A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: FACTORS INFLUENCING FACULTY ATTITUDE

TOWARD ONLINE TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

by

Kelly Waltman-Payne

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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APPROVED BY:

Carol Gillespie, Ph.D., Committee Chair

Justin Necessary, Ph.D., Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover the factors that influenced the faculty's lived experiences and perceived preparedness when transitioning to fully online courses in response to the COVID-19 crisis, for full-time faculty members at Greenhill College, North Branch. The central research question for the research was "What factors, such as professional development and other training, related to online learning, influenced faculty attitudes and perceptions of preparedness, as they transitioned to online teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic 2020?" Ten participants were selected using a random sample drawn from full-time faculty members at Greenhill College, North Branch. Data collection included interviews, focus group interviews and document and artifact examination. The transformative learning theory guided the research into the adult learning process, as the faculty members in the study were adults. This research provides educational studies with a baseline for understanding the factors that impact the development of faculty attitude, especially during a crisis, which in turn can help faculty prepare for such a transition. The results of the study suggested that faculty shared a lack of confidence in online education and their ability to effectively teach students in this environment.

Keywords: online teaching, remote learning, distance learning, COVID-19, Coronavirus Pandemic, online education, training

Dedication

I have so many people to thank for helping me to achieve this goal. This manuscript belongs to them.

I dedicate this manuscript to Professor Paul Travis, Texas Woman's University, who inspired me to "become."

I thank Dr. Carol Gillespie, my dissertation chair, whose constructive advice and encouraging words help push me to the end of this academic journey.

To my grandmother, Mable Waltman (Nanny), who lived a life that demonstrated the importance of education. Nanny served as an example to me long before I knew that I needed a role model.

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To my children, Alexandra, Ethan, Kennedy, Jessie, and Nico, who move me every day to do better and to be better.

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And finally, to God, who blessed me with a wonderful life and the ability to achieve this earthly goal. I pray that I will always use the gifts He has gifted me to further His kingdom here on earth. "The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out" (Proverbs 18:15).

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List of Abbreviations

Adult learning theory (ALT)

Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19)

Emergency remote teaching (ERT)

Learning management system (LMS)

Technology acceptance model (TAM)_

Technology readiness framework (TR)

Transformative learning theory (TLT)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Administrators at American higher education institutions were required to transition their college's education system during the spring of 2020 to an online learning model in response to the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic. In the United States, over 1,400 colleges and universities closed their doors between March 1, 2020, and April 4, 2020, to begin remote instruction (Marsicano, 2020). In most cases, faculty transitioned these face-to-face courses to the online format within one to three weeks, a relatively short time needed to develop an online course. Faculty faced genuine challenges to meet the needs of their students. While college faculty did have the advantage of existing learning management systems, this transition proved to be a challenging adjustment for higher education administrators and faculty across the United States. The effects of this transition are still being felt in higher education today. Chapter One includes the background, the historical, theoretical, and social contexts; situation to self, the problem and purpose statements, the significance of the study, the research questions, the basic definitions, and concludes with a summary paragraph.

Background

In 2018, the number of students enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States was 19,645,000; 12,713,000 students were enrolled in one or more online courses (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). During the transition in the spring of 2020, most face-to-face college courses transitioned to deliver their instruction entirely online (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Online learning has a lengthy historical background, beginning in the 1800s (Dillon, 2018). Though online learning changed as technology advanced, challenges and room for improvement remain (Scott, 2020). Socially, online education has changed how

Americans engage in the world (Scott, 2020). Advancements in technology continue to challenge educators and others, as technology changes often occur rather rapidly (Ranellucci et al., 2020).

Historical Context

The history of distance education is long and rich. The University of London began offering students the opportunity to earn full degrees through distance education in 1858 (Bergmann, 2001). For the first time, rural students could earn a degree and continue working while staying in their hometown. In 1873, Ana Tickner, from Boston, Massachusetts, created the first formal correspondence course to educate the female population (Bergmann, 2001). While these opportunities were initially designed to provide rural and underserved students with educational classes, the evolution of distance learning grew. In 1953, the University of Houston offered its first credit courses via televised correspondence courses (University of Houston, 2019). During the 1960s, as online learning continued to grow, the tools available to online teachers were built by the teachers themselves alongside the software developers who were embarking on a new platform for education (Scigliano, 2000).

In 1989, the University of Phoenix offered the first fully online degree (University of Phoenix, 2016), and remote learning took off. As technology grew, so did the delivery methods. Initially offering education for traditionally underserved students, distance education courses became more organized and led to the creation of today's online learning, virtual or cyber schools. The 1992 creation of the world wide web made online learning more accessible to learners and required teachers to advance and alter their pedagogy in this innovative classroom. The world wide web made education available to various disciplines, expanding educational opportunities. Education is considered one of the most critical areas that have been comprehensively impacted by web technology (Harasim, 2000).

Attitudes toward online education, in general, began to shift in the 21st century. Expectations of learning and understanding evolved and have affected the design and delivery of education (Harasim, 2000). The COVID-19 pandemic challenged that understanding and the strength of the design and delivery of online education (Heggeness, 2020). Looking to the future, the continued growth of these online schools or schools offering virtual classes will likely serve more students in an even broader context. The changes in education have also brought changes to instructional methods and a shift in attitudes towards these new educational models. Though much is known about online learning in general, much less is known about instructors' attitudes, preparedness, and the ability to launch an online learning classroom, even less of which is based on systematic research.

Professional development has been used to train teachers and college faculty members in leadership (Koty, 2020) skills and strategies (Wenner & Campbell, 2017) as well as in online teaching (Zhao, 2021). Since the early 1920s, professional development has been a part of education. One of the first examples of professional development training for teachers occurred in England. Between 1922 and 1938, each summer, 500 schoolteachers from overseas came to London for a two-week residential course, where teachers would learn how to be effective teachers. (Robinson, 2011). Schools and universities often use professional development training to teach instructors about new pedagogy or tools for teaching. Professional development has been found to positively affect teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and self-efficacy, which in turn leads to better teachers (Barni et al., 2019). Teacher professional development has historically served as a catalyst to education reform (Goddard, 2004).

School administrators play an essential role in mentoring and encouraging teachers (Smilor, 2022). Influential school leaders can positively impact school performance by

encouraging teachers (Huguet, 2017). Communication between school administrators and teachers is essential for sharing ideas, giving directions, and even serving as a source of encouragement. Contact is associated with conveying messages, making plans, and expressing clear thoughts (, 2012). With email as a primary form of communication between school leaders and teachers, mail messages can shape teacher perceptions (Albert, 2020).

Berg and Seeber (2017) suggest that being a college professor is a stressful job, much more stressful than the public perceives. Work-life balance is a challenge for faculty members even in the best of times. During the COVID crisis, family relationships could strengthen or weaken the faculty member's ability to teach effectively in the online environment. The tension between work demands and a perceived loss of control can cause workers to feel overwhelmed with work responsibilities (Owens et al., 2018). The COVID-19 transition to online learning tasked faculty members with the additional burden of caring for small children, educating school-age children, and often caring for elderly parents in their homes, as the faculty navigated the challenges of online teaching during a crisis (Heggeness, 2020).

Social Context

History shows us that innovation often comes from a time of crisis. After helping to secure the victory in World War II by contributing to the wartime workforce, women entered the civilian force at the end of the war. During the 1980s, the world wide web was developed by several engineers, building on military technology (Dillon, 2018). Before the year 2000, technology experts commonly believed that computers, unable to deal with the calendar turnover, would create huge problems at the turn of the calendar year by shutting down industries that relied on computers. Dubbed Y2K, this problem led to innovation in technology by increasing the number of employment-based visas due to the need for Indian engineers to work

on the Y2K problem (Giovannella, 2020). Innovation has led the internet to become a vast source of information and a portal for education in recent years. The internet provides quick answers to many questions. Online learning has provided an opportunity to reach students worldwide and has contributed to creating a more global educational society. The changes in education and knowledge have been on a steep incline, with the COVID-19 transition to online learning making an even bigger push for online courses (Scott, 2020). The internet has led to changes in scholarly publications (Roberts, 2019), while the internet's everyday use has significantly impacted seeking information, the increase of big data, and the rise of online education (Lee, 2021).

The result of innovation often creates a positive effect on society. One negative aspect of increased internet access is the digital divide created by widespread internet connectivity. Those who are left behind from the digital divide include senior adults (Friemel, 2016); the poor (Goedhart et al., 2019); families with less education, and those with intellectual disabilities (Lee, 2021). The transition to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic required administrators to, in many cases, increase the schools' internet connectivity to reach the needs of learners across their districts and states (Bleich et al., 2020). In this way, the digital divide would have less impact by closing the gap between those who have the internet and those who do not. Even with the digital divide the internet and its increased use have dramatically transformed society over the last twenty years and made learning at home truly possible during the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020.

Theoretical Context

Several theories have served as a foundation in distance learning studies and teacher attitudes toward using technology in online courses. The technology innovation model,

developed by Rogers (1983), has been used to understand faculty adoption of technology. When applying Roger's model to faculty in colleges and universities, Rogers suggests that most faculty are slow to adopt new technology (Hall & Hord, 2006). Past research has also used the technology readiness framework (TR) to examine faculty readiness to adopt the technology (E). Technology readiness was historically used in research outside of education but is now being used to examine faculty adoption of technology (Ally, 2017).

The transactional distance theory has also been used thoroughly to study the separation of the teacher and students in the distance education model (Moore, 1970). With the increase in digital learning, the transactional theory has sparked a renewed interest among education researchers, who used the transactional distance theory to examine teacher perceptions of online teaching (Wengrowicz, 2017). This theory has also been used to study the pedagogical and the geographical separation of the student and instructor in the online model is often cited as the biggest challenge in online education (Forte et al., 2016).

Problem Statement

The problem was that, when required to transition their face-to-face courses to the online format in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, some college faculty members lacked the training and necessary support to feel confident and prepared to make the transition (Gillis & Krull, 2020). With a rise in student enrollments in online courses, it is essential to understand what factors contribute to the faculty members' perceptions and overall lack of confidence when transitioning to the online platform. Identifying any inputs that could be changed or improved is essential to enhance online learning in general and to increase teacher efficacy. COVID-19 has contributed to changing the learning classroom for students across the world (Lewis & Price-Howard, 2021).

While training for future teachers has changed some over the last twenty-five years (Loyalka et al., 2019), preparing teachers for teaching online is imperative for the future of education. The impact of school leadership on the teacher's attitude is also crucial for understanding the influences that shaped the faculty members' perceptions during the 2020 transition. Teachers' perceptions of school leadership directly relate to teacher attitude (Mwangi & Wanjiku, 2015). Additionally, faculty members teaching from home during the COVID-19 crisis may have been burdened with more challenges when working from home. 39% of working mothers and 28% of working fathers say that life was more difficult for their families due to the pandemic (Igielnik, 2021). Understanding the factors, including professional development, administrator messaging, and home-life factors is vital for examining the faculty members' attitudes and perceptions of preparedness as they faced the task of transitioning their course online during the spring of 2020.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover the factors that influenced the lived experiences of faculty and their attitude and perceptions of preparedness when transitioning to fully online teaching in response to the COVID-19 crisis for full-time faculty members at Greenhill College, North Branch (pseudonym). At this stage of the research, faculty members' attitudes and perceptions of preparedness will generally be defined as the impact of professional development, perceived administrator support, and home-life factors on the faculty member's attitude toward the transition to online learning. The research provided insight into the role that these factors played in the faculty members' overall lived experience.

Significance of the Study

In this research, online learning courses are defined as remote learning, remote instruction, online learning, online instruction, distance learning, digital learning, or instruction. This research identified the factors, including professional development, perceived administrator support, as well as home-life factors, that served as transformational events in faculty members' lives as they transitioned their courses online. This research can further help guide future training and professional development opportunities to develop faculty members to prevent some of the chaos that ensued from the COVID-19 transition to online learning. While there is ample research into the effect of online education accessible to the masses (Zongozzi, 2021) and the need for quality design and delivery systems in the online education environment, approximately half of the teachers polled reported a positive attitude toward remote learning (Barczyk & Duncan, 2020) 80% of teachers polled, preferred the face-to-face classroom to the online environment for teaching (Dorgii, 2021). This attitude that served as a precursor to the COVID transition is vital for preparing faculty members before a change. By utilizing phenomenological interviews, this study provides a broader and more in-depth look at factors, such as professional development, administrative support and messaging, and home factors that influence teacher attitude. From this, administrators and other stakeholders can adjust the training, support, and other factors to help faculty succeed in future situations.

Research Questions

The research questions chosen to guide this study provided valuable insight into the factors that influenced the faculty's lived experiences and their perceptions of preparedness as they transitioned to teach online in the spring of 2020. The following research questions guided

the study. Question 1 served as the central research question, while sub-questions 1, 2, and 3 served as the sub-questions.

Central Research Question

What factors influenced the faculty member's lived experiences and their attitude and perception of preparedness toward the mandatory transition to online teaching in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020? Faculty attitude strongly affects student achievement in the classroom (Shahzad & Naureen, 2017). Additionally, faculty attitude toward technology impacts their willingness to adopt and use technology in teaching (Dinc, 2019).

Sub-Question One

What professional development or training did faculty members receive before or during the transition that influenced the faculty member's lived experiences and attitude toward the mandatory transition to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020? Professional development, historically, is the way colleges, universities, and K12 schools train their teachers in pedagogy and professional skills (Sharma & Jaswinder, 2018). Online teaching requires more extensive training to include training to operate the learning management system and other web-based tools, in addition to training in pedagogy (Chen et al., 2017).

Sub-Question Two

What administrator messages did faculty receive before or during the transition that influenced the faculty member's lived experiences, including their attitude and perceived perception of preparedness toward the mandatory transition to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020? Faculty members' perceptions of their value to administration is essential to understand; as the faculty member's perception of being valued by administration increases so does the faculty member's perception of administration support (Culver et al., 2020).

Administrator support has been closely tied to faculty members' self-efficacy (Culver et al., 2020). To embrace change, effective, positive leadership is required (Bock, 2013).

Sub-Question Three

What home-life factors influenced the faculty member's lived experiences, including their attitude and perceived perception of preparedness toward the mandatory transition to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020? Netemeyer's (1996) work-family conflict theory suggests that it is difficult for faculty to fulfill their family role and work role well. Challenges facing faculty members in the past have been long work hours which interfere with family life and workload (Wong et al., 2020). Historically, women have carried a larger share of child and home care, which impacts their job (Cerrato, 2022).

Definitions

1. *Attitude* - A mindset that affects how a person thinks and acts. (Blazer, 2017).

2. *Covid-19* - Global pandemic of coronavirus 19 disease, resulting in shutdowns in schools and businesses worldwide (Barton et al., 2020).

3. *Online Education* - Synonymous with other forms of education, including distance education, remote learning, virtual learning, online learning (Allen et al., 2015).

4. *Transformational Learning Theory* - Part of the adult learning theory based on Mesirow's 1978 study of women returning to postsecondary study or the workplace after being away from the environment for an extended period sheds light on the personal transformation that takes place in adults during the learning process (Mesirow, 1978).

Summary

The problem was that, when required to transition their face-to-face courses to the online format in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, some college faculty members lacked the training and support necessary to feel confident and prepared to make the transition (Gillis & Krull, 2020). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover the factors that influenced the lived experiences and faculty attitudes and perceptions of preparedness when transitioning to fully online teaching in response to the COVID-19 crisis for full-time faculty members at Greenhill College, North Branch (pseudonym). These faculty members completed the transition to online learning during the Coronavirus pandemic spring of 2020. Understanding the lived experiences of faculty members during this crisis teaching situation will help inform educators and administrators of training and preparation that needs to be completed in order to prepare faculty more fully for future situations.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed how we engage in business, healthcare, education, and other industries. Perhaps the most evolution has taken place in education. Understanding the faculty member's experience as they made this transition will inform administrators and educational institutions to equip their faculty members better. Faculty attitude and their perception of preparedness toward the online teaching transition provide an excellent research opportunity as educators move forward to meet the educational demands in a post-COVID world. Chapter One includes a summary and relevance of the historical, social, and theoretical contexts for the study, the significance, and the research questions. Also included in Chapter One are the problem and purpose statement and the definitions for the terminology related to the study. Assessing the factors that influenced faculty members' attitudes toward online learning

will contribute to the current literature and provide professional development and training

opportunities that will help further online teaching success.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Chapter Two contains a well-researched literature review. First, the theoretical framework for the current research is explained. The research relies on the transformative learning theory, a part of Mesirow's (1978) adult learning theory. Following Chapter Two is a well-researched literature review, which provides the foundation for the proposed research. Finally, Chapter Two concludes with a summary of the Chapter Two contents, which support the research project.

Theoretical Framework

This research relied on the adult theory of learning (Mesirow, 1978), specifically, the transformative learning theory (1978). This research helps researchers to understand more about professional development and teacher training and its impact on community college faculty attitudes during the transition to online learning. Examining these faculty members as learners in the transformative learning process provides more understanding into the factors that influenced them as they made this transition.

Adult Learning Theory – Transformative Learning Theory

According to Mesirow, the learner's authentic learning experience contains three phases. These three phases, or dimensions, are psychological, convictional, and behavioral. First, according to Mesirow, critical reflection occurs when the learner, in this case, the faculty member, examines the previously unquestioned assumptions behind their thought processes. Second, through discourse, a form of dialogue, the learner seeks to understand various perspectives. Finally, for Mesirow (1978), the action occurs. Action is what the learner chooses

to do with the learning that has transformed their mind. Adult Education Quarterly published an article in 1978 titled "Perspective Transformation" that introduced the transformational learning idea, formally, to the adult education field. Academics that challenge the transformation theory have long argued that the theory places too much emphasis on social action, which has led to much disagreement. To the constructivist developmental psychologists, adult capacity, and the ability to engage in the transforming processes of self-assessment and reflection through discussion leads the learner through the transformative process. In this understanding of the theory, the learner's psychological predispositions play a crucial role when establishing the transformative learning habit (Illeris, 2018).

Inside these three dimensions, Mesirow included ten steps for the transformation process. First, for Mesirow (1978), the transformation begins after a triggering event or a disorienting dilemma. This event or dilemma can be a singular event or a combination of circumstances. Typical triggers for Mesirow (1978) include marriage or death, a training exercise, or another critical event. Next, the learner should examine their feelings of guilt or shame about the event. The learner then critically assesses their sociocultural assumptions to challenge their own biases. Next, the learner must acknowledge their discontent to challenge their preconceptions. Next, in step 5, the learner considers new roles, relationships, and actions for themselves outside of their biases. The learner then plans a course of action based on these new roles. The learner gains the necessary knowledge for the new position based on the selected activity. The learner can also try on new positions to see what works the best. Next, the learner begins to feel comfortable with their transformation. This step helps the learner build their confidence and competence about their new role. Finally, in step ten of Mesirow's theory, the learner reintegrates into their life based on their unique perspective, and the transformation has occurred.

Table 1

Mezirow's Ten Phases of Transformative Learning (1978)

Steps	Phase
Step 1	A disorienting dilemma
Step 2	Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
Step 3	A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions
Step 4	Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change
Step 5	Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
Step 6	Planning of a course of action
Step 7	Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
Step 8	Provisional trying of new roles

Steps	Phase
Step 9	Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
Step 10	A reintegration into one's life based on conditions dictated by one's perspective

To the transformative learning theorist, personal experience is an essential step for learning to be effective. The learner's interpretation of the experience creates meaning for the learner. This meaning leads to a change in the learner's behavior or belief patterns, making a paradigm shift. In turn, this shift affects the learner's future experiences. According to Mesirow's transformative learning theory (1978), learners must change their perspective and transform their existing meaning schemes. For example, through this transformative learning process, one study found that English language learners report a shift in their view of the United States' culture and their view of themselves as they gain more confidence in communicating through the English language (King, 2000).

The typical face-to-face educational setting allows teachers to encourage students to interact with new ideas through critical thinking. Teachers provide students with opportunities to discuss content and concepts with other students in this environment. Additionally, these face-to-face classroom experiences allow students to engage with other students who challenge their assumptions and question their biases. Providing these same types of opportunities to students in an online classroom requires a shift in the teachers' attitude toward the school. Instructors must provide a challenging educational environment while using a different educational model, and

trying to create an educational environment that provides students with a safe, engaging place to learn. Creating this environment where students can bounce ideas off each other and are motivated by their peers is often the biggest challenge in the online learning environment.

Historically, a significant barrier to online education is the need for faculty members to transition their traditional face-to-face courses to the online model (Brock & Carter, 2016). The literature includes extensive studies examining this phenomenon, (Smith, 2021), but few that address the factors influencing the teacher's feelings of preparedness. Many teachers hold an instructive approach to learning, where the teacher is the direct instructor to the students, sometimes referred to as the "sage-on-the-stage" (Brookfield, 2006, p. 63). Because of this mindset, faculty members often try to mimic their face-to-face courses in the online format (Brock & Carter, 2016). This mindset can create an obstacle to transforming courses to the online form. The COVID crisis brought unforeseen challenges to the steps of higher education institutions that, in many ways, the colleges were unprepared.

This lack of preparedness has been brought into question and has drawn attention to the need for professional development and a plan in the case of another crisis that requires an immediate transition to a different teaching mode and learning (Houlden & Velestsianos, 2020). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, administrators, faculty members, and students faced new challenges in the online education model. Faculty who felt unprepared to transition and the challenged students often lacked the skills or technology to engage in the online college class. The overriding fear of the pandemic created unique challenges to the higher education environment (Zhong, 2020).

The transformative learning theory (Mesirow, 1978) relies on disorienting dilemmas that challenge learners' thinking. For this research, the theory might encourage educators to use

critical thinking to test their own beliefs about the effectiveness of the online learning environment. The use of Mesirow's theory in the current research required faculty to set aside their own intrinsic bias. Transformative learning is described as learning that changes how individuals think about themselves and their world. This process involves a shift of consciousness on learning during the learning process (Mesirow, 1978). The central claim of the transformative learning approach is that the individual learner will change if they encounter an authentic learning experience.

The transformative learning theory (Mesirow, 1978) shows promise in helping teachers make the mindset switch to become online teachers (Brock & Carter, 2016). Helping faculty members change their mental habits can help these instructors to adjust to this new educational model (Brock & Carter, 2016). Additional challenges facing faculty as they transitioned to teaching online include creating an environment with a solid structure for students to learn in this online environment (Kearsley & Moore, 2012). Changing the teacher mindset by convincing the instructors to think outside the box when creating and delivering their online courses is essential to improving online education (Brock & Carter, 2016).

The transformative learning theory (Mesirow, 1978) is the lens by which the adult faculty member participants in this study were viewed. This research focused on the selected faculty members' experience as they transferred their courses to the online format. Mesirow's transformative learning theory (1978) tenants framed the current study. Mesirow's theory informs the literature on teachers and the role that professional development, administrative support and messaging, and home-life factors can play uniquely. The theory sheds light on the transformative learning process for teachers as they became learners in the transition to online teaching.

Related Literature

Several themes emerge in the literature related to faculty attitudes toward technology, the actual value of the online learning format for students' positive educational outcomes, and the faculty member's perceptions of their preparedness to develop and teach these online courses. The research questions in this study examined the factors, such as professional development and training, institutional and administrator support, as well as home-life situations that could impact faculty members' attitudes toward the online transition to teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020.

The Online Classroom

Online learning is typically delivered in two ways – synchronous and asynchronous (Joliffe et al., 2012). The asynchronous learning environment allows students to access learning materials on any day and from anywhere. Online learning has been successfully used in industry and academia for several years (Research and Markets, 2018).

If the long-range intention of the educational systems is to develop student successes both inside and outside the classroom, then it is essential to understand the factors that propel students to success. A genuine need exists to understand the significant role of faculty attitudes, pedagogy, and technical abilities in developing online courses. While online classes create challenges for the faculty member and the students, there are some distinct advantages of online learning. According to Westberry (2009), online learning can support higher cognition levels, foster learner reflection and information processing, and level the playing field between students. Ritzhaupt et al., (2013) identifies the online learning advantages from the learners' point of view, including convenience, time savings, and reduced cost. Arkorful and Abaidoo (2015) list additional benefits for students in the online learning environment, including the lack of due

dates based on time zones, location, distance, and the students' ability to access the course materials. While there are certain advantages to the online format for learning, there is a bias against these non-traditional modes of education, especially among instructors (Westberry, 2009).

The face-to-face classroom provides an environment where student-instructor relationships form the foundation of learning. The classroom offers an avenue for the give-and-take relationship prevalent in a successful learning experience. This foundation serves as a positive motivation for students and teachers alike and can be crucial for creating the student-teacher bond, which is vital for learning (Comer, 1995). Online teachers find it challenging to develop and nurture that relationship without face-to-face interaction. Since the student-instructor relationship is key to student success (Comer, 1995), the educational community must understand how to build successful student-teacher relationships inside the online world. Studies show that the strength of the teacher-student relationship comes from the time in a face-to-face environment and positive encouragement provided by the teacher to the student (Wilken, 2018). The online learning environment offers a challenge to this paradigm. In the online academic environment, faculty members must find an alternative way to create a relationship between themselves and their students. This challenge is significant for online instructors.

Historically, one significant barrier to online education is the need for college faculty members to transition their face-to-face courses to the online model (Brock & Carter, 2016), which is what was required of college faculty due to the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020. Negative perceptions about online learning can come from the professor's attitude toward the online learning experience (Wang & Xu, 2015). While some noted benefits of online learning, faculty had significant hurdles to overcome to transition to the online format during the crisis.

Students often see the advantages of the online form, citing convenience, time savings, and reduced costs, while faculty tend to prefer the direct instructional model (Aithal et al 2016). These faculty members recognize that the strength of the relationship built with students relies on the face-to-face environment and the encouragement the instructor can provide students in the background (Wilken, 2018).

Positive faculty attitudes positively affect student learning outcomes (Ali et al., 2019). Faculty members' perceived preparedness is essential for understanding their attitude toward the transition during spring 2020. Previous research does show that faculty are more willing to use technology if the instructors perceive it as easy to use (Davis, 1989). Identifying the events, training, and messages that influenced faculty members' attitudes toward online learning in general and the transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic will help structure training and messaging to build up the faculty perception of their preparedness for future transitions. Changing the faculty mindset includes convincing instructors not to mimic their face-to-face courses in the online environment (Brock & Carter, 2016). This information is critical for the transition during spring 2020 since the faculty had a short period to make the transition. Teachers' self-efficacy, or their perception that they can successfully teach their students, is positively correlated to the teacher's attitude or perceived locus of control (Senler, 2016). During the COVID transition, faculty members' perceptions were fundamental as the transition was made fast and often with little direction.

Approximately 50% of faculty employed at colleges and universities before the spring 2020 transition had online teaching experience (Bettinger & Loeb, 2017). Before the transition, many faculty members reported concerns over the quality of online learning courses (Newton, 2019). The added stress of a crisis on teachers has not been well-documented before COVID.

Teaching online without planning, training, or preparation, as was necessary during the COVID transition, is called "emergency remote teaching" (ERT). Appropriate technology and resources became the focal point for many schools and administrators (Anderson, 2020).

Berry (2020) found that less-prepared faculty members are less likely to help students in their online classes and are less likely to create a sense of community in their online courses. Professional development for online instructors can help faculty learn to use the learning management system, web-based tools and discover the best practices for online teaching (Chen et al., 2017; McGee, 2017). The faculty's willingness to use the technology could be improved with the proper training. Positive faculty attitudes can influence student success in the classroom, increase student retention, and increase student graduation rates (Gray & Nicolas, 2019). Attitude is the "summary evaluation of a psychological object captured in attributes such as good-bad, harmful-beneficial, pleasant-beneficial" (Ajzen, 2001, p. 28). Faculty members with a positive attitude can positively affect students, their universities, and other faculty members (Ali et al., 2019). Conversely, faculty members with negative attitudes can negatively affect the learning process (Ali et al., 2019). For this reason, it is essential to understand faculty attitudes toward online learning in general, and specifically during the crisis transition to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020. Teacher attitude toward the educational use of technology and its perceived ease of use has consistently ranked high in importance among teachers entering the teaching field (Scherer et al., 2018). These attitudes and perceived ease of use are the main factors in how students receive and accept distance learning. Faculty members' attitudes also influence their view of the value of the online format in achieving the positive educational outcomes they are trying to achieve. Additionally, faculty members that have been

teaching for several years rank technology readiness as a strong indicator of their willingness to adopt the technology (El Afy et al., 2017).

Faculty members occasionally recognize the benefits of online courses from the instructors' perspective. One advantage of online learning is the instructor's ability to tutor at any time of day while being located anywhere in the world (Dixson 2015). In addition, instructors can update the course materials, grade material, and provide more timely feedback to the students. Finally, online learning allows students to immediately see the assignment changes, grades, and feedback in the online course management system (Dixson 2015). This reduces the need for faculty members to constantly answer questions about grades and assignment changes since students can readily see them on their timetables.

As faculty members become more familiar with technology and the tools, their attitudes toward the technology become more positive (Dixson 2015). During the COVID-19 pandemic, schools and colleges were transitioned immediately to an online virtual education model. The faculty members, in most cases, were required to use the learning management system (LMS) adopted by the college or university. The deployed LMS system was previously used sparingly and often not used unless the specific course was hybrid or virtual at the beginning of the semester. Before COVID, the typical practice was to limit LMS training to instructors who needed the current course training (Newton, 2019). As a result, the more involved and robust training was limited. Faculty attitudes towards adopting the technology might have been influenced by the fact that they did not choose their technology. The training supplied before the pandemic was not always readily available to faculty immediately during the crisis.

The quality of online learning has been cited by college faculty as a genuine concern of this online format (Newton, 2019). Thus, the quality of online learning courses has been the

concern of higher education institutions and instructors long before COVID (Newton, 2019).

Creating engaging courses that build students' knowledge and confidence while allowing

instructors to use their best practices is essential for quality learning. Faculty members did report

some positive outcomes for students in online learning during the spring of 2020 for some

selected students. These positive outcomes included a need for students to pay more attention

and be more deliberate with time and energy toward assignments (Berger et al., 2021).

Faculty members' job satisfaction has been correlated in the research to higher student outcomes

and higher student satisfaction in e-learning programs. Faculty members that teach online are

generally satisfied with their role if they feel they have had proper training and have access to

good technical support (Wingo et al., 2017). Though much of the research into online learning

has focused on students, there has historically been limited research with a faculty focus. In

recent years, there has been an uptick in research regarding faculty members' attitudes toward

their experience in the face-to-face and online classroom (Wingo et al., 2017). Job satisfaction is

so important that it has been identified as one of the five pillars of quality online education in the

Online Learning Consortium Curriculum (OLC, 2017). Examining the factors that lead to faculty

job satisfaction is essential for understanding faculty members' impact on student learning

outcomes. Faculty members who feel prepared to do their job will likely find more job

satisfaction in the job.

Before the pandemic, faculty members were sometimes expected to teach online, though

many pushed back against this expectation (Wingo et al., 2017). Blackmon (2016) claims online

teaching can "strike both fear and joy in faculty members" (p. 80). Understanding faculty

members' attitude is essential for online learning success because faculty members are a crucial

factor in the learning process for students (Eom & Ashill, 2016). Faculty attitude toward online

learning programs can significantly impact a college or university's entirely online program (Wingo et al., 2017). Mitchell et al. (2015) suggests faculty advocate for the online programs. For example, Mitchell cites two universities' experiences that both created robust online learning opportunities. First, the University of Illinois invested $18 million into an online initiative, partially failing due to the lack of faculty buy-in. The second university, the University of Massachusetts, started an online program. Their program was very successful and was heavily supported by the faculty. The administrators at UMASS sought the faculty buy-in by responding to their concerns and including the faculty in the process (Mitchell, 2015). Faculty attitude and faculty buy-in do influence online course success.

The Student Perspective of Online Learning

As a primary stakeholder in the educational process, it is vital to understand the learning experience from the student's perspective. One aspect of student learning is students' attitude toward the online learning experience. Several factors influence student attitude toward distance learning, including the need for this educational format. Online learning requires students to be self-regulated learners, capable, and have the ability and desire to interact online. The challenge for faculty is creating the environment for students to flourish in their learning experience, not just survive.

Overall, college students perceive online courses as successful (Gray et al., 2016). However, students overwhelmingly report that online courses taken in the past have required more time and focus than they initially thought, which influences their attitude toward future studies (Knowles & Kerkman, 2007). Understanding the value of online courses to the student remains a primary driver of attitude among students (He et al., 2006). Communication between the instructor and student remains a concern and priority to students when considering the online

format (Dixcon, 2012). With the COVID transition, students and faculty did not choose whether to engage in the online form or not.

Students' learning motivation and attitude are linked to their willingness to take online courses (Kim et al., 2017). Student retention and positive attitudes among students are real challenges for online education as this educational model moves forward (Dumford & Miller, 2018). Attitudinal factors such as learning motivation, learning capability, and the online experience are considered the most important among learners for their success (Chen et al., 2017). Improving the students' academic performance and the faculty members' ability to meet their needs as they persist in school are primary motivators in students' desire to continue learning online (Chen et al., 2017).

Students in fully online programs report more positive attitudes toward science than students in the traditional, face-to-face science courses (Perera et al., 2017). Recent research into student attitudes toward the emergency online instruction delivered during COVID-19 found that students believed the online learning experience was practical for saving time and money, was safer, and more convenient (Hussein et al., 2020). Students also reported that the online learning experience created more distractions for them. Students also noted a decrease in their focus, a heavier workload, technology issues, and lack of help from their professors as the most significant challenges in the online environment (Hussein et al., 2020). Understanding the student perspective of these online courses is essential for faculty to create and engage in online courses. The future of higher education relies on the ability to train faculty members to develop online courses that engage and challenge students, just like their face-to-face courses did.

Professional Development and Training

As colleges offer more courses online, distance, and hybrid modalities, there is an increased likelihood of transitioning to a fully online course educational construct in the future. Therefore, it is crucial to assess faculty attitudes toward online learning. Understanding the factors that can influence community college faculty attitudes as they transition to online course delivery is vital for American education coming out of the Coronavirus Pandemic. It is possible, if not probable, that faculty may once again be required to transition to the online learning model. Helping to prepare these faculty members with practical training, administrative support, and sound technology is critical for teacher and student success in the higher education environment.

Professional development courses have been strongly correlated to faculty attitude shifts toward teamwork, teaching satisfaction, and teaching approach (Prottas, 2016). To succeed in the online teaching environment, instructors need ongoing training and support (Baran & Correia, 2014). Professional development can do much to improve faculty attitude. Faculty report excitement toward online teaching, which leads to a positive attitude toward their online courses when offered training that addresses their concerns about online education (Kara et al., 2021).

To teach online courses, faculty need to acquire new technology skills, increase their engagement strategies, and increase their motivation to embrace the future education model. Learners will continue to use many forms of electronically supported learning. The drive for improved attitude shifts for teachers and faculty members will remain essential to the positive holistic educational outcomes regardless of where the learner is in time and space. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to discover the factors, such as training, that influenced the faculty's perceived preparedness when transitioning to fully online courses in response to the COVID-19 crisis, for full-time faculty members at Greenhill College, North Branch.

Professional development, historically, is how colleges, universities, and K12 schools train their teachers in pedagogy and professional skills (Christ & Sharma, 2018). Research shows that teachers find professional development wholly ineffective (Verloop, 2004; Kang et al., 2016). Engagement, collaboration, and establishing community are essential skills for the online instructor (Gaytan, 2015). Online education has been the most significant area of growth in higher education over the last few years, so professional development courses should have likely increased as well (Allen et al., 2016). Professional development can help support faculty members in addressing the main challenges in creating and delivering online courses (Meyer & Murrell, 2014).

Many factors influence the adoption of professional development training (Porter et al., 2014). Institutional money allotted for professional development, in addition to time and the school's policy related to training, impact the way colleges and universities affect the number of courses and the quality of the professional development provided by the college or university (Elliott et al., 2015). On an individual basis, professional development is influenced by the faculty member's personal schedule and peer influence (Kang, 2012). Though there are factors that negatively influence faculty participation and effectiveness of faculty professional development, training does show to improve faculty effectiveness (Meyers & Murrell, 2014). Online teaching is significantly different from teaching face-to-face courses (Elliott et al., 2012). Online teaching requires more extensive training to include training to operate the learning management system and other web-based tools, in addition to training in pedagogy (Chen et al., 2017). Online teaching also requires training in instructing in the virtual environment, course delivery, course design, and content (Gabrowski et al., 2016). Research suggests, absent the correct training, faculty members struggle to deliver effective courses in the online environment

(Gabrowski et al., 2016). Quality professional development can help improve faculty members' content knowledge as well as improve their digital skills (Herman, 2007).

Professional development courses have been strongly correlated to attitude shifts among faculty toward teamwork, teaching satisfaction, and teaching approach (Prottas, 2016). Overall, the research indicates that professional development does impact teacher attitude and teacher perception of readiness. An opportunity exists to create professional development opportunities that bridge the gap between faculty with a positive attitude toward educational technology and those with a negative attitude toward this change.

Previous research has suggested seven attributes of successful online courses. These attributes can be addressed through professional development opportunities. The attributes include knowing and creating the content, designing the online course, knowing the students, enhancing the student-teacher relationships, guiding student learning, evaluating online courses, and maintaining teacher presence (Baran et al., 2013). Faculty members must restructure their thought process when transitioning from the face-to-face to online learning environment (Lion & Stark, 2010). Research suggests that training can help faculty members to change their thought process (Lion & Stark, 2010).

Mentoring is an additional form of professional development that has shown promise in helping teachers to overcome their hesitancy in using technology (Kopcha et al., 2015). Teachers often report feeling unprepared and uneasy about teaching in the online environment, which can be addressed through professional development or mentoring (Baran al., 2014). Research has shown that regarding online teaching, instructors prefer professional development that they can use immediately, that fits into their schedules, that is in-sync with their teaching procedures, and training that is directed by a program chair or leader (Baran et al., 2014). It is important to

understand the types of training and professional development that faculty members feel is important so that the faculty members are engaged in the process.

When teachers are the students in professional development courses, research finds that instructors often select the online format mainly for accessibility rather than for the course content or instructor (Parsons & Leggett, 2019). In addition, faculty attitudes toward their online learning management system improve as they become more familiar with the management system during training (Villarruel et al., 2019). This affirms the idea that targeted professional development could have a bearing on faculty members' attitudes.

Instructors need ongoing training and support to succeed in the online teaching environment (Baran & Correia, 2014). Therefore, training, and professional development in the use and implementation of educational technology in the classroom, face-to-face or virtual, serve as the primary means for continuing education of faculty members at community colleges. A significant correlation exists between the faculty members' interest in professional development and student performance (Cameron al., 2020). Teachers have reported positive feelings, even feelings of excitement before professional development training (Brinkley-Etzkorn, 2020). This initial excitement on the part of faculty members can be developed from beginning to end, creating a more robust learning system that leads to a positive attitude toward online courses.

Training can help address any concerns or misperceptions that faculty members have about online education (Kara et al., 2018). Professional development training is used to improve competence in skills related to teaching, administration, and research (Kara et al., 2018). Academic faculty benefit from professional development when the professional development activities align with the faculty member's professional goals. Significant changes in attitude,

perception, and self-efficacy have been correlated with faculty attitudes toward online learning (Yoo, 2016). Research derived from Bandura's social learning model suggests that engaged professional development has an even more significant influence on teacher attitude (Brinkley-Etzkorn, 2019). This research would imply that the idea of targeted, deliberate, and collaborative professional development could be beneficial to teachers and faculty members as they transition from traditional face-to-face instruction to an online educational format.

As technology changes, the training course must change to create new norms. Teachers report barriers to entering the online education world (Luongo, 2018). Teacher satisfaction about these self-perceived barriers to online learning impact the teacher's attitude toward the process (Luongo, 2018). Professional development offerings strengthen online instructor's technical, pedological, and content knowledge (Berry, 2019; Meyer & Murrell, 2014). Faculty members acknowledge the unique challenges in online courses that can be addressed through professional development and training (Seaman, 2009). However, many online faculty members are disappointed in the professional development opportunities that have been provided for them (Bollinger et al., 2014). The importance of faculty training cannot be emphasized enough. Less prepared faculty members are less likely to help students in the online environment and less likely to create a sense of community with their students (Berry, 2019). While many factors contribute to the professional development offerings at a college, such as cost, time, and policy issues, the course offering does impact the efficacy of faculty members when teaching online (Elliott et al., 2015).

Professional development for online teachers includes training on the learning management system, training to use the web-based tools, and pedagogical training for best practices for online teaching (Chen et al., 2017; McGee et al., 2017). Online teaching is vastly

different from face-to-face teaching. During the COVID pandemic, face-to-face faculty members were required to switch to the online environment in a swift transition. If the faculty members had not already had the professional development training to help with online teaching, they likely did not have time to participate in training during the transition.

The literature is absent regarding how faculty members perceive their professional development training for online teaching. Without extensive studies, it is difficult for colleges to determine the real impact of training and professional development as faculty members engage in online teaching at record levels. By examining the role that professional development and training plays in preparing faculty members for online teaching, this research will fill a gap in the literature.

College Institutions, Administration, and Faculty

College administrators are typically the drivers to expand online education. Many online courses are developed from the perspective of administrators rather than faculty (Philips et al., 2019). A gap does exist between administrators and faculty members on many issues in education, including educational reform (Bridich, 2016). Administrators' attitudes impact the courses and learning systems that faculty members are required to use. Attitudes toward the online course experience often differ among administrator and faculty, leading to a chasm and online programs that lack robust success (Touloupis & Athanasiades, 2020).

Approximately two-thirds of academic leaders consider online learning to be "critical to the long-term strategy of my institution" (Pearson, 2015, p. 5). To the administrator, college is a business and administrators must run the business. These administrators are required to make a profit and stay afloat in difficult times, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This is one reason for the reported increase in online course offerings in recent years (Pearson, 2015). Administrators

during the COVID crisis were required to re-brand themselves as online providers of education. If they did not successfully do that, they likely did not come out of the COVID educational crisis well.

Administrators have a different focus than faculty members when it comes to the approach to the mission of the college. Administrators are often concerned with the bottom line, while trying to drive enrollment numbers up and pass rates up. Administrators often have a broader view of the college or university as a whole. On the other hand, faculty members are typically not as concerned with the financial health of the college or university but are more concerned with the academics and the content delivered in the classroom. Faculty members tend to have a narrow view of education, because instructors primarily focus on the content delivery in their classroom. For example, before the COVID crisis, over 80% of administrators surveyed said online classes are used to increase enrollment (Parsad & Lewis, 2008). Both faculty members and college administrators agree that traditional classes are better for student learning outcomes, but the administrators tend to have more confidence in the online learning model as a mode of delivery (Baker, 2016).

The Babson Survey of Online Learning (Allen et al., 2016) demonstrates the difference in attitudes about online education between administrators and faculty members. In 2015, 71.4% of college administrators considered the learning outcomes the same or better in online education than those in face-to-face instruction, though only 29.1% of these leaders believed that their faculty had a positive attitude toward online education (Allen et al., 2016).

Administrators are historically in favor of increasing their online offerings, based on their perception as business leaders (Philips et al., 2019). Approximately two-thirds of administrators consider online learning to be a critical component of the long-term mission of the college

(Pearson, 2015). The proposed research will examine the factors such as administrative support and messaging that influenced faculty members' attitudes as they made the crisis s transition to online teaching during COVID-19 in the spring of 2020.The shift to online learning does impact the bottom line. Adjustment to the curriculum during the COVID transition required increased Wi-Fi coverage, and other changes necessary to the transition, including the installation of hot-spots in school parking lots, and even gave away technology and hot-spots to students going home to learn. Examining the perspectives of both faculty and administrators as they made the transition, as well as the administrator's communication through email and other communication channels can shed light on the crucial relationship that might affect the faculty's attitude toward the transition.

Faculty members have historically resisted the administrator's proposals (Astin & Scherrei, 1980). However, more recent research demonstrates that faculty members are not open to administrators placing additional requirements that cost the faculty member more time (Wright, 2008). Innovation, including online course development, requires a significant amount of time on the part of faculty members. 38% of faculty members perceived their administrators' support regarding innovation, finding their leaders to be "quite a bit" or "very much" supportive of new ways of teaching (Dumford et al., 2018, p. 452).

Though the numbers of students in online courses continue to increase, faculty members are concerned about the amount of time and effort they must put into the courses for students to be successful. Additionally, faculty report a lack of support from their institutions in carving out time for adequate preparation (Evrim et al., 2014). Faculty members' perceived support from their administration is essential in understanding the faculty member's attitude toward online teaching transition. Faculty members are critical participants and responsible for creating a

stimulating and challenging environment for students to learn. As a result, faculty members significantly influence student success in the classroom**,** student retention in higher education, learning, and graduation (Kezar, 2013). Understanding the faculty members' perceptions of their value to administration is imperative; as the faculty member's perception of being valued by administration increases, so does the faculty member's perception of administration support (Culver et al., 2020). Early research does suggest that some teachers may not have been aware of the available support for putting their courses online (Allen, 2016), indicating a lack of communication.

Administration support has been closely tied to faculty members' self-efficacy (Han et al., 2018). Much research has been done into the importance of self-efficacy to student outcomes, though most research has been conducted with elementary and secondary school teachers. In addressing college-level faculty members' self-efficacy, a college faculty member should feel comfortable participating in course design, instructional strategy, technology use, and classroom management. As faculty members approached online teaching during spring 2020, their self-efficacy likely influenced their beliefs about the instruction they were intended to deliver. Praise is one effective way to motivate faculty (Skipper et al., 2012). Public praise for faculty members who embraced the transition to online learning as a result of COVID-19, made great strides in teaching during the pandemic or otherwise contributed to the teaching field could go a long way in encouraging faculty members to embrace online learning. Trust is an essential component between faculty members and their college administrators. Organizational communication or the sending and receiving messages in an organization is essential to building trust (Lippert & Aust,2004). Trust between principal and teachers in K12 schools have been studied extensively (Holland, 2016; Shaw & Newton, 2014), while there is little research

examining the trust relationship between college faculty and administrators (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015), Research indicates that faculty feel confident when they trust their leader but feel less confident when they do not trust the leader (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). Faculty members who were asked to contribute to decisions on the institution level tend to have more significant buy-in and report a higher job satisfaction (Allen & Judd, 2007). Though the COVID-19 transition likely did not offer opportunities to faculty members to contribute to institutional decision-making, the tone from administrators might hold bearing on faculty attitude toward the transition.

Institutional support, via administrators, has been shown to impact the job performance of faculty members (Falola et al., 2020). For this reason, it is important to examine the role that administrator support and messaging played in faculty attitudes toward their transition to the online format. Faculty members historically resist administrator proposals (Astin & Scherrei, 1980), though administrator support has been closely tied to faculty member's self-efficacy (Han et al., 2018).

Little research exists in the literature regarding community college faculty's perception of their relationship with leadership. Kater (2017) found that shared governance was crucial to build trust between faculty and community college leadership. For research into community college leadership, it is essential to recognize the leadership tiers that are present in the colleges and universities being studied. The leadership tiers at the selected community college include the division chair, academic dean, vice president, or provost and president.

Home-life Factors of Faculty Members

The COVID transition to online learning presented a unique challenge to faculty members, as many returned to their homes to teach virtually or remotely. Additional challenges

presented themselves since many public school-age children were also sent home to learn virtually for the remainder of the school year.

Historically, one factor that heavily influences faculty attitude is faculty work-life balance. Work-family conflict (WFC) theory (Netemeyer et al., 1996) suggests that if individuals fulfill their family roles, it is more challenging to fulfill their work roles. As a result, life as a faculty member can be challenging, though rewarding. Challenges include work hours, time spent with family, work interference with family, family interference with work, and job satisfaction. These challenges were only magnified during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 transition to online teaching broke down the typical barriers between faculty's work life and family life.

Faculty members feel a loss of control at work when they are overwhelmed with home responsibilities (Owens et al., 2018). This, according to Owens et al. (2018), can cause cognitive dissonance on the part of the faculty member. Previous research into the work-family-life balance suggests that the balance is often connected to sociocultural family roles and gender roles (Lester, 2015). Identifying the additional challenges for faculty as they made the transition to teach online during the COVID transition to online education is important in understanding the complete experience of these faculty members.

Findings suggest that a positive relationship exists between faculty work hours and job satisfaction (Beigi, 2016). With faculty working at home during COVID-19, these work hours likely increased. Though much research has been done on the work-family balance in the private sector, a literature gap does exist when it comes to the academic world. While all faculty did not have the same experience once they transitioned to home, many factors could influence the faculty member's attitude toward the online teaching experience.

Faculty rank is shown to be a positive indicator of work-life balance for all faculty members (Denson et al., 2018). This work-family balance among those seeking tenure and the departmental support for family-work balance, caring for an ill family member and workload have the strongest association with positive attitudes toward work in academia (Jones et al., 2019; Kerr, 2019). These factors and others could have contributed to faculty attitude and experience during the COVID transition to online teaching.

Teaching does contribute to work-family stressors and conflict among teachers (Muasya, 2020). The additional burden of combining the faculty members' own family life with the stressors of transitioning face-to-face courses to the online environment could have created a situation where achieving a positive attitude felt impossible for the faculty member. Historically, women have shared most of the caregiving burden in the home and make up a majority of the teaching workforce. While the transition to a more egalitarian approach has undoubtedly been in the process during recent years, women still handle many home chores and oversee the home and family responsibilities. Recent studies show that there still exists a significant division of chores based on gender inside the home (Cerrato & Cifre, 2020). Males typically report a better work-life balance when working in academia than their female peers (Sharma, 2021). As more faculty members came home to work during COVID, along with the children and family members, more of the burden, based on historical research, likely fell on the women.

The effects of having a family do weigh heavily on faculty in academia. For example, primary caregivers who remain in academia publish less (Acker & Armenti, 2004). Some researchers even argue that female faculty members sometimes delay childbirth and marriage or do not get married and have children due to their success in academia (Wolfinger et al., 2009). In addition, researchers have found that discipline, age of children, and place in the academic hierarchy

impact the faculty member's ability to maintain career progress while caretaking family (Schultz, 2017). These concerns could play a part in faculty attitudes as they transitioned to online education in spring 2020, worked alongside other family members, or cared for children. When faculty members transitioned their course to the online environment, most began working from home. In many cases, their families and children were working alongside them. Understanding the stressors that influenced faculty attitude toward online teaching is important. Though the proposed research may just touch on some of these challenges, this is undoubtedly a place where additional research could be valuable in understanding the lived experiences of these faculty members.

Online Teaching During a Crisis

Hodges et al. (2020) define teaching online without much planning, training, or preparation as "emergency remote teaching (ERT)." This contrasts with teaching that was planned or high-quality online teaching. The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it a unique opportunity to examine true emergency remote teaching.

Research is emerging regarding the unique circumstances created for educational institutions due to the COVID crisis. Limited knowledge and research do exist regarding higher education in times of global health crisis, such as the 2002-2004 SARS outbreak (Apple, 2010; Araujo et al., 2020), the global financial crisis (Araujo et al., 2020) and natural disasters (Pacheco et al., 2022). Access to appropriate technology and resources to access online learning became a focal point of the COVID transition (Anderson, 2020), with many students having unreliable or no internet connectivity. Teaching or learning during a crisis presents additional demands on students and teachers. Researchers examining students' journal entries and teachers' journal entries found similarities in the entries of both about their shared trauma experience

created from the crisis (Gnanadass et al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic will likely result in many shared experiences among students and teachers. The pandemic put students, teachers, and even administrators in difficult positions and increased learning anxiety while navigating the instructional change required to educate students. When researchers examined the student journal entries about their experience with COVID-19, they found terms like "trial by fire" (Berger et al., 202, p. 44). Both students and teachers wrote about work and family challenges and challenges in their personal life during this transitional period.

Giovannella's (2020) study of instructor perceptions of their online experience after two months into the COVID-19 pandemic found that teachers did have positive feelings toward the technology they were using. Teachers also reported an increase in their digital skills, which helped them to create and effectively administer their online courses (Klapproth, 2020). Retno and Wirza (2020) found that teachers who transitioned to online teaching for the COVID-19 pandemic, felt good about the technology they were using, but believed they needed further development for their digital skills.

Much early research into online education during COVID has focused on student learning (Demuyakor, 2020). With few exceptions, the studies that investigate the teaching experience do not separate the students from the teachers (Slimi, 2020) or do not provide in-depth information about the faculty experience (Bao, 2020; Dhawan, 2020). Through interviews, the proposed research will examine a more in-depth view of the transition and provide valuable insight into the faculty members' experience.

Much of the current available research into the COVID-19 transition to online learning focuses on schools outside the United States. Giovanni & Passarelli (2020), in their survey of 546 Italian college faculty members, found that instructors were reluctant to change their

teaching, held a negative view of online learning in general, and did not want to change their teaching method to accommodate the online environment. Hjeslvold et al. (2020) found Norwegian computer science instructors felt comfortable with the online transition but believed they were not pedagogically competent in the online environment. This reluctancy would indicate that more professional development could lead to a feeling of preparedness for faculty members. Further studies of Norwegian instructors found that teachers tried to create learning environments for students but struggled with their digital competence (Damşa et al., 2021). Tartavulea et al. (2020) found that 362 European college professors reported feeling comfortable with the transition to online learning but planned to go back to their original teaching methods as soon as possible.

Faculty members in the United Kingdom reported a very negative view of the transition to online learning and the online learning model in general (Watermeyer et al., 2020). India researchers found that roughly 1/3 of college instructors polled in India acknowledged the challenges created by the COVID-19 transition to online learning but did believe that the online environment forced them to pay more attention to their teaching methods (Nambiar, 2020).

Limited research is available on the faculty attitude toward the transition in the United States. In one study in the United States, Fox (2020) surveyed 5300 faculty members. He found that faculty members who had existing learning management systems in place before the COVID transition had a more favorable view of online education than those that did not have the management system in place at the time of the COVID transition. Among college instructors teaching in the United States, the proposed research will add to this emerging body of literature.

Teaching during a crisis, specifically during COVID-19, provided faculty members with some opportunities for transformation. The limited recent scholarship suggests that many

teachers took advantage of the opportunity to teach online by transforming their courses and pedagogy when necessary (Giovannella, 2020; Rapanta et al., 2020). Other research highlights the importance of digital literacy in the online transition (Hjelsvold et al., 2020). Digital competency, or the ability of a faculty member to use digital resources to align with their pedagogy, is an important goal for all teachers (Hjelsvold e et al., 2013). Still, other research emphasizes the importance of institutional support and guidance through the transition process (Jankowski et al 2020).

Early research into the COVID-19 transition does indicate that certain factors did affect online teaching (Hofer et al., 2021). Teaching during a crisis requires skill and action on the part of the teacher (Etalapelto et al., 2013). Teacher agency is an important part of the teaching field, and even more so during a crisis. Agency is the confidence ability of people to act upon their ideas (Virkkunen, 2006). In all situations, but especially in crisis, faculty members are required to act as change agents that act quickly and decisively.

The proposed research will examine community college instructors who primarily teach introductory courses for transfer to universities. Current research is certainly limited in studying community college faculty members. For the proposed research, academic discipline will not be considered. Instructors in certain disciplines, such as anatomy and other sciences, faced additional challenges when teaching online (Leighton et al., 2021). Further research might evaluate the differences in attitude toward online learning among instructors in different disciplines.

Not all faculty experience has been reported as negative. Some faculty members did report that online teaching made their job easier by allowing faculty to use recordings and other pedogeological changes (Watermeyer., 2020). Faculty report embracing the opportunity to

digitize their courses which expanded their repertoire and helped them to challenge the status

quo (Aagaard & Lund, 2020). Teacher's report being forced to create online and successful

learning environments (Damsa et al., 2021). Many did embrace the online transition with various

motivations (Tartavulea et al., 2020). Early research indicates that the COVID transition to

online learning created challenges for teachers to stretch beyond their professional capacities

(Jankowski et al., 2020). While COVID presented challenges to faculty members, each college

or university had existing challenges. Challenges such as digital infrastructure, and leadership

provided additional hurdles for faculty members (King & Boyatt, 2014). The proposed research

will examine the factors that led to faculty members' feeling of preparedness as they transitioned

to the online learning environment. It is important to note that faculty members were likely

feeling stress due to changing family circumstances, as well as pandemic stress.

In most cases, faculty transitioned the courses to the online format within one to three

weeks, a relatively short time to develop an online course. Faculty were met with authentic

challenges to meet the needs of their students. While college faculty had the advantage of

teaching online, this transition proved to be a big adjustment to higher education across the

United States. During the transition to online learning in the spring of 2020, most college course

instruction was delivered online.

During spring 2020, a survey of 17 faculty members highlighted the substantial reduction

in learning outcomes and the reduction in active learning assignments for students in the virtual

learning environment (Barton, 2020). This change in learning models could undoubtedly impact

some disciplines, such as science, where the need for field instruction is present.

While some reports of the transition to online learning are adverse, there could be valuable

information learned through studying this time of crisis. Some faculty members report that online

teaching makes their job easier (Watermeyer et al., 2020). Social-distancing requirements caused schools to find ways to bring the information to students while not requiring them to sit in a classroom next to other students. This format allowed faculty to improve their teaching by using recordings and other methods to improve (Watermeyer et al., 2020). Likely, some of the teaching innovations that come out of the COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns will push education in a direction not seen before COVID.

Technology has played an essential role in the development and spread of online education, and it continues to do so. As a result, many colleges have reported increased utilization of online resources. Countless efforts have been made in higher education to integrate developing Internet technologies into the teaching and learning process over the last decade. Several studies have found instances where blogs have been used to improve student participation and reflection. Some studies have argued for the viability of using wikis for online student collaboration, and podcasting is gaining popularity among educators because of its educational potential. (Watermeyer et al., 2020). Overall, the future for online education is likely growing. It is important to address the factors that contribute to positive student outcomes.

With the rising cost of tuition in the United States, it is often necessary for students to hold full-time jobs while attending college. Online education has afforded these students the opportunity to do both (Cote & Allahar, 2011). In many ways, COVID accelerated the process of higher education distance learning. This time in crisis has left colleges and universities scurrying to plan more robust and sound digital alternatives to the brick-and-mortar campuses. Access to digital learning holds no geographical boundaries; it is accessible for those who must work, raise families, or spend time on efforts outside of education while still trying to attain the degree that will propel them into a better future. Innovative and exciting technologies have now become

relevant in the places of higher education. This expansion now directly impacts the academic faculty jobs (Peter & Tesar, 2017).

Summary

The adult learning theory (ADL) and, specifically, transformative learning theory (TLT) served as frameworks for the research While there are many barriers to online education, one specific challenge during the COVID transition was the need for faculty to swiftly transition their face-to-face courses to the online environment (Brock & Carter, 2016). Understanding how to improve faculty attitudes is important because positive faculty attitudes do influence student learning outcomes (Ali et al., 2019). Making the transition from a brick-and-mortar classroom to the online environment was a challenge for faculty who know that the strength of the student-teacher relationship comes from the face-to-face environment (Wilken, 2018). The college administrator's leadership and messaging also play an important role in faculty attitude. Previous research has discovered that home factors do influence the faculty members work life, including the instructor's teaching discipline, their place in the academic hierarchy, and the age of the faculty member's children (Hardy et al., 2018). The research examined the role that these played in the faculty members' feelings of preparedness and attitude toward the transition to remote learning. The research is important for educators and institutions because online education is here to stay.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover the factors, such as training, that influenced the faculty's perceived preparedness when transitioning to fully online courses in response to the COVID-19 crisis, for full-time faculty members at Greenhill College, North Branch. These faculty completed the transition to online learning during the Coronavirus pandemic spring of 2020. Chapter Three describes the research design, research questions, the setting and participants, and the researcher's positionality. Chapter Three also includes the interpretive framework, including the philosophical, ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions. The researcher's role, the procedures, including permissions and the recruitment plan, and the data collection plan are also included in Chapter Three. The data collection plan is explained, including the three types of data collection, individual interviews, focus group interviews, documents, and the analysis plan for each type of data and the approach to data synthesis. Trustworthiness, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are all addressed in Chapter Three. Finally, the ethical considerations for the proposed research are addressed.

Research Design

Qualitative research must present a holistic account of the participants' experience (Creswell, 2018). The qualitative design was appropriate for this research because it aims to gauge the attitude and perception of the participating faculty members' preparedness as they transitioned to online teaching. In contrast to quantitative data, qualitative data is "soft" and can offer a richer and more in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences (Corbetta, 2003, p. 27). This research attempted to understand faculty members' experiences and the impact of

their pre-COVID training during this transition period, as well as the result of the college administration's directives and messaging, and the home factors that may have contributed to the faculty members' perception of preparedness toward online teaching and their perception of preparedness. The research used a hermeneutical phenomenological research design (Heidegger, 1977; Finlay, 2009).

Qualitative research looks for themes through the stories of the people. According to Denzin (2009), qualitative research should be situated in an activity that makes the world visible and allows others to see these practices that can transform the world. The qualitative researcher should engage with the reality of the phenomenon. Moustakas (1994), the founder of phenomenological research, proposed that research should focus on the wholeness of experience and that good qualitative research should express the essence of experiences. Moustakas (1994) viewed experience and behavior as integrated and unbreakable relationships. This relationship between the phenomenon and the person experiencing the spectacle serves as the framework for phenomenological research.

The phenomenological research approach allows the researcher to describe a phenomenon's essence by exploring it from those who experienced it. Husserl, considered the father of transcendental phenomenology, or descriptive phenomenology, merged science with philosophy. This transcendental phenomenological conceptual framework is rooted in the idea of openness and a lack of judgment or assumptions on the researcher's part (Moustakas, 1994). This research was well suited for a phenomenological design because, as a researcher, I attempted to elicit the participants' experiences without judging those experiences. Verstehen, German for understanding human interaction, lies at the heart of phenomenological research. The phenomenologist researcher believes that all perceptions are grounded in space and time, and

study participants share this shared experience. This shared experience and the participant's perception of the event provided valuable data to the researcher. Christensen et al. (2010) claim that a phenomenological study's main objective is to find the meaning of a person through their own lived experiences or a group of people around a single, shared phenomenon. Finding meaning in the faculty member's experience as they lived through the COVID-19 transition to online learning was paramount to learn from these faculty members' experience, which can inform future transitions. This phenomenological research attempted to understand the human experience, perception, and attitude through the study's participants' eyes, the faculty members.

Understanding these faculty members' human experience is vital to improving the processes and relationships that guide these types of transitions. Phenomenology helps us learn about others and their experiences, building on previous knowledge (Lichtman, 2010). Specifically, this research helps us understand the events, training, and actions that impacted faculty perceptions and attitudes toward the online transition to teaching. Developing an understanding of the faculty members' everyday lived experiences as they embarked on the online teaching experience during the COVID-19 pandemic provides insight into the perceptions, thoughts, and feelings the faculty member had during the transition and could lead to a better understanding of the future. Transcendental phenomenology, which means "to bring to light," begins with a phenomenon and is used to study the participants' common and shared experiences (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). Transcendental phenomenological research allows researchers to truly see or hear what is being communicated without corrupting it with their own biases and judgments. According to Hytner, "the phenomenon dictates the method (not vice-versa), including even the type of participants selected for the research (1999, p. 156). The transcendental phenomenological design was used for this research study to examine faculty

members' lived experiences as they transitioned to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic during the spring 2020 semester. This design was a workable procedure for this research because the design helped me, as a researcher, to set aside my interests and assumptions before and during the data collection. The transcendental phenomenological approach to research seeks to understand the life world or human experience as it is lived (Laverty, 2003). Using criterion sampling, preferred in phenomenological research (Hoffding & Martiny, 2016), participants were selected based on their shared experience of making the transition to online teaching during spring 2020 due to COVID-19.

Research Questions

Central Research Question

What factors influenced the faculty member's lived experiences and their attitude and perception of preparedness toward the mandatory transition to online teaching in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020?

Sub-Question One

What professional development or training did faculty members receive before or during the transition that influenced the faculty member's lived experience, including their attitude and perception of preparedness, toward the mandatory transition to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020?

Sub-Question Two

What administrator messages did faculty receive before or during the transition that influenced the faculty member's lived experiences, including their attitude and perceived perception of preparedness toward the mandatory transition to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020?

Sub-Question Three

What home-life factors influenced the faculty member's lived experiences, including their attitude and perceived perception of preparedness toward the mandatory transition to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020?

Setting and Participants

Setting

This research took place on three branch campuses of a large community college in North Texas. Due to COVID safety precautions, I conducted the interviews with Greenhill faculty and focus group meetings with the participants at East Bridge College, via video conferencing. Greenhill College (a pseudonym) is a large community college that traditionally serves approximately 28,000 students at its three branches and several small satellite campuses. 10-15 participants were selected from the North Branch of Greenhill College, as suggested for qualitative research saturation (Hennink & Keiser, 2017). The North Branch enrolled 8,400 students during the spring 2020 semester. Greenhill College's leadership structure includes an Executive Board and a College President. The college utilizes Deans and Provosts to carry out the day-to-day activities on each campus. Division Deans are responsible for all oversight of their division at the North Branch, including faculty hiring, scheduling, and training. I selected this setting because this community college is a flagship two-year college in Texas. This college has historically offered online, and face-to-face courses and has a robust learning platform. This college campus is in a suburb of a large city. Additionally, this college provides many training opportunities for faculty members. The training curriculum is accessible through the faculty member's professional development portal.

Participants

        The faculty members for this study were full-time faculty members who taught at the selected community college during the COVID-19 pandemic transition to online teaching in the spring of 2020. Faculty members who taught face-to-face courses at the time of the transition, with limited experience teaching online will be chosen. Participants selected had no more than one year of experience teaching online at the time of the transition to online teaching.

        As a researcher, I first gathered information from the faculty members through screening surveys and video-conference interviews. A sample of 10 -15 participants were selected for the study from the 157 full-time faculty at Greenhill College, North Branch. The table below reflects the demographics of Greenhill College and the North Branch for the academic school year 2019-2020.

Table 2

Greenhill College and North Branch 2019-2020 Demographics

Faculty members	Greenhill College	North Branch
Full-time faculty members	436	157
Minority faculty members	107	78
Women faculty members	244	78
Men faculty members	192	63

Faculty members	Greenhill College	North Branch
Faculty holding Doctorate degrees in their teaching field	196	60
Faculty holding non-terminal master's degrees in their teaching field	240	97

The student-to-faculty ratio at the North Branch location during the 2019-2020 academic school year was 24.5. I secured faculty email addresses for the full-time faculty members teaching at the North Branch. Though these emails were available on the college website and can be obtained through open and public records, I obtained permission from the site and the International Review Board (IRB) before utilizing faculty emails. Faculty members responded to the screening survey from their computers. Faculty members were asked to answer general questions about demographics, the number of years teaching, and the number of years teaching online. I asked faculty members to confirm that they were part of the transition to online teaching in spring 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The responses to survey data resulted in a good representation and allowed me to eliminate those faculty members who taught more than one year online or were not a part of the transition to online teaching in spring 2020. Connell (2018) recommends that survey items be relevant, meaningful, clear, easy to answer, and non-judgmental (Connell et al., 2018). Using Connell's recommendations as a guide, the survey asked only the questions necessary to

determine if the faculty member met the criterion, with less than one year experience teaching online, as well as their participation in transitioning to online teaching as a result of their college's transition to COVID-19.

I used a screening survey created inside Survey Monkey to identify faculty members who met the research criterion. The survey was generated and delivered via email to all full-time faculty members at Greenhill College, North Branch. Screening surveys are ideal for asking close-ended questions that screen for the study. The first question on the survey affirmed that the faculty member taught at Greenhill College. Questions 2 - 5 asked the faculty member about their number of years teaching in an online format and teaching for Greenhill College. Questions 6 - 7 confirmed that the faculty member was teaching face-to-face courses in the spring of 2020 and was forced to transition their courses to an online format.

After receiving the survey responses, I used purposive sampling techniques to identify those faculty with less than one year of experience teaching online courses before spring 2020 and who transferred their face-to-face courses to the online platform during the COVID transition. Purposive sampling is non-probability sampling, which occurs when "elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher" (Dudovskly, 2019, p. 52). While Creswell (1994) recommends five -24 participants for qualitative phenomenological research, I sought a minimum of 12 participants for this study and aimed to collect data on 15 participants to account for attrition. Content validity requires experts to evaluate whether the items assessed defined content. The test items should reflect the knowledge needed on a given topic. Lawuse (1975) established criteria for establishing content validity, which was used to assess the proposed survey's content validity. The methods included audio-recorded interviews

using a topical guide, a focus group, and document analysis. Member checking was used to assess the research process and the validity of the instruments and research questions. Questions for the initial screening survey can be found below:

1. Do you teach as a full-time faculty member?

2. How many years have you taught as a full-time faculty member?

3. How many years have you taught as a faculty member at Community college?

4. Have you taught online community college-level courses before spring 2020?

5. If so, how many courses have you taught? How many semesters?

6. Were you teaching face-to-face courses in spring 2020?

7. Were you required to transition your face-to-face courses to the online format in spring 2020?

Researcher Positionality

Practically, this research will help college administrators to plan targeted training and professional development that will develop faculty members, resulting in a more positive attitude toward online teaching and improved perceptions of preparedness to face the challenge of teaching online. By identifying the factors that influenced faculty attitudes, administrators and human resources departments can fill the gaps in training or messaging that led to a negative attitude or an attitude of unpreparedness among their faculty members. American higher education was designed to bring large students together to learn, research, and socialize. The challenges brought by COVID-19 caused a temporary shift and could cause a more permanent change in how education is implemented in the future. This research aimed to inform those planning or implementing this shift and those who were required and could be required to make this shift again.

Though there is extensive research about the development of online learning and ample research about the factors that impact faculty attitude, little is known about faculty members during the COVID-19 transition to online teaching, likely because this is a recent event. This research is essential to the chosen North Texas college because the faculty at this school educate many students through their college and dual credit programs. Furthermore, this research is useful to other colleges and schools faced with a quick transition to online learning during the spring of 2020. While online or digital learning was undoubtedly becoming more popular during the last few years, the COVID crisis pushed online education to the forefront. Faculty members can benefit from understanding the factors that influenced their attitude or perception of preparedness toward remote instruction during this crisis. If the end goal is positive student outcomes, research is crucial to discover the factors influencing behaviors and actions that could eventually lead to higher student success rates.

Faculty members with more positive attitudes and more confidence in their abilities positively impact students in their classes by increasing student happiness, mood, and behaviors (Blazar, 2017). Faculty attitude plays a vital role in creating enthusiasm in the classroom and can shape students' views about the content being taught (Tatto, 2016). Findings from this research advance the adult learning theory (Mesirow, 1978) by offering a window into the transformative process of faculty members' learning during the online teaching transition. Understanding the impact of training factors, administrative support, and home-life factors on faculty attitudes of preparedness is essential in furthering online education.

Interpretive Framework

This research was interpreted through a social constructivist theory. Social

constructionism is a postmodern theory that emphasizes the role of a social group in the

construction of knowledge. Social constructivists emphasize that what is to be taken as authentic.

Social constructionism emphasizes the socially constructed nature of knowledge. Vygotsky

(1978) believed that the community plays an essential role in gaining knowledge and applying

meaning to that knowledge. To the social constructivist, teaching and learning are shared in

society. Learning is a collaborative process, and knowledge exists inside the participants' culture

and society. This research applied the social constructivist theory by acknowledging that many

people see the world through social constructs or social understandings. Discussion, interaction,

and knowledge all play a role in acquiring knowledge (Kapur, 2018).

Philosophical Assumptions

The philosophical assumption of the qualitative researcher is essential because the

assumption led the inquiry into the research problem and the development of the research

questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher's premises, in turn, influenced how data was

gathered to answer the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This section identifies my

ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions for the research to fully explain my

beliefs in collecting and analyzing the data.

Ontological Assumption

When conducting a phenomenological study, it is important to report the participant's

various experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Vagle, 2018). I am aware that the

participants' viewpoints will consist of different perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018;

Moustakas, 1994). To account for this, I used multiple data sources to gather each participant's

descriptions and perspectives of their experiences as they transitioned to the online learning environment in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020 (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Categorizing the data into themes after data collection helped me understand the various viewpoints and perceptions of faculty members as they transition to online teaching (Moustakas, 1994).

Epistemological Assumption

It is important in qualitative research that the researcher builds a relationship with the participants to gather subjective evidence based on the perceptions of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As such, the personal experiences of the faculty members were used to understand the experiences as a whole. I used multiple data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews, to help me build the relationship with the participants. I used the data gathered as evidence of the faculty members' perception of the experience of transitioning to the online learning model.

Axiological Assumption

Axiological assumptions include the researcher's values brought to the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My attributes that influenced the study were my status as a faculty member at a community college and my participation in the transition to online teaching that could have an impact on my axiological assumptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, my home situation during the COVID-19 transition affected my views toward the research. My personal experience influenced my desire to study this experience, but I was aware that my personal experience could create bias.

Researcher's Role

Patton (2015) suggests that a qualitative researcher should act as the human instrument of inquiry and have a background, experience, training, or skills that explicitly draw the researcher to the research. This type of research is attractive to some researchers because of their interest in understanding the experience of those they study (Roman & Apple, 1990). As a qualitative researcher, I acted as the data collector and the data analyst. As a human instrument, I interviewed participants and collected data, setting aside my bias and judgment. During the spring 2020 semester, I taught as an associate, or part-time faculty member, at the selected community college. As a part-time faculty member at the selected large college, I did not have a personal relationship with any full-time faculty members. I avoided bias as I conducted the interviews for this research. Recognizing that my position as a faculty member could bias me when interviewing the participants, I maintained detailed notes on the interviews and observations I made as I interviewed the participants. Transparency is critical for the qualitative researcher to avoid bias (Hunt, 2011). Maintaining "empathic neutrality" (Patton, 2015, p. 570) was one way to ensure that I, as the researcher, was not too close to the participants but also not too distant to react empathetically.

The phenomenological approach does require a face-to-face interview or a video conference interview, so it was imperative that, as the researcher, I set aside bias as required of all phenomenological researchers (Larkin et al., 2006). Larkin (2006) suggests that the researcher must accept that the participants construct their meaning. By continually self-monitoring during the process, I was able to identify bias and judgment in myself. I also maintained notes on these thoughts as I interviewed the participants.

As such, I acted as the interviewer and engaged the participants in a dialogue. I had no relationship with any of the participants. None of the participants reported to me, and I did not report to any participants. I had never, to my knowledge, met any full-time faculty members at this branch, in their capacity as faculty members on the campus.

My bias as a faculty member could have had a bearing on this study. As a faculty member who also experienced the phenomenon, I held a bias. Through bracketing, I made every effort to set my bias aside. I chose the qualitative phenomenological design for this study, because I believed the faculty member's experience was best understood in this format by dialogue with the participants. As the sole researcher, data collector, and data analyzer, I made every attempt to set aside my own bias as I created the themes through the participants' language. Though my interest in this phenomenon began with my personal experience with this transition, I made intentional efforts to research without bias.

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Procedures

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The procedures section contains the necessary site permissions, information about securing the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the participant recruitment plan, the plan for data collection and analysis and an explanation of the triangulation methods used in the study.

Permissions

I obtained permission from Greenhill College to conduct the study. Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) provided IRB approval for this study before I began the research (See Appendix A, B). IRB approval from Greenhill College, North Branch (Appendix C) and East Bridge College (Appendix H) are provided.

Recruitment Plan

Interview Participants

Utilizing the list of faculty emails on the school's website, I sent the initial survey to all faculty members at the college (Appendix D). The initial survey questionnaire generated a pool for the random sampling procedure. I then employed purposive sampling to narrow down the participants' pool for this study (Ames et al., 2019). Finally, I used random sampling from the remaining pool to identify between 10 and 15 participants for this study, as recommended in qualitative phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2014). I sent a recruitment letter to each faculty member who was selected (Appendix E).

Participants were asked to complete an informed consent form (See Appendix F). Sample consent forms can be found in Appendix N. Informed consent is the main component of the ethical conduct of research with human subjects. Informed consent included telling the participants what was expected of them if they participated in the research and revealing any foreseeable risks or benefits from their voluntary participation. This form also included information on data storage and deletion and notified participants that they would not receive compensation for their participation. Also, the participants were each notified of the researcher's contact information in the case of questions or concerns on the participant's part. Anonymity for the selected college and faculty participants was gained through the assignment of pseudonyms. A pseudonym is a fictional name assigned that anonymizes the participant, group of participants, or the place. This pseudonym protected the colleges' identity and protected the integrity of the research. A pseudonym was assigned to each participant to protect their privacy and encourage complete honesty in the research process.

Focus Group Participants

After obtaining permission from East Bridge College (See Appendix H), I utilized faculty emails from the school's website to send the same survey (See Appendix I). I sent a follow-up reminder after one week. After obtaining survey results, I sent the recruitment emails (See Appendix J) to faculty who met the initial requirements for the study. Using purposive sampling, participants were selected from the pool. Those participants were asked to complete the consent form (See Appendix K). Sample consent forms can be found in Appendix N.

Data Collection Plan

The phenomenological researcher's data collection involves gaining a clearer and fuller picture of the participants' experience with a specific phenomenon. I began this research process by reaching out to full-time faculty members teaching at Greenhill College, utilizing the college's publicly accessed website for faculty contact information. Emails containing the screening survey were sent to all faculty members. I then used the screening survey to identify those faculty members who were teaching full-time at the selected college during the spring of 2020, had less than one year of experience teaching online courses, and were required to transition their face-to-face course to the online format as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the survey responses, I requested faculty members who met the criterion, asking for their interest in participating in this research. Next, I selected 15 faculty members to participate in the study. Though a minimum of 12 participants was needed in this study, 15 were chosen to account for attrition.

Individual Interviews

The interviews occurred at a mutually agreed-upon time via videoconference. Participants were encouraged to share their stories and reflections about their experiences by

utilizing a videoconference interview. Faculty members were interviewed individually to maximize the interviewer-participant relationship. I first gained approval from the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) from Liberty University (Appendix A, B) to proceed with the proposed study. I gained Institutional Review Board approval from Greenhill College, North Branch (Appendix C). Email addresses, available on the college website, were used to identify full-time faculty members for the screening survey.

I then distributed the cover letter, survey instrument, and informed consent document to the sample population via email. A follow-up email was sent to non-respondents one week after the initial email to encourage the initial survey completion. All surveys were reviewed and hand-scored by me, the researcher. Surveys and responses were coded using pseudonyms and numbers to ensure the confidentiality of the respondents.

After reviewing the survey responses, I used purposive sampling to create a pool of full-time faculty members who had less than one year of experience teaching online before spring 2020 and were required to transition their face-to-face courses to the online format during spring 2020 amidst the Coronavirus pandemic. Using random sampling methods, a minimum of 12 participants were selected. After securing the participants' necessary consent, I arranged a mutually- agreed upon time to interview the participants in one-on-one interviews. I used Zoom video conferencing software to conduct the video conference interviews.

Individual interviews served as the first data collection strategy. As the interviewer, I interviewed the participants using a topical guide. Phenomenological research supports interviews using topical guides, which is created by the researcher prior to the interview. When necessary, I, as the interviewer, engaged in the epochè experience before and during the study. The epochè process allows the researcher to set aside their assumptions and engage fully in the

interview process (Moustakas, 1994). I conducted in-depth interviews to gain the participant's perspectives on the transition to online learning. Interviews were completed individually, with only the faculty members and me present. I ensured that the participants agreed to follow-up contact with me to clarify any needed details or answer follow-up questions. Kahn and Cannell (1957) assert that interviewing is a "conversation with a purpose" (p., 149). Though I took notes during the interviews, each session was also recorded on a recording device.

Interviewing is a frequently used method of data collection used in qualitative research. Using a semi-structured interview approach, I encouraged faculty member participants to share their transition experiences. One-on-one interviews were conducted by Zoom video conference due to the prevalence of the COVID virus. Participants were asked to read and sign a consent form stating that they understood the study's purpose and agreed to participate. I recorded each session on a recording device and saved the audio files in a password-protected computer file for accuracy. These in-depth or intensive interviews were semi-structured, with open-ended interview questions (Appendix G) to better understand the meanings and motivations. I used a prepared topical guide to keep the interview on track.

The interviews each lasted from 60-90 minutes. In each interview, I encouraged a two-way conversation to generate knowledge about the faculty members' experiences. Creating an atmosphere of "reciprocity" was crucial for gaining real insight (Zahavi, 2015, p. 548). Zahavi suggests that the interview's reciprocity can be attained by interviewing the interviewee in a neutral way. By conducting interviews, taking notes through observations, tape-recording the sessions, and analyzing any relevant documents, I gained the most accurate information possible on the factors that influenced faculty attitudes toward the online transition. Giorgi (2009) recommends that in a phenomenological interview, the researcher seeks as complete a

description as possible about the participant's experience. For this study, I used a semi-structured interview method. Using an interview guide, I asked questions that were prepared and approved by the IRB. Additionally, interview guides help the researcher to utilize the time allowed.

This guide allowed the interview to remain focused. Questions for this interview were open-ended, requiring participants to provide their own words and sentences to describe the phenomenon. In a phenomenological research study, the researcher must word the question in a manner that genuinely seeks out the meaning of a phenomenon (Englander, 2012). Englander (2012) asserts that questions should elicit a response about the phenomenon rather than the object in a phenomenological interview. Giorgi (2009) recommends that the first question in any semi-structured phenomenological interview be about the participant's experience. The questions below guided the discussion, and I adjusted the questions as needed to get the participant's full story for the phenomenological research. Moving from descriptions or explanations of general experience to more specific lived experiences, the questions led the participants to reflect on their experience in spring 2020 (Hoffding & Martiny, 2015). Additionally, I asked open-ended questions to encourage more discussion from the participants and direct or guide the interview to focus on the experiences (Hoffding & Martiny, 2015).

Phenomenological researchers argue that to understand the participants' social reality, the researcher must understand the participants' experience with the phenomenon (Gray, 2009). According to Englander (2012), phenomenological researchers should shift the interview based on the participant's responses. Phenomenological researchers must be flexible in the interview process. Since the interviews will follow a semi-structured format, I explored topics in more detail as they came up with each participant.

Individual Interview Questions **(Appendix G)**

The questions below served as an interview guide. These questions were asked of each participant.

1. Please introduce yourself to me as if we just met. By using less structured questions, Maxwell (2019) suggests that the interview will allow for personal beliefs and meanings to surface, providing insight into the experiential process of the participants being studied.

2. Please walk me through your experiences with the COVID-19 transition as a full-time faculty member at Greenhill College, North Branch. Allowing participants to describe their experiences will enable the researcher to understand what transpired during the transition to online teaching and get the participants comfortable with the interview process (Seidman, 2013). CQ

3. Please explain your feeling of preparedness and your attitude as you approached this transition to online teaching in spring 2020. Rubin & Rubin (2012) suggest that the participants' meaning is based on their context and experience, which includes their own bias. CQ

4. Please tell me about the training and professional development opportunities you had before the COVID-19 transition to online learning. Professional development training has been tied to the effectiveness of teachers' lesson planning, teaching methods, classroom management, and cooperation (El Afi, 2019). CQ

5. What types of positive reinforcements, experiences, or messaging did you receive from your administration before or during this transition? Communication, body language,

occupational socialization, and encouraging words have been shown to increase teacher

motivation and attitude toward their job (Osman & Hakan, 2018). SQ1

6. What type of negative reinforcements, experiences, or messaging did you receive from

   your administration before or during this transition? (Osman & Hakan, 2018). SQ2

7. What additional challenges did you face at home as you made the transition to online

   teaching in the spring of 2020? Can you provide insight into any challenges you faced?

   SQ3

8. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that might shed light on your experience

   that might have impacted your attitude or perceptions of preparedness as you made this

   transition to online teaching? (Saric & Steh, 2017) CQ

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

Data can sometimes be lost when translating an event into words (Davidson, 2009). For

this reason, video recordings were utilized to allow me to revisit the interviews. Video recordings

can also capture the participant's emotional responses, such as laughter or anger. These emotions

can sometimes be difficult to remember or record in written notes (Poland, 1995). Recordings

provide a more efficient translation for the researcher. Kiem and Munro (1985) found that

recordings were four to thirteen times faster than working from transcripts alone (Halcomb &

Dnavison, 2006).

The Zoom video recordings provided more accurate and in-depth information for the

research. Having the ability to re-listen and re-watch the interview offered me a valuable

opportunity to revisit the interview. Zoom video recordings were used to transcribe the

interviews, providing opportunities to re-listen to the interviews as necessary for thorough

transcription.

Data analysis was conducted on the semi-structured interviews, focus group notes, and all artifacts. After collecting the transcriptions from audio recordings, the interview notes, focus group notes, and document analysis notes, I followed Hycner's five-step process to analyze data gathered during a phenomenological study (Hycner, 1999).

1. Bracketing and phenomenological reduction - In this step, I, as the researcher, brakceted myself out by consciously not taking a position (Lauer, 1958). I bracketed out my personal views or preconceptions (Miller & Crabtree, 1992). I watched the video and listened to the recordings several times (Moustakas, 1994).

2. Delineate units of meaning – I extracted or highlighted the statements by participants, which shed light on their shared experience (Creswell, 1998). Moustakas (1994) recommends that the researcher use careful judgment to eliminate redundant statements. Coding was necessary for analyzing qualitative data by labeling and organizing the data, identifying themes, and identifying their relationships. Using the codes to identify themes allowed me to analyze the participants' words, phrases, and sentences. A code is typically a word, short sentence, or phrase that captures the phenomenon's essence or experience (Saldana, 2016). I used the inductive coding method to decrease bias and allowed the codes to rise from the interview responses. This process was time-consuming but provided the best and most accurate data analysis for this research (Patton, 2015).

3. Cluster units of meaning to form themes – I utilized "creative insight." (Hycner, 1999, pp. 150-151) to examine the units of meaning in whole, to form clusters of themes. Clusters of themes can be formed by grouping the units of meaning altogether (Creswell, 1998). The audiotapes were helpful during this clustering process.

4. Summarize each interview, validate, and modify when necessary – I then wrote a summary that included all the themes collected during the data analysis. Hycner (1999) recommends that researchers understand temporally, spatially, and materially. I performed a validity check on the data, modifying the summary as needed.

5. Extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and compiling for a composite summary – After steps 1-4 were conducted for each of the participant interviews, I wrote a composite summary reflecting the "horizons" or themes (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) cautions that the researcher must not eliminate the minority voices, so I was careful to pay attention to these.

Focus Group

A focus group was used as the second data collection strategy. Data was collected through a focus group composed of six faculty members teaching at another small community college, East Bridge College. In a focus group, the researcher moderates the focus group interviews during a 60–90-minute session via video conferencing software. Evidence suggests that a focus group approach to phenomenological research can produce more curiosity and openness about the familiar experience (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2020). Focus groups provide an environment that is less threatening for participants to share perceptions, ideas, and thoughts (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

Focus groups have been used since the 1920s, when researchers used them to study the media effects on attitudes toward the United States involvement in World War II (Merton, 1987). Social scientists used focus groups for various reasons, including the economical and fast method for collecting data from multiple participants (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Focus groups are socially oriented, providing an advantage to the qualitative researcher (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

Individuals often feel safer sharing information in a group environment (Vaughn et al., 1996). The interaction between the participants also provided valuable data to the researcher (Duggleby, 2005).

Focus group discussion is used as a qualitative approach to research which serves to gain a deeper understanding of issues. Well-designed focus groups usually last between one and two hours (Morgan, 1997; Vaughn et al., 1996) and consist of between six and 12 participants (Langord et al., 2002; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2004). For this reason, the focus group in this research was comprised of at least six faculty members, and the focus group session lasted approximately 60-90 minutes. Morgan (1997) recommends over recruiting by 20% for the focus group due to the availability of participants on the day of the focus group session. I recruited six to nine participants for the focus group to have a minimum of six participants.

Using the Zoom video conference software, the selected participants were asked to reflect on their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes toward the transition to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic during the spring of 2020. I made notes on group dynamics and interactions inside the focus group. The focus group questions (Appendix Q) were developed to allow participants to speak about their lived experiences. Participants were asked to write down any additional information they believed was important in order to understand, fully, their lived experiences. Participants were asked to share any further observations or suggestions at the end of the session

Focus Group Questions

1. Please tell what discipline you teach and how long you have been a college instructor.

   This question helped participants get comfortable with the focus group process.

2. Tell us about your experience during the COVID-19 transition to online teaching in the spring of 2020. This question allowed participants to explain, in their own words, their transition to online teaching. CQ

3. What type of training and professional development had you received before the transition to online teaching in the spring of 2020? Participants reflected on their training and professional development, which helped them feel more comfortable with online teaching or did not prepare them well. SQ1

4. What types of administrator messages and emails did you receive from your administrator during the transition? Participants reflected on their administration's messaging during the transition to online learning. SQ2

5. Did you feel supported by your administration during the transition to online teaching? Participants reflected on their perception of the college administration in supporting the faculty members during a crucial time, transitioning to online teaching. SQ2

6. Are there any home factors that contributed to your feelings of preparedness as you made the transition to online teaching during spring 2020? Participants reflected on their home-life factors and experiences that may have impacted their feelings of preparedness as they transitioned to online teaching. This allowed participants to discuss their experience in the lifeworld, which is important for phenomenological research (Bevan, 2014). SQ3

7. Is there any other information you would like to share about the transition to online teaching in spring 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? This question allowed participants to add any additional information they believed was relevant in producing a clear and accurate picture of their experience. CQ

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan

After collecting focus group data, I reviewed the video recordings to create written abridged transcripts. By focusing on the research questions, I made a written transcript of the portions of the focus group session that helped me understand the phenomena being studied. Using Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, hermeneutics, (Tomkins & Eatouch, 2010) was valuable in gaining information on the participants' lived experiences as they transitioned to online teaching. I created themes from the answers provided by the participants using the hermeneutic approach. Identifying the patterns and links in the participant's responses helped me to make the necessary connections in understanding the totality of the experience of transitioning to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. Self-reflections were also noted by me, by making a note of the group members' reactions and the dynamics of the participants toward each other. I also noted how the participants reflected on their experiences during the online transition by taking note of the areas where group members agreed and disagreed (Palmer et al., 2010).

Document Analysis

Document analysis was used as a third data collection strategy. Every qualitative study begins with historical and background data (Marshall, 2006). Public documents from Greenhill College regarding the transition to online learning were obtained through the college's Public Information Office. This archival data aided the researcher when placing the participant's responses in context. Participants were asked to bring any emails or training documents that helped them to answer the interview questions regarding the transition to online learning in spring 2020. Content analysis should be nonreactive (Marshall, 2006) and may be applied to various sources, including emails and training documents. Faculty emails from the

administration were used to evaluate the instruction and tone of the leaders. These emails provided context for understanding the faculty members' lived experiences.

Document analysis can include words from websites, emails, journals, agendas, meeting minutes, diaries, and journals (Bowen, 2009). Documents shared between faculty and college administrators, communication logs, and screenshots were useful documents for the research. Corbin and Strauss (2008) recommend using document analysis to understand a qualitative study better. Punch (2005) believes that document data should be added to other data collection forms, such as interviews. Participants were asked to share any journal or diary entries and emails related to the online learning transition. These documents were analyzed to better understand the faculty experience and understand any background information that may not be shared in the interview. Morell-Scott (2014) recommends using diaries to provide background information in qualitative phenomenological studies. These primary sources offered richer data that provided a more detailed picture (Taylor, 1995) of the faculty members' perceptions as they transitioned to online teaching in spring 2020.

Document Analysis Plan

Analyzing the documents provided by the faculty participants took a systematic approach. Participants were asked to bring any documents that shed light on their experience transitioning to the online learning platform in spring 2020. This approach required me to find, select, appraise, and synthesize the data in the documents. Documents provided access to triangulation in the research process.

I used the READ approach to document analysis: (1) readied the materials, (2) extracted data, (3) analyzed data and (4) distilled the findings. Criteria was established around the data and placed during the ready phase. Data was extracted in several ways. I created an excel document,

where each artifact document represented one column in the spreadsheet. The artifacts helped to set up a timeline of the events surrounding the transition to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The third step was to analyze the data. During this phase, I was able to analyze data and form theories. After data extraction, I saw the fuller picture. At this point, I created a narrative of the events (Shiffman et al., 2004). The final state in the READ process of document analysis is to distill the findings. I distilled the findings by adding quotes or other notes on each document upon review. After setting up the timeline, I went back to fill in any holes (Dalglish, 2021). I also identified if the documents were complete or comprehensive and considered the document's original purpose before categorizing it (Hodder, 2000). By analyzing the documents carefully, I was able to gain a good background on the participants and understand their experience more fully.

Data Synthesis

Data synthesis began as soon as all three data sets were available. Data collected in the interviews were recorded using Zoom, the video conferencing software, with the participants' permission. These recordings were then labeled accordingly (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The focus-group session was also recorded via Zoom video conferencing software. Phenomenological research looks for common themes among the interview responses, not only paying attention to these common threads but keeping in mind the voices of the minority. Using "horizons" or themes, I was able to summarize the emerging themes while documenting the minority responses (Moustakas, 1994). After data analysis, I reported the findings to the dissertation committee.

Beginning with the interview recordings, I re-watched and re-listened to the Zoom recordings while transcribing on a computer using Microsoft Word software program. Creating

the written transcriptions allowed me to revisit the interview and focus group sessions as many times as necessary to fully understand and transcribe the interview sessions.

I conducted data analysis on the semi-structured interviews, the focus group, and the archival records following Moustakas' (1994) steps for phenomenological research to complete the analysis process. An overview of the data analysis procedures was included in the recording of all sessions, reviewing statements for accuracy, eliminating repeated information, and following phenomenological reductions. Moustakas's (1994) phenomenological reductions include horizontalizing, bracketing, coding by themes, clustering the data into themes, and organizing the themes into a coherent textural and structural description. Using this method, I also incorporated identifying applicable themes, considered multiple perspectives, and categorized the data into how and what context (Moustakas, 1994).

Horizontalization

Moustakas (1994) recommends horizontaling as a process to identify the patterns and themes that are included across multiple data sources. This approach allowed me to identify similarities and differences across the different participants settings and contexts, and to gain a better understand of the phenomenon being studied.

First, I visually laid out all the transcribed data to become familiar with it (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Next, I included the transcribed data in the horizontalization phase information from archival records; this began the informal mental recollection of the details (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Roulston, 2019; Salamon, 2017). I coded each participants' accounts by creating notes on each statement that had unique and identifying characteristics. This process preserved the participants' uniqueness (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994).

Next, I began the dialogue, by extracting the statements that deepened the understanding of the lived experiences of the participants. Finally, I took notes on any themes and commonalities that presented themselves as I transcribed the data from the transcripts created form the interviews and focus groups (Moustakas, 1994). The thematic analysis helped me to interpret the meanings embedded in the data and make sense of those meanings.

Epoché

Moustakas (1994) recommends that a researcher use epoché, the method of bracketing out the participant's experiences to focus on the experiences related to the phenomenon being studied. Bracketing separates the researcher experiences from the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). I bracketed out my own experiences from the transition to online teaching due to the COVID pandemic, to include my assumptions, opinions, and any preconceived notions about the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenological reduction allows important themes to develop through the data, which, in turn, helps deepen the understanding of the phenomenon. To eliminate researcher bias, I documented my personal experiences through the epoché process (Vagle, 2018). I read and reread the data to gain a holistic understanding of the participants' lived experiences and rewatched the videos several times to ensure accuracy and to ensure that I did not impose my own interpretation on the data (Moustakas, 1994).

Coded Themes

After collecting the data, and completing the epoché process, I coded the data in order to categorize and analyze the participants' responses (Glaser &Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992). McGovern (2003) suggests that coding allows the researcher to organize their research findings in a way that allows them to identify similarities and differences in responses. By utilizing open

coding, I examined the similarities and differences identified in the categories. I used different color highlighters to draw attention to similarities and differences within the data. I then looked closely at the participants' significant statements to identify any similarities and differences that help to deepen my understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). I created clusters by organizing statements into familiar groups and themes by textural and structural description. This process led to the "how" and "why" questions, which deepened my understanding of the participants' lived experiences (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). I used this same method to analyze both the interview and focus group data. Finally, I reread all transcripts and notes, while placing additional notes in the margins (Creswell, 2013). The data was analyzed for accuracy. Selective coding helped to reveal any critical themes in the data (Creswell, 2013).

Textural Description

For Creswell, the textural description serves as a detailed examination of the data and describes the essential qualities of the phenomenon being studied. The goal is to create a rich, detailed description of the phenomenon, using quotes and narrative descriptions to capture its texture (Creswell, 2013). I transcribed the participant's words before coding to gain a detailed textual description. I then completed member-checking to assure the validity of the instruments and research questions (Moustakas, 1994).

Composite Textural Description

Moutakas (1994) and Creswell (2013) both recommend a composite description in the analysis phase. By weaving together quotes, anecdotes, and descriptions, I created a composite description that captures the qualities of the phenomenon. I reviewed the description considering the research questions to create a more accurate and detailed description. I then shared this written description with participants and incorporated any relevant feedback I received. This step

in the analysis allowed me to synthesize data from multiple sources to gain a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon.

Trustworthiness

Schurink et al. (1998) emphasize the value of trustworthiness in research and list various means to achieve it. These researchers claim that trustworthiness is measured by the reader; if the reader thinks the work is trustworthy, then the research is trustworthy. By bracketing myself out of the phenomenological research, I set aside my own bias and judgment and created trustworthiness in my research. This bracketing naturally led to the focus on "insider perspective" (Mouton & Marais, 1990, p. 70), which is crucial for trustworthiness in a qualitative study.

Credibility

Using multiple data sources provided triangulation for this study (Dowd, 2016), ensuring credibility. Triangulation is grounded in the method, encouraging using a mixture of methods (Fusch, 2020). Using multiple methods, including interview and observations during the interview process, the research findings are credible. Member-checking, also known as participant validation, was used to ensure the research's credibility. Member-checking establishes credibility by allowing participants to see their data, correcting errors, and providing additional information if the participant deems it necessary (Mounton & Marais, 1990). Member checking enhances credibility and accuracy (Liao & Hitchcock, 2018).

Transferability

Transferability refers to how qualitative research results can be transferred to other contexts or settings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that transferability is the researcher's responsibility to "provide the data base that makes transferability judgments possible on the part

of potential appliers" (p. 316). I ensured transferability by describing the research context that is key to the research. Additionally, I provided "thick descriptions" of the phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316), detailed explanations of experiences during data collection. These detailed notes served to create transferability in this research.

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research is data stability over time and various conditions and data that can withstand constant societal changes. I was accurate and consistent in order to create a dependable, confirmable study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Detailed documentation throughout the process helps create dependability inside the study. I used a code procedure throughout data collection, which provided dependability.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to how the results could be confirmed or by others. Confirmability is essential to academic research as the results should be corroborated. To achieve confirmability, I carefully documented the procedures for checking and rechecking the data and search for damaging contradictions to earlier findings. After the study, a data audit was conducted, inspecting the data collection process, and analyzing all procedures. An external audit was enlisted. The auditor examined the raw data, process notes, materials associated with dispositions, and instrument development information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical reflexivity is an essential component of the qualitative research process as ethical questions arise during the process (Van Unger, 2017). Some ethical questions to consider are "who will benefit from this research?" and "are there any risks from this research?" These ethical questions should be felt throughout the research process (Drolet et al 2022).

Because qualitative data often contains identifiable characteristics of individuals, places, or events, the data must be stored correctly. It is crucial that all data revealing personal information be kept in a password-protected storage receptacle (McCrae & Murray, 2008). The Data Protection Act (1998) states that data should be stored only until its initial purpose is no longer needed. All recorded data was held in a password-protected file on a personal computer. All physical copies of documents, including the recorded interviews, were stored in a locked filing cabinet. Archival data, such as notes, documents, survey responses, were held in a secure locked file cabinet. The data will be kept for five years after the date of publication. After this date, all files will be deleted from the audiotapes, and all other data will be destroyed.

Summary

Using a transcendental phenomenological approach, I studied a sample of full-time community college faculty members to identify the shared themes among the faculty responses in individual interviews, a focus group meeting, and documents provided by the participants. Identifying these themes helped me gain the complete picture of the faculty member's lived experience and their perceived preparation for such a big transition. After collecting the data, I analyzed the data using Hycner's five-step method, which included coding and clustering the responses into themes. I bracketed myself to ensure credibility and validity to the study. The data collection procedures provided a credible, dependable, and trustworthy research project to add to the current literature. Transferability was achieved to make this research relevant in other contexts.

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were considered, including informed consent and personal information protection. The research fills a gap in the literature by providing a window into these faculty members' lived experience as they made the complex

and challenging transition to online teaching during the Coronavirus pandemic in the spring of 2020. Overall, the education community can benefit from these research findings in several ways. Understanding faculty member perceptions of their preparedness to transition their classes to an online format during a crisis can shed light on possible training opportunities and other ways that administrators can support faculty members. These selected faculty, as well as other faculty members will likely be required to create online courses for the future. Preparing these faculty members in the best way can only benefit the students they serve.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover the factors, such as training, that influenced the faculty's lived experiences and perceived preparedness when transitioning to fully online courses in response to the COVID-19 crisis for full-time faculty members at Greenhill College, North Branch. This chapter includes detailed information about each participant in the interview and the focus group sessions, including biographical and professional background information, when available. Chapter Four continues with the theme development, providing information for each of the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis. This chapter also includes the central research question and the three sub-questions and concludes with a summary of the contents found in the chapter.

Participants

Interview Participants

The 10 research participants who agreed to take part in the interview process (see Table 3) were all full-time faculty members at Greenhill College when the COVID pandemic required them to move their courses online. The five male and five female instructors who, from the time of their consent to participate, were given a pseudonym (Roberts, 2006) selected from a list of names that were not related to their actual identities. Each participant completed a Zoom interview which lasted from 68 minutes to 94 minutes. These pseudonyms allowed the research participants to remain anonymous in their answers to the interview questions.

Table 3

Descriptions of Interview participants

Pseudonym	Teaching Discipline	Education Level
Jessica	Government	Ph.D
James	History	M.A.
Edward	Psychology	Ph.D
John	English	Ph.D
Mary	English	M.A.
Alice	Sociology	M.A.
Leigh	English	Ph.D
Nicole	Government	M.S.
Robert	Biology	M.S.
Stevie	Chemistry	M.S.
Kenneth	Psychology	Ph.D

Jessica

Jessica teaches political science at Greenhill College, North Branch. She teaches the required Government courses, Federal Government and Texas Government, but has occasionally taught specialty government courses focusing on a specific event in the context of government. For example, Jessica taught a course on America's involvement in the Vietnam War last

academic year. She holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from a regional state university. Jessica

taught political science at the community college level full-time for four years at this college.

Prior to COVID, she taught five to six traditional, face-to-face courses each year. She typically

did not teach during the summer sessions and was teaching her first online course during the

spring 2020 semester. Jessica brought copies of eight emails sent from her administrators to her

during the spring 2020 semester. Her Division Chair and Academic Dean's emails were positive,

encouraging, and instructive. The first email was sent to all faculty before the shutdown,

informing them about the possibility of a shutdown, so faculty could begin preparing. Emails

sent later in the semester offered a link to an LMS training and a video guide prepared by another

faculty member demonstrating how to use Zoom. The beginning of the Dean's emails each began

with an update on COVID numbers in the area and ended with positive encouragement for

faculty members, such as "Thank you for all you are doing for our students. You are making a

difference for them". The division chair's emails ended with an offer to help "anyway I can."

James

James, a history instructor at Greenhill College, holds a master's degree with a specialty

in military history. James is a published author who has written and published several books on

military history. James speaks at conferences often and is active in several historical

associations. James taught at the college for 14 years prior to spring 2020, but had not taught

online and, in his words, "did not want ever to teach online." He believes history was best taught

in a face-to-face class where lectures are the "primary instructional method." James spoke highly

of the college administrators and their role in creating a thriving learning environment for

students during a "rough spring 2020". James' wife and four children, ages 6 -17, were home

during the COVID crisis. His wife did most of the children's schooling, but James did contribute to "making it run smoothly."

Edward

Edward teaches psychology at Greenhill College, where he taught for five years as a full-time faculty member before the COVID transition. In spring 2020, Edward held a master's degree in psychology. He has since completed his dissertation to earn a doctorate degree in Psychology. Edward taught two online courses before the COVID transition; both courses were taught in the summer 2019 sessions. Edward had a "fairly close relationship" with his Division Chair, who was very supportive during COVID. Edward did not bring any copies of emails, but stated that the emails from administration, in the beginning, were "quite a mess with some confusing direction as they tried to figure things out on their end." Edward lived alone but returned to his parent's home during the spring 2020 semester to help his parents during the "time of crisis for the world."

John

John, holds a doctoral degree in English, and is an English instructor on the campus. He spent his first three years teaching on another campus for Greenhill but taught at North Branch for one year before the COVID transition. John had no online teaching experience but was planning to teach during the summer session of 2020 and had completed some training and Canvas tutorials in preparation. Most of John's faculty load came from teaching dual credit at local high schools. John said the Canvas training "was a big help" when it came time to transition his five courses to the online format that semester. John did not bring any copies of emails but did confirm that administrators sent frequent emails and that he received several calls from his Division Chair. John felt that the administrators were willing to help; many sent links to

training videos, TED talks, and research articles about online learning. John lives in a house close to campus with his partner, who continued to work outside the home during the COVID pandemic.

Mary

Mary, a new instructor at the college, has taught English on this campus since the fall of 2019. The COVID transition was her second semester as a full-time college faculty member. Mary holds a master's degree in English and previously taught, for 12 years, as a high school English teacher. Mary's interview revealed that Mary is a passionate instructor who values education at the community college level. Prior to the COVID transition, Mary had not taught online. She discussed some of the challenges she faced as a new instructor with no online experience, saying it was "pure hell for about two months." Mary said she received support from the college administration but felt the training needed improvement. She brought copies of two emails sent to her by her division chair. Both emails were supportive and positive and provided instructions on accessing training provided by the college. Mary believes training for online teaching should have been provided before COVID was "on the scene." She said she was "very discouraged" and did not feel she gave her students the best educational experience. Since that semester, Mary said she has "taken advantage of every online training I can." When she came home to teach that semester, Mary's husband, a teacher, and their three children, ages 8-14, were also home. Her mother lived with Mary and her family. She said that while it was a stressful time with work, she enjoyed the time with her family and has missed that since returning to work and school.

Alice

Alice is a sociology instructor at Greenhill, North Branch, and holds a Master of Arts degree. She taught as an adjunct for the college for four years before getting hired as a full-time faculty member in the spring of 2020. Alice was teaching her first online course during the COVID transition to online teaching. She said that administrators at her school were "indeed the rock stars" that semester. Alice brought copies of four emails to support her claim. Two emails from the Division Chair and two from the Academic Dean were positive and encouraging. Alice said these administrators provided support, encouragement, and guidance for a "crazy transition." Alice also brought copies of three pages from her personal journal. In entries, dated March 2020 - April 2020, she described challenges she faced, including the nation's health crisis, financial struggles, and challenges at home. Alice lived with her partner, who works in the restaurant business. Her partner was laid off during the first part of the COVID crisis, during that spring semester. As a result, "money was pretty tight at our house" and created additional stress. Overall, Alice felt she got her classes into the LMS and created some "fairly decent courses." She learned as she went and "made the best of a bad situation." Alice had little previous Canvas knowledge, gained by teaching one online course, so she expanded on that knowledge to build her courses. It was "not a terrible experience," even though she felt unprepared to do it.

Leigh

Leigh teaches English at Greenhill College as of spring 2020 and has taught on the North Branch for eight years. She holds a Doctorate degree in English Literature from a university in the northeast. Leigh taught her first online course during the Summer of 2019. Today, she prefers the in-person class experience but has found different things about online teaching that she does enjoy. Leigh enjoys teaching English at the community college level, because she likes " engaging new writers." In the spring of 2020, she taught five face-to-face courses that required a

transition to the online format. She taught two English I courses, two English II courses, and one British Literature course. Leigh said that teaching one online course during the previous semester did help her to navigate Canvas and utilize some of the online learning tools found inside the Canvas system. Leigh spoke about the "constant, daily support" of her Division Chair, who encouraged questions and interactions among faculty in the department. This participant brought copies of six emails to support her assertion, all from her division chair, which reflected the sender's supportive, encouraging, and helpful attitude. Leigh's four children, ages 6 -14, were home during this time, along with her husband, a high school principal, who was also working from home. Her two older children, ages 12 and 14, were "fine with being home and getting their work done." The younger two children, ages six and nine, needed more structure and help. Leigh said that the time at home was "not all bad, because my family ate together daily, went on walks, and played many games between working."

Nicole

Nicole taught Government on the North Branch for Greenhill College and had been teaching for five years when COVID hit and was teaching her first online class during the spring 2020 semester. She holds a master's degree in political science and history. Nicole watched "many" training videos online through the training department to learn how to transition students to online learning. She uploaded lecture videos, held individual Zoom sessions with students, and uploaded content "like crazy" during the pandemic. Nicole said she was "all in." She has used the skills she learned during that semester of online teaching to teach online summer classes since that semester. Nicole said she received frequent communication from her Division Chair and other faculty in the government department during the spring 2020 semester. Nicole lived alone and said loneliness was her biggest challenge during this period. The time at home allowed her to

improve her online teaching and take up cooking. She has a few health challenges that made going out in public a "bit too risky," so she stayed mainly at home through the spring and summer semesters of 2020.

Robert

Robert holds a master's degree in biology and is a biology instructor at Greenhill College, North Branch At the time of the COVID transition to online teaching in the spring of 2020, Robert needed to gain experience teaching in the online format. He did not believe the online format was the best way to teach science students. Before spring 2020, he had taught full-time at the college for two long semesters, and was teaching four biology classes – all face-to-face, that required a transition to online. Robert taught Biology I for non-majors, Biology II for non-majors, Biology II for majors, and A&P Biology II. This participant spoke about the positive support he received from his department, but he did not bring any supporting documents to the interview. Robert's wife works as a nurse, working outside the home during the COVID pandemic, leaving him as their seven-year-old daughter's primary caretaker and teacher. Robert spoke of the stress of having his wife going to work during this time when little was known about the "virus or the after-effects."

Stevie

Stevie is a Chemistry professor at Greenhill College, North Branch, and holds a master's degree in science from a nearby university. She had not taught any online courses before spring 2020 and was in her sixth year at the college. Before transitioning her classes online, Stevie strongly believed that chemistry instruction only lends itself to the face-to-face course environment. With the chemicals needed in the lab and the complex concepts to master, she felt, and still feels, that students learn best when she can "see them in the classroom." Stevie spoke

highly of administrators on the campus, especially her department chair, who helped

"tremendously" with the transition to online teaching. She brought two copies of emails, one

from her Division Chair and one from the Academic Dean; both reflected positive support and

information on training opportunities. Stevie did have some Canvas training before the transition

and had completed some professional development for online teaching. Stevie's elderly mother

lives with her, her husband, and their four children. In addition to her age, her mother's health

created elevated stress in the home.

Kenneth

Kenneth, a former Clinical Psychologist, holds a Doctorate in Psychology, and has been a

full-time instructor at Greenhill College, North Branch, for eight years. His previous work with

drug and sex offenders left him burned out and looking for a way to "contribute to the next

generation," so teaching was his next career choice. Kenneth said he had little to no online

teaching experience, though he did web-enhance most of his face-to-face courses before COVID,

which offered him some Canvas Learning Management System knowledge. Kenneth said he was

unprepared to go online that spring but "knew it had to be done." He brought six copies of emails

and a list of the training course he completed during the spring 2020 semester. These emails

from Ken's Division Chair were supportive and offered help, support, and potential Zoom

sessions with faculty members. Though Kenneth had not taught online, his experience using

Canvas to web-enhance his courses helped him to transition his five courses to the online format

that spring. Being a parent of two teenage children who were home to complete their schoolwork

that spring provided Kenneth with additional challenges. His wife, a licensed professional

counselor, was also home and conducting therapy sessions via Zoom.

Focus Group Participants

Nine faculty members were selected randomly as participants in the focus group session (see Table 4). These nine faculty members met with me via Zoom at a mutually-agreed-upon time. Some faculty members participated in the session from their college offices; others accessed Zoom from their homes. There was a technical problem in the beginning with two participants, causing the session to start approximately ten minutes late, and the session ran long, at 101 minutes. All faculty members were engaged and contributed to the discussion without additional prompting. The participants spoke to each other and me openly. The session flowed well, and the participants seemed to enjoy talking to one another about their experiences. The main challenge during this session was that participants inadvertently talked over each other due to the remote nature of the meeting and a technological lag time. Only one focus group participant brought evidence of administrator messages.

Table 4

Descriptions of Focus Group Participants

Pseudonyms	Teaching Discipline	Education Level
Jana	Math	M.S.
Elton	Philosophy	Ph.D.
Walt	Biology	M.S.
Taylor	English	Ph.D.
Lynn	History	M.A.

Pseudonyms	Teaching Discipline	Education Level
Lois	Government	M.A.
Rebecca	Speech	M.A.
Bob	Chemistry	Ph.D.
Travis	Theater/Art	M.A.

Jana

Jana is a math instructor for East Bridge College. She has been working as a professor at community colleges for "about ten years," mainly as an adjunct, and holds a Master of Science degree. She went to work as a full-time professor in the spring of 2019 at the college, one year prior to the COVID pandemic. Jana previously taught two courses in the online environment; both were dual credit classes. She discussed her challenges at home during the spring 2020 semester, recalling that she sometimes felt "lost" due to a lack of communication from the administrators at the college. While she understands the enormous challenges administrators faced that spring semester, she believes administrators could have responded more swiftly to faculty questions. Jana brought a list of the professional development and training she completed during the spring 2020 semester. She completed three LMS training and two training sessions about teaching online and engaging students in the online environment. All training was provided through the college's training site. At the time, Jana had two school-aged children that came home to complete their schoolwork during the COVID pandemic. She also had one child, four years old, who could no longer attend preschool. Jana said the four-year-old was her biggest

challenge while she was trying to "learn how to teach online and create and deliver content, hold Zoom sessions, and grade papers." Jana's husband is a firefighter, so he continued to work outside the home during the pandemic and even worked extra hours due to a lack of fire personnel. The extra hours required of her husband at work, along with three children who needed to be taught, and the need to create and engage in her courses, created a "significant" amount of stress for Jana.

Elton

Elton, a philosophy instructor at the college, has a Doctorate in Philosophy. He lives with his partner in an apartment in the middle of the city. He taught at East Bridge College for four years prior to the COVID pandemic; two years as an adjunct and two years as a full-time professor. Elton expressed his discouragement over his need for more communication with administrators during the transition. He said that as he went through emails in preparation for this session, he realized that he had only received six emails sent by administrators during the two weeks before the shutdown. Elton claimed that this lack of communication was representative of the communication during the following two months. Elton brought copies of these emails to the session. His partner is a professor at a neighboring college and was also home, teaching during the COVID pandemic in the spring of 2020. Elton spoke of how much it helped him to speak with his partner about "problems with his online courses and online tools that would help engage students." Collaborating with his partner was a "lifesaver" for Elton. Being able to speak with his partner about work challenges was beneficial to him. Living in an apartment with "all the walls closing in" was an additional challenge for Elton.

Walt

Walt taught at East Bridge College for 13 years as a full-time biology instructor. He holds a master's degree in biology. He is married and had two "nearly grown children" when the COVID pandemic required him to put his courses online. Walt is married to a high school teacher who was also home that spring. One of Walt's sons lived at home, graduating from high school in May 2020. During the spring 2020 semester, his college-aged son came home from college when his dorm closed due to COVID. Walt felt that one of that semester's most significant challenges was finding the best way to set up science labs for online students. His division chair was supportive and often sent emails and text messages including links to websites, TED talks, and other materials that helped support the transition. Several publishers created online labs to meet the need, but since the programs were new, there were some glitches, but they at least made the labs possible.

Taylor

Taylor was a new English professor during COVID, recently graduating with a Doctorate in British Literature. She did not feel supported by the administration during the transition and felt "on her own to figure this thing out." She spent much time and energy trying to create "good, engaging, functional English courses online." She had time to research, engaged in many pieces of training, and read about online teaching. Many things Taylor learned during that time are still a part of her online courses, though she has "perfected some of the assignments and tools." Taylor lived with a roommate, who was a middle school teacher. Her roommate returned to her parent's home once the schools shut down, leaving Taylor alone. Taylor's family lives in another state, so her access to them during the pandemic was limited. Taylor said this was a "very lonely time" for her.

Lynn

Lynn taught as a history professor at East Bridge college for 15 years during the transition to online due to the COVID pandemic. She holds a master's degree in history. Lynn now teaches only part-time at the college due to health issues that became worse during the pandemic. Lynn had not taught in the online environment prior to spring 2020. At the time of the transition, Lynn was teaching six English courses in-person that she transitioned onto online. She "never really used Blackboard" before that semester but "learned very quickly." Lynn thought there needed to be more communication from the administration. However, she does not "rely on administration much" in her position as a professor. She stated that she "did not expect much, so I was not disappointed." Lynn's division chair and dean were "sporadically" helpful, but it was not enough to help for such a significant change to online. She recognized that the administrators had their "hands full at the time" but felt that the lack of support led to a "sub-par course" for students. Lynn perceived that she lacked the necessary training and felt "lost" during the process. She brought copies of ten copies of student evaluations from the spring 2020 semester. Most evaluations were positive of Lynn's instruction, but three students mentioned the instructor's lack of online experience as a hindrance to their educational process. She lived with her husband and two teenage daughters when COVID required the online transition. Lynn got COVID during the summer of 2020, which resulted in significant health challenges causing her to retire in 2021. Lynn has since returned as a part-time adjunct instructor in the history department.

Lois

Lois is a full-time Government professor at the college and holds a Master of Arts degree in Government. She had been teaching in that capacity for six years prior to the mandatory transition to online teaching due to the COVID pandemic. During that semester, Lois taught her first online dual credit course. She was "fairly unfamiliar" with Blackboard before teaching this

online course and was "getting the hang of it" when COVID hit, and she was required to move

all her courses online. Lois was glad she had some template to follow or would have been "very

lost." Her administrators were not supportive, which was "extremely discouraging" to her and

her colleagues. Lois believed her colleagues were helpful, often sending links to online training,

various TED talks on education, and other helpful resources. She stated that "we were a close-

knit group that really helped each other out." Her biggest challenge was her need for more

experience and training with Blackboard. During the COVID transition, Lois lived at home with

her husband and two cats, and said that her home situation benefited her during this time, since

they were the only things she had to worry about aside from work. Political science, according to

Lois, requires reading and critical thinking, writing, and discussing. The online environment has

proven to be a suitable format for that sort of thing. Lois still prefers her face-to-face courses but

acknowledges that the online format works well for working students or those with families at

home. Lois stated that the spring 2020 semester really "opened my eyes about online teaching"

and that, though she was "fairly negative about the online learning experience," she has since

"come around."

Rebecca

Rebecca had taught speech full-time at East Bridge College for two years when COVID

required her to move her classes online. She holds a master's degree in speech from a regional

university. Rebecca had no online teaching experience when COVID hit, and she had not used

her LMS much. Rebecca felt her biggest challenge was her lack of experience at the collegiate

level and lack of support from her division chair. She and the other professors in her department

formed an "informal coalition" to share educational resources and offer the necessary support.

Rebecca received technical help from her colleagues during this time because the college's

technology help desk was "overloaded with responsibility" during the transition. Rebecca lived at home with her husband and was pregnant during the spring 2020 semester, giving birth to a daughter in the summer of 2020. Little training, poor leadership, and concerns about her pregnancy made for a stressful semester. Her essential worker husband worked for "many hours" that spring semester.

Bob

Bob is a full-time faculty member who teaches chemistry at East Bridge College and holds a Doctorate in Chemistry. When the COVID pandemic hit in the spring of 2020, Bob was teaching four Chemistry courses with labs and had no online teaching experience. Bob had taught full-time at this college for nine years prior to the spring 2020 semester and was the acting division chair in his department since the fall of 2019. Because of his position as faculty and administrator, Bob contributed a unique perspective to the focus group discussion. Bob was able to see the experience from both sides. He spoke about the administration's significant challenge as the pandemic "unfolded, with little known." The college administrators were trying to make decisions in real-time, because they could not wait. Many administrators, according to Bob, realized they were not providing enough guidance, but were working on "very little information that was often contradictory." Aside from his duties as acting division chair, Bob said his wife's health was a big challenge during the COVID pandemic. She required doctor visits that were "difficult to schedule," and it was "a tough few months, personally and professionally."

Travis

Travis is a Theater and Art instructor at the college, who holds a Master of Fine Arts. He taught full-time for two semesters before COVID. He had not taught online before the transition. Travis perceived "decent, but not great support" from his division. According to Travis, faculty

in the Art and Theater Department are "very close," because they spend much time together outside of school hours. Art shows and theater productions provide opportunities to get to know the other faculty members. His division chair provided training for Blackboard right before the transition, which was beneficial since he had no experience using the learning management system. Travis says this training helped him use Blackboard and transition his four Art Appreciation and two Theater Appreciation courses online that semester. Travis felt fortunate that he taught art and theater because there are excellent websites, museums, and interactive learning sites online for students to engage in art and theater online. Since Travis and his wife were home with their children, he felt like the semester was "manageable" once he learned how to put everything on Blackboard, use the grading tools, and instruct students who "did not know much about Blackboard either." He lived with his wife and two school-aged children in 2020. His two children came home to "do school." His wife, an art teacher, taught at a local high school that year and was also home during that same period, teaching her students.

Results

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover the influential factors on faculty's lived experiences and perceived preparedness when transitioning to fully online courses in response to the COVID-19 crisis, for full-time faculty members at Greenhill College, North Branch. Purposeful sampling was used to provide rich data of faculty members' experience as they transitioned their courses to the online environment. After analysis from three data sources, interviews, a focus group session, and document artifacts (Appendix M), several themes and sub-themes emerged to answer the one research question and three sub-questions. The analysis process for this study consisted of organizing the data, creating transcripts from the recorded

interview and focus group sessions, transcribing the transcripts, coding and organizing the themes, and finally forming an interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2016).

Theme Development

There was a total of 10 interview participants from Greenhill College and nine focus group participants from East Bridge College that participated in the data collection for this research study. The data collection began with one-on-one interviews with each of the faculty member participants from Greenhill College. Each participant signed the consent form agreeing to be interviewed or participant in the focus group session, The one-on-one interviews and the focus-group sessions consisted of eight open ended interview questions to gain knowledge into the lived experiences of the faculty member. Each interview lasted between 68-94 minutes. The focus group session lasted approximately 101 minutes. Both the interviews and the focus group session were conducted using Zoom and were recorded using the Zoom software. Transcripts were created from the recordings using Microsoft Word.

Interview participants were able to select their top five interview times from a list provided by me. Once all participants had selected their available times, I sent each interview participant a proposed time for the interview. The focus group participants were asked to select their top five times they could meet for the session. Once I received all responses, I sent each participant information for the selected date and time for the session. One focus group participant that was previously selected to participate was unable to participate due to a schedule conflict. Reminder emails were sent to all participants two weeks prior to their date, and again one week prior to the selected date. I sent the Zoom link one day prior to the interview date and the focus group session date. In both the interviews and the focus group session, the researcher began with an introduction to the research study and the researcher. During each interview and the focus

group session, I noted each participant's interaction and body language, voice, tone, facial expression.

Once the data collection process was complete, I began data analysis by watching the Zoom recordings several times and creating transcripts. Along with each participant's responses as well as the document artifacts provided by the participants, I analyzed the notes to identify codes, phrases, key words, and quotes. All codes, keywords, phrases, and noteworthy quotes from all data collection methods were analyzed to identify patterns and themes which were then placed into categories relative to the research questions. Recurring words and phrases were assigned codes that represented similarities which then were assigned to categories to yield the emerging themes. This process was conducted for the one-on-one interviews and the focus group session.

The following nine themes were identified: Experience Teaching Online, Perception of Preparedness and Attitude, Administrator Messages and Support, Family Challenges at Home, Fear and Loneliness During the Pandemic, Sharing the Crisis with Students, Concerns About Student Performance, Concerns About the Future of Higher Education, and Mandatory Online Teaching as a Learning. Lesson. Several themes also produced sub-themes. Table 6 provides narrative data aligned with these ten themes.

Table 5

Codes Leading to Themes

Codes	Themes
Lacked experience teaching online, no confidence in online format, very little computer skills, limited LMS knowledge	Experience teaching online
Not prepared to teach online, very ill-prepared to teach online courses, no preparation to teach virtually, not capable of completing the task of getting classes onto the LMS in the required time, not prepared, bad attitude and lack of confidence in online teaching	Perception of preparedness
Positive messages via email and text from division chairs, vice-presidents and academic deans; daily emails of concern from administrators, encouraged me to take care of my family and myself, negative messages from administrators; no messages, no	Administrator Messages and Support

Codes	Themes
encouragement, no direction, very little direction from administrators	
Significant family challenges at home, kids home from school, homeschooling children, taking care of family, taking care of elderly parents, caring for sick spouses	Family challenges at home
Fear of the pandemic, fear for family members, extreme loneliness during the pandemic, not seeing family and friends	Fear and loneliness during the pandemic
Shared experience with students, shared trauma, similar experiences	Sharing the crisis with students
Student's lack of LMS knowledge, surprising lack of computer skills, students "disappeared", some students returned to school during pandemic Fall 2020	Concerns about student performance

Codes	Themes
Concern about higher education, lack of enrollment, dropping students, need for degree in the future	Concerns about the future of higher education
Learned a lot, more comfortable in online environment now, learned new skills, learned about LMS	Mandatory online teaching as a learning lesson

Theme 1: Experience Teaching Online

    Faculty members were only selected to participate in this research if they had less than one year experience teaching online as a college instructor. Participants in both the interviews and focus group session spoke of their lack of experience as a factor in their feelings of preparedness. None of the participants had taught online for more than one long semester or two summer semesters.

Sub-Theme 1: Faculty's lack of Learning Management System (LMS) Knowledge

    Eight participants discussed their lack of knowledge and experience using the college's Learning Management System (LMS). Faculty at Greenhill College use the Canvas LMS, while faculty at East Bridge College use the Blackboard LMS. Several faculty members in each group had never used their college's LMS prior to the transition. For both groups, their lack of experience proved to be a significant challenge. Only two interviewees and one focus group participant considered their experience with their LMS as "significant" or "good enough" to help

them feel prepared to teach online. These faculty members felt their familiarity with their LMS gave them more confidence to make the transition and teach online.

Theme 2: Perception of Preparedness and Attitude

Sub-Theme 1: Lack of Preparedness to Teach Online

Fourteen participants believed they needed to prepare better to successfully teach online. The three main reasons for their lack of preparedness, according to these participants, were "lack of training," "lack of knowledge," and "anxiety." Faculty members with online teacher training still felt "ill-prepared" to take on the online teaching challenge during the COVID pandemic.

Sub-Theme 2: Attitude Toward Online Teaching and the Transition

The majority in both participant groups spoke about their positive attitudes toward transitioning their courses to the online format. Faculty members said they were "doing what was necessary," "I saw the writing on the wall," and "we had no choice but to embrace it," despite their lack of preparedness. Four participants spoke of being "extremely nervous" or "very nervous" about transitioning their courses online, because they felt they were incapable of doing so efficiently and effectively. Though they were apprehensive, faculty spoke of being "proud" that they "accomplished their goal" and "stayed afloat".

Sub-theme 3: Lack of Training and Professional Development

All interviewees and eight focus group participants spoke of the need for more training than what they had completed before the spring of 2020 to teach online. Though four interview participants and two focus group participants said they sought online teaching training before the COVID transition, all participants believed they had not completed enough or the "appropriate" training to help them prepare for this transition. Five focus group participants agreed they would have needed more training to prepare them for such a transition. All faculty participants

discussed the plethora of online training opportunities that "sprang up after the COVID semester" and exist today. The majority in each group said they had taken advantage of "numerous" training opportunities since the spring of 2020. Some faculty members brought lists of professional development and training they had completed during and after the spring semester.

Theme 3: Administrator Messages and Support

The responses among participants varied regarding administrator messages. Most participants agreed that administrator messages and support matter to "build a successful team" and to "take on a challenge like education was met with during COVID." Several participants discussed the importance of positive messaging from leadership as well as positive messaging when taking on a big task. Participants agreed that part of their success relies on the college leadership's encouragement and confidence in them to perform the job.

Sub-Theme 1: Positive Administrator Messages and Support

Ten participants in the interview group spoke highly of their administration, citing specific emails that "encouraged me to keep going," "encouraged me to get outside with my family," and "take care of my mental and physical health." Interview participants spoke of administrators that were "invested 100% of the time," who "cared about us as professionals," and who were "a well of information." Even slightly negative comments about their administrators, such as "they could not successfully do their jobs," were followed by messages, such as "they were overwhelmed," "they did not know what was happening with the virus," and "they had their own families to take care of." For this group, the administrators were their division chairs, academic dean, and vice presidents.

Sub-theme 2: Negative Administrator Messages and Support

Most focus group participants found their administration unsupportive and "absent" during the transition to online teaching in the spring of 2020. This group spoke of being "discouraged by the lack of support" and "confused about our path." One group member was an acting division chair during the transition process. This participant offered more empathy to the administrators, stating that "they, too, were challenged with tasks that they had never done before" and had very "little guidance from the state and educational organizations." One participant brought a copy of an email sent by their administrator, which the faculty member felt was "negative" and "unclear." Another participant brought copies of three emails sent by their division chair, which were neither positive nor negative, but allowed the participant to "set a timeline in her head" of the events surrounding the "shutdown" at school and the transition to "online education."

Theme 4: Family Challenges at Home

Both groups of faculty participants spent a large part of the time discussing their home life that presented significant challenges during the COVID pandemic. Each faculty participant spoke of the "big challenges" and "overwhelming challenges" that faced them at home – family, work-life balance, as well as health challenges for them or family members. Three faculty members in the interview group and one faculty member in the focus group had family members or close friends die from COVID during the first few months of the pandemic, creating a "huge emotional challenge" and "increasing the stress" they felt while at home. Most participants had family members at home during the transition. School-aged children who came home to complete their schoolwork, presented significant challenges for several faculty participants. The younger children caused a particular level of "additional stress" because these children must "have all their needs cared for." Since daycares and preschools were closed, these younger

children were home and needed care. Many participants acted as primary caregivers for their families, which was the source of additional stress.

Theme 5: Fear and Loneliness During the Pandemic

Faculty in both groups spoke of the "fear" of the pandemic and the "unknown"; and feeling "scared" and "anxious" for their family members. Three participants talked about their fear that affected their own learning process as they transitioned their courses online. One said she was sure her feelings "had a negative impact" as she was learning new things and "becoming a student myself." Not knowing the "trajectory" or "real seriousness of the virus" was a concern for one interview participant.

Several participants spoke of feeling "lonely" as they made it through that semester and into summer. While faculty participants viewed the experience as stressful, many felt there was a positive outcome for them. Faculty in both groups described the time at home as stressful but "not bad"; one said it was a time for "reconnecting," "establishing better relationships," and "finding a better balance" with their home and work life. Faculty with families who did not live with them used Zoom and Microsoft Teams to engage with their family members. One faculty member has continued to use Zoom to stay in touch with her family members.

Theme 6: Sharing the Crisis with Students

Focus group faculty members said they "shared the crisis with students" and realized "students were struggling just like I was." Two participants said they extended deadlines until the last day of the course to accommodate student issues. Both participants said they would not typically take that action but believed it was necessary during the COVID pandemic. Students were "dealing with their issues at home with family, school, and work." Several instructors taught students lost jobs and struggled financially. Four faculty members said this experience

helped them have more "empathy" or "compassion" for students and the challenges they are facing. After relaying one story of a student he taught, one faculty member said, "students were one side of this coin, and we were on the other. We were experiencing a crisis together at the same time."

Theme 7: Concerns About Student Performance

Faculty expressed concern about student performance during the spring 2020 semester and beyond. Faculty members believed students were struggling with the pandemic and online learning in general. Participants said they spent a lot of their time during spring 2020 trying to help students be successful "as students" in an online environment. They were concerned that students were not fully prepared to take online courses, that students lacked knowledge, and were facing significant home challenges that continued when they returned to school in the fall of 2020. Five participants said the students' lack of LMS knowledge presented a "huge challenge" and. "significant problem" for their success in the course. One faculty member brought copies of student evaluations from this semester, which reflected students who struggled in the course due to lack of familiarity with Blackboard and "lack of experience" on the instructor's part. This lack of student familiarity with the LMS at their college provided additional challenges to faculty members teaching these students during the spring of 2020.

Faculty in both groups expressed surprise at finding the extent that students struggled to be successful online. One faculty member said, "these are the digital natives," and he thought they would "have this online thing down better than I did." Students struggled with the LMS, work and home challenges, and "being engaged in this environment." Copies of student evaluations confirmed the students' struggle with this mode of learning.

Faculty participants discussed their concern over the lack of rigor in the college classroom today as an "offshoot of the pandemic." Students that completed their education in online high school were cited as a reason for student deficits in the classroom today. Several faculty members in the focus group session expressed concern over the students' lack of "motivation" and "lack of success" in learning. Faculty said students "are not as prepared" as they were in the past, have "serious educational deficiencies," and are "lacking in social skills" that impact their academic performance. One faculty participant said these students have "social and classroom challenges that are difficult to meet."

Theme 8: Concern about the Future of Higher Education

Faculty participants expressed concern over the future of higher education, especially at the community college level. They discussed the changes they see in students and increased classroom challenges as a "big hurdle for higher education" Lower enrollment is an additional concern for these faculty members. One faculty member noted that "my online enrollment now exceeds my face-to-face enrollment" three years after the start of the pandemic. The focus group participants discussed this "shift" in higher education, while one participant wondered if college "brick and mortar" will be around in the next ten years.

Theme 9: Mandatory Online Teaching as a Learning Lesson

Focus group participants discussed the role that mandatory online teaching played in helping them to become better instructors. One participant said, "the experience helped me to accept that online courses can be successful," but "I still prefer face-to-face classes." One faculty member said online courses are "here to stay," and that she has "more confidence in the online format now." Two faculty members believed that the online teaching helped them become better

face-to-face instructors, pushing them to see students as "people with challenges" and "just like me."

Outlier Data and Findings

Outlier Finding #1

One faculty member from the interview group at Greenhill College, North Branch, believed he did not have administrative support. This faculty member believed that the administrators' messages could have been more concise during the transition. The other ten faculty members found administrators to be helpful and supportive.

Outlier Finding #2

One faculty member felt they had enough training to transition to online teaching during the spring 2020 semester. This participant had completed the training voluntarily because they had a "particular interest," but it prepared them enough to make the transition. This faculty member said that "without the training, I would not have made it".

Table 6

Theme Table with Narrative Data

Theme	Quote
Experience Teaching Online	"I lacked experience teaching online and with the LMS. This was a huge detriment"
	"I had very little confidence in my ability to teach online. I had no experience teaching online"
	"My limited online teaching experience was a disadvantage"
	"I had not even used Canvas before"

Theme	Quote
Perception of Preparedness/Attitude	"Oh, I was not prepared to teach online. Not in the least"
	" I lacked confidence in the online learning experience"
	"I did not trust the online platform"
	"I was not prepared to teach online which created anxiety for me"
	"I did not feel capable of getting my courses on Blackboard in that short period of time. Two weeks"
	"We had no choice but to embrace it despite my lack of preparation, but I had a bad attitude about it at the time"
	"I was extremely nervous about my success in this format"
	"I lacked the training necessary to be successful"
	"I don't think I had any training or professional development courses over online teaching"

Theme	Quote
Perception of Preparedness/Attitude	"I had completed one course and listened to a couple of TED talks"

Theme	Quote
Administrator Messages and Support	"Our administration encouraged me, nearly daily, to get outside with my family"
	"Emails sent told me to take care of my mental and physical health"
	" I appreciated that"
	"My administration was invested 100% of the time"
	"My division chair sent good information via email and text message"
	" Our dean encouraged us to try new things in our online classes. That was freeing really"
	"Our administration was fairly absent"
	"I felt a lack of support on the part of our administrators"
	"I heard from my division chair once during the entire spring after I went home"
	"It was like they just vanished"

Theme	Quote
Family Challenges at Home	"I had some pretty big challenges once I got home, in terms of family issues"
	"I did have some overwhelming issues with my kids being home to do school, trying to manage all of it was difficult"
	"Meeting the needs of my kids, my husband, my parents. It was hard"
	"It wasn't all bad though. We ate dinner together every night, took walks, enjoyed our time together"
	"My wife was pretty sick with COVID during that time. That created a high level of stress"
Fear and loneliness during the pandemic	"For me, this time was pretty lonely. I didn't see my family and that was really hard"
	"I worried about everyone - my colleagues, my friends, and family, and me"
	"Fear and anxiety was at an all-time high, especially in the beginning"

Theme	Quote
	"I worked to establish better relation"
Sharing the Crisis with Students	"At some point I realized that I was sharing this crisis with my students" "My students and I were not so different" "This was traumatic for all of us"
Concerns About Student Performance	"I was surprised at my students' lack of internet and Blackboard knowledge" "My students struggled with the LMS" "It felt like many of my students have never logged in to Canvas before" "They had a real lack of experience with Blackboard" "Students were struggling with home challenges too" "When students returned in the fall, they still have some pretty significant things going on at home. Many had lost their jobs" "They lacked motivation " "They came back with very little social skills, It was shocking really"

Theme	Quote
Concerns About the Future of Higher Education	"I saw a decline in enrollment over the fall semester. It was a little scary"
	"I have a concern for higher education in general"
	"You watch the news and see that a college degree is not valued as much"
	"I wonder if there will be any more brick-and-mortar colleges in the future"
	"I see a shift in students and in the college in general"
Mandatory Online Teaching as a Learning Lesson	"I just really learned so much during that spring semester and the next semester too"
	"I learned how to teach online"
	"I have more confidence in teaching online now"
	"I feel better about it, but I still prefer my face-to-face classes"
	"I learned that these online classes can be successful, but it does take some work"

Research Question Results

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover the factors that influenced the faculty's lived experiences and perceived preparedness when transitioning to fully online courses in response to the COVID-19 crisis, for full-time faculty members at Greenhill College, North Branch. The study was designed to answer a central question and three research sub-questions. The interviews, focus group, and documents analysis attempted to answer these four questions. The following research questions helped guide the study.

Central Research Question

The central question that guided this research study was: What factors influenced the faculty member's lived experiences and their attitude and perception of preparedness toward the mandatory transition to online teaching in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020? Participants in both groups believe that lack of training, experience, administrator support, and challenges at home impacted their lived experiences during this transition. Representative of faculty member's comments, Kenneth, said, "faculty were challenged with struggles at work, challenges with students, and true concerns about their family and friends."

Sub-Question One

The first sub question for this research study was: What professional development or training did faculty members receive before or during the transition that influenced their lived experiences, including their attitude and perception of preparedness, toward the mandatory transition to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020? Faculty agreed that there was no mandatory training for teaching online prior to the requirement to teach online during COVID. As a result, the faculty felt "unprepared," but their attitude" remained cheerful

throughout, though it was exhausting." Their positive attitude led to success in "getting students through the course."

Sub-Question Two

The second sub-question for this research study was: What administrator messages did faculty receive before or during the transition that influenced the faculty member's lived experiences, including their attitude and perceived perception of preparedness toward the mandatory transition to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020? This question brought forth different answers in each of the two groups. The interview group perceived their administrators as "helpful" and "supportive" during the process, citing emails that were "uplifting" and "encouraging" to support this claim. These faculty participants believed the administrators' messages helped them to "be successful that semester" and "pass on a decent course to my students." The focus group participants perceived their administrators as "negative" and "somewhat absent" during the process," which led to a "less than successful experience."

Sub-Question Three

The third sub-question for this research study was: What home-life factors influenced the faculty member's lived experiences, including their attitude and perceived perception of preparedness toward the mandatory transition to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020? Faculty described their challenges at home during the spring 2020 semester that affected their lived experiences, including challenges with "having kids at home" and "homeschooling my kids," as well as COVID and non-COVID health issues. Faculty mentioned the "worry for our nation," "concern for my community," and deep concern for "family members, especially my elderly parents."

Table 7

Alignment of Research Questions to One-on-One Interviews, Focus Group Session, Artifact

Documents

Research Question	*Interview Questions*	*Focus Group Questions*	*Artifact*
What factors influenced the faculty member's lived experiences and their attitude and perception of preparedness toward the mandatory transition to online teaching in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020?	2-8	2-8	Copies of emails Copies of journal entries
What professional development or training did faculty members receive before or during the transition that influenced their lived experiences, including their attitude and perception of preparedness, toward the mandatory	4	4	List of professional development trainings completed

transition to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020?		

What administrator messages did faculty receive before or during the . transition that influenced the faculty member's lived experiences, including their attitude and perceived perception of preparedness toward the mandatory transition to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020?	5,6	5,6	Copies of emails sent by administrators

What home-life factors influenced the faculty member's lived experiences, including their attitude and perceived perception of preparedness toward the	7	7	Copies of personal journal entries Copies of emails

mandatory transition to

online teaching due to the

COVID-19 pandemic in

2020?

Summary

Chapter Four provided an in-depth analysis of the participants' responses of faculty members' lived experiences as they transitioned to the online format for teaching. Some participants participated in the one-on-one interview questions, while others participated in the focus group session. Several participants provided documents relevant to the transition. An overview of the development of themes and a description each is present with a detailed narrative response from each participant representing their individual experiences with the transition to online teaching. The nine major themes that derived from the data analysis were: (a) experience teaching online (b) perception of preparedness and attitude (c) administrator messages and support (d) family challenges at home (e) fear and loneliness during the pandemic (f) sharing the crisis with students (g) concerns about student performance (h) concerns over the future of higher education and (i) mandatory online teaching as a learning lesson. The chapter concludes with responses to the central question and the three sub-questions.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover the factors that influenced the faculty's lived experiences and perceived preparedness when transitioning to fully online courses in response to the COVID-19 crisis, for full-time faculty members at Greenhill College, North Branch. Chapter Five includes six sections: (a) an overview of the chapter, (b) a summary of the findings, (c) a discussion of the findings and the implications considering the relevant literature and theory, (d) an implications section (methodological and practical), (e) an outline of the study delimitations and limitations, and (f) recommendations for future research.

Discussion

This research study was conducted to address the gap in literature regarding faculty members experience in transitioning their courses online. Limited research was available about this transition because it was a recent event. The results of this study expounded on previous research into online teaching and teaching during a crisis as discussed in Chapter Two. The section below focuses on the interpretation of the findings, implications for policy and practice, theoretical and empirical implications, limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research.

Interpretation of Findings

This study relied mainly on Mesirow's adult learning theory. According to this theorist, an authentic learning experience contains three phases, including psychological, convictional, and behavioral. As learners learn, they evolve, including their ability to self-assess and reflect as they learn. Mesirow emphasizes the importance of critical reflection, dialogue and discourse in

the transformative learning process, suggesting that adults can transform their beliefs and perspectives throughout life, as they learn more. The end process leads to more personal growth and development. For the current study, the faculty members are the adult learners. They described their lived experiences of transitioning and teaching online during the first months of COVID pandemic. Faculty described their "evolution" as learners by describing the psychological, convictional, and behavioral transformation they made during the process.

Interpretation of Theme 1: Experience Teaching Online

The first theme, lack of experience teaching online, was identified as a reason for the faculty's lack of preparedness, as well as their lack of confidence. This theme aligns with previous research (Baker, 2016) that suggests that experienced faculty are more comfortable and confident in teaching online courses. This theme focused on the faculty members' experience with online teaching as well as experience with their school's Learning Management System (LMS). Data analysis showed that faculty members believed their lack of experience teaching online and with their LMS contributed to their feelings of incompetence as they transitioned to teach their classes online. The data also suggests that participants believed that more experience teaching in the online environment would have prepared them better.

Interpretation of Theme 2: Perception of Preparedness/Attitude Toward Online Teaching

Previous research suggests that faculty members have a negative attitude toward online teaching platforms (Ulmer et al., 2007). The commitment of faculty to online education is valuable to the educational institutions they serve (Curran, 2008). Data analysis gleaned from the current study supports this assertion. Participants described their negative attitude toward "online teaching" and "the online platform" prior to the spring 2020 semester. Faculty believed that their

attitude toward teaching online had created negligence on their part, and on the college's part, to prepare them for this transition.

Interpretation of Sub-theme 1: Lack of Preparedness to Teach Online. Participants discussed their lack of preparedness to teach online. Participants believed their lack of preparedness caused additional anxiety and apprehension about teaching online, when it became necessary. This perception of a lack of preparedness and lack of confidence to teach online aligns with previous research that found that faculty members who are adequately trained feel more confident in pursuing their work tasks (Bibal, 2019).

Interpretation of Sub-theme 2: Attitude Toward Online Teaching. Participants described a "negative" attitude toward online teaching prior to the spring 2020 semester. This finding closely aligns with Fauzi and Khusuma's research (2020) that found that 80% of educators were dissatisfied with online education. While online teaching was a remedy to the pandemic, recent research suggests that the majority of university faculty believe that face-to-face education delivers a superior product (Sourav, 2022).

Interpretation of Sub-theme 3: Lack of Professional Development and Training. Faculty members described a lack of professional development and training as the main source of confusion and apprehension to teach online. Several faculty members brought copies of the trainings and professional development they completed to improve their online teaching (See Appendix N). Previous research has demonstrated that professional development and training is important in increasing teacher efficacy and confidence (Buchberger et al., 2000).

Interpretation of Theme 3: Administrator Messaging and Support

Faculty agreed that administrator support is crucial for success in teaching at the collegiate level, which aligns with previous research by Ryan et al. (2005). Some participants

found that their administrators were very supportive and positive, which helped them to be successful in their online teaching during the semester. Positive administrator messages have been linked to faculty success (Marynowski, 2016). Faculty from the focus group believed their administrators were not supportive nor helpful, which led to a lack of confidence and confusion in teaching online during spring 2020, which has previously been shown to create negative outcomes (Marynowski, 2016).

Interpretation of Sub-theme 1: Positive Administrator Messages and Support. Participants in the interview group reported positive administrator emails and texts that led to their success in teaching online. Previous research has suggested that positive messages from administrators are beneficial to teachers and help them feel more confident about their jobs. Perceived support from administrators is positively correlated with teacher success (Murphy et al., 2017).

Interpretation of Sub-theme 2: Negative Administrator Messages and Support. Most participants in the focus group session reported that negative messages from their administrator, as well as a lack of messages from some administrators, created more stress for the faculty teaching online during the pandemic. Prior research suggests that negative massages and a lack of support can have a detrimental effect on employees (Hameiri, 2014).

Interpretation of Theme 4: Family Challenges at Home

Faculty agreed that there were numerous challenges at home when they began teaching online during spring 2020. These home and family challenges added to their stress-level in trying to complete the tasks needed for their work. This finding aligns with previous research that suggests that home-life factors do impact work performance (Beckett et al., 2015).

Interpretation of Theme 5: Fear and Loneliness During the Pandemic

Faculty reported feeling fear and anxiety due to the pandemic, as well as apprehension in teaching successfully online. This theme aligns with previous research that suggests that anxiety and fear can lead to a lack of perceived success at a task (Jones & Sloane, 2016).

Interpretation of Theme 6: Sharing the Crisis with Students

Participants reported a feeling of "linked fate" or a shared experience with their students as both were living through the pandemic. Faculty expressed a sense of connection with their students they had not previously felt. The current research and previous research suggest that a crisis can lead to a shared experience between faculty and students (Ulvik et al., 2021).

Interpretation of Theme 7: Concerns about Student Performance

Participants expressed concern over student performance in their classes during spring 2020 once the classes moved online. Faculty members' concern became an important part of their own success during that semester. This affirms previous research that demonstrates that faculty members feel concern about student performance (Lei et al., 2018).

Interpretation of Theme 8: Concerns about the Future of Higher Education

Participants expressed concern over the future of higher education, which developed during and after the transition to online teaching. As higher education maintains a shift, like no other time in history, the education model is tasked with adopting new technology, identifying creative ways to increase enrollment and stretch the budget, supporting student and faculty mental health, and becoming more flexible.

Interpretation of Theme 9: Online Teaching as a Learning Lesson

Participants affirmed that the mandatory transition to online teaching as a learning lesson. Faculty believed that their experience during the spring 2020 semester led to a more

positive attitude toward online teaching and toward online education overall. The lessons they learned during that semester are being used today, both in the online classrooms and the face-to-face classrooms. This theme aligns with previous research that suggests that faculty members evolve in the learning process and are lifelong learners (DeNeef, 2002).

Implications for Policy and Practice

The overall findings of the study provide various stakeholders including higher education administrators, faculty members, and professional development creators and providers with vital information in determining what types of professional development, support, and messaging are needed for faculty members to make transitions that are often necessary in the education field.

Implications for Policy

Policy makers may use these results to create standardized policies for mandatory professional development training for college faculty. Having a standardized policy established by the state or institution ensures that all training environments are following the same blueprint to create the necessary skills needed by faculty members to teach online. As enrollment in online courses and online programs continues to climb, it is likely necessary to train the faculty members to teach effectively online.

Implications for Practice

Participants affirmed that more professional development and training was needed to help them to feel competent and confident in teaching in the online format. Implications of this research suggest that faculty members should engage in training and professional development to help them successfully teach in the online format. While more training was needed to help faculty transition to the online learning environment for the selected participants, this research could be beneficial to faculty members at colleges and universities across the United States.

Participants affirmed the need for positive messages and support from administrators as they took on the task of transitioning to online teaching, especially during a crisis time. College administrators could benefit from the current research, by learning more about positively and effectively leading faculty in a college environment. Additionally, institutions should place a focus on resources to help faculty in their roles at home and work, in order to create a more competent and confident labor force.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

The purpose of this section is to address the theoretical, empirical and practical implications of this research, based on faculty's lived experiences during the transition to online teaching. The findings of this study were consistent with previous research on the importance of training and administrator support for faculty members. This study did go further by examining this phenomenon as it occurred inside a crisis, the COVID pandemic. Additionally, the challenge of transitioning courses to an online environment in response to a crisis has not been studied extensively.

Theoretical Implications

The adult learning theory theorizes that learners evolve as they engage in the learning process. These faculty members, as adult learners, went through the process of learning a new skill, online teaching. The theoretical implications of this research study perceived that faculty members' lived experiences is paramount in understanding the adult learning process and the role it plays in developing competent faculty members. Faculty members engaged in the learning process, as they, the teachers, became the learners.

Some faculty members began the learning process by identifying their own learning needs and creating a learning plan. Faculty sought out learning opportunities through their

college's training materials, YouTube, TED talks, and other online resources. Faculty collaborated with their colleagues during their learning process. Participants used Blackboard Collaborate, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams to meet with other colleagues, and, in some cases, to meet with their supervisors. Faculty members then reflected on their own learning. This type of reflection benefits the adult learners by allowing them to assess their progress and identify areas where they need to focus their learning efforts.

Empirical Implications

There has been a significant increase in online teaching over the last few years, driven in large part by advancements in technology and a growing demand for flexible educational options. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated online learning enrollments, at colleges across the United States, since many schools and universities moved their programs online as a result. While online teaching offers some advantages to students, it is important to develop faculty that can teach effectively in this new format. The current research suggests that faculty that perceive they are prepared feel more confident in online education and in their ability to teach well in this format. Additionally, faculty members who receive positive support from their institutions and administrators feel more confident about their tasks and their ability to create and facilitate effective courses. Learning and teaching during a crisis, while also feeling pressure from home responsibilities proved to be a challenge for these faculty members.

By focusing on the faculty perspective during this transition, this research allows us to view the faculty members as adult learners. Professional development and training can increase faculty confidence to teach online; this also increases the faculty member's confidence in online education, overall. This is important because more confident teachers lead to better student outcomes. Positive institutional and administrator messages are important for increasing

confidence in faculty. Balancing home-life factors during the Covid pandemic was identified as a significant challenge by faculty. Faculty with young children and other caregiving responsibilities struggled with maintaining balance while keeping up with their teaching duties, leading to a perceived increase in their stress level. Noise, inadequate workspace and other distractors were cited as home challenges as well. Some faculty said that teaching online as a result of the COVID pandemic increased their time with family and was, therefore, seen as a positive experience. Fear and loneliness created a feeling of isolation and lack of interaction with their colleagues which created a more negative experience for some. Providing support and resources to help faculty members balance their work and personal obligation is important for the future of teaching and higher education in general

Limitations and Delimitations

For this phenomenological research, there were limitations and delimitations within the study. Limitations are potential weaknesses of the study that cannot be controlled. The delimitations are purposeful decisions made by the researcher to limit or define the boundaries of the study.

Limitations

The biggest limitation for this study was the COVID-19 pandemic. While this research was conducted after the severity of the virus had diminished, restrictions were still put in place to protect participants from the virus. Using Zoom to conduct the interviews and the focus group session allowed faculty members to participate from their preferred location, but this format is not ideal for creating seamless dialogue and for interpreting non-verbal behaviors. The geographic area is another limitation of the research. The community colleges selected for the one-on-one interviews and the focus group are close in proximity. Additionally, one focus group

participant, several weeks after the session, was admitted to hospital with an acute non-COVID sickness. As a result, I could not complete the member-checking process with this participant.

Delimitations

The delimitations of this study include the full-time status of faculty members and their participants' lack of online teaching experience. As the researcher, I believed that full-time faculty members would have a compelling reason to participate in the research, thus increasing the interest and participation in the study. Lack of experience was another delimitation of this study, because only faculty members with less than one year experience were selected. Since lack of experience was crucial to the research, it was important that faculty members who frequently taught online were excluded from the group. An additional delimitation is the selection to use a hermeneutic approach to the research. Inherent in the hermeneutical approach is a tendency toward research bias. While I did set aside my bias as a faculty member using the bracketing method, the tendency to see myself in the faculty members' stories was present.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations for the importance of faculty training have been highlighted throughout this study. Based on the literature, the findings, limitations and delimitations, a clear approach is needed to prepare faculty to effectively teach online. Additionally, an approach to training administrators to support faculty members through positive messages and encouragement is important.

The first recommendation for future research requests more research into how to properly support and train faculty members for successful online teaching. Another recommendation for future research is to provide information for administrators in helping to prepare those faculty members. The third recommendation for future research is to probe more into the effects of

positive messaging and training for instructors who are facing a crisis. Additionally, more information could be gained from a larger pool of faculty participants, in order to better understand the faculty experience. A broader study would provide a deeper understanding of the experience of part-time faculty, faculty from other geographic areas, as well as faculty from different disciplines.

Conclusion

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover the factors that influenced the faculty's lived experiences and perceived preparedness when transitioning to fully online courses in response to the COVID-19 crisis, for full-time faculty members at Greenhill College, North Branch. This chapter summarized the findings and interpretation of all research questions which lead to implications for future research on the factors that impacted faculty members' lived experiences as they transitioned to the online learning environment.

The findings indicated that faculty members were not well trained during their transition to teach online and were teaching in a format they did not initially trust. Faculty members believed they needed training and administrator support to teach effectively in the online environment, especially in a crisis. Feeling unprepared created more anxiety and apprehension for faculty as they completed their work tasks. Considering these findings, it would be useful to consider these factors when analyzing, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating training programs for both faculty and administrators that would lead to more successful teaching. As education continues to expand in the online environment, it is important that we equip faculty instructors to feel confident in creating successful, and engaging courses in this environment. This approach will serve higher education institutions, administrators, faculty, and most importantly, the students.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval: Liberty University

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

April 21, 2022

Kelly Payne
Carol Gillespie

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY21-22-835 A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: FACTORS INFLUENCING FACULTY ATTITUDE TOWARD ONLINE TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Dear Kelly Payne, Carol Gillespie,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(ii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B

IRB Modification: Liberty University

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 27, 2022

Kelly Payne
Carol Gillespie

Re: Modification - IRB-FY21-22-835 A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: FACTORS INFLUENCING FACULTY ATTITUDE TOWARD ONLINE TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Dear Kelly Payne, Carol Gillespie,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has rendered the decision below for IRB-FY21-22-835 A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: FACTORS INFLUENCING FACULTY ATTITUDE TOWARD ONLINE TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC .

Decision: Exempt - Limited IRB

Your request to replace Collin College, Spring Creek campus, with Dallas College, Brookhaven Campus, as a study site has been approved. Thank you for submitting your revised study documents for our review and documentation. Your revised, stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study in Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for complying with the IRB's requirements for making changes to your approved study. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.
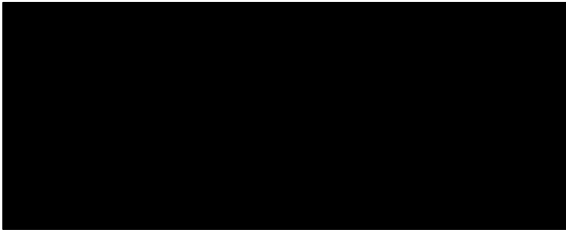
We wish you well as you continue with your research.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

Appendix C

IRB Site Approval Letter: Greenhill College, North Branch

[REDACTED]

To Kelly Payne:

I am writing to express [REDACTED] support for your research study, "A Phenomenological Study: Factors Influencing Faculty Attitude Toward Online Teaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic" to be conducted with data pertaining to full-time faculty at [REDACTED] I understand that the variables you are seeking include factors such as training that influenced faculty's perceived preparedness when transitioning to fully online courses. The College is supportive of research that will improve instruction and student outcomes.

To that end, the division of Strategic Research and Analytics, (1) extends *provisional* approval to use [REDACTED] as a research site and (2) will make the requested data available to you on a timeline to be agreed upon, contingent upon the following stipulations being met:
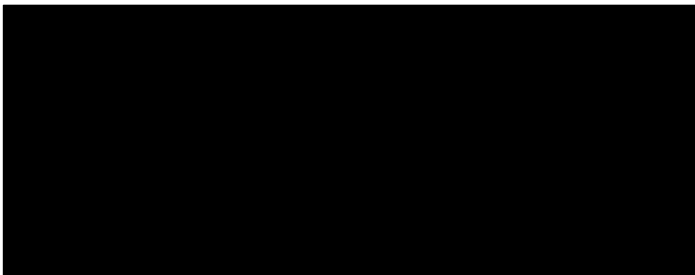
- Obtain final approval from the necessary stakeholder(s) to recruit members of the target population(s).
- Complete the IRB review at [REDACTED]

Please be in touch as you have met the stipulations above.

We look forward to working with you and to learning the results of your study.

Please contact the IRB at [REDACTED] with any questions.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Appendix D

Survey Monkey: Interview Participant Pool

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: FACTORS INFLUENCING FACULTY ATTITUDE

TOWARD ONLINE TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Survey Monkey: Initial screening survey questions

1. In the Spring semester of 2020, were you

    a. teaching part-time at ███████████

    b. teaching full-time at ███████████

    c. not teaching at ███████████

2. How many face-to-face courses were you teaching, and were required to transition to the online format, for █████████ in the Spring semester of 2020?

    a. 0 courses

    b. 1-2 courses

    c. 3+ courses

3. How many semesters of online teaching experience did you have prior to the Spring semester of 2020?

    a. 0-1 semesters

    b. 2-3 semesters

    c. 4+ semesters

4. How many years have you taught as a full-time college faculty member (please include teaching years at all colleges, both part-time and full-time)

    a. 1-3 years

    b. 4-6 years

   c. 7+ years

5. How many years have you taught as a faculty member a̶ ████████

   a. 0-3 years

   b. 4-6 years

   c. 7+ years

6. How many semesters did you teach in face-to-face courses prior to the spring Semester

   of 2020?

   a. 0-4 semesters

   b. 5-8 semesters

   c. 9+ semesters

7. How much lead time did you receive from college administration, during the Spring

semester 2020, notifying you that you would need to transition your face-to-face courses

to the online course format?

   a. 1-5 days

   b. 6-10 days

   c. 10+ days

Appendix E

Interview Participants: Recruitment Letter Email

Dear Faculty Member:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to learn more about the factors, such as professional development and other training related to online learning, that influenced faculty attitudes and perceptions of preparedness as they transitioned to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must have been full-time faculty members teaching at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮▮ in Spring 2020, were required to transition at least one face-to-face course to the online format and had less than one year (2 semesters) of experience teaching online when the transition occurred. Participants, if selected and willing, will be asked to select an available time slot for an interview (10 minutes), participate in an audio- and video-recorded ZOOM interview (90 minutes) collect and provide to the researcher any documents, such as emails and diary or journal entries, which could shed light on the participant experience as they transitioned their courses to the online format in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (1 to 3 hours). Participants will also be asked to review the written transcript once the interview is complete and transcribed (1 hour). Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please click here https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RWP89S7 to complete the screening survey. You will receive a follow-up email if you are selected to participate in the individual interview. You can contact me at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or more information.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you are selected and choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me prior to the scheduled ZOOM interview session.

Please scan and email your consent form to me at: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or mail the completed consent form to:

    Kelly Waltman-Payne

    ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Sincerely,

▮▮▮▮▮

Appendix F

Interview Participants: Consent Form

Consent

Title of the Project: A Phenomenological Study: Factors Influencing Faculty Attitude Toward Online Teaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic
Principal Investigator: Kelly Waltman-Payne, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a full-time faculty member at ████████████████████████ who was teaching in Spring of 2020 and was required to transition at least one course to the online format. Participants should have had no more than one year (two semesters) of experience teaching online prior to the COVID-19 transition. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this study is to discover the factors that influenced the lived experiences of faculty which may have contributed to their attitude and perceptions of preparedness when transitioning to fully online teaching in response to the COVID-19 crisis for full-time faculty members at ████████████████████.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:
1. Select a time slot for a 90-minute ZOOM interview (10 minutes).
2. Collect and provide to the researcher any emails, diary or journal entries, and any other documents which could provide additional information about your experience with transitioning to the online format in Spring 2020 (1-3 hours).
3. Participate in an audio- and video-recorded ZOOM interview with the researcher (90 minutes).
4. Read over interview transcripts after research is complete (1 hour).

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society include a better understanding for college administrators and those in positions of power in education that will inform training for faculty. Additional benefits include the contribution to the academic profession of a deeper understanding of the depth of challenge faculty members faced as they lived through and worked through the pandemic.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

As a mandatory reporter, I will be required to disclose any child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others that I learn through this research.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- The college sites and each participant will be assigned a pseudonym in order to protect the participants' privacy. The researcher will be in a private location where others will not easily overhear the conversation during the ZOOM interview to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participant.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. All physical documents will be stored in a locked file cabinet. After three years, all electronic records will be, deleted and hard copy data will be shredded.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Kelly Waltman-Payne. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at ████████████ or by

email at kpayne3@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Carol Gillespie at cgillespie@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

Appendix G

Individual Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to me as if we just met. By using less structured questions, Maxwell (2019) suggests that the interview will allow for personal beliefs and meanings to surface, providing insight into the experiential process of the participants being studied.

2. Please walk me through your experiences with the COVID-19 transition as a full-time faculty member at Greenhill College, North Branch. Allowing participants to describe their experiences will enable the researcher to understand what transpired during the transition to online teaching and get the participants comfortable with the interview process (Seidman, 2013). CQ

3. Please explain your feeling of preparedness and your attitude as you approached this transition to online teaching in Spring 2020. Rubin & Rubin (2012) suggest that the participants' meaning is based on their context and experience, which includes their own bias. CQ

4. Please tell me about the training and professional development opportunities you had prior to the COVID-19 transition to online learning. Professional development training has been tied to the effectiveness of teachers' lesson planning, teaching methods, classroom management, and cooperation (El Afi, 2019). CQ

5. What types of positive reinforcements, experiences, or messaging did you receive from your administration before or during this transition? Communication, body language, occupational socialization, and encouraging words have been shown to increase teacher motivation and attitude toward their job (Osman & Hakan, 2018). SQ1

6. What type of negative reinforcements, experiences, or messaging did you receive from your administration before or during this transition? (Osman & Hakan, 2018). SQ2

7. What additional challenges did you face at home as you made the transition to online teaching in the spring of 2020? Can you provide insight into any challenges you faced? SQ3

8. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that might shed light on your experience that might have impacted your attitude or perceptions of preparedness as you made this transition to online teaching? (Saric & Steh, 2017) CQ

Appendix H

IRB Site Approval Letter: East Bridge College

June 23, 2022

Ms. Kelly Waltman Payne
███████████████████████

RE: IRB Proposal 2022.02

Dear Ms. Waltman-Payne,

I am pleased to inform you that your study, *A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: FACTORS INFLUENCING FACULTY ATTITUDE TOWARD ONLINE TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC DURING SPRING 2020* has been approved by the ████████████████████████
████████

Your study appears to meet the requirements set forth for the protection of human subjects and individual rights. Your approval is valid for one year, beginning June 23, 2022. Any modifications to this study must be submitted for review and approval prior to implementation. Additionally, you must notify the IRB Committee immediately of any unanticipated incidents.

Congratulations! We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving your final report.

Respectfully,

<center>**Appendix I**</center>

<center>**Survey Monkey: Focus Group Participant Pool**</center>

<center>A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: FACTORS INFLUENCING FACULTY ATTITUDE</center>

<center>TOWARD ONLINE TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC</center>

Survey Monkey: Initial screening survey questions

7. In the Spring semester of 2020, were you

    d. teaching part-time at ▮▮▮▮▮▮

    e. teaching full-time at ▮▮▮▮▮▮

    f. not teaching at ▮▮▮▮▮▮

8. How many face-to-face courses were you teaching, and were required to transition to the online format, for ▮▮▮▮▮▮ the Spring semester of 2020?

    d. 0 courses

    e. 1-2 courses

    f. 3+ courses

9. How many semesters of online teaching experience did you have prior to the Spring semester of 2020?

    d. 0-1 semesters

    e. 2-3 semesters

    f. 4+ semesters

10. How many years have you taught as a full-time college faculty member (please include teaching years at all colleges, both part-time and full-time)

    d. 1-3 years

    e. 4-6 years

    f. 7+ years

11. How many years have you taught as a faculty member at ▮▮▮▮▮▮

    d. 0-3 years

    e. 4-6 years

    f. 7+ years

12. How many semesters did you teach in face-to-face courses prior to the spring Semester of
2020?

    d. 0-4 semesters

    e. 5-8 semesters

    f. 9+ semesters

7. How much lead time did you receive from college administration, during the Spring semester
2020, notifying you that you would need to transition your face-to-face courses to the online
course format?

    a. 1-5 days

    b. 6-10 days

    c. 10+ days

Appendix J

Focus Group Participants: Recruitment Letter Email

Dear Faculty Member:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to learn more about the factors, such as professional development and other training related to online learning, that influenced faculty attitudes and perceptions of preparedness as they transitioned to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must have been full-time faculty members teaching at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ in Spring 2020, were required to transition at least one face-to-face course to the online format and had less than one year (2 semesters) of experience teaching online when the transition occurred. Participants, if selected and willing, will be asked to select an available time slot for the focus group session (10 minutes), participate in a recorded ZOOM focus group session between the researcher and several faculty members (1 hour), collect and provide to the researcher any documents such as emails and diary or journal entries, which could shed light on the participant experience as they transitioned their courses to the online format in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (1 to 3 hours). Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please click here https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RWP89S7 to complete the initial screening survey. You will receive a follow-up email if you are selected to participate in the focus group session. You can contact me at ▮▮▮▮▮▮ or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ for more information.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you are selected and choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me prior to the scheduled focus group session.

Please scan and email your consent form to me at : ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or mail the completed consent form to:

    Kelly Waltman-Payne
▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Sincerely,

Kelly Waltman-Payne
Doctoral Candidate, School of Education, Liberty University
▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Appendix K

Focus Group Participants: Consent Form

Title of the Project: A Phenomenological Study: Factors Influencing Faculty Attitude Toward Online Teaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic
Principal Investigator: Kelly Waltman-Payne, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a full-time faculty member at ████████████ who was teaching in Spring of 2020 and was required to transition at least one course to the online format. Participants should have had no more than one year of experience teaching online prior to the COVID-19 transition. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this study is to discover the factors that influenced the lived experiences of faculty which may have contributed to their attitude and perceptions of preparedness when transitioning to fully online teaching in response to the COVID-19 crisis for full-time faculty members at ████████████

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:
5. Select a time slot for a 60-minute focus group (10 minutes).
6. Collect and provide to the researcher any emails, diary or journal entries, and any other documents which could provide additional information about your experience with transitioning to the online format in Spring 2020 (1-3 hours).
7. Participate in an audio- and video recorded ZOOM focus group with the researcher and other participants (60 minutes).

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include a better understanding for college administrators and those in positions of power in education that will inform training for faculty. Additional benefits include the contribution to the academic profession of a deeper understanding of the depth of challenge faculty members faced as they lived through and worked through the pandemic.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

As a mandatory reporter, I will be required to disclose any child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others that I may learn through this research.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- The college and each participant will be assigned a pseudonym in order to protect the participants' privacy. The researcher will be in a private location where others will not easily overhear the conversation during the ZOOM focus group session to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. All physical documents will be stored in a locked file cabinet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and hard copies will be shredded.
- Focus groups will be recorded. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and not included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Destruction of data/records

Archival data, such as notes, documents, survey responses, will be held in a secure locked file cabinet. The data will be kept for five years after the date of publication. After this date, all files will be deleted from the audiotapes, and all other data will be destroyed. Physical data will be shredded; computer data will be erased.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Kelly Waltman-Payne. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at ███████████ or by email at █████████████. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, ████████████████████████████.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

Appendix L

Focus Group Questions

1. Please tell what discipline you teach and how long you have been a college instructor. This question should help participants get comfortable with the focus group process.

2. Tell us about your experience during the COVID-19 transition to online teaching in the spring of 2020. This question will allow participants to explain, in their own words, their transition to online teaching. CQ

3. What type of training and professional development had you received before the transition to online teaching in the spring of 2020? Participants can reflect on their training and professional development, which helped them feel more comfortable with online teaching or did not prepare them well. SQ1

4. What types of administrator messages and emails did you receive from your administrator during the transition? Participants can reflect on their administration's messaging during the transition to online learning. SQ2

5. Did you feel supported by your administration during the transition to online teaching? Participants can reflect on their perception of the college administration in supporting the faculty members during a crucial time, transitioning to online teaching. SQ2

6. Are there any home factors that contributed to your feelings of preparedness as you made the transition to online teaching during spring 2020? Participants can reflect on their home-life factors and experiences that may have impacted their feelings of preparedness as they transitioned to online teaching. This will allow participants to discuss their experience in the lifeworld, which is important for phenomenological research (Bevan, 2014). SQ3

7. Is there any other information you would like to share about the transition to online teaching in spring 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? This question will allow participants to add any additional information they believe is relevant in producing a clear and accurate picture of their experience. CQ

Appendix M

Document Artifact Sample: Administrator Email

Good morning colleagues:

I hope this email finds you well. If you are following the local news, you know that the COVID-19 numbers are increasing in our area. I hope you will all remain safe and well during this crisis.

I want to draw your attention to our training department. They have been hard at work curating and developing some of the best training programs I have seen to help us during this time. They have done a very good job at putting together relevant training for you. Go take a look.

I have also included a link to a wonderful TED talk I watched yesterday. This speaker presents an interesting opinion of online education and its value.

You may even share this with your students, as we are all facing unforeseen challenges. I am here to help. Please reach out.

Education Without Classrooms

Appendix N

Document Artifact Sample: List of trainings

Trainings, PD, Books, Lectures

Professional Development/Trainings

Quality Matters Rubric – this was a very good training. I learned a lot about teaching online, setting up my courses, interacting with students. Very good course.

Learning to Teach Online from Arizona State University – this course was mainly centered around the principles of online teaching, rather than the mechanics. It really gave a general overview of teaching online.

Motivating Students to Learn – wow! This was excellent and applies in the classroom or online.

I watched a LOT of YouTube videos on Canvas and its tools, etc.

Our college also provided some PD on various aspects of online teaching, using Canvas, etc.

Books:

Small Teaching Online by Darby Flower

The Online Teaching Survival Guide by Judith Boettcher

Excellent Online Teaching by Aaron Johnson

TED Talks:

George Greenbury: Schools Without Classrooms

Daphne Koller: What we're learning from online education

Tyler Dewitt: Online Learning Could Change the World

Mark Russo: Tough Teacher Truths