ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

IN TRANSITION: THE JOURNEY OF ADULT EDUCATORS FROM TRADITIONAL TEACHING INTO TEACHING ONLINE

BY

ELIZABETH A. BICEK

A thesis submitted to the

Athabasca University Governing Council in partial fulfillment

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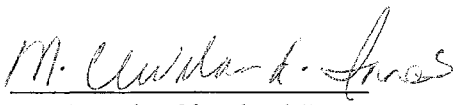
The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to the Athabasca University Governing Council for acceptance a thesis "IN TRANSITION: THE JOURNEY OF ADULT EDUCATORS FROM TRADITIONAL TEACHING TO TEACHING ONLINE" submitted by ELIZABETH A. BICEK in partial fulfillment of the in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF DISTANCE EDUCATION.



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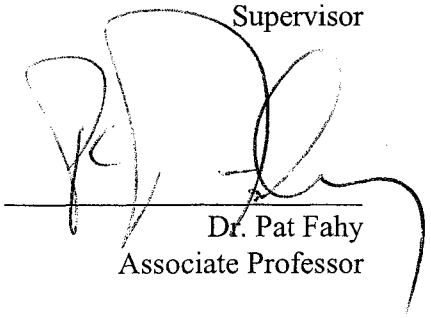

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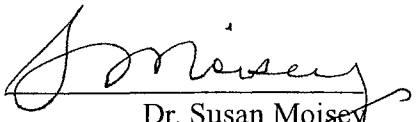

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my Mom, Helen Bicek. Your strength and determination continues to inspire me. Thank you for believing in me and reminding me that “I can do anything, which I set my mind to.”

ABSTRACT

As adult educators travel the asynchronous, online frontier they face many exciting challenges and opportunities. The realities facing adult educators, new to teaching online, include learning new technologies, adapting pedagogy, understanding the online roles of teachers and students and working collaboratively with their organizations to develop legacies of support and training for colleagues preparing to join them on their online journey. This study explored the question "What are the realities facing adult educators in the initial stages of the role as asynchronous, online teachers?"

This research utilizes a qualitative case study design. Using a semi-structured interview format, four adult educators that had facilitated a minimum of one online course were interviewed. Additional required characteristics were experience as an adult educator in a traditional classroom setting and, as a group, presented a range of experience in online teaching. Patterns in the data were identified using the constant comparison method, until a picture of similarities and differences emerged.

Two sets of key findings emerged. First, four major elements or roles affect the transition to teaching online. These roles are interdependent because each role affects or is influenced by the online teaching and learning process, work together to create the greater e-learning community. The four roles are: the role of the teacher, the role of technology, the role of the learner and the role of the organization. Second, upon further analysis, a pattern of three groups of learners surfaced. These groups are: students as learners, teachers as learners and organizations as learners. It is surmised that how well these learning groups are supported

and trained will influence how each learning group is affected by or influenced by the other learning groups. Recommendations for further study include a longitudinal study of a traditional organization transitioning into online teaching and learning to explore how the greater e-learning community is affected by or influences the online teaching and learning process.

Adult educators transitioning to teaching online require: personal comfort and competence with related online technologies, an organization knowledgeable and sensitive to distance teaching and learning, initial assessment and training in the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of online teachers, and opportunities to access support and training to meet emerging needs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many individuals whom I need to recognize. Without their guidance and support this study may have never come to fruition. To Dr. Pat Fahy and Dr. Susan Moisey, thank you for answering my MANY questions and providing me with the information that started my journey. To Dr. Martha Cleveland-Innes, thank you for continuing with me on my journey. I appreciate your guidance, support and most importantly your enthusiasm. I am grateful to have had the three of you as online teachers. It is adult educators such as you that make the online teaching and learning environment an exciting place for students to learn. To Dr. Jean Hoeft and Ms. Mary Frampton, thank you for being my sounding boards and editors. Thank you for challenging me and encouraging me to "think outside the box". It is awesome to work with educators of such a high caliber. You continue to inspire me. Finally to my family – Mom, Dad, and my brother Scott. You will never know how grateful I am to have you as part of my life. Thank you for all the little (and not so little) things you do to help me. You have all had a part in shaping the person I am today. Thank you for your unwavering belief in me. I love you.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Online learning has become a significant force in education and training since the emergence of the Internet in the early 1990s. In comparison to traditional education, online teaching and learning provides opportunities to customize learning and address individual needs. In addition, online learning offers many convenient features for the learner: learning from work or home, asynchronously or synchronously, and cost savings associated with travel, time away from work and materials (Richardson, 2001; Killion, 2000).

One challenge facing organizational leaders, decision makers and program developers new to online teaching and learning is the problem of incorporating online learning opportunities into an organization's traditional programming. This challenge is typically intensified because "organizational leaders and decision makers generally lack a coherent understanding of distance education practice, along with its full range of possibilities available to achieve desired outcomes" (Garrison, 2000, p. 1).

One reason online learning is different from traditional education is that it is an extension of distance education, where there already is a role for instructors and learners, because they have worked with separation of time and space. Distance learning, originally correspondence study, has been around since the 1800s. In its original form correspondence learning was directed through the mail with students and educators staying in touch through writing. Distance learning expanded to include radio, television and audio-, video-, audi-graphics- and computer-mediated conferencing (see Appendix A for a brief description on the history of distance learning).

Throughout the history of human communication technology has influenced definitive shifts in education (Frick, 1991; Nasseh, 1997) with communication between teacher and student being a vital element in successful distance education. Referring to the work of Moore (1990), Nasseh continues that distance educators understand that the success of distance education is based on the content of the dialogue between teacher and student. This includes the effectiveness of the communication system in the teaching and learning transaction.

Online learning is (National Staff Development Council (NSDC), 2001) an Internet- or Intranet-based learning experience with the teacher and learner separated by time and location.

According to Smith (2001) "blended learning is a method of educating at a distance that uses technology (asynchronous or synchronous) combined with traditional education or training." (p. 1). To integrate online learning opportunities successfully, whether as an accompaniment to traditional learning or as a separate learning mode, distance education and online learning need to be understood in relation to the traditional education environment.

According to the College of DuPage (2002) "online classes are often very different than traditional face-to-face classes in terms of how the material is presented, the nature of the interaction among class members, and the overall learning experience." (p. 1).

Kearsley (2002) states:

> In an online classroom, the course begins and ends on a certain date. Apart from any real-time events (i.e., chats or conferences), students participate in the class when (and where) they wish. They read email and discussion forum postings and reply to them. They may upload assignments as files. The instructor reads and responds to all student work and questions – usually on a daily basis. Both instructors and students have a pretty good idea of what they are learning.

The transition into online education needs to begin from where we currently exist – which, according to Randy Garrison and others, includes consideration of fundamental issues such as beliefs about the teaching and learning transaction, the role of student, the role of educator, and so on.

When discussing the teaching and learning transaction, Garrison (2000) states that factors to be examined need to include the transactional issues (teaching and learning), structural constraints (geographical distance) and fiscal implications (cost savings) unique to distance and online learning.

One of the realities of an online asynchronous, text-based teaching and learning environment is that verbal and non-verbal cues are not part of the interaction between teacher and learners. Modifications in the online teaching and learning transaction should be considered when creating a new asynchronous, text-based e-learning community. One modification is moving from teacher-centred instruction to that of learner-centred instruction. Cleveland-Innes, Emes and Winchester (2002) discuss that students take on individualized roles as learners, shifting from a subordinate role to that of an active participant sharing in the journey of learning by creating the learning experience with the teacher. The researchers continue that this adjustment in the learners will require a corresponding role change in the expectations of faculty. The roles of teachers in a learner-centred environment are modified to ensure that learners are active participants who are making sense of their learning. This is accomplished by being viewed as a supporter, collaborator and coach for students as they gather and evaluate information (Newby, Stepich, Lehman & Russell, 2000; Fahy 2000). According to Salmon (2001) this role change may be summarized as changing from content transmitter to meaning-maker.

Salmon (2001) writes that though networked computers provide vehicles for learning materials and interactions, students still require **"**champions" who [make] learning come alive. This view is supported by Collison, Elban, Haavind and Tinker (2000) believe that teachers need to act as learning guides, by seeing what is occurring within the dialogue and lighting the way forward for students to generate growth and learning.

When adult educators decide to transition into asynchronous, text-based teaching, they are faced with three learning curves: (a) adapting teaching style to the online environment, (b) learning how to use online technologies and (c) understanding the role of online teacher.

According to Palloff and Pratt (2000) educators cannot simply transfer their traditional models of pedagogy to the online environment. The authors state that unlike the traditional classroom, in the online environment consideration of the development of the learning community is important, in order for the learning process to be successful.

In their study, Anderson, Varhagen and Campbell (1998) contrast early adopters of technology with mainstream faculty. Their study identifies three themes related to mainstream faculty adopting technology in the teaching and learning transaction. These themes are faculty:

- Feeling excluded from the dialogue about technology issues, including investments in technology-based models of teaching and learning, classroom updating, and development of distance education initiatives.
- Fearing the impact of technology on the human component of teaching.
- Having conflicting demands on their time and resources.

The authors reveal mainstream teachers require opportunities to experience new tools, participate in scheduled courses, seek assistance of mentors and meet with colleagues and technology experts within the institution.

In an online learning environment, Reeves and Reeves (1997) state that "teachers play the roles of teachers, coaches, mentors and guides" (p.62). Truman-Davis, Futch, Thompson and Yonekura, (2000) add that as adult educators prepare for their new role they must also prepare for the new role required of their students. According to DeVries and Tella (1998) the success or failure of technologically mediated educational experiences depends largely on the skill and commitment of teachers.

As pioneers traveling the asynchronous, text-based online frontier, educators are faced with many exciting challenges and opportunities. The realities facing adult educators, new to teaching online, include learning new technologies, adapting pedagogy, understanding the online roles of teachers and students and working collaboratively with their organizations to develop legacies of support and training for colleagues preparing to join them on their online journey.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to explore experiences of adult educators in the journey toward online asynchronous, text-based teaching. Data collection is designed to increase understandings of the realities facing educators as they transition into the online environment. A qualitative approach and a case study design are used in this study. The significance of this research is to provide adult educators and decision makers transitioning into asynchronous, text-based online teaching and learning with insights into the realities facing adult educators in their new role. These insights may provide adult educators and decision makers with a new perspective from which to view the online teaching and learning community.

PROBLEM

To achieve the purpose of this study the following question was examined: "What are the realities facing adult educators in the initial stages of the role as asynchronous online teachers?" Sub-questions to further investigate this question included:

1. What was the background of the adult educators and how did they progress to becoming online teachers?
2. As online teachers, how did they accomplish the following tasks associated with the teaching-learning experience:
    a) Encouraging contact between teacher and students and between students
    b) Encouraging reciprocity and cooperation among students
    c) Encouraging active learning
    d) Encouraging feedback to students and from students

e) Communicating expectations of teachers and of students

f) Meeting the diverse needs of students and

g) Encouraging students to develop higher cognitive skills, such as analysis, synthesis, application and evaluation.

3. What support or training was required to assist the teaching and learning skills required of online teachers?
4. What technical challenges were experienced by online teachers and how were these challenges overcome?
5. What support or training was required to support the technical skills required for online teachers?
6. What were the most essential knowledge, skills and attitudes required for a more successful transition into online teaching?
7. What were the three pieces of advice the participants would offer adult educators' considering moving into online teaching?

DELIMITATIONS

This study explores the experiences of adult educators to understand the realities facing teachers of varying levels of online teaching experience in their role as asynchronous, text-based online teachers.

This study focuses on the transactional (teaching and learning) issues, but not the structural constraints and fiscal implications of teaching online. The reason for this focus is that the study sets out to explore the experiences of educators and not, as mentioned by Garrison (2000), the challenges facing organizational leaders, decision makers and program developers. It is recognized that the geographical distance and cost structures affect the way

asynchronous text-based online teachers interact with learners, but teachers do not have control over these structures. However, the experiences of adult educators as asynchronous text-based online teachers may influence organizational leaders, decision makers and program developers as they integrate online learning within their traditional systems.

The benefits and constraints of traditional teaching versus teaching online are excluded from this study. It is assumed that good teaching matters, whether-or-not the teaching and learning process takes place in a traditional or online environment. It is the mode in which communication occurs that differs. Therefore, it is hot the technology alters the way adult educators plan for instruction and interact with learners that is the focus of this study.

LIMITATIONS

This is a qualitative study utilizing a case study design which allows for discovery of new relationships, meanings and understandings of the phenomenoan under study (Merriam, 1988; Dewiyanti, 1999). This study possesses the features of a case study described by Merriam (1988) attaining a rich, thick description and analysis of an event and advancing knowledge within a field of study.

The experiences of four adult educators teaching online are the basis of the study. The emphasis of this case study is placed on exploration and description (Hobbs, 2003) of the data collected from the four teachers. A comprehensive view of each individual's experience is created. This comprehensive view is created through the richness of data collected through the exploration of each teacher's experience.

DEFINITIONS

To clarify the use of terms and improve the level of shared understanding, the following definitions are offered.

Adult educator: Those who have some responsibility for helping adults to learn (Knowles, 1980).

Advanced beginner online teacher: An online [teacher] demonstrating experience sufficient to recognize the main characteristics of competency, but having to think everything through carefully. (Division of Continuing Pharmacy Education, 1997; cited in Athabasca University Study Guide, Fall 2000).

Asynchronous: When the asynchronous is used to describe computer-mediated human interaction, it indicates that communication can take place without both parties being logged on at the same time, as messages can be left for subsequent reading (Berge 2001). For the purpose of this study the term asynchronous will refer to asynchronous online text-based computer-mediated communication.

Attitude: A mental position with regard to a fact or state (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary).

Attribute:	An inherent characteristic; *also*: an accidental quality (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary).
Competent online teacher:	An online [teacher] possessing basic mastery to cope with and manage basic contingencies of the online teaching and learning environment. This is demonstrated by not having to think through everything all the time, being able to complete the basics in a routine situation and reflecting carefully in non-routine cases. (Division of Continuing Pharmacy Education, 1997; cited in Athabasca University Study Guide, Fall 2000).
Distance education:	Education at a distance – not a separate discipline, but simply a form of education that requires solutions to problems such as the separation of teacher and learner by place and time (Garrison & Shale 1990; Crawford 1999).
Expert online teacher:	An online [teacher] possessing an intuitive grasp of the online teaching and learning environment. This is demonstrated by their ability to naturally act without thinking in all situations (Division of Continuing Pharmacy Education, 1997; cited in Athabasca University Study Guide, Fall 2000).

Internet:	A global computer network that links computer networks and individual computers though the use of common protocol and a variety of different types of connections including radio, satellite and telephone (National Staff Development Council (NSDC), 2001). Also World Wide Web.
Knowledge:	The fact or condition of understanding something with familiarity gained through experience or association. The fact or condition of being aware of something (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary).
Learner:	A person who gains knowledge or understanding of a skill by study, instruction, or experience (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary). Also: student.
Novice online teacher:	An online [teacher] having no competence or experience with the online teaching and learning environment. (Division of Continuing Pharmacy Education, 1997; cited in Athabasca University Study Guide, Fall 2000).
Online:	Covers a range of technologies. In education and training, technologies that concentrate on computer-mediated communication (CMC) are most common (Salmon 2001).

Online learning:	An Internet or Intranet-based learning experience (NSDC 2001). Teacher and learner are separated by time and location.
Organization:	An administrative and functional structure (as a business or a political party); *also*: the personnel of such a structure (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary).
Proficient online teacher:	An online [teacher] who recognizes themselves as possessing a deeper understanding and competence of the online teaching and learning environment. This is demonstrated by their ability to react without consciously thinking in most situations. (Division of Continuing Pharmacy Education, 1997; cited in Athabasca University Study Guide, Fall 2000).
Role:	A socially expected behavior pattern usually determined by an individual's status in a particular society (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary).
Skill:	The ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance. A learned power of doing something competently. A developed aptitude or ability (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary).

Synchronous: At the same time. In the context of online learning, synchronous refers to situations in which all participants are connected at the same time. Chats, instant messaging and web conferencing are forms of synchronous communication (NSDC 2001).

Traditional classroom: In a traditional classroom teachers and students interact at the same place at the same time. Also called face-to-face (f2f).

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study is to explore experiences of adult educators in the journey toward online asynchronous, text-based teaching. The question explored is "What are the realities facing adult educators in the initial stages of the role as asynchronous online teachers?" A qualitative approach and a case study design are used. The significance of this research is to provide adult educators and decision makers transitioning into asynchronous online teaching with insights into the realities facing adult educators in their new role. These insights will provide adult educators and decision makers a new perspective from which to view the online teaching community.

Results of this study are limited to the context, and other, similar contexts, present in this research. Detailed information about participant background and situation is provided to facilitate this process. The small sample size allowed for in-depth exploration with each participant, but limits generalizability. A qualitative study utilizing a case study design allows for discovery of new relationships and understandings through the collection of comprehensive and descriptive data.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to explore experiences of adult educators in their journey toward becoming asynchronous, text-based online teachers to increase understandings of the realities facing teachers in their new online role. The literature review is conducted under the following headings: (a) traditional teacher transition into teaching online, (b) technology, teaching, and learning, (c) roles of the online teacher, (d) knowledge, skills, and attitudes (e) support and training of teachers during their transition. These categories were developed to connect the relevant research to the present study.

TRADITIONAL TEACHER TRANSITION INTO TEACHING ONLINE

It is recognized that educators participating in the online environment are not automatically pushed from teacher-centred instruction to learner-centred instruction. It is acknowledged that certain online teaching and learning opportunities, as is the case in the traditional classroom, lend themselves to having the educators act as transmitter of knowledge by primarily answering the questions of learners.

Chickering and Gamson (1987) identify seven principles of good practice in teaching. They state that these principles recognize the complexities in which content and instruction interact by focusing on the how of teaching. These principles are:

Encouraging Contact

Good practice encourages contact between students and faculty. One of the most important factors in student motivation and involvement is frequent contact between the student and teacher. Teacher concern helps students get through rough times and keep on working. When students know a few teachers well, it enhances the students intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own values and plans.

Encouraging reciprocity and cooperation

Good practice develops reciprocity and cooperation among students. When learning occurs in a team rather than in isolation, learning is enhanced. Good learning is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Team work often increases involvement in learning. In addition, sharing one's ideas and responding to peers and teachers improves thinking and deepens understanding.

Encouraging active learning

Good practice uses active learning techniques. Students do not learn form sitting in classes, listening to teachers and memorizing assignments. Students need to talk, reflect, relate and apply what they are learning. They need to make what they learn part of who they are.

Encouraging feedback

Good practice gives prompt feedback. Learning becomes focused by understanding what you know and do not know. Students need help in assessing their existing knowledge and competence, performing and receiving feedback on their performance and reflecting on what they have learned and what they need to know, in addition to how they might assess themselves.

Emphasizing time on task

> Good practice allocates realistic amounts of time for effective learning for students and effective teaching. High performance for students, teachers, administrators, and other professional staff may be established by how an organization defines time expectations.

Communicating expectations of teachers to students

> Good practice communicates high expectations. High expectations are important for everyone. Expecting students to perform well becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Meeting the diverse needs of students

> Good practice respects diverse talents and ways of learning. There are many to learn, with each student bringing different talents and styles to a course. Students need to be provided opportunities to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them, only then may they be guided in new ways that do not come so easily to them.

Perhaps the move to a unique teaching-learning environment provides the opportunity to examine the teaching and learning process, in such a way that teachers of content become teachers of student learning. It is suggested by Gold (2001) that, in the online world, the process of knowing something and teaching something may not be so intrinsically linked. Facilitating an online class may be very different from teaching a traditional class with the teacher, the learner and the content being separated by time and space (Relan & Gillani, 1997; Gold, 2001). The separation of time and space places both the teacher and the learner in an unfamiliar learning environment where text-based communication replaces the verbal and non-verbal cues taken for granted in the traditional learning environment. This separation requires teachers to discover different skills and persona to accommodate for the lack of verbal and non-vernal cues.

Online learning environments emerged out of the development of information and communication technologies. The teaching of online course requires a new role for the adult educator. This role includes knowledge of the technology, support for students who are adjusting to new roles as learners and a new method of communicating with the learners. New methods of communication offer greater opportunity for dialogue, which can lead to learner-centered activities. Online teaching (Palloff & Pratt, 2000) requires that educators move beyond old models of pedagogy into new practices that are more facilitative and that do not simply transfer old models of pedagogy to a different mode. Unlike the traditional classroom, in the online environment consideration to the development of learning community is crucial. As a result the successful techniques often taken for granted in the traditional environment cannot be overlooked online. This is why it is recommended that online teachers use learner-centred instruction over teacher-centred instruction.

Relan and Gillani (1997) examine the differences between teacher-centred and learner-centred instruction, as described by Cuban (1993). Cuban characterizes learner-centred instruction as learners interacting in small groups and in the decision making as to how learning would occur. (see Figure 1, The instruction continuum).

Figure 1. The instruction continuum

Teacher-Centered Instruction		Learner-Centered Instruction
Teacher talk > learner talk	———	Teacher talk ≤ learner talk
Large group discussion	———	Small group instruction
Teacher determined time use	———	Learners determine time use
Teacher plans content	———	Learners help plan content
Teacher determines rules of behaviour, classroom rewards, and punishment	———	Learners and teacher determine rules of behaviour, classroom rewards, and punishment
Textbook used to guide instruction	———	Multi-media and materials used to guide instruction
For material requiring explaination or guidance	———	Makes learning meaningful encourages deep understanding
Passive learning occurs	———	Active learning occurs

Note. Adapted from Athabasca University MDDE 621: Online Teaching Study Guide (Fall 2000, p. 24, 26)

Facilitating online "means abdicating our tried and true techniques that may have served us well in the face-to-face classroom in favour of experimentation with new techniques and assumptions" (Palloff & Pratt, 2000, p. 7). Skilled teachers are naturally geared toward an apparently vague or open stance in discussion activities. Their goals are to "focus and deepen the thinking of participants, individually or as a group, without shutting down the inquiry work of the participants themselves" (Collison, Elban, Haavind & Tinker 2000, p.37).

Collison et al. (2000) suggest that online teachers need to be able to clarify and extend the thinking of learners by helping them reflect and think about how they present their ideas and by moving dialogue and learning forward through learner-centred instruction. This move is crucial as learner-centred instruction aids in the construction of a learning community by focusing on learners' needs, providing for flexibility in the learning environment and being open (Crawford, 1999).

Berge (2001) states that educators can break down the instructor-learner hierarchy by: (a) becoming a member of a learning team, (b) evolving into the roles of consultant, guide, resource-provider, and expert questioner to learners, (c) sharing control of the learning experience, and (d) providing support to learners work to encourage learners to become more self-directed.

Garrison, Anderson & Archer (2000) have developed the Community of Inquiry model. Their model is composed of three elements they believe to be essential to an educational experience. These elements are social presence, teaching presence and cognitive presence.

Social presence is "the ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally, as "real" people (i.e., their full personality), through the medium of communication being used" (Garrison, Anderson, Archer & 2000, 94).

Teaching presence is defined as "the design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes" (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, & Archer 2001).

Teacher presence, according to Garrison and Anderson (2003), represents a new, and perhaps greater challenge in an asynchronous, text-based learning environment. Teaching presence is crucial as it creates high levels of interest and participation from students. This occurs because of the structure and focus created.

Garrison and Anderson (2003) write that due to the lack of non-verbal communication in an asynchronous text-based learning environment, teachers are presented with a special challenge when establishing social presence. The authors continue that nonverbal communication such as this lacks a sense of closeness referred to as "immediacy" by Mehrabian. In a learning environment, this sense of immediacy is important as it creates an atmosphere of support and security characterized by a feeling of reduced personal risk and increased acceptance. This support and security is crucial, particularly during discussion which may contain more aggressive questioning and challenging.

Cognitive presence as defined by Garrison and Archer (2003) is the extent to which the participants in any arrangement within a community of inquiry are able to construct meaning through sustained communication.

According to Willis (1994), educators must: (a) change the way they think and teach in a traditional environment, (b) change their role from teacher-centred to learner- centred, (c) become comfortable and skilled with technology as the link between educator and learner, (d) become comfortable with teaching without visual cues, and (e) recognize and be receptive to learner differences.

Gold (2001) states that when facilitating online that three levers of an educator's control are weakened. These levers are, how: (a) knowledge is distributed, (b) knowledge is evaluated, and (c) relationships are created. Gold recognizes that the dilemma of teaching online is not in the transfer of knowledge but in creation of the most appropriate learning environments for learners to acquire knowledge. The implications for adult educators transitioning into teaching online, according to Gold, becomes a matter of adapting the teaching and learning process with which they were familiar to the unfamiliar online environment.

TECHNOLOGY, TEACHING AND LEARNING

DeVries and Tella (1999), state that a good distance education teacher makes technology become almost transparent when they become proficient with using the tools within the distance environment. This occurs in part when teachers learn how to instruct within the learning environment in addition to using technology to create and implement an interactive, learner-centred learning environment (Gold, 2001).

Chickering and Ehrmann (1996) provide educators with an insight into how technology could act as a lever with the seven principles for good practice, as outlined by Chickering and Gamson, earlier in this chapter (see pages 16-17). Chickering and Ehrmann believe that instructional strategies may be supported by a variety of online technologies

which include email, computer conferencing, and the World Wide Web. The authors state that technology can be used as a lever to: (a) increase student involvement and commitment; (b) share resources, (c) create a social and collaborative environment, (d) improve thinking, (e) deepen understanding, (f) demonstrate application, (g) encourage reflection, and (h) help sharpen students cognitive skills of analysis, synthesis, application, and evaluation. Below is a summary of the author's discussion in relation to Chickering and Gamson's seven principles for good practice.

Good practice encourages contacts between students and faculty.

> Communication technologies may complement face-to-face contact in and outside of traditional classroom by providing increased access to teachers, helping students share useful resources, and providing for opportunities for joint problem solving and shared learning. Asynchronous communication, including electronic mail, computer conferencing, and the World Wide Web increase opportunities for students and teacher to communicate and exchange work at a quicker speed than below, allowing for a more thoughtful and less confrontation communication.

Good practice develops reciprocity and cooperation among students.

> Computer-based tools encourage spontaneous student collaboration. A clear advantage of email is that it opens up communication among classmates even when they are not physically together.

Good practice uses active learning techniques.

> The range of technologies that encourage active learning is staggering. Many fall into one of three categories:
>
> - tools and resources for learning by doing
> - time-delayed exchange
> - real-time conversation

Good practice gives prompt feedback.

The ways in which new technologies can provide feedback are many:

- Email - supporting person-to-person feedback
- Simulation – inherent
- Recording and analyzing personal and professional performances.
- Portfolio evaluation strategies

Good practice emphasizes time on task.

New technologies may improve time on task for students and teachers. Technology also can increase time on task by making studying more efficient.

Teaching strategies that help students learn at home or work can save hours otherwise spent commuting to and from campus, finding parking places, and so on.

Technology increases interaction between teacher and student and among students by fitting into busy schedules and providing access to learning resources.

For teachers interested in classroom research, student participation and interaction can be recorded to help document student time on task.

Good practice communicates high expectations.

New technologies may communicate high expectations clearly and efficiently. Significant real-life problems, conflicting perspectives, or paradoxical data sets can set powerful learning challenges that drive students to not only acquire information but sharpen their cognitive skills of analysis, synthesis, application, and evaluation.

Good practice respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

Different methods of learning may be incorporated into learning. This includes the use of visuals, well-organized print, virtual experiences and through tasks requiring analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, with applications to real-life situations. Technology may also encourage self-reflection and self-evaluation as well as encourage collaboration and group problem solving.

> Technologies allow students to work at their own pace by suppling structure to students who need it and leaving assignments more open-ended for students who do not.

With the guidance of an online teacher, asynchronous text-based communication may be used as a lever in the online teaching and learning process as suggested by Chickering and Ehrmann for the seven principles outlined by Chickering and Gamson. Asynchronous Computer-mediated Conferencing (CMC) (Salmon, 2001):

> Provides a way of sending messages to a group of users, using computers for storage and mediation. A computer, somewhere, holds all the messages until a participant is ready to log on and access them, so online conferences do not require participants to be available at a particular time. For this reason CMC is often called "asynchronous" (not operating at the same time)…. CMC serves people almost anywhere, because participants need only have access to a computer, a network connection and password, a modem and a telephone line to take part
> (pp. 15-16).

Salmon continues, "with text-based conferencing it is possible to "rewind" a conversation, to pick out threads and make very direct links" (p. 17). She states that CMC can be viewed as a new context for learning, not just as a tool. "It enables individuals and groups of people to carry on "conversations" and "discussion" over the computer networks" (pp. 17-18). According to Salmon there are many special characteristics to CMC. These characteristics provide for the:

- Choice of when to participate (read and reply to messages)
- Permanence of publishing with a succinct verbal discussion
- Time to reflect
- Freedom to express views and express personal experiences and thoughts

- Shifting of authority and control of the conference from teachers to students.

These characteristics of communication enhance learning by being open to the needs of learners and providing for flexibility in the learning environment. These enhancements alter the role of teacher and learner because both become members of a learning community with the roles of information transmitter and learning guide being shared during the learning process.

ROLES OF THE ONLINE TEACHER

Newby, Stepich, Lehman, and Russell (2000) state that the key role changes for the teacher in a learner-centred environment include: (a) participating at times as one who may not know it all, but wants to learn, (b) being viewed as a support, collaborator and coach for students as they gather and evaluate information, (c) coaching students actively to develop and pose their own questions and explore alternative ways of finding answers, and (d) encouraging individuals actively to use their personal knowledge and skills to create unique solutions to problems. As stated earlier, online learning must be learner-centred because online students become active participants in their learning.

Coppola, Hiltz, and Rotter (2001) suggest that though the roles of the instructor in a traditional setting are also the roles used in an Asynchronous Leaning Network (ALN), these roles are transformed to meet the new mode of communication. Coppola et al. state that helping educators understand the shift in their roles can assist them as they make a transition from the traditional into the online environment. For example, “the role of an online teacher changes from content transmitter to meaning maker, to engage and enable participants to construct and make sense of their learning” (Salmon, 2001, p.39) These new roles do not

negate the fact that online teachers can also be knowledge transmitters with online educators answering questions posed by students.

Information on the role of the online teacher is summarized into four categories: (a) questioner, (b) connector, (c) manager, (d) mentor.

Questioner. The questioner role is described as (a) using questions and probes to focus on critical concepts, principles and skills (Berg, 1995); (b) engaging in deeper cerebral development as they edited and responded to questions (Coppola et al., 2001); (c) reflecting more deeply on their responses to questions (Coppola et al., 2001); (d) operating as co-learners and enriching the learning of the participants with respect to the subject of the collaboration (Collison et al., 2000).

Connector. The connector role is described as: (a) promoting and developing a social environment (Berg, 1995); (b) focusing on creating relationships between learners and instructors within the electronic classroom (Coppola et al., 2001); (c) creating an intimate and connected relationship with learners (Coppola et al., 2001); (d) developing a regular feedback loop (Collison et al., 2000); (e) inviting, guiding, and focusing learners (Collison et al., 2000).

Manager. The manager role is described as: (a) organizing for and managing interaction (Berg, 1995); (b) focusing on administration of the class and the course (Coppola et al., 2001); (c) planning and structuring courses more closely (Coppola et al., 2001); (d) spending time gathering and organizing materials and getting them into digital or other media formats (Coppola et al., 2001); (e) working to ensure student interaction online (Coppola et al., 2001); (f) becoming a teacher or coach or changing teaching style (Coppola et al. 2001), (g) **"**separating and directing content queries from process queries" (Collison et al., 2000).

Mentor. The mentor role is viewed by Rohfeld and Hiemstra (1995) and Berg (1995) as the most important role for an online teacher, as teachers need to be able to model effective online teaching. This included making the technology transparent (DeVries & Tella, 1998).

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

Successful teaching and learning in a distance education setting is dependent upon the proficient use of the medium, as well as the "can-do" attitude of the instructor (DeVries & Tella, 1998). Online teachers should be able to effectively promote active, collaborative, and focused reflection among members of the learning community (Collison et al., 2000). To accomplish this, the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of adult educators teaching need to be recognized.

Knowledge. According to the literature, knowledge may be divided into two categories – pedagogical knowledge and technical knowledge.

Pedagogical knowledge. According to information summarized by Full Circle Associates (FCA), adult educators facilitating online should be aware of (a) adult learning principles, (b) communication styles, (c) learning styles, (d) cultural competency, (e) group and interpersonal dynamics, (f) group facilitation, (g) knowledge of and assessment of audience, (h) subject/ content expertise and (h) teaching/ training principles.

Technical knowledge. Online teachers should possess basic computer knowledge (Fredrickson, Pelz & Swan, 2000; Gillette, 1999). Salmon (2001) identifies three categories of necessary technical knowledge: (a) declarative knowledge – "the facts" – what technology is available, (b) procedural knowledge – "the process" – how to use technology, and (c) strategic knowledge – "the application" – how to work with students using technology.

Skills. Skills of online teachers may be summarized into three categories. These skills include: (a) communication skills, (b) technology skills, and (c) facilitation skills.

Communication skills. Communication skills include the ability to guide the online conversation. This set of skills includes critical thinking strategies which sharpen the focus of the teaching and learning process by: (a) identifying direction, (b) sorting ideas for relevance, (c) focusing on key ideas and (d) deepening dialogue (Collison et al., 2000). Another skill mentioned by Collison et al. (2000) is the ability of the instructor to create thoughtful and carefully articulated written replies.

Technology skills. Technology skills include those abilities which may assist the learning process through the use of technology. Though adult educators need to have or acquire sufficient computer and Internet skills (Truman-Davis, et. al., 2000), including word processing, use of software and resource collection. McKenzie (1999) states that teachers should be able to support their students learning, thinking and problem solving through the use technology.

Facilitation skills. Facilitation skills include those abilities which assist the learning process through the use of instruction. According to Truman-Davis et al. (2000) the online environment fits particularly well with faculty members who wish to guide students in finding their own content in a constructivist approach where meaning is created in relation to students' prior experience and knowledge. According to Collison et al. (2000) a teacher "would greatly enhance course delivery if the online teacher was both an expert of the content and a skilled moderator"(p.44). McKenzie (1999) states that "high on the list of skills is the ability to "size up" the progress and the process being used by each student or student team" (p. 19).

Attitudes. An attitude as defined in the Merriam-Webster's Online Collegiate Dictionary is a mental position with regard to a fact or state. Attitudes identified by Collison et al. (2000) include humility and the ability of the online teacher to listen. Truman-Davis et al. (2000) found that faculty most comfortable while transitioning into the online environment were more willing to: (a) learn, (b) share control of class design, (c) adapt teaching style, (d) collaborate, (e) change their role, (f) build a support system, and (g) be patient with technology. FCA, from the Group Facilitation Listserv, identified the following attitudes posed by adult educators facilitating online: (a) conceptual and systematic thinking

(able to put it all together), (b) concern for quality (and able to describe it), (c) empathetic (able to see the situation as others see it), (d) inspirational, (e) objective/ neutral (no vested interest in one solution over another, (f) charismatic, (g) a sense of when to stay quiet, (h) ability to tolerate ambiguity, (i) accepting others (hold others with unconditional regard), (j) authentic, congruent, honest (walks his/ her talk), (k) caring and compassionate, (l) flexible and versatile (ability to switch gears at the last moment), (m) open to self-growth, and (n) open to self-knowledge and awareness (strengths, weaknesses, ego, impact on others).

SUPPORTING AND TRAINING TEACHERS WHILE IN TRANSITION

Research reveals a strong desire among faculty members to receive early, appropriate training for these unfamiliar teaching experiences (Devries, Helford, & Rugg, 1998; DeVries & Tella, 1998). Training should provide teachers with a background of the differences between traditional and online instruction: (a) delivery methods (Gibbons & Wentworth, 2001), (b) conversion or development of course material (Gibbons & Wentworth, 2001) , (c) the unique needs of learners (Gibbons & Wentworth, 2001), (d) role expectations of teachers (Coppola et al., 2001), (e) planning and management of organizational details (Gilcher & Johnstone, 1988), (f) technical aspects of the system (DeVries & Tella, 1998; Gilcher & Johnstone, 1998), and (g) strategies for teaching students (Gilcher & Johnstone, 1988; DeVries & Tella, 1998), in order to "enable the adult educator to evolve from an instructor and content expert to a teacher and resource person" (Gibbons & Wentworth, 2001, p. 4).

When preparing adult educators for their roles as asynchronous, text-based online teachers, "training and support should not only be about acquiring new skills but also help trainees to explore their attitudes to CMC and its meaning for their own teaching" (Salmon, 2001, p. 58). Gold (2000) states that "even though technology may change the way students

learn, it will have no impact without teacher support, and one of the most important reasons for the lack of faculty support is lack of faculty preparation" (p.2). Salmon (2001) states that "any significant initiative aimed at changing teaching methods or introduction of technology into teaching and learning should include effective e-moderator support and training, otherwise its outcomes are likely to [be] meager and unsuccessful" (p. 55).

In order to modify their teaching styles adult educators must be convinced of the value of engaging students in problem-based or projectbased learning with these new tools. "The transformation of teaching styles, preferences and behaviours requires persuasion, learning by experience and the provision of highly personalized learning journeys" (McKenzie, p.20). It is of particular importance that online teachers modify their teaching style to reflect a problem- or projectbased approach because as stated earlier by Palloff and Pratt (2000), unlike the traditional classroom, in the online environment, consideration to the development of learning community is crucial and the successful techniques often taken for granted in the traditional environment, cannot be overlooked online.

Sparks (2002) "believes that professional development must represent a sharp departure from past practice" (pp. 1-2). Gold (2001) and Salmon (2001) suggest that before becoming online teachers, teachers should experience the online environment first as online learners. This is crucial because otherwise [adult educators' teaching] "online will continue to map traditional practices onto the new medium with little of the transformation necessary in the teaching process" (Gold, 2001, p. 2). McKenzie and others suggests that teachers should be provided with an hands-on experience, which mirrors the learning of their students. This experience provides instructors with an experience of the differences in the online learner, online course delivery and appropriate learning strategies, as well as fostering

empathy for the online learners needs and challenges (Gold, 2000, p.4). According to Mackenzie (1999)

> Not enough attention [is] devoted to the creation of professional development models that [will] help teachers grow … "guide on side" skills and strategies. Most professional development for technology still centres [on] how to use the tools, the software application and resources. There is little focus on strategic teaching or guidance … [with] little focus on "unteaching" or the unteachable moment" (p. 18).

In addition to training and professional development teachers also require institutional and technical support (Truman-Davis et al., 2000). In discussing the preparation of adult educators for teaching online, Truman-Davis et al. (2000) identifies three critical areas: (a) technology – learning about software management skills, using electronic library resources, advanced email techniques, and managing technology problems; (b) pedagogy – learning about distributed and asynchronous learning, best practices for using technologies, instructional strategies, distributed learning course development processes, interaction in online courses, assessment of online courses, course administration, group work in online courses, copyright and fair use information, and learner support; and (c) logistics – learning about the course production process, using online library resources for course development, submitting materials in electronic format, reviewing, editing and revising suggestions with instructional designers and evaluation of materials.

Adult educators beginning to teach online need to be supported with the allotment of sufficient time to practice the type of teaching and support they are expected to use, access to web resources, and mentor moderators (Collison et al., 2000).

Hartman, Dziuban, and Moskal (2000), identify ten factors which contributed to faculty satisfaction when teaching online at the University of Central Florida. These factors include: (a) reliable infrastructure, (b) high-quality faculty development, (c) extensive faculty support, (d) faculty recognition and incentives, (e) interdisciplinary approach, (f) web vets, (g) student support, (h) assessment, (i) institutionalization, (j) continuous improvement.

SUMMARY

New learning environments lead to new approaches to teaching. The move to online teaching is such an environment change. Unlike the traditional classroom, the online environment requires careful consideration of the development of the learning community. Also, successful techniques often taken for granted in the traditional environment cannot be overlooked online; and that the move to online teaching provides further motivation for teachers to use learner-centred instruction over teacher-centred instruction. As a result, educators require a move into new practices characterized as being more facilitative and less instructional.

New learning environments encourage teaching in new ways. Chickering and Gamson (1987) identified seven principles of good practice in teaching. They state that these principles recognize the complexities in which content and instruction interact by focusing on the how of teaching. Chickering and Ehrmann (1996) provided educators with an insight into how technology could act as a lever with the seven principles for good practice, as outlined by Chickering and Gamson (1987). It was Chickering and Ehrmann's belief that instructional strategies may be supported by a variety of online technologies which include email, computer conferencing, and the World Wide Web.

New learning environments encourage new ways of communicating. Asynchronous, computer-mediated text-based communication, According to Salmon (2001), computer-mediated text-based communication enhances learning by being open to the needs of learners and providing for flexibility in the learning environment by providing. This form of communication alters the role of teacher and learner because both become members of a learning community with the roles of information transmitter and learning guide being shared during the learning process.

New learning environments encourage new roles for teachers. Teacher roles may be categorized under the headings questioner, connector, manager and mentor.

While the literature on the realities confronting adult educators transitioning to teaching online provides a great deal of information, it is apparent that at the time of this study, little has been written on how online teachers are impacted by the structure, context and organization in which they operate, or the impact on individual online learners.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

As stated in Chapter Two, this study sets out to explore the experiences of adult educators transitioning toward teaching online in order to increase understandings of the realities facing adult educators in their new online role. This is a qualitative study utilizing a case study design.

Merriam (1998) states that case studies include introducing discovery of new relationships, meanings and understandings of the phenomenon under the study. This case study focuses on a particular phenomenon seeking to understand the specific issues and problems of practice resulting in an interpretative product (Merriam, 1998; Dewiyanti, 1999). An interpretative product is (Merriam, 1998; Dewiyanti, 1999), "produced when a case study researcher gathers as much information about the problem as possible with the intent of interpreting or theorizing about the phenomenon. This product contains rich, thick descriptive data that is used to develop conceptual categories… [which may] play an important role in advancing a field's knowledge base."

Chapter Three is organized under the following headings (a) research design and method, (b) research procedures and (c) summary.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

In order to explore the experiences of adult educators in their role as asynchronous text-based online teachers the researcher conducted a qualitative research study using a case study. This methodology was selected because the research was designed to explore rather then explain (Greene, 1997) the role transition of asynchronous, text-based online teachers, by obtaining descriptions and interpretations (Stake, 1995) of four adult educators. This information provides a collage of realities experienced by adult educators in transition. As explained qualitative data allows the researcher to describe an event in great detail and in doing so, allows the researcher to become more knowledgeable about the event.

A case study model was selected because case studies maximize what researchers learn through the generalization of the unique and common elements within cases (Stake 1995). A case study was created by conducting and transcribing four semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview format was selected as the means for data collection as it provided for a fairly open framework which allows the researcher and the educators to focus and converse in two-way communication while giving and receiving information (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAOUN),1990). In addition, the semi-structured interview allowed for questions to be created during the interview, allowing the researcher and the educator the flexibility to search for details or discuss issues as they arise (FAOUN, 1990). Stake (1995) supports this approach stating that the researcher makes a flexible list of questions, progressively redefines issues and seizes opportunities to learn the unexpected.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT.

The four educators were selected based on their experience in following three areas. Each educator:

- Facilitated a minimum of one online course.
- Experienced adult learning in a traditional classroom.
- Posessed a variety of experience as online teachers.

Although the four selected educators currently work, in various capacities, for educational organizations, their current employment status is not pertinent to this research. This study was based on their previous experience as online teachers. Individuals were asked to participate voluntarily in the study. It was not assumed that they would be participating during work hours.

Having been selected, the teachers were next recruited. This was accomplished by an initial telephone conversation to: (a) introduce the educator to the researcher, (b) informally discuss the study, (c) obtain educator emails and (d) request an interview date. Once an educator agreed to participate the following items were emailed to them: (a) letter of consent, (b) consent form and (c) interview questions. (see Appendix B).

Interviews occurred during the period of May 12 – 16, 2002. A typical interview was approximately one hour in length. I audio-taped each interview, took notes and kept a personal journal.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.

To guide the interview the following seven supporting questions were asked:

1. Describe your background as an adult educator and explain how you progressed to become an online teacher.
2. As an online teacher, how did you accomplish the following tasks associated with the teaching-learning experience?
    - Encouraging contact between yourself and your students and between your students
    - Encouraging reciprocity and cooperation among your students
    - Encouraging active learning
    - Encouraging feedback to your students and from your students
    - Communicating expectations of educators and of students
    - Meeting the diverse needs of your students and
    - Encouraging your students to develop higher cognitive skills, such as analysis, synthesis, application and evaluation.
3. What support or training is required to support the teaching and learning skills required of online teachers?
4. What kind of technical challenges did you face as an online teacher and how did you overcome these challenges?
5. What support or training is required to support the technical skills required for online teachers?
6. Given your experience as an online teacher what do you think are the most essential knowledge, skills and attitudes required of an online teacher?

7. If you were going to give advice to an adult educator considering moving into teaching online, what three essential pieces advices would you offer?

RESEARCH STANDARDS.

A multiple-case study research study was conducted as it, "provides a purposive sample and the potential sample for generalizability of findings" (Christie, Rowe, Pery, & Chamard, 2000).

Research standards were created to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. The criteria used to ensure reliability and validity focused on ensuring: (a) confirmability, (b) credibility/ internal validity and (c) reliability/ dependability.

Confirmability. "Confirmability is defined as the ability of others to satisfy themselves that the research was carried out in the way it is described by the researcher" (Christie et al, 2000, p. 17). Christie et al. (2000), state that confirmability is accomplished through a record of the data collected. This was accomplished by audio-taping and transcribing interviews, as well as maintaining a personal journal. The personal journal permitted the researcher to document thoughts, concerns and insights gained during the data analysis process.

Internal validity/credibility. "Credibility/internal validity is establishing a phenomenon in a credible manner by locating generative mechanisms that assist in determining inferences about real-life experiences" Christie et al., 2000, p.17). These criteria were met by linking analysis to prior theory and peer debriefing. Peer debriefing was accomplished through meetings with Dr. Hoeft, Executive Director of the Calgary Regional Consortium and Dr. Martha Cleveland-Innes, Associate Professor at Athabasca University, and Ms. Mary Frampton, Specialist Adult Educator (Retired).

Reliability/dependability. "To achieve reliability/dependability in case study research demands the enactment of case study procedures so as to identify a documentation" (Christie et al., 2000, 19). This was accomplished by providing research procedures and establishing a protocol for data collection. Data were collected through four interviews. Before conducting the interviews the researcher created seven questions to guide each interview. If an interviewee deviated from a question, the researcher decided to ensure that the relevant data were collected within the allotted interview time. However, the researcher did ask the seven questions in a sequence to ensure that the data were collected and refocused the discussion as deemed necessary. The researcher wrote down key words or symbols during the interview as a reminder to ask questions during the interview, as well as to check transcripts. In addition, participants were asked if they wished to review the typed transcripts of their interviews. As the researcher has attained respondent confidence all four teacher stated they did not wish to review transcripts prior to analysis.

The researcher attempted to remain impartial during the interviews, but actively interacted with educators, relying on both verbal and non-verbal cues to move through the interview. By doing so, the researcher was able to seek clarification and knew when to move to the next question. The audio taped interviews were transcribed by an independent professional. The researcher then compared the transcripts to the audio-taped interviews for accuracy.

Conceptual themes in the data emerged through the following process: first, data from each transcript was coded in their entirety to explore common themes and elements unique to each teacher. Data were analyzed twice in this format. Next data were coded by analyzing each of the seven questions independently to explore common themes within each of the seven questions. Questions were coded under five themes. These themes include: the individual, communication, program development, the organization, and balancing the role of technology, the role of the teacher, and the needs of the students. Sub themes were discussed under each code.

In order to protect the privacy of the four educators, audio-tapes, transcripts and the researcher's journal are to be kept in a secure location for a period of one year. After this time the data will be destroyed.

Findings were interpreted by documenting the themes and sub-themes within each of the seven questions. The four interviews identify both the shared realities of the four adult educators as well as the unique experiences of each individual. When it was determined that insufficient data were collected on the traditional teaching background of three of the four teachers, the researcher sent an email to collect this additional data, asking them to answer the following information, "As an adult educator, provide a few lines about your traditional teaching background or teaching philosophy." Two teacher's emailed responses and one telephoned in her response.

SUMMARY

According to Stake (1995), a case study maximizes what researchers learn through the generalization of the unique and common elements within cases. In addition, a qualitative study utilizing a case study design allows for discovery of new relationships and understandings through the collection of comprehensive and descriptive data.

Four adult educators were selected as they facilitated a minimum of one online course, experienced adult learning in a traditional classroom and as a group posessed a variety of experience as online teachers. In addition to their online teaching roles, the four adult educators had additional personal and professional roles.

A semi-structured interview format was selected as the means for data collection as it allowed the researcher and teachers to both give and receive information during interviews. In addition, a semi-structured interview allows the researcher to make a flexible list of questions in order to progressively redefine issues and seizes opportunities to learn the unexpected. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. The researcher took notes to ask questions and check transcripts. The research kept a personal journal during the data collection and analysis processes.

Data was analyzed according to the seven interview questions which focused on: (a) online teaching and learning experience, (b) support and training, (c) technical challenges, (d) refection as to the skills, knowledge and attitudes required of online teachers and (e) advice to adult educators considering the transition into teaching online. Data was manually analyzed first in its entirety, to explore the common and unique experiences of teachers, and second in relation to each of the seven questions to explore the common experiences of teachers.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Findings of the study in Chapter Four are discussed under four headings: (a) educator profiles, (b) interview questions, (c) case study and (d) data collection.

EDUCATOR PROFILES

The four educators were selected based on following three areas. Each educator has taught a minimum of one online course, experienced adult learning in a traditional classroom and together represent a range of experience as online teachers. Two teachers are advanced beginners at different levels to becoming competent online teachers. One teacher is moving from a proficient online teacher to an expert online teacher. One teacher is an expert online teacher. None of the online teachers could be characterized as a novice online teacher without competence or experience (see Chapter One – Definitions Section).

The four educator profiles were created from data provided from responses to the first interview question in which educators described their background as a traditional educator and explained how they had progressed in their journey toward becoming an online teacher.

PROFILE 1: BARRY

Barry believes that teaching is based on establishing relationships and a positive culture for learning. This belief is reflected in his statement, “You need to reach the student to teach the student.” He believes that it is important to make learning experiences meaningful and relevant for his students. Barry believes that the educator’s role, whether as a K-12 teacher or as an adult educator, is to create a desire and interest for learning by establishing a setting and incentives for learning while making it possible for the learner to experience success. He goes on to say that confidence building and establishing the level of trust, which promotes risk-taking in learning, are also important elements in the teaching and learning experience. Barry concludes, “Teaching is learning. The best learning takes place in situations in which a teacher and learners are sometimes teaching, sometimes learning.”

As an adjunct associate professor Barry taught graduate level students. Barry taught one course in a traditional classroom setting to thirty students, two courses via teleconference to forty students and most recently two asynchronous, text-based online courses to over twenty online learners. In addition to his roles described earlier, he has also been a teacher and counselor. Barry has held various positions in school and central office administration.

Barry’s introduction to becoming an online teacher was presented as an opportunity to become involved in a new way of offering graduate level courses. Barry became an online teacher because he believed that this opportunity would benefit him by developing his online learning and teaching skills.

Barry has a very limited background in the use of technology. Because of this limited technology experience he decided to hire someone, at his own expense, to help with typing emails and posting and responding in online discussions. This decision to hire someone was made because Barry has limited keyboarding skills and the number of postings he is confronted with would be time consuming for him.

Though Barry's preference is to work face-to-face with individuals in a classroom setting, he recognizes that there are some unique learning opportunities made available through the online delivery of post-secondary courses. His online experience consists of chat rooms, discussion boards, CDs developed with different scenarios for the student to respond to, and an area of online research. In each online course he taught, the course content was similar to that taught in a traditional setting and via audio-conferencing. Though Barry views the two online teaching events as positive learning experiences, he acknowledges that they were plagued by many technical problems which affected the online teaching and learning experience.

PROFILE 2: COLLEEN

Colleen believes in the lived experience of the classroom, with students learning and dialoging with peers. She believes strongly that learners must be provided with the opportunity to use and practice the knowledge and skills they study in class within their personal and work environments. Colleen also believes that it is important to ensure that the process being used with learners matches with the content being taught. She illustrates this in the example if you are teaching the leadership of good communication skills, team work or collaboration, then your students need to be provided not only with the opportunity to observe and practice good techniques, but also be provided with immediate and consistent

feedback as to how well they perform these techniques. As a traditional educator Colleen enjoys the reciprocity of the teaching and learning relationship that she shares with her students. She also enjoys the immediacy of being able to read and adapt to her students through the many verbal and non-verbal cues which occur during their classroom interaction.

Colleen began her career teaching students in Grades 9-12. In addition to her role as a classroom teacher her other roles include being a school administrator and today a central office administrator. In addition, she has mentored and taught adult learners at a graduate level. She has taught adults by herself and as part of a team in the traditional classroom setting and via audio-conferencing and online conferencing. She estimates that she has taught hundreds of adult learners in a traditional setting, approximately one hundred learners via audio-conferencing and thirty learners via the Internet. As a result of her Internet teaching experience, Colleen indicates that she is hesitant to teach online because in her words, "the experience is not a complete fit" with the content.

Throughout Colleen's interview it is evident that she does not feel fulfilled by her online teaching experiences. She continually questions the effectiveness of her asynchronous, text-based online teaching and learning experience. She believes strongly that online courses must "have at least an audio component, though a video and audio component would be better."

PROFILE 3: DOROTHY

Dorothy believes that learning is a life-long process in which learners must be actively involved and engaged participants. She recognizes that learners come from different backgrounds and experiences, possessing not only a variety of learning styles, but also different skill levels. Dorothy believes that the common ground between teachers and students is that they are both learners with contributions to make to the learning process. She states, "The students are at the center of the learning and my role is to facilitate their learning through providing a risk-free environment in which they have the opportunity to question, make choices and reflect." Dorothy always enjoys interacting with students and colleagues. She acknowledges that in the online environment, the interaction is of a different nature, and that as an online teacher she misses the face-to-face component.

Dorothy started her career teaching many years ago in Great Britain, where she taught English, history, geography and arithmetic for four years. Dorothy then moved to Canada, where she became a teacher in language arts at the junior and senior high school levels. In addition she has held the positions of staff development consultant, assistant principal and adult education teacher. As an adult educator she was approached to become a team leader for self-directed learning. From her position as team leader she was persuaded to teach online. Dorothy states, "I was sort of forced into it. I was really interested in it so it was a natural sort of progression for me." She estimates that in her role as an adult educator she has taught hundreds if not thousands of adults in a traditional setting and approximately 120 students over six online courses. Dorothy states that she is "very positive about the whole process of online teaching and learning", believing that it is important to "look at the possibilities rather than the negatives in an online environment."

PROFILE 4: ANNE

Anne became a secondary classroom teacher approximately twenty-seven years ago, because teaching incorporated her love for learning, her desire to work with students and the flexibility to travel during school designated holidays. In her role as an adult educator she estimates that she has taught thousands of adults in both the traditional setting and online environment. In addition to being the administrator of online and self-directed learning programs, Anne is a self-described online leader. Not only has she taught in a traditional and online environment, but at the time of the interview she was responsible for technology professional development within her organization.

As a classroom teacher, Anne began her career in a rural school on the prairies. During this time she became very excited about what possibilities the role of a teacher might have. She observed that teachers in a small rural school do everything. In addition to teaching Grades 7-12 social studies and English she also coached basketball and football. As she moved through her career, Anne moved to a large urban schooling system.

As a rural teacher, she came to understand that though teaching is an integrated systemic concept, it is compartmentalized to serve the administrative structure of schools. Anne states, "When you take away those barriers, I can teach language arts on the football field. I [could] engage students in drama and the thinking of drama, while we were on field trips looking at Hutterite Colonies as part of their Social Studies unit."

She found herself, "out of necessity building a learning environment that was present in [all teaching and teaching activities] while mapping learning to learning outcomes" in order to identify assessment issues. As she moved along in her career, it became clear to Anne that once one moves into a school system that learning "anywhere and everywhere"

was not allowed. Anne found that whether it was among teachers or in the institutionalization of education, a rank order developed and this structure limited the way she wanted to work.

Anne left the school system because she felt it was becoming too much about "filling the vessel." During her time away from teaching, she became interested in the role of technology in adult learning.

Upon her return to teaching, Anne worked with adult learners. Anne realized many things as she worked with adults. She soon realized that their ability to learn was not the problem, but rather it was the "access to instruction and refiguring instruction so that it mapped in to the prior learning needs" of the adult learner. This included practical issues including flexing and pacing learning.

While at home with her children and teaching adult night courses Anne contemplated her options. Using her computer at home, she began to explore what technology was doing and the direction it was going. She found that technology shared some of the same characteristics she believed were important to the learning process. For example, technology allowed her to work in a pervasive learning environment, which integrated itself so that learning was not chunked or ordered allowing for time to reflect during the learning process. As a result of this breakthrough in her own thinking, Anne started thinking differently about processes, structures, organizational frameworks, outcomes and conclusions. She started to draw different conclusions about working in a technologically enhanced environment then when she worked with paper and pencil. This breakthrough transformed her thinking. It also transformed her practice and action and led her to ask questions about, "What happens when you take the classroom learning environment and you transform it using technology?" To answer this question, Anne took the initiative. She redesigned her English course to address

the learning needs of her adult learners, paid for server space and started working with her students by moving them into a computer lab and showing them how to access, use and extend technology into their learning. She also started flexing the learning environment by personalizing it through self-pacing and individualizing learning. This personalizing was accomplished by interviewing students, designing assignments with students and informing students how they would be assessed. Her initiative to integrate technology into adult learning built confidence, supported learners and crafted student success. This redesign contributed to 94% of Anne's students' passing with marks that were higher than students in previous courses.

Because of her initial online success, Anne began to extend her work by building courses and training other teachers. Even though her initiative translated into student success, her work was not well received or supported from her organization. Her work was viewed as too time consuming, too threatening and too expensive.

Because Anne could not continue to work sixteen-hour days trying to develop content, use it with students and train teachers without support or assistance, the whole online initiative stopped. It was not until that point that her administration began to ask questions and establish a plan. After two years her organization did recognize the value of her work and began to build its thinking around how to support it. At the same time, online student enrollment exploded but the organization did not have enough teachers trained or have the thinking in place to sustain growth.

Anne led the planning and developed an initiative that transformed the educational institution. At the time of her interview, Anne's organization has one thousand students online, with a technological capacity for one hundred thousand students. In addition her organization is continually reaching out and forming partnerships. One partnership includes an online teacher-training program, which is accredited by a local university.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Seven supporting questions were developed to guide the interviews. These questions are listed below.

1) Describe your background as an adult educator and explain how you progressed to become an online teacher.
2) As an online teacher, how did you accomplish the following tasks associated with the teaching-learning experience?
    a) Encouraging contact between yourself and your students and between your students.
    b) Encouraging reciprocity and cooperation among your students.
    c) Encouraging active learning.
    d) Encouraging feedback to your students and from your students.
    e) Communicating expectations of educators and of students.
    f) Meeting the diverse needs of your students.
    g) Encouraging your students to develop higher cognitive skills, such as analysis, synthesis, application and evaluation.
3) What support or training is required to support the teaching and learning skills required of online teachers?

4) What kind of technical challenges did you face as an online teacher and how did you overcome these challenges?
5) What support or training is required to support the technical skills required for online teachers?
6) Given your experience as an online teacher what do you think are the most essential skills, knowledge and attitudes required of an online teacher?
7) If you were going to give advice to an adult educator considering moving into teaching online, what three essential pieces of advice would you offer?

DATA COLLECTION

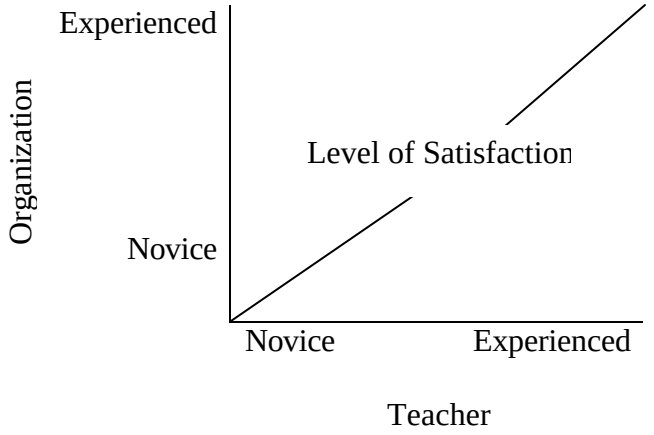
QUESTION ONE

When teachers were asked to describe how they had progressed from an adult educator to an online teacher the one common theme that arose was that teachers had been provided an opportunity to participate as an online teacher. Three of the four teachers were asked or persuaded to say yes, and one teacher, while on leave, experimented with the computer and technology, saw the potential and took initiative to experiment further.

Two teachers worked with graduate level students, while two teachers worked with adult learners returning to complete or upgrade high school courses. The researcher observed that the two more experienced online teachers were positive about their experiences, while the two new online teachers were somewhat dissatisfied with their experiences. Interestingly, the two experienced teachers were employed by an organization with six years of online experience, while the two new teachers were the first to instruct online for their organization. The researcher speculates that this difference in teacher reactions toward their online teaching and learning experience may be a combination of individual and organizational

factors. Teachers as individuals appear to have a range of comfort and competence with online technologies, as well as an understanding of their role. Similarly, the two organizations appear to have a range comfort and competence with online technologies, as well as an understanding of their role (see Figure 2, Teacher satisfaction with online transition).

Figure 2. Teacher satisfaction with online transition



The more experienced online teachers work for the same organization. Their organization is experienced in self-paced and online learning. One of the teachers wears many hats – educator, adult educator, online leader, teacher and strategist, administrator and technology leader. Though she attempts to speak as an adult educator transferring to teaching online, it appears that she has made and is not still making the transition.

It appears that she understands her online role. This observation is supported by her discussion of the learning community (learners, students and the greater organization) in that technology as a tool should not impede the teaching and learning process. Her interview simultaneously provides the points of view of online adult educator and administrator.

The two more novice online teachers work for the same post-secondary institution. When the first of these teachers became an asynchronous, text-based online teacher, at the post-secondary level, it was in addition to his full-time role as a school administrator. During this time he balanced his online role with his other professional roles. Though he had a very limited background in the use of technology, he chose to participate when asked, as he saw it as a learning experience which would force him to use technology. Though he views his online opportunities as positive learning experiences, he acknowledges that they were plagued by many technical problems. He concludes that the online teaching and learning environment did not meet his needs as an educator.

The second teacher, in addition to her three online experiences, was also introduced to another organizations online course. Her experience with this other organization provided her with an opportunity to view online teaching and learning of an experienced online organization. This teacher appears frustrated with her online teaching experience, as she has seen the potential of online teaching and learning. This awareness is evidenced by her reference to the other organization which illustrates her knowledgeable background:

> It looked dramatically different…. They really did try to stay in touch with what was a match for their learners …. They went to greater simplicity; they controlled the boundaries and options in a way to make thing[s] simpler for people.…. It was really done so that it was a connection which was much more enriching… What they saw when they looked on their computer was so much friendlier and [easy to navigate]…. It is

> much more stimulating to look and to want to interact with….
> It was just more … alive.

She indicates that she is hesitant to teach another online course, though she does recognize that:

> I think people are going to realize that [it] is like the covered wagon. It is like some little pioneer is going to be so much bigger and better and more suited to the learning purpose….
> You have to do the best you can right now but realize that you are on a journey and the world will get a lot better and we are not going to have to do with the inadequacy that we do it at present.

QUESTION TWO

Based on the conceptual maps of Chickering and Gamsom (1987) and Chickering and Ehrmann (1996), teachers were asked to describe how they accomplished the following seven tasks: (a) encouraging contact between themselves and students and between students, (b) encouraging reciprocity and cooperation among students, (c) encouraging active learning, (d) encouraging feedback to students and from students, (e) communicating expectations of teachers and of students, (f) meeting the diverse needs of students and (g) encouraging learners to develop higher cognitive skills, such as analysis, synthesis, application and evaluation, in association with their teaching-learning experience. Their discussion revealed the findings which are discussed on pages 57-69.

Encouraging contact. The common theme which emerges focuses around communication. As stated by one teacher, "we need to be personalizing an impersonal environment." Subsets within the theme of communication include: (a) creating social and teacher presence, (b) developing collaborative interactive environments and (c) understanding the differences between teaching face-to-face and teaching online.

Creating social and teacher presence. As discussed earlier in Chapter Two, social presence is "the ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally, as "real" people (i.e., their full personality), through the medium of communication being used" (Garrison, Anderson, Archer, 2000, 94).

Teaching presence is defined as "the design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes" (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, and Archer 2001).

Teacher and social presence were established through contact via the telephone, home pages, emails, chat rooms, discussion boards, and posting onsite office hours.

Social presence. Teachers provided examples of creating social presence to bring out their full personality as well as the personalities of their learners. One teacher stated that because the online environment is an impersonal environment she believes that as teachers get to know their students, their emails should try to incorporate personal comments and questions specific to individual students. This teacher also states that being able to meet students face-to-face made a tremendous difference when creating social presence. She explains:

> As a teacher you feel really divorced from the student and the face-to-face contact you are used to in the classroom environment…. I think face-to-face contact is one of the things you really miss and the immediacy of responding to

> questions…. You don't get the body language and so you have to rely on little symbols LOL [laughing-out-loud] or whatever it is they put down to see what they are feeling…. I think that contact is really missing in the online environment and I think many teachers find that they miss that contact.

She continues that it is also important that online teachers maintain a social presence with colleagues. She has set up an area where all online teachers may communicate, discuss best practice and ask questions. In addition she also emails a summary of online meetings to her teachers.

Teacher presence. Teachers provide examples of designing, facilitating and directing the cognitive and social processes within the teaching and learning transaction, for the purpose of creating meaningful learning opportunities for learners. One teacher stated that she "phoned each student and talked to them personally." She also used chat rooms for introductions. Another teacher stated, "Everyday I bring in any information they [students] need to know. Generally I change that page once a week but if there is some emergent issue coming up then I'll [send] out a message on the home page. I also email all the students and I encourage them as soon as they email me I usually, even if it [is] just handing in an assignment, I'll email them back and say, "Thanks for your assignment"."

Developing collaborative interactive environments. Collaborative and interactive environments were formed through the creation of a training program, student group assignments, and ensuring that students see that the collaborative online environment was greater than just the interaction between students and teachers.

Teacher training programs. One teacher states that her organization developed standards for creating social presence as well as for developing collaborative interactive

environments. In addition, her organization provides eight weeks of professional development which incorporated the different levels of interaction.

Student group assignments. One teacher indicates that she set up student assignments in a project style so that students worked with other people. She went on to state that by encouraging communication between students, in a project format, "actually increased communication with us [teachers] too because they [students] wanted to get it [the assignment] right."

Collaborative online environments. One teacher states: "One critical piece of building online learning community and building this kind of cooperative environment [is] it cannot be just between student and teacher. Students have to come to see that there is a whole team of people working." Her example of the greater online community, within her organization, included learning strategists, online counselors, virtual libraries, technical help desk, and a student run student centre.

Understanding the differences between teaching face-to-face and teaching online. Asynchronous, text-based teachers compare his or her online teaching experiences in relation to their traditional teaching experiences. Teachers found that the physical distance between themselves and students difficult to adjust to. One teacher states that she feels divorced from the students and the face-to-face contact she, as a teacher, is use to in the traditional classroom environment. She concludes with the observation, "I think that face-to-face contact is one of the things you really miss, [in addition to] the immediacy of responding to [student] questions."

Encouraging reciprocity and cooperation. Reciprocity and cooperation encourage students to work collaboratively and be social with the goal of increasing student involvement in learning by openly sharing ideas and responding to peers. Four themes emerge from discussions with teachers. These themes are: (a) introductions, (b) assignments (online and face-to-face), (c) conflict between collaborative assignments and self-pacing and (d) teacher and learner preparation.

Introductions. Introductions set the beginnings of creating an environment of reciprocity and cooperation by building relationships and establishing a safe environment where students may share ideas and respond to peers. Introductions may also help teachers in creating learning groups by allowing them to get to know their learners.

Though two out of four teachers directly recognize online introductions at the beginning of a course, as a way to developing reciprocity and collaboration, all four teachers used online introductions. One teacher stated that in order to develop reciprocity and cooperation among students, teachers accomplished this mostly through knowing their students. She identifies online introductions or "icebreakers" at the beginning of a course as a way in which to learn about: (a) why students were enrolled in the course, (b) why students chose an online versus a traditional environment, (c) how much online learning experience did students have, and (d) what were student's hobbies and outside interests.

Assignments (online and face-to-face). Assignments with a project component are identified as a way in which to encourage cooperation and reciprocity among students. One teacher states that though she encouraged group work among her students, they were provided the option to meet face-to-face or online.

Teachers indicate many obstacles to creating the ultimate learning environment which encourages reciprocity and cooperation. Teachers make the following comments about the obstacles to creating effective online group work: (a) teachers were not trained in the use online tools expected to be used by students for online project work, (b) student special requests or exemptions were greater online than in a traditional learning environment, (c) students were hesitant to work in groups at a distance.

Conflict between collaborative assignments and self-pacing. Teachers discussed the contradiction between collaborative group assignments and individual self-pacing. This opposition is described by one teacher who stated:

> We have designed in our courses collaborative assignments. Now these [collaborative assignments] have fallen into different levels of debate because at the same time we have argued for self-paced learning, so the self-paced learning often flies in the face of collaboration. It's been a balancing act…. We are trying to get away from linear learning, so that student can collaborate in major ways throughout a course that isn't confined to certain learning's that are tied to specific lessons so it can still remain self-paced.

Teacher and learners preparedness. During his interview, one teacher provides several examples of how neither he, as an online teacher, nor his online learners were adequately prepared for the asynchronous, text-based online teaching and learning experience. This lack of preparedness is evidenced by his comments about online group work. In his example he explains that it was difficult for him to offer students support because he could not respond to every posting, he was not able to view group work progression and he could not help students adjust to online group work. He concludes, "[I was] reluctant to interfere with the process too much. It was supposed to be up to them to work out how they were going to do things."

Another teacher demonstrates unprepared ness for her online role and the online role her learners. She feels that the online venue is appropriate for the very independent learner wishing to operate in isolation. She describes online learners as being more selfish. This statement is qualified with the examples of increased special requests from online learners and demands for flexibility. She concludes with, "It is a way that [students] would never expect if they were in a classroom."

A third teacher states that it is important that teachers prepare for online interaction by getting to know his or her students. She provides an example of how her organization helps teachers get to know their students through the use of student profiles so that students may be matched with their peers and teachers may know their students prior to their online meeting.

Teachers observe that students require help adjusting to collaborative online assignments. Specifically, they indicate that students are: (a) hesitating to participate in online group work, (b) not realizing that group work is a course component and (c) experiencing difficulty communicating, scheduling time and dividing group work.

Teachers observe that they also require help adjusting to collaborative online assignments. Specifically, they indicate that teachers need to: (a) be kept informed of student progress and discussion, (b) know how to support students, and (c) help students make the transition from face-to-face into online group work.

Encouraging active learning. The common themes which emerge focus on: (a) defining active learning and (b) helping teachers evaluate active learning.

Defining active learning. All four teachers describe what active learning means to them through defining active learning and providing examples. Definitions include: (a) having students make meaning, incorporate ideas, and make connections, (b) having students apply information to some aspect of their life which is meaningful to them, (c) engaging students, (d) creating thoughtful assignments, (e) keeping students motivated, interested, and actively engaged in learning, (f) letting students be a part of their own learning, (g) encouraging students to incorporate ideas from their experiences, (h) flexing learning for students, and (i) choosing something meaningful, researching it, finding out applications, choosing what you learn, and creating a plan.

One teacher questions whether the asynchronous, text-based online venue is a good fit for actively learning:

> I am going back to say, where you would be mostly learning new information, then I think you will be okay [with online learning]. Where you are supposed to be gaining other skills with it [online learning], I think it [online learning] is not as strong. In other words the venue by which you offer [information] has to be a fit with the content. If I had to learn … statistical things … and I will be using the computer for most it, good bet to do on-line… When you are supposed to be [developing leadership or counseling skills] some of those kinds of skills involved [than online as a venue] are questionable.

Another teacher believes that gentle nagging and the setting of benchmarks to keep students on task is crucial. She believes this form of encouragement enables students to participate in their own learning, therefore allowing them to engage in their learning. In her opinion it is important for teachers to keep students engaged by accommodating their

different learning styles. She states that this accommodation may be accomplished by recognizing an active learning moment, using the teacher's knowledge of a student to evaluate their options and taking action to modify the course or assignment. She provides an example of how she recognized an active learning moment, used her knowledge of a student to evaluate her options, and took action to keep her student engaged. She shared the following example:

> Today this boy, he knows how to write a critical response essay he knows how to write a readers response which are the two key things. He is a bright young man and he sort of said to me that I've really let things get behind and I was wondering if I could do some alternative creative assignments.
>
> He is a very creative person. So, I just wrote back to him and made a whole list of suggestions and said what do you think of this instead of doing poorly in the course work?
>
> Altering the course to suite their learning styles I think it is really important and sort of being flexible enough to do that.
>
> I know that he [the student] knows how to do the critical written aspect might be a lot more beneficial to him, keep him interested and motivated and actively engaged in learning rather than instead of sitting there and saying -- Oh! I've to write another critical response essay. That's another way of encouraging them.

Helping teachers evaluate active learning. A teacher explains that courses offered by her organization are under constant review. Her organization employs a full-time online editor to ensure standards for active learning are defined and met. It is the editor's responsibility to ensure that courses not only match to course guidelines, but also that every activity and every page allows for students to be engaged in their learning. She states, "No one is allowed to sit and read."

She explains that her organization is exploring gaming theory, how games may be used to encourage learning, and how this may be applied within courses. As an administrator, when evaluating active and engaged learning she asks the following questions:

- How are students engaging in learning?
- How are student taking information in?
- How is their learning changing the way they think, act and perform a task?

Examples of evaluating active learning included: (a) evaluating interaction, (b) balancing quantity vs. quality, (c) using benchmarks, and (d) creating portfolios.

Encouraging feedback. The common theme which emerges focuses on communication between teacher and student. Subsets within the theme of communication include: (a) communicating teacher's social presence, and (b) understanding the role of the teacher online.

Communicating teacher's social presence. Teachers create a social presence by: (a) posting a biography, (b) making follow up phone calls, (c) responding to postings, (d) providing students with ideas to think and respond to, (e) asking questions, providing current readings, (f) including jokes and personalized questions about hobbies, (g) providing timely feedback, (h) including gifs in email such as moving smiling faces (i) entrance surveys and exit interviews and (j) timely feedback.

Understanding the role of the teacher online. One teacher recognizes that teachers play a crucial role in the online teaching and learning process. She states:

> There is a huge role for teachers to play in helping the student understand how they learn, how they can structure their learning, giving feedback about how they are doing, making sure that students are attentive and understanding about the learning community that they are working in.

Teachers demonstrate that they were having difficulty understanding their online role. This is evidenced by comments made by two teachers. The first teacher states "We were not able to do what we thought we were going to do and that was to respond to every posting that was made by every student." As a result, he feels that his role as teacher is reduced to overseer which encompasses checking and responding to postings. This experience leaves him feeling less fulfilled.

Another teacher states, "[When you do not provide immediate or consistent feedback] it is like how long do you keep talking if nobody is giving you any feedback to keep going."

Communicating expectations. The common theme which emerges from this question focuses on communication between teacher and student. The three sub-themes focus on: (a) how did teachers communicate their expectations, (b) what teacher expectations were communicated, and (c) when did teachers communicate expectations?

How did teachers communicate their expectations? Several teachers indicate that teachers need to spell out their expectations to students. Teachers provide the following methods for communicating their expectations: (a) organization web site, (b) home page, (c) course syllabus/ policy/ outline/ guidelines, (d) discussion boards, (e) progress reports, (f) setting benchmarks, and (g) maintaining up to date student records.

One teacher indicated that the challenge of communicating expectations was not "just communicating the expectations, [but] it was helping people understand what that would look like in reality." He went on to explain that because students were having trouble accessing the Web site, some students did not gain access to course information or assignment questions for up to one month into a four month course.

What teacher expectations were communicated? Teacher expectations focus on course content, course activities and the quantity and quality of student participation.

When did teachers communicate expectations? Teachers agree that expectations should be discussed at the beginning of a course. One teacher indicates that, "the difficulty comes when they [learners] do not understand how much time and effort they have to put into this learning and what their expectations are. We spend a lot of time being very clear." Expectations are communicated on the Web site, through online course syllabuses, course requirements and progress reports.

Another teacher makes expectations clear within the course outline. He believes that the challenge is not just simply about communicating expectations, but helping students understand what the set expectations look like in reality. He notes that in one instance some students did not have access to the course outline, because they did not know that they were accessing the wrong Web site. As a result of accessing the wrong site, these students did not know what was expected of them in their course.

Meeting student diverse needs. The common theme to emerge focuses on the individual student. However, how teachers focus on the individual student differs. Discussion focuses on: (a) recognizing that adult learning requires flexibility, individualization, levels of privacy, anonymous learning, (b) meeting diverse needs through: timelines, milestones, assignments, self-pacing, (c) allowing for different perspectives, (d) accommodating learning styles, (e) matching individual and group (course) goals - when is it appropriate or feasible, (f) developing courses to accommodate learning styles, differentiated instruction, and multiple intelligence, and (g) accommodating for different levels of comfort with technology.

One teacher indicates that he did not expect perspectives of learners to be so different between the provinces. "As far as the course content goes we found that there were quite a few different perspectives depending on where they were from." In this situation he is referring to both different province perspectives (British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba) and different job roles (principals, teachers, central office administration). He concludes, "that's why it [is] so important to know the background [of learners] from the beginning. [This is done through personal] introductions and [sharing] their perspectives."

Another teacher believes that no matter what a teacher's teaching environment is, they will always have diverse learner needs. She also states:

> Sometimes diversity takes away from the common good…. So I think we need to be suiting the tool to the learning goal and the learning need…. I am not going to meet all the diverse needs. I have [met diverse needs] and I understand it [how to meet diverse needs]… I see it [meeting diverse needs] as a possibility… not always [a reality].

Developing higher cognitive skills. The common theme which emerges focuses on balancing the role of technology, the role of the teacher, while meeting the needs and abilities of students. Sub themes include: (a) the ability of the student to use different information sources, (b) the ability of the student to use different cognitive strategies, (c) the ability of the teacher to adapt to student needs in the teaching and learning process. This question may best be summarized by one teacher's statement. She states:

> Technology allows us to combine information and ideas in such a way that new ideas can emerge or new orders and communication standards can emerge. Well it is everything whether it's analyzing information we can juxtapopose, information we can extrapolate, we can run tests and reports, we can throw information in a database and create environments where we can start to target information in ways we could never do without the technology…. It is the highest level of thinking and that these are tools that move us to the levels of thinking without us having to use time consuming

> processes that are isolating. Now we have shared learning environments so that we can bring together expertise, we can now build teams where we identify the varieties of expertise and bring them together to work in a synthesized environment that allows us to generate new understanding.

The ability of the student to use different information sources. Teachers indicate the ability of students to use different sources of information including (a) personal experiences, (b) Web sites, (c) databases, (d) self-assessment.

The ability of the student to use different cognitive strategies. Students require the ability to use different cognitive strategies moving from skill based to a more problem and issue based thinking.

One teacher states, "The cognitive part to me is the part that should be able to be done online as well as anywhere else." She concludes that in order to develop higher cognitive skills within learners, students need immediate strategies which they can use in their online learning.

Another teacher recognizes course activities, assignments, questioning and Web searches as methods to help develop higher cognitive skills in online learners. She also adds the use of self-assessment and time to reflect as other valuable activities.

The ability of the teacher to adapt to student needs in the teaching and learning process. Teachers suggest:

- Encouraging students through the types of assignments built into the course.
- Building links into the course.
- Integrating self-assessment into the course.
- Encouraging students to find links.
- Providing textbooks and reference materials.
- Integrating personal experiences.

QUESTIONS THREE AND FIVE

These questions asked what support or training was required to support both the teaching and learning skills and also the technical skills required of online teachers?

The common theme which emerges, in relation to this heading, focuses on the individual. Support and training of teachers during their transition should help enhance and develop the technical skills and teaching and learning skills required of online teachers. While teachers did not perceive content to be an issue, regarding it to be the same regardless of the learning environment, they identified two other areas requiring support. These areas are requiring technology support and training and needing help organizing the online teaching and learning transaction.

Teachers suggest that organizations seeking to support and train their teachers, transitioning from the traditional into the online environment, may consider (not ordered by importance or timeline):

- Assessing (organization/ self-assessment) teacher comfort and competence with technologies (hardware and software) and related knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Helping teachers understand how to create meaningful online teaching and learning interaction for students and teachers.
- Providing sufficient lead time for teachers to learn the platform and new environment they will be working in.
- Providing curriculum support to help teachers translate curriculum into content to suit the online environment and for the online environment to suit them.

- Asking how do the traditional ways in which the organization works impact the asynchronous, text-based online teaching and learning process? (Example registration procedures).
- Preparing students for their role as asynchronous, text-based online learners.
- Understanding how to make the online venue meaningful for both learners and teachers.
- Assuring learners are provided with information about the learning mode and assignments expected through course descriptors.
- Establishing guiding principles for online programs.
- Securing adequate support and training mechanisms.
- Developing a learning community where all members are able to work together.
- Providing access to colleagues, supervisors and other support systems which may be offered in both the traditional and the online venue.
- Suggested support systems which include discussion groups, one-to-one meetings, mentorship, collaborative communities of practice, training and teachers as online learners.
- Providing technology support and technology that does not interfere with online teaching and learning (servers, hardware, software).

Support and training is crucial. As stated by one teacher, "It is like taking people on a journey to a place where you have not been yourself and you are the tour guide."

QUESTION FOUR

Question four asked teachers about the online technical challenges they faced and how they overcame these challenges (see Table 1. Summary of challenges and insights: pedagogical, technical, personal).

Table 1. Summary of challenges and insights: pedagogical, technical, personal

Pedagogical		**Technical**		**Personal**	
Challenge	**Insights**	**Challenge**	**Insights**	**Challenge**	**Insights**
Adapting teaching and learning styles	Training and support	Technology - Personnel	Communication	Adapting to technology	Training and support
	Seeking help		Persistence		Seeking help
	Letting go of initial fear		Lead time		Letting go of initial fear
	Experiment	Technology - Server	Do not make server problems a teacher problem		Experiment
		Technology - Hardware and Software	Technology cannot be barrier		
			Provide technolo gy to teachers onsite and offsite		
			Technology support in the form of personnel and training		
			Set limits of responsibility. What is realistic to expect from teachers and technology personnel?		

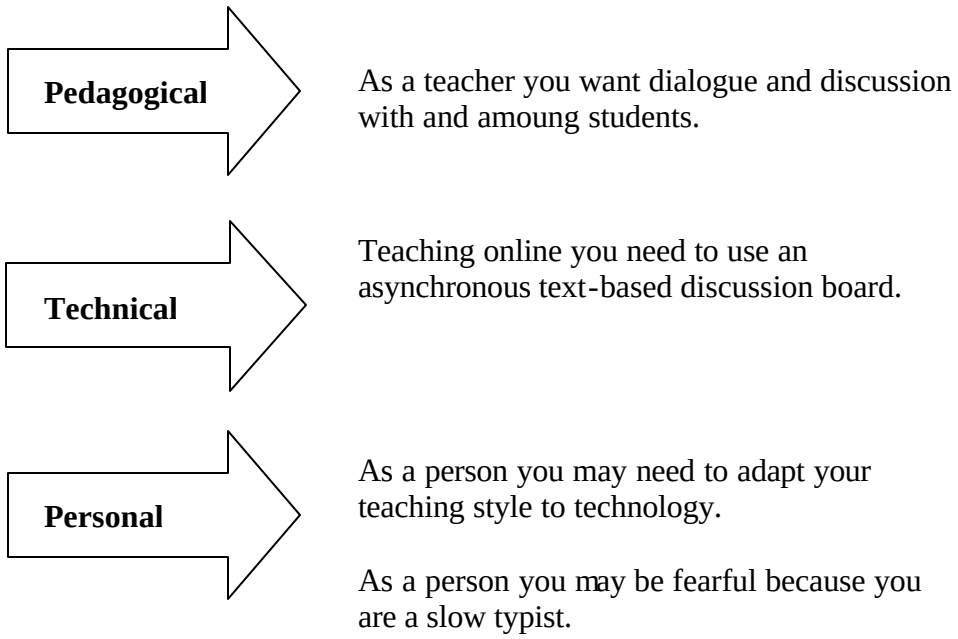
One teacher identifies two technical challenges. The first involves comprehending technical language and educators experiencing difficulty talking to technical people and trying to understand the terminology they use and being able to follow technical directions provided. The second challenge is using old equipment and technology. She provides insights about overcoming technical challenges, believing that it is crucial to provide access to updated equipment and technology, access to free training, access to software at home and onsite, to provide support to course design, and to provide shared experiences. She also states that technology problems, such as server problems, should never be a teacher issue, but that of the program coordinator and technical staff.

Another teacher identifies one major challenge focusing on technology problems with the server and learning platform. In his view many technical challenges can be overcome by providing access to support personnel and providing sufficient lead time.

Another teacher summarized her challenges as an online teacher as: (a) adapting to asynchronous discussion boards, (b) adapting her teaching and learning styles, (c) overcoming her fear of being a slow typist and not having perfect online grammar and spelling, (d) adapting to marking on the vertical plane (computer screen) from the horizontal plane (pen and paper). This teacher overcomes these challenges by remembering she was a risk-taker and not being afraid to make mistakes or to ask for help. She notes that the one thing she still does not enjoy about online teaching is that she is unable to see the student and their reactions. She states, “You want to be able to make jokes. We want to get that collaboration, cooperation and you have to work hard at that.”

It became evident that when analyzing the data to technical challenges it should not be discussed in isolation. Rather, technical challenges need to be examined in relations to the pedagogical and personal challenges which may result from technology. Take for example dialogue and discussion (see Figure 3, An example of the pedagogical, technical, personal relationship).

Figure 3. An example of the pedagogical, technical, personal relationship



Teachers are in agreement that organizational support and responsiveness is important. One teacher states, “He [the project coordinator] was very good about helping work through it [problems] and getting the technician [when] he realized that there was a need…. If [the technician] would not have been there [I] would have a problem because… I did not have the technical expertise.

QUESTION SIX

Question six asked teachers to share what they believed were the most essential knowledge, skills and attitudes required of an online teacher. The common theme which emerges focuses on the individual. Teachers reflect on their experience as an online teacher and describe what they believe are the most essential skills, knowledge and attitudes required of online teachers. Their beliefs as to the essential skills, knowledge and attitudes required of traditional educators considering teaching online, are summarized in Table 2. Participant summary of essential knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Table 2. Participant summary of essential knowledge, skills and attitudes

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Subject expertise	Technical skills – software applications – word, platform being used	Remain a learner
Knowledge of different information sources	Technical skills - keyboarding skills	Remain humbled
Access to computer	Pedagogical skills – become a learning strategist	Recognize that you will never be an expert
Knowledge of what makes online learning different from traditional learning	Pedagogical skills – individualizing and personalizing instruction	Share skills that you acquire with colleagues
Knowledge of what makes online group work different from traditional group work	Communication skills – written word	Adaptable to lack of human interaction
Content knowledge	Communication skills – online facilitation	Be a learner
Understand how research is important and what good research versus what is not good research	Technical skills - keyboarding skills	Be open
Knowing how to take pieces and apply it to given situations	Technical skills – email basics	Be a risk taker
Knowing how to ask questions to get people thinking	Communicating - keep communicating	Don't be afraid of the online environment
Knowing what are the implications of that and how do you really make it meaningful	Technical - some technical aspects – do not be afraid of computers	Experiment with what works and what doesn't work
Knowledge of computers integrating the online environment with other types of environment		

QUESTION SEVEN

Question seven asked teachers to share three essential pieces advices that they would offer an adult educator considering moving into teaching online.

The common theme which emerges focuses on the individual. Teachers reflect on their transition as of the time of the interview and then provide three essential pieces of advice for future teachers considering their transition into the online environment (see Table 3. Essential advice for new online teachers).

Table 3. Essential advice for new online teachers

Reflection	Question	Action
Be prepared not be in charge of the learning and let go of some of the controlling aspects of your work.	Does the online venue fit the learning purpose?	Individualize instruction and to make it count for each student.
Look at the love of teaching. If you are an excellent classroom teacher and you love teaching and you know your curriculum really well then that is a big step forward for going into online.	Do you have the technology background or technology support to make it work?	Allow yourself to be seen as strategist and not as expert.
Be open-minded and to look at the possibilities rather than the negatives in an online environment.	Do you have the skills, abilities and techniques to make a meaningful learning opportunity to connect students to each other, to yourself to the broader learning purpose?	Demonstrate to your students that you have expertise in the area that you are instructing and that you do not necessarily have expertise in other areas.
Be aware of what you are going into. Learn about what this is actually like; give it a try with someone else before you actually delve right into it. So do some work.	Do you [and your students] understand what you [they] are getting into? At this point, online is different than what was experienced in the past.	Attend as many workshops as you can. Look at your growth process because, once you get into the environment it hooks you completely.
		Never be afraid to ask questions.
		Have someone you can turn to.

SUMMARY

This chapter includes a snapshot of the four participants – Anne, Barry, Colleen and Dorothy – by providing a brief description of who they are and the journey they took from the traditional to the online environment.

Two teachers are advanced beginners at different levels to becoming competent online teachers. One teacher is moving from a proficient online teacher to an expert online teacher (see Chapter One – Definitions Section). One teacher is an expert online teacher. None of the online teachers could be characterized as a novice online teacher without competence or experience. The two more novice teachers, teaching to graduate level master students, worked for an organization new to online learning. The two more experienced teachers working teaching to adults upgrading courses at the grades one through twelve level, worked for an organization with six years of experience.

Chapter Four discussed data in relation to the seven interview questions. In particular, teachers experiences in relation to their: (a) online teaching and learning experience, (b) support and training, (c) technical challenges, (d) refection as to the skills, knowledge and attitudes required of online teachers and (e) advice to adult educators considering the transition into teaching online. Chapter Five: Interpretation of Findings provides a discussion of the major roles uncovered during the data analysis of the data collected in Chapter Four.

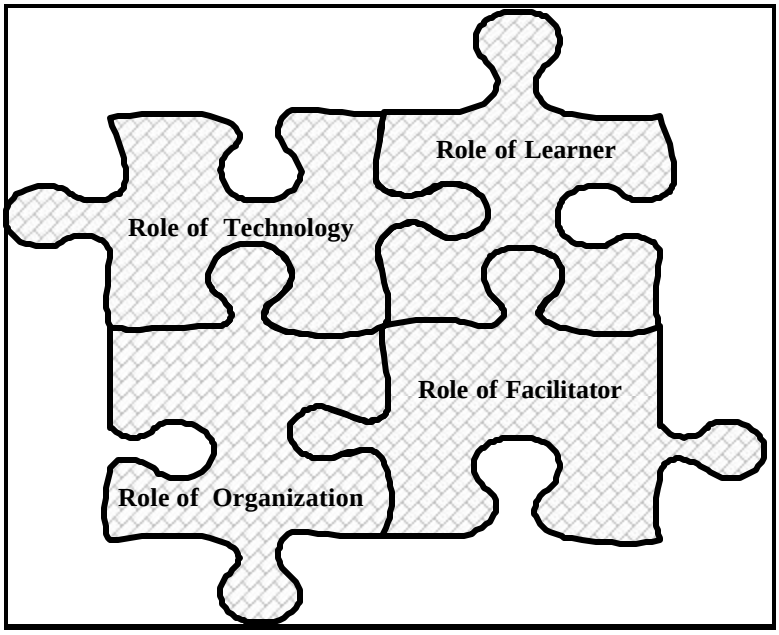
Upon analyzing the data the most notable finding observed about the realities facing adult educators in their experiences as teacher in the journey toward online asynchronous, text-based teaching was that there are four interdependent roles. These roles will be elaborated on in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

This study was originally conducted to explore adult educators transitioning toward becoming online teachers and the realities experienced in their new online roles. As the data within the seven questions were analyzed, three major roles outside the control of adult educators, in addition to one role within their control, emerged. These roles are interdependent because each role affects or is influenced by the online teaching and learning process. These four roles work interdependently creating the greater e-learning community. If one piece of the puzzle is removed, the community is incomplete and not as effective as the whole. The four roles are identified as the role of the teacher, the role of technology, the role of the learner and the role of the organization (see Figure 4, Roles within the greater e-learning community).

Figure 4. Roles within the greater e-learning community



Chapter Five provides a discussion of these four roles. At this point it is important to clarify that in this chapter the term role is being used both as being attached to a person's behaviour, in relation to the role of the teacher and the role of the learner, and also as a function in relation to the role of technology and the role of the organization.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

In the greater e-learning community, teachers making the transition toward online tecahing, influence the teaching and learning process through their knowledge, skills and attitudes and the impact of teachers.

Knowledge, skills, attitudes. During the interview all teachers identify knowledge, skills and attitudes that they believe are required of an online teacher. Teacher knowledge, skills and attitudes were further analyzed in relation to the literature review conducted.

Knowledge. According to the literature, knowledge may be divided into the two categories of pedagogy (FCA, 2001) and technology (Fredrickson, Pelz, & Swan, 2000; Gillette, 1999; Salmon, 2000).

When discussing pedagogical knowledge, the teachers did not specifically highlight knowledge about adult learning principles, communication styles, learning styles, cultural competency and group facilitation, as identified by FCA (2001). However, these points were discussed or alluded to during the interviews. For example one teacher acknowledges the importance of adult learning principles demonstrating pedagogical knowledge. This is supported by the self-talk of the two more novice teachers as they attempt to understand why their first online teaching experience was not fulfilling for them as teachers.

When examining the discussion on technological knowledge against the three categories (declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, strategic knowledge) identified by

Salmon (2001), it would appear that the two advanced beginners, with two days of training, do possess a basic declarative and procedural knowledge, while lacking the strategic knowledge to integrate the technology that is available to them within the online teaching and learning process. Table 4. Knowledge – pedagogy, technology summarizes the discussions related to these two headings.

Table 4. Knowledge – pedagogy, technology

Pedagogy	Technology
Subject expertise. Pre-knowledge of your learner. Clear knowledge of your learning outcomes.	Knowledge of computers and integrating the online environment with other types of environment.
Understand how: online learning differs from traditional learning and how to help online learners transition.	Knowledge of basic email
Different sources of information that students can tap into.	
Understand how: online learning differs from traditional learning and how to help online learners transition. Understanding what good research is and what is not.	
Making the online teaching and learning experience personally meaningful and fulfilling for you as teacher.	

Skills. While analyzing the data three skill sets emerged. These three skills are communication skills (Collison et al., 2000), technology skills (McKenzie, 1999; Truman-Davis, Futch, Thompson & Yonekura, 2000) and facilitation skills (Collison et al., 2000; McKenzie, 1999; Truman-Davis, Futch, Thompson & Yonekura, 2000).

The two more novice online teachers identify technology and communication skills, while the expert teacher also acknowledges facilitation skills. The skills as recognized by the four teachers are summarized in Table 5. Skills - communication, technology, facilitation.

Table 5. Skills - Communication, technology, facilitation

Communication	Technology	Facilitation
Be comfortable communicating in the written word and electronically. Learn how to ask questions to get people thinking for themselves and into themselves	Technical skills relating to hardware, software, platform.	Separate essential skills from value-added skills. Become a learning strategist. Learn how to individualize and personalize instruction. Facilitating online learning process.

Attitudes. An attitude is a intellectual attitude with regard to a fact or state. All four teachers identify attitudes. The identified attitudes include:

- Remain a learner
- Remain humble
- Be a risk taker
- Not being afraid of the online environment
- Recognize that you will never be an expert
- Share skills that you acquire, and
- Experiment to find out what works and does not work in the online environment.

Six out of the seven attitudes identified were specific to the individual teacher. One of the seven attitudes included the online learning community, by stating "share the skills that you acquire." Upon further analysis it is evident that reflective, proactive and positive attitudes are necessary for teachers transitioning into the online environment.

Online teacher responsibilities. As they engage in their online teaching roles, all teachers demonstrate that they currently understand or are beginning to understand their responsibilities as questioner, connector, manager and mentor. These responsibilities were discussed earlier in Chapter Two. Berg (1995) writes that there are many necessary conditions to successfully teaching online. He classifies these areas into the areas of pedagogical, social, managerial and technical.

Questioner. The questioner uses questions and probes learners so that they focus on critical concepts, principles and skills. The four teachers demonstrated the following examples of the questioner role:

- Encouraging students through the types of assignments build into the course.
- Building links into the course.
- Integrating self-assessment into the course.
- Encouraging students to find links.
- Providing textbooks and reference materials.
- Integrating personal experiences.
- Educating students on what it means to develop higher cognitive skills.

The two online teachers identified as advanced beginners at different levels to becoming competent online teachers demonstrate attempting to focus and deepen the thinking of their learners by utilizing a guided-inquiry pedagogy (Collison et al. 2000) they

appear to demonstrate difficulty, as online teachers, moving from teacher-centred instruction to learner-centred instruction (Cuban, 1993; Fahy 2000; Relan & Gillani, 1997; Bandrul, 1997; Gibbons & Wentworth, 2001).

The two more experienced online teachers appear to use a more learner-centred approach (Cuban, 1993; Fahy 2000; Relan & Gillani, 1997; Bandrul, 1997; Gibbons & Wentworth, 2001). The two more novice teachers appear to view their roles, as described by Gold (2000), as information providers and transmitters. This is evidenced by one teacher's comment, about his shared online teaching experience, "We were not able to do what we thought we were going to and that was to respond to every posting that was made by every student." The two more experienced online teachers appear to view their roles, as described by Collison et al. (2000) as helping to clarify and extend the thinking of learners. This is supported by one teacher's belief that different forms of encouragement, for example, "gental nagging", enables students to participate in their own learning, therefore allowing them to engage in their learning. Another teacher states that, "no one is allowed to sit and read" and that she is interested in ensuring that, "students are engaging … [and] taking information… [and] changing the way they think."

Upon further analysis the observation was made that in the questioner role, teachers need to consider their audience. For example, "gentle nagging" may be appropriate for some learners, but may not work for the self-directed learner who is disciplined and able to set and maintain timelines.

Connector. As connector, the online teacher is responsible for encouraging and creating a social environment by creating intimate and connected relationship with learners. All teachers shares examples of social presence. These include (a) posting a biography, (b)

making follow up phone calls, (c) responding to postings, (d) providing students with ideas to think about and respond to, (e) asking questions, providing current readings, (f) including jokes and personalized questions about hobbies, (g) providing timely feedback and (h) including gifs in email such as moving smiling faces to provide encouragement. When determining social presence, the most experienced online teacher shares that she asks herself three questions, as an administrator observing an online course. These questions include:

- How do I know you [as a teacher] are here?
- What makes me know that you [as a teacher] are in this course?
- What is it that you [as a teacher] do?

***Manager*.** In the manager role, the teacher plans, structures and oversees online interaction by becoming a facilitator, coach or by adapting his or her teaching style. When discussing their practice in relation to the teaching and learning experience, it was evident that teachers understood good teaching practice as outlined by Chickering and Gamson (1987). All teachers demonstrated how they used or sought to use technology to incorporate the seven principles for good practice as outlined by Chickering and Ehrmann (1996). However, the interviews three of the four teachers highlight that adult teachers require assistance to equip them to help their students and themselves in creating or maintaining a meaningful asynchronous, text-based online teaching and learning experience. At one point during one teacher's interview she noted, from an administrator's point of view, that when communicating expectations with student learners her organization has failed when students say:

- "I didn't know that this is how it works"
- "I didn't know this is what I would be expected to do"

- "I did not know these things"

Variations of these statements were communicated by the other three teachers.

Mentor. As the mentor, the teacher is responsible for modeling effective online teaching. The most experienced online teacher recognizes that teachers play a crucial role in the online teaching and learning process. She states:

> There is a huge role for teachers to play in helping the student understand how they learn, how they can structure their learning, giving feedback about how they are doing, making sure that students are attentive and understanding about the learning community that they are working in.

Three of the teachers in comparing their online teaching experiences in relation to their traditional teaching experiences, found that the physical distance between themselves and students was difficult to adjust to.

One teacher indicates that she feels divorced from her students missing the face-to-face contact she, as a teacher, is use to in the traditional classroom environment. She concludes with the observation, "I think that face-to-face contact is one of the things you really miss, [in addition to] the immediacy of responding to [student] questions."

Two of the teachers show evidence of not being adequately prepared for their online role. One teacher states, "We were not able to do what we thought we were going to do and that was to respond to every posting that was made by every student." Another teacher describes her perception of asynchronous, text-based online student communication as, "[When you do not provide immediate or consistent feedback] it is like how long do you keep talking if nobody is giving you any feedback to keep going."

A fifth responsibility emerged when analyzing the data. This responsibility is that of the reflector. As reflector, the teacher not only needs to view online teaching and learning in the context of the online classroom, but also in the context of the learning community outside

the online classroom. This consideration may occur through thinking on experiences, questioning experiences and acting to enhance online teacher responsibilities.

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

In a new online community technology is often viewed as a tool in the online teaching and learning process. However, technology, more specifically the learning platform used, is one of the main foundations supporting the creation of the greater e-learning community. Teachers were in agreement that technology should not get in the way of learning. Another teacher provides the following illustration:

> The tech part is absolutely critical to get out of the way. If it is not it is like going down a bumpy road with graveled lines, it is slow and you are stopping through the potholes. It is just really uncomfortable and not a great journey either for the [teacher] or the students. Whereas, if the tech stuff is going great guns, you've got [a] good highway, everybody's sailing, everybody is focused on the learning and the journey just goes.

The four teachers indicated that to overcome technological challenges it is important to:

- Have open communication
- Be persistent
- Provide lead time, and
- Provide onsite and offsite technological development.

Most importantly, as recommended by one teacher, "set parameters of responsibility… [and ask] what is realistic to expect from teachers and technology personnel?"

Understanding how the learning platform and online technologies impact the teaching and learning environment is crucial. Organizations, teachers and learners need to make the

connection that online teaching and learning is influenced by how online technologies are used. If this connection is not made, then the groundwork for successful learning is weakened even before the teacher and learners come together online. In this section the role of technology in relation to the elements of using technology and communicating through technology will be discussed.

Using technology. As stated earlier, by Chickering and Ehrman (1996), technology can push learners in new ways that may not come so easily in a traditional learning environment. One teacher understands this potential, she states:

> Technology allows us to combine information and ideas in such a way that new ideas can emerge or new orders and communication standards can emerge. [This] is everything whether it's analyzing information we can juxtapopose, [or] information we can extrapolate. We can run tests and reports, we can throw information in a database and [we can] create environments where we can start to target information in ways we could never do without the [use of] technology…. It is the highest level of thinking and [and it is] these tools that move us to the levels of thinking without us having to use time consuming processes that are isolating. Now we have shared learning environments so that we can bring together expertise, we can now build teams where we identify the varieties of expertise and bring them together to work in a synthesized environment that allows us to generate new understanding.

Though technology has the potential to push learners' thinking, at times it is also viewed as an impersonal environment because human contact in the forms of verbal and non-verbal cues is not present. Another teacher states that online teachers "need to be personalizing an impersonal environment." She continues,

> As a teacher you feel really divorced from the student and the face-to-face contact you are used to in the classroom environment…. I think face-to-face contact is one of the things you really miss and the immediacy of responding to questions…. You don't get the body language and so you have to rely on little symbols - LOL [laughing-out-loud] or whatever

> it is they put down to see what they are feeling…. I think that contact is really missing in the online environment and I think many teachers find that they miss that contact.

It is suggested by the four teachers that the learning environment may be personalized through the creation of social and teacher presence and that the development of collaborative and interactive environments should be explored.

Creating social and teacher presence. Teacher and social presence are established through contact via the telephone, home pages, emails, chat rooms, discussion boards and posting onsite office hours.

When discussing teacher presence, one teacher states that she "phones each student and talks to them personally." She also uses chat rooms for introductions.

Another teacher states:

> Every day I bring in any information [the students] need to know. Generally I change that page once a week but if there is some emergent issue coming up then I'll [send] out a message on the home page. I also email all the students and I encourage them as soon as they email me, even if it [is] just handing in an assignment, I'll email them back and say, "Thanks for your assignment."

When discussing social presence, one teacher states that because the online environment is an impersonal environment she believes that as teachers get to know their students, their emails should try to incorporate personal comments and questions specific to individual students.

Developing collaborative interactive environments. Collaborative learning communities may be encouraged through the use of technology to establish the classroom environment and encourage online group assignments. All teachers encourage students to use

email and asynchronous, text-based Computer-mediated Communication as a way of encourage collaborative learning opportunities.

Establishing the classroom environment. All teachers use online introductions, at the beginning of a course, as a way to developing reciprocity and collaboration. One teacher states that she develops reciprocity and cooperation among students by knowing her students. She identifies online introductions, also called ice breakers, at the beginning of a course as a way in which to learn (a) why students are enrolled in the course, (b) why students chose an online versus a traditional environment, (c) how much online learning experience do students posses have and (d) what are student hobbies and outside interests.

Three of the teachers indicate that teachers need to spell out their expectations of students. They communicate their expectations through Web site, home page, course policy, syllabus, outline, guidelines, discussion boards, progress reports, setting benchmarks and maintaining up-to-date student records.

Another teacher states that the challenge of communicating expectations is not "just communicating the expectations, [but] it is [also] helping [learners] understand what [this] would look like in reality." He explains that students in one of his courses had trouble accessing the Web site, with some students not gaining access to course information or assignment questions for up to one month into a four month course, because expectations were outlined on the Web site but not communicated via email or another mode of communication.

The teachers agree that expectations should be discussed at the beginning of a course, focusing on course content, course activities and the quantity and quality of student participation. Two teachers indicate that course content is similar whether it is taught in a

traditional or online environment. Teachers agree that it is the mode of learning and the activities provided which are different. The teachers acknowledge the importance of defining how participation is to be evaluated in both quantity and quality.

One teacher states that her organization spends a great deal of time laying out student expectations because, "[her organization] has come to understand… that the students who are successful are the ones who understand what the expectations are [of them]."

Encouraging online group assignments. Assignments with a group project component are identified as one way in which to encourage cooperation and reciprocity among students. A teacher states that though she encourages group work among her students, they are provided with the option of meeting face-to-face as her students are hesitant to work collaboratively online.

One teacher discusses the contradiction between collaborative group assignments and individual self-pacing. She states:

> We have designed in our courses collaborative assignments. Now these [collaborative assignments] have fallen into different levels of debate because at the same time we have argued for self-paced learning, so the self-paced learning often flies in the face of collaboration. It's been a balancing act…. We are trying to get away from linear learning, so that student can collaborate in major ways throughout a course that isn't confined to certain learnings that are tied to specific lessons so it can still remain self-paced.

During his interview one teacher provides several examples of how neither he, as online teacher, nor his online learners were adequately prepared for asynchronous, text-based online group work. He comments,

> It was difficult for us to offer a lot of support to [the students].…[as] some of them did [update .. us [and] we could see what they [the students] were doing and how it [their group project] was evolving.

> We found that the members of the class initially did not really care for doing group work. They had to find ways of connecting with the others. [Though] it was supposed to be done on line, some of them just phone[d] each other, got to know each other and discussed what they were doing over the phone.
>
> I think they found that [online group work] more difficult than [traditional] group work where [they] take some [class] time for a break and [get together]. It is a bigger problem scheduling, find[ing] time when they can [get] together. [As well] the time frame was very tight because of how this course was set up [and] so they needed to be getting together, getting a common topic …and gathering their information and getting the key questions done in a matter of two or three weeks.
>
> They had a period of time when their project took place like over a week where others would respond to them so, I think they would have found that to be the most difficult part … because … students in the class were there because of the idea of being able to work at their own rate … whenever they want to …and the project forced them to be coordinating their times a little bit more.
>
> We [as facilitators] were … reluctant to interfere with the process too much. It was supposed to be up to them to work out how they were going to do things.

Upon analyzing this passage it began to emerge that the teachers and learners were not adequately prepared for their online roles. Expectations were not established to make online group work a successful experience. This is demonstrated first by learners not knowing they were suppose to keep teachers in the loop by providing updates to group work progression. Second, teachers did not know how to help learners connect with their groups online or provide suggestions to work effectively with online groups. Finally, teachers appeared to confuse intervening to help students understand their roles in online group work with interfering to interfere with the process, because the process was suppose to be up to [the learners] to work out how they were going to do work in groups.

Communicating through technology. According to DeVries and Tella (1999) when distance education teachers becomes proficient with the tools used in the distance environment they become good distance education teachers by making the technology become almost transparent. Technology may be used as a communication tool to disseminate information, to encourage feedback between teachers and learners and to increase contact between teachers and learners.

First, as discussed earlier in this chapter, information may be disseminated through technology for the purpose of establishing a classroom environment, in addition to providing articles and materials related to the course content. Second, technology may be used to reply to learners inquiries. Replies do not always have to be text-base. As a way to personalize her emails, one teacher states she includes animated graphics. Finally, technology may be used to provide additional learning materials to learners. For example, one teacher said he provided extra articles or provided some thoughts for learners to reflect on.

Chickering and Ehrmann (1996) state that the ways in which new technologies may provide feedback are many — sometimes obvious (email) and sometimes more subtle (simulations). All teachers provide feedback to students. For example two of the teaches encourage and use feedback from students through student entry and exit surveys, as well as through informal communications.

All four teachers used email, asynchronous computer conferencing and the World Wide Web to increase contact between themselves and students and between students. Chickering and Ehrmann (1996) add that student project work, including study groups, collaborative learning, group problem solving and discussion of assignments can be significantly reinforced through communication tools that facilitate interactivity. When

discussing student group assignments, one teacher states that she set up student assignments in a project style so that students may work together. She illustrates this with, "by encouraging communication between students, in a project format, increased communication with [herself and her teaching partner], because students wanted to get the assignment right."

THE ROLE OF THE LEARNER

In a new e-learning community, students take a more active role in their learning. By taking a more active role in their schooling, learning becomes more meaningful. This encourages a deeper understanding of students' learning.

By helping students develop insights through discussion board interactions, assignments and exploring the use of gaming theory. The teachers identify two elements to helping learners understand their online role. They discuss active learning in the context of the online environment, but define it in it different ways. Second they identify that teachers require help to evaluate active learning online.

Defining active learning in the context of the online environment. From an analysis of the four teachers' descriptions and examples of active learning emerged including (a) having students make meaning, incorporate ideas and make connections, (b) having students go and apply information to some aspect of their life which is meaningful to them, (c) engaging students, (d) creating thoughtful assignments, (e) keeping students motivated, interested and actively engaged in learning, (f) letting students be a part of their own learning, (g) encouraging students to incorporate ideas from their experiences, (h) flexing learning for students and (i) choosing something meaningful, researching it, finding out applications, choosing what you learn and creating a plan.

One teacher mentions that her organization is incorporating gaming theory into program development and delivery.

Three teachers discuss active learning in terms of how students, as individuals, may take an active role in the asynchronous, text-based online teaching and learning process by incorporating their personal and professional experiences into learning opportunities.

Helping teachers evaluate active learning. Examples of evaluating active learning include: (a) evaluating interaction, (b) balancing quantity vs. quality, (c) using benchmarks and (d) creating portfolios. One teacher explains that:

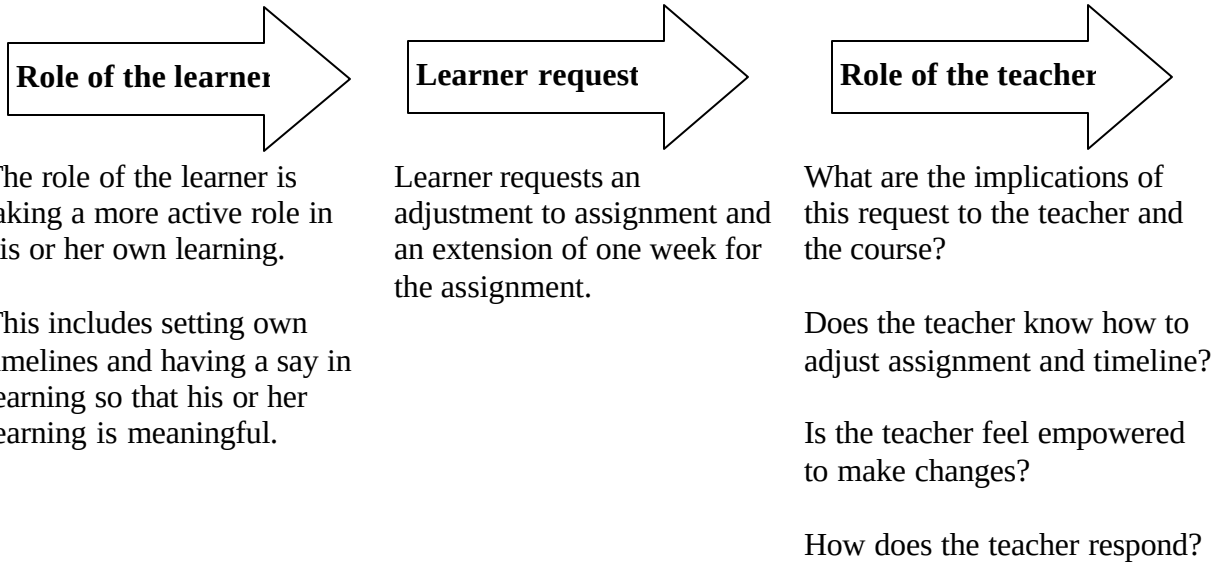
> We want to see how students are engaging, how they are taking this information and how it is changing the way they think, the way they act and the way they perform the task; this is very important to us. No one is allowed to sit and read.

Another teacher provides an example of recognizing an active learning moment, used her knowledge of a student to evaluate her options and took action to keep her student engaged. She shared the following example:

> Today this boy, he knows how to write a critical response essay he knows how to write a readers response which are the two key things. He is a bright young man and he sort of said to me that I've really let things get behind and I was wondering if I could do some alternative creative assignments.
>
> He is a very creative person. So, I just wrote back to him and made a whole list of suggestions and said what do you think of this instead of doing poorly in the course work?
>
> Altering the course to suite their learning styles I think it is really important and sort of being flexible enough to do that.
>
> I know that he [the student] knows how to do the critical written aspect might be a lot more beneficial to him, keep him interested and motivated and actively engaged in learning rather than instead of sitting there and saying -- Oh! I've to write another critical response essay. That's another way of encouraging them.

Role adjustment and changes in expectations requires a corresponding role change in teachers Cleveland-Innes, et al. (2002). For this role change to occur teachers need information about both how the learners' role changes and how this role change affects the learner's expectations. For example, as a leaner takes a more active role in their learning they may expect flexibility from their teachers in the form of assignment modification or changes to timelines. Whether or not a teacher is prepared for this new expectation in his or her learner will determine how he or she reacts to the learners (see Figure 5, An example of learner and teacher role changes).

Figure 5. An example of learner and teacher role changes.



The four teachers understand the importance of meeting the diverse needs of their learners'. They discussed the importance of (a) recognizing that adult learning requires flexibility, individualization, levels of privacy, anonymous learning, (b) meeting diverse needs through timelines, milestones, assignments, self-pacing, (c) allowing for different perspectives, (d) matching individual and group (course) goals, (e) developing courses to

accommodate learning styles, differentiated instruction and multiple intelligence and (f) accommodating different levels of comfort with technology.

Data analysis indicates that teachers acknowledge the need for learners to be able to utilize both different information sources and different cognitive strategies. The teachers indicate that learners need to be able to use different sources of information including personal experiences, Web sites, databases, self-assessment. They also indicate that learners need to be able to use different cognitive strategies moving from skill based to a more problem and issue based thinking.

The teachers also provide illustrations of how not being prepared for the change in the role of their learners affected them as teacher in the online teaching and learning interaction. These examples are provided below under the headings of group projects, modifying assignments and learner expectations.

Group projects. Three teachers observe that students require help adjusting to collaborative online assignments. Specifically, they report that students were: (a) hesitant to participate in online group work, (b) unaware that group work was a component of the course and (c) experience difficulty communicating, scheduling time and dividing group work among peers.

The two teachers identified as advanced beginners found it difficult to watch student progress, unless students took it upon themselves to update teachers regarding group progress. This was in part because, as described by one teacher, "[I was] a little bit reluctant to interfere with the process too much it was supposed to be up to them to work out how they were going to do things."

It is evident from discussions with three of the teachers that just as students require assistance teachers also require assistance to help students make the transition from face-to-face into online group work. One teacher shares that teachers need to be kept informed of student progress and discussion. He also alludes to the fact that teachers needed to know how to support their students.

Modifying assignments. An example, cited earlier, discussed how one teacher recognized an active learning moment, used her knowledge of a student to evaluate her options, and took action to keep her student engaged. As a result of adapting an assignment , which she knew her student could do, as a result she was able to, "alter the course to suit [his] learning style" in order to ensure his learning experience was "more beneficial to him, [by] keep[ing] him interested, motivated and actively engaged in [his] learning."

Another teacher expresses that:

> [She] had more special requests from online [learners] than from any other group of [learners]. [I believe that] the venue itself by setting itself up to be flexible and everybody's schedule, all the good reasons make also the reasons why people feel, maybe rightly so, [that] they should be allowed to be more individual and maybe kind of make it work for themselves…. It is a way that they would never expect if they were in a classroom.

To ensure collaboration among students, another teacher also provides her learners with an option to work online or face-to-face.

Learner expectations. Learn expectations include both expectations of students for the course/teachers and also expectations of teachers require of students.

Student expectations of teachers. Two teachers observe that students expect teachers to keep marks up to date and provide feedback in a timely manner. One teacher remarks that students want detailed feedback within twenty-four hours, teacher contact and self-paced

learning. It is also apparent that students expect learning to be free of technical problems. This view is supported by one teacher who observed students not receiving course information and assignments, in a timely manner, because of trouble accessing the Web site.

Teacher expectations of students. Student expectations are communicated on the Web site, through online course syllabuses, course requirements and progress reports. One teacher observes that, "the difficulty [for learners] comes when they do not understand how much time and effort they have to put into [online] learning and what their expectations are." Her organization spends a lot of time being very clear to students.

To summarize, students may help teachers by taking charge of their own learning. This may be accompanied through group interaction, taking initiative to help teachers in creating an e-learning community by seeking clarification and asking questions.

THE ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATION

In the creation of the greater e-learning community, individuals within organizations, including key decision makers and department heads, should explore the elements of leadership**,** support and training.

Teachers were in agreement that organizational support and responsiveness are important. As one teacher states, "He [the project coordinator] was very good about helping work through it [problems] and getting the technician [when] he realized that there was a need…. If that would not have been there we would have a problem because… I did not have the technical expertise."

Leadership. Personnel within a traditional organization, need to be able to lead teachers and learners to a meaningful online teaching and learning experience. Their leadership role may be defined as initiating research to understand the differences between

traditional and online teaching and learning, in order to prepare personnel, teachers and learners with the knowledge and skills required to create the new online community. The four teachers provided examples of how an organization may initiate its leadership role. Suggestions included:

- Assessing (organization/ self-assessment) teacher comfort and competence with technologies (hardware and software) and related knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Helping teachers understand how to create meaningful online teaching and learning interaction for students and teachers.
- Providing sufficient lead time for teachers to learn the platform and new environment they will be working in.
- Providing curriculum support to help teachers translate curriculum into content to suit the online environment and for the online environment to suit them.
- Asking how do the traditional ways in which the organization works impact the asynchronous, text-based online teaching and learning process? (Example registration procedures)
- Identifying, defining and communicating among the different personnel involved in the asynchronous, text-based online teaching and learning process. These included: project manager, course developers, support (traditional/ online), technology personnel, copyright staff, registration staff, administrators, teachers and students.

- Preparing students for their role as asynchronous, text-based online learners.
- Understanding how to make the online venue meaningful for both learners and teachers.
- Assuring learners are provided with information about the learning mode and assignments expected through course descriptors.
- Establishing guiding principles for online programs.
- Securing adequate support and training mechanisms.
- Developing a learning community where all members are able to work together.

The leadership role, not limited to the suggestions provided above, will help in creating a collaborative online environment, which extends the online classroom. The most experienced online teacher states, "One critical piece [for] building [an] online learning community and building this [type] of cooperative environment [is] it cannot be [viewed as] just between student and teacher. Students have to come to see that there is a whole team of people working [to maintain an online learning community]." Her example of the greater online community, within her organization, includes learning strategists, online counselors, virtual libraries, technical help desk and a student run student centre.

Support and training. One teacher stated:

> We have to honor what teachers bring to this work… we do that through the support network, … by having mentorship's, by having collaborative communities of practice, by offering them technical support, by giving them the technical tools so that they [have] access to [technology], [and] so that they can experiment and play. You give them safe environments, no risk environments, you work …. at [the] different comforts levels.

Online teachers require collaborative and interactive learning environments where they may learn about and discuss:

- The role of the teacher and the knowledge, attitudes and skills required of online teacher
- The roles of technology, learners, and the organization
- The effected of the different roles on the online teaching and learning process.

This support and training may be accomplished, as stated by one teacher, by providing a robust learning environment characterized as safe, comfortable and with no pressure. She believes that teachers should be allowed to work and play with technology in ways that are empowering. She concludes this empowerment is best accomplished by allowing teachers to integrate their experience.

Interviews with all teachers demonstrate that they agree with current research that support and training should: (a) help teachers acquire new skills (Salmon, 2000), (b) help teachers understand Computer-mediated Communication in relation to their teaching (Salmon, 2000), (c) experience the online environment as an online learner (Gold, 2001; Salmon, 2000), (d) foster empathy for online learner needs (Gibbons & Wentworth, 2001), (e) provide models for "guide on the side" skills and strategies (MacKenzie, 1999), (f) be offered early and be appropriate (DeVries, Helford, Rugg ; DeVries & Tella, 1998), (g) provide a background on the differences between online and traditional (Gibbons & Wentorth, 2001; Coppola et al., 2001; Glicher & Johnstone, 1998; DeVries & Tella 1998).

When discussing teacher training programs, one teacher shares that her organization has developed standards for creating social presence as well as for developing collaborative interactive environments. In addition, her organization provides eight weeks of professional

development which incorporates the different levels of interaction between teacher and learner.

As indicated by another teacher, if appropriate training and support are not provided to allow teachers to become familiar with the whole online process, “it is like taking people on a journey to a place where you haven’t been yourself and you’re the tour guide.”

The four teachers provided additional examples of how an organization may initiate its role in support and training. Suggestions included:

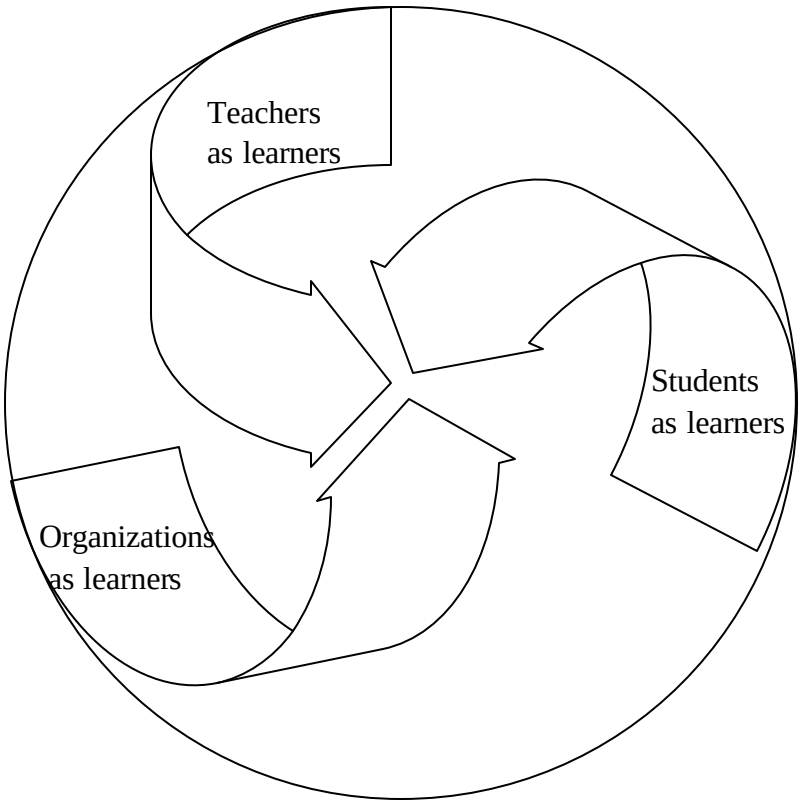
- Providing access to colleagues, supervisors and other support systems which may be offered in both the traditional and the online venue.
- Suggested support systems which include discussion groups, one-to-one meetings, mentorship, collaborative communities of practice, training and teachers as online learners
- Providing technology support.

Upon analyzing the four roles, it was observed that there are three groups of learners. These groups are:

- **Students as learners.** Traditional students seeking to study online.
- **Teachers as learners.** Traditional educators assisting in the online teaching and learning process.
- **Organizations as learners.** Traditional education institutes offering online courses. The term organization encompasses the many people and departments affected by or influencing the online teaching and learning interaction between learners and teachers.

It is surmised that how well these learning groups are supported and trained will influence how each learning group is affected by or influenced by the other learning groups (see Figure 6, Learning groups in the online teaching and learning community).

Figure 6. Learning groups in the online teaching and learning community



SUMMARY

Differences between experienced and inexperienced teachers emerged. These differences included comfort with online technologies, ability to aid learners in transition, emphasis placed on types of knowledge, skills and attitudes required, emphasis placed on lack of verbal and non-verbal cues, and level of satisfaction with online teaching experience.

There are three challenges in the journey to becoming asynchronous, text-based online teachers. These challenges include the level of support and training received from organizations, the comfort and competence of teachers in moving from traditional to online teaching and the ability of teachers to adapt to events outside their control.

As the data within the seven questions were analyzed, three major roles outside the control of adult educators, in addition to one role within their control, emerged. These roles are interdependent because each role affects or is influenced by the online teaching and learning process. These four roles work interdependently creating the greater e-learning community. The four roles are identified as the role of the teacher, the role of technology, the role of the learner and the role of the organization

Upon analyzing the four roles, it was observed that there are three groups of learners. These groups are: Students as learners, Teachers as learners and organizations as learners. It is surmised that how well these learning groups are supported and trained will influence how each learning group is affected by or influences the other learning groups.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTIONS, CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS

In a qualitative study, the position of the researcher is critical to understanding subjectivity in data interpretation. To be clear about positioning the researcher must be up front and candied about their perspective. To facilitate this, Chapter Six is written in the first person.

I began this study as an opportunity to examine the realities of traditional adult educators in their journey toward becoming online teachers. I wished to compare my data with the current literature about adult educators transitioning into asynchronous, text-based online teaching. This study used as data audio-tapes of four adult educators interviews conducted between the dates of May 12 – 16, 2002. Based on my observations and analysis of all the data the following conclusions were drawn.

The information shared by the four teachers, during this study, went beyond their personal realities, to observing that there are four interdependent roles. Two roles are functional (the role of technology and role of the organization) and two roles are attached to a person's behaviour (the role of the teacher and the role of the learner). These four roles are both affected by and also influence the teaching and learning transaction.

In this closing Chapter, I will reflect and draw conclusions from the data analysis, discuss my treatment of this study, discuss the impact of these findings on the field, and conclude with suggestions for further study.

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

As I listened to the four audio-taped interviews, four roles began to appear. Through the analysis of the data the following interdependent roles emerged:

- The role of the teacher
- The role of the learner
- The role of technology
- The role of the organization.

Throughout the study my research question focused and directed my thinking. What are the realities facing adult educators in their role as asynchronous, text-based online teachers? By focusing on my question, I recognized how complex the process of online teaching and learning is. This became more evident when I made the connection that the interaction which occurs in the online teaching and learning environment is affected by or influences the greater e-learning community. My research question was adapted to include the realities outside the online classroom, in addition to the interaction within the online classroom. This inclusion of the greater e-learning community was recognized by Anne, who stated, “one critical piece [for] building [an] online learning community and building this [type] of cooperative environment [is] it cannot be [viewed as] just between student and teacher. Students have to come to see that there is a whole team of people working [to maintain an online learning community].”

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

Teachers in transition need to understand what is expected of them in their online role. In addition, teachers in transition should be provided with the basic knowledge about the roles of both the online learner and organization.

As the main contact within the online teaching and learning environment, teachers require a basic understanding of how the greater e-learning community is affected by or influences the teaching and learning environment. This understanding will help teachers to more effectively direct their students, as their learners require help, outside the parameters of the teacher's expertise.

In an e-learning community, teachers are the first point of contact for learners experiencing problems. Teacher's classroom manager role increases to included problem solver of the unexpected from course materials arriving late, to server access problems, to passwords not working. Teachers need to understand how online technologies affect the teaching and learning interaction within the virtual classroom. In addition, teachers need to be familiarized with the similarities and differences between the traditional and online environments so that they may determine if their instructional style is a match for the content and the online environment, therefore securing a positive and fulfilling online experience in their online teaching role.

If the most important role that an online teacher may play is that of mentor, how can teachers model effective online etiquette, if they are not adequately prepared for their new roles or understand the differences between the online and traditional classroom. As a member of the greater e-learning community, teachers must take an active role to reflect, question and take action as to how their online role and the roles of the organization and learners interact within the virtual classroom.

THE ROLE OF THE LEARNER

Teachers in transition need to understand the new role of learners and how this new role affects teaching and learning within the online environment. Second, teachers require that students understand their role as learners within the online environment.

If students, as a member of the greater e-learning community, are expected to take a more active role in their learning, teachers must understand what their students' role change is so that they may examine their instructional style in relation to the online environment and decide whether to modify or maintain their current instructional style.

In addition, if a teacher is knowledgeable about both the learners' role change and the reasons why the role change is occurring, teachers will be better equipped to help learners struggling with expectation of their role as online learner.

Finally, the organization and teachers need to provide every opportunity for their students to succeed as online learners. Students need to be educated about their role change and what is expected of them as a member of the greater e-learning community. This knowledge needs to occur on two levels - prior to beginning their online studies and within the context of studying online. For example – online group/ project work. Learners need to be told if group work is a mandatory part of the course. Then while in the course teachers need to establish ground rules and expectations of students during group projects.

THE ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATION

Teachers in transition require infrastructure supports that demonstrate an understanding and sensitivity for the uniqueness of the distance and online teaching and learning environment.

Organizations in transition need to reflect on current infrastructure and how this structure will work within or be adapted to the distance and asynchronous, text-based online

settings. Berge and Smith (2000) state that the "key to success of sustaining initiatives in technology-enhanced learning and distance education is the commitment and support of the organization's top leaders" (p. 351).

When organizations do not reflect on how their overall practices may influence the asynchronous, text-based teaching and learning process, it is their teachers and learners who may be impacted negatively. This sentiment was shared by teachers interviewed during this study. Remember Barry's experience when his students were unable to access the course web site for up to one month of a four month course. Experiences such as this leave both teachers and learners feeling inadequate, stupid, divorced and frustrated, instead of feeling empowered, connected and successful.

Organizations in transition, with the help of adult educators and staff affected by online programming, need to question and take action as to what supports are required and how these supports will be implemented. Berge (2001) writes, "leaders' can build credibility for distance education, maintain currency in the field and gather support and partners inside and outside the organization" (p. 351). When assessing the readiness to initiate and implement online teaching and support, organizations need to address, on some level, how the functions in their organization may be impacted (Crawford, 1999), as well as utilize a checklist to assess the readiness to initiate and implement online teaching and learning support (Truman-Davis et al., 2000).

In addition, for teachers and learners to successfully transition into the online environment, decision makers must be prepared to ensure that traditional teachers are equipped to help their students and themselves in creating and maintaining a meaningful asynchronous, text-based teaching and learning experience. Gold (2001) stated that "even

though technology may change the way students learn, it will have no impact without teacher support and one of the most important reasons for the lack of faculty support is lack of faculty preparation" (p. 2).

Teacher preparedness for the asynchronous, text-based teaching and learning online setting may be accomplished through a combination of adequate support and training. As we transition from traditional teaching into online teaching, decision makers and adult educators need to find the balance to seeking, providing, receiving and improving or enhancing the training and professional development required to creating meaningful teaching and learning opportunities within their organizations. Sparks (2002) writes:

> Quality teaching in all classrooms and skillful leadership in all schools will not occur by accident. They require the design and implementation of the most powerful forms of professional development…. [with] a recognition that this professional development must represent a sharp departure from past practice (pp. 1-1 – 1-2).

Truman-Davis et al. (2000) suggest that successful professional development must address technology, pedagogy and logistics. They continue that in each area institutions must ensure that teachers have both the background and the tools that they require.

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

In the greater e-learning community, technology is both a tool to aid the teaching and learning transaction and also is the environment where teaching and learning occurs. Pull the plug, press the wrong key, or enter an incorrect password and the online teaching and learning environment disappears. Parameters need to be set, responsibilities known and lines of communication created. Technology needs to be respected and understood, only then can a safe and dependable learning environment be created.

IMPACT ON THE FIELD

This study found that when examining the realities of teaching online, it is not enough to simply explore the realities of adult educators within an exclusive and independent setting. Rather it was discovered through this study that the realities of the greater e-learning community must be taken into account when helping adult educators to transition into teaching online. This is critical because there are not only the obvious elements within online roles, but there are also the subtle elements within online roles which are affected by as well as have influence on the online teaching and learning transaction. By understanding the how, what and why of the four roles of teacher, learner, organization and technology, decision makers and program developers will be able to better support and train their adult educators, because they will have a broader understanding of the online teaching and learning transaction, outside the context of the interaction between teacher and learner as well as within it.

TREATMENT OF PROBLEM

Upon reflection this study may be expanded to included interviews with the greater e-learning community. Interviews may have included the learners, technology personnel and immediate supervisors of the four teacher interviewed. A new study may include a longitudinal study of a traditional organization making the transition into asynchronous, text-based programming. It is suggested that this study may examine the journey of a learning community making the transition toward becoming an asynchronous, text-based greater e-learning community. This extension may seek to explore the realities facing teachers, learners, supporting personnel and decisions makers as individuals and members of the

greater e-learning community and how their journey as individuals impacts the online teaching and learning environment, both in the virtual classroom and in the larger online community.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

My original question has provided for a deeper understanding of the realities facing traditional adult educators in their transition toward becoming online teachers. However, the data suggests that realities of adult educators in transition are affected not only by the interaction within their virtual classrooms, but are also affected by the realities of their organizations and the realities of their learners, both who are also in transition. Questions which resulted from this study include:

ORGANIZATION

- Do organizations know the basic technical skills (comfort and competence) required by teachers?
- How do organizations assess teachers and encourage teachers to self-assess their level of comfort and competence with technology and online pedagogy?
- Do organizations know how to assess the technological and pedagogical skills required of online teachers?
- How do organizations help teachers lacking technical skills, but interested in making the transition into online?
- How do organizations help teachers not miss the face-to-face contact they are use to in the traditional setting?

- How do organizations help their teachers during their transition from traditional teacher into online teacher, so that they view the transition as a meaningful teaching experience?
- Does the organization understand the role of the online teacher?
- Are the differences and similarities between role of traditional teacher and online teacher being clearly communicated?
- Do organizations know how to help teachers understand their new role so that they have a meaningful experience as a teacher?
- How can organizations help teachers become comfortable with the online teaching and learning environment so they do not feel as reliant on meeting face-to-face?
- Do traditional learning organizations understand that cultural sensitivity encompasses not only cultures from other continents, but also the cultures within regions and provinces (states) within the same country?
- Do organizations understand the difference between instructor-centred instruction and learner-centred instruction? Are teachers provided with the tools and strategies to help them move through the instructor-centred - learner-centred continuum within the online environment?
- Are organizations providing students and teachers with a clear set of expectations about making the transition into online teaching and learning?
- Do organizations provide a supportive environment that encourages teachers to recognize an active learning moment and using their knowledge of a

student to evaluate their options allow teachers to take action to modify the course or assignment to the learning goals?

TEACHER

- Do teachers understand the role of online teacher?
- Are the differences and similarities between role of traditional teacher and online teacher being clearly understood?
- Are teachers being adequately prepared for their role as an online teacher?
- Do teachers understand that cultural sensitivity encompasses not only cultures from other continents, but also the cultures within regions and provinces (states) within the same country?
- Do teachers understand the difference between instructor-centred instruction and learner-centred instruction? Are teachers provided with the tools and strategies to help them move through the instructor-centred - learner-centred continuum within the online environment?

LEARNER

- Do learners have any responsibilities to help teachers transition becoming an online teacher?

GENERAL

- When is online professional development (PD) appropriate?
- What skills can be learned online? Which are not appropriate? What cognitive activities can be effective online?
- How is support and training defined? Are they viewed as two separate items or are they viewed as interchangeable terms?
- Are organizations, teachers and students both knowledgeable and possess an understanding about the features unique to distance education and asynchronous, text-based teaching and learning?

SUMMARY

This study found that when examining the realities of teaching online, it is not enough to simply explore the realities of adult educators within an exclusive and independent setting. Rather it was discovered through this study that the realities of the greater e-learning community must be taken into account when helping adult educators to transition into teaching online. This is critical because there are not only the obvious elements within online roles, but there are also the subtle elements within online role. By understanding the how, what and why of the four roles of teacher, learner, organization and technology, decision makers and program developers will be able to better support and train their adult educators, because they will have a broader understanding of the online teaching and learning transaction, outside the context of the interaction between teacher and learner as well as within it.

The next question which should be explored, as a result of this study, is what are the realities facing the greater e-learning community in its transition from traditional into asynchronous, text-based teaching and learning?

APPENDIX A

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DISTANCE LEARNING

For detailed information, visit the PBS http://www.pbs.org/als/dlweek/history/index.html.

1800S

What are the origins of distance education in America? You may not believe it, but distance learning has been around since the advent of the written language. In the modern age of education, there is still an extensive history. Follow the history of distance learning delivery systems over the past century.

In the 1800s, distance learning was originally known as correspondence study. Made popular by the postal service, correspondence study was conducted through the mail by a school or other qualified institution that kept students and instructors in touch through writing. The United States was not the only country involved with correspondence courses however. European countries offered courses in shorthand and languages as early as the 1840's

1900S

Before there were VCRs, DVDs, fax machines, cable television, satellites, broadband networking or personal computers, there was radio and television. Although the early models of these electronics were bulky and produced less-than-optimal sounds and images (by today's standards), America was fascinated with them.

Along side the live-performance radio shows and serial Westerns of the mid-20th century were a variety of educational programming that could reach an audience that could not attend a centralized classroom. With the popularity of radio and television, educators found a new technology that didn't rely on the postal system to deliver the education.

1960S

With media and technology evolving in the 1960's, changes were being made to distance education. Instead of relying on the postal system to deliver instructional materials, course information could be delivered via radio and television. Using multiple media combined with an administrative backbone to support the education, open universities were enrolling students.

Although the British Open University and the Australian radio schools are often the better known distance learning institutions, there are many others around the world in Asia, South America, and Europe. Today, virtual classrooms are expanding in number due to common technologies like television and radio, as well as new technologies like desktop, laptop, and network computers.

Arguably, the invention of television and video recording had the most profound influence on the face of distance learning. Some people in the distance education field may say that the personal computer and the Internet reinvented the face of education and how students may learn at a distance. In the 1980's broadcast television was changing with the advent of satellite and cable programming services.

1980S

To respond to the shift in technology, satellite television networks were being created that would deliver training and instruction. Large corporations like IBM and Kodak recognized the benefit from providing training using satellite transmissions. Likewise, the Department of Defense invested heavily into all branches of the military to set up a satellite network for training purposes. By serving their members at a distance, time and money could be saved long-term by reducing the amount of travel and loss of work hours of an employee.

1990S

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APPENDIX B

RESEARCH PROTOCOL

To ensure human participants in this study are treated in an ethical manner, protocols have been established in three categories: participant recruitment, informed consent, and interview procedure.

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT PROTOCOL

Four participants will be pre-selected by the researcher. The potential participants will be based on a recommendation by the researcher's executive director who indicated that these participants met the following criteria:

1. Have taught a minimum of one online course.
2. Have taught adult learning in a traditional classroom.
3. Have a level of internet use (novice – expert).

INFORMED CONSENT PROTOCOL

1. Obtain participant telephone numbers from supervisor.
2. Contact each of the four participants by telephone. This will establish the first point of contact and help in creating a relationship based on comfort and trust. Script to be used:

   Good morning. My name is Lisa Bicek; I currently work with Dr. Jean Hoeft at the Calgary Regional Consortium (CRC) who suggested I contact you. I am calling you to request your participation in a study I am conducting as part of my master of distance education degree with Athabasca University. This study will look at the experiences of teachers in their role as asynchronous, text-based teachers. Would you willing to consider being a participant in this study and granting an interview?

   If a participants answer is no, thank them for their time.

   If a participant's answer is yes, continue with script:

Thank you. I will send you some additional information by e-mail. This information will include the following: (a) letter of consent, (b) consent form, and (c) interview questions. If you have any questions, feel free to contact my thesis supervisor or myself. Our names, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers are included in the letter of consent. Could you provide me with your e-mail address?

In addition, I would like to ask you to read, sign, and fax the Consent Form within the next few days. The fax number is provided in the letter. When I receive your signed form for consent, I will contact you, by e-mail, to establish the date, time, and site for our meeting. I am hoping we will be able to meet in late April or early May.

Thank you. I look forward to meeting you.

3. E-mail the potential participant, attaching the following: (a) letter of consent, (b) consent form, and (c) interview questions on Athabasca University letterhead.
4. Upon receiving the signed Consent form, e-mail the participant to set a time and place for interview. Script will include:

    Thank you for returning the signed Consent Form. At this time,
    I would like to suggest that we meet:
    Date, Time, Location
    If this is not suitable for you, please suggest an alternative date,
    time, and location for us to meet. If it is easier for us to
    schedule an appointment over the telephone, please contact me
    during the day at (###) ###-####.

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Upon meeting the participant at the pre-arranged time and place, the following will take place:

1. Greet and thank participant for agreeing to volunteer their time for interview.
2. Remind participant that s/he has the right, at anytime during the interview, to not answer a question or to end the interview. Indicate that the interview will be recorded and transcribed, and that the transcriptions will be made available to the participant to ensure accuracy.
3. Conduct interview using questions.
4. At the end of interview, thank participants for their time, and provide a date when they can expect transcript and how long they will have to review transcript (one week).
5. When participants have had a chance to review the transcript, arrange a meeting time to obtain the reviewed transcript from the participant and to clarify areas pertaining to the transcript if necessary.
6. Conclude the session by thanking the participant and stating that when the study is complete, participants may receive a copy of results if they are interested.

PARTICIPANT LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear _____:

I am a Master's student in the Centre for Distance Education at Athabasca University. Working under the supervision of Dr. Susan Moisey, I am conducting a qualitative research study titled "The Experiences of Teachers in Their Role as Asynchronous Online Teachers." I am requesting your cooperation as a voluntary participant in this study, which explores the teaching, learning and techno logical experiences of teachers who have been online teachers. It is my hope that this study will aid my understanding of the skills, knowledge, and attributes required by asynchronous online teachers.

The following outlines the study itself and information about your participation. If you require any further information or have any questions, please contact me by telephone (###) ###-#### (day) or (###) ###-#### (evening) or e-mail #####@####.##. My thesis supervisor may be contacted at Athabasca University by telephone (###) ###-####. ext. #### or email #####@####.##. .

Your interview will be used in the development of a case study. The interview will be audio-taped by the researcher and transcribed by a third party. You will be provided with a copy of the transcript to review for accuracy. At this time, should the researcher require clarification, you may be asked to participate in a further discussion based on information contained in the transcripts.

Your commitment to this study would be as follows: (a) read and reflect on the questions to be discussed during the interview, (b) take part in an interview, approximately 1 hour in length, and (c) review transcripts to ensure accuracy.

As the researcher and interviewer, it my responsibility to ensure your confidentiality and to ensure that there are no risks or adverse effects to you as a result of participating in this study. All information will be held confidential, except when legislation or a professional code of conduct requires that it be reported. Only, myself, as the researcher, and the thesis supervisor will be privy to the data that was collected. You will not be identified by name in the study, nor will the organization you work(ed) for be identified. You will have access to all raw data collected about you. All the raw data collected during this study will be stored in a secured location and after two years be destroyed. There will be four participants in the study.

Your participation in this research study requires a commitment of approximately 4 hours. At anytime during the study, you may refuse to answer certain questions or may withdraw from the study by simply indicating your choice to the researcher. No evaluative judgment will be made about you if you choose to withdraw from the study, and all raw data connected to your participation will be immediately destroyed.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the results of this study, please check the box at the end of the Consent Form, accompanying this letter. Results will be e-mailed when the study is complete.

Upon agreeing to be interviewed, you will be contacted and a date, time, and place will be established.

Please fax a signed copy of the attached Consent Form, indicating your consent to participate to (###) ###-####. Cover not required.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Bicek

CONSENT FORM

Please fax this form to (###) ###-####. No Cover required.

I, _____, have read and understood the information contained in this letter, and I agree to participate in the study, "The Experiences of Teachers in Their Role as Asynchronous Online Teachers," on the understanding that I may refuse to answer certain questions, and I may withdraw during the data collection period.

__ please send me a copy of the results of this study.

Name: _____ Date: _____

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