

# Advanced Faculty Professional Development for Online Course Building: An Action Research Project

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*This article reports on an action research project conducted by an Office of Distance Education at Kennesaw State University (KSU) for the purpose of finding a solution to the professional development of advanced faculty technology users. Action research (Lewin, 1946) involves a cycle of planning, action, and subsequent research to determine the effects of a social action. In particular, this research uses developmental action inquiry to gain knowledge “through action and for action” (Torbert, 2002; Torbert, 2004). Accordingly, this study identifies a problem, plans and implements a solution, and determines the effectiveness of that solution. Thus, three distance learning directors and 10 departmental online coordinators in KSU’s College of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) created and alpha tested an online training program for faculty with advanced technology experience. The group then beta tested the program and analyzed faculty responses for conceptual themes to revise the program. The revised online training program was then updated and offered to HSS faculty. The effect of this training is discussed in terms of its impact on the number of new online courses developed over the past few years in HSS at KSU.*

**Keywords:** advanced faculty development, online faculty training, pedagogy, professional development, online learning, elearning, action research

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## Introduction

Allen and Seaman's (2014) report of online education in the United States (U.S.) continues to establish the Internet's increasing role in higher education. Their latest installment expands on three trends advanced in their tenth annual report (Allen & Seaman, 2013). First, Allen and Seaman confirm the number of U.S. institutions offering online courses continues to climb. While the "vast majority of higher education (71.7%) institutions had some form of online offering" in 2002, today that number stands at 86.5 percent (p. 20). In short, it is now rare for a U.S. university not to offer coursework online.

Second, Allen and Seaman note the number of public and private online university degree programs offered in the U.S. continues to grow. The number of degree programs offered fully online jumped from "48.9% of U.S. institutions in 2002 to 70.6% in 2012" (Allen & Seaman, 2013, p. 21). In the last decade alone online private nonprofit degree programs in the U.S. have more than doubled from "22.1% in

2002 to 48.4% in 2012" (p. 21). Even small, residential, liberal arts colleges are looking to online learning to give their students summer and study abroad flexibility. In short, no sector is immune to the growth of online learning.

Third, Allen and Seaman report the number of students taking online courses in the U.S. continues to increase. Whereas less than 10 percent of students in the U.S. were taking an online course in 2002, that percentage stood "at 32 percent" in 2012 (Allen & Seaman, 2013, p. 4). This increase is particularly noteworthy because while the number of students enrolled in higher education *fell* in 2012, the number of those taking online courses *rose* to 6.7 million. These findings illustrate how fast higher education has changed as institutions have worked to make the web a classroom.

One way researchers have analyzed online education is by way of the different parties impacted by it (e.g., students, faculty, and universities). Although students have received the bulk of attention to date in the literature—and justifiably so—attention has also been given to the instructor. In

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reality, university instructors have been in the crosshairs for over a decade now as they have had to update their skills in order to take on the duties associated with educating students online. This shift in pedagogy is significant. University-level instructors have had to adjust to the online environment, while learning a range of new technologies in order to ensure their online courses achieve the same learning outcomes as face-to-face education. Not surprisingly, Paulus, Myers, Mixer, Wyatt, Lee, and Lee (2010) assert that more research must be done to equip faculty with the means to teach effectively online. Paulus et al. assert that faculty development programs are where this training occurs. Likewise, Roth (2014) advances that higher education must understand instructional professional development because of the vital role faculty members play in ensuring quality education for students completing online courses.

With so much at stake, it is surprising that there is not more research on faculty training programs designed to equip instructors to teach online, although more has emerged in recent years. Still there is notably little research on faculty development programs for instructors with existing experience teaching online but who desire advanced instructional skills. Subsequently, this study focuses on the professional development of university-level faculty with some experience in online teaching, but who seek greater expertise. The next section establishes what literature offers in this area.

## Literature Review

**A** literature review was conducted to determine what research currently indicates about faculty training for online instruction. Three trends emerged from this literature: First, training

programs are consistently developed, conducted, and analyzed based on a distinct theoretical framework. Second, a range of case studies on faculty training for online course development has been conducted. And third, this line of inquiry has given considerable attention to best practices of faculty training for online instruction. A synopsis of the first trend follows.

### *The Online Instruction Training Program Framework*

A portion of faculty training research has identified and tested different developmental frameworks for online instruction. Online instruction programs have employed blended online learning, design-based research, and problem-based training as frameworks for faculty development. Nerlich, Soldner, and Millington (2012), Shattuck and Anderson (2013), and Cho and Rathbun (2013) offer examples of these guiding frames.

Nerlich, Soldner, and Millington (2012) employ *Blended Online Learning* (BOL) as their theoretical frame. They choose BOL for several reasons (e.g., to encourage collaboration among faculty members participating in online instructional training), but most importantly because BOL promotes a “community of inquiry” among trainees (p. 323). Based on Nerlich et al.’s research, BOL is found useful for building and facilitating faculty training because it positively impacts those at most, if not all, levels of higher education (e.g., the student, the teacher, and the administrator). Further, BOL is deemed valuable because it helps facilitate trainee collaboration and problem-solving abilities during training as well as after a program has ended.

In contrast, Shattuck and Anderson (2013) identify *design-based research* (DBR) as their framework for training in order to

maximize the skill development of part-time instructors enrolled in Maryland's Certificate for Online Adjunct Teaching (COAT) course. DBR is "a systematic but flexible methodology aimed to improve educational practices through iterative analysis, design, development and implementation based on collaboration among researchers and practitioners in real-world settings" (Wang & Hannafin, 2005, pp. 6-7). According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), DBR is particularly useful for understanding, improving, and reforming established teaching practices. In Shattuck and Anderson's (2013) inquiry, they used DBR as a lens to examine instructors who were preparing to teach online for the first time. Shattuck and Anderson's findings indicate that faculty members responded well to training using DBR based on participant responses. Shattuck and Anderson report that participants found the transition to online instruction much like throwing a pebble in a pond—every decision had a ripple effect on every other part of online teaching. Moreover, trainees made clear that preparing for online training required that they think about all aspects of course development, aspects often overlooked in the classroom. Trainees also stated that online instruction made them think differently about how they approached classroom instruction. In short, faculty training using DBR was deemed relevant and valuable.

Additionally, Cho and Rathbun (2013) chose *problem-based learning* (PBL) as their framework for faculty online training to develop and facilitate a teacher professional development program. Cho and Rathbun specifically selected PBL so trainees would take the initiative to work through the problems associated with teaching online, and they would share what

they learn after solving a problem. In their analysis, Cho and Rathbun gave particular attention to trainee responses to assigned tasks, what trainees thought of the resources provided in the program, and how examples of online instruction shared during the program impacted faculty member learning. Based on their research, Cho and Rathbun contend that online teacher development training programs must make two things clear: the expectations of a program before training begins and the role of the trainer during training. They point out that any online training program must be offered at the right time so faculty members not only choose to participate but also take full advantage of it.

Along with Nerlich, Soldner, and Millington (2012), Shattuck and Anderson (2013), and Cho and Rathbun (2013), Baran and Correia's (2014) *nested approach* (i.e., faculty development is a product of several layers of university support) and Fink's (2007)  model (i.e., faculty must have incentive to teach online; see Hermann, 2013) are also frameworks for developing, managing, and analyzing a faculty training program. In addition to the research distinguishing various frameworks for faculty online training, a portion of the literature consists of case studies on faculty training for online teaching.

### *Case Studies on Professional Development for Online Teaching*

A second theme of faculty development and online teaching literature involves case studies. Barker (2003), Paulus, Myers, Mixer, Wyatt, Lee, and Lee (2011), and Healy, Block, and Judge (2014) have each considered the construction and facilitation of faculty training for online teaching as dealt with at different institutions. Their findings are revealing.

In her article, Barker (2003) describes the steps taken by Sacred Heart University's Nursing Department to offer asynchronous computer-based instruction to departmental faculty. In this case study, Barker generally asserts that faculty training programs must prioritize education first and technology skill development second to be effective. In particular, Barker notes four areas that need attention when considering faculty development for online learning: (a) obtain faculty buy-in up front; (b) emphasize student learning over faculty teaching; (c) stress instructional design and mastery of technology; and (d) highlight the importance of increased opportunity for faculty-student interaction (e.g., through discussion boards). Barker points out that while online learning may seem like a 24/7 proposition, when faculty members set parameters and follow-up with students in a timely manner, online education rivals classroom learning in promoting critical thinking.

Separately, Healy, Block, and Judge's (2014) case study of certified adapted physical educators (CAPEs) aimed to identify the advantages and disadvantages of offering an online faculty training program to university-level educators. The quantitative and qualitative analysis of 42 respondents established that participants viewed online training as an effective means of teacher skill development because it provided greater flexibility (e.g., convenient meeting times, less travel) and increased learning opportunities (e.g., better access to experts and resources); however, participants also noted that online training programs limited the social interaction of trainer with trainees and trainees with trainees. Further, faculty reported that training can suffer when technological problems arise. Healy, Block, and Judge's findings support previous research by Navarro and Shoemaker (1999),

Lin and Davidson (1995), Sujo de Montes and Gonzales (2000), and Dede, Ketelhut, Whitehouse, Breit, and McCloskey (2009) all showing that online training has advantages and disadvantages.

More recently, Paulus, Myers, Mixer, Wyatt, Lee, and Lee (2011) reported the results of their case study on nurses transitioning to online instruction at a university in the south. The researchers analyzed the results of a semester long program based on two guiding questions: "What happened during this professional development program...as faculty transitioned to online instructor?" (Paulus et al., p. 2) and "What were... participant experiences in the program?" (p. 2). Their findings include: (a) faculty had difficulty keeping up with training because of the amount of time training required, (b) faculty noted the transition to online teaching produced anxiety, mainly because online teaching varies the learning process, and (c) faculty were concerned with maintaining the momentum of what they learned once the program ended.

In short, this literature makes clear the unique challenges of teaching online as evident in each case study. It highlights how faculty and programs have addressed the challenges of transitioning to online teaching. With this established, a final theme of faculty training and online instruction literature is addressed.

### *Best Practices for Faculty Training of Online Teachers*

Along with literature emphasizing a theoretical framework for building and conducting research and case studies on faculty training programs, this literature has also given attention to best practices of faculty training for online instruction. Gregory and Salmon (2013) and Roth (2014) illustrate this trend in the literature.

Gregory and Salmon (2013) contend that too often faculty training programs are limited because they focus on knowledge and skills of online teaching rather than beliefs and practices. To address this shortcoming, Gregory and Salmon take an intervention approach whereby a mentor-mentee relationship is established during training and continued after the training. Their results produce four principles of training for online instruction. They include: (a) adapt training as needed, (b) make sure training takes context into consideration, (c) spread the word about training, and (d) take steps to ensure on-the-job training.

Likewise, Roth (2014) contends that learning communities are integral to instructor development at the university level. Among his points on effective faculty training for online teaching, Roth advances that: (a) collaboration is integral to effective teaching development, (b) learning communities work best when their purpose are clearly articulated, (c) professional development of teachers is now needed more than ever because of increased technology in higher education, and (d) theory and practice are cornerstones of effective development programs.

In sum, although some research has been done on faculty training for online instruction, more is needed. With the discourse initiated here and offered by others contributing to this line of inquiry (e.g., Wildavsky, Kelly, & Carey, 2011), this research extends faculty development inquiry for online instruction. In particular, this study examines a newly-developed faculty training program designed for instructors with advanced online teaching experience (i.e., faculty who already teach online but who are willing to adopt new technologies and adapt new frameworks to better serve students).

## Method

This research employs action research as its method to assess the development of a professional training program for faculty members with existing online teaching experience, but who desire further technology training. Lewin (1946) describes action research as “a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action” (p. 202-203). Within this approach to research is a cycle of planning, actions, and subsequent research to determine the effects of the “social action.” Accordingly, this research (a) identifies a problem, (b) plans and implements a solution, and (c) determines the effectiveness of the solution. In particular, the action research described here adheres to developmental action inquiry (Torbert, 2004) in which knowledge is gained “through action and for action” (Torbert, 2002, [www.williamratorbert.com/](http://www.williamratorbert.com/)).

At Kennesaw State University (KSU), the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) offers more online courses than any other college in the university. The CHSS Office of Distance Education (ODE) is made up of an instructional designer, nine departmental online coordinators (one from each department), a mobile online coordinator, two assistant directors, and a director. CHSS ODE supports the faculty by, among other things, running the “Build a Web Course Workshop.” The workshop is a semester-long faculty development workshop delivered in a hybrid format and covering online pedagogy, course design, the Quality Matters (QM) rubric, online course delivery, and instructional technology. A faculty member successfully completes the workshop when he or she has an online or hybrid course that meets QM standards. Faculty members who successfully complete

the workshop and build the online or hybrid course to QM standards receive a \$3000 stipend. The workshop began in spring 2010 and by spring 2015, 195 faculty members had successfully completed the “Build a Web Course” workshop.

While the mission of CHSS ODE is to grow online programs and online and hybrid courses, ODE does not promote that growth by compensating faculty solely for course development. Instead, ODE provides a stipend for professional development that includes a *deliverable* (i.e., an online or hybrid course or component of a course). In 2010, when the workshop first began, CHSS administrators theorized that if faculty were taught to build online and hybrid courses with an incentive for the training, then faculty would continue to build and teach more online and hybrid courses.

### *Statement of the Problem*

Although online and hybrid course offerings have increased in CHSS, the rate of increase has not been as significant as that anticipated at the beginning of this study. When faculty members were informally queried regarding the reason, three main answers were given (Terantino, Slinger-Friedman, Thomas, Randall, Aust, & Powell, 2014; Slinger-Friedman, Terantino, Randall, Aust, & Powell, 2014.) First, they wanted updated online/hybrid teaching skills. While faculty could take the workshop or any part of it as many times as they liked, they were only paid for successful completion the first time. Second, when faculty who had completed the workshop were asked why they did not build *more* online and hybrid courses after the workshop, they answered that they wanted an incentive such as a stipend. And third, there were faculty who wanted more than a skills update. They wanted advanced skills

training and pedagogy, and they wanted it in a convenient and effective format.

In order to stay within the CHSS policies compensating faculty for high quality course development while at the same time responding to faculty requests and fostering the development of more online and hybrid courses, 3 directors of distance learning and 10 online coordinators from CHSS designed and created a pilot training program for advanced users to develop online courses. The alpha version of this program was termed “The Project.” This training consisted of a series of learning modules developed and designed to offer participants with existing teaching experience a program for advanced instructional development.

At the same time, data was drawn as part of an action research project to extend faculty professional development literature. Torbert’s (2004) *developmental action inquiry* was chosen to facilitate participant self-transformation as well as enhance instructor creativity, awareness, justness and sustainability and guide data collection over the course of the program. Using the developmental action inquiry framework, data was collected in two ways: First, at the end of each learning module, the discussion board postings were reviewed for insights regarding the effectiveness of the module. Second, each participant completed a 15-item survey related to “The Project” at the end of the training program (see Appendix A).

### **Results**

**T**he Project” was initiated by the Director of Distance Education in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Kennesaw State. The purpose of “The Project” was to create advanced online professional development to provide faculty within HSS at KSU who already

teach online with advanced tools and pedagogy to improve existing and future online courses. "The Project" focused on the development of online modules created and run by online coordinators, alpha tested by the developers functioning as program participants. Online Coordinators were designated faculty within each academic department in the CHSS at KSU who acted as a liaison between department faculty and the Office of Distance Education (ODE) in the College. Online coordinators in CHSS were responsible for supporting distance education in online, hybrid, and traditional classroom settings within their departments. This support was provided in the form of one-on-one sessions to brainstorm and troubleshoot distance learning issues with full-time and part-time faculty and included department-level training for instructional technology. The designated faculty received a supplemental stipend for assuming the additional responsibilities described above.

A total of 11 modules were created, 10 by the online coordinators and 1 by the Director of Distance Education. The Online coordinators were given freedom to select their own module topic with the guidelines that it should pertain to best practices and sharing knowledge and expertise relating to online learning, and that it should contain 30 minutes to an hour worth of content on their topic along with an interactive activity. Each participant was expected to log in each week and access the module contents and participate in the activities. Each module designer was expected to monitor his or her own module during the week that it was active and to provide feedback to participants.

The modules created by the Online Coordinators fell into one of four types: (1) pedagogy/online teaching, (2) trends, (3) technology, and (4) tips or lessons learned relating to the online coordinator position. The following are a list of the topic titles:

Latest Research into Successful Online Learning; Best Practices in Mobile Learning, Faculty Presence in Online Courses, Get Your Students Heads into the Clouds!, Cloud Computing at Kennesaw State University, Strong and Effective Types of Feedback for Students in an Online Environment, Taking the Long View, How Online Learning Has Changed at Kennesaw State, Lessons Learned: Five Tips I Would Share with New Online Coordinators, Creative Assignments in the Online Classroom: The Virtual Museum, Learner-Content Interaction in Online Courses, Real Online Programs of Kennesaw State University, and The Use of Social Media in Online Teaching.

The design of the modules and the presentation of content varied depending on the module creator; however, each module was created to QM Standards in order to model best practices. Most online coordinators used voiceover PowerPoint to deliver their content (*Figure 1*), and two used a PowerPoint with more detailed notes. Some module designers had supplemental or required readings. Every module started with module objectives (*Figure 2*).

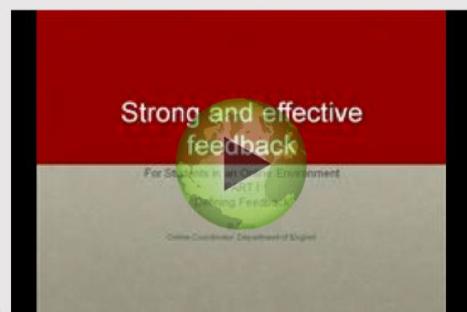
Every module also had a discussion board where participants were asked to reflect and interact by answering one or two directed questions relating to the material covered. Often participants were asked to relate their own experiences and methods of achieving a particular objective, such as establishing instructor presence in an online course (*Figure 3*).

This activity sometimes involved asking participants to provide examples from their own courses for all participants to be able to view and from which they could benefit (*Figure 4*).

Content comprehension and retention were verified in some modules by using self-assessment quizzes and drag and drop exercises (*Figures 5 and 6*).

## Step Two: Online Lecture - Part 1

Listen and follow the online lecture on Strong and Effective Feedback for Students, Part I: Defining Feedback.



Transcript of the lecture.

[Link to lecture in online viewer.](#)

Figure 1. Voiceover PowerPoint Presentation

The CHSS ODE "Project"

Dropbox | Quizzes | Checklist | Groups | Rubrics

Attendance | Grades | Classlist | Edit Course

Latest Research Into Successful Online Learning

Back to Table of Content

Goals for this Module

How the Contents of this Module Help Participants to Achieve the Goals

Online Learning: Old News, New Debates

**Goals for this Module**

- Participants will be able to describe the two basic sides of the argument regarding technology in education.
- Participants will be able to define "disruptive technologies," "EduPunk," "Moo," and "bricolleur."
- Participants will be able to name five factors that latest research says will increase critical thinking skills, course retention, program retention, graduation rates, and employability in our students.
- Participants will be able to name three qualities "the market" wants in college graduates.
- Participants will explain where the instructor's expertise and creative genius fits into the current context of online learning.
- Participants will describe what they would do in their online courses if they could do anything at all.

Figure 2. Module Objectives

At the end of the module....I can see how I might use D2L's 'Intelligent Agents' to more effectively touch base with students who are struggling with staying up with the course (Thanks for that idea Chris!). I would also like to do one of those "Introduce myself to the class" videos with [REDACTED] to put a nice personal 'stamp' on my courses. I think that this module really underlined the importance of us having a social presence in our online courses to connect students to our courses and to promote student success.

<<< Replied to message below >>>

Authored by [REDACTED]

Authored on: Mar 12, 2013 2:35 PM

Subject: My course presence

Hi Everyone,

Here are some ways that I establish my presence in my online courses:

(1) Post an introduction powerpoint slide show with some photos and details about my background (growing up and my research background) and tell the class a little about my family.

(2) Create a class discussion board on which everyone (including me) posts an introduction answering some specific (and hopefully interesting conversation starter) questions. I make sure to respond to each student's introduction post.

(3) Send a welcome email to the entire class.

(4) I respond to several (but not all) discussion posts for each module in which I have a discussion board.

(5) I give feedback to common issues that I find in assignments through an email or a voicethread.

(6) I "touchbase" through email occasionally to remind students to stay up with the material.

Figure 3. Participant Experience Sample

**Activity 3: Policies**

12 messages - 0 unread

All:

'Copy & Paste' the statements / policies from your online class that describe your availability, email response time, grading turnaround time, etc., and feel free to describe your philosophy about these issues in your post and/or comment constructively on what others have submitted.

Figure 4. Request for course content sample

**Test Yourself**

Value: 5

Which of the following, below, was NOT one of the elements that research said created an effective online course?

a. Requiring at least 20 pages of writing per course and 40 pages of reading per week.  
 b. Having at least one discussion board per week.  
 c. Encouraging students to set goals for themselves and evaluate their progress toward those goals.  
 d. Fostering frequent faculty-student contact.

**Check Answer**

Figure 5. Self-assessment Quiz

**DragNDrop Activity**

Drag the items from the bottom to the slots on the right.

Disruptive Technology	—>	A broad term that can refer to any use of technology in the classroom.
MOOC	—>	
		—> Massive open online course

Figure 6. Drag-N-Drop Exercise

Since the professional development offered in “The Project” was completely centered on these online modules, a learning management system was employed to deliver the content. The modules were hosted on Desire2Learn. Each module was opened to participants on Tuesday, and it was expected that all participants would complete that module by the following Monday evening at midnight.

## Discussion

The lessons learned from this action research project were interpreted from a review of the learning module discussion boards and the responses provided to the 15-item survey administered

after completion of “The Project.” For example, the Online Coordinators were asked how they felt about “The Project” before it started and after it was completed. While only 20% stated they were enthusiastic about “The Project” before it started, 50% were enthusiastic about it after it ended. The majority of participants (60%) stated that the pedagogy/online teaching modules were the most helpful to them. The following sections highlight additional salient themes based on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data. These themes are presented in three conceptual categories including concern regarding time given to complete the modules, the feeling of success, and the need for revision.

*Category 1: Faculty voiced concern with how long it took to complete modules.*

When introduced to the idea of “The Project,” a leading concern for most of the faculty involved the time needed to complete the modules and to create their individual modules. One participant voiced this concern in a response to survey item 1, “Given increasingly large loads and tenure-related expectations, the number one concern was time. I did, however, learn a lot about online teaching and distance learning so the extra effort was worth it.” This concern for the amount of time it would take to participate in the learning modules and create a module may have also impacted the participants’ level of enthusiasm upon beginning work on “The Project.” Initially, 50% of the participants reported feeling “neutral” with regards to completing “The Project.”

*Category 2: Faculty found advanced training beneficial and timely.*

Several of the participants indicated that the project can potentially be used for “faculty development and community-building among colleagues.” Specifically, they enjoyed reading the experiences of other online teachers and coordinators, and they appreciated the online delivery of “The Project.” Multiple participants commented on “the variety of the modules,” indicating they were able to gather new information related to a spectrum of topics as presented in the individual learning modules. In particular, 60% of the participants appreciated the modules that focused on the pedagogy of online teaching, while 30% valued the technology-based modules.

It is also important to note that upon completing the learning modules presented in “The Project,” the level of enthusiasm

had increased significantly from the 50% reported initially. After completion, 90% of the participants reported feeling “somewhat enthusiastic” or “enthusiastic,” while only 10% remained “neutral.” Perhaps most importantly, 90% of the participants reported they were better online teachers after completing “The Project,” and 70% reported they were better online coordinators. One participant referenced this apparent change in the way he or she viewed “The Project,” “Once I started seeing the very interesting contributions, I thought it was brilliant.”

*Category 3: Faculty identified what needed revision in the program.*

Although there were several successes experienced throughout the implementation of “The Project” and everyone referenced the potential benefit of its activities, there was also an obvious need for revisions of several of the components. One participant reported, “I see potential for this, but it needs refinement.” One constant theme among the needed revisions relates to the consistency and quality of the learning modules. The following suggestions taken from the end-of-project survey reference the disparity that existed among the modules:

- “It needs to be put together as a more consistent product. Some of the modules will not work for this purpose -- those should be removed. Additional modules with technology (how to use some of the tools addressed in the other modules) should be added.”
- “Some modules were better developed than others. Also, discussion boards alone don’t reflect good practice in my opinion.”

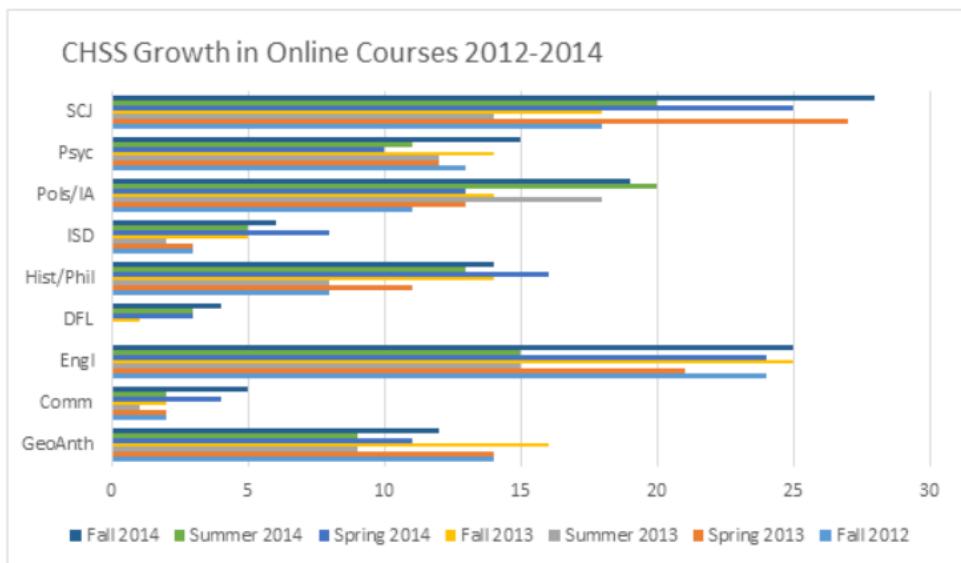


Figure 7. CHSS Growth in Online Courses 2012-2014

Legend:

SCJ=Sociology and Criminal Justice

Psyc=Psychology

Pols/IA=Political Science and International Affairs

ISD=Interdisciplinary Studies

Hist/Phil=History and Philosophy

DFL=Department of Foreign Languages

Engl=English

Comm=Communication

Geo/Anth=Geography and Anthropology

Thirty percent of the participants expressed that Kennesaw State University Online Coordinator specific modules were not very helpful.

- “The quality of the modules varied too much. It seemed like there were a lot of modules. It would have been effective with fewer modules.”

One participant called for providing more “clarity about what it [“The Project”] entails at the beginning.” The question arose, is “The Project” intended for the development of technology skills or for advanced training to develop additional online courses?

Another participant suggested that the facilitators “build into this project various course assignments that relate to the required deliverable (a new course).” In this manner, the participants would hone their technology skills while developing a new online course. It is particularly encouraging to note that 80% of the survey respondents indicated that they would be willing to create additional modules.

#### *Next Steps: Action Items of Research*

Building on the aforementioned need for revisions, a subgroup of “The Project” reviewed the created modules

and selected those most appropriate for *advanced* faculty development. Two online coordinators, the instructional designer, and the director of CHSS ODE then created software and pedagogy modules to increase the number of modules for advanced faculty development to 15. The program's final modules included:

- (a) *Softchalk*,
- (b) *Best Practices in Mobile Learning*,
- (c) *The Latest Research on Successful Online Learning*,
- (d) *Strong and Effective Types of Feedback*,
- (e) *Panopto*,
- (f) *Get Your Students' Heads INTO the clouds: Cloud computing*,
- (g) *Creative Assignments in the Online Classroom: The Virtual Museum*,
- (h) *VoiceThread*,
- (i) *“Faculty Presence” in Online Courses*,
- (j) *Doceri: An iPad App for Creating Content “On the Go”*,
- (k) *Tiki Toki*,
- (l) *Learner-Content Interaction in Online Courses*,
- (m) *The Use of Social Media in Online Teaching*,
- (n) *Work Smarter, Not Harder, and*
- (o) *Wiki is Hawaiian for Fast!*

With the modules set, faculty members were offered a chance to participate in the advanced faculty development program entitled “Skills Update Workshop”. To promote the development of additional online courses, successful completion of this new training and the subsequent delivery of a new online course resulted in the awarding of a \$1000 stipend to the faculty member, an amount consistent with the average recommendation of the online coordinators who completed the survey.

As *Figure 7* indicates, the “Skills Update Workshop” resulted in the creation

of 25 new online courses since the program was first offered in fall 2012. The increases in online course offerings are presented based on departments in HSS.

While all HSS departments have not developed new online courses at the same rate, most departments have increased their online course offerings each successive year since 2012. Above all, ODE is now well positioned to meet its goal for additional online course offerings based on its faculty training programs refined through this and related research.

## Summary

The benefits of faculty development for enhancing teaching effectiveness have been well documented (Emerson & Mosteller, 2000; Gillespie & Robertson, 2010); nevertheless, motivating faculty to pursue *advanced* faculty development opportunities presents a unique challenge in light of the increasing expectations and competing priorities. Given this challenge, the “The Project” was developed at Kennesaw State University to train faculty in online course development and delivery. Based on this and concurrent research examining “The Project” (Terantino, Slinger-Friedman, Thomas, Randall, Aust, & Powell, 2014; Slinger-Friedman, Terantino, Randall, Aust, & Powell, 2014), the resulting “Skills Update Workshop” has gone far in providing faculty members advanced technology training for online instruction at Kennesaw State.

The success of any faculty training program hinges on creating a program that effectively delivers appropriate content in a supportive environment. The findings of this research offer a roadmap for improving the content and structure of online instruction in new and existing online courses. In sum, this research describes one solution to

the professional development of *advanced* faculty training for online teaching for faculty at Kennesaw State University and at institutions like it.

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## Appendix A

- Question 1: What were your thoughts when you were first introduced to the idea of "The Project"?
- Question 2: Before "The Project" began, please rate your enthusiasm for it.
- Question 3: After completing "The Project," how enthusiastic are you about the experience?
- Question 4: Do you believe that this workshop, with a few modifications to make content more specific to online faculty, will effectively serve faculty who have completed the "Build a Web Course" Workshop and desire more professional development?
- Question 5: Do you like the fact that it was all online?
- Question 6: What category of modules was most helpful to you?
- Question 7: What category of modules was least helpful to you?
- Question 8: After completing "The Project," do you believe that you are a better online teacher?
- Question 9: After completing "The Project," do you feel that you are a better online coordinator?
- Question 10: What did you like least about "The Project"?
- Question 11: What did you like most about "The Project"?
- Question 12: What changes would you make to better serve your faculty who enroll in "The Project" pilot in fall?
- Question 13: If asked, would you participate in creating another module for a similar endeavor such as "The Project"?
- Question 14: How much should faculty be paid to complete "The Project" in a semester (not creating modules, just attending/participating)?
- Question 15: What else would you like to share? Do you have any ideas for research?