the construction of their *technological pedagogical content knowledge*.

As noted in the Five Ages model, professional development is linked to quality

assurance, and this is especially true in online education (Latchem, 2014). One of the

many roles of teaching and learning centres is to ensure adherence to online learning

standards, and both quality and compliance are "contested spaces" (Hicks, 2014, p. 272).

The intensely contested space of quality becomes more intense in online education

because of the persistent perception of online education's inferiority (Jaschik &

Lederman, 2018; OCUFA, 2020).  Hicks outlines several aspects of this contested space

that informed the document analysis and the email interviews, including institutional

positioning and recognition of faculty development for online instructors in academic

strategy, the professional development offerings currently available for online

instructors, and if online is treated separately from other core teaching activities. These

areas denote rich areas for further research, but the most critical need, according to Hicks

(2014), is understanding the impact of how professional development contributes to changes in student learning outcomes.

This chapter has moved from a broad overview of professional development programs for adjunct faculty, to the challenges involved in professional development for contract faculty, to now focus on professional development programs for part-time online faculty, an area where there is very little research. Meloncon (2017) notes that "little work has been done on contingent faculty teaching in online settings" (p.257). Meloncon surveyed 91 online educators in technical and professional communications, and she discovered that 39% had no autonomy, and this lack of autonomy can potentially "constrain their pedagogical practices while providing programs a justification for not offering sufficient professional development" (p.258). The unbundled nature of course development, where a course is developed separately from delivery, could partially explain why a third of the respondents did not have access to an instructional designer, indicating "a need for professional development opportunities in instructional design" (p.259). Half of the respondents in this study did not know who owned their course, establishing a need for professional development regarding intellectual property and the ownership of labor. As noted by Meloncon (2017), although course ownership may not be negotiable, "all faculty need to know what their rights are and whether they can negotiate or retain some rights of reuse" (p.260). This is especially suitable for faculty who may teach similar courses at several institutions. Finally, 62% of the survey respondents reported taking a course about online teaching, with 14% (10 of the 91 respondents) saying they had paid for their own training, whereas 35% (or 48 out of the 91) had no formal preparation before teaching online.

The work of Magda (2019), Hicks (2014), and Meloncon (2017) highlight that the situation remains largely unchanged since Biro began exploring the professional development needs for online faculty. Biro (2005) foresaw the exponential increase in distance learning courses and an increase in the number of students participating in distance learning, as well as the emerging pattern of hiring adjunct faculty to teach online. She observed, "if *online* adjunct faculty are viewed as a growing and important subgroup of adjunct faculty, it is obvious that a gap in the literature exists concerning their needs, experiences, and issues in this new role" (p. 6). Based on growth and volume of online education, it is inarguable that online faculty are a growing and important subgroup of adjunct faculty, but are they *viewed* that way? The scant research available suggests they are not yet viewed as an important subgroup of adjunct faculty. Biro's fundamental question remains an important and unanswered one. The question that follows is, if they are viewed as an important subgroup of faculty, how are they being served? Have teaching and learning centres received additional funds or created new offices to support the development of online education? These questions can be partly answered through an analysis of strategic academic documents and by exploring professional development offerings by Canadian teaching and learning centers

Biro (2005) was also one of the early researchers to note endemic tensions in faculty development for online contingent faculty. Benefits to online contingent faculty included teaching part-time, participating in an academic setting, and having a sense of "giving back to society" (p. 4). Benefits to the institutions using contingent faculty included cost-savings in terms of lower salaries and benefits, younger instructors who had recently completed graduate school, and flexible course scheduling. The many

benefits to institutions come with responsibilities – primarily the responsibility to develop teaching competence to ensure quality. Biro was responsible for hiring and training faculty, and she recognized the need to see "faculty as learners," a point reiterated by Zawacki-Richter and Anderson (2014), who also note that online faculty "bring many of the fears, inhibitions, and bewilderment of students when first exposed to the very different context of teaching in mediated and networked contexts" (p. 22).

Biro (2005) conducted interviews with 10 online postsecondary instructors in the Philadelphia area, and she discovered important approaches for supporting these adult learners, such as online, self-paced tutorials, print-based help manuals, and adequate time to prepare and revise their courses. Henry (2014) corroborates these findings, demonstrating that the type and form of training (online, self-paced), the duration of training, and active learning all have a statistically significant impact on faculty's perceived gain in knowledge and skill, recommending that college administrators and e-learning faculty "implement and pursue professional development training workshops that incorporate active learning and span several days, weeks, or months" (p. ii). The content of these trainings should specifically focus on best practices, the learning management system, and course design.

Carusetta and Cranton (2009) did not look specifically at online faculty, but their study on the Canadian community college system bears some resemblance to the conditions some online contingent faculty may face, such as a lack of autonomy (Meloncon, 2017). They studied community college faculty with mandated curriculums, predetermined assessments, and other constraints who "find interesting and innovative strategies for maintaining their stance as adult educators in a context that has many

constraints against doing so" (p. 76). They found that adult learners want self-directing, collaborative learning activities. Carusetta and Cranton (2009) go beyond that, suggesting that viewing college faculty as adult learners engaged in social and institutional change is a good first step in working toward "much-needed reform in higher education (where traditionally educators transmit information to students and test them on retention)" (p. 80). This description of the educational transaction as transmission is low-end, content-based e-learning (Duus, 2009), and faculty wishing to sculpt a new situation may be forced to challenge power structures where they lack autonomy. To engage in social and institutional change, Carusetta and Cranton (2009) argue that to truly engage faculty, "it is important to remove them, either physically or conceptually, or both, from where they feel constrained by the policies and philosophies of their parent institution" (p. 80) to explore new ways of thinking without fear of recrimination. It is interesting to ponder what this physical and conceptual removal looks like for online contingent faculty who are already physically distant from the institution and may have little knowledge of institutional policies or student services.

McQuiggan (2011), Rochefort (2012) and dos Santos (2017) each conducted institutional case studies to assess the quality of their online faculty professional development programs. McQuiggan (2011) downplays the differences between face-to-face and online learning contexts, suggesting there are more similarities than differences between the two delivery modes. She questions whether it is the online environment that produces change or if it is the process of intentionally thinking about how one teaches that leads to a transformation in teaching practice. McQuiggan's perspective is verified by the previously cited findings showing seven in ten instructors who have taught online

believed that the experience helped them develop pedagogical skills in online and face-to-face classroom environments (Jaschik & Lederman, 2017).

McQuiggan (2011) does not fully explain exactly how the experience of teaching online leads faculty teaching in predominantly face-to-face environments to examine their teaching philosophy, but it may be that faculty hold unquestioned assumptions about teaching. Teaching online then becomes the transformative trigger that causes faculty to think intentionally, thoughtfully, and deliberately about every teaching decision to maximize student learning. This would fall in line with Dewey's conception of the relationship between experience and reflection. Dewey (1997) suggests thought is habitual, but through intentional experience one can render themselves "more sensitive and responsive to certain conditions" (p. 37). Non-reflective experience is based on habits as a dominant form of experience, but teaching online requires openness to new ways of thinking to overcome the inadequacy and contradictions of habitual ways of action (Miettinen, 2000, p.61). When the triggering event of teaching online occurs, then it becomes possible to re-form one's ideas about teaching through reflective interaction with educational technology tools and reflection. Hence the importance of reflection in most teacher development programs.

What McQuiggan (2011) fails to account for in minimizing the difference between online and face-to-face instruction is that "one has to keep in mind how much the technology of doing something defines the activity itself, and by doing so, precludes the emergence of other ways of doing 'it', whatever 'it' might be" (Franklin, 1990, p. 17). Tasks are structured by the available tools, and the tools often redefine the problems as well as the available solutions. McQuiggan views tools as neutral entities without

recognizing that "tools come with a governing logic" (Shatzer, 2019), and this logic tends to reduce reciprocity (Franklin, 1990).

This is why McQuiggan's (2011) argument that faculty need to be engaged in serious dialogue with someone they know, like, and trust is of vital importance if instructors are to critically examine their attitudes, values, and assumptions about teaching. It reintroduces people into the technological decision-making process (Franklin, 1990), and McQuiggan's (2011) focus on the importance of human connections confirms Rochefort's (2012) findings in her qualitative study that determined one-on-one interaction with the instructional designer is the most effective form of professional development for online faculty. Many online faculty do not interact with an instructional designer (Jaschik & Lederman, 2018; Magda, 2019; Meloncon, 2017), and one-on-one support presents the problem of scalability, which became one of the central professional development challenges during the pandemic.

Rochefort (2011) also notes that one-on-one support may not account for those instructors teaching compressed courses, working other jobs, or online faculty who are physically distant from the institution. Rochefort's observation is crucial because most of the models for effective professional development covered so far have mentioned time duration, collaboration, active learning, and strong relationships involving serious conversations. These professional development models requiring time and strong relationships may come into conflict with the daily life concerns, or the *vernacular reality* (Franklin, 1990) faced by contingent faculty who may be teaching at multiple institutions and may not be compensated for the time and effort they spend on professional development.

Even if they are willing, it may be difficult for an institution to provide that level of support to all its online instructors as online education continues to grow. This problem of scale became very evident during the pandemic; many teaching and learning centres extended their reach, stretching resources and fatiguing their staff (Educational Developers Caucus Centre Leaders Meeting, 2020). Another important finding from Rochefort's study is that online instructors admitted a reluctance to seek out faculty development or contact with peers, even though doing so might change or influence their approach (p. 82). It is not fully explored why this is the case, but researching the faculty barriers that exist to accessing and participating in online professional development would be worthwhile research. This lack of connection between online contingent faculty and the rest of their colleagues remains an unexplored area of significant tension.

Finally, Rochefort (2012) notes that academic programs did not seize the opportunity to present academic program goals, beyond course goals, to their online faculty using the same internet-based communications used for instructional purposes. Introduction to the mission and specific departmental goals is an essential element to Jackson's (2012) professional development model for adjunct faculty, and internet-based communications technologies offer the opportunity to integrate online contingent faculty in departmental meetings, program review conversations, and curriculum mapping exercises. As noted by Hicks (2014), "one advantage of using these modes and environments for professional development is that they provide first-hand experience for faculty and teachers on how students are learning and engaging in a range of technologies" (p. 281). Rochefort's (2012) insight comes at a time when distance and alienation can be overcome, but it is not known how institutions and academic programs

may be fully integrating online contingent faculty into the academic community by involving them in quality assurance activities, such as program review.

Most of these studies have focused at the faculty-level, but as Sorcinelli, et al., (2006) argue, leadership and management is required to increase the effectiveness of professional development efforts at the institutional-level. Leadership requires department chairs and faculty to establish interdisciplinary collaborations, and this is exactly what Dos Santos (2017) discovered in his case study of online educational development at Canadian undergraduate university. Dos Santos (2017) discovered in his case study that successful leaders recognized the need for educational development, exhibited vision (an understanding of the need for online education and the commitment to do it well), and created microcultures and networks of support for online educators. Leaders allocated time and incentives, and then let others lead the online learning initiatives with a distributed leadership model. Successful online teaching development also required a host of supports that recognized different levels of expertise and approaches to teaching that enabled faculty choice. These leadership activities describe well the limited but important influence teaching and learning centres wield, and the personal and political nature of institutional power distribution.

## Chapter Summary

This integrative literature sought to summarize and synthesize representative literature on professional development to establish the clear need for additional research on professional development for online contingent instructors in Canada. The extant research was summarized to outline the several significant gaps that remain, but the review also situated the research as an extension of the contested policyscape mapped by

Harrison (2016), based in Duus' four paradigm model of e-learning. Harrison's policyscape mapping did not include institutional academic plans beyond Ontario or look at the challenges, tensions, and conflicts experienced by teaching and learning centres, but her findings note the need for more resources for teaching and learning centres to support the growth of online learning. A brief review of the historical development of teaching and learning centres sketches the political nature of educational development and shows that the unique challenges of serving part-time faculty and online educators are largely unrepresented. Providing services to this growing faculty subgroup with this new mode of educational provision will likely be one of the evolving forces in educational development for the foreseeable future, but many of the long-standing challenges enumerated by Grabove et al. (2012), such as evaluating the impact of professional development on student learning outcomes, remain.

The review also summarized much of the extant research and many of the remaining research gaps pertaining to adjunct and online contingent faculty development, demonstrating that significantly more research is needed. Research is required in several areas, including the effectiveness of adjunct faculty development programs offered in varied online and hybrid formats, barriers surrounding adjunct participation in professional development programs, and the impact of instructional development programs on specific faculty groups, such as online faculty. Stes et al., (2010) also suggest that the long-term effects of instructional development will remain difficult but important research territory because of the largely voluntary nature of professional development initiatives and the wide diversity of institutional contexts.

The COVID-19 pandemic renewed an interest in professional development to prepare and support faculty in digital education. As noted by VanLeeuwen, et al. (2020), "Innovations in faculty development can be key strategic levers for institutions to ensure quality, as well as mechanisms to support innovation and change" (p.3). Despite the importance of teacher training for new faculty and the need to provide advanced training for experienced faculty, challenges and barriers remain in providing professional development for part-time online instructors, including concerns about changing culture, work security, and unclear expectations about the vision and role of online learning at specific institutions (VanLeeuwen, et al, 2020, p. 9).  Faculty on-boarding also varies widely, and inequities related to professional development opportunities for sessional or adjunct faculty remain minimally represented within Canadian Digital Learning Research Association's annual survey of Canadian postsecondary institutions (VanLeeuwen, et al., 2020). Preparatory and ongoing professional development for both technology and pedagogy needs to be a priority, and it must be delivered in ways that account for the precarious work security faced by many contract academic staff (VanLeeuwen, et al., 2020).

The literature review most importantly pointed to an enduring gap regarding whether online contingent faculty are viewed as an important faculty subgroup, and this study works to shed light on this question by exploring academic strategy documents and the efforts being put forth by teaching and learning centres in Canadian colleges and institutes. Through document analysis and email interviews, this study partially fills a research void in an underdeveloped area by looking for recognition of faculty development for online instructors as a strategic priority. It also explores what types of

faculty development programs are emerging and how they are delivered. The next

chapter provides the research design for how this study fills in a small portion of the gaps

outlined in this chapter.

## Chapter 3. Seeing the Invisible

**Ontological, Epistemological, and Theoretical Orientation**

Chapter One outlined the weight of extant evidence suggesting that precarious work conditions for adjunct faculty have negative consequences, such as reduced student persistence in a major and retention in postsecondary studies at the undergraduate level. The opening problem statement also leveraged existing studies to highlight that negative consequences for student learning may be exacerbated in online education, where online education can lower odds of student completion (Garrett, 2018). These studies suggest that negative student learning outcomes are partially the result of precarious working conditions for part-time faculty, and the negative impacts of part-time faculty on student persistence and retention demand a recalculation of the cost-savings of using adjunct faculty. Finally, these studies point to professional development as a worthy investment for postsecondary education. Strategic recognition of online faculty and addressing their professional development needs comprise an important part of faculty working conditions that can mitigate the most egregious effects of contingency.

Chapter Two reviewed Duus's (2009) four e-learning paradigms to frame the contested space of online education, and it recounted how Harrison (2016) applied this framework to map tensions and challenges to the growth of online education in Ontario. The Chapter One problem statement and the Chapter Two literature review worked to establish that it is in the institution's best interest to address the professional development needs of sessional online faculty from both negative and positive perspectives. Faculty development may reduce the adverse impacts of exposure to part-time faculty and the online achievement gap, and it can improve and sustain educational quality by maturing

online education in a period of extreme tumult. Chapter Two also worked from general to specific to highlight enduring themes in educational development, including student assessment, integration of technology, the development of part-time faculty, and the need for leadership. It showed that professional development for online faculty is an under-researched area, specifically regarding whether online contingent faculty are viewed as an important faculty subgroup.

To determine if online contingent faculty are viewed as an important faculty subgroup, this study explores academic plans covering the current period and immediate future belonging to member institutions of Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) through document analysis. Email interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres within those institutions capture the struggles and successes of meeting the professional development needs of this growing faculty subgroup. This study investigates academic plans and the experiences of teaching and learning centre directors to see what gaps, if any, exist between Franklin's (1990) *projected reality* and *extended reality* with respect to training and support for contingent faculty teaching online.

The *projected reality* of the future is represented in academic plans and describes an ideal state influenced or caused by the actions in the present. The projected reality is often influenced by the *constructed reality,* which Franklin (1990) describes as a reality shaped by a daily barrage of archetypes and propaganda so common that they form "the fabric that holds the common culture together" (p. 37). The constructed reality of myth informs the projected reality of the future but may conflict with experiential realities. The *vernacular reality* of "direct action and immediate experience" is both "private and personal, but it is also common and political" (p. 36). This world of multiple realities

speaks to two different sources of knowledge creation; the first type of knowledge is a cultural inheritance of myth and story, and the second type of knowledge is forged in experience. The document analysis focuses on the *projected reality* of the future and the ideology of technology (the *constructed reality*), and the email interviews with directors of teaching and learning centers will focus on their *vernacular reality* to create an *extended reality* based on the direct action and experiences of educational developers.

Directly flowing from these discussions, this chapter details a two-phase, multimethod qualitative study that seeks to answer: *How are online faculty and their professional development represented in current Canadian postsecondary academic plans (phase one)? How are the professional development needs of contingent online faculty being served by Canadian teaching and learning centres (phase two)? What gaps, if any, exist between the projected reality of academic plans and the extended reality of teaching and learning centres in Canada (integrated analysis of phases one and two)?* This research is grounded Deweyan critical pragmatism best interpreted by Alison Kadlec (Kadlec, 2006; Kadlec, 2008), and it employs *The Real World of Technology* (Franklin, 1990) and *Distrusting Educational Technology* (Selwyn, 2014) to provide contemporary interpretations of Deweyan critical pragmatism in relation to educational technology. To assemble the pieces, it is necessary to begin with a brief overview of how critical pragmatism fit within major research paradigms before discussing Deweyan critical pragmatism specifically. After a summary of research paradigms and critical pragmatism this chapter outlines a description of both research phases, their methodologies, and the study's limitations are discussed.

**Overview of Research Paradigms**

A re*search paradigm* is "a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that a community of researchers have in common regarding the nature and conduct of research" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 24). Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011) outline five major research paradigms:

- **positivism:** Positivism is comprised of realists and "hard science" researchers with a belief in a single, identifiable reality.

- **post-positivism**: Post-positivism modifies positivism by accepting that "our knowledge of the world is conjectural, falsifiable, challengeable, changing" (Cohen, et al., 2011, p. 27), so the world can "never be fully understood" (Lincoln, et al., 2011, p. 102).

- **critical theory, including Feminism:** Critical research "holds up to the lights of legitimacy and equality issues of repression, voice, ideology, power, participation, representation, inclusion, and interests" (Cohen, et al., p. 31) because "human nature operates in a world that is based on a struggle for power" leading to privilege and oppression (Lincoln, et al., 2011, p. 102).

- **constructivism (or interpretivist):** Constructivism is a relativistic paradigm where researchers assume that "reality as we know it is constructed intersubjectively through the meanings developed socially and experientially." The constructivist paradigm suggests "we construct knowledge through our lived experiences" and social interactions (Lincoln, et al., p. 103).

- **participatory (and postmodern):** Postmodern research approaches are marked by an absence of grand metanarratives (Bloland, 1995). Instead, postmodern approaches assert the valorization of subjectivity, the importance of temporality and context in understanding phenomena, the existence and celebration of multiple, contradictory interpretations of the world, and the recognition that researchers are part of the world (Cohen, et al., p. 27).

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that *positivism* "is a poor choice for labeling quantitative researchers today because positivism has long been replaced by newer philosophies of science. The term is more of a straw man (easily knocked down) for attack than standing for any actual practicing researchers" (p. 24). They prefer the term post-positivism, reducing the structure above to four major research paradigms. Cohen, et al., (2011) provide a similar structure for understanding the multiplicity of research paradigms. Their structure includes:

- **normative paradigm:** The normative paradigm is like positivism in that it believes human behaviour is essentially rule-governed and should be investigated by the methods of natural science (p. 17).

- **interpretive paradigm:** Interpretivists focus on actions, which are "only meaningful to us in so far as we are able to ascertain the intentions of actors to share their experiences" (pp. 17-18). This paradigm includes phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and symbolic interactionism.

- **paradigm of complexity theory:** An emerging paradigm in educational research that features autocatalytic, self-organizing systems; researchers

embrace "co-evolution resulting from competition to force development and cooperation for mutual survival," and *connectedness* (pp. 28-29).

- **critical theory**: Critical researchers are part of a transformative paradigm whose purpose is "not merely to understand situations and phenomena but to change them" and seek emancipation for the disempowered to "redress inequality and to promote individual freedoms within a democratic society" (p. 31).

Cohen, et al. (2011) further synthesize these four research paradigms into three research approaches:

- **quantitative:** surveys, experiments, post-positivist approaches.

- **qualitative:** phenomenological, ethnomethodological, existential.

- **critical:** Feminist, participatory, political.

The study outlined in this chapter draws upon interpretive, participatory, and critical lenses to investigate the nature of academic plans and analyze the interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres. It is best understood as a critically pragmatic multimethod study, requiring a brief discussion of mixed methods, pragmatism, and how the multimethod approach is related to, but different from, mixed methods.

### The Pragmatic Paradigm

Neither Lincoln, et al., (2011) nor Cohen, et al. (2011) include mixed methods as a distinct paradigm. Cohen et al.'s paradigm model (2011, p. 47) allows for research approaches that can integrate theories and methodologies from different research paradigms, but they are reluctant to deem mixed methods a paradigm because "it is not unusual for different methods to be used at different stages," therefore, mixed methods

"does not really have the novelty that seems to be claimed for it" (p. 26). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) disagree, unequivocally suggesting "there is now a trilogy of major research paradigms, qualitative research, quantitative research, and mixed methods research," (p. 24) which these two authors call *integrative research* as a broader and more inclusive label.

Mixed methods, or integrative research, is a "middle ground between philosophical dogmatism" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18). On one side are the quantitative purists, who "believe that social observations should be treated as entities in much the same way that physical scientists treat physical phenomena" (p. 14), whereas "qualitative purists (also called constructivists and interpretivists) reject what they call positivism," opting instead for the superiority of "constructivism, idealism, relativism, humanism, hermeneutics, and sometimes, postmodernism" (Johnson & Onweugbuzie, 2004, p. 14). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) propose that a mixed methods approach rejects the incompatibility thesis that the quantitative and qualitative paradigms cannot and should not be mixed. Mixed methods rejects positivism's absolutism by recognizing there are many subjective, human decisions made throughout the research process, broadening the narrow definition of science, as well as rejecting relativism's logically self-refuting argument which hinders "the development and use of systematic standards for judging research quality" (p. 16). The qualitative stance, at its most extreme, undermines itself and fails to recognize the numerous qualitative research strategies, such as member checking, triangulation, negative case sampling, pattern matching, and external audits capable of producing more rigorous, trustworthy, and objective qualitative research.

Mixed methods accepts that "value stances are often needed in research" (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2014, p. 16), and it is on this point where pragmatism becomes a fitting philosophical partner for mixed methods research because pragmatism values utility. William James (1902), one of the progenitors of pragmatism, writes that "only when our thought about a subject has found its rest in belief can our action on the subject firmly and safely begin. Beliefs, in short, are rules for action; and the whole function of thinking is but one step in the production of active habits" (p. 435). Beliefs and values guide research decisions. To embrace mixed methods as the third research paradigm is to recognize the flaws *and* the enduring value of the two dominant paradigms, with their different ontologies and epistemologies, for the purpose of cultivating research habits that "fit together the insights provided by qualitative and quantitative research into a workable solution" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 16).

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie suggest the heart of pragmatism is Dewey's comment that "in order to discover the meaning of the idea [we must] ask for its consequences" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). One of the consequences of pragmatism is that one's ontology and epistemology may, in the end, turn out to be less significant than the topic of inquiry. As Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) suggest, "if two ontological positions about the mind/body problem, for example, do not make a difference in how we conduct our research then the distinction is, for practical purposes, not very meaningful" (p. 17). Mixed methods "offers a practical and outcome-oriented method of inquiry that is based on action and leads, iteratively, to further action and the elimination of doubt" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). Cohen, et al., (2011) describe mixed methods as a "matter of fact approach to life, oriented to the solution of practical problems in the

practical world. It prefers utility, practical consequences and outcomes, and heurism over the singular pursuit of the most accurate representation of 'reality'" (p. 23). Practicing mixed methods research establishes a relationship between the two dominant paradigms, which Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) suggest now mutually recognize that the light of reason can vary across persons, perceptions are theory-laden, that the presence of the researcher affects the research process, and alternative explanations could always exist. Mixed methods allow for the possibility that the future may not resemble the past, suggesting that what is known about the structure of reality and its construction is limited and subject to change in light of further knowledge and alterations in the human condition.

The growth of mixed methods in educational research respects the dynamic and complex processes at work in almost every learning transaction, and with it:

> The need to use all possible methods to answer complex study research questions and the complexity of social phenomena that dictates the need to explore social phenomena from various facets and multiple perspectives. Indeed, by integrating quantitative and qualitative methods within a mixed methods approach, researchers can gain a more thorough understanding of the research problem under investigation and get more complete answers to the posed research questions. By conducting a mixed methods study, researchers can obtain statistical trends and patterns in the data and get individual perspectives that help explain these trends. In other words, by conducting a mixed methods study, researchers can address both confirmatory (verifying knowledge) and explorative

(generating knowledge) questions and get answers to the 'What?' 'How?' and

'Why?' (Ivankova, 2015, p. 4)

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie's (2004) term *integrative research* is preferred to mixed

methods because it resolves tension and reduces confusion surrounding mixed methods

and multimethod studies.

For many, mixed methods means exclusively the integration of quantitative and

qualitative research approaches, whereas *multimethod* studies may employ multiple

quantitative or qualitative approaches (Morse, 2003). Like Ivankova's (2015)

justification for mixed methods research, Seawright (2016) suggests "we are in the

middle of a boom time for multimethod research" because "well-designed and well-

executed multimethod research has inferential advantages over research relying on a

single method" (p. 42). This study employs word frequency counts (quantitative),

discourse analysis (interpretivist, critical), and content analysis of interviews

(participatory) to "transform key issues of descriptive and causal inference from matters

of speculative assertion into points of empirical debate" (Seawright, 2016, p. 42).

According to Seawright (2016), "a good multimethod research design will shape the

whole research process around testing and refining the assumptions on which the final

causal inference will depend" (p. 43), and similar to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie,

Seawright describes this as *integrative design.* Integrative designs have the potential to

be more influential because they offer a "more rigorous, more credible inference"

(Seawright, 2016, p. 49).

The pragmatic paradigm leverages both quantitative and qualitative research

approaches, dependent upon the situation, with the possible exception of critical inquiry.

Because pragmatism focuses on the utility of what works, it almost necessarily enhances the operation of the status quo, whereas critical research seeks to alter the power relationships in existence. Still, Cohen, et al.'s paradigm model (2011, p. 47) suggests that mixed methods is open to the inclusion and blending of critical approaches, as well. In its multimethod approach, this research study draws upon post-positivist and constructivist paradigms to conduct a multi-phase qualitative study, but both paradigms are orientated by Deweyan critical pragmatism.

**Deweyan Critical Pragmatism and the Wisdom of Experience**

At its simplest, a critical research approach orients one`s work to critiquing and changing society rather than solely trying to understand or explain it (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Critical theory is a "transformative paradigm" whose purpose is "not merely to understand situations and phenomena but to change them" by seeking emancipation for the disempowered to "redress inequality and to promote individual freedoms within a democratic society" (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 31). Critical theory "holds up to the lights of legitimacy and equality issues of repression, voice, ideology, power, participation, representation, inclusion, and interests" (Cohen, et al., 2011, p. 31) because "human nature operates in a world that is based on a struggle for power" leading to privilege and oppression (Lincoln, et al., p. 102). Chapters One and Two discussed issues of precarity and exclusion for contingent faculty and the marginalization of teaching and learning centres. The next section expands upon these themes of power and representation by contemplating the ideology of educational technology and the growth of a doubly invisible workforce through the lens of critical pragmatism.

This research study employs Franklin's four realities because my ontology (the nature of being) rests in an inter-related structure of reality, best described by the phrase that what affects one directly, affects all indirectly (King, 1967). This inter-related structure of reality is faithful to Franklin's (1990) observation that technology is a set of interconnected and complexly interrelated practices. As shown in Chapter One, the experience of alienation, precarity, and unpreparedness of part-time online faculty can and does negatively affect students and the quality of their academic programs. What affects faculty directly affects the students, and indirectly impacts the institution's reputation and the value and legitimacy of online education. All teaching and learning is inter-related, and in this interconnected reality, Franklin (1990) argues that knowledge must play a role in the improvement of the human condition.

### *Pragmatic Constructivism*

One tradition within the broad umbrella of critical theory is pragmatic constructivism (Brookfield, 2005). Pragmatic constructivism "rejects universals and generalizable truths and focuses instead on the variability of how people make interpretations of their experience" (p. 15). Pragmatic constructivism

> argues for an interactive, co-evolutionary relationship between mind and world, individual and environment: mind is a creative participant in mind-world interactions, individuals are agents in individual-society interactions, and those who do science are, by logical extension, as implicated in truth-making as the world which they try to objectively describe. This co-evolutionary process does not release cognition or selves from the environment's orbit, allowing them to

spin off freely through space, but rather situates them in a larger context in which

they are active and creative agents. (Lempert, 1997, p. 43)

Or, as Brookfield (2005) puts it, events happen to us, but experiences are constructed by

us (p.14). The mind and the world co-create each other, and the researcher exerts

influence within the context they live and move during the research process.

Pragmatic constructivism emphasizes the importance of continuous

experimentation to bring about better social forms (Brookfield, 2005, p. 14). Continuous

experimentation is emblematic of Deweyan critical pragmatism (Kadlec, 2006) and

expresses well the daily life of educational developers, who also exist in deliberative,

experimental, open-ended and contextual dimensions. Guided by these deliberative,

tentative, and contextual considerations, critical pragmatism is open to the use of

multiple methods to generate a more complete understanding of phenomena. The inter-

related, co-evolutionary relationship between mind and world allows thoughts to form

guiding actions, and interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres will "tap

into the critical potential of lived experience in a world defined by flux and contingency"

(Kadlec, 2008, p. 56). Continuous change and an unpredictable future describe both the

current state of higher education and that of online education. The onset of the COVID-

19 pandemic in March 2020 demonstrated this world of flux and contingency in a

radically immediate way. To flatten the curve and put the value of human life at its

centre, education needed to move online. To do so, it needed a new model of learning

that would use technology to help faculty and students be flexible, creative, and attentive

to their mental health. Education needed useful solutions to deal with disruption. This

research study is attuned to power inequalities in the use of contingent faculty, but it

looks at this issue critically to find actionable solutions that reduce or redress these inequalities in some small way.

### Deweyan Critical Pragmatism

Critical pragmatism accepts that knowledge can affect transitions and guide events, and "thus involves a necessary reference to the future" (Mahowald, p. 40). This study works to uncover the present state of professional development of online contingent faculty to create a social intelligence that may enlighten and strengthen future working conditions primarily through recognition of this faculty subgroup in academic plans and expanded professional development opportunities. The study analyzes academic strategy documents to see how professional development for online faculty is conceived, and interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres uncover current practices with a necessary reference to influencing future plans, strategies, and programs.

Deweyan critical pragmatism posits that critical thought and action "develops through a *process* of harnessing the potential of lived experience" (Kadlec, 2008, p. 56). Kadlec argues that Deweyan pragmatism "offers an ideal process through which our critical capacities may be honed and deployed in service of more meaningfully democratic practices, institutions, and policies" (2008, p. 56). At the heart of Deweyan critical pragmatism is recognition that the world is in flux, and it is "only through the active cultivation of 'social intelligence' that we adequately equip ourselves to navigate a perilous existence" (Kadlec, 2008, p. 59). Social intelligence arises from lived experience, and Kadlec (2008) argues that Dewey's critical pragmatism recognizes power imbalances do exist, but they are not fixed. Experience, especially the experience of "unalterable changefulness," can alter patterns of dominance.

Tapping into the critical potential of lived experience under conditions of

unalterable changefulness begins with the therapeutic recognition that there is no

such thing as a unified field of power directed entirely by stable and fixed

interests. The first implication here is that there are always new opportunities to

exploit cracks and fissures in various structurally entrenched forms of power.

(Kadlec, 2008, p. 69)

The email interviews explore how directors of teaching and learning centers might be

exploiting these cracks and fissures to shift power relationships. These new power

relationships will not create an ideal society; rather, Dewey grounds hopes in the real

world for change to be practicable. Critical workers in education must "extract the

desirable qualities that exist and criticize the undesirable features to suggest

improvement" (Dewey, 1944, p. 83). Extracting the desirable and rejecting the

undesirable is the working process of generating *social intelligence*.

Social intelligence "sees the irredeemable instability of our world as a hard fact

that must be faced through concerted and often agonizing effort" (Kadlec, 2008, p. 64).

For teaching and learning centres, especially, the pandemic presented the opportunity to

exert concerted and agonizing effort in a time of fluctuating budgetary outlooks,

disruptions in technology, sudden changes in academic leadership, and a pandemic

leading to an unplanned, unpredictable, and unprecedented growth of online education.

The pandemic created fissures and instability, and the Educational Developers Caucus

Centre Leaders meetings is one example of a connected network that deliberately created

social intelligence, which is "merely our best shot at navigating a radically contingent

existence" (Kadlec, 2008, p. 70). Exploring the lived experience of educational

developers working with online education and educational technology also provides an ideal audience to build a *confluence*.

> Literally, confluence means a gathering or flowing together at a juncture, and
>
> from the perspective of critical pragmatism this junction should be a common
>
> problem around which alternative perspectives may be voiced and heard. In a
>
> world defined by flux and contingency, the ability to bring alternative viewpoints
>
> to bear on a common problem is crucial not only because it allows the
>
> opportunity for the expansion of social intelligence, it is also vital because it
>
> inspires a taste for that kind of engagement. . . The view of power implied in this
>
> notion of confluence takes seriously power relations while recognizing that those
>
> power relations are far more unstable, dynamic, and even internally contradictory
>
> than totalizing views of power may admit. (Kadlec, 2008, p. 75)

As covered both in Chapter One and Chapter Two, professional development for online faculty is a common problem with many emerging perspectives, and educational technology and online education are defined by flux and contingency. Bringing alternative views to bear through interviews creates a confluence recognizing that teaching and learning centres can and do exert power in these unstable and dynamic times. By comparing academic plans with the experience of educational developers, internal contradictions may surface between strategy and practice, and between the ideology of educational technology and the experience of the end-user.

Pragmatic constructivism views experience as a co-evolutionary process where individual agents possess influence and whose actions sculpt the larger context. Reality is

relational and established by a language-based mind-world interaction. Dewey's philosophy of experience is similar; Dewey outlines a dual and dynamic nature of culturally inherited knowledge and knowledge forged in experience.

> We live from birth to death in a world of persons and things which in large measure is what it is because of what has been done and transmitted from previous human activities.  When this fact is ignored, experience is treated as if it were something which goes on exclusively inside an individual's body and mind. It ought not be necessary to say that experience does not occur in a vacuum. There are sources outside an individual which give rise to experience. It is constantly fed by these springs. (Dewey, 1997, p. 40)

The ideology of technology (Veletsianos & Moe, 2017) is culturally transmitted, and not all previous human activities have been positive. Those alive today inherit a complicated legacy, and this outpouring is like a spring runoff; it contains both life-giving water as well as flotsam, jetsam, and detritus. It takes great effort and wise discernment to see exactly how and in what ways these springs structure the understanding of human life. Franklin (1990) describes technology as both fish and water, icing and cake, means and end, and when seen in this way, the ideology of technological progress gives rise to the experience of human purpose in both good and bad ways.

Deweyan critical pragmatism suggests experience is framed by culture – the sources outside an individual surround and direct experience. The direction of the culture caused Dewey to become concerned about the quality of deliberation and discourse in contemporary democracy, leading him to argue that "the conditions of the discussion

may indirectly help improve the quality of the communications in different contexts"
(Pappas, 2012, p. 59). Deliberative democracy, according to Dewey, is not a mental
process, "but something we do that requires the learning and operation of certain
embodied habits" (Pappas, 2012, p. 61). Deliberative democracy is an active will.
Experience does not occur in a vacuum, and even though past decisions and outside
forces frame the theatre for action, individuals hold some power to co-evolve a new
reality, and discussion is one such means for doing so. The email interviews should be
seen in this light as a form of deliberative democracy that hold potential to improve the
quality of communications in other contexts.

The case of professional development gives the abstract mind-world interaction a
concrete example by creating a congruence of interests. As Dewey states,

It is not true that there is no common interest in such an organization between the
governed and the governors. The authorities in command must make some appeal
to the native activities of the subjects, must call some of their powers into play.
(Dewey, 1994, p. 84)

A culture of power within an organization is visible in embodied habits of operation, but
these can and do change, especially when a common interest exists. Administrators,
educational developers, and faculty all have a common interest in faculty development,
and this should be an area where their separate interests are "mutually penetrating"
(Dewey, 1944, p. 84) because they produce strong alignment between mission, purpose,
and role. The mission of the institution to provide quality education aligns with the role

of teaching and learning centres to support faculty to improve teaching practice, which

corresponds with the faculty identity to be an effective educator.

## A Modern Critical Pragmatism Using Franklin and Selwyn

Ursula Franklin and Neil Selwyn provide relevant updates to Dewey's critical

pragmatism as it relates to the world of educational technology. Similar to Dewey's call

for a new discourse, Franklin (1990) describes these powerful springs that shape reality

by saying, "technological rationales have very much the authority of religious doctrine,

including the notion that the laity is unfit to question the doctrinal content and practice"

of technology (p. 44). As a result of technological orthodoxy, what is needed is a new

public discourse focusing on justice, fairness, and equality in the global sense. "Once

technological practices are questioned on a principled basis and, if necessary, rejected on

that level, new practical ways of doing what needs to be done will evolve" (Franklin,

1990, p. 123). Technology must be questioned critically to develop new practical ways of

doing what needs to be done. To find these new solutions, attention must be paid to the

language surrounding technology because "much clarification can be gained by focusing

on language as an expression of values and priorities" (p. 124). Seeing beyond or within

these external forces, and rejecting them if appropriate, enables the formation of new

pragmatic approaches.

Selwyn (2014) offers a similar conception of critical pragmatism when applied to

educational technology. Like Franklin, Selwyn (2014) observes educational technology

is characterized by celebratory discourses and boosterist claims. Educational technology

is a matter of "faith as well as fact" (Selwyn, 2014, p. 10) that paint technology as a

thoroughly positive project, but technology in education is "never a completely predictable or certain affair," and research should focus "beyond questions of how technology *could* and *should* be used, and instead ask questions about how technology is actually being used in practice" (Selwyn, 2014, p. 15). Care needs to be taken "to not associate digital technology too readily with discourses of inevitable progress, transformation, and the allure of 'the new'" (Selwyn, 2014, p. 17). This is, according to Selwyn, the ideological function of educational technology.

The ideology of educational technology (the constructed reality) imposes upon the dominated a discourse of liberation at the same time it further oppresses them through the use of "carefully selected phrases" describing new technological advances that create images of "chummy communities" of adventurous users (Franklin, 1990, p. 102). The ideology of educational technology's supreme benefit is characterized by a belief in the primacy of the individual and their personal entrepreneurism within the gig academy (Kezar, et al, 2019). Online contingent faculty provide flexible labour processes for emerging markets and support increasingly flexible patterns of production and consumption (Selwyn, 2014). Cognitive capital is "intellectual, communicative, symbolic and emotional in its substance, and therefore concerned with working with forms of language and communication that can be digitalized" (Selwyn, 2014, p. 30). This new form of cognitive labour is autonomous and creatively employs networked and cooperative forms of working to support just-in-time production for mobile capital, mobile users, and niche markets. The "employees' enhanced autonomy and initiative as well as the establishment of other 'freedoms'" tends to "overlook the role of all these

forms of technology in reconfiguring education into primarily economic forms" (Selwyn, 2014, p. 128).

Dewey conceived reflection as a deliberate slowing down between thought and action (Rodgers, 2002, p. 852) so that the role of technology is not overlooked. Franklin (1990) observes that technology claims to liberate at the same time it imprisons, so while post-Fordist conceptions of labour may glamorize academics as autonomous and creative intellectuals, it may do so to exploit these very traits. In a similar way, Selwyn (2014) urges those working with educational technology to "think beyond ideology" (p. 147) and develop alternative forms of understanding that "can begin to point towards concrete possibilities of action" (p. 147). This slowing down to think beyond technology is akin to generating *social intelligence*, and Selwyn argues that more researchers need to engage in the politics of the ideological deconstruction of digital education, which this research study strives to do, in part, by analyzing academic strategy documents. The email interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres also support Selwyn's argument that scholarship in educational technology should be grounded in the real experiences of those working with educational technology to develop "pragmatic, achievable and grounded interventions that center on the actions and practices of people working within the area of educational technology" (Selwyn, 2014, p. 147). This expressed well the spirit of critical pragmatism.

Teaching and learning centres often exist at the fulcrum between academic strategy and faculty implementation. They serve the interests of the institution by supporting faculty to educate students, and their experiences shed much light on

technology as a contested space. The interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres in Canada's colleges and institutes seek to recognize deep differences and conflicts of interest through "testimony" and "storytelling" (Kadlec, 2008, p. 76). Kadlec (2008) suggests that if the research design's purpose is to gather diverse perspectives, "there is no reason why critical differences among people need be washed over and eclipsed;" testimony and storytelling should be viewed as "legitimate expressions of deliberation that build our civic identities" (2008, p. 76).

This inter-related ontological, epistemological, and theoretical orientation pays attention to symbols (academic plans) and stories (interviews) as the data to be gathered and analyzed. The research design thinks beyond technology to develop and collect pragmatic and achievable solutions using learning technologies to serve this emerging class of ideal cognitive labourers – contingent faculty who primarily teach online.

**Conception of Power**

This study employs Deweyan critical pragmatism to criticize undesirable features of the current power structures and suggest improvements to postsecondary education through the strategic recognition of contingent online faculty and their professional development needs. Pragmatic constructivism suggests that the researcher's mind-world interactions possess some ability to influence the environment, and it is necessary, therefore, to briefly outline how Dewey's conception of power informs this research approach (Figure 12).

**Figure 12**

*The Author's Conception of Power*
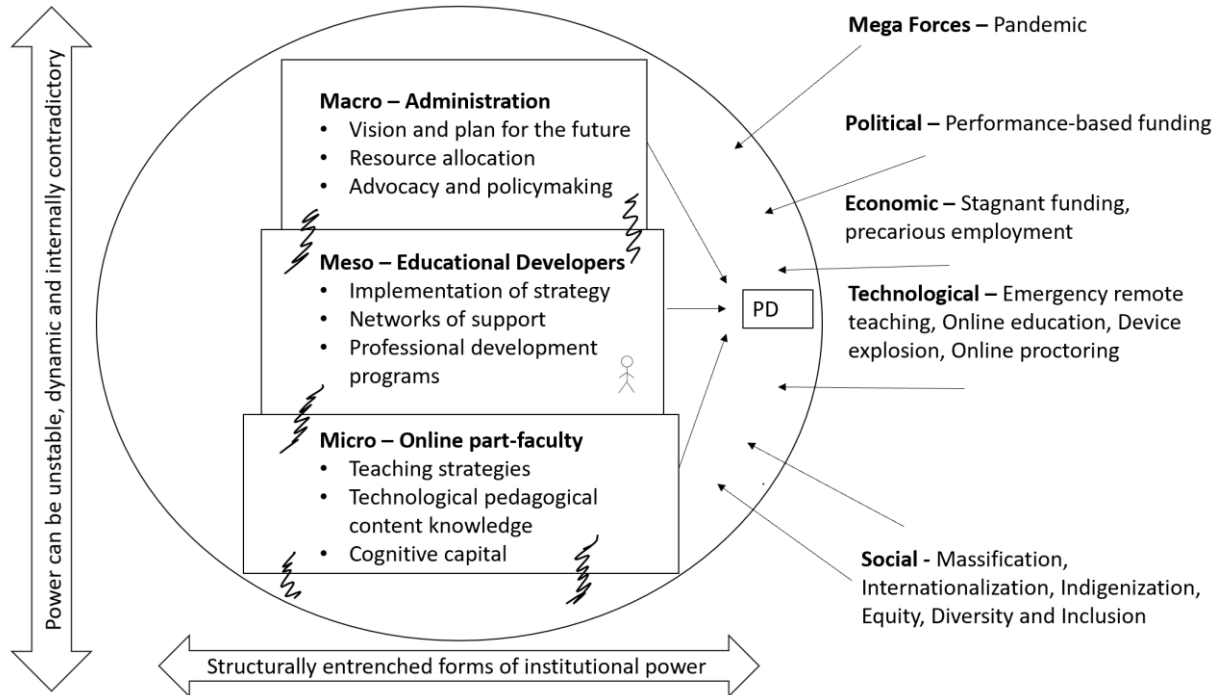


*Note:* The world exists in a state of unalterable changefulness, flux, and contingency. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified and accelerated other political, economic, social and technological trends impacting postsecondary education, creating fissures and cracks that hold the potential to destabilize (or consolidate) structurally entrenched, but internally contradictory, forms of power.

Postsecondary institutions operate within a larger frame where external pressures (the pandemic, performance-based funding, and funding stagnation) inform and limit the sphere of action. This unalterable changefulness and irredeemable instability can alter patterns of dominance (Kadlec, 2006), and these external pressures are likely to create fissures and cracks that can be exploited through "bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 163). Within any postsecondary institution,

power is structurally entrenched and unequally distributed. Executives hold greater influence over organizational vision, resource allocation, and advocacy with policymakers. But most postsecondary institutions also have faculty associations and other unionized employees that can and do exercise power. Slowly shifting patterns of dominance, such as Indigenization and the call for greater equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in postsecondary education after tumultuous racial events in the United States and Canada stand in contrast to totalizing views of power.

As stress fractures emerge, educational developers can exploit these fissures and cracks through their formal influence through strategic planning processes and resource allocation. They can also exert influence through networks of support with other administrators and faculty (Roxa & Martensson, 2009; Roxa, et al., 2011), highlighting that power relations can be dynamic and internally contradictory. Professional development is conceived as an activity that provides a congruence of interest between the mission of the institution, the role and function of teaching and learning centres, and the faculty who identify with the desire to provide high-quality instruction. As the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted, seismic global events can elevate the influence and prestige of some units, like teaching and learning centres, at the same time it may intensify existing pressures, such as increased tuition, performance-based funding, and decreased public funding.

Having now covered the problem presented by the growing use of contingent faculty and online education, the extant research and research gaps involved in providing professional development to part-time online faculty, and the theoretical and

epistemological orientation of the study, it is now time to detail how the research design

aligns with a critically pragmatic approach and fills in part of the many research gaps.

**Overview of the Research Design**

The questions this two-phase multimethod qualitative research study seeks to

answer are: *How are online faculty and their professional development represented in*

*current Canadian postsecondary academic plans? How are the professional development*

*needs of contingent online faculty being served by Canadian teaching and learning*

*centres? What gaps, if any, exist between the projected reality of academic plans and the*

*extended reality of teaching and learning centres in Canada?*

Franklin's (1990) *technology as practice* guides the approach: technology is best

studied in a limited context because redemptive technologies, or those technologies that

work precisely by reintroducing people into the decision-making process, are most likely

to emerge from context-specific studies carried out at the micro level. To account for

context, this research study focuses on member institutions of Colleges and Institutes

Canada (CICan). CICan is a national organization representing publicly supported

colleges, Cegeps and polytechnics in Canada. There is tremendous diversity within

CICan's membership, but members share a commitment to quality education and skills

development for all Canadians "as a means to maximize labour participation and support

Canada's prosperity" (Colleges & Institutes Canada, n.d.).

CICan membership institutions have been selected for several reasons. First, the

shared institutional focus on skills development and labour participation diminishes, to

some extent, the vital and important discussion about education as a public or a private

good (Selwyn, 2014). Because colleges and polytechnics in CICan embrace the role of education-for-employment, discussion of neoliberalism and marketization (Selwyn, 2014; Wall, et al., 2014) plays a less important role. Secondly, in colleges and polytechnics, the distinction between tenure and non-tenured faculty is often less of a factor than it is in the university setting, though there still exists the division between full-time and part-time employment. Third, colleges and polytechnics tend to place a greater emphasis on teaching rather than research (Grabove, et al., 2012). Perhaps the most important reason for their selection is that colleges and polytechnics offer certificates, diplomas, and degrees with a focus on undergraduate educational attainment. By selecting membership institutions of CICan, this study directs its attention on undergraduate and continuing education credentials.

CICan's membership reflects Canada's diversity, and member institutions include First Nations Technical Institute, Yukon College, Nunavut Arctic College, and several Cegeps in Quebec. Some CICan members also belong to Universities Canada, such as Kwantlen Polytechnic University and Vancouver Island University, but most Canadian universities are not members of CICan. The document analysis investigates 17 current academic plans from Canadian postsecondary institutions that are member institutions of Colleges and Institutes Canada. The email interviews with 12 directors of teaching and learning centres come from institutions who are members of CICan and possess academic plans covering the current period and immediate future. The broadest possible diversity and geographic representation was sought to create a confluence of alternative perspectives and voices to the common problem of providing meaningful professional development opportunities for online contingent faculty. By providing a snapshot of

plans for the immediate future, the research design contributes a more comprehensive

exploration of how institutions recognize the strategic importance of professional

development and provide support for this growing subgroup of faculty.

The following sections outline the details for both phases of the research

approach.

**Graphic Depiction of Work Plan and Conceptual Framework**

**Figure 13**

*Graphic Depiction of a Two-Stage Multimethod Research Approach*

Phase One – The Projected Reality

Documentary analysis of 12-14
Canadian academic plans

Methodology
- Deductive thematic analysis
- Inductive thematic analysis
- Bolman & Deal's Four Frames

Phase Two – The Extended Reality

Email interviews with 12-14
Directors of Teaching and
Learning Centres in Canada

Methodology
- Content analysis
- Duus's Four Paradigms

Integrated analysis of Phase One
and Phase Two to see and define
the gap between the projected
reality of academic plans and the
extended reality of experience

*Note:* This two-stage multimethod study is comprised of two sequential phases of qualitative

data collection and analysis, concluded with an integrated analysis.

Seawright (2016) suggests there is currently a boom in multimethod research, but

many have "no serious interaction at any level of detail" (2016, p. 47). In this study, there

is significant integration between phase one and phase two. The individual phases of this multimethod study seek to map a gap, if it exists, between the projected reality of the future as it is expressed in academic plans and the extended reality as it is experienced by directors of Canadian teaching and learning centres (Figure 13).

**Figure 14**

*Conceptual Framework*
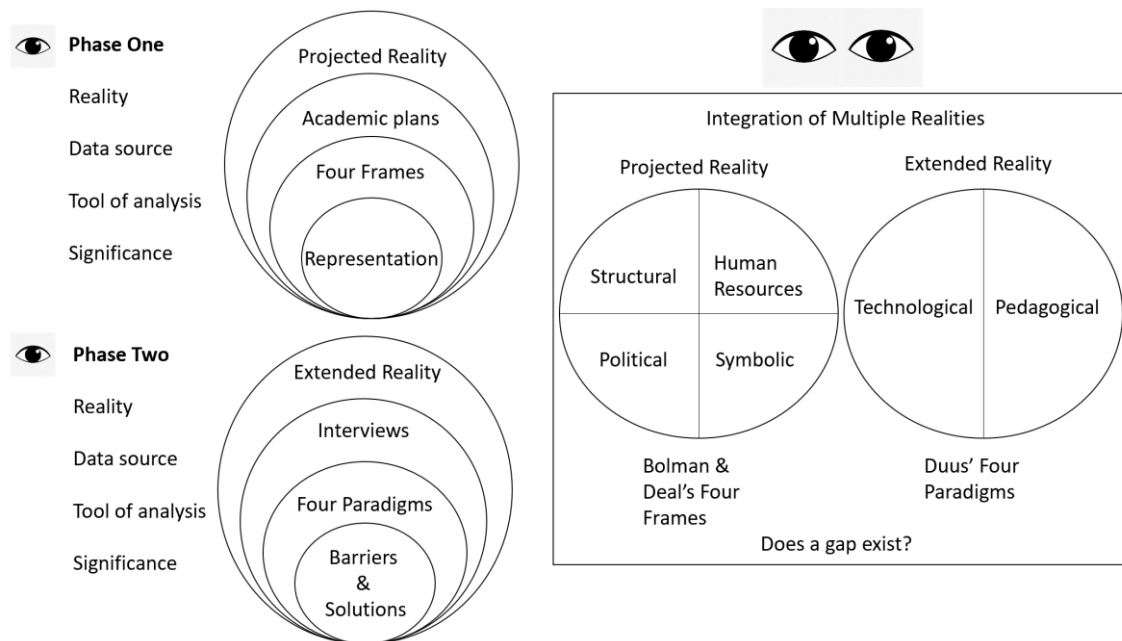


*Note:* This diagram presents a detailed view of the research plan. On the left, Phase One and Phase Two are monofocal approaches. Phase One uses Bolman and Deal's Four Frame model to explore academic plans to find representation of part-time and online faculty. Phase Two applies Duus's Four Ideal-Type Paradigms for e-learning to frame barriers and solutions. The bifocal integration occurs afterwards.

The justification for using a multimethod approach is guided by the research question and has been established throughout the problem statement, literature review,

epistemological orientation, and discussion of Franklin's four interconnected realities. To study these "multiple realities" of educational development, multiple methods are required (Figure 14). Phase two employs Duus' four e-learning paradigms (explained in Chapter Two) to uncover tensions between the technological and pedagogical paradigms, and phase one employs Bolman and Deal's (1997) four-frame model for understanding organizations, requiring a brief explanation.

**The Four-Frame Model**

This study examines the professional development of online educators in Canada as a contested space to explore what gaps, tensions, or conflicts may exist between academic strategy documents (the *projected reality*) and the experience of teaching and learning centre directors (the *extended reality*). To help map the purpose of professional development and the tensions that exist, Bolman and Deal's (1997) four-frame model for understanding organizational behaviour will be applied to analyze the findings. Bolman and Deal's (1997) four-frame model for understanding organizational behaviour includes four major frames that provide a useful guide for analyzing academic plans and the tensions involved in providing professional development programs (Figure 15).

The *structural frame* refers to the organizational architecture, often hierarchical and rules-oriented, but it does not have to be. New design structures promoting flexibility, participation and quality are emerging to handle the pressures caused by technology, customer expectations, and workforce dynamics (Bolman & Deal, 1997). An illustrative example of conflicts within the structural frame can be found in Harrison's (2016) policy analysis of e-learning in Ontario is postsecondary collaboration.

**Figure 15**

*Bolman and Deal's Four-Frame Model for Understanding Organizations*
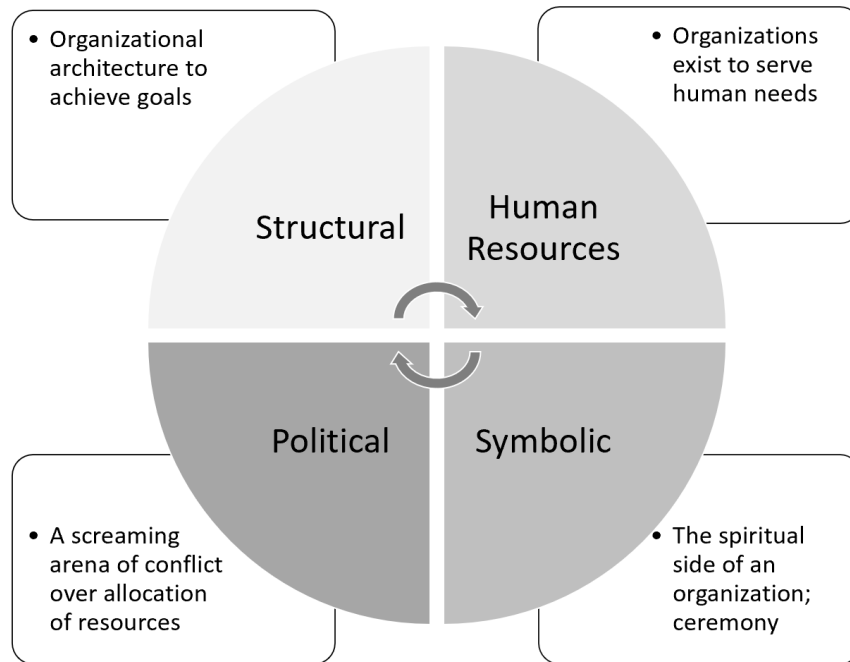


Collaborative services and shared resources, especially for small schools, appeared as a persistent theme in Harrison's (2016) policy analysis, but collaboration was often ineffective because even though provincial governments wish to see collaboration within the postsecondary sector, institutions are in direct competition with each for students; the provincial structures actually favour competition between institutions rather than fostering collaboration amongst them.

Within a single organization, the structural frame assumes organizations seek to achieve established goals and objectives, such as those expressed within academic plans, and that appropriate structures must be designed to fit an organization's circumstances including its goals, technology, and environment. Typical structural tensions include

those surrounding knowledge, skill, or product (online versus face-to-face), customers or clients (full-time faculty versus part-time faculty or online instructors), and process. Process is an important dimension because the shift to a production mode of teaching and learning has led to the "unbundling" of learning where course development is separate from delivery, delivery is separate from course development, assessment is separate from delivery, and certification is separate from assessment (Contact North, 2016). This unbundling may lead to divisive or ineffective governance structures and processes for the development of online education.

**Table 1.1**

*Overview of Bolman and Deal's Four-Frame Model*

| | *Frame* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Structural* | *Human Resource* | *Political* | *Symbolic* |
| Metaphor for organization | Factory or machine | Family | Jungle | Carnival, temple, theatre |
| Central concepts | Rules, roles, goals, policies, technology, environment | Needs, skills, relationships | Power, conflict, competition, organizational jockeying | Culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, heroes |
| Image of leadership | Social architecture | Empowerment | Advocacy | Inspiration |
| Basic leadership challenge | Attune structure to task, technology, environment | Align organizational and human needs | Develop agenda and power base | Create faith, beauty, meaning |

The *human resources frame* accounts for reciprocal need where "individuals find meaningful and satisfying work, and organizations get the talent and energy they need to succeed" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 103). The human resources frame assumes that organizations exist to serve human needs, and that when the "fit between individual and system is poor, one or both suffer" (p.102). The human resources frame concentrates on the assumption that successful organizations align individual and organizational needs, and the human resource frame advocates for "treating the workforce as an investment rather than a cost" (p.117). Professional development programs for online contingent faculty are an investment in both the growth and quality of online education and online educators, but cost implications and institutional infrastructures remain ongoing tensions (Harrison, 2016).

The *political frame* "views organizations as alive and screaming political arenas that host a complex web of individual and group interests" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p.163) where there are enduring differences in beliefs and perceptions of reality. Online education is a contested space where one of the most important decisions involves the allocation of scarce resources in a new era of performance-based funding and pandemic-induced austerity, and conflict plays a central role in organizational dynamics. Power is the most important resource, and goals and decisions emerge from "bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position" (p.163).

As the conflict between the Council of Ontario Universities and CAUT regarding the *Faculty at Work* (2018) report demonstrates, conflict takes place within, without, and across organizational settings. As another example, Harrison (2016) uncovered a polarization along Ontario's north-south axis regarding equitable access to resources to

support online education (p. 157). Understanding how online directors of teaching and learning centres participate in the academic planning process and how they compete for and allocate scarce departmental resources will illuminate enduring tensions and the complex web interests.

The *symbolic frame* assumes life is ambiguous and uncertain, and that what will happen next is a puzzle. To reduce the ambiguity of the puzzle, "people create symbols to resolve confusion, increase predictability, provide direction, and anchor hope and faith" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 216).

> The *symbolic frame* represents the spiritual side of institutions and maintains that an organization and its culture are inherently linked. Symbols permeate our social lives and to fully acknowledge the workings of an organization and to make sense of organizational life one must acknowledge that these symbolic actions convey meaning beyond the obvious. People seek to make meaning out of life by incorporating the use of symbols, myths, rituals, ceremonies and traditions. From this symbolic perspective, cultural norms, values and symbols unite organizations, connect people, and help to bring about desired goals.
> (Timmerman & Mulvihill, 2017, p. 443)

Academic planning is a sort of ritual and ceremony, a form of organizational theater. Postsecondary institutions are always responding to external pressures and events, and what Bolman and Deal (1997) say about all organizations is particularly true for postsecondary institutions; "they are constantly buffeted by larger social, political, and economic trends" which makes "maintaining legitimacy and support in the eyes of multiple constituencies" important to "reflect contemporary beliefs and expectations" (p.

235). Academic plans are symbols signaling "all is well or improvement is just around the corner" (p. 243), and they provide insight into contemporary beliefs about what improvements need to happen to maintain legitimacy and respond to the "winds of change" (Harrison, 2016).

Bolman and Deal's four-frame model provides guiding questions for this study's exploration of the academic plans and the email interviews.

1. **structural frame**: What new educational development design structures may be emerging to handle the pressures caused by the growth of online education and the changing workforce dynamics to support online educators?

2. **human resources frame**: How are postsecondary organizations aligning organizational needs with the needs of online educators? What investments in professional development programs are taking place for online educators?

3. **political frame**: How are teaching and learning centres competing for and allocating scarce resources to meet the needs of different and emerging faculty groups? What conflicts are they experiencing regarding online education, and how are they negotiating and bargaining to meet the goals of their institutions?

4. **symbolic frame**: How do the academic plans maintain legitimacy and support in the eyes of multiple constituencies and reflect contemporary beliefs and expectations about online education? What obvious and unobvious meanings are being conveyed in academic plans about the growth online education and faculty development?

The phase one document analysis explores these symbolic planning documents to understand the stated strategic purpose of professional development.

**Phase One – The Projected Reality of Academic Plans**

**Document Analysis**

Silverman (2013) recommends one should make a "mental leap" (p. 1) and view the familiar as if one was a stranger in a strange land. A document analysis of academic plans for colleges and institutes in Canada covering the current and immediate future provides that opportunity. Document analysis "is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents" (Bowen, 2009, p. 27), which can be seen as social facts. These "social facts" (Bowen, 2009, p. 27) are examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009). The procedure of document analysis entails selecting, finding and making sense of the documents by extracting excerpts, quotations or entire passages that are then organized into major themes. The qualitative researcher is expected to draw upon multiple sources so that a confluence of evidence breeds credibility (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis provides an efficient, cost-effective, unobtrusive way to investigate trends and changes in postsecondary education. Documents provide a means for tracking dominant themes and conceptions of change.

Rivas (2012) suggests that "it is useful to combine deductive and inductive coding" (p. 371), and the plans will be analyzed first using deductive content analysis. Deductive coding is appropriate when the researcher has a general idea of what they are looking for and can use broad, deductively determined codes to identify data, and then

apply inductive codes to explore the content in greater detail (Rivas, 2012). Core

elements of the deductive framework will include faculty development (and its

permutations), online education, assessment of student learning, and quality (along with

all variant terminology). Any mention of part-time, sessional, contingent, and contract

faculty will also form a core component of the deductive analysis. The deductive content

analysis will outline common academic plan elements and also provide some

consideration of the relationship of codes to one another and how they intersect and

interplay within the document.

Content analysis was a method "originally developed to analyze mass media" and

is now still associated with the quantitative analysis of communications (Prior, 2014, p.

377). Selected word counts and code proximity (collocation) provide the opportunity for

comparisons within and across documents, enabling data visualization opportunities

through concept maps and spider diagrams highlighting textual relationships and node

frequencies (Rivas, 2012). Prior (2014) argues that word counts and word proximities

often fail to catch intricacies, however, and she highlights the difficulty in dissociating

content analysis from discourse analysis. To rectify this limitation, Prior (2014) suggests

content analysis is "easily merged with various forms of discourse analysis" (p. 377),

such as political discourse analysis, to make meaning.

Discourse analysis can be divided into two major approaches: *language-in-use*

and *sociopolitical* (Miles, 2010). *Language-in-use* is concerned with the micro

dimensions of language whereas *sociopolitical* approaches are most commonly used in

the social and human sciences (Miles, 2010, p. 368). This study orients towards the

sociopolitical approach of discourse analysis because its concern is centered upon how language forms and influences the social context, and how textual constructions maintain the social context (Miles, 2010). Or, in terms of Franklin's multiple realities, the sociopolitical approach examines how the *constructed* and *projected realities* of academic plans form the social fabric that holds the organizational culture together (Franklin, 1990).

To analyze the documents, the researcher cannot simply "lift" words or passages and throw them into the report (Bowen, 2009). The researcher must take account of the broader educational, social, political and economic relationships that explain the meaning of the documents (this has been accomplished in the opening two chapters). Discourse analysis does not see language as a neutral medium for communicating information (Tonkiss, 2012), but instead views language as a tool for the construction of social reality, and therefore as a tool of power. The discourse of academic plans represents then, not just an institution's strategic future, but an exercise in power (Cohen, et al., 2011). Discourse analysis always involves power (the conception of power discussed earlier), and

> the role of power in a social context is connected to the past and the current context, and can be interpreted differently by different people due to various personal backgrounds, knowledge, and power positions. Therefore there is not one correct interpretation, but a range of appropriate and possible interpretations. (Miles, 2010, p. 370)

Even though discourse analysis provides a range of possible interpretations, replicability can be made possible through explicit procedures, and validity must "survive in the face of independently available evidence of what they claim" (Krippendorff, 2010, p. 233), meaning the answer to the research questions must be inferred from evidence within the available texts. The researcher should demonstrate transparency in analysis by presenting the documents and the coding decisions as clearly as possible (see Appendix D for a table of coding notes).

In discourse analysis, words represent ideas and experiences, and because academic plans are designed to be succinct summations of priorities, hard choices need to be made regarding word selection and organization. Sutherland (2016) suggests that discourse analysis must first consider the text itself, the meaning of the words, along with thoughts about the producer, the context and the textual metafunction. This study looks most closely for representation of part-time and online faculty, the purpose of professional development, and then it contemplates the language of academic plans for indication of language that represents the ideology of technology as a celebratory discourse as described by Franklin (1990) and Selwyn (2014). Looking at these mundane objects is important. In the words of van Dijk (2006),

> Who controls public discourse, at least partly controls the public mind, so that discourse analysis of such control is at the same time inherently a form of political analysis. In other words, it is not so much directly the social and political economy, but rather the symbolic economy of language and discourse that controls the minds of political actors and hence their actions (p. 44).

The document analysis explores this symbolic economy of language to deconstruct how the projected future is conceived.

One of the potential forms of bias in documentary analysis is that documents such as academic plans are imbued with the opinions and perspectives of policy makers and administrators, and the documents may privilege a top-down view of education (Cohen, et al., 2011). Documents, because they are embedded in social processes, will likely bias against disenfranchised people, such as contingent faculty, who may not be involved in the strategic planning process and not part of the creation and dissemination of the academic plans (Miller & Alvarado, 2005). As mentioned in Chapter One, contingent faculty have been referred to as invisible, and invisibility is way of expressing a lack of self-representation and the experience of precarity (Butler, 2018). This endemic bias necessitated the second phase of the research design.

### Sampling, Data Collection and Analysis

The sample of academic plans were collected using a mixture of convenience and purposive sampling. Convenience sampling chooses the nearest individuals until an adequate sample size has been obtained (Cohen, et al., 2011). In this study, convenience largely means that the academic plans come from member institutions of CICan that were publicly available online. One of the benefits of using publicly available documents is that they are accessible via the web and do not require research ethics approval. The academic plans, in addition to being available, must also meet the other criteria for selection, and so the convenience sample is conjoined to purposive sampling. In purposive sampling, researchers "hand-pick" (Cohen, et al., 2011, p. 156) the cases based

on their judgment of the typicality to build up a sample satisfactory to their needs. The sample of academic plans will:

- come from member institutions of CICan that possess teaching and learning centres,

- commence after 2016 and/or cover the immediate future period, ideally extending to 2020 or beyond, and

- represent the greatest variety and diversity in the Canadian postsecondary sector.

On this final point, the ideal distribution of the purposive sample of academic plans would come from Alberta (2), British Columbia (2), Manitoba (2), New Brunswick (1), Newfoundland and Labrador (1), Northwest Territories (1), Nova Scotia (2), Nunavut (1), Ontario (2), Prince Edward Island (1), Quebec (2), Saskatchewan (2), and Yukon (1). Geographic diversity based on province was one lens to account for several other forms of diversity, such as size of institution, demographics, and the difference between urban and rural institutions.

Substitutes were found when it was not possible to fill the ideal distribution outlined above. The size of the institution was also a consideration in selection. The research commenced with an assumption that an adequate volume of documents would be identified, but because some provinces and territories only contain one or two CICan institutions, there were gaps in the final assembly (see Appendix A – List of Academic Plans). All gaps were noted in the limitations to establish transparency. Once the academic plans were selected, they were analyzed using the deductive and inductive coding approach outlined in the prior section. NVivo was used to aid in the word

frequency and collocation for the deductive and inductive analyses. The plans were lightly coded to see if *professional development* and *online faculty* were present. Axial codes, codes given to a group of words with similar meanings (Cohen, et al., 2012), were assigned to the purpose or purposes of professional development, such as *pedagogical innovation* and *technology-enabled learning*. Selective codes operate at a higher level of abstraction than axial codes and are useful in telling the main story line (Cohen, et al., 2012). Bolman and Deal's (1997) four-frames supplied the selective codes so that the hierarchy was shallow and flexible.

**Phase Two – The Extended Reality of Directors of Teaching and Learning Centres**

**Methodology and Analysis for Email Interviews**

The email interviews explore the *vernacular reality* of educational developers to build an *extended reality*, creating a confluence of social intelligence regarding professional development offerings for online faculty. Email interviews are one of the main types of internet-based qualitative research methods, along with online synchronous interviews, online asynchronous interviews, and virtual focus groups (Meho, 2006). Email interviews are unlike e-mail surveys because they are semi-structured in nature and involve multiple email exchanges between the interviewer and the interviewee over an extended period. James and Busher (2006) conducted two separate studies using email interviews by sending one question at a time so that the interviews were conducted over months, but it would be possible to give interviewees choice as to how the interview is conducted.

The information shared with the researcher via email is not shared with, viewed by, or influenced by other participants. The benefits of email interviews include cost and efficiency. Research participants have time to offer meaningful responses in a format they are familiar with at a time that fits conveniently into their workflow. As James and Busher (2006) note, however, email interviews may take longer to conduct, but this turned out to be highly beneficial during the pandemic period as the situation evolved over the course of a year, confirming another one of email interviews' benefits; they discovered that asynchronocity was an attractive and creative interview method because it promoted a shift in power (James & Busher, 2006, p. 414). Email interviews allow participants to exercise greater control over when they respond, and they find it less stressful that they can offer answers when it suits their schedule. Because email interviews are text-based, the data can also be easily input into language analysis software such as NVivo. The interviews were manually reviewed to develop general categories using line by line or sentence coding (Rivas, 2012) to identify general themes, and then further analyzed using NVivo.

Interviews generate knowledge from humans through conversations (Cohen, et al., 2011), and it is therefore methodologically consistent with Dewey's, Franklin's and Selwyn's focus on experience, where knowledge and social intelligence are built through deliberation, reflection, and the construction of explanations. If diverse voices are brought to bear on a common problem, this creates a confluence of social intelligence. During the email exchange, the interviewer can probe answers and explore responses dealing with complex and deep issues. Interviews are regarded as the gold standard of qualitative research, but in-person interviews can be expensive (in time) and they can be

inconvenient for respondents. In-person interviews may also make geographically diverse participation less likely. In the COVID period, they would have been unsafe, illegal, and impractical.

In addition to logistical challenges, many in-person interview participants indicate nervousness, an apprehension about being interviewed, and they are conscious that they have a role to provide useful information (Sedgwick & Spiers, 2009). Email interviews may reduce this apprehension that they will say something regretful because interviewees have time to plan their responses. Even though interviewees remain fully conscious they are an object of analysis (Kaun, 2010), interviews still fulfill the purpose of revealing the way people make sense of their everyday life, including their social world and of each other (Cohen, et al., p. 411). Email interviews are an appropriate tool when investigating the daily experience of professional development for online faculty as contested space because online interviews can be a successful method for capturing narrative accounts of participants' experiences that are full of in-depth reflection and understanding of professional identities (James and Busher, 2006).

In an in-person interview, the interviewer needs to establish rapport and be ready in case some subjects tap into emotionally laden discussions, so that respondents can talk freely, richly, and honestly about their experience. Some debate whether email interviews can achieve the same level of depth and reflexivity as in-person interviews or web-based interviews that take place synchronously (Hewson, 2014). Building and developing trust is more difficult, and so researchers are required "to think very carefully about how they build relationships of trust with participants they cannot see and may never meet" (James

& Busher, 2006, p. 417). In the James and Busher studies, the researchers possessed prior knowledge of the participants, and they suggest it is problematic when this prior relationship does not exist. Others have found that some participants may find certain types of disclosure easier in the online environment and that the data gathered in online environments can be comparable or superior in depth (Bruggen & Willems, 2009; Hooley, et al., 2012).

Cohen et al., (2012, p. 415) describe several stages for in-person interview investigations that are worth considering in either an online format.

**Design.** The email interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres focus on two core areas, (1) the programs and supports already in place for supporting online contingent faculty, and (2) the "contested space" of providing educational development to supporting online instructors.  The list of email questions, informed by Franklin and derived from Hicks (2014) and Bolman and Deal (1997) are included as Appendix C (approved as part of the ethics application).

**Analysis.** Sedgwick and Spiers (2009) suggest that data generation and analysis occur simultaneously. The data analysis will include frequency of occurrence, patterns and themes, clustering into categories, and finding patterns of similarity and variance. Coding "is the ascription of a category label to a piece of data, with the category label either decided in advance or in response to the data that have been collected" (Cohen, et al., p. 428). An example of a recent study that followed this approach is Webber's (2018) survey of faculty satisfaction. Webber (2018) manually coded the interviews, and then used language analysis software for additional analysis. Some of the dominant themes emerging from these in-person and webconference interviews included perceptions of

politics and power, perceptions of privilege and oppression, agency and voice, and leadership, exactly the type of topics expected to surface in this research study. Because of the asynchronous aspect of email interviews, thematic coding began before all the data was collected, and the codes were built progressively as more data emerged (Rivas, 2012).

**Special Considerations for Email Interviews**

In addition to consideration for interview design and analysis, Hooley et al. (2012) suggest consideration of the following issues to justify the use of online research approaches:

- **access:** The challenges of physical access and physical distancing were overcome using email.

- **technical ability:** Participants were comfortable using email for discussions, though it is recognized that some people are better speakers than writers, and that the converse is also true.

- **research topic:** The topic researched is inextricably bound up with the use of internet-based communications technologies to overcome the experience of distance and connection, and so the medium and method are congruent.

- **environment:** Using email eliminated any environmental barriers that would have prohibited any of the target research population from participation.

- **sensitivity:** Some of the interview questions are likely to raise some sensitive topics, but the questions are of a professional nature and not of an intensely personal one.

- **anonymity and confidentiality:** The processes for maintaining anonymity and confidentiality are outlined in the ethics application (secured on January 20, 2020, File No: 23764) and within the informed consent notification prior to participation. No personal information was collected beyond what is on the participants' business cards. In the analysis and dissemination, individual names are not reported, and the researcher employed APA's strategies for disguising identifying materials (Section 1.19), including limiting the description of specific characteristics and using composite descriptions.

- **data handling:** The email discussions were only available to the researcher through a password protected portal. Data were managed through the creation of folders from each participant for storage. The transcripts were copy and pasted into NVivo, and this aided in managing the resources available for transcription, coding, and analysis.

- **visual clues:** Visual clues were not likely to be vitally important to the research topic, and when email interviews were transitioned to a synchronous, web-based format, non-verbal information was excluded.

In summary, email interviews must account for all of the elements that need to be present for a successful in-person interview to take place, but they also present additional

challenges. The next section outlines the sampling considerations and strategies utilized

to account for the challenges presented by email interviews.

### Sampling, Data Collection and Analysis

The email interview candidates were selected using a mixture of purposive and volunteer

sampling. Purposive sampling is used to access "knowledgeable people" who have in-

depth knowledge about particular issues because of their professional role and expertise

(Cohen, et al., 2011), such as the challenges and opportunities around professional

development programs for part-time online educators. The target population for the email

interviews are directors of teaching and learning centers in CICan institutions that have

academic plans covering the current period and immediate future. The potential research

pool was initially determined by searching for publicly available academic plans of

CICan institutions that meet the criteria outlined in phase one, and then inviting the

directors of those educational development units to participate in the email interviews.

The ideal distribution of the purposive sample of directors of teaching and

learning sought the greatest possible diversity and was distributed between Canada's

provinces; twelve interviews were planned to come from Alberta (2), British Columbia

(2), Manitoba (2), Nova Scotia (2), Ontario (2), Quebec (2), with two to four interviews

coming from any combination of individuals from the following provinces and

territories, Newfoundland & Labrador, New Brunswick, Nunavut, Prince Edward Island,

Northwest Territories, or Saskatchewan. Volunteer sampling is appropriate when relying

on professional networks and connections to build a satisfactory research sample. In this

case, asking for volunteers who are directors of teaching and learning centres in CICan

member institutions reduces the possibility that the research sample will not represent the

wider population of directors of teaching and learning centres. Like many other

qualitative research studies, this study emphasis on the unique distinctiveness of the

individuals in question (Cohen, et al., 2011).

These recommended guidelines were followed for the successful conduct of the

email interviews:

- **invitations**: People were solicited individually.

- **subject line**: An effective subject line was employed, such as "Following up from

  our EDC discussion."

- **self-disclosure**: Introductions explained who I was, how I got the participants'

  emails, and the purpose of the research.

- **be open about the research**: Trust was established through openness about what

  I was doing, why, and how I planned to respect the participants' confidentiality

  and anonymity, covered in the informed consent letter. As noted, no personally

  identifiable information, such as name or institutional affiliation, is used in the

  final analysis.

- **interview questions:** The interview plan included the fewest, best, and most clear

  interview questions possible. The twelve initial questions were derived from

  Hicks (2014), informed by Bolman and Deal's (1997) four frame model, and

  correspond to the conflict between the pedagogical and technological paradigms

  (Duus, 2009).

- **due dates and reminders:** Participants were provided reasonable due dates, and

  when sending a reminder, I sent the original email with the research questions

embedded. I made participation easy and gentle with reminders such as, "I haven't heard from you in while. Have you had a chance to consider my last question?"

- **choose more participants than anticipated:** A highly committed participant can be very helpful, but an uncommitted participant may not be worth the time, energy or effort. Well-intentioned volunteers may dropout, meaning the researcher should plan to secure more participants than originally planned. This proved true during the pandemic period. Many participants agreed to participate but failed to do so, likely because of a significant increase in demand on teaching and learning centres related to the pivot to emergency remote instruction.

Successfully recruiting participants and maintaining email conversations proved not to be the same thing.

Positionality is determined by how one stands in relation to the other, and it is impacted by factors such as education, gender, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity. One's position as a researcher is constantly in flux because the duration of contacts may at times outweigh the identity associated with insider-outsider status and shift the loci of the position (Merriam, et al., 2001). In line with these considerations, the researcher is both an insider and an outsider; I am a director of teaching and learning centre and so inside the culture of educational development, but an outsider to the research participants' unique institutional cultures. There were no direct supervisory relationships involved or deception of research participants, and this study upholds the ethical suggestion of "using highly educated subjects" (Cohen, et al., p. 78). Most directors of teaching and learning centres hold multiple graduate degrees, and because of their familiarity with the role of

navigating institutional politics, they possess institutional and professional agency and would be unlikely to place themselves in a compromising position through their comments. This is also considered a "minimal risk" study where "the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research" (Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics, 2016). These are professional colleagues who, by their participation, are contributing to the scholarship of educational development, one of the strategic growth areas identified by the EDC.

### Foreseeable Limitations

Due to the scant information on the state of contingent faculty in Canada, this study was operationalized with several important knowledge gaps, including the volume and general working conditions of online contingent faculty in Canada. As noted by Harrison (2016), even though almost all Canadian postsecondary institutions are involved in online education, participation and resourcing is widely variable. Consequently, it is possible that the academic plans selected for this study make little or no reference to the professional development of online education because these particular institutions may not be industry leaders in online education or have a current academic plan. It was also not possible to represent territories and provinces with a small number of institutions that did not have academic plans or teaching and learning centres.

This limitation cannot be eliminated, but its effect was reduced by employing a *boosted* sample, or a *stratified purposive sample* to make sure small, northern institutions serving indigenous communities were represented in either Phase One or Phase Two. The limitations regarding institutions not being industry leaders in online education or

having a teaching and learning centre was also mitigated, somewhat, by the best evidence

available suggesting almost all Canadian postsecondary institutions are involved in

online education with plans to grow this form of educational provision in the immediate

future, and that most Canadian institutions now have educational development units. In

the email interviews, especially, this consideration was muted by the fact that the

pandemic presented the same challenge to all Canadian postsecondary institutions. Be

that as it may, province, type and size of institution, and unique circumstances (e.g.

leadership) all affect an institution at a particular point in time. Context was accounted

for by concentrating on members of Colleges and Institutes Canada, and the existing

research shows that most institutions involved in online education were dealing with

many of the same challenges before the pandemic (Bates, et al., 2017).

The francophone dimension also presents a challenge to any study truly hoping to

call itself Canadian. These institutions face a different landscape for many reasons and

tend to engage in distance learning less intensively (Bates, et al., 2017). This limitation is

noted, along with the recognition that context is interpreted differently due to personal

backgrounds, knowledge, and power positions. Consequently, a range of possible

interpretations exist (Miles, 2010). In addition to sensitivity regarding institutional

context, I must also attend to the maturity and size of the teaching and learning centres

because larger, more mature educational development units may have a broader and

more sophisticated structure enabling a broader diversity of programs and supports.

As mentioned in the discussion of Phase One, academic plans may present a top-

down view of the institution. This is, in fact, part of the rationale for the first phase of the

study to determine if "indispensable but invisible" or "doubly invisible" faculty are

recognized in academic strategic documents. The limitations, challenges, and strategies

to enhance the success of email interviews were outlined in the previous sections, and I

experienced many of them.  Some respondents expressed that the distractions and

disturbances of daily life, especially during the pandemic, lead to a lack of time and a

lack of coherence because of the time lag between questions, answers, and follow-up

questions.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlined the approach for exploring how the professional

development needs of contingent online faculty are represented within current academic

plans in Canada, and how are they being addressed by Canadian teaching and learning

centres. A graphic depiction of the work plan and a conceptual framework outlined how

multiple realities can become visible through a phased approach. A conception of power

provides illustration of Dewey's assertion that unstable power dynamics exist alongside

and within entrenched structures of power. The researcher's ontology, epistemology and

theoretical orientation were situated within the research paradigms that aligned with

Deweyan critical pragmatism, summarized and illuminated using the more contemporary

work of Franklin (1999) and Selwyn (2014). The research study is rooted in Franklin's

*technology as practice,* a form of critical pragmatism, where the researcher does not just

strive to understand the real world of technology as it is presently constructed, but works

to build a social intelligence that may aid in creating more equitable conditions. The

chapter also provided detailed descriptions of the document analysis for Phase One of the

research study, and it outlined the research methodology of email interviews in Phase

Two, including the advantages, disadvantages, limitations, and the steps taken to

minimize these challenges wherever possible. Sampling strategies and the analytical

approaches were also detailed. The following chapter now details the findings and results

from the execution of both research phases.

## Chapter 4. Results and Findings

**Phase One – Document Analysis**

The first half of this chapter details the processes and findings of the phase one document analysis. The document analysis employed a slightly modified form of Bolman and Deal's (1997) Four-Frame Model for understanding organizations (described below), and the results show strong representation of professional development within the Structural, Human Resources, and Symbolic frames. The chapter offers an explanation, rooted in Bolman and Deal's model, as to why the *political* frame is the least represented within this set of academic plans. It posits that because the political frame of organizational life concentrates on power, conflict, and the allocation of scarce resources, one would expect that negotiation, bargaining, and coalition-building would take place both before and after the publication of the academic plan but not appear within it.

The analysis demonstrates that professional development appears frequently as an important change driver for numerous institutional strategies. Only by thoroughly outlining and discussing the importance of faculty development for other initiatives does it become possible to conclude that professional development to support contract faculty and the development of online education was largely absent from this set of Canadian strategic documents written prior to pandemic. The analysis shows that contract, part-time, and adjunct faculty are referenced on only three occasions, and online faculty are only mentioned once in the 17 academic plans. The relative invisibility of online education and online faculty, as well as invisibility of the political frame, provides justification for the phase two e-mail interviews exploring online education and professional development as contested spaces.

**Overview of Phase One**

Phase one sought to answer the question, *how are online faculty and their professional development represented in current Canadian postsecondary academic plans?* by investigating a set of 17 academic planning documents from CICan institutions covering the current period and immediate future. These documents were analyzed for symbolic recognition of online faculty and expressions of the importance of professional development for online instructors. Academic plans are social facts that represent the values and strategic choices postsecondary leaders are making to prepare their institutions for an increasingly digital learning environment. In 2019, online course enrollments in Canada increased by 10%, while traditional enrollments remained flat (Lederman, 2019). With double-digit growth occurring in online education, Biro's (2005) question is perhaps more important than ever: are online faculty viewed as an important subgroup of faculty? Were institutions recognizing the unique professional development needs of online instruction before the COVID-19 pandemic? An investigation of these academic plans provides a partial answer.

The document analysis explores the *projected reality of the future.* Franklin (1990) suggests, "It is hard to imagine one's own time as history. …Yet it will happen, and our artifacts will reflect our values and choices, as artifacts have done throughout the ages" (p. 114). Academic plans of CICan institutions are contemporary artifacts expressing strategic choices, and a close analysis of these future-building documents provides insight into the values and priorities of postsecondary institutions regarding faculty development and online education as they approached the third decade of the 21st century. Sub-questions of the investigation include:

- What is the stated purpose, if any, for professional development? Is there an

  explicit connection between faculty development and online education within the

  academic plans?

- Are contract, part-time, adjunct and/or online faculty visible within these

  documents?

**Methodology**

**Data Collection**

The academic plans were collected using a mixture of purposive and convenience

sampling, where purposive and convenient combine to mean that the academic plans

belong to CICan membership institutions that were publicly available online. To qualify

for inclusion, the academic plans also had to meet other criteria for selection, and so the

convenience sample is conjoined to purposive sampling. This sample of academic plans

(see Appendix A for a full list):

- come from member institutions of CICan,

- commence after 2016 and/or cover the immediate future period, ideally extending

  to 2020 or beyond,

- strive to represent the greatest variety of diversity in Canada, and

- self-identify as academic plans, education plans, or make strategic

  recommendations about the future of academic programs.

Academic plans are often but not always differentiated from strategic plans and

comprehensive institutional plans, but this does not hold firm in all situations. Reflecting

the great diversity within the Canadian postsecondary sector, some institutions possess

strategic plans and academic plans; others contain academic planning statements within

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comprehensive institutional plans, whereas others develop supplemental educational

technology plans or education action plans.  This varies according to institutional size,

history, planning capacity, and (perhaps most importantly) the provincial milieu in which

the institution operates.

**Figure 16**

*Geographic Representation of Institutional Academic Plans Analyzed*



*Note:* The assembled dataset of 17 academic plans from 10 Canadian provinces and territories

covers the current period and immediate future sought to represent CICan's diverse

membership.

The provincial context is perhaps of penultimate importance because plans are political documents that communicate important messages to funders about priorities and how resources will be allocated (Bolman & Deal, 1997), and postsecondary institutions operating in Ontario and Alberta are now facing a new era of performance-based funding (Spooner, 2019). Whatever their variations in name, format, or province, however, plans represent a "ceremony any reputable organization must conduct periodically to maintain legitimacy" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 242). To be included, the academic plans needed to meet the criteria and communicate strategic direction for faculty and academic programs.

The CICan membership page includes all member institutions, and the website was used to identify the member institutions with academic plans covering the current period and the immediate future. CICan represents 134 of Canada's publicly funded colleges and institutions, and there is a wide diversity in CICan membership, including small to medium-sized universities (Vancouver Island University), large polytechnics (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology), as well as small colleges (Yukon College). CICan members include Indigenous institutions (Nunavut Arctic College), most of the Cegeps in Quebec, as well as specialized institutions (Maritime College of Forest Technology). CICan's diverse membership is one of its strengths, but this diversity makes it difficult to declare the dataset is a representative sample of CICan institutions. To gather the document set, a Google search was executed with the query phrase: "institution name" and "academic plan", for all 134 institutions. The search commenced alphabetically by province, and alphabetically by institution. From this search, 13 academic plans were identified that met the inclusion criteria. Unfortunately, no

academic plans meeting the inclusion criteria were identified for institutions in

Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Prince Edward Island, or Quebec. To ensure the

greatest diversity of representation, four additional plans were included in the dataset

because a close examination of institutional plans showed they met the basic inclusion

criteria, were akin to the structure of the other documents, and included statements about

the strategic direction for academic programs.

### Document Analysis – Findings

Once collected, the planning documents were analyzed using both the deductive

and inductive coding approaches outlined in Chapter Three. NVivo, a qualitative data

analysis software, identified word frequency, proximity, and the broader context in which

these queries appeared. The plans were first lightly coded using open codes (Cohen, et

al., 2012) for all instances of *professional development, professional learning, faculty*

*development, educational development,* and *mentoring* to identify the purpose of

professional development. Some variation of the phrase *professional development*

appeared in all 17 documents, appearing a total of 65 times.  A second query was

executed for *part-time, contract, adjunct, and online faculty.*

Axial codes, codes given to a group of words with similar meanings (Cohen, et

al., 2012), were then assigned for the purpose of interpreting and expressing the

purpose(s) of professional development as it appeared in the academic plans. Finally,

selective codes, codes which operate at a higher level of abstraction than axial codes

(Cohen, et al., 2012), were applied because they are useful in telling the main story line.

These selective codes are rooted in Bolman and Deal's (1997) four-frame model. "Each

of the frames has its own image of reality" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 15), and this multi-

frame model provides a flexible and creative framework, allowing for a holistic

interpretation of the purposes of professional development.

The next section employs Bolman and Deal's four frames (Table 1.1) to discuss the

multiple purposes of professional development found within this set of academic strategy

documents.

**The structural frame.**

The *structural frame* concerns an institution's social architecture, and the

structural frame's organizational metaphor is a factory or machine, but Bolman and Deal

(1997) suggest that structures do not need to be machinelike and can, indeed, be more

flexible. Whether fixed or flexible, the structural frame reflects the belief that the right

formal arrangements can increase quality and performance; that the structure of an

organization's facilitates or impedes the achievement of objectives and exercise some

form of performance control (p. 43). To produce the desired output, an organization must

have the right structures (goals, rules, and policies) in place to adapt to changes in

technology and changes in the environment.  The structural frame designs organizations

for maximum efficiency and accountability. There is often a fixed division of labour and

set of rules governing performance.

The *structural frame* appeared as the most dominant code within this set of

academic plans, accounting for approximately 35% (23/65) of the coding occurrences.

This aspect of the analysis looked for expression of roles, rules, policies, or evidence of

changing technology or a changing environment driving the need for professional

development. To be designated a theme, at least 3 of the 17 academic plans had to

express this purpose of professional development, and major themes occurred when 5 or

more of documents mentioned this specific purpose. Internationalization appeared as a major theme in the structural frame.

### *Internationalization.*

Internationalization refers to the professional development efforts involved in sending faculty to foreign locations and/or creating welcoming learning environments for international students onto Canadian campuses.

- The college has had a continuous presence in the international education sector, however, future potential needs to be explored to determine the potential for further revenue generating opportunities, professional development activities for staff and faculty, or international student recruitment. (College of the North Atlantic, 2017, p. 6)

- Promote professional development opportunities for faculty in support of the goal of internationalization of teaching and learning. (Red River College, 2016, p. 7)

- Addressing enrolment management, international student services, education abroad and faculty development, our internationalization strategic process will assess, affirm and integrate the potential of international members within our learning community. (Sheridan College, 2017, p. 3)

- Offer training for faculty in teaching methods to support international students' learning. (Saskatchewan Polytechnic)

The strategic goal of internationalization reflects the Janus-like nature of academic plans. In looking both externally and internally, faculty development focal areas emerge from

changes in the external environment to further grow and support internationalization efforts abroad and support the internationalization of Canadian learning environments. Over half a million international students now study in Canada (Canadian Bureau from International Education, n. d.) because international students may pay more than three times the amount of their domestic counterparts. Some Canadian institutions now receive more funding from international student tuition than from provincial operating grants, and "while there is nothing intrinsically wrong with turning to international students to fill the gap left by flagging government support …we cannot continue to sleepwalk down this road" (Usher, 2018, p. 2). Professional development is one strategy to ensure efforts at internationalization are conducted intentionally, thoughtfully, and deliberately.

### *Industry-Relevant.*

The external/internal aspects of professional development are also visible in professional development efforts to maintain industry relevance, another major theme within the *structural frame*. Industry-relevant sabbaticals allow faculty to engage with industry to develop strategic partnerships and bring these experiences back into the classroom. Examples of industry-relevant professional development include:

- To meet the goal of faculty currency in subject matter expertise, we will: Increase options for return-to-industry sabbaticals and industry-related professional development. (Saskatchewan Polytechnic, 2016, p. 14)

- Recognize the importance of ongoing opportunities for faculty to engage with industry. (Durham College, 2017, p. 13)

- Allow faculty to connect with industry needs and trends to ensure their ongoing knowledge relevance. (SAIT, 2017, p. 17)

These illustrative examples highlight that faculty who have been away from industry for a certain time may not be aware of how practices and processes have shifted, largely resulting from advances in technology. This is also true for the teaching and learning environment. It is unsurprising then, that another theme in the *structural frame* focuses on technology-enabled teaching.

### *Teaching with Technology.*

The *structural frame* squares its attention on adapting the organization to changes in technology or in the environment. Franklin (1990) argues that changes in technology sculpt a new environment, especially regarding the practice of teaching, where technology is not seen as a collection of hardware/software but as a *way of doing something*. Another one of the major purposes of professional development within this set of academic documents is enabling faculty to effectively integrate technology into teaching practice. This section comes closest to answering the phase one research question because it expresses how online education is perceived in strategic direction, and examples of professional development statements reflecting this purpose allude to leveraging technology to expand or diversify delivery methods:

- Our goal is to strengthen and expand our delivery methods through the use of new technologies, flexibility and innovation. To expand capacity, we will support and encourage the professional development of our staff and faculty. (College of New Caledonia, 2017, p. 11)

- To that end [to promote skills that prepare students for success beyond Sheridan], we will bolster our investments in faculty development. We must also leverage technologies that enhance learning and deliver on our

> commitment to accessibility and inclusivity. (Sheridan College, 2017, p. 3)

- Support professional learning for technology-enabled learning. (Confederation College, 2017, p. 10)
- Support faculty in adopting, adapting and creating open education resources that increase access to relevant, flexible learning content. (SAIT, 2017, p. 17)

Numerous statements establish an explicit connection between faculty development and the purpose of teaching with new and emerging technologies. Online learning and online faculty are not specifically mentioned, but professional development for teaching with technology is designed to support accessibility and expand delivery methods. It is not entirely clear what some terms, such as accessibility, mean within these documents. In the first case, delivery methods might mean online education, but the *new technologies* are not identified; these could be new teaching technologies, or new industry-relevant technologies. In the other examples, inclusivity might suggest Universal Design for Learning (UDL), whereas one strategic tactic clearly articulates that accessibility is achieved by lowering the cost of learning materials by incorporating relevant open education resources. These various aspects of accessibility – accessing education when it is convenient, financial accessibility, and disability accommodations – are present but not clearly delineated. Accessibility and technology-enabled phrases occasionally applied broadly that could include an expanded future for online education.

Within the *structural frame,* professional development activities to leverage technology to enhance or improve instructional quality is a sub-theme of teaching with

technology. Technology has the capacity to enhance learning, increase access, and enable learning, possibly reflecting Franklin's (1990) observation that the real world of technology often involves "an inherent trust in machines and devices" (p. 30). The use of current technologies is also indicative of and associated with higher quality. The *structural frame* is also concerned with institutional roles, and several planning statements refer to the creation of professional learning committees, the need to align professional development activity and resources to larger strategic and academic plans, and the goal of developing annual professional development plans to ensure and measure the best use of resources. These activities overlap considerably with the *human resources frame*.

**The human resources frame.**

The *human resources frame* assumes organizations exist to meet human needs, including the employees' needs, and a symbiotic fit benefits both the organization and its employees. The *human resource frame* seeks to align organizational and human needs, but not equally. Bolman and Deal (1997) suggest that organizations tend to be comprised of three groups – a core group considered critical to the enterprise, an increasingly part-time workforce providing flexibility (e.g. permanent part-time), and a contractual fringe (who may be working full-time but only during the duration of the contract) (Bolman & Deal, 1997). These three employee groups correspond with the three major faculty types: tenure and tenure-track faculty, non-tenure track faculty in long-term contracts, and short-term contingent faculty.

Trading short-term gains for long-term decay (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 117) is an omnipresent risk that exists in the human resource frame. Part-time faculty provide a

cheaper, flexible workforce (short-term gain), but one that may have negative impact on student persistence which negatively impacts long-term financial sustainability or erodes quality (long-term decay). To counter long-term decay, organizations invest in people through such activities as professional development because organizations also need the energy, effort, and talent of their employees to achieve institutional goals. When individual and organizational needs are not well-aligned, people are apt to feel neglected or unsupported, and the organization will sputter along due to a lack of commitment and loyalty. Basic human resource strategies to avoid organizational sputtering include offering professional development opportunities, empowering employees through autonomy and job enrichment, and developing measures of human resource management. Each of these strategies are clearly visible in the academic plans. 19 of the 65 occurrences of professional development (approximately 29%) focus on basic human resource strategies (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

The first basic human resource strategy is offering professional development opportunities, and for some institutions, professional development is a recruitment and retention strategy.

### *Recruitment and Retention.*

- Strengthen comprehensive orientation programs for new contract and full-time faculty. (Durham College, 2017, p. 13)
- YukonU will also work to attract and retain new faculty by enhancing resources for professional development. (Yukon College, 2016, p. 11)

These examples are reflective of the *human resource frame* where the barrier to change is anxiety, uncertainty, or some feeling of incompetence (Bolman & Deal, 1997). In the

former case, there may be uncertainty about the quality of faculty orientation, and in the latter example, there is certainly anxiety that new faculty, once they gain experience, will find the grass to be greener at another institution unless there are attractive professional development perks. One remedy for these anxieties and uncertainties is training to develop new skills or knowledge (a more comprehensive orientation), but also to provide opportunities for participation and involvement in professional development, which provides some amount of skill building and career renewal. Most notable here, however, is the first of three visible recognitions of part-time, contract faculty, who are specifically targeted for stronger and more comprehensive orientation programs, though no rationale is provided for why this was identified as a strategic priority.

The next basic human resource strategy is empowering employees through autonomy and job enrichment. This major theme appears most strongly as supporting faculty research and scholarly activity.

### *Research and Scholarship.*

Examples include:

- Engage in and expand opportunities for general and discipline-specific professional development including scholarship and applied research. (Durham College, 2017, p. 13)

- Enhance academic support services in order to empower faculty and enable faculty teaching, professional development, and scholarship efforts. (Vancouver Island University, 2017, p. 14)

The strategic focus on building research and scholarship capacity through professional development likely emerges from increased competition for grant funds that augment

academic operations. This theme is also reflective of the accountability frameworks postsecondary institutions operate in and must respond to in their planning. In the *Campus Alberta Quality Council Handbook* (Campus Alberta Quality Council, 2020), for example, a major element of the organizational evaluation standards for scholarly and research require postsecondary institutions to have "policies and procedures in place to support and facilitate engagement by academic staff in scholarship, and where appropriate, research or creative activity" (CAQC, 2020, p. 34). Within the *Handbook,* research and scholarly output is specifically connected an institution's ability to grant degrees, salary rewards, and future financial planning, where "faculty shall have an appropriate level of scholarly output and/or research or creative activity for the baccalaureate or graduate program involved" (p. 50). External pressure on scholarly output may drive internal planning efforts to strengthen faculty research capabilities while serving as a job enrichment strategy and proof to external accrediting bodies requiring evidence of scholarly activity and research supports in accreditation processes.

### *Measuring Professional Development Activity.*

The third basic human resource strategy is developing measures of human resource management, and this human resource function is highly visible within this set of academic plans, where several institutions' note the need to measure or develop measures regarding professional development activity and the use of professional development resources. Examples of measuring professional development participation include:

- Develop formal annual plans for professional development to ensure the best use of resources in this area. (Manitoba Institute of Trades and

Technology2016, p. 17)

- Implement an ongoing cycle of professional learning; Co-construct a professional learning plan. (Confederation College, 2017, p. 10)

- Establish a faculty development plan that recognizes the importance of continual skill development in all stages of a faculty member's career. (Durham College, 2017, p. 14)

One plan even suggested measuring professional development would be achieved by specifically designating 30% of professional development expenditures to leading change and supporting diverse leaner needs (Nova Scotia Community College, 2016). Many institutions provide professional development resources to faculty at faculty discretion, recognizing that faculty development plans must account for the various stages of a faculty member's career, but there is also evidence that the professional development opportunities offered are prescriptive to meet specific organizational initiatives. Professional development opportunities will build organizational capacities for leading change (presumably the changes outlined in the academic plan), supporting diverse learners, and shifting roles for all academic staff. These statements strongly suggest that the function of implementing and measuring professional development can also be highly political, and these examples of measuring professional development participation are formal efforts to ensure the best use of scarce financial resources, and so they border the political frame.

**The political frame.**

The *political frame* acknowledges the reality that organizations are in a state of endemic conflict characterized by coalitions that form around enduring differences of

roles, beliefs, and perceptions of reality. Conflict centers around the allocation of scarce resources, and goals and decisions emerge from bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position. Power is the primary commodity, and power can be defined as the ability to influence behavior, change the course of events, overcome resistance, and get people to do what they would not otherwise do (Bolman & Deal, 1997). The political frame holds particular relevance for online education because about 50% of faculty who have online teaching experience remain skeptical that online courses can achieve equivalent educational outcomes to in-person courses (Jaschik & Lederman, 2019) and may not be interested in teaching online.

Bolman and Deal's use *jungle* as the metaphor for the *political frame*. The jungle-as-metaphor poses problems because of potentially negative cultural connotations and the suggestion of a kill-or-be-killed, predator-prey relationship. Jungle-as-metaphor is also not actually faithful to Bolman and Deal's (1997) description of the political frame as the operation of alliances, coalitions and networks. A more appropriate metaphor to reflect this dimension of internal politicking would be a *congress or parliament* (Table 1.2), where many backroom negotiations and conversations take place. Using parliament as a metaphor is also faithful to a major function of the political activity of organizations, which is controlling meaning and symbols, such as academic plans (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 170). Connectivism also provides an emerging and potentially more useful way of thinking about the *political frame* because connectivism emphasizes self-organizing networks that arise out of nebulous, shifting environments that are not totally under control. These internal networks connect specialized information sets and enable organizational learning, defined as actionable knowledge (Conrad & Openo, 2018).

Parliament, and an interconnected web of networks and shifting alliances, offer better metaphors than *jungle* to update this aspect of the four-frame model.

**Table 1.2**

*Modified Overview of the Four-Frame Model*

| | Frame | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Structural* | *Human Resource* | *Political* | *Symbolic* |
| Metaphor for organization | Factory or machine | Family | Parliament Web of networks Connectivism | Carnival, temple, theatre |
| Central concepts | Rules, roles, goals, policies, technology, environment | Needs, skills, relationships | Power, conflict, competition, organizational jockeying | Culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, heroes |
| Image of leadership | Social architecture | Empowerment | Advocacy | Inspiration |
| Basic leadership challenge | Attune structure to task, technology, environment | Align organizational and human needs | Develop agenda and power base | Create faith, beauty, meaning |

The *political frame* is the least visible frame within this set of academic plans, accounting for only 7/65 occurrences. Coding for this frame looked specifically for evidence of conflicts, networks, or a commitment of financial resources and investment. One example stands out:

- The Chief Financial Officer and the Provost are requested to continue to work with employee labour relations groups and with our excluded staff to explore, identify and make available high-quality professional development for all our employees. (Vancouver Island University, 2017,

p. 27)

In this example, specific positional authorities are requested to enter into negotiations

with labour unions and excluded staff specifically for the purpose of providing high-

quality professional development. This strategic recommendation stands out both

because of its specificity on professional development as a site of conflict, but also

because comments such as this are largely absent from this set of academic plans. The

absence of such comments holds true to Bolman and Deal's explanation of the political

frame, characterized by negotiation and coalition-building to establish power, allocate

scarce resources, and control messaging. As such, one would expect that negotiations and

jockeying for position and power would take place both before and after the construction

and publication of the academic plan and would not be part of the publicly visible face.

The *political frame's* function to control meaning and symbols would hide internal

fights, justifying the need for the phase two email interviews to gain greater insight into

organizational life.

Another function of the *political frame* is developing an advocacy agenda, and

within the political frame, it deserves mention that one of the major themes that emerged

within this set of academic plans was Indigenization.

### *Indigenization.*

Strategic references to indigenization within the academic plans include:

- Provide professional development to faculty so they can effectively

  provide safe classrooms when facilitating dialogue about Indigenous

  knowledge. (Confederation College, 2017, p. 9)

- Ensure inclusion of Indigenous content knowledge and practices in faculty development. (Durham College, 2017, p. 13)

Indigenization also includes the second of three references to part-time, contract, adjunct faculty:

- As we [Yukon College] become a university, we intend to remain a leader in Indigenous education by integrating traditional knowledge and perspectives into all our programming. We will also build capacity for indigenization throughout the institutional, not least by establishing mechanisms to hire elders as adjunct faculty. (Yukon College, 2017, p. 7)

Within the confines of this dissertation, there is not sufficient time to provide Indigenization, reconciliation, and decolonization the space and depth it deserves. I became a Canadian citizen in 2015 and am still learning about my obligations as a treaty inhabitant, so I am far from qualified to speak eloquently on this important matter. Still, the appearance of Indigenization as a major purpose for professional development and the hiring of elders as adjunct faculty to support it requires brief comment.

Indigenization is a vitally important topic for Canadian post-secondary institutions because of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action* (2015). Its appearance in academic planning documents is a positive sign that, according to Gaudry and Lorenz (2018), may also contain a great risk. The risk they identify is that Indigenization represents the challenging task of reconciling how to engage with Indigenous knowledge systems in a university culture "that is still, for the most part, invested in Indigenous erasure and marginalization" (Gaudry and Lorenz, 2018, p. 218).

Indigenization will look different in different places for geographical, historical, and social reasons, so having one solution to Indigenization works against deeper and more authentic responses (Blomgren, 2020, personal communication). Indigenization may even look wildly different within an institution's different academic programs; social work, health, and education may have pockets of faculty more advanced in their understanding of Indigenization than others within an institution. And so, like online education, it is hard to speak of Indigenization as a single thing, and this causes Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) to warn caution. "Despite the growing prevalence of indigenization rhetoric on campuses across Canada, there are several distinct visions of indigenization, only some of which are able to work in tandem with others" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 218). It is unclear what the Indigenized professional development will entail, but there is a great risk that it will exist at the light end of the spectrum, *Indigenous inclusion,* where Indigenization supports the adaptation of Indigenous students, faculty, and staff to the current (often alienating) culture of the Canadian academy (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Inclusion policies, such as mechanisms to hire elders as adjunct faculty, could be vital components of Indigenization, but it might also be the "low-hanging fruit of indigenization" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 220) that works to increase the number of Indigenous bodies within the already established Western academic structure and culture. "As the saying goes, it's just 'more brown faces in white spaces'" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 220). In this case, hiring elders as adjunct faculty means hiring Indigenous elders into faculty positions that also have a history of marginalization.

Potentially hidden within this risk is also a Western/white approach to time and planning, which carries with it the suggestion that, at the end of the planning period,

Indigenization will be, like other strategic initiatives, accomplished. Even though it is a positive sign that Canadian institutions are recognizing this need, leading the culture, and adopting an aspirational vision, there is a risk that institutions will not move beyond implementing the least transformative aspects of Indigenization, leaving the status quo intact (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). In this light, the appearance of Indigenization within academic plans may overlap considerably with the *symbolic frame.*

**The symbolic frame.**

The *symbolic frame* expresses the spiritual side of an organization, such as its mission, core values, and its own institutional mythology. Stories of meaning are important because much of organizational life is ambiguous and uncertain, and to combat this uncertainty, organizations need ritual, and ceremonies serve as guiding lights that inspire hope and anchor faith (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Academic plans are mythic, which does not mean false, as much as it means they tell a powerful story that an organization will live and die by (Wright, 2004). Plans are necessary symbols, especially for academic organizations that provide few "real" pieces of objective evidence to evaluate performance (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 243). Planning is a signal that all is well or improvement is just around the corner, and it provides managers a vision of the future (the constructed and projected realities) that they are working to create. The symbolic dimension tells an inspiring story designed to create faith, beauty, and meaning (Bolman & Deal, 1997).  Symbolic expression of professional development occurred prominently, accounting for approximately 16 out of 65 occurrences of professional development. The major symbolic purposes of professional development include:

***Expression of Core Values.***

- The College values lifelong learning for students, faculty and staff through personal growth and professional development. (Champlain, 2015, p. 3)

- The college has a deep commitment to professional development that supports faculty growth and development in leading-edge teaching techniques and approaches. (Durham College, 2017, p. 13)

- Expert teachers actively work on their teaching through various forms of professional development, including participating in professional learning communities of peers that encourage research-informed exchanges between faculty and diverse KPU researchers. (Kwantlen Polytechnic University, "Teaching Excellence", para. 2)

- As a value-based institution, VIU continues to believe it is essential to invest in the professional development of its faculty and staff. (Vancouver Island University, 2017, p. 27)

Symbolically, professional development also proclaims or establishes an identity.

### *Declaration of Identity.*

- To differentiate ourselves we must equip our range of educators with training and opportunities to advance their teaching practice and leadership. (Kwantlen Polytechnic University, "Distinctiveness")

- KPU educators are driven to excel. Through the ongoing and dynamic support of our Teaching and Learning Commons we will unleash an active program of professional development with a special emphasis on reinforcing faculty capacity to embrace and help shape BC's pedagogical

future. (Kwantlen Polytechnic University, "Preparing KPU for the British

Columbia K-12 Curriculum Transformation" para. 4)

- Establish a SAIT-relevant professional development framework for

  academic leaders and staff. (SAIT, 2017, p. 17)

- Support, through dedicated financial resources, selection guidelines,

  processes and procedures, faculty and staff professional development

  opportunities within and outside Saskatchewan to help individuals realize

  their goals of lifelong learning, and teaching and service excellence.

  (Saskatchewan Polytechnic, 2016, p. 8)

Symbolic language within the academic plans singles out professional development to

enable faculty to use leading-edge technology that can shape the pedagogical future and

achieve the faculties' and/or the institutions' goals of excellence. The inspiring, heroic

language of unleashing a differentiated approach to professional development is far less

tactical than the other frames because the purpose of professional development in the

symbolic frame is primarily to establish meaning, to tell the story of who the institution

believes itself to be or wishes to become. Kwantlen Polytechnic University provides the

clearest example of how symbolic language about the institution's self-identity shapes

the faculty member's role and activities; KPU educators are driven to excel, they will

embed best practices in e-portfolios, dismantle boundaries between faculties, and provide

a range of technology-enhanced and online learning environments, all of which will be

accomplished through an *unleashed* program of professional development.

**Concluding Discussion – Document Analysis**

The document analysis of 17 academic plans covering the current period and the immediate future sought to answer how professional development for online contingent faculty is represented in academic strategy. Exploring the stated purposes of professional development sought to discover if an explicit connection exists between faculty development and online education within this set of academic plans (Figure 17).

**Figure 17**

*The Various Strategic Purposes of Professional Development*
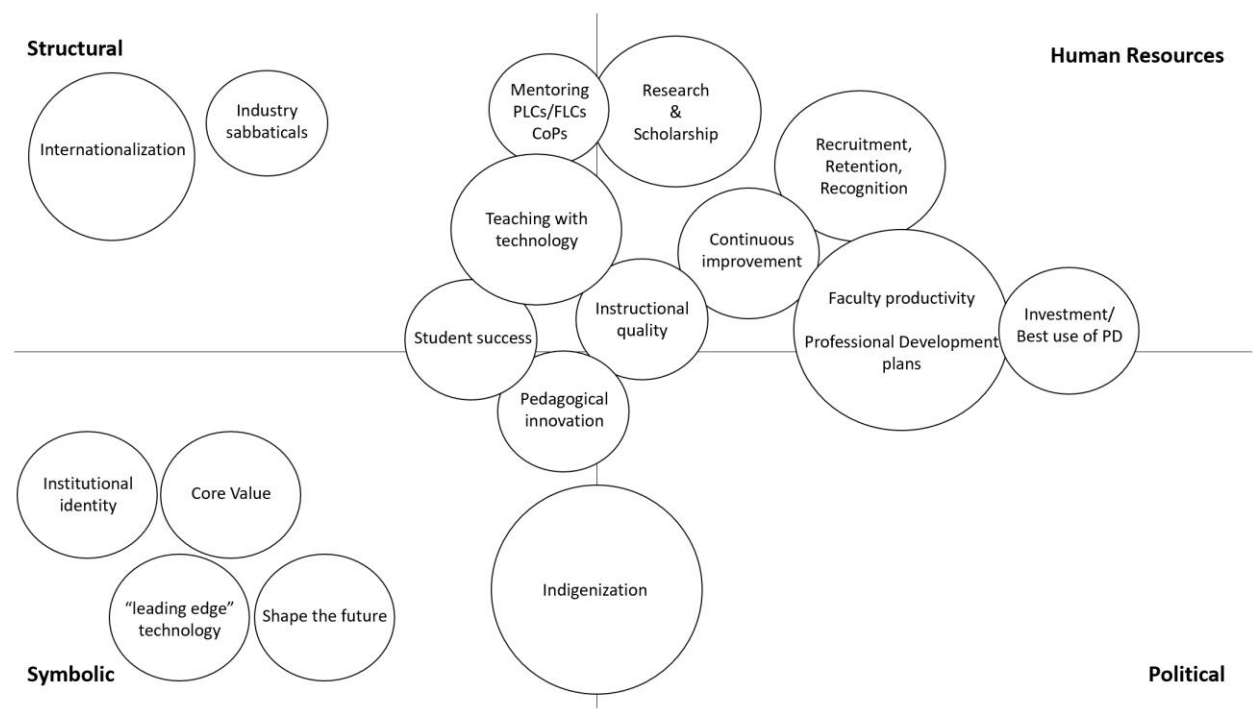


*Note:* The size of the circles represents their relative frequency of appearance. The proximity to the outer edge suggests coherence to Bolman and Deal's definition of that quadrant; a more central location suggests the stated purpose of professional development is a blend of multiple frames. Professional development activities to support internationalization, indigenization, and research and scholarship appeared most frequently, along with the institutional need to develop and track faculty professional development participation.

These findings explicated the diverse purposes of professional development within this set of 17 academic plans in accordance with Bolman and Deal's (1997) four frames to show that faculty development appears prominently and often as a crucial strategy and tactic to achieve many institutional change initiatives, including internationalization, Indigenization, promoting research capacity, and enabling faculty to enhance teaching with technology. Professional development also appears symbolically as a core value and as a part of the postsecondary institution's mission as lifelong learning institutions, reflecting the political frame's function to control messaging.

Only by elaborating upon the many areas where professional development plays a critical role in institutional progress can a researcher feel confident concluding that professional development to support online learning *does not* appear prominently as an explicit theme within this set of academic plans belonging to CICan membership institutions covering the current period and the immediate future. If professional development did not appear with such frequency, prominence, and specificity for other strategic initiatives, one might rightly conclude the researcher was looking for the wrong thing in the wrong place. However, one of the tactics to avoid sleepwalking down the road of internationalization is to offer professional development opportunities that recognize Canadian colleges are becoming increasingly diverse and that intercultural interactions are the norm in contemporary Canadian learning environments. Similarly, several institutions' academic plans articulate Indigenization as a strategic priority, in hopes of reconciling a brutal colonial past. With such clearly expressed purposes of professional development to respond to trends and ready postsecondary institutions for the future, the lack of statements regarding professional development for online

education stands out. It seems fair to conclude that professional development to support online education is not an explicit priority precisely because professional development appears frequently as a major strategy and tactic to drive a diverse array of changes in other areas of activity. The absence of any mention of professional development to support and grow online education is notable because of how present professional development appears in other places.

The document analysis also looked for representational evidence of part-time, online, contingent faculty, who now comprise over 50% of the Canadian professoriate. The second research question asks, *are contract, part-time, adjunct and/or online faculty visible within these documents?* As expected, there is little mention of part-time faculty, but they are not entirely invisible. Part-time, contract, and adjunct faculty appear three times within this set of academic planning documents:

- Strengthen comprehensive orientation programs for new contract and full-time faculty. (Durham College, 2017, p. 3)

- As we become a university, we intend to remain a leader in Indigenous education by integrating traditional knowledge and perspectives into all our programming. We will also build capacity for Indigenization throughout the institution, not least by establishing mechanisms to hire elders as adjunct faculty. (Yukon University, 2016, p. 5)

- Ensures faculty – all full-time, part-time and online – are continuously engaged in development of teaching practices to maintain best-in-class teaching and relevancy. (SAIT, 2017, p. 17)

This final reference from SAIT is the only time online faculty appear within this set of academic plans. Biro (2005) wondered if online adjunct faculty were viewed as a growing and important subgroup of adjunct faculty. As Canadian postsecondary education enters the third decade of the 21$^{st}$ century, it appears they are not yet viewed as an important subgroup, but their importance may finally be emerging at some Canadian institutions.

Part-time faculty have been described as indispensable but invisible, and online faculty have been described as doubly invisible because they are part-time faculty who work away from the bricks and mortar institution. Emerging at a few institutions is recognition that contract faculty, especially new contract faculty, need better orientations, and that they need to be included in the development of teaching practices to ensure relevance and quality. The document analysis, however, is unable to tell what a stronger orientation program entails or how symbolic language like "best-in-class" teaching is defined and maintained, further justifying the need for the phase two email interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres to gain a sense of the *extended reality* (Franklin, 1990) and assemble a fuller picture of the whole reality of professional development for part-time online educators.

**Limitations to Phase One**

There are numerous limitations to this document analysis. First, document analysis tends to privilege those in formal positions of power who possess the ability to control messages, meaning, and the publication of symbols. It is possible that teaching and teaching and learning centres are marginalized within these institutions, decreasing their likelihood of being represented within these documents. Second, power in a social

context can be interpreted by different people due to various personal backgrounds, and therefore there is not one correct interpretation (Miles, 2010). Deciding where to place Indigenization, as a theme, was an incredibly difficult choice, and I resisted the urge to place it where I thought it *should* belong. This interpretation is the author's, but research transparency aids in establishing reliability and trustworthiness. In addition to these two limitations, these 17 documents are the academic plans publicly available at the time of writing. There may also exist internal planning documents and other strategic initiatives not available for review that would shed considerable light on the professional development activities in place to prepare online faculty to teach online. 2020 also marks an important landmark for many strategic plans; several "Vision 2020" plans are nearing their completion, and many postsecondary institutions are likely working on new plans for 2025 and beyond, which could include online education as a strategic priority, especially in wake of the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021 has likely changed the planning landscape dramatically, and as institutions adjust to the post-pandemic situation, there will likely be a dramatic reshuffling of institutional priorities. It would be good to replicate this part of the study in 2-3 years.

The greatest limitation of the document analysis of this set of academic plans, however, appears to be the nature of academic plans themselves. The *political frame* was the least represented frame within the analysis of the academic documents, which holds true to its essence. The political frame is characterized by negotiation and coalition-building, where power is the prime commodity because it allocates scarce resources in an arena of conflict, competition, and constriction. As such, one would expect negotiations to take place both before and after the construction and publication of the academic plan.

These conflicts would take place behind-the-scenes and would be out-of-view within the externally facing, symbolic language of the academic plan. The internal fight for power can only be partially inferred from the content of the academic plans, justifying the need for the phase two email interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres at CICAN institutions to gain a better sense of professional development for online educators as a contested space. The next section outlines how the email interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres at CICan institutions deepen and expand upon the findings within the document analysis.

**Phase Two – Email Interviews**

**Overview of Phase Two**

An exploration of the *projected reality* of professional development, as it appeared in a set of 17 academic plans belonging to CICan membership institutions, detailed that online faculty and their professional development needs were not strongly represented. This finding was anticipated because academic plans provide a privileged organizational view and was congruent with Bolman and Deal's (1997) conception of the *political frame*, where the function to control messaging would likely hide turmoil from public documents such as academic plans. The research design accounted for this limitation by including a second phase consisting of email interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres to answer the second research question: *How are the professional development needs of contingent online faculty being served by Canadian teaching and learning centres?* The following section of this chapter answers this question so that it becomes possible to attempt an answer for the third and final research

question: *What gaps, if any, exist between the projected reality of academic plans and the extended reality of teaching and learning centres in Canada?*

Phase one explored the *projected reality of the future,* and phase two explores the *extended reality* (Franklin, 1990)*,* or "that body of knowledge and emotions we acquire that is based on the experience of others" (p.37). Encountering and analyzing the day-to-day realities of ordinary people in everyday life creates a confluence (the bringing together of stories around a common problem) that allows social intelligence to develop, social intelligence being the end goal of a critically pragmatic research approach to effect change in a world defined by disruption and unalterable changefulness.

### Recruitment and Data Collection

Participants were identified and recruited by first searching to discover if the institutions with the academic plans analyzed in phase one possessed teaching and learning centres. If they did, the identified head of that unit was emailed to participate in the interviews. Then, using the CICan membership database, the researcher sought to recruit directors of teaching and learning centres from the various provinces in accordance with the ideal distribution outlined in Chapter Three. When the ideal distribution outlined in Chapter Three could not be secured, volunteer sampling from the Educational Developers Caucus (EDC) and the Educational Developers Network of Alberta (EDNA) was employed to meet the research requirements. 32 invitations to directors of teaching and learning centres from across Canada were necessary to secure 12 participants, and the map below identifies that actual distribution varied significantly from the ideal distribution and may over-represent western Canada. The less personal, longer, and less immediate medium of email interviews (Meho, 2006), coupled with the demands placed on teaching and

learning centres during the pandemic, probably caused difficulty in securing broader

participation. Finally, to achieve a large enough sample, the researcher relied upon his

personal networks and connections made through both the monthly meetings of the

Educational Developers Caucus Centre Leaders Meetings that took place during the

pandemic period from May 2020 – 2021, and the Educational Developers Network of

Alberta. This explains why a higher number of interview participants are located in

Alberta than any other province (Figure 18).

**Figure 18**

*Canadian Distribution of Email Interviewees*



Following the completion of a consent form, each interviewee addressed the

questions highlighted in Appendix B. The interviews took place between January 2020

and March 2021.  The email interview responses were reviewed and follow-up questions

were asked. Some of the interview participants asked if they could conduct the interview

synchronously online, revealing a desire for a more immediate human connection and

because, as more than one admitted, "if I don't make time for it, it won't happen." Even

though securing participation was more difficult than anticipated, some of the email

interviews took place over several months and occasionally transitioned into synchronous

conversations, providing both rich data for the research study and a stronger professional

network for the researcher. Immediately following each synchronous interview, the

interviews were transcribed and field notes assigned to the interviews.  Transcribed data

was manually reviewed to develop general categories that were further analyzed using

NVivo software.

The email interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres showcase

challenges and successful innovations spurred on by their important role in response to

the pandemic, as well as ongoing, unresolved tensions. In accordance with the research

ethics application, interview responses have been modified so they do not reveal

institutional identity. Specific institutional names and corporate names of learning

management systems have been removed. To establish transparency and trustworthiness

in the analysis, the directors' voices appear in *italics* to provide support for the coding

decisions and the interpretation. In accordance with the ethics application and APA

section 1.19, confidentiality have been protected by disguising some aspects of the data

so that neither the person nor their institution identifiable. The description of specific

details (e.g. a small institution in Northern Ontario) have been limited, and composite

descriptions have occasionally been used where they did not change the interviewee's

meaning in ways to lead readers to draw false conclusions (American Psychological Association, 2020).

**Email Interview Analysis – Findings**

**Participation in Online Education is Unequally Distributed.**

Participant recruitment proved to be more challenging than anticipated because several of the institutions possessing the academic plans analyzed in phase one did not have teaching and learning centres, and of those that did, several suggested they were not heavily engaged in online education when contacted to participate in an interview.

> *I would be happy to participate in your research. Before you include me, I just wanted you to know we really don't do much fully online.*
>
> *We don't have a huge online presence, but if I can contribute something meaningful to your work, I am glad.*

These are far from groundbreaking findings, but the responses are notable for two reasons. First, they provide some indication for how unprepared and hard hit some institutions would be in the coming months as the pandemic forced them to move a significant amount of their instruction online, often without the necessary expertise or technological infrastructure. Secondly, the best information in Canada showed that almost all Canadian colleges and universities were engaged in online education (Bates, et al., 2017), but these responses indicate that the level of engagement in online education is significantly more unequal and more nuanced than these statistics suggest.

Prior to the pandemic, other CICan institutions were heavily engaged in online education and offered a more robust, wider array of online professional development opportunities.

- *Faculty training and support is important to us. It is important to note that **all** faculty support and training (excluding the Instructional Skills Workshop) is offered online.*

- *Everyone is online; that is just how we do business.*

- *Our institution is moving towards integrating online teaching as part of the ongoing way we deliver programming; online teaching has been (for the most part) part of the full-time, permanent part-time faculty regular duties. It will continue to be the model; with an increased component of the duties being a remote teaching component.*

Even though this study includes a small sample, it shows a spectrum that prior to the pandemic, some institutions were not engaged in online education, where others had fully developed support unites that had been involved in online education for years and were in the process of maturing and expanding their offerings. These widely divergent responses indicate that institutional engagement existed on a developmental spectrum in relationship to online learning before the pandemic. Even though institutions existed on a wide spectrum in their professional development services for online faculty, they all shared awareness of part-time faculty and the unique challenges in serving them.

**Awareness of the Vernacular Reality of Part-Time Faculty.**

The *vernacular reality* (Franklin, 1990) is the reality of everyday people in everyday life.  The heads of teaching and learning centres for CICan institutions (or their designated equivalents) interviewed in this study demonstrated awareness that the challenges of providing professional development to part-time faculty arose directly from the part-time faculty members' everyday reality.

- *The life of the part-time faculty members can be busy with other things – parenting, other jobs, etc. Part-time faculty don't have time to do extra professional development, training, or one-on-one sessions with teaching and learning staff.*

- *Instructors are not financially compensated for taking part in professional development. Although many instructors do choose to be involved and there is a certain expectation that they can meet the requirements of their role, it can add up to many extra hours and some of the part-time instructors have other jobs and obligations that prevent them from engaging in professional development.*

These comments demonstrate institutional awareness of the unique needs of contingent faculty, and many teaching and learning centres reported attempting to reach part-time instructors either through specialized programming or by making services and offerings available on-demand.

Two of the larger institutions reported a strategic focus on this subgroup of faculty and that their efforts had produced positive connections:

- *My unit has a history of encouraging sessional faculty to be involved in all our programming. Our new faculty orientation typically has more sessional faculty than tenure-track faculty, and a lot of sessional faculty attend our workshops and events.  We have sessional faculty in all our communities of practice and we provide funding that is specific to sessional faculty for developmental purposes. So, in terms of allocation of resources, I think we've*

> *done a fair job of ensuring that sessional faculty have access to all the same resources that full-time faculty get.*
>
> - *We have really focused on this demographic in recent years and ensuring that they are included in all professional development opportunities. Communication and promotion is top of mind for this group.*

The targeted, inclusive approach detailed above demonstrates that some institutions are aggressively reaching out to sessional faculty to offer comprehensive professional development programs. Efforts exist, but theses types of approaches may be rare, unfruitful, or reach only a small number of sessional faculty. Most of the other directors suggested that invitations to part-time faculty had resulted in limited uptake.

> *It's very unequal. Our sessionals are not paid for professional development and do it off their own back. Some have the time and inclination to participate in professional development; most don't. Sometimes, new faculty part-time hires didn't receive our communications so they battled through the semester without knowing we existed.*

These comments reveal that prior to the pandemic, engagement in online education was widely variable, and uneven participation in online education led to uneven approaches to serving part-time faculty with professional development programs. This widely diverse institutional preparation and readiness begins to sketch out the contested space of professional development for online educators, best exemplified in the following comment:

*The tendency for online courses to be assigned to sessional faculty rather than to the full-time faculty creates a systematic imbalance in how much attention is paid to issues about online education, because sessional faculty don't have as much of a voice on governance committees or in decisions about budget priorities. Many departments and faculties treat online courses as a necessary evil rather than valid educational opportunities. Further, because sessional faculty are in tenuous positions and often have to teach at multiple institutions in order to have a full career, there is a tendency for the online courses to not be updated regularly and for corners to be cut. This perpetuates the impression that online courses are second-best because they don't get the same attention or investment that we see for many face-to-face courses, or any courses taught by full-time faculty who often have more time for course development.*

This interview comment provides strong evidence that most directors of teaching and learning are not just aware of the vernacular reality of part-time online faculty; they are also acutely aware that the vernacular reality of online contingent faculty impacts educational quality, especially when institutional structures foster inequality between face-to-face and online courses. The *vernacular reality* of the part-time online instructor (working multiple jobs and excluded from governance structures) impacts the quality of online education in a perpetual cycle where corners are cut (courses are not evergreened), resulting in a substandard educational product that reinforces the perception that online courses are second-rate, further justifying the move to give sessional faculty the "necessary evil" of teaching online. This comment captures that the systemic barriers faced by online contingent faculty (a lack of time for uncompensated professional

development) are intensified by institutional procedures, it creates a vicious cycle where the perception of online education as second-best reinforces that reality.

All of the directors of teaching and learning centres interviewed for this study were aware some part-time instructors faced unique challenges that could impact educational quality, but only three of the 12 expressed having some success in providing professional development services to this faculty subgroup. Because of the widely variable approaches and sizes of teaching and learning centres, the next section outlines the systemic barriers faced when providing services to part-time faculty teaching primarily online, followed by the innovative approaches some Canadian institutions are taking to serve part-time faculty teaching online. It then outlines specific conflicts between the technological and pedagogical paradigms that all teaching and learning centres faced before returning to enduring conflicts around quality and its relationship to professional development.

### Barriers

In the interviews, the directors detailed a wide array of services available to part-time faculty, including formal programs such as new faculty orientations and informal *coffee shop* sessions offering opportunities for conversation and discussion that became particularly important during the pandemic. Monthly newsletters and tips and tricks sheets were another informational tool mentioned by over half the directors that informed faculty of new video resources available on online/blended teaching and learning topics, examples of the one-on-one supports available to faculty, and discipline-specific pedagogies and approaches. Yet, even when teaching and learning centres could provide

professional development services, it was not guaranteed that part-time faculty would take advantage of them, demonstrating that access to professional development offerings is not sufficient to overcome the structural and human resource barriers that stand in the way of professional development participation.

**Table 2**

*Overview of Major Barriers and Solutions Identified in the Email Interviews*

| Barriers | Solutions |
|---|---|
| *Human Resources*<br>• Not compensated<br>• No time<br>• Work multiple jobs<br>• Don't know centres exist | *Human Resources*<br>• Compensate for time involved in PD |
| *Human Resources – Teaching Identity*<br>• Teaching is not their "real job"<br>• Self-limiting beliefs | *Human Resources – Teaching Identity*<br>• Implement holistic frameworks, such as European Framework for Digital Competencies |
| *Structural/Human Resources*<br>• Small institutions lack capacity<br>• PT faculty are excluded from governance structures | *Structural/Human Resources*<br>• Organizational restructuring<br>• Faculty secondments to the T&L<br>• Formal mentoring programs<br>• Informal professional learning opportunities, such as faculty learning communities<br>• Supplemental professional development |

- *Scheduling faculty development offerings for the part-time remote instructor is near impossible. Typically, the majority of part-time faculty do not attend given distance, cost, and time commitments. We often find that several of the part-time instructors who teach online are contracted to more than one postsecondary institution, so we run into conflicts.*

- *We have many great offerings, but what we do find a challenge is that professional development is not always required, and then knowledge gaps become evident. There are differing opinions about whether professional development should be mandatory or not, and this can put educational developers in a tough spot if a casual instructor is required to do unpaid professional development, they may not approach it with the same enthusiasm.*

These comments reveal enduring difficulty about handling micro-level details, such as being able to offer professional development at the right time, and about higher-level, institutional decisions, such as requiring part-time instructors to participate in mandatory but uncompensated professional development. Some directors said that even when the collective agreement included compensation for professional development and non-classroom hours, sessional contract dates did not always align with professional development offerings, and even if they did, part-time online faculty were unlikely to access professional development because of the vernacular reality barriers already mentioned (distance, time, and cost commitments). One suggested that the part-time faculty most likely to participate in professional development were those motivated to secure a more permanent position.

Overall, directors hoped these generic professional development offerings would reach some or all part-time instructors, but several expressed doubts that providing access to these training resources would be sufficient for serving them.

*Sessionals are badly served. They get an uneven quality of information from their departments, are paid less for the same work, and are poorly connected to support systems like the teaching center. They rarely access the services that are available to them, and typically don't respond to surveys and focus groups about what they might like. Anecdotal conversations tell us they never get the communication in the first place, and when they do, they have other jobs that they describe as more pressing than accessing professional learning, even if it is asynchronous or just resource materials they could access at a personally convenient time.*

Again, the vernacular reality of part-time faculty (insufficient time and/or willingness to participate in professional development because of lack of compensation for participation) presents formidable if not insurmountable barriers when teaching and learning centres attempt to serve part-time instructors. The little communication between and with part-time faculty about professional development offerings makes it difficult to conduct a professional development needs assessment and build appropriate services. Beyond these formidable barriers, the directors also noted specific barriers to adequately serving online instructors, including the lack of a teaching identity.

**Teaching Identity.**

When asked about the biggest barrier to providing service to part-time online instructors, several directors did not primarily mention the practical and logistical barriers outlined above. Instead, they mentioned the teaching identity.

- *I would say the biggest challenge is guiding faculty from industry on the 'how-to-teach,' at the same time as the 'how to teach online.' This is a difficult transition.*

- *We are offering a lot to support faculty, but many of them are not taking advantage of what is being offered because self-limiting beliefs, fear of technology, fear of being judged, not seeing themselves as teachers, resistant to teaching online, etc.*

The lack of a fully formed teaching identity served as a barrier especially at those CICan institutions heavily involved in trades programming, where trades instructors did not see themselves represented in professional development offerings.

> *Our trades faculty want trades-specific assistance with technology. Some of them felt that the existing training sessions were too fast or assumed too much foundational knowledge so they couldn't keep up. In my experience with other teaching and learning centres, I have seen this before where trades faculty wish to have bespoke offerings or services in addition to what already exists for the 'academic' faculty.*

Teaching identity is a complex and multifaceted concept (Noonan, 2018), but these interview excerpts highlight both the need for discipline-specific educational developers to help form the teaching identity, along with trainings targeted at self-limiting beliefs that build the teaching identity, suggesting teaching and learning centres are best able to provide professional development when they can differentiate by discipline and go beyond building comfort with teaching tools. These specific challenges were exacerbated at institutions with small or new teaching and learning centres.

**Structural / Human Resources.**

Some of the directors interviewed in this study came from institutions with new and/or small teaching and learning centres. Smaller institutions with underdeveloped teaching and learning centres lack both the organizational structure and the human resource capacity to provide professional development opportunities for different types of faculty. Small teaching and learning centres must be perceived as both a *structural* and a *human resources* barrier to providing quality professional development to part-time online instructors because the *structural frame* seeks to achieve institutional goals by making sure an organization has the appropriate structures (roles) to fit an organization's goals, including its technological needs, and these structural needs an often be attained by having the right human resources in place. Some institutions possessed mature and sophisticated teaching and learning centres capable of attempting creative solutions, but smaller institutions with limited capacity found it more difficult to overcome the barriers of providing educational development to part-time online instructors because they lacked structure and personnel.

- *My hiring was the institution's first time having any kind of educational development position, so there was nothing at all in place when I began.*
- *The only thing I wish we had in place right now is a larger team, because I remain a team of one for now.*
- *At the moment, I am a department of one. I would love to have more people who can offer one-on-one support for faculty who require step-by-step*

> *assistance with basic technology. We also need more instructional designers*
>
> *to help with creating quality courses online.*

The structural and human resource limitations present barriers on both sides of the service delivery model. The teaching and learning centre (the organizational structure with the role to provide professional development) must be able to provide programs and services in a way that part-time faculty teaching online (the human resources) can participate in. Even if teaching and learning centres overcome structural or expertise deficiencies, they may not be able to overcome the barriers that part-time online faculty face. In these cases, the vernacular reality of the teaching and learning centre *and* the vernacular reality of the part-time faculty compound each other to make the provision of educational development more difficult.

Despite these barriers, the COVID-19 pandemic forced teaching and learning centres into a space where they needed to innovate and find solutions. Even smaller educational development units needed to overcome their shortcomings, and they did so through creative collaborations. One director put it this way: *"We have begged, borrowed, and stolen ideas from other colleges and universities."* The next section outlines some of the creative solutions and innovative approaches teaching and learning centres implemented to support the massive shift to online education.

### Innovations

Prior to the pandemic, one of the teaching and learning centres included in this study, a larger community college, provided a glimpse into implementable innovations to better serve part-time online faculty. This institution offered a self-paced course designed for

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online instructors that focused on the role of an online instructor, consideration of online learner demographics, research into significant trends in online learning, and personalized adaptation of best practices in online education to personal teaching practice. This program was the most elaborate and mature professional development program designed specifically for part-time online instructors that recognized their unique needs and situation. It included the major elements of successful professional development programs outlined in Chapter Two, including curricular elements, course design, time, duration, and active learning. In addition to this robust, targeted offering, the analysis of the interview data also revealed that teaching and learning centres were responding in innovative ways to primarily serve all faculty, with the hope that these efforts would reach part-time instructors, as well. The following section outlines the innovative ways teaching and learning centres strived to expand their role and services in exceedingly difficult and demanding times.

**Teaching Identity.**

Recognizing that the lack of a fully formed teaching identity impacted educational quality, several directors began implementing holistic frameworks to structure professional development efforts and help instructors form a teaching identity. This section provides three examples of such holistic efforts to build a digital educator identity.

> *I am currently looking at the European Framework for Digital Competencies for Educators with some slight adaptations to meet our needs. This framework will allow us to connect digital competencies with teaching and learning, professional expectations, and learner needs. I hope this will help all of our faculty to gain*

> *clarity on what is expected of them as educators and provide them with options*
>
> *and resources/supports to build on areas where they wish to grow and learn.*

The European Framework for Digital Competencies (Redecker, 2017) begins with

*professional engagement,* which includes a focus on professional interactions with

colleagues, learners, and other interested parties for their individual professional

development, "and for the collective good and continuous innovation in the organization

and the teaching profession" (p. 19). This program would form the structure of an

organizational teaching and learning framework that would be adapted to account for the

unique needs of part-time faculty, and the framework accounts for teaching and identity

by emphasizing professional collaboration, individual and collective reflection, and using

digital sources for continuous professional development.

> Another example adapted a K-12 framework for the postsecondary environment:
>
> *We are using Charlotte Danielson's work from Enhancing Professional Practice*
>
> *to unpack quality instruction. We have revised the work which was developed as*
>
> *a meta-analysis of K-12 work and modified it to represent adult learning. There*
>
> *are four domains of practice: Planning, Classroom Environment, Instruction and*
>
> *Professional Responsibilities – which provide vocabulary and rubrics to self-*
>
> *evaluate and also provide a research-based framework to use as a lens to analyze*
>
> *and deconstruct educational practices. Our chairs and deans have seen this work*
>
> *and some of the chairs are already using it to enrich their pedagogical knowledge*
>
> *and vocabulary when working with faculty.*

Danielson's *Enhancing Professional Practice* framework begins with a commitment to

continual professional development; "It is essential that all educators recognize that the

work of professional learning never ends; it is a career-long endeavor" (Danielson, 2008,

p. 15). In addition to the formulation of a teaching identity grounded in professional

learning, Danielson's (2008) framework also emphasizes the importance of a teaching

community by focusing on the role of administrators to provide both time and support.

Finally, a third example used Maxwell's Fail Forward model as a way to

approach faculty teaching online for the first time.

> *Faculty need to be comfortable using technology and feel safe to make mistakes*
>
> *(based on Maxwell's Fail Forward). Faculty are encouraged to try new things to*
>
> *motivate and engage students, particularly in synchronous classes. If new*
>
> *initiatives do not work, it is ok with us, and it is considered a lesson learned!*

Maxwell's conception of failing forward addresses the construction of a teaching identity

by separating the self from teaching performance so that one's self image is not dictated

by external events (John Maxwell Company, 2011). Failing forward is a strengths-based

approach where failure is perceived as a momentary event so that individuals can be

encouraged to find the approach that works and bounce back so that past missteps do not

attack self-confidence.

Implementing these three holistic professional development approaches to build a

teaching identity were all in development, and they were often preceded by and paired

with more immediate and practical programs, such as faculty secondments and mentoring

programs to expand capacity and build community.

**Structural / Human Resources.**

Teaching and learning centres often expressed frustration because it was

impossible to serve instructors they did not know were teaching at the institution,

instructors who did not know what a teaching and learning centre offered, or even that it existed. Several directors noted strengthening connections with human resources department to access institutional records to identify and proactively reach out to instructors deemed of highest priority for support. High-priority groups varied by institution, but they typically included new instructors, trades instructors, faculty with low technological competence, or faculty teaching specific types of courses, such as hyflex courses that simultaneously combine students who attend on-site and distance students connecting via web-conferencing tools. In addition to strengthening connections with human resources departments to identify and connect with new and online instructors, teaching and learning centres were also expanding their structural and human resources capacities through the following programs.

### *Faculty Secondments.*

As noted in the discussion of barriers, smaller teaching and learning centres were struggling to expand their capacity to serve trades faculty and serve a spectrum of needs. One immediate solution explored by several institutions involved hiring part-time faculty or instituting faculty secondments, especially for trades instructors.

- *We have a trades instructor who has now been dedicated to supporting the online teaching needs of trades faculty specifically. He is helping them get their materials online, designing assessments, ad hoc training, etc.*

- *We seconded a trades instructor who has a lot of experience putting his own courses online to work directly with trades faculty whenever they have questions or need assistance with the learning management system and other technology-related issues.*

The secondment of faculty with disciplinary expertise and experience teaching online presented itself as a necessary, common-sense, practical strategy to expand capacity to meet faculty needs. Another programmatic structure designed to meet the human resource needs of online contingent faculty included intentional mentoring efforts.

### *Mentoring Programs.*

Novice online instructors often begin their teaching positions without a teaching identity and without adequate knowledge of teaching skills and strategies. Mentoring can be a successful strategy to reduce the isolation that part-time faculty experience and improve the teaching skills of part-time instructors (Knowles, 2020). Some of the directors expressed a desire to expand and improve their mentoring programs, and many of these efforts were underway.

- *We are working on streamlining a mentorship program for faculty, particularly for new hires who come from industry, such as health and trades professionals. Currently, a mentorship program is in place, but it is more ad-hoc than we would like, and sometimes new faculty fall through the cracks.*

- *We are creating an online Faculty Learning Community that is specific to online instructors, with one of our ed developers embedded in the FLC so that we can provide targeted supports based on what online faculty need as it occurs to them. An online FLC would provide greater flexibility and access for faculty who may not come to campus.*

Directors expressed the important need to have formal mentoring relationships in place for part-time online faculty so that they were supported by an experienced faculty member in a relevant discipline. Formal mentorship programs were proposed to

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strengthen relationships within the teaching community and reduce the isolation of teaching online. Many others were engaging in informal mentoring opportunities, and the comment below is typical of this common approach:

> *To strengthen the community of online/remote teaching faculty (which, right now, is pretty much 90% of the faculty), we conduct conversation sessions (community of practice) where faculty have the opportunity to share their best practices, challenges, ask questions, and work toward solutions. This has been very successful and sessions are well-attended.*

This emphasis on strengthening the community served as the foundation for faculty secondments, formal mentorship programs, and informal mentoring opportunities. These new programming structures addressed human resource needs, but in some cases, the pandemic caused larger scale organizational restructuring.

### *Organizational Restructuring.*

At the beginning of the pandemic, larger institutions already heavily involved in online education frequently had a specific unit or units responsible for various aspects of online education. *Our distributed learning department used to exclusively deal with distance or online learning and have been teaching online for 20 years or so.* This quote indicates that the time when this unit "used to" deal exclusively with online education was coming to an end. Four of the twelve directors reported large scale organizational restructures informed and prompted, in part, by what they observed about online education during the pandemic.

- *The college used to have a centre for teaching and learning, a program development office, and a quality assurance department. These are being brought*

> *under one umbrella so that they can do things in a more coordinated and coherent function.*

- *At my institution, elearning was historically part of Information Technology rather than associated with the academic side of the house. Their methods were very top-down (but with very little focus on a broader institutional plan, or any focus on pedagogy or faculty input). The people in charge were not really 'education' folks. The biggest functions were to manage the LMS and provide training for its basic use, and to create online courses where the intellectual property belonged to the institution and could be 'taught' by any instructor. That unit provided no development support for faculty beyond teaching them where to click in in the LMS. Over the past couple of years, there have been some changes. The elearning unit was moved away from IT and into the academic side. Our two units now share physical space and report to the same person. There is pressure for us to collaborate and to have shared goals. This has been a bit rocky, with some territoriality and miscommunication. I suspect there will be some further structural changes with the goal of creating more streamlined approaches to online teaching, LMS management, faculty development, and governance.*

These quotes reveal that the institutional structures and the process of streamlining can be, and often is, subject to political negotiation and bargaining. This latter quotation, especially, highlights historical structural conflict when online learning was not considered core and was separate from main teaching and learning activities and supports. It also points to enduring tensions between the technological paradigm (represented by information technology) and pedagogical paradigms (represented by the

teaching and learning centre). Furthermore, these comments give some indication that online education had been unbundled (courses can be taught by anyone), and institutions may be re-bundling these various functions (information technology services, teaching and learning, and quality insurance) to increase institutional efficiency, improve the learning experience, and/or gain control over quality.

Secondments, formal and informal mentoring programs and opportunities, and organizational restructuring all represented permanent structural changes designed to meet the specific human resource demands of online faculty. Outsourcing must also be added as a strategy to expand teaching and learning offerings that some institutions are exploring.

### *Supplemental Professional Development.*

Directors of teaching and learning centres, especially those in smaller institutions, were also exploring various forms of either monetizing their professional development offerings through continuing studies offices or subscribing to services to expand their capacity and supplement their offerings. 4 of the 12 specifically mentioned investing in LinkedIn Learning or offering micro-credentials through their institution's continuing education department.

- *We offer an essential skills for instructors program, a non-credit faculty development program geared towards those who come from industry to teach in the institution, and also for those who are making the transition to online teaching from face-to-face environments. Our continuing education department hires a contractor to facilitate the program. There is a cost associated, but our*

*professional development fund covers the cost for instructors to take this*

*program.*

At the present time, all teaching and learning centre directors who mentioned offering continuing education micro-credentials through their continuing education departments were planning to pay for their instructors, including part-time online instructors, to participate in these programs.

In response to the many barriers inhibiting the delivery of professional development programs to part-time faculty teaching online, teaching and learning centres responded by innovating and introducing holistic ways to build a teaching identity. To expand their capacity and strengthen the teaching community, teaching and learning centres were also implementing faculty secondments, formal mentoring programs, and informal mentoring sessions, communities of practice, and faculty learning communities. There was also some evidence that some institutions were expanding their reach and supplementing their programs by purchasing subscription services, such as LinkedIn Learning, or hiring external contractors to offer continuing education micro-credentials. In other areas of educational development, conflicts remained unresolved, such as the tension between technology and teaching.

**Conflict Between the Technological and Pedagogical Paradigms.**

Duus (2009) notes conflict between his four ideal elearning paradigms. The *technological paradigm* views e-learning as a technological challenge primarily to deliver content. The *pedagogical paradigm* prioritizes teaching strategies, and educational developers have argued that technology should not drive the services

provided by teaching and learning centres (Grabove, et al., 2012). Educational

developers tend to reside within the pedagogical paradigm and use technology to support

pedagogy. This research study looked for evidence of conflict between these two

paradigms, and as the following examples highlight, conflicts between the technological

and pedagogical paradigms arose in at least three different dimensions: the tendency for

technology to displace teaching, faculty resistance, and online proctoring.

### *Technology Before Teaching.*

Almost every director of teaching and learning interviewed for this study said

something to this effect: *For the educational developer, there is no difference between*

*face-to-face and online. There is always a solution. We stress active learning in face-to-*

*face environments, and we stress interactive learning in the transition to online. There is*

*always a digital equivalent.* Even though educational developers often see equivalent

teaching approaches in both face-to-face and online teaching environments, directors

expressed frustration that faculty struggled to use the technological teaching tools, and

this struggle with teaching tools distracted from the higher goal of using technology to

teach.

- *In the hierarchy of needs, people are in urgent need of technology training, so*
  *teaching and learning is being left for some time in the future when they 'have*
  *more time.' Finding a way to put teaching and learning first is one of my biggest*
  *challenges with any of our faculty.*

- *Technical vs pedagogical focus: I realize that these are not mutually exclusive,*
  *but often the challenges of learning new tools and technologies must be*
  *addressed before we can get into more substantial conversations around how an*

*instructor would like to teach, meaningful assessment, etc. Sometimes there just isn't time to have both sides of the conversation. Thus, the pedagogy is often overlooked in favor of creating a product.*

Teaching effectiveness is marginalized by the technology. The challenge of putting teaching first crystallized around assessment and online proctoring which became a major source of conflict during the pandemic.

### *Assessment and Online Proctoring.*

The COVID-19 pandemic forced many institutions into a series of philosophical discussions and choices about whether they would support online proctored exams, and if so, what online proctoring company would they select, and would they implement online proctoring using an institutional pay model or a student pay model, thus passing assessment costs along to students. Most of these decisions took place quickly and did not allow for the process of constructive alignment.

- *Theoretically, when the course curriculum is designed, assessment of learning is tailored to the learning outcomes for each course and should address the learning at the appropriate level of taxonomy. In practice, this is a challenging task as many faculty prefer relying on the exams through a lock-down browser as it is an easy way to create, maintain, and mark the assessments. Our provost issued a guideline last Spring for only using traditional testing options in extenuating circumstances (apprenticeship) and moving all assessment to alternative assessment options. My unit has been overwhelmed with requests to make this happen.*

- *Our online courses (until recently) had an expectation of an in-person proctored exam, and many online courses had a stipulation that passing the final exam was necessary to earn course credit. This was intended as a check against academic integrity violations, but also so that some faculty didn't have to have thoughtful pedagogy for their assessments. If that sounds bitter, then you're interpreting my statements correctly.*

- *[There is] great mistrust in learners regarding academic integrity (in assignments and exams). [There is] great resistance in some faculty to step away from traditional testing and look at alternative forms of assessment.*

- *Our provost issued a guideline on not using traditional testing (except in special circumstances). In response to this, I have created a role of assessment advisor who is offering assessment clinics each week as well as ongoing individual/program consultations. We have developed/are developing several assessment workshops (i.e. basics of alternative assessment, rubrics, online assessment tools – basic and advanced.*

Intrusive privacy concerns from students and faculty forced senior academic leadership at a few of the institutions in this study to issue a guideline forcing faculty to move away from final exams towards alternative assessments. This decision overwhelmed teaching and learning centres, who in one instance altered positions to create an assessment specialist. At most institutions, teaching and learning centres were exhausted by requests to create alternative assessments for faculty *and* training other faculty and students in how to use the online proctoring tools allowed by their institutions.

Teaching and learning centres attempted to navigate this crucial conflict between the technological and pedagogical paradigm by providing assessment specialists to design alternatives to final exams, and by creating academic integrity modules and resources for faculty. Taken together, technology's tendency to displace teaching, and discomfort with online proctoring surveillance raised concerns about the quality of online education.

### Symbolic Frame

The *symbolic frame* uses institutional narratives and micronarratives to establish meaning. Symbolically, several of the directors interviewed for this study were experienced online educators who expressed a commitment to the goals of online education, best represented in the comments that follow:

- *I am a huge proponent of online education. This is not solely because my institution offers most programming online, but also because I have been an online educator, I have completed a degree online, and I am a doctoral candidate in an online program. I believe education changes lives, and online education is a mechanism where the masses can be reached.*

- *I'm a huge fan of accessibility, and I think that the increase in online education will allow more people to complete postsecondary credentials or professional development in a way that fits their lifestyle. Removing barriers to education is very important to me.*

Even though directors of teaching and learning voiced strong support throughout the interviews for the potential and the promise of online education, many also expressed concern about how online education is often implemented and deployed, based on their

direct experience and observations. These conversations reveal a political battle over the soul of online education.

**Quality.**

- *I was chair of a very busy academic department with a relatively large number of online course options. In addition to our first-year survey courses, our department offered roughly a dozen online courses (at least 50 total sections per year, and all tended to be quite full). All were courses that were necessary for degree completion and were offered in tandem with their in-person versions. They were offered throughout the year, and most of our students took at least one online course as part of their degrees. I collected data for a number of years, looking at student grade outcomes, as well as drop rates and student course evaluation data. Online courses in my department had lower student satisfaction, lower student grades (controlling for students' average GPA), and higher rates of dropping or non-completion. Some were better than others, of course.*

- *I am concerned about increases in online learning opportunities that are driven by perceived financial benefits with little or no focus on meaningful or higher-level learning outcomes (huge online classes with minimal assessments, standalone modules without interactive opportunities, fact-based rather than skill-based assessments). I worry about online education being forced on students rather than being available as one of many excellent options.*

This gap between directors' personal belief and commitment to the goals and promise of online education, and their experiences and fears about the potential future of increased low-quality offerings, often forced directors of teaching and learning centres to enter the highly contentious, unpleasant, sensitive, and tricky area of quality assurance.

### *Quality Assurance and Minimum Standards.*

When looking toward the future of professional development for online education and part-time faculty, the directors voiced a need for, but a begrudging reluctance to engage in, the development of minimum quality standards.

- *I wish we had sets of minimum standards that would govern what tools/skillset faculty need to have/standards they need to adhere to, to successfully teach online/remote courses. Such standards might address what you need to set up a "good online" course; it might also address the curriculum standards for an online course; technology standards for teaching remotely, minimum standards for quality/interactivity of instruction, etc. I think these are really important to have to ensure the quality of instruction. We are just now starting to talk about the development of some of these.*

- *We currently do not have any formal process of evaluating/assessing the quality and effectiveness of our online programming. Like many institutions, we are in the works to create a suite of minimum standards for online curriculum, online teaching, quality & interactivity of instruction, as well as standardized course evaluations.*

- *Without a focus on quality instruction we would not have academic credibility, student referrals, and the kind of results we have come to place on ourselves as a college.*

Comments regarding quality were ascribed to the symbolic frame because the symbolic frame establishes meaning and tells the story of who the institution believes itself to be. The symbolic frame focuses on the mission, core values, and stories of meaning, but the directors were also very aware of the highly political nature of quality assurance. Directors variously called their participation in quality assurance efforts as a *delicate dance* and a *very fine line.* One director expressed this dance on a tightrope in the following way:

> *We are not the course police. We don't want to be the ones scrutinizing programs and courses. We don't do this for face-to-face courses. But when we see inconsistencies in syllabi or that the instructor is not engaged and has not followed the advice for how to be online, someone has got to do something. We have had some quality assurance processes in course and program development, but not in delivery. I don't want faculty to see me in the judgment corner, but in order to give students the maximum experience, there has to be a standard way of doing things. Who's going to champion this? I guess I will. Carefully.*

This reluctant role to develop and implement minimum standards of quality instruction is reflective of a recommendation about online education made in the United States: "we should create and maintain a regulatory environment that supports the use of technology to supplement and strengthen the intrinsically interactive nature of teaching and learning" (Protopsaltis & Baum, 2019, p. 3). Any move towards the implementation of minimum

standards and the creation of a *regulatory environment* is likely to be highly contentious, but most important to directors of teaching and learning centres, it puts their relationships with faculty on the line.

Several directors described that the main challenge during the pandemic-induced shift to online learning was the cultural shift required for traditional face-to-face faculty to become open to and comfortable with the differences in online delivery. At the onset of the pandemic, many faculty were in a state of denial, discomfort, grief and fear regarding the task of transitioning to online instruction. The diversity in demographics, disciplines, online teaching experience, and personal readiness resulted in wide variance in the quality of online courses.

> *While some instructors (usually the younger ones, and often the sessionals) were open right from the start, by far the large majority of faculty ranged from skeptical to hostile regarding online teaching. As a result, a minority of faculty began the Fall term with excellent online/hybrid courses, another minority had made no modifications at all, and a slight majority had made some changes to their existing f2f courses to adjust for remote delivery.*

The diverse acceptance of teaching technologies, according to this director, varied according to age and faculty type, with sessional faculty being some of the most enthusiastic adopters of online delivery. This diverse comfort and acceptance of teaching technologies and online education resulted in a widely variable learning experience, which in turn led to a convergence in concerns about educational quality. By expanding their role in quality assurance, directors were acutely aware they were entering dangerous territory because their currency is faculty relationships, and they were reluctant to disturb

relationships with the faculty they described variously as *frequent flyers, high flyers,* and *the usual suspects* devoted to teaching excellence, who they had built strong and trusting relationships with over previous years. Did what they see from some faculty during the pandemic (a temporary situation) warrant making permanent changes? To paraphrase the question in Franklinian terms, did the accelerated technological development of online education reveal greater and more irreversible problems, or would expanding their role in quality assurance forever change the nature of educational development itself?

**Concluding Discussion – Email Interviews**

When discussing the unique needs of online contingent faculty, one director said, *we are all in the same storm, but we are certainly not all in the same boat.* Using the storm-as-metaphor, the pandemic thrust teaching and learning centres into a maelstrom and into the eye of the storm. The pandemic hit teaching and learning centres hard, but it also provided a temporary reprieve from budget discussions, and all the directors expressed some awareness that their institutional esteem had risen. Many felt confident, or at least less anxiety, that their teaching and learning centres would weather the upcoming budget battles as they watched others sink - *we did have a number of programs cancelled,* and *we saw student services reduced by 25%.* As one director put it, *Just before the pandemic began, I said to our Provost, 'This institution is about to discover it has a teaching and learning centre.'* This discovery means that, at least for the short term, teaching and learning centres' response to the pandemic has demonstrated their value and increased their importance, justifying small budget increases in some cases and hold-the-line budgets for others.

This relatively happy outcome for teaching and learning centres may be a different boat than the one contingent faculty are sailing in. As noted, the directors of teaching and learning centres interviewed in this study were keenly aware of the vernacular reality of their part-time online instructors, and some expressed concern about the futures of their contingent faculty.

> *I'm not sure that the plight of contingent faculty will get any better – online or otherwise – and I actually expect there will be fewer contingent faculty in the coming years. As budgets are slashed, contingent faculty are the first to go when sections are merged or canceled.*

How the pandemic has changed the future of professional development for online contingent faculty, both short-term and long-term, is hard to tell because, as the interviews reveal, participation in online education was widely variable before the pandemic, and not all institutions were equally well-equipped to deal with the storm that followed. Some institutions reported success in targeting and serving this population, but most hoped whatever programs and services they offered would reach contingent faculty.

The Canadian directors of teaching and learning centres interviewed for this study expressed the sentiment that the pandemic accelerated trends already underway. The pandemic provided the impetus to make decisions already being considered.

> *Our trades department is moving more courses online, and this has been a natural move given some of the challenges with class sizes, enrolments, tuition. Other departments are also reviewing potential offerings that may be better suited for online delivery.*

It also increased the number of faculty with online teaching experience, and these changes in instructional practice may become permanent.

> *The many tools like Padlet, Kahoot, etc., are now part of all faculty's repertoire and while instruction may not be fully online, I anticipate more variation in instruction with these new tools seeded throughout.*

To prepare themselves for these changes, many teaching and learning centres have experimented with new ways to provide professional development programs to part-time and online faculty, including self-directed courses that focus on the teaching identity, and formal and informal mentoring programs that strengthen the teaching community. Ongoing tensions remain between Duus' *technological paradigm* and *pedagogical paradigm,* where the focus on technology often displaces the focus on teaching activities and learning goals, and this conflict is most pronounced around creating alternatives forms of assessment and online proctoring.

The phase one document analysis showed that the political frame was largely absent in the controlled messaging of academic plans, but the email interviews revealed conflict in and around the human resources, structural, symbolic and political frames, especially with regard to quality. To address the conflicts in the human resources frame, teaching and learning centres were adapting their structures using faculty secondments and creating assessment specialists.  Conflicts within the structural frame became evident through internal reorganizations, where several institutions discussed creating new structures that would bring into closer alignment information technology services, teaching and learning centres, program development units and quality assurance functions. In Bolman and Deal's (1997) four-frame model, the largest area of conflict for

online education and professional development for part-time online instructors will likely swirl around the concept of quality, which can be understood both as a political conflict and a battle over the mythic life of an institution.

Franklin (1990) notes that when a process such as teaching moves from being a holistic to a prescriptive technology, control shifts to the manager. This happens because there are two primary orientations, planning to maximize gain or to minimize disaster. Faculty secondments, mentoring programs, and informal communities of practice can be seen as growth-oriented professional development strategies to maximize faculty gain, whereas organizational restructuring may be better viewed in Franklinian terms as *designs for compliance* to minimize disaster. Designing processes of oversight and control to minimize disaster often accompanies the speed and strength of technological spread, such as the rapid spread of online education during the pandemic. When holistic and prescriptive technologies for a choice between designs for gain or designs to minimize disaster, Franklin suggests there are two ways forward regarding technological implementation. The first way forward is to institutional and routinize technological structures and functions. When this happens, "users often become captive supporters" (p. 97) of a stagnant technology where improvements are cosmetic or marginal. When this happens, the technological development perceived to liberate its users can begin to enslave them, or at least control their actions. Quality assurance checkboxes and scorecards may be seen in this light.

The other way forward is to take a principled stance and put people in the centre of the technological process. Franklin argues that "all things change when one thing changes" (p. 103) and this can be true for the implementation of technology and the

principled stance to put the professional development needs of part-time online educators

first. As Franklin stresses, "the world of technology is the sum total of what people do"

(p. 123). Similarly, Pirsig (1999) describes quality in the following way:

> Quality tends to fan out like waves. The Quality job he didn't think anyone would
>
> see **is** seen, and the person who sees it feels a little better because of it, and is
>
> likely to pass that feeling on to others, and in that way the Quality tends to keep
>
> on going. My personal feeling is that this is how any further improvement of the
>
> world will be done: by individuals making Quality decisions, and *that's all.*
>
> (Pirsig, 1999, p. 367)

Pirsig's belief that quality fans out like waves suggests a direct relationship between

quality and professional development – quality sustains quality. In *Zen and the Art of*

*Motorcycle Maintenance,* quality is akin to excellence, and it is a deeply personal

undertaking that we pass on through individual decisions. We either make high-quality

decisions or low-quality decisions and pass that feeling on. In the realm of professional

development, individual decisions to create quality are often invisible, but these invisible

decisions are responsible for the improvement or degradation of online education, *and*

*that's all*. And that is everything.

Online education is superior for some students in some settings because it allows

them to manage multiple life engagements (family, work, and school). Many online

educational programs meet these learners' needs, and quality sustains quality – an

institutional investment in the professional development for online contingent faculty is

reflective of an institution's 'response-ability' (Sterling, 2004, p. 50) to recognize

opportunities to make sustainable decisions to reduce fragmentation and increase

participation and appreciation of their online contingent faculty. The paradigmatic and cultural shift is that online educational quality and sustainability is more than a change in teaching – from face-to-face to online education, or from teacher-centered to student-centered teaching practices. It is to recognize that the promise in online education does not rest with "just tools" (Kirkwood & Price, 2006), but with the teams of developers, designers and faculty who make quality decisions and then pass on quality teaching and learning experiences to their students.

Burrows, et al., (1992) argue quality is a variable philosophical concept, dependent on the criteria used by each individual stakeholder's position. This is true, but these individual criteria are not relativistic; they are positional and linked in a chained interaction within a nested hierarchy. King (1967) suggests we live in an inter-related structure of reality, best understood by the phrase that what affects one directly, affects all indirectly, and the quality of online instruction affects the institution, the academic program, other faculty and students. An example of this inter-related structure of reality is that an academic program's sustainability will be determined by the students, who make learning decisions based on the quality of the faculty member's decisions about course assessments; these course assessments may be based on the quality decisions made by an academic administrator, who set as a strategic priority the institutional need for alternative assessments; this policy may flow from a provincial framework that rewards funding to higher educational institutions based on how academic programs support labour market demands and human skills in an increasingly technological economy. A program review process will explore how labour market demands are

shifting and how curriculum needs to be adjusted to remain relevant. This chained

reaction is used to highlight the inter-related nature of quality to sustainability.

When the direct connection between quality and sustainability is clear – that quality

sustains quality – it becomes easy to see that quality is an "indefinable but fundamental

driver that causes everything to achieve ever-higher quality," and "such observations take

us beyond quality assurance as a mere box-ticking process of assessing predetermined

standards towards a culture of continuous improvement" (Latchem, 2014, pp. 313-314).

It will sound like a tautology, but it is not: quality programs are sustainable, and

sustainable programs possess quality. This is the essence of quality enhancement and

continuous improvement. Continuously improving programs enhances their quality and

likelihood of sustainability, and there is no better way to do this for online education than

by intentional professional development programs, especially those designed for this

"doubly invisible" (Meloncon, 2017) faculty subgroup of part-time instructors teaching

primarily online.

**Limitations to Phase Two**

Limitations to phase two include the interview sample, the nature of email

interviews, and the limitations of the analysis. Obtaining a sufficient number of

participants for the interviews proved difficult, and there are several provinces of Canada

not represented. The interview sample of 12 directors of teaching and learning centres

overrepresents Alberta and smaller teaching and learning and centres, and it is not clear

how this could skew the interpretation. Email interviews, as demonstrated in the quotes

used throughout, showed that they can provide great reflexivity, but securing enough

participants and enough data was likely hampered by the pandemic, when directors of

teaching and learning centres were overwhelmed by the task of transitioning their institutions to emergency remote instruction. The pandemic clouds all aspects of the analysis, and separating out the impact of the pandemic on professional development services for part-time online educators was a daunting challenge because providing professional development opportunities to part-time online faculty became subsumed within the larger challenge of equipping all faculty with the skills necessary to teaching online. Finally, as a director of a teaching and learning centre living through the pandemic, my experiences undoubtedly informed my interpretation, but participant quotes have been provided at length to establish trustworthiness through transparency.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter detailed the phase one document analysis of 17 academic plans covering the current period and the immediate futures, and the phase two email interviews of 12 directors of Canadian teaching and learning centres. An exploration of the *projected reality* sought to answer, *How are the professional development needs of online contingent faculty represented withing academic plans?* Phase one detailed that online faculty and their professional development needs were not represented within academic planning documents and political conflicts were also largely hidden. Major purposes for professional development included Indigenization, internationalization, and remaining relevant to industry.

The second phase consisted of email interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres answered the second research question: *How are the professional development needs of contingent online faculty being served by Canadian teaching and learning centres?* Prior to the pandemic, participation in online education was widely

variable, and professional development offerings for part-time online instructors were also widely variable. Two institutions reported specific, targeted programs for part-time faculty including self-paced courses that addressed online educator identity, unique needs of distance learners, and trends in online education. Several other teaching and learning centres were implementing innovative approaches to expand their capacity, build teaching identity, and strengthen the teaching community through faculty secondments, formal and informal mentoring programs. Enduring conflicts remain between the technological and pedagogical paradigms, specifically in terms of assessment and online proctoring. The quality of online education also remains, and will likely remain, a contested space.

The next chapter provides an integrated analysis answering the final research question: *What gaps, if any, exist between the projected reality of academic plans and the extended reality of teaching and learning centres in Canada?*

## Chapter 5. Gap Analysis

**Final Analysis**

This study first sought to determine if online contingent faculty are strategically viewed as an important and emerging subgroup of faculty within academic strategy documents belonging to CICan institutions covering the current period and immediate future. It then worked to map the contested space of professional development, including the barriers and innovative solutions to providing professional development to online contingent faculty within CICan membership institutions by interviewing a set of directors of Canadian teaching and learning centres. This chapter summarizes the major findings and gaps in relation to professional development for part-time and online educators, including a contemplation about the truly unique faculty development needs for part-time online educators. The chapter concludes by illustrating how Franklin's conception of redemptive technologies informs recommendations for how to attend to the unique professional developments needs for part-time online educators working within the gig academy.

This research study sought to answer the following research questions: *How are online faculty and their professional development represented in current Canadian postsecondary academic plans (the phase one document analysis of the projected reality of the future)?* Part-time and online faculty are almost completely absent within this set of academic plans covering the current period and immediate future, which now seem like ancient historical documents after the global pandemic-related shift to online education in 2020-2021. In this set of 17 contemporary artifacts from across Canada, professional development was strongly represented and appeared as an important tactic

to achieve institutional strategic initiatives including internationalization, Indigenization, supporting research and scholarly activity, and recruiting and retaining new faculty. Precisely because of the frequency and specificity of professional development's importance to other academic plan initiatives was it possible to assert that online education, online educators, and part-time faculty were marginally represented within these documents belonging to membership institutions of Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan). The document analysis showed that academic plans secreted internal conflicts, remaining faithful to Bolman and Deal's description of the political frame's role to control messaging for both internal and external audiences.

The absence of professional development to support online education is curious given the prevailing suggestions that almost all Canadian institutions are engaged in online education (Bates et al., 2017), and that many postsecondary administrators view online education as key to their digital futures. The absence of *part-time, contract, sessional* faculty is also curious because of the prevalence of these faculty within the Canadian professoriate. At the commencement of the study, one signpost of potential progress guided the inquiry. Mount Royal University's *Planning to flourish: Academic plan 2017-2022* signifies the importance of contract faculty by stating that "contract faculty are an integral part of the University and make many contributions" (2017, p. 20). In their academic plan, MRU commits to providing contract faculty with the services and resources necessary to be successful in their work, including "high quality professional development and teaching support" (p. 6), as well as the creation of a Statement of Principled Treatment for Contract Faculty. At the time of writing (April 2021), this Statement of Principled Treatment for Contract Faculty remains on the academic plan

implementation subcommittee's to-do list. Even without the details of the statement, however, MRU's academic plan remains an important outlier and serves as a model for the types of representation a future researcher might hope to find in 5 to 10 years because it includes strategic recognition of the contributions of sessional faculty, as well as regulations of their employment including access to high-quality professional development and teaching support.

The second research question asked, *how are the professional development needs of contingent online faculty being served by Canadian teaching and learning centres (the phase two email interviews of the extended reality)?* The email interviews, some of which spanned the entire pandemic year, reveal that the unique status and needs of part-time online faculty were subsumed within the greater and more immediate need to transition all faculty regardless of status to emergency remote instruction to continue providing education through digital means.  The email interviews with directors of teaching and learning centres recognize that part-time faculty are poorly served and poorly integrated, even if resources are provided on-demand and/or they are specifically invited to participate in professional development activities. Furthermore, the interviews reveal that even though the past year has been a difficult and trying one, the pandemic has spurred a period of intense, innovative activity and creativity to support faculty for online instruction. Many of these efforts and assets will likely form a strong foundation to build on for future development. Finally, the interviews describe the contested space of professional development for online faculty, including a renewed concern and focus on instructional quality, serious reservations about online proctoring, and a pressure to

return to normal as quickly as possible using emerging instructional approaches such as hyflex learning models.

This chapter now seeks to answer the final, integrated research question: *What gaps, if any, exist between the projected reality of academic plans and the extended reality of teaching and learning centres in Canada regarding the specific professional development needs of online contingent faculty?* In one respect, there is no gap. Part-time faculty were largely absent from the strategic academic documents, and they were admittedly not being well-served by the majority of teaching and learning centres, according to the directors interviewed in this study. If it is possible for a group of people to be triply invisible, this became the case for part-time online faculty during the pandemic. Sessional faculty are indispensable but invisible, part-time online faculty are doubly invisible (Meloncon, 2017), and contract faculty teaching online became triply invisible during the pandemic as teaching and learning centres, by necessity, focused their efforts on supporting all faculty in the transition to online instruction, leading one director to suggest, "We are all in the same storm, but we are definitely not all in the same boat."

As noted, adjunct faculty and sessional appointments are often excluded from workshops, courses or certificate programs offered to full-time faculty (VanLeeuwen, et al., 2020). Remote faculty are at a heightened disadvantage because of their short-term appointments, a lack of connection to their peers and institutions, and the additional demands of teaching online (Mueller, et al., 2013), further widening the gap between the services available for regular and sessional faculty. The skill deficit for online instructors may be further exacerbated by age and experience, leading Anthony et al., (2020) to

recommend that professional development opportunities for part-time instructors should go beyond allowing part-time online faculty to participate in general offerings or access asynchronous development opportunities that are available on demand. Specialized professional development opportunities must offer monetary incentives and account for participation in meaningful work, but apart from those important suggestions, how else should professional development opportunities for online contingent faculty be specialized?

One of the research participants asked the question in this way: *What's your sense of the support needs of part-time faculty members as distinct from 'regular' faculty members?* This inquiry goes to the heart of the study. Based on the research, the investigation of academic plans, interviews with colleagues, and my own experience as a director of teaching and learning within a CICan institution, the multifaceted concept of teaching identity provides a way of approaching a tentative and incomplete answer for several professional development gaps that remain for part-time online instructors, including instructional autonomy, assessment, and participation within a community.

### Teacher Identity

The construction of a teaching identity is a multi-faceted, layered, socially situated process that emerges and forms out of a teachers' sense of agency (Noonan, 2018). Cranton and Carrusetta (Cranton, 2006) outline five facets of authenticity that include a strong sense of identifying as a teacher, awareness of the characteristics and preferences of learners, and an awareness of the context and constraints of teaching and how these factors influence teaching decisions and identity. Conceived this way, an authentic teaching identity interweaves agency and identity; "teachers make and remake

themselves by drawing on their current self-conceptions and then acting in ways that seek to match those self-conceptions" (Buchanan, 2015, p. 705). The formation of a teaching identity is especially important for CICan institutions because of their more concentrated focus on vocational education and training, where instructors often hold a dual professional identity as industry experts and teachers.

The formation of a strong teacher identity takes place over time (McMurtrie, 2021b), and professional development plays an important role in identity development because individuals are shaped by their experiences within the various structures of their teaching activity (Buchanan, 2015). In the mind-world interactions of teachers, identity emerges from experience but also contributes to how teachers interpret and make meaning of their work, including their perception of and response to professional learning activities (Noonan, 2018). Because many part-time faculty are not required to possess teaching qualifications, and disciplinary expertise in itself has been seen as adequate preparation for teaching (Lucas, et al., 2012), part-time faculty members may not yet have formed a teacher identity or identify with the terms *teacher* or *educator* because they are primarily industry-experts who have not yet begun to develop their dual identity. This identity, or lack of, will flow into all pedagogical decisions and approaches.

Successful teachers must be experts in their area but also have a sound understanding of its pedagogy to effectively match the teaching and learning method to the needs of their students and their contexts (Lucas, 2014). Most professional development workshops, such as the Instructional Skills Workshop (originally designed in 1978 for industry-based educators to begin to build this second professional identity),

focus on teaching activities such as drafting learning outcomes and the employment of effective teaching practices such as participatory-learning, not on the development and formation of the teaching identity. Many vocational and technical educators may actually eschew the term *teacher* because of their primary professional identity (Tyler & Dymock, 2017), and learners lose out as a result of this missing element (Lucas et al., 2014).

Defining, building, expanding and/or transforming this dual identity is a challenge for all faculty, but the challenge is intensified for part-time online educators, where instructors may be unbundled from several other tasks of professional educators, including curriculum development, research and scholarly activity, and program review. If the building of the multi-faceted teaching identity is a lifelong process for full-time faculty that continues to develop throughout their careers, teacher identity requires more intentional development for someone who does not hold that self-conception, especially when teaching in trades and vocational education where the very word pedagogy "frightens the horses" (Orr & Robinson, 2013, p. 5). Based on the email interviews, the literature review, and experience, much more professional development could and should focus on the construction of the teaching self because the process of teacher preparation can bring about conflict in the identity formation process. This conflict arises when the theories and practices proposed by teaching and learning centres do not match what teachers have observed and experienced as students (Buchanan, 2015). This conflict can intensify when teaching online because the practice of teaching online may bear little to no resemblance with one's learning experience.

**Instructional Autonomy**

Instructional autonomy is one aspect or dimension of the professional teaching identity that allows for and encourages agency within the constraints and context educators operate within. For part-time faculty, this lack of autonomy can look and feel like this:

Many adjuncts are simply given a textbook and a syllabus and are then asked to teach course sections in classes they have never taught. This is of course a worst-case scenario, but one that is repeated at the beginning of every semester on college campuses around the United States. (Anthony, et al., 2020, p. 5)

Based on the interviews and the best Canadian research available (Pasma & Shaker, 2018), this worst-case scenario takes place across Canada as well, and the lack of preparation may be worse for online instructors. Regular faculty are often given academic freedom that may or may not extend to part-time faculty, especially those teaching online. Some have even suggested that the lack of autonomy for part-time online instructors (who may be told to just teach the course the way it was designed) justifies not offering professional development (Meloncon, 2018). Part-time instructors may not know who owns the intellectual property in their courses, and intellectual property and course ownership must become meaningful professional development topics for part-time instructors so that they have a clear understanding of their right and role in course ownership.

As noted by Meloncon (2018) in her study of part-time online educators, 39% reported possessing no instructional autonomy. Professional development programs designed for part-time online faculty would recognize the limitations these instructors

face and provide meaningful avenues for how they could exercise creativity and autonomy within these limits. Like the teaching identity, instructional autonomy is a complex concept, and addressing it in professional development programs does not present simplistic answers, but good teaching at the college level should "involve at least some measure of creativity and professorial autonomy over the conditions of faculty work" (Kim, et al., 2008, p. 177). Carusetta and Cranton (2009) highlight that Canadian community college educators often face a lack of autonomy which may be exacerbated when teaching online (Meloncon, 2017). Still, these educators "find interesting and innovative strategies for maintaining their stance as adult educators in a context that has many constraints against doing so" (Carusetta & Cranton, 2009, p. 76). Meaningful professional development for part-time online educators would seek to identify areas where these educators could enhance and exercise their professional autonomy, likely leading to greater satisfaction and strengthening professional identity.

### Assessment

Assessment is a perennial professional development topic for all faculty, but the best evidence available suggests that adjuncts use fewer practices that foster student success and learning, including collaborative and active learning strategies, and creating challenging assignments for students (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011; Kezar, et al., 2019; Umbach, 2007). Contract online instructors may be given mandated assessments for their courses that may not align with their teaching philosophy or allow for the exercise of instructional autonomy. Consequently, contingent faculty are least likely to understand the whys and hows of assessment (Scott & Danley-Scott), and studies suggest they also grade more leniently, perhaps as a job retention strategy (Ran & Xu, 2017).

Contingent faculty are less likely to engage in student-centered assessment practices, and this is important because assessment touches every aspect of the learning transaction. Assessment has been described as the heart of the student experience and as the single biggest influence on how students approach their learning (Rust, et al., 2005). Assessment tasks are integral to educational quality, and assessment shapes student behaviour; "students do what is rewarded" (Vaughn, et al., 2013, p. 42). Assessment design directs how students approach learning, and in its simplest terms, deep learning is good and surface learning is bad. When adopting a surface approach to learning, students tackle content as something that can be obtained in specific quantities through appropriate techniques. This mechanistic transfer of content is low-end e-learning (Conrad & Openo, 2018; Duus, 2009), and surface approaches to learning yield poor outcomes. Therefore, it is fair to say that "nowhere are the stakes and student interest more focused than on assessment" (Campbell & Schwier, 2014, p. 360), and while assessment is an enduring topic relevant to all faculty members, there are issues specifically relevant to part-time instructors, including recognition of the amount of time involved in providing meaningful, student-centred assessment practices. Assessment often includes providing meaningful feedback to students, and this is some of the hardest, most-time consuming work of teaching. Just like students will do what is rewarded, part-time faculty are more likely to engage in more meaningful forms of assessment if they are compensated accordingly.

In a review of 53,460 course sections at a North American university to determine grading leniency, Millet (2016) shows that grading leniency may be the result, not the cause, of low-grading reliability. Leniency would occur when faculty members suspect

their assessment methods are unreliable, where student performance requires subjective and complex judgment, or when there are badly designed and poorly executed assignments. Millet (2016) does not specifically mention contract faculty, but each of these dilemmas likely apply to part-time faculty, and the major findings may be extrapolated here, as well. Millet (2016) suggests that instructors who are tough risk receiving poor teaching evaluations, and tough graders would then have to "adapt or face extinction" (Millet, 2016, p. 9). Precariously employed faculty facing extinction (unemployment) serves as a valid motive for grading leniently.

Lenient and unreliable grading has an impact on educational quality, but when a group of lenient graders reaches a critical mass, whole academic departments could lower norms and undermine educational quality. Again, Millet (2016) does not specifically mention adjunct faculty, but lenient graders can cause divisions within an academic department or across them at the same time they provide students a false sense of their progress and capability (Arum & Roksa, 2014). Faculty should engage in more engaging and authentic assessment practices (Conrad & Openo, 2018), but that means faculty will be measuring what is hard rather than what is easy, thereby making assessment more difficult and more subjective. Part-time online faculty need support in designing assessments that align to learning outcomes, leverage the affordances of technology, and allow them to assess complex skills. But they must also receive this support within professional development programs that recognize their unique working conditions by recommending reasonable assessment strategies that allow for some instructional autonomy and are cognizant of their economic realities and the increased pressure to achieve favourable student ratings.

**Developmental Spectrum**

The interviews indicated that educational development units face the same challenges of faculty teaching a classroom of 300 students; all learners exist along a developmental spectrum, but most professional development opportunities, like most other teaching and learning environments, have a group of learners inhabiting the same learning environment and encountering the same material, which is why a professional development opportunity can be transformative for some and unenlightening for others (Noonan, 2018). The professional development needs for faculty will vary on the subject area, the instructor's prior teaching experience, the comfort with certain instructional modalities, and their instructional beliefs (Conrad & Openo, 2018; VanLeeuwen, et al., 2020). In addition to this, most pedagogical training is focused on new instructors but may be unavailable for sessional instructors or meet the advanced needs of experienced educators (VanLeeuwen, et al., 2020). Therefore, teacher development for part-time online educators must provide differentiated, unique challenges and fresh opportunities to instructors according to their need, experience, and skill level. Designing these individually-tailored learning experiences runs counter to the demands, experienced intensely during the pandemic, to provide professional development at scale.

This will become increasing important as educational development evolves because there will increasingly be a need to serve both novices who need orientation to proven and effective practices and faculty who have become more proficient online educators, who now desire opportunities to play with instructional designs and experiment with new engaging teaching tools. If Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (Flair, 2019) has any meaning as a way to conceive what a learner can and

cannot presently do without support, educational development opportunities and experiences must not be too advanced for the learner. Educational developers will need to provide tailored instruction to ensure they are providing professional development opportunities that allow educators to take their next step in the formation of their teaching identity and exercise autonomy to implement teaching practices and technologies they have no previous experience with, which may also include scholarly teaching or reflective practice.

### Compensation/PD Funds

Compensation and the creation of community are two additional elements that must be accounted for when considering the professional development needs of contract faculty teaching online. Universities and colleges "are among the least engaged workplaces in the world" that "are failing to maximize the potential of their biggest asset – their faculty and staff" (Gallup, n.d., para. 1). This lack of engagement incurs real costs in the form of negative outcomes related to transition, retention, persistence, graduation, transfer, and academic performance, particularly among first generation, low-income, and racially minoritized students (Kezar, et al., 2019, p. 99). It is a given in most places that full-time, regular faculty will be paid for their time in professional development activities, and some may even possess discretionary funds to attend conferences to maintain their research profiles and stay current in the discipline. Compensation for participation is often not extended to part-time faculty. As noted in the interviews, newly hired full-time faculty are required to attend formational professional development activities, such as the Instructional Skills Workshop, as part of their contract.

Participation is optional for part-time faculty, where they may be offered a stipend that may not be enough to incentivize attendance.

A defining hallmark of the professional teaching identity is professional development, but, like research and scholarship, professional development has been unbundled from the teacher identity. "As unbundling has occurred faculty are arguing they should be paid for professional development and to attend conferences, as required to keep up to date with their discipline and to keep courses current" (Kezar, et al., 2019, p. 137). Considering the costs to student retention and persistence when exposed to part-time faculty, especially in online environments, the investment in professional development should be one institutions are eager to extend to improve the working conditions so that online contingent faculty have the capacity to enhance the learning environment that is critical to student success. Providing adequate compensation for part-time online faculty for research and scholarship or to attend professional development opportunities are two methods for strengthening the contingent faculty participating in the teaching community.

### Community

Social learning theories suggest learning is grounded in relationships (Kezar, et al, 2019), and the teaching identity is formed, in part, through relationships (Buchanan, 2015). The inter-related structure of reality and the mind-world construction of reality support a focus on community. As revealed in the interviews, one institution heavily invested in online learning took building community seriously by assigning all new faculty a mentor to combat faculty isolation teaching in a vast service area with dispersed campuses. A formal mentorship plan ensures new faculty are supported and do not suffer

a sense of isolation when teaching online. If institutions do not provide mentoring or take steps to meaningfully integrate part-time online faculty, the institution sends the message that they do not deserve an investment of institutional effort (Kezar, et al., 2019). Furthermore, they will have no grounding in the institutional mission or the academic program's goals. If contingency itself breaks down connections, then professional development could reverse this trend by deliberately building community with part-time faculty.

This community-building aspect of professional development must extend beyond the teaching and learning environment to the rest of the college community. Xu and Jaggars (2013) highlight that a learning gap exists for every student subgroup when adapting to online learning, but that the negative effects of online learning were most pronounced in males, students of colour, mature students, and students with lower levels of academic preparation, or what some now call the "new majority" of college students (Malm & Weber, 2018). Professional development efforts must meaningfully integrate the student support infrastructure many institutions invest heavily in to better identify students-at-risk and connect those students to the supports they need when they turn to a community to support their success. Many institutions increasingly look towards learning analytics (West, et al., 2016) as the solution to address the complex problem of student retention, but this is, again, turning towards a technological solution when one of the strongest indicators of student persistence and graduation is the strength and quality of faculty-student interactions. Mattering is defined "as a feeling that the student counts" (Kezar, et al., 2019, p. 110) and it can contribute to psychosocial and psychological well-being.  Moving from students to faculty, faculty development efforts that establish

community connections with student services demonstrates that faculty matter so that they can pass this sense of belonging and mattering along to their learners.

### The Research-Practitioner

Critically reflecting on teaching practice is an "intuitive, imaginative, and affective process" (Cranton, 2006, p. 12). When formalized, critical reflection can become part of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). SoTL is needed because teaching practice is undergoing rapid change and more knowledge is being legitimated pragmatically rather than logically or empirically (Jarvis, 1998). Jarvis' (1998) conception of the research-practitioner is important because SoTL is a benchmark for many educational development units; it is a recognized priority by the Educational Developer's Caucus because it can "improve the rationality and justice of practice" (Jarvis, 1998, p. 90). Kadlec (2008) suggests that in a world defined by flux and contingency, we must tap into the world of lived experience. SoTL, and the desire to improve student learning through investigation of teaching practices, encourages practitioner-researchers to describe precisely what they do and explain why and how certain processes effect or enhance student learning.

Jarvis (1998) argues that practitioner-researchers are a new breed of practitioners who are needed because "we can no longer assume that the research conducted in the past is replicable in the future" (p. 165). With changing demographics, modalities, conditions, and student abilities, many research projects need to be "small, local, and practical" (p. 167) to produce both a personal theory and information about practice. This focus on small, local, and pragmatic solutions occurs within a shift in SoTL, where increasing numbers of SoTL studies involve the scholarship of technology-enhanced

learning (Wickens, 2006), and it coincides with Franklin's assertion that technology is best studied in small, contextually bound environments. The research-practitioner is an evolved teacher identity where the goal of research is to improve student learning and enhance educational quality (Openo, et al., 2017), and one of the more advanced forms of professional development for part-time online educators will include adopting the advanced conception of the research-practitioner, but it will do so only by confronting the challenges involved.

SoTL is one avenue for part-time faculty to continue their research efforts, but "unless and until institutions change the conditions of contingency to support the full engagement of instructors in SoTL, we cannot recommend contingent instructors devote time and energy in this unpaid capacity" (VanderKloet, et al., 2017, p. 11). Embracing the research-practitioner identity is a rejection of the unbundling of the faculty role into teaching specialists and researchers. Many part-time faculty struggle to maintain their research profiles, but engaging in authentic, action-based research, including SoTL, is work that part-time online faculty may not be encouraged to participate in through professional development funds or receive compensation for. Building the research-practitioner is a longer-term goal than the more immediate investment in compensated professional development to develop basic skills and form the teaching identity, but it is an important method for re-professionalization that may come closest to Franklin's conception of a redemptive technology.

**Professional Development for Contingent Online Faculty as Redemptive Technology**

Canadian teaching and learning centres employ an extensive array of professional development practices to support digital education, including workshops, one-on-one

support and training, course redesign activities, and formal mentorship programs

(VanLeeuwen, et al., 2020), to name just a few. Many of these offerings are well-

designed to model the type of quality teaching educational development units promote,

creatively and competently demonstrating how to use teaching and learning technologies

available to increase interactivity and student engagement, such as the effective

employment of peer assessment or the use of applications such as Jamboard, Padlet, etc.

Professional development also articulates strategic hopes and aspirations for an

institution's future, and while professional development for online education did not

occur prominently within this set of academic plans, professional development remains

an important strategy to change negative attitudes around online education

(VanLeeuwen, et al., 2020). Professional development is a strategic choice (Sorcinelli, et

al., 2006), and "innovations in faculty development can be key strategic levers for

institutions to ensure quality, as well as mechanisms to support innovation and change"

(VanLeeuwen, et al., 2020).

Still, much more can be done to support Canadian sessionals (Sabourin, 2020)

who are often overlooked, excluded, or not compensated for participating in professional

development opportunities (VanLeeuwen, et al., 2020). Based on the analysis of the

academic plans, the answer to Biro's (2005) question is that online contingent faculty are

not yet viewed as an important faculty subgroup within important strategic documents.

This reality was put succinctly, in the words of one Canadian director of teaching and

learning interviewed for this study, *"I don't think we support exclusively online faculty*

*very well."* The need for quality professional development for part-time sessionals is

needed because the weight of the evidence suggests that negative employment practices

spill into the learning environment, negatively impacting student learning and outcomes, thereby undermining the mission of the academic enterprise to provide high-quality learning experiences. At its simplest, "quality education is tied to an investment in and support of employees at the college" (Kezar, et al., 2019, p. 97). The need for professional development for online educators is greater because low interactivity is a known shortcoming of online educational offerings (Protopsaltis & Baum, 2018), and for most students most of the time, frequent and high-quality interaction with faculty leads to higher learning outcomes (Kezar, et al., 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic has likely intensified and accelerated trends underway, and some of the changes that have taken place over the past year will be irreversible. Canadian postsecondary institutions now face multiple futures, and there are competing narratives emerging about the future of online education. The first narrative is that online education during the pandemic has been a disaster (OCUFA, 2020), and the experience will confirm what many educators have believed all along, that online education is an inferior option (Hodges, 2020). The second narrative is that it has not been all that bad. Faculty, educational developers, and institutions proved themselves nimble and creative. There are positive lessons to be learned, new resources to build upon, and as institutions transition back to face-to-face, more online educational opportunities will likely be available. And some students have appreciated the flexibility that online learning provides and will pursue this option. About two-thirds of Canadian students have been satisfied with their education since September.

> Nationally, we are talking about 200,000 to 400,000 students who might be open
> to making remote education a permanent part of their education. Even if you take

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the more conservative number (always the right choice in higher education),

that's a simply massive potential client base for a university that wants to go big

into remote instruction. Such a move would not be easy, and it might not be

possible for all universities (smaller ones would lack the capital resources,

prestigious ones might not want to be seen to dilute their brand). But if one or two

of them make the right investments, the rewards are potentially very, very high.

(Usher and Sullivan, 2021, para. 9)

A key component of these "right investments" to capitalize on this larger appetite for

online learning would likely be professional development for online faculty.

The recommendations outlined above focus on building a future of professional

development opportunities within a community that centers around the teacher identity,

increases instructional autonomy, and compensates contingent online faculty for

providing student-centered assessments and for participating in research and professional

development opportunities. But a very different future is possible, and perhaps even more

probable. Online education plays a large part in the transition from teaching as a holistic

technology to a productive technology through the unbundling of education. As teaching

shifts from a holistic to a prescriptive technology, an increase in power shifts from the

producer to the manager. Scale forces the process of teaching and learning to be dis-

integrated, which has promoted the increased use of contingent instructors. At the present

time, there is no indication that the accelerating shift towards contingent faculty is likely

to slow down because none of the drivers, such as massification or stagnant public

funding, are abating.

In addition to these historic drivers, new trends are emerging to increase the use of sessional faculty on short term contracts, such as the emergence of micro-credentials. Kezar et al., (2019) foresee that "certain types of professional and credential programs viewed as easy revenue will increasingly be offered through outsourced mediums, utilizing low-cost coursework in pedagogically questionable ways" (p. 146). As academic programs become more modularized, the need for traditional faculty roles operating within standard academic programs may also become more minimized. The ever-increasing integration of technology, which has been used as an argument throughout this study for more and better professional development, could mean that some of these courses and microprograms are offered without a human instructor, or perhaps one that teaches from beyond the grave, as happened at Canada's Concordia University earlier this year (Grillo & Ross, 2021). These learning opportunities requiring no faculty development could be complemented by the numerous for-profit professional development micro-credentials to become a certified online instructor that exist in the marketplace, as in the case of LinkedIn Learning or the Online Learning Consortium that both already offer several modules on teacher development. It is also conceivable and likely that some teaching and learning centres could be outsourced as faculty are hired to develop professional development modules that are then licensed by institutions for the purpose of additional labour savings (Kezar, et al., 2019). These developments will likely be accompanied by new advances of artificial intelligence and learning analytics that will aid in automating certain teaching and student advising functions.

Online contingent instructors, the ideal cognitive capital of post-Fordist capitalism (Selwyn, 2014), will likely need to become more entrepreneurial, blending

employment from multiple institutions and from multiple sectors. As noted in the interviews, many directors are aware that part-time instructors frequently hold multiple jobs, and many online educators who participate in professional development do so out of their own pockets (Magda, 2019; Meloncon, 2018). It is completely foreseeable that future online educators will need to supply the means to conduct their teaching (Kezar, et al., 2019), including purchasing their own computers, paying for internet, and keeping software licenses up-to-date. The actual lived experiences of part-time online educators trying to secure positions will be "falsely cast as freedom from institutional control" (Kezar, et al., 2019, p. 148) at the same time they are "engaged in perpetual forms of hyper-competition and self-branding" (Kezar, et al., 2019, p. 149).

Facing these multiple realities and multiple futures, it is necessary to close this study by returning to Franklin's real world of technology to discuss professional development for online contingent faculty as a redemptive technology. First, and most importantly, Franklin's redemptive technology renounces technological determinism and the assertion that technology development is a self-evident process that follows along simple technical or economic logic (Williams, 2019). Instead, "The world of technology is the sum total of what people do.  Its redemption can only come from changes in what people, individually and collectively, do or refrain from doing" (p. 123). Organizations make strategic choices to focus on particular problems, and it is a choice whether the proposed future of a re-bundled and re-professionalized approach to professional development will be selected over an unbundled future where teaching and professional development are outsourced. Even though the voices of the powerless and invisible are not usually heard in technological deliberations, the technological systems are not so

"profoundly anchored in our political and social milieu that they cannot be altered so drastically" (Franklin, 1990, p. 122). Franklin urges that that when we find certain aspects of the real world of technology objectionable, we must object in terms of justice, fairness and equality.

These ends are achieved by paying close attention to discourse of technology to determine if language reintroduces people as the center of the decision-making process. Redemptive technologies can arise from the analysis of unacceptable practices and can use "existing technical knowledge in a changed structure for a changed task" (p. 128). Applying this principle to the professional development for part-time online educators consists in providing teams of educational developers to employ their technical knowledge about student learning technologies to advocate for online sessionals within service development and academic planning activities, as some directors are already doing. Another aspect of redemptive technologies arises from the study of things that do work, and collaboratively building on successful activities, such as the models described in the email interviews, must take place in a larger postsecondary context where institutions are in direct competition with one another. As noted by Harrison (2016) and Usher and Sullivan (2021), smaller institutions will be at a competitive disadvantage, and after the pandemic, institutions may exist on a more uneven developmental spectrum of expertise, competency, and capacity to support part-time and online instructors. Studying and sharing what works moves away from competition and towards collaboration. Redemptive technologies emerge from small studies on the micro level, and this recognition holds the importance of SoTL and discipline-based education research. Yet one of the enduring research gaps that may eventually come to haunt teaching and

learning centres is the lack of studies demonstrating a beneficial impact on student outcomes (Grabove, et al., 2012; Stes, et al., 2010). Again, studies that trace and evaluate the impact of teaching and learning initiatives are complex and difficult to execute, but the importance of studying the needs and experiences of those at the receiving end of technology (faculty implementing the teaching technology and the students experiencing it) forms another redemptive technology that can guide future efforts and strengthen the emerging scholarship of educational development.

Franklin (1990) asks, "How will our society cope with its problems when more and more people live in technologically induced human isolation?" (p. 51). During the pandemic period, we found out how education would cope, including widespread faculty burnout (Flaherty, 2020). Canadian postsecondary institutions coped because faculty, supported by teaching and learning centres and educational development units, admirably rose to the occasion and deployed their expertise in effective teaching practices and technology-enhanced learning. Consequently, some teaching and learning centres are presently enjoying a slight reprieve from austerity budgets because they demonstrated their value with their tremendous response to the pandemic, and during the interviews, many expressed confidence and relief for their immediate budgetary future. They were, as Franklin would describe them, "people with particular gifts" who were "essential to the well-being of the endeavor" (1990, p. 128). But, as they made education safe for technology, they may have also unwittingly accelerated great and irreversible consequences of technological integration.

Or, they may have been engaging in Franklin's earthworm theory of social change by seeding thoughts, and knowledge, and concern. What is needed going forward

is a lot more earth-worming so that faculty development can mature and grow online learning into its fullest and most mature state by putting the teaching selves of online educators at the centre of attention. Franklin notes that "the emphasis on a pragmatic rationale for choice tends to hide the value judgments in particular technological stances" (p. 123), and this is the crucial difference between a pragmatic study and a critically pragmatic one. The use of part-time instructors to teach online courses is not just a pragmatic strategy, it is a value judgment. As one director of a Canadian teaching and learning expressed it: *Our leadership has made it clear that we will not teach on the backs of part-time faculty. We don't live off them, as some institutions do.* This study has worked hard to pay attention to Franklin's advice: "Let us *understand,* and on the basis of our common understanding, *protest.* We must protest until there is a *change* in the structures and processes of the real world of technology" (p. 130). We understand so that we can protest for change and demand that the room of online learning becomes warm, comfortably furnished, and inviting to all, rather than one that excludes part-time online educators and produces inequitable results for those new majority of students who most need what online education has long promised but only occasionally delivered.

## Chapter 6. Conclusion and Knowledge Mobilization

For the past 50 years, the primary cost containment strategy for colleges and universities has been the employment of part-time faculty labour, and there are many benefits to doing so. Part-time faculty provide flexibility for night, weekend, and online courses. They add real world-experience, and part-time faculty may be subject matter experts in a niche topic taught in a specialized course. Other evidence suggests, however, that the cost of increased usage of sessional faculty may be "much more complicated and obscure than expected" (Ran & Xu, 2017, p. 44) because increased exposure to part-time faculty decreases student retention and completion in post-secondary studies. The weight of the available evidence suggests that for all students in all disciplines and all institutions, there is a negative correlation between exposure to part-time faculty and persistence in a major and postsecondary studies in general. The new majority (males, student of colour, mature learners and learners with lower levels of academic preparation) appear to be most adversely affected by exposure to part-time faculty, and this inequity appears to be compounded and exacerbated in online learning contexts. Increasingly, the working conditions or part-time faculty appear to be responsible for these negative impacts.

Policymakers and postsecondary administrators should be concerned about the total cost of using part-time faculty and could begin to build more inclusive institutions of higher education that integrate part-time faculty into the learning community by building intentional and robust professional development for online faculty. This must be part of a new integrative vision for the future of online education.

> We are at a moment of convergence portending a second, more mature, wave of
>
> work that transcends 'technosolutionism' – one that requires an integrative vision
>
> committed to student success and deep learning and looks to the larger 'social
>
> compact,' and even more broadly to a more profound cause and urgency around
>
> the future of human capacity. (Bass, 2018, p. 35)

An integrative vision for professional development puts the human capacity of the
instructor at the centre, especially in online education. The findings suggest that an
integrative vision for professional development that puts the instructor at the centre
includes cultivating their teaching identity, supporting the work involved in new and
better assessment strategies, involving part-time online educators in a teaching
community, and compensating them for their time, effort, and participation.

The rapid transition to remote teaching and learning in March 2020 and the
following year of primarily online instruction have renewed and heightened interest in
professional development to support online educators (VanLeeuwen, et al., 2020). Out of
the pandemic, a new normal will emerge, and expanded investment in professional
development should be part of this new normal. Many colleges and universities invested
in professional development over the past year so that faculty could create more
interactive online versions of their courses using short, engaging videos, more formative
assessments and fewer high-stakes exams. These changes to more engaging,
participatory, and interactive teaching practices helped increase student engagement
during particularly difficult times (McMurtrie, 2021a). Online education was growing
rapidly before the pandemic, and more students may now be more open to making online
education a permanent part of their education (Usher & Sullivan, 2021). Developing

online instructors serves the interests and mission of postsecondary institutions to ensure high-quality student learning experiences, and these professional development experiences need to focus on constructing a teaching identity, fostering instructional autonomy, and strengthening the teaching and learning community. Investing in professional development opportunities for part-time online educators is an important strategic choice to mature online education so that it can fulfill its potential and promise and uphold the highest standards of academic quality.

The knowledge generated in this study will be mobilized in the following ways:

**Outputs**

The results and findings form this study should result in a number of publications:

- The Real-World of Technology Revisited – will detail how Ursula Franklin's prescient thoughts on technology apply to an era of unbundled education.
- The findings of the document analysis and the email interviews will be adapted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, such as the International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning.

**Outcomes**

The key argument made in this research study is that online contingent faculty should be recognized as a strategically important faculty subgroup and served through targeted professional development programs. The ideal outcomes of this study include the appearance of this faculty subgroup in future academic plans and the growth of specific professional development programs that recognize their unique needs and situation.

**Impacts**

Joseph Aoun (2018) suggests "we need a new model of learning that enables learners to understand the highly technological world around them," but also nurtures the uniquely human capacities for creativity and flexibility. The change this research study would like to influence is greater institutional recognition of, and attention to, the growing body of online contingent faculty and their working conditions. If the recommendations included in this study were implemented, Canadian institutions would be able to offer the highest-quality online educational opportunities available globally by creating inclusive institutions that recognize both the economic challenges and the vital importance of their increasingly part-time, online, human workforce. They would recognize the unique human capacities of creativity and flexibility that part-time online educators bring to the learning environment.

**Future Research**

As detailed throughout this study, there is a great need for more and better data regarding online education and online educators in Canada, including annual data regarding who takes online courses, in what contexts, and how participation and success vary according to different factors and populations (Veletsianos, 2021). There is even less data about who is teaching online in Canada, how much online education is taught by Canadian sessionals, and how much preparation and experience these online educators possess. This data gap is intensified by the "overwhelming absence of literature pertaining to the educational development of sessionals in Canada" (Sabourin, 2020, p. 11). Further investigation into alternative or hybrid forms of professional development is needed (Stes, et al., 2010) to provide guidance to evaluating the most effective and

impactful forms educational development. The effect of instructional interventions on specific faculty groups, such as online contingent faculty, should also be studied, but nowhere is more research needed than establishing the connection between quality professional development activities for online contingent faculty and its impact on student learning. This research will remain very difficult, but also very much needed to demonstrate a return on investment for professional development activities.

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## Appendix A: List of Academic Plans

**Alberta**

Lethbridge College. (2017). *Academic transformation through excellence in excellence in teaching & learning: Lethbridge College academic plan, 2017 – 2020.*

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**Manitoba**

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**New Brunswick**

New Brunswick Community College. (2017). *Together we rise: 2017-2022 strategic plan.*

**Ontario**

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Sheridan College. (2017). *Character; quality; accountability: Academic plan, 2017-2022.*

**Quebec**

Champlain Regional College. (2015). *College strategic action plan, 2015-2020.*

**Saskatchewan**

Saskatchewan Polytechnic. (2016). *Tomorrow's learning in the making: Saskatchewan Polytechnic academic model, 2016-2020.*

**Yukon**

Yukon University. (2016). Building the North's future: Academic plan 2016-2021.

**Appendix B: Interview Plan**

1. What are you already doing well to support online faculty? What supports and programs do you have already have in place?  What do you wish you had in place?

2. What conflicts are you experiencing regarding online education, and how are working to respond to these challenges and meet the goals of your institutions?

3. What new organizational structures, if any, are you considering to handle the pressures caused by the growth of online education in order to support online educators?

4. Most teaching and learning centres now need to serve full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and online faculty.  How are you allocating scarce resources to meet the needs of different and emerging faculty groups? Have you received, or do you think you will receive, additional resources for the purpose of developing new programs and services for online faculty?  What opportunities do you see to more fully integrate online contingent faculty into your services?  How are you planning to strengthen your community of online faculty?

5. How would you define "pedagogical innovation"?  How do you share these innovations with other faculty, either offline or online?

6. In your involvement with strategic planning, how are you raising the issue of support for online educators to support quality online education?  How is this message being received?

7. Evaluation of impact is very difficult, but what evaluation and assessment methods do you have in place for programs targeted at online contingent faculty?

8. 9 out of 10 digital learning administrators say online courses exceed in-person

   learning outcomes.  What is your reaction to that?  Why do you think that is?

9. How is online treated differently than other forms of instruction at your

   institution?

10. How do you ensure quality of the assessments of learning outcomes in your

    online courses?

11. Online education now accounts for 12%-16% of all teaching for credit in Canada.

    How do you personally feel about the growth of online education? How is

    affecting your department's work and your understanding of educational

    development in practice?

## Appendix C: Informed Consent Recruitment Letter

**Informed Consent Participation Form**

**TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:** MULTIPLE REALITIES: EXPLORING PROFESSIONAL

DEVELOPMENT FOR ONLINE CONTINGENT FACULTY IN ACADEMIC STRATEGY AND

PRACTICE IN CANADIAN COLLEGES AND INSTITUTES

**DISSERTATION SUPERVISOR:** DR. CONNIE BLOMGREN (CONNIEB@ATHABASCAU.CA)

**Invitation:**

You have been invited to take part in this email interview because your experience and

expertise can contribute much to understanding the challenges and solutions for

providing professional development to part-time online instructors.   Your participation

in this email interview is entirely voluntary.

**Researchers and Purpose of Research:**

Jason Openo, a doctoral candidate at Athabasca University, is conducting researching

into the personal experiences of directors of teaching and learning centres in Canada to

gain a sense of the conflicts, struggles, and successful efforts teaching and learning

centres are putting forward to serve the emerging group of part-time, online faculty.

These experiences should shed a deeper understanding on the institutional

barriers/successes Canadian institutions are presently facing when trying to serve this

unique population of instructors.

**Participation Format and Expectations:**

This research study will involve email interviews that involve 11 questions (attached).

You may answer them all at once, or over time.  The amount of time is dependent on

how thoroughly you are willing to answer the questions.  The email interviews will take from 1-5 hours.

During the email interview process you will be able to, at any time, ask questions about the research that you may have.

**Location of Interviews:**

The interviews will take place via email, allowing you the ability to answer whenever it is most convenient for you to do so.

**Risks and Benefits**

There are no foreseeable risks.

The direct benefits to participating in this study are unknown, but your participation in this study is likely to provide valuable information in an under-researched area that will aid Canadian institutions in overcoming institutional barriers and implementing pragmatic, achievable, and grounded interventions for online faculty development.

**Confidentiality:**

All participants can be assured of privacy and confidentiality.  The emails exist on an email server residing in a multi-layered security environment.  When exporting emails to qualitative analysis software for analysis, the minimal business card information (name and address) will be separated from the content of the interviews.   When reporting results, identities will remain as generic as possible, e.g. "A director of a teaching and learning centre at a small/large institution in Eastern/Western/Northern Canada," so that identities will remain as confidential and anonymous as possible. Some provinces/territories within Canada have only 1 or 2 CICan members, so

anonymity may be difficult to guarantee, but every effort will be taken to keep the

respondents' identities confidential by not using institutional name or province.

**Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw:**

You have the right to withdraw from the email interview at any time. You can also

request that any component of the interview be modified or removed if you do not

agree with the notes created or the summaries created.

**Results:**

The findings will be published in my doctoral dissertation for Athabasca University, as

part of the program requirements for the Doctorate of Education in Distance Education

program. Other dissemination methods will include peer reviewed conferences and/or

peer-reviewed articles in relevant journals, such as the International Review of Research

in Open and Distributed Learning (IRRODL). If you would like to gain access to the

findings, contact Jason Openo ([jopeno@mhc.ab.ca)](jopeno@mhc.ab.ca).

This proposal has been reviewed and has received ethics approval through the

Athabasca University Research Ethics Board on January 20, 2020.

**Certificate of Consent:**

I have read the foregoing information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions

about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

By responding yes to this email and/or by participating in the email interviews, I consent

voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

**Appendix D: Coding Notes**

**Document Analysis**

The axial and selective codes for the academic plans are fully detailed in the first half of Chapter Four, but one additional note is required on the theme of Indigenization. Indigenization is a "conceptual signifier that is increasingly used in the Canadian academy" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 225), but it has many different and obscure meanings, especially when expressed within academic strategy documents. Indigenization therefore presented a unique challenge for how to code it and locate it within the framework. Yukon College specifically mentions that Indigenous knowledge will be integrated into all their academic programs and by establishing mechanisms to hire elders as adjunct faculty. In the latter case, Indigenization, as a theme, should be located within the *human resources* frame for hiring elders, but even though that held true to Bolman and Deal's description of that frame, primarily locating Indigenization with the *human resources* frame seemed insufficient. Indigenization and decolonialization are ultimately "about the redistribution of intellectual privilege, working toward collaborative relationships that decentralize administrative power" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 225). Based on the *symbolic frame*'s focuses on organization culture, and Indigenization's focus on changing that culture through the redistribution of power (the domain of the *political frame*) it was placed centrally on the axis between these two frames. If the fundamental shifts envisioned by Gaudry and Lorenz were to take place, including Indigenous faculty taking on administrative roles and Indigenous faculty not being required to take on important but often unrewarded labour to speed

decolonial processes along, Indigenous would transform all four-frames of the

organizational model.

| | Codes | |
|---|---|---|
| *Initial Codes* | *Axial Codes* | *Selective Codes* |
| • Time<br>• Scheduling<br>• PD perceived as burden<br>• Compensation<br>• No voice in governance<br>• Communication | The life of the part-time faculty member can be busy with other things – parenting, other jobs, etc.<br><br>Scheduling faculty development offerings for the part-time remote instructor is near impossible.<br><br>Instructors are not financially compensated for taking part in professional development.<br><br>It's a catch-22 when everyone *feels like there is no time*, so anything we offer as support *feels like a burden* rather than an opportunity. | **Awareness of vernacular reality of part-time and online contingent faculty**<br><br>Connected to generic barriers |
| Unequal preparation | I just want you to know we don't do much online. | **Variable participation in online education** |
| Size of institution | Everyone is online; that is just how we do business.<br><br>I'm a department of one.<br><br>Our institution is moving towards integrating online teaching as the way we deliver programming. Online teaching as been (for the most part) part of the full-time, permanent part-time regular duties. | Interpretive decision: Connects to **pandemic-induced acceleration of trends already underway** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Perception of online learning | Many departments treat online courses as a necessary evil. | **Connects with awareness of vernacular reality** – reality of part-time online educator + institutional structures = unequal experience |
| Basic instructional skills | I would say the biggest challenge is guiding faculty from industry on the 'how-to-teach' at the same time as the 'how to teach online'. | **Teaching Identity** |
| Basic online instructional skills | | Subtheme: Most pronounced in the Trades disciplines |
| Identity as barrier | Many of them are not taking advantage of what is being offered because they don't see themselves as teachers. | Trades presents an additional identity barriers |
| Holistic programs | Enhancing professional practice Maxwell's fail forward European digital competency framework | **Solutions and Innovations** |
| Practical solutions<br> • Faculty secondments<br> • Mentoring programs<br> • Informal mentoring | Specific solutions<br><br>opportunities, communities of practice, faculty learning communities | |
| Merging of T&L, program development and quality assurance efforts | Streamline/efficiency/ (Franklin's design for compliance?) | **Structural / Human Resources** |
| Subscription services, LinkedIn Learning Continuing Studies and Continuing Education Microcredentials | Outsourcing | |
| Online proctoring Leadership bans on online exams Alternative assessments Assessments specialists | Assessments | **Conflict between the Technological Paradigm and Pedagogical Paradigm**<br><br>Technology before teaching |

Bolman and Deal's Four-Frame model provided a shallow and flexible model for analyzing the academic plans. Analyzing the email interviews proved to be much more difficult because even short sentences contained multiple frames and themes, such as expressing support for online education while also expressing anxiety about how online education is being implemented, indicating both symbolic and political conflicts. The research study looked specifically for conflicts between Duus's *technological* and *pedagogical* paradigms, and these conflicts were evident in the emphasis on technology displacing a focus on teaching, specifically around assessments. Still, it became difficult to separate these into mutually exclusive and totally exhaustive categories primarily because of the omnipresent concerns about quality, a symbolic dimension that seemed to undergird and transcend the interviews. The multifaceted concept of teaching identity also proved problematic to place in any one of the frames because the organization is hiring someone to teach who does not see themselves as a teacher. This could easily be construed as a human resources mismatch between employee and employer, but because the teaching identity is built through relationships, it is necessarily connected to the symbolic frame and the structures teaching and learning centres are building to intentionally build that dual-identity.

## Appendix E: Ethics Approval

Athabasca University
RESEARCH CENTRE

### CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

The Athabasca University Research Ethics Board (REB) has reviewed and approved the research project noted below. The REB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2) and Athabasca University Policy and Procedures.

**Ethics File No**.: **23764**

**Principal Investigator**:
Mr. Jason Openo, Graduate Student
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences\Doctor of Education (EdD) in Distance Education

**Supervisor**:
Dr. Connie Blomgren (Supervisor)

**Project Title**:
Multiple realities: Exploring professional development for online contingent faculty in academic strategy and practice in Canadian colleges and institutes

**Effective Date:** January 20, 2020        **Expiry Date**: January 19, 2021

**Restrictions:**

Any modification or amendment to the approved research must be submitted to the AUREB for approval. Ethical approval is valid *for a period of one year*. An annual request for renewal must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date if a project is ongoing beyond one year.

A Project Completion (Final) Report must be submitted when the research is complete *(i.e. all participant contact and data collection is concluded, no follow-up with participants is anticipated and findings have been made available/provided to participants (if applicable))* or the research is terminated.

**Approved by:**                                **Date: January 20, 2020**

Cheryl Kier, Chair
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, Departmental Ethics Review Committee

**Athabasca University**
RESEARCH CENTRE

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**Approved by:**                                         **Date: January 13, 2021**

Carolyn Greene, Chair
Athabasca University Research Ethics Board

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Athabasca University Research Ethics Board
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