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Faculty Perceptions of Organizational Changes due to Online Education at Traditional Four-Year Higher Education Institutions

Dissertation

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Abstract

As online education continues to grow in the United States, few studies have investigated how faculty members perceive their instructional roles and their organizations to be changing as a result. This qualitative study is based on interviews with twenty-two faculty members from public and private non-profit institutions across the United States, and found that faculty members perceived the course design process, interactions with their students, and their own approach to teaching all changed substantially in the online context, typically in ways that inclined them to see these efforts as higher quality than their on ground teaching endeavors. Despite this, faculty members did not perceive that their departments or their institutions changed very much as a result of online education, and determined that institutional motivations for online education were consistent with typical market-aligned non-profit approaches to higher education in the United States (e.g., based on competition, student demand, and expanding institutional reach). Moreover, this market-aligned inclination identified by faculty members aligns well with Slaughter and Rhoades' (2004) theory of academic capitalism.

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CHAPTER 1: Overview of the Study

Online education continues to grow in scope and scale in colleges and universities in the United States. As of 2015, nearly thirty percent of all students were enrolled in at least one distance education course, up from eleven percent in 2002, even while overall higher education enrollments declined (Allen & Seaman, 2003, 2017). Online education has permeated institutions even more deeply, with almost seventy percent of institutions offering some form of distance education by 2015 (Allen & Seaman, 2017).[1] An increasing number of faculty members are being asked to teach online, though no reliable national data exists about how many faculty are teaching online and whether they mirror broader faculty demographics or diverge from them in important ways. Despite the scope and scale of the shifts in American higher education potentially caused by online education, this area remains substantially under-researched. In many ways, research on online education is still in a nascent phase, with an abundance of open questions and a seemingly ever-changing research context.

Despite this, there are pockets of research coverage about important topics like comparability of learning outcomes between face-to-face and online learning modalities (Cavanaugh & Jacquemin, 2015) and the faculty experience of teaching online (De Gagne & Walters, 2009). One area that remains woefully under-researched, however, is the effect that online education has on the institutions that adopt it. While trade publications highlight the financial benefits to some institutions as a result of online education (Straumsheim, 2017), very

[1] The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) tracks "distance education" enrollments rather than "online education" enrollments, but these terms are typically considered to be synonymous given the overwhelming preponderance of online education over other distance education methods (Allen & Seaman, 2016). "Online education" will be the preferred nomenclature for this study.

little peer-reviewed research exists to describe the effects on institutional culture, faculty members, or any other part of the institutions engaged in these apparently successful forays into online education. Moreover, how might these successes encourage other institutions to invest in online education, and what effects does this imitation have on institutions? What happens at institutions that attempt to replicate these successes but fail to do so? As of now these questions remain largely unanswered, as peer-reviewed literature on organizational changes resulting from online education or the processes by which such changes take place remains exceedingly scarce (Paul, 2014).

Focus of the Study

This study will attempt to add to the nascent literature base on the institutional changes resulting from online education by focusing on faculty perceptions of institutional changes. Faculty members were selected as the unit of analysis for this study because of their deep involvement in online education and their centrality to the work of the university (Etzioni, 1964, 2010; Major, 2010). How faculty members perceive, experience, and fulfill their roles within an institution is an immensely important determinant in how each university functions, and there are indications that the rise of online education in the last twenty-five years has changed or even fundamentally destabilized the faculty experience (Mazoué, 2012). These changes, in turn, may have a range of effects on the university as a whole. Faculty centrality to the work of the university also makes them ideal observers of changes occurring within it.

As mentioned above, some areas of faculty perception have already received sustained attention. Numerous studies have investigated faculty experiences in teaching online, including questions about changes to instructional roles and faculty participation in instructional development opportunities (e.g., Bailey & Card, 2009; Major, 2010; Orr, Williams, &

Pennington, 2009; Wasilik & Bollinger, 2009). These and other scholars have provided a rich description of the challenges, dislocations, identity questions, and joys of learning to teach in the online context and have detailed important steps that instructors and institutions can take to increase the quality of online education offerings. Despite this, few studies have directly connected these individual changes to broader interpretations of organizational change, which is a major focus of this study. Other areas have yet to receive sustained attention whatsoever, including faculty perceptions of broader institutional changes resulting from online education. The handful of studies addressing this question typically do so within a larger case study of an institution (e.g., Garza Mitchell, 2009) rather than through attention to faculty voices across institutions.

The study described here addresses this gap in the literature by attending to faculty perceptions and experiences of organizational change within their institutions. Faculty members were asked to respond to a semi-structured interview protocol developed by the researcher and their responses were transcribed verbatim, coded, and analyzed. Though this analysis contributes to the literature by itself, this study added the additional step of comparing these results with two existing theories of institutional change that are often used in the higher education literature: academic capitalism and mimetic isomorphism. Academic capitalism theorizes that institutional actors have come to realize the value of their knowledge products and have increasingly engaged in market-based activity around these products. Mimetic isomorphism posits that institutions emulate other institutions, especially those of higher prestige or success, particularly in times of uncertainty. This additional application step helps to clarify the application of relevant theory for online higher education (as opposed to “on ground” higher education) and thus provides more usable models for academic administrators.

Research Questions

Building from the background presented above, this study investigated the following research questions:

1) How do faculty members understand and experience changes to their teaching roles as a result of their institution's adoption of online education?
2) What factors do faculty members regard as responsible for their institution's decision to provide online education?
3) How do these findings fit with existing models of organizational change?

Conceptual Rationale

To put these questions in context, it is important to understand the various conceptual backgrounds involved. Online education, as typically defined in the literature, involves a group of students taking a course with an individual professor for a specified term and engaging in all class activities through the Internet without ever meeting the instructor or other students in person (Annand, 2007). Though the history of online education seems to start naturally with the first fully-online course offered in 1981 (Harasim, 2000), its development is part of a much longer history of distance education. Correspondence education, or education by mail, proliferated at land grant institutions like the University of Illinois and the University of Wisconsin in the late nineteenth century to serve rural citizens of these states (Watkins, 1991). Radio and television broadcasts began to supplement these mail-based educational programs in the 1920s and 1930s, but never made significant inroads into the higher education market (Sherow & Wedemeyer, 1990).

Faculty members have generally been hesitant or even resistant to embrace new models of higher education, including correspondence education and online education (Mitchell,

Parlamis, & Claiborne, 2015; Watkins, 1991). As the historical overview of the study in chapter two will make clear, there has been enduring skepticism of non-traditional forms of instruction for many decades, specifically forms that are "mediated" in ways other than face-to-face interaction (e.g., lectures by mail, so-called "teaching machines") or those that engage too readily in market-driven activity. Concerns about the quality of online education have intermingled with concerns about an erosion of faculty autonomy that may result from engagement in online education (Jaffee, 1998). Multiple scholars have pointed towards significant changes taking place concurrently in faculty roles, including "unbundling" of the faculty role into smaller aspects undertaken by different individuals (Gehrke & Kezar, 2015). One example of this is part-time instructional staff with no research or service responsibilities (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016). Another example from the online context is the increasing assistance provided to faculty members in course design and development by "para-academic" staff like instructional designers (Macfarlane, 2011).

Organizational change as a construct involves a number of specific criteria, according to Kezar (2014). These include the reasons for change, the process of change, and the outcomes of change, among other aspects. The limited research that exists on organizational change resulting from online education has tended to focus on case studies of community colleges and looked to cultural explanations for successful changes (e.g. Cox, 2005; Garza Mitchell, 2009). Other studies have compared successful and unsuccessful attempts to create online programs (Mitchell, Parlamis, & Claiborne, 2015), or have been undertaken by participant-observers as part of the process of creating new online programs. In all of these cases, faculty members have played a key role in determining the success or failure of online initiatives, with several cases showing faculty engagement to be the crucial factor (e.g., Mitchell, Parlamis, & Claiborne, 2015). These

studies also show faculty members to be keen observers of the changes occurring within their institutions.

Significance of the Study

As described above, a major gap exists in the literature about organizational changes related to online education. Given the relatively rapid rise of online education, it is to be expected that sizeable gaps will remain in the literature until scholarly attention has been focused in this area. This study is a first step in exploring one small facet of this sizeable research field, which by itself is reason enough for the study.

Several additional insights also accrue to researchers and practitioners through this study, however. As previously noted, research suggests that how faculty members perceive and experience online education within their institution is key to the success or failure of online education initiatives. From the perspective of administrators, understanding how faculty members relate to online education is thus of paramount importance for designing implementation strategies that maximize chances of success. The results of this study may also incline administrators to take faculty concerns about online education more seriously.

Second, existing models of organizational change like academic capitalism or mimetic isomorphism have not been previously examined for fit within the online education context. Researchers and practitioners have thus lacked an important interpretive frame for understanding institutions in the midst of major changes in the higher education landscape. Research-based guidance about choosing change models provides academic administrators with an important tool to analyze their institutions and determine implementation strategies for online education, which in turn may provide direction towards effective leadership in the midst of substantial changes to higher education institutions.

Faculty members who are teaching online may also benefit from this study. In understanding the perspectives of their colleagues related to organizational change on online education, they may be able to help shape the course of changes within their own institutions.

Overview of the Study

This study is presented in five chapters. The first chapter has presented an overview of the study, including the context in which the study is taking place and conceptual frameworks related to the study. The second chapter investigates the relevant existing research in much greater depth, including explication of the theoretical frame for the research and a thorough description of the organizational change theories to which the findings of the study are compared. The third chapter details the research design, including sampling approaches, data gathering methods, data analysis, and limitations of the study. The fourth chapter describes the research findings. The fifth chapter analyzes the fit between organizational change theories and the research findings, and discusses implications for faculty and institutions prompted by the research findings.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

Introduction

To put the research questions for this study into context, it is first necessary to understand the multiple conceptual frameworks implicated therein. This chapter begins with a definition and overview of online education as well as a description of several relevant historical contexts. It then describes faculty perspectives on online education, including concerns among some faculty members that online education is undermining their roles within the university and drastically changing the institutions in which they work. Research concerning changing roles of faculty members is addressed next, with particular reference to how the instructional role changes in the online context. The chapter then describes the handful of studies that directly address institutional change as a result of online education from the perspective of faculty members. The chapter concludes by discussing a typology of organizational change theories that will guide interview protocol development, as well as two well-known theories to which the findings from this study will be compared.

Overview of Online Education

In its most basic sense, Allen and Seaman (2013) defined a fully online course as taking place at least eighty percent online, and typically characterized by having no in-person meetings. They contrasted this with hybrid or blended courses, which typically take place between thirty and eighty percent online, web-enhanced courses, which take place up to thirty percent online, and traditional courses without any web presence whatsoever. The focus for this study is on fully online courses rather than on blended/hybrid courses or on ground courses using web-based tools.

Despite being categorized as one approach to higher education, online courses are not a singular phenomenon. There are a wide range of instructional methods utilized by faculty members within courses deemed to be fully online. Competency-based courses, which are based on individual student mastery of well-defined skills, have minimum student-student or student-instructor interaction and have been gaining increasing traction since the beginning of Western Governors University (Kinser, 2007). They are designed on the basis of programmed instruction (described in more detail below) and are intended to be used by a student as slowly or quickly as the student desires without regular instructor intervention. As commonly referenced in the research literature, however, online courses are similar to on ground courses in that a group of students sign up to take a class with an instructor during a specified term (Annand, 2007). Within cohort- and time-based online courses, another distinction exists between those that utilize web-based video conferencing to meet at pre-defined times and those that do not. Courses that do use pre-defined video conference meetings are referred as synchronous online courses, and those that do not are referred to as asynchronous. Other structures of synchronous and asynchronous courses are typically quite similar, with assigned readings and use of text-based discussion boards, as well as other features.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, almost thirty percent of all students in higher education were enrolled in at least one online course by the year 2015 (Allen & Seaman, 2017). Nearly three-quarters of online students take courses from institutions located within one hundred miles from their residence, and more than eighty percent enter online education with prior college credit (Clinefelter & Aslanian, 2017). At the undergraduate level in 2017, business degrees were most popular overall, accounting for nearly a quarter of all students enrolled, followed by healthcare, general humanities, and information technology at 20%, 14%, and 13%

respectively (Clinefelter & Aslanian, 2017). Graduate enrollments in 2017 also featured business at the top with a similar percentage, followed by information technology, education, and healthcare at 19%, 17%, and 12% respectively (Clinefelter & Aslanian, 2017). With the exception of general humanities at the undergraduate level, it is notable that all of the most common degrees can be classified as professional. As Clinefelter and Aslanian (2017) pointed out, this finding is hardly surprising given that eighty percent of all students report taking online courses in order to advance their careers. It is also notable that undergraduate enrollment in online education skews even further female than higher education as a whole. (Clinefelter & Aslanian, 2016; NCES, 2014; NCES, 2015).

Online education was offered in some form at 3,354 institutions in 2015, representing almost seventy percent of degree-granting higher education institutions in the United States. Enrollment numbers were heavily skewed toward the largest institutions, however, with the top five percent (235 institutions) accounting for nearly half of all distance enrollments (Allen & Seaman, 2017). Almost seventy percent of students taking at least one online course in 2015 did so at a public institution (Allen & Seaman, 2017). Disaggregating further, slightly less than half of all distance education enrollments at public institutions were at two-year institutions, which roughly tracks the breakdown for public higher education more generally (NCES, 2016).

While it is tempting to assume that the profile of online instructors is generally in line with typical profiles of college faculty in general, very little published data exists about who teaches online. While the 2004 National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF:04) found that a smaller percentage of part-time faculty members taught distance education courses than full-time instructors (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016), other studies have contradicted these findings. In a broad survey of a university system in the Northeast, Shea (2007) found that

part-time instructors were significantly overrepresented among instructors teaching online. In a survey targeted at community colleges, 45% of online courses were taught by part-time faculty members, though the researcher concluded this was in line with the part-time versus full-time breakdown at community colleges more generally (Lokken, 2014). Females were slightly overrepresented in online teaching in the NSOPF:04, particularly among full-time faculty (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016). Despite the increasing prevalence of online education in the United States and the importance of faculty in higher education, no further research was uncovered about demographics of faculty members teaching online courses. Furthermore, the National Center for Educational Statistics has no current plans to re-administer the NSOPF (NCES, n.d.).

History of Online Education

Online education, as its name suggests, was enabled by the creation of the Internet in 1969. Educators in the mid-1970s began to use email and virtual discussion boards as supplements to on ground courses as networked personal computing spread through the academy, but it was 1981 before the first fully online course was launched (Harasim, 2000). The course, offered by the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute, was entirely text-based and came to rely heavily on discussion boards as the primary mode for learner engagement, setting an early example of online course design that would become characteristic of so-called “asynchronous learning networks” or ALNs (Harasim, 2000). Other early examples of fully online education using the ALN model included courses in Information Systems at the New Jersey Institute of Technology and an Associate’s Degree in Engineering offered by Northern Virginia Community College (Mayadas, 1997).

Online courses continued to grow in popularity through the 1990s, enabled in part by large development grants from several major philanthropic organizations, including the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006). Development of dedicated web-based courseware to support functions like posting readings, turning in assignments, and grading (e.g. WebCT, Moodle, Blackboard) provided further impetus for growth, as this courseware made building and teaching online courses less technologically demanding (Piguet-Smith & Peraya, 2000). The founding and accreditation of Western Governors University in 1998 by a group of thirteen governors of western U.S. states lent substantial credibility to the idea of completing full degrees completely online (Kinser, 2002), as did the founding of the World Campus initiative at Pennsylvania State University in the same year (Hons, 2002). Online education has only continued to grow in the 2000s and 2010s; by 2002, over 1.6 million students in the United States were taking at least one fully online course, representing almost 10% of all enrolled students in higher education. Ten years later this figure had more than quadrupled to 6.7 million students, representing 32% of all students enrolled in higher education in the United States (Allen & Seaman, 2013).

Depending on one's perspective, however, online education can be understood as simply the most recent form of education at a distance, following in the history of television, radio, and especially courses by mail. More commonly known as correspondence courses, courses by mail emerged in the nineteenth century at several institutions in the Midwest like Illinois Wesleyan University, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and the University of Chicago (Watkins, 1991). In addition to readings, these courses included a range of written activities that students would complete and then mail back to the institution for grading. Watkins (1991) connected the developments at Wisconsin, in particular, to fulfillment of the institution's land-grant mission of

providing useful education to as many Americans as possible. Frederick Jackson Turner, notable historian of the American West and a correspondence instructor at Wisconsin, believed education by mail would provide social uplift for communities throughout Wisconsin (Watkins, 1991). Additional land-grant institutions, including the Universities of Kansas, Minnesota, and Oregon, began offering correspondence courses in the first decade of the 1900s, building directly on the Wisconsin model (Watkins, 1991).

Correspondence education was not without its problems, however. Many less-than-reputable academic institutions, including a large number of for-profit companies, offered correspondence education of low quality, tarnishing the reputation of the field as a whole and earning the moniker “diploma mills” (Pittman, 1991, p. 117). Such notable intellectuals as Abraham Flexner and Thorstein Veblen pilloried correspondence education on its claims to be able to provide a university education to anyone, regardless of academic preparation (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006; Watkins, 1991). Pittman (1991) argued that faculty resistance to correspondence education reflected the “elitist tendencies” (p. 112) of higher education, in contradistinction to the democratic ethos of correspondence education, as well as a consistently conservative bent among faculty members and an understandable concern about quality. Though this resistance to correspondence education among faculty members did slow its growth, correspondence education remained a viable method of taking university courses for credit well into the second half of the twentieth century.

Radio was the next innovation in distance education. Several state institutions like the University of Iowa and California State University began broadcasting educational programming, sometimes as part of broader correspondence study efforts, in the 1920s (Sherow & Wedemeyer, 1990). In this model, students would listen to the broadcasts in addition to

readings and assignments returned through the mail, making radio broadcasts roughly analogous to the lectures in contemporary universities (Ferster, 2014). Educational radio reached its zenith in the mid-1930s, soon to be eclipsed by educational television (Saettler, 1990). Educational television as part of college-level academic work operated on the same model as radio, with broadcasts performing the function of a lecture to buttress otherwise standard correspondence courses (Sherow & Wedemeyer, 1990). As with many technological teaching interventions, a major hope for television was driving down the cost of instruction and making a wider range of curriculum available to students, especially those in rural areas (Ferster, 2014). One of the best known and longest-running instructional series was NBC's *Continental Classroom*, which started in 1958 and aired early in the morning before commercial programming (Saettler, 1990). Although over a hundred frequencies were reserved in the United States for educational institutions and programming, instruction by television did not prove to the be panacea that some institutions hoped for, and gradually fell into disuse (Sherow & Wedemeyer, 1990).

Though these communications technologies decisively impacted the shape and development of online education, teaching machines and computer-assisted instruction are also important historical antecedents to consider when discussing online education. The first teaching machines, which resembled small typewriters, were developed in the 1920s as a way to test students on basic factual knowledge without teacher intervention (Ferster, 2014). They were not intended to replace teachers altogether, but rather to automate some parts of grading in order to allow teachers more time for other classroom pursuits. The major conceptual breakthrough for teaching machines came as a result of the psychologist B. F. Skinner's work on operant conditioning in the 1940s and 1950s (Ferster, 2014). Operant conditioning involves providing immediate feedback on an action, like answering a test question that reinforces the rightness or

wrongness of the action through a visual cue or other stimulus (Saettler, 1990). Immediacy of reinforcement is key for operant conditioning to be effective, leading Skinner to believe that the reinforcement cycles in traditional classrooms were much too slow to provide optimal environments for learning (Ferster, 2014). In order to provide immediate feedback during the learning process, units of instruction must be broken down into small chunks, arranged in a meaningful way, and repeatedly tested, a process called programmed instruction. According to Saettler (1990), it was no large leap from programmed instruction to the development of teaching machines that could be programmed to provide all phases of instruction, acting in effect as an automated individual tutor for students. In Skinner's mind, this also had the added benefit of allowing students to progress through the learning process at their own pace, a benefit that would not be lost on future proponents of programmed instruction (Ferster, 2014).

The invention of the computer, itself literally a programmable machine, hastened the development of programmed instruction, or computer-assisted instruction (CAI) as it came to be known. One of the earliest major developments of CAI came out of the University of Illinois in the form of the Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations (PLATO) system in the 1960s (Ferster, 2014). In addition to presenting small chunks of material in a linear fashion, the PLATO system was also equipped with a help feature that would provide additional information about a test question if a student had difficulty answering it, and break the problem down into even smaller sub-problems if necessary. As with the earliest teaching machines, PLATO was not intended as a replacement for classroom instruction, but as an automated tutoring system to support instruction. PLATO and other early CAI systems did not live up to the hype of their progenitors and were not commercial successes, in part because the cost of delivery remained

prohibitively expensive in the era of massive mainframe computers (Ferster, 2014; Saettler, 1990).

As computer hardware, and especially storage media, improved, CAI began to spread through the K-12 market, often in the form of educational games (Ferster, 2014). But it was the development of algorithmically-based Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) that represented the next level of advancement in CAI. Unlike previous instantiations of programmed instruction that operated more or less linearly, ITS operates based on a map of the concepts within a knowledge domain, including the relationships between concepts. ITS simultaneously creates and maintains a map of what an individual student knows and understands, and can thus adaptively choose which concepts to focus on for a given student based on the intersection of these two maps (Saettler, 1990). Individual students can thus take different paths through the knowledge domain, based in part of what they already know and what they struggle to master (Ferster, 2014). As instances of ITS began to move online, they were branded with the moniker "adaptive," insofar as they were designed to adapt to individual students. Though lauded for their ability to help students master specific knowledge domains, the complexity of authoring adaptive content has slowed adoption of the technology (Ferster, 2014).

Online education can thus be understood as the product of nearly fifty years of internet development, a hundred years of teaching machines, and over a hundred years of university distance education. Rather than springing to life *ex nihilo*, online education reflects and embodies the long history of technological innovations in college teaching and learning, particularly those aimed at overcoming boundaries of time, distance, and instructor (in)competence. These legacies are important to understand in order to comprehend faculty

perceptions of online education, as online education is simply the most recent, if most dramatic, technology to change the institutions in which faculty members work.

Faculty

While some notable faculty members like Frederick Jackson Turner were deeply involved in correspondence education (Watkins, 1991), most faculty members retained their traditional relationship with students throughout the twentieth century. Just like their predecessors who resisted correspondence education, many faculty members have remained skeptical about online education, often judging it to be lower quality, contrary to their professional identities, and ethically questionable. This section describes some of the major concerns that faculty members have voiced about online education and ties these narratives directly to research about the changing nature of the faculty role in the university over the past several decades. As argued in the previous chapter, understanding how faculty members perceive organizational changes related to online education is crucial for developing robust change theories and managing online education efforts.

Enduring Skepticism

According to Mitchell, Parlamis, and Claiborne (2015), "many faculty hold a historical perception of online institutions being degree factories offering a low-quality education at a high cost" (p. 356). Growing as it did from correspondence education and commonly supporting students who do not fit the traditional profile of higher education, perhaps this is not surprising. In instructional terms, many faculty members struggle to see how online education can ever be of similar quality to on ground courses, as they see significant barriers to creating active and inclusive learning spaces in the online environment (Duncan & Young, 2009). Lack of face-to-face engagement with students also leads some faculty members to report difficulties creating

personal bonds with students (Duncan & Young, 2009; Lackey, 2011). Similar sentiments were expressed by Jaffee (1998), who argued that online education, for many faculty members, "represents a radical departure from prevailing practice that is incongruous with their understanding of the essential nature of teaching and learning" (p. 25). While it is worth noting that Jaffee's article was published in 1998, advances in technology would likely not ameliorate his concerns, as he grounded faculty resistance to online education in the deep-rooted culture of academia, including faculty understandings of their own professional identities and perceptions of the classroom as an environment imbued with ritual meaning.

Anderson and Simpson (2007) raised concerns about online education from an ethical perspective. Online learning platforms collect large amounts of data about students, giving instructors knowledge of student behavior that is not typically available in face-to-face classes. How should online instructors use this information? How might it bias their perceptions or grading of individual students? Should students be informed that instructors have access to this information? Should students be allowed to opt out of this data collection process? In addition, the authors raised questions about the ethics of crossing cultural and linguistic boundaries, particularly from developed communities to marginalized communities. What might culturally-responsive pedagogy look like in the online context, particularly given the wide potential range of cultures represented in an online course? How can minoritized students participate in ways that are both meaningful to them and pedagogically appropriate for the course?

In one particularly trenchant critique that engages similar themes, Lauzon (1999) argued that online education has the potential to perpetuate widespread neocolonialism because of its wide geographic distribution from a small number of institutions in the developed world. The history of distance education has demonstrated how marginalized people have sometimes been

educated by those of European descent, leading Lauzon to urge reflection on the often unidirectional flow of information and discourse. He described an alternative in which online education could be used to bring disparate communities into dialogue rather than establishing epistemological hierarchies founded on historically oppressive relationships.

Taking a somewhat different approach, Agre (2002) described the institutional changes taking place as a result of online education as the most recent chapter of a longer battle between those who see education as a commodity and those who see it as a community. Commodity, in his description, refers to a market-focused approach of selling atomized bits of learning in the marketplace, whereas community refers to a people-focused approach of co-learning and knowledge creation. Online education, he averred, can be used in the service of either approach, though more likely as some weighted amalgamation of the two. Rather than offering one coherent vision of the effects that online education was likely to have, however, the author posited that the model or specific hybrid of models best fitting the culture each institution would show through in online education much as it had in traditional on ground activities.

Several other writers have used the framework of commodity versus community to ground their criticism of online education. Benson and Harkavy (2002) argued that universities should be sites of resistance against the commoditization of education and should be working towards neo-Deweyan ideals of education for democratic citizenship. Several other authors have offered a similar critique (Clegg, Hudson, & Steel, 2003; Levidow, 2002), claiming that neoliberal ideologies support commoditization of education while making it appear as an inevitable outcome of market pressures and globalization. They argued that resistance should take a decidedly critical approach and should work to unpack the various discourses of neoliberal ideology that seem to push inexorably toward online education. Miyoshi (2002) also descried

what he called the corporatization of the university in the context of online education, namely its close ties with business interests, which is in keeping with neoliberal ideologies surrounding higher education as a private rather than public good. Noble (2002), perhaps the best-known faculty opponent of online education, argued that commoditization is a direct assault on faculty professionalization. He pointed to correspondence education as the mold from which online education has sprung, including a fracturing of the traditional instructional role and increased standardization of curriculum. Online education is thus neither novel nor innovative for Noble, but rather the most recent in a series of attempts to undermine faculty authority and professionalization in an updated technological guise.

Trow (2002), like Benson and Harkavy (2002), lamented the impending shift away from liberal education as a result of online education. Because he thought that face-to-face relationships between teachers and students were crucial for "shaping the mind and character" (p. 316) of students in liberal education, he believed that the growth of online education would lead naturally to a diminishment of liberal learning. Trow also forecasted the further weakening of faculty professional autonomy through online education. Specifically, he worried about institutions using pre-recorded instructional content from well-known professors rather than asking their own faculty members to teach. In his view, this would turn faculty members "into what amounts to teaching assistants in other people's courses" (p. 310), a situation he clearly found unacceptable. He also described a potential shift toward increasing external assessment, standardization, and control of higher education that might be at least partially facilitated by the shift to online education.

Cornford (2002) offered a similar forecast about increasing structure in higher education institutions as a result of online education. In particular, he opined that development of online

offerings required much more specific elaborations of university policy and more rigid implementation of these policies. Online education thus shifts universities from loosely integrated organizations with a wide variety of local knowledge centers towards centralized organizations with defined and routinized processes for instruction. Like other authors discussed here, he believed that increased centralized management of online education would inevitably weaken the professional autonomy of faculty members.

Resisting technological determinism is the focus of several other critiques of online education. Yeaman (2011) traced the history of technological innovation in American education in order to show how deeply Americans are attached to notions of technologically-mediated progress. He argued that many higher education professionals, particularly in the United States, have come to view technology as inevitably progressive, rather than as one line of discourse in a longer, larger conversation. Clegg, Hudson, and Steel (2003) argued that technology should be a major site of contestation in higher education, rather than described as an inevitability. Online education should be understood as the result of a long history that has been shaped by conflict, and that online education will ultimately increase the power accrued by managerial interests at the expense of faculty.

Faculty opinions of online education have not all been negative, however. Annand (2007) argued that online education can facilitate a move toward self-directed learning for students, reducing the time instructors spend with students and thus the cost of instruction. He posited that students "must organize their learning independently, taking over some of the roles of the instructor" (p. 1) for the new models of online education to be successful. The interaction of learner and content takes center stage in this approach, with the social aspects of learning marginalized. Annand's model is perhaps best seen in competency-based online education, such

as Southern New Hampshire University's College for America program, or Western Governors University. Both of these institutions use programmed instruction to move learners towards examinations of competency with little support from other students or faculty members (Anderson & McGreal, 2012; Kinser, 2007). One impact of such a dramatic organizational shift is a clear reduction in the centrality of faculty members to the teaching and learning activities of the university. Faculty members in competency-based environments do not engage in teaching as traditionally defined, but rather serve as subject matter experts in the creation of programmed instruction.

In one particularly provocative paper, Mazoué (2012) argued that online education would fundamentally destabilize and eventually eradicate face-to-face higher education. Citing advances in the science of learning, improvements in online technologies, open educational resources, and the "unbundling of faculty roles" (p. 75), he argued that the educational forces arising from this nexus represent a transformational moment for higher education. Like other writers, he envisioned an instructional approach that bears a striking resemblance to programmed instruction, with learning-science-based online courses deployed at scale, particularly within competency-based frameworks. Dual mode institutions, or those that serve both face-to-face and online learners, represent a transitional phase in the historical evolution of higher education toward a fully online future, he argued.

As reported in most of the extant literature, then, faculty members remain skeptical of online education. Many faculty members see it as part of a continued movement toward deprofessionalization of their roles within the university. Others relate it to neocolonial or neoliberal ideologies and resist it on those grounds. Even those who see it is a benefit for

students still see it unmooring the university as currently constituted. These critiques and forecasts do, in fact, highlight the changing nature of the academic enterprise.

Evolving Faculty Roles

Etzioni (1964, 2010) argued that faculty members, along with doctors, lawyers, and engineers, should be classified as professionals, whose very function within an organization depended on a large degree of autonomy in decision making. He further described the structure of a professional organization as one in which the administrative function is designed to serve the professionals, inverting the typical corporate business model where administrators (or managers) direct staff members towards their own ends. Due to their status as professionals, tenure-line faculty in particular have typically shown more loyalty to their academic specialty than the institution in which they currently ply their craft (Delanty, 2007; Lee, et al., 2005). Insofar as management of the organization is required, beyond addressing the concerns of the professionals within it, professionals expect a leader from the professional cadre and a voice in all significant organizational decisions (Etzioni, 1964, 2010). Organizational change, when it happened at all, was to be managed by an administrator who had come from the ranks of the faculty and shared their concerns, while faculty members continued to attend to their professional work largely unaffected by the institutional context.

Under this rubric, as codified in the doctrine of academic freedom, faculty members have typically enjoyed substantial decision-making authority in the classroom, including the selection of appropriate subject matter, teaching practices, and assessment strategies (Sullivan, 2011). By the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, faculty autonomy in the classroom was beginning to erode, as calls for increased oversight of teaching practices and accountability for student learning outcomes became more insistent among disciplinary, legislative, and

accreditation organizations (Brint, 2011; Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016). Moreover, a "para-academic" staff oriented towards the improvement of teaching and learning began to challenge faculty professional competence in the classroom and advocate for non-trivial pedagogical changes (Brint, 2011; Macfarlane, 2011; Rhoades, 2011).

Erosion of faculty autonomy in the classroom is emblematic of a broader disintegration of faculty work often termed "unbundling." Macfarlane (2011) described the decline of traditional faculty roles in which each individual scholar alternates between research, teaching, and service, delineating instead increased specialization among faculty members in one of these areas and the rise of hyper-specialized para-academic support staff. Unbundling is particularly manifest in the rise of instructionally-focused, non-research faculty members and the increase in part-time instructors across higher education (Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016). In addition, scholars point to technological change as particularly destabilizing to the faculty role. According to Finkelstein, Conley, and Schuster (2016), "technology has expanded its reach so swiftly in just recent years as to have dramatically changed the campus function and perhaps especially the modes of faculty work" (p. 12). Nowhere is this more evident than in the classroom, into which para-academic specialists like instructional technologists have increasingly come to assist faculty members with teaching (Macfarlane, 2011; Rhoades, 2011). Online education thus sits at a contested nexus of professional autonomy within higher education, a situation obviously not lost on faculty members.

Research on faculty members who have taught online bears witness to some of these changes. Instructors perceive that their role in an online course changes from a lecturer to more of a facilitator (Chiasson, Terras, & Smart, 2015; Hartman, Dziuban, & Moskal, 2000). This change may come with a sense of reduced control over the course environment (Chiasson,

Terras, & Smart, 2015; Conceição, 2006), though several studies suggest that instructors perceive the change to be positively learner-centered (Conceição, 2006; Hartman, Dziuban, & Moskal, 2000). Some faculty members report feeling more isolated as a result of teaching online (Boling et al., 2012; Lackey, 2011), while others indicate feeling out of their professional depth in regard to online pedagogical practices (Berge, 1998). Instructors overwhelmingly report that developing an online course takes more time than developing a face-to-face course (Chiasson, Terras, & Smart, 2015; Conceição, 2006; Hartman, Dziuban, & Moskal, 2000; Reinheimer, 2005; Rockwell et al., 1999), and most instructors teaching online are provided with some amount of technical and pedagogical training from staff specialists (Ray, 2009).

Faculty roles are changing in the twenty-first century university and online education appears to both reflect and contribute to this evolution. While perhaps not signaling the end of faculty life as it has been practiced in the United States, these trends do indicate a change in the relationship of the faculty to their roles and to the organization itself.

Organizational Changes

Though faculty members are obviously interested in the ways online education is changing higher education institutions, very few scholars have empirically investigated this topic. In terms of basic structure, online education efforts are typically managed within institutions by either a centralized administrative department established for that purpose or by individual academic departments (Hoey et al., 2014; Paolucci & Gambescia, 2007). Administrative needs of online education mirror those required for face-to-face classes, including marketing, recruitment, enrollment management, registration, information technology, library support, and a host of other services. Holtrop (2012) found that how these needs are met and the structure of this support can be tied directly to the historical evolution of online education at a

given institution, often reflecting idiosyncrasies of individual administrators and existing collaborative relationships across an institution. Despite the multiple research opportunities provided by such variety and change, only a handful of empirical studies of sufficient quality could be identified that probe the impact of online education on existing higher education institutions.

In a cross-case study including fifteen community colleges, Cox (2005) detailed a host of changes that took place within institutions as a result of committing to online education. Institutions invested heavily in support services for online students and instructors, and were required to acquire a range of web-based technologies and the resources to support them. Structural changes included the addition or reassignment of administrative leadership to manage online education efforts, as well as sufficient investment in staff to support course development. Strong support from senior leadership was crucial to successful efforts, though many colleges in the study lacked sufficient policies surrounding intellectual property and compensation structures for faculty members.

Perhaps even more interestingly, focus groups and interviews conducted as part of the study revealed sharp differences in the perceptions of online education between administration leaders and faculty members. The former were fully committed to online education and stressed its importance for remaining competitive and expanding the availability of education for students, while the latter remained unsure if it was an appropriate activity for the community college and whether it was one that benefitted students or faculty members. The author concluded that administrators in particular labored under several myths that went mostly unchallenged, like online education as a necessary competitive advantage, equivalence in student learning outcomes between online and face-to-face courses, and the actual ability of online

education to increase enrollment among students not being served by higher education. From this analysis, it is clear that developing an online program requires a commitment of resources from a college, significant structural changes, attention to the needs and concerns of faculty members, and more empirical research on the potential benefits of offering online programs for the institution and the community.

In a similar study, Garza Mitchell (2009) used focus groups and wide-ranging document analysis to study a Midwestern community college in the midst of a large expansion of online education in order to determine how this effort changed the institution over time. Faculty members found their roles to shift more towards facilitators, away from instructors or lecturers, and administrators became champions of online education both inside and outside the college. Faculty members also discussed applying pedagogical methods learned in teaching online in their on ground classes, a finding supported by other research (e.g., Kearns, 2016). Perhaps most interestingly, Garza Mitchell found that the institutional culture in place before the change, which stressed creativity and adaptability, "made it possible for this change to occur without being overly traumatic for faculty members and administrators" (p. 98). While this study and Cox's (2005) study provide important interpretive lenses for the community college context, it remains to be seen whether the same sorts of conclusions can be drawn from four-year college environments.

In one particularly germane study, Mitchell, Parlamis, and Claiborne (2015) contrasted the successful online efforts of the University of Massachusetts system (UMassOnline) and the failure of such efforts in the University of Illinois system (Global Campus). They argued that the major distinguishing factor between the two programs was how administrators involved faculty members in the process of developing online education within the state system. In the former

case, existing faculty members from institutions in the University of Massachusetts system were recruited to teach online courses through UMassOnline, eventually creating a successful groundswell of support from rank-and-file members of the various UMass institutions. Administrators at Global Campus, on the other hand, recruited new and untenured faculty members to teach rather than offering these opportunities to existing faculty members. Faculty members at University of Illinois campuses saw these additional faculty members as a threat and made their concerns heard through faculty senates and other means. The authors concluded that "Global Campus failed merely a year and a half after its launch due in large part to faculty resistance" (p. 355). The lesson for online education management is clear: how faculty members are involved in the process of developing online offerings is very important for success. Neither this study nor others mentioned herein have directly investigated how such findings might influence the application of particular organizational change theories, however.

Some case studies have also emerged from participant-observers involved in the development of online educational offerings. Yamagata-Lynch, Cowan, and Luetkehans (2015) described the five-year development process for an instructional technology master's degree at a large Midwestern university. They noted that many of the tensions that arose involved policies and existing technologies that had not been adapted to support online education, as well as a variety of concerns voiced by faculty members about the online program's potentially corrosive effect on residential courses and faculty member time commitments. The authors also found entrepreneurial leadership among a range of faculty and administrative stakeholders to be important in keeping the design process moving forward, allowing the institution to ultimately craft a program recognized as at least equal to the face-to-face program. LeBaron and McFadden (2008) described a similarly fraught development process in creating a master's degree in

education at an Appalachian university. Like the previous case study, the participant-observers also encountered issues with outdated technologies that struggled to support online education, as well as a lack of student and faculty support, particularly around the use of these technologies.

Each of these studies foreground different aspects of how faculty members perceive organizational changes and how they are involved in shaping institutional outcomes. Creating partnerships between faculty members and administrators appears to be an important aspect of successful efforts, as does taking faculty concerns seriously. Assisting faculty members in role transition and providing adequate support for technologies also seem particularly important. With such a small existing literature base on online education-related organizational change to work from, however, additional guidance from major theories of organizational change is also necessary.

Theoretical Orientation

Because this study aims to investigate how individual faculty members understand changes within their institutional contexts, Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld's (2005) conception of sensemaking provides a useful theoretical lens for this study. Deeply embedded within a constructivist epistemological paradigm, sensemaking is the process by which individuals develop "plausible images that rationalize what [they] are doing" (p. 409) within a particular social or organizational context. Phrased slightly differently, sensemaking involves the creation of a narrative for understanding and interpreting phenomena in relation to existing identities within a given social group and then acting in accordance with these interpretations. In less formal terms, sensemaking is an attempt to answer the questions "What's going on here?" and "What do I do next?" (p. 412) when individuals enter a new context or realize that their frames of reference no longer satisfactorily explain the reality in which they are operating. Sensemaking

is not often required within stable environments because existing interpretations function well as a guide for action. In contrast, social or organizational changes often trigger sensemaking by causing a mismatch between previous worldviews and the new environment. In change situations, individuals are forced to reconsider their conceptions of the organization in light of the changes and determine appropriate adjustments to their behavior. As the authors noted, "We expect to find explicit efforts at sensemaking whenever the current state of the world is perceived to be different from the expected state of the world" (p. 414).

Organizational Change Theories

In addition to investigating how faculty members perceive changes, this study will compare these findings to existing organizational change theories. Based on the literature reviewed herein, two theories seem particularly relevant to understanding change in the context of online education: academic capitalism and institutional isomorphism. This section will briefly describe both of these theories and indicate how each might provide explanations of perceived changes related to online education. The theories will then be situated within Kezar's (2001, 2014) typology of change theories, which will provide a schema for comparing the two theories and, ultimately, a subset of the findings of this research study.

As described by Slaughter and Rhoades (2004), academic capitalism is theory that "explains the process of college and university integration into the new economy" (p. 1). The authors posited that the major economic shift in the economy of the United States from manufacturing to technological services provided a new and profitable market outlet for the product of the university: knowledge. In the economy of the twenty-first century, "knowledge is raw material to be converted into products, processes, or service" (p. 15). The theory of academic capitalism differs from other descriptions of corporatization of the university, however,

in that it treats the movement towards increased market activity as impelled rather than compelled. That is, actors inside the university rather than those outside bear primary responsibility for bringing the university into the market sphere. Increases in market activity have consequences for universities, however, including more business-like administrative regimes and market-driven decision making. Perhaps most important from the vantage point of this study, the authors pointed to increased intellectual property and copyright claims on instructional materials by institutions as one result of increased market-driven decision making and described how these claims allow institutions to unbundle faculty labor in search of efficiencies and profit centers.

The theory of institutional isomorphism, on the other hand, posits that organizations within defined fields like higher education "provide a context in which individual efforts to deal rationally with uncertainty and constraint often lead, in the aggregate, to homogeneity in structure, culture, and output" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 147). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argued that isomorphism consists of three types: coercive, where the state or other sanctioning body enforces standards; mimetic, which involves the borrowing and application of ideas across institutions to solve similar problems; and normative, which results from the development of professional standards within a defined field. Each of these have some relevance in understanding online education, but mimetic isomorphism seems particularly relevant to the discussion of why institutions decide to undertake online education. Mimetic isomorphism often occurs in times of uncertainty, as institutions attempt to model themselves on more successful institutions to deal with changing external conditions. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) were careful to point out that such modeling does not include direct understanding of cause and effect relationships, such that adding a particular type of position would be known to increase

efficiency or market position. Rather, modeling is often undertaken "when an organization faces a problem with ambiguous causes or unclear solutions" (p. 151). Moreover, modeling an organization on a more successful organization can be a relatively easy way to increase legitimacy within a defined field. This pressure for legitimacy, and thus the potential for mimetic isomorphism, also seems to increase as the number and variety of employees and customers increases. It should be noted, however, that DiMaggio and Powell were concerned with borrowing between institutions, rather than the spread of practices within institutions, and that they theorized that institutions became more alike as a result of such borrowing.

Online education may thus look very different depending on the lens through which one interprets it. Academic capitalism may interpret the phenomenon as a result of individuals within universities looking for increased opportunities to offer their product (i.e., education) to the market. Rather than catering to a primarily local constituency, which had been the norm for most of higher education's history, institutions are using a novel delivery technique to provide services much more broadly and often at scale. In order to do this, however, these individuals need to increase the bureaucratization of their organizational structures, including the hiring of additional technology experts, curriculum consultants, and a large number of adjunct faculty members. Moreover, as more institutions operate in more market-driven modes, other institutions are required to compete in order to remain viable.

Viewed through the lens of mimetic isomorphism, however, institutions may be more likely to turn to online education in times of increased uncertainty. Given the overall higher education landscape and the prophetic pronouncements of impending apocalypse described above, the current climate seems uncertain for many institutions. Organizational leaders do not necessarily know that online education will be successful at their institutions, but they do see

many schools with successful online programs reversing enrollment declines. Significant borrowing is thus taking place between institutions, such that additional administrative positions are being created to manage online education at the same time that faculty positions are increasingly relegated to part-time status or non-tenure track appointments.

Kezar's (2014) typology provides a way to classify these theories of change. Her criteria are a useful way to understand change theories in general, consisting of ten interrelated yet distinct elements found in most change theories, but particularly helpful when comparing the foundational elements of disparate theories. Each of the ten elements are displayed in the table below for academic capitalism and mimetic isomorphism in order to provide an example of how the typology works. These elements will be discussed and interpreted in more detail with reference to the findings of the study in chapter five.

Table 2.1

Academic Capitalism and Mimetic Isomorphism within Kezar's Change Theory Typology

Element	Academic Capitalism	Mimetic Isomorphism
Why change occurs	Economic environment shifts; increased market activity among institutions	Environmental uncertainty; field reification
Process of change	Diffuse, networked, uneven	Imitation, borrowing
Outcomes of change	New institutional structures and work relationships	Institutions becoming more alike
Key metaphor	University as business	Follow the leader
Examples	Patenting and licensing research products	Organizational restructuring to mimic more successful peer
Type of change	Unplanned; dependent on environment	Unplanned; dependent on environment
Context of change	Network of actors internal and external to institutions	Network of actors internal and external to institutions

Tactics	Support marketization of institutional products	Observe and borrow structures and strategies of other organizations
Criticisms	Lack of usefulness for institutional leaders	Offers few alternatives for institutional leaders
Benefits	Breaks down imaginary boundary between institutions and market activities	Deconstructs myth of institutional innovation; recognizes field-dependency of change

Element column adapted from Kezar (2014). Academic capitalism adapted from Slaughter & Rhoades (2004). Institutional isomorphism adapted from DiMaggio & Powell (1983).

Summary

This chapter described a range of literature with a direct bearing on faculty perceptions of online education. Online education must be understood in historical context, as arising out of correspondence education, programmed instruction, and the affordances of the internet itself. Many faculty members remain skeptical about online education and see it as an outgrowth of neoliberal ideologies or an attempt to deprofessionalize the faculty role. Faculty roles are indeed changing, with unbundling on the rise and a concomitant rise in adjunct appointments, though to what degree this change is related to online education is unknown. Adopting online education changes institutions, though the literature dealing directly with these changes remains sparse. In light of this empirical scarcity, two major organization theories provide direction toward closing the knowledge gap. These theories will be compared against the findings of the study in chapter five, organized within a typology of organizational change theories that was also used to develop the interview protocol for faculty members. The next chapter will describe the development of this protocol and the other research methods of the study.

CHAPTER 3: Research Methods

This chapter describes the research methods that were used for the study. Qualitative methods were selected for their fit with the research questions. After reviewing the research questions, this chapter details the research design, including sampling, data gathering procedures, data analysis, and limitations of the study. A diagram of the research design concludes the chapter.

Research Questions

As discussed in chapter one, this study will focus on three research questions:

1) How do faculty members understand and experience changes to their teaching roles as a result of their institution's adoption of online education?
2) What factors do faculty members regard as responsible for their institution's decision to provide online education?
3) How do these findings fit with existing models of organizational change?

Research Design

This study utilized qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. While some organizational researchers have used quantitative methods to explore questions of this nature (e.g., Vignare, Geith, & Schiffman, 2006), most studies in this area utilize qualitative approaches. Qualitative approaches are designed to "provide rich insight into human behavior," including "the meanings and purposes attached by human actors to their activities" (Guba & Lincoln, 2001, p. 58). Because this study focused on the meanings that faculty members make of their own experiences with online education and the organizational contexts in which they work, qualitative inquiry was deemed most appropriate for this set of research questions. The theoretical orientation of the study supports this choice of method because the study focused on

how faculty members perceive and understand the changes and change processes involved in online education. The study was approved by the BC Institutional Review Board after a review by the researcher's dissertation committee.

Case study methods were also considered for this project. These types of studies can offer rich descriptions of organizations, particularly of the interactions between different areas of organizations and the culture of institutions. Several of the important studies reviewed above fit into this genre and decidedly shaped the research questions for this study. Given that the desired unit of analysis for this study was faculty members across institutions and disciplines rather than the institutions themselves, case study methods were not adopted. As mentioned in chapter one, faculty members are central to the planning, development, and implementation of online education and their perspectives have real consequences for the organizations in which online education is offered, but they have not received the research attention related to organizational change befitting their role. This study compared and contrasted faculty perceptions of organizational change in order to illuminate the basic outlines of an under-researched area, rather than diving deeply into a few institutions. In this sense, the study was designed for more generalizability than case studies can typically offer.

Sample

The sample for this study was purposeful rather than random (Cresswell, 2014). It consisted of full-time faculty members, both tenure-line or non-tenure-line, who had both developed and taught at least one online course in any discipline in the two years prior to the interview at a four-year postsecondary institution in the United States. Part-time faculty members were excluded from this study because they are often not included in decision making within departments and institutions (Kezar & Maxey, 2014) and may thus lack the requisite context for

describing organizational changes. Given the swift changes to technology and associated teaching methods in online education, specifying recency of experience was deemed important for the study to reflect a current understanding of faculty experience (Bernard et al., 1984).

In order to ensure that the sample targeted faculty members with a perspective on organizational change related to online education, only faculty members teaching in a fully-online, degree-granting undergraduate or graduate program were invited to participate. The rationale for this further limitation is twofold. First, fully-online programs require more faculty engagement in the design and development process, often requiring sustained reflection on the goals and outcomes of online education in a way that developing single courses does not. Second, offering fully-online programs demonstrates commitment to online education at an institutional level and thus a greater likelihood that broader organizational change processes are active and perceptible within that institution.

In order to compare and contrast the attitudes among academic disciplines, the sample was intentionally broad. Programs in the natural sciences are less common than programs in the social sciences, so the researcher made extra effort to recruit from such programs. Given the research discussed in the previous chapter regarding the variability of online education, participants were recruited from public and private universities at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, though this was considered less important (and was less successful) than sampling across academic disciplines.

While previous studies have indicated that saturation for semi-structured interviews can be reached in as few as 12 interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006), the researcher conducted 22 interviews in order to accommodate potential variability among academic disciplines. Of these 22 participants, thirteen identified as female and nine identified as male. Three participants

taught in the sciences, four in the applied sciences, eight in the social sciences, and seven in the applied social sciences. Public institutions were overrepresented in the data, with 18 of 22 faculty members teaching in these institutions at the time of their interview. 10 of 22 faculty members taught at schools located in the Southeast United States, while four taught in the Great Lakes region, three in the Southwest, two in the Mid East, two in the Rocky Mountains, and one in the Plains. New England and the Far West were both unrepresented in the sample. Ages of participants ranged from 31 to 73, with five faculty members in their thirties, seven in their forties, three in their fifties, four in their sixties, and one in his seventies, while two faculty members preferred not to answer this question. Nineteen participants identified as white, one as Latino, one as Black, and one as South Asian. The tables below show the sampling frame, the sample of participants within that frame, and the demographic data of participants.

Table 3.1

Sampling Frame – Faculty Members at Four-Year Institutions

Institution Type	Region	Academic Area	Course Level
Public	Far West	Natural Science	Undergraduate
Private	Great Lakes	Applied Natural Science	Graduate
	Mid East	Social Science	Both
	New England	Applied Social Science	
	Plains		
	Rocky Mountains		
	Southeast		
	Southwest		

Table 3.2

Participants by Institution, Region, Academic Area, and Course Level

Pseudonym	Institution Type	Region	Academic Area	Course Level
Abe	Public	Southeast	Social Science	Undergraduate
Anastacia	Public	Southwest	Social Science	Undergraduate
Camila	Private	Mid East	Social Science	Graduate
Enid	Public	Great Lakes	Science	Both
Greg	Public	Southeast	Social Science	Undergraduate
Hazel	Public	Rocky Mountains	Social Science	Undergraduate
Laura	Public	Southeast	Applied Science	Graduate
Leslie	Public	Great Lakes	Social Science	Graduate
Lewis	Public	Southeast	Applied Science	Graduate
Lucile	Public	Southeast	Social Science	Graduate
Martha	Private	Plains	Applied Social Science	Graduate
Matt	Public	Great Lakes	Applied Social Science	Graduate
Meg	Public	Southeast	Applied Social Science	Graduate
Nelson	Public	Rocky Mountains	Applied Science	Graduate
Reid	Private	Great Lakes	Applied Social Science	Graduate
Renee	Public	Southwest	Science	Undergraduate
Rosa	Public	Southeast	Social Science	Graduate
Russ	Private	Mid East	Applied Social Science	Graduate
Sanjay	Public	Southeast	Science	Graduate
Simone	Public	Southeast	Social Science	Undergraduate
Stephanie	Public	Southwest	Applied Social Science	Graduate
Theo	Public	Southeast	Applied Science	Graduate

Table 3.3

Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity	Gender	Other
Abe	31	Latino	Male	Identifies as immigrant
Anastacia	39	Black	Female	Identifies with Cuban and Mexican-American Heritage
Camila	38	White	Female	
Enid	44	White	Female	Identifies as part Native American
Greg	53	White	Male	
Hazel	67	White	Female	
Laura	48	White	Female	
Leslie	35	White	Female	
Lewis	60+	White	Male	Identifies as middle to upper income
Lucile		White	Female	Identifies as middle aged
Martha	34	White	Female	
Matt	47	White	Male	
Meg	45	White	Female	Identifies with Mexican American culture through husband
Nelson	61	White	Male	
Reid	59	White	Male	Identifies as lifelong Christian
Renee	40	White	Female	
Rosa	55	White	Female	
Russ	68	White	Male	Identifies as highly educated
Sanjay	49	South Asian	Male	Identifies as immigrant
Simone		White	Female	Identifies as a Democrat
Stephanie	44	White	Female	
Theo	73	White	Male	

Pilot

The semi-structured interview protocol developed for this survey was piloted with one faculty member in April 2018. The data collected from this interview, though rich, was not included in the final data for the study. Feedback from the pilot interview suggested several changes to the interview protocol, including more attention to changes faculty members have made to their own instructional approach as a result teaching online. The pilot also assisted the researcher in developing interview skills and becoming comfortable with the protocol before deploying it more widely.

Data Gathering

Data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews of faculty members. The interviews concentrated on faculty perceptions of organizational change resulting from their institution's adoption of online education, including reasons for change, processes of change, outcomes of change, and management of change. Kezar's (2014) organizational change typology was used as a guide to develop the interview protocol. The full interview protocol is attached in Appendix A.[2]

After IRB approval, the researcher used IRB-approved correspondence to reach out to deans, department chairs, and program directors of colleges and departments engaged in online education to ask for contact information and permission to reach out to individual faculty members who met the criteria for inclusion in the study. From there, the researcher contacted faculty members using IRB-approved communication and scheduled remote interviews with the individuals who were willing to participate. A $20 Amazon.com gift card was offered to all interviewees as an incentive for participation. All interviews were completed through the Zoom

[2] Given my positionality (described below), I did not collect any data from the institution in which I work.

virtual conferencing platform. Permission was sought and granted to record each of the interviews, which were then transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

In line the with the data collection methods described above, data analysis consisted of open coding, categorization, and theme construction from the transcribed interviews and focus groups (Cresswell, 2014). The researcher used ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software, to manage and code the data, and wrote memos throughout the analysis process to record reflections, questions, or impressions about the data. Analysis included both inductive and deductive elements, and proceeded in two main phases.

The first phase consisted of line-by-line coding of interview transcripts and the application of *in vivo* codes (i.e., descriptive, low-inference codes that remained very close to the actual data). As described by Coffey and Atkinson (1996), this coding phase is designed to "reduce the data to manageable proportions" and "facilitate the retrieval of data segments" that fit together into categories (p. 28). These codes were then sorted into categories and analyzed for subset/superset relationships and potential aggregation among codes and categories. The major themes of the study emerged from these categories.

The second phase of analysis specifically attempted to match categorized data to theories of academic capitalism and mimetic isomorphism described above. The researcher used Kezar's (2014) framework to compare and contrast the findings with each theory, which allowed for robust interpretations of how well these two theories fit the online education context from the faculty perspective.

In line with the theoretical orientation of the study, both sets of interpretations from the data are based on the specific narratives that participants constructed related to organizational

change in their institutions. Attention was focused on rationalizations constructed by participants as part of these narratives, the social forces described by participants, and their understandings of how their roles and the organization itself changed as a result of online education. The researcher also looked for similarities and differences in responses of individual interviewees, including looking for patterns that might involve disciplinary background or demographics.

Limitations of the Study

While this study was designed to collect and connect faculty perceptions and experiences from a range of institutions and academic disciplines, practical limits on the number of interviews conducted impose substantial cautions on generalizability of findings. Given that the sample was non-random and was recruited through department chairs, it is possible that the participants in this study were more positive about online education and its effects on the university than is true of the general population of faculty members teaching online. In addition, limitation of the study to full-time faculty members who have designed and taught an online course within the prior two years may have excluded additional insights from part-time faculty members about the organizations in which they teach or may exclude full-time faculty who tried teaching online and decided not to continue doing so more than two years before the interview period. Moreover, the sample was skewed heavily towards participants who identified as white and those who teach at public institutions.

Researcher Positionality

Researcher bias must also be taken into account. I am an administrator at a private university whose position focuses on support for online education, including regular and sustained interactions with faculty members. I am thus not neutral with reference to the research questions, but actively seek an understanding that will lead to better administrative practices. I

also identify as a first-generation college student, in addition to having previously completed an online undergraduate degree. My background may thus have inclined me to look more favorably on online education than is warranted given the research data.

Attempts to Limit Bias

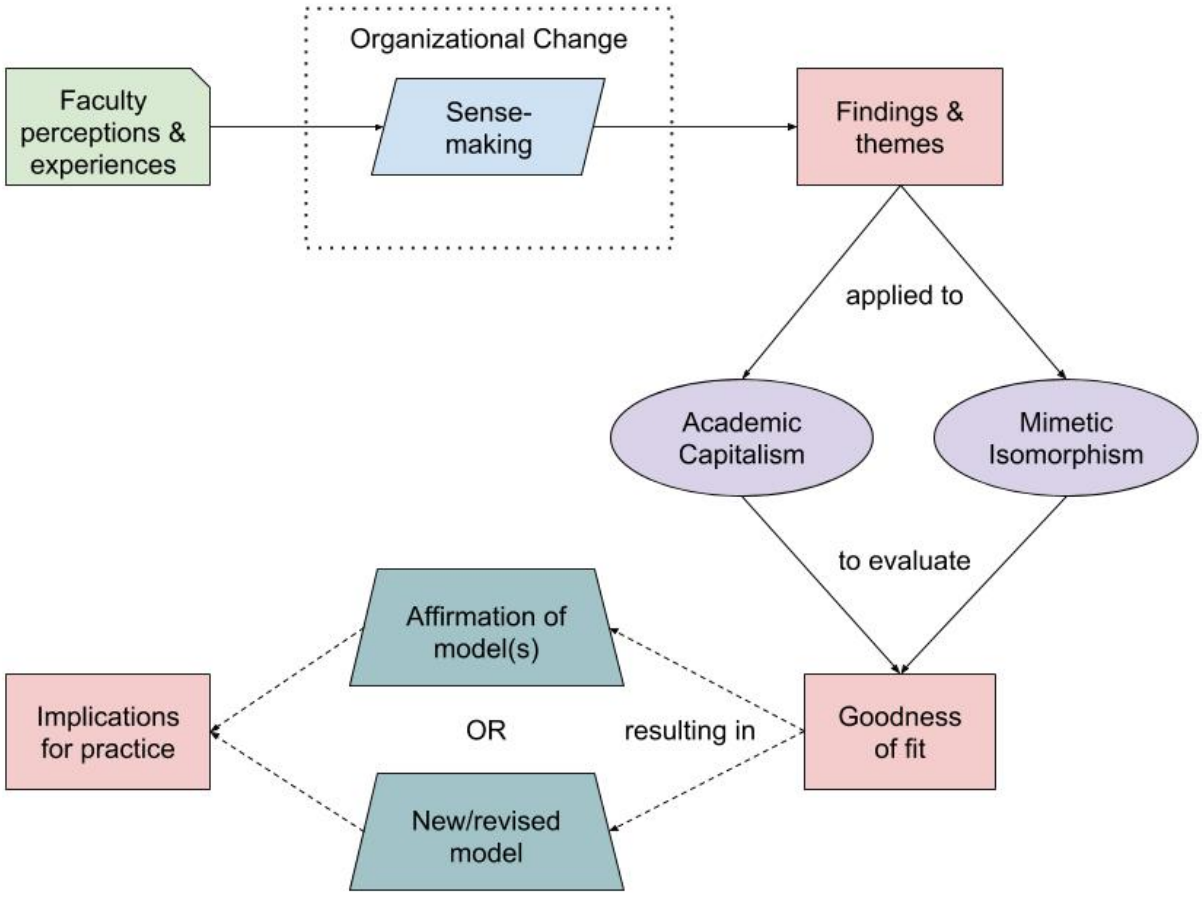
In order to address potential bias and increase interpretive validity of the research (Maxwell, 1992), I also asked all participants to engage in a member checking activity designed to evaluate the research themes. This process enabled me to get feedback on the data from key informants and provide an avenue for sharing preliminary results of the study with participants. Eight of twenty-two participants responded to my request to review an outline of major findings. All faculty members indicated that I had captured and refined the data that they provided in an appropriate manner. One faculty member made substantive comments on theme organization that I incorporated into the findings section below by making student demand for online education its own subcategory and by emphasizing the revenue generation motives of institutions engaged in online education.

I also invited a fellow doctoral student to code a subset of the interview transcripts and then discuss the similarities and differences in applied codes in order to expose my potential biases and establish more reliable interpretations from the data. One outcome of this discussion was an important distinction between changes that faculty members perceive at the department level and those that they perceive at the institutional level, thus substantially clarifying the analytical categories for the study. This same doctoral student also reviewed the research themes after the analysis phase and provided further formative feedback, particularly about cohesion of categories and organizational flow of the findings section.

I also decided not to sample from the institution in which I work or any institution that I have attended as a student. Given that most of the limitations detailed above have the potential to bias the research conclusions in a positive direction, I have also made a concerted effort to note negative information from faculty members in research memos and attempted to ensure that this information was given requisite weight in conclusions.

Figure 3.1

Study Design



CHAPTER 4: Findings

After the coding and analysis processes outlined above, a total of 76 distinct codes emerged from the interviews. These codes clustered into three major themes:

1) Faculty members made substantial changes to their online and on ground instructional practices as a result of developing and teaching online courses.
2) Faculty members experienced only minor changes in their departments and/or their institutions because of online education.
3) Faculty members believe that their institutions are primarily motivated to participate in online education because of market forces.

Each of these themes will be described in detail in this chapter. The next chapter will discuss the impact of these findings for institutional policies and practices, as well as how they fit with the theories of academic capitalism and mimetic isomorphism.

Changes to Online and On Ground Instructional Practices

Faculty members overwhelmingly described the development and teaching of online courses as a departure from the way they had typically engaged in these activities in the past. The online environment required them to be more thoughtful about course materials, assignments, and organization, as well as deliberately plan for student engagement, communication, and feedback. Faculty members also noticed changes to their own orientation toward teaching in the process of designing and developing online courses, including changes in attitude towards online education, an increase in their own technical skills, and redeploying the approaches of online education for their on ground students as well.

Course Design Changes

Course materials.

One major change for faculty members involved the provision of course materials for students. In on ground courses, faculty members were used to providing a list of readings and doing a substantial amount of lecturing in class. In the online environment, faculty members described curating a range of materials for students, including readings, videos that they produced themselves, videos they found online, or other media. As Stephanie, who teaches in the applied social sciences, described the process, "We try to find different ways to teach the material…. they need to read this particular article, then they need to watch the short video… then they need to go on a discussion board and talk about the video, or write a paper." Similar patterns emerged throughout the interviews, in which faculty members described needing to be more thoughtful in the course materials they provided to online students, particularly female faculty and those who teach in the sciences. Leslie, who teaches in the social sciences, described assigning a relevant podcast series about the subject of the course. Greg, who also teaches in the social sciences, described providing links to useful websites, "or to TED talks, or to YouTube videos, or to other kinds of content things like that."

Nearly all of the participants described video that they recorded themselves as an important component of their online courses. Some faculty members like Abe, who teaches in the social sciences, described recording voice-over-Powerpoint lectures for students. His students voiced appreciation for these videos around examination times, when they could go back to the video and make sure they understood important concepts that he covered. Other faculty members like Lewis, who teaches in the applied social sciences, noted that he tends to record videos "on things that require calculations…things that I typically have student questions about." Even though he tries "to cover everything just as thoroughly as possible," he does not get the "direct feedback loop" that he does in a live classroom session, where students can ask questions and

potentially take the conversation down different paths. A few faculty members described recording short ad hoc videos throughout the term to add additional content to assist students with a particular concept. As Camila, who teaches in the social sciences, described, “Sometimes I’ll do a pop-up lecture. We’ll actually talk through something they’re struggling with.”

While most faculty members did not experience the use of video as a major dislocating change, two faculty members in particular noted major changes in their relationships with students through using pre-recorded video. Nelson, who teaches in the applied sciences, noted the need to be more formal on video, in a way that was not particularly comfortable for him as an instructor. “When you're not online, the ability to joke and be more familiar with students comes easy.” In the online environment, however, he said, “I’m much more careful and a little more formal.” Renee, who teaches in the applied social sciences, also described her early attempts at recording video as difficult and intensely depersonalizing. Describing herself as “perfectionistic,” she would “erase and rerecord and do take after take” in order to make the recordings perfect. Her students noticed, with major consequences:

> It was a nightmare, because to the students I was a machine. I was a robot who did everything perfectly… there was never an error. There was never a moment of humor. There was never a moment of humanity. And they treated me like shit…. They were horrible to me. What I learned over time is you have to let them see the human side.

To her credit, Renee also described the changes she made to her video recording practices after this experience. She transitioned to an “off-the-cuff” style of recording that allows her to “bring in humor” and engage with the students when she makes on-screen mistakes in calculations, even saying things like “oh, wow, that wasn’t right at all…here’s what I did wrong…let’s fix that now and then move on from there.” As these vignettes drive home, however, faculty members

sometimes struggled with the changes resulting from using pre-recorded video, as opposed to providing lecture-style content in the same room with students.

Assignments.

Faculty members also described substantial changes to the ways they thought about student assignments in their online courses, particularly in public institutional settings. Laura, who teaches in the applied sciences, indicated that her discipline includes "a lot of small, discrete quantitative skills" that each function as "an individual little building block" towards mastery in the subject. Her description of how she changed her assignment approach is worth quoting at length:

> It turns out that in the online environment, I could chop up each of those discrete skills into a completely automatically graded discrete unit that the students could attempt as many times as they wanted…. Then if they did it wrong, it would either show them the answer, or it would point them to some resource, like a video, or the textbook, or something, to show them how to do it…. Because a typical thing for a student in these quantitative classes to do is they'll go to class, and they'll listen to this one and a half hour live lecture, and then they go home, and they open the textbook, and they have no idea how to start the first problem….We've all had that experience, and it's really demoralizing.

Laura's enthusiasm for this approach – often termed adaptive learning – increased even further when she realized that this method was also helping to level the playing field in her course, considering that her students came with "a diverse set of backgrounds" and "different weaknesses that need to be addressed."

Leslie also described having to "rethink the types of assignments" that she requires in her online classes. Like Laura, she assigns "more frequent assignments" as well as assignments that require students to exercise particular disciplinary skills. She indicated that this is essentially forced upon her by the online environment, in which "you can't really just be like, 'Here, I'm gonna lecture a bunch and now here is some exam.'" Despite this, she said that "the students get a lot more out of the class in actually learning skills in the online version because I require them to do homework assignments that are a lot more like [what] they're going [to do after college]." Abe also described assigning "more, smaller assignments" in his courses, in part because "students seem to respond better…they just perform better, their grades are better, and it seems to keep them engaged."

Faculty members also described other changes that they made to their assignments as a result of designing for the online environment. Abe found that he needed to be more explicit in assignment directions because students do not have the same sort of ready access to asking questions about assignments as they would in class with him twice per week. Rosa, who teaches in the social sciences, described being able to allow students to exercise more creativity in the online environment, particularly in the final presentations they make to other students in the course. Theo, a lecturer in the applied sciences, requires his students to write blog posts about course materials and respond to their fellow students, while Russ, who teaches in the applied social sciences, posts discussion questions after each virtual conferencing session.

Interestingly, both Sanjay, who teaches in the sciences, and Matt, a lecturer in the applied social sciences, maintained that having students write out responses to discussion questions rather than answering these questions in an on ground class was beneficial. Sanjay reflected that having students write in his class helped them understand the "scientific thought process…like

how to ask a question, how to formulate a hypothesis." His ability to provide feedback on their writing made it easier for him to teach "the most effective way of conveying" scientific reasoning, because he could "say this is a good hypothesis, your peer wrote this – that's not a good hypothesis and have [a look at] an example right there." Matt also maintained that having students write more "forces [students] beyond just a surface level understanding." Whereas "they could fumble their way through a question in class," discussion boards force them "to be able to express their thought in a way that is clear in writing, which brings a whole different dimension to the table."

Despite this, some of the participants described their online course assignments as more-or-less the same as their on ground courses. Meg, who teaches in the applied social sciences, said that her department teaches her online courses "pretty much like they're face-to-face." Her students have "small group work, they have breakout sessions, they have all these things that I'm requiring them to do." Martha, who also teaches in the applied social sciences, said that she has "the same approach for when I taught face to face versus teaching online." This may have something to do with the fact she tries to take a "very experiential" approach and have students "take what they're learning in classes and have them apply it to real world scenarios." Her discussion boards replicate many of the discussions that she would typically hold in an on ground course. Simone, a lecturer in the social sciences, directly tied what she does in the online context to her on ground courses, stating that "when I'm teaching in-person I get feedback from students [about] what they're interested in, what they like…I'll kind of take that and transfer it to the online…courses and try to engage them a little bit more."

Quality.

Nearly all faculty members who participated in the study thought that the course designs they produced in order to teach online were of higher quality than their typical on ground courses, though faculty members under the age of 50 were more likely to discuss this aspect of their online courses. Anastacia, who teaches in the social sciences, emphasized the importance of producing well-organized courses for the online environment. “Online requires me to be extremely organized, it requires me to use different modalities…. So it’s like how do we mix medias, how do we balance reading loads.” Martha described organization as a key area for online course design as well, because “If classes are not organized and things aren’t clear, it makes for a lot of confusion for the students.” She indicated that having a poorly organized class actually leads to more work answering student questions, so spending time thinking about the organization of the course upfront was worth the investment.

Related to this, several instructors mentioned that the online environment strongly encourages faculty members to be more prepared for the course term and individual class meetings. As Nelson described it, “Doing this course…to be honest, it requires greater attention to preparation for class….the preparation needs to be more careful, more thoughtful, and more precise.” In campus based classes, however, especially at the graduate level, “the reality is, sometimes you can wing it.” Hazel, who teaches in the social sciences, also noted this change, stating, “It’s been very beneficial for me because, in the process of preparing the lectures…I realized I couldn’t be extemporaneous as I am in the classroom and I had to really have a script.” Her focused preparation, in turn, “made me really clarify the objectives that I wanted to meet in the different lectures.”

Several other faculty members mentioned an increased focus on course learning objectives and more rigorous course designs in general. Camila described her online courses as

"probably more pedagogically sound" than her on ground courses because she "know[s] that they're meeting the objectives that they need." Her online courses manifest this rigor, in part, because of her focus on aligning assessments and assignments to learning objectives:

> …it has to be proved that all my objectives have to line up. I have to show how I'm meeting this objective. Every single step of the way. My course maps, my objective maps, all of those different things, that it's so seamless. Which in my classroom, I know what I'm doing, it's in my brain, and yes, I have to verify that, but not as much as I have to do when I do it online.

Lewis also described an intentional process on the part of his department to ensure fit between course objectives and broader program goals. They spent time, he said, "making sure that the things we require student to do support learning objectives because we've mapped those learning objectives to program outcomes."

Many faculty members, especially male faculty members, tied the increase in online course quality to adoption of a quality rubric and review process. As Greg described it at his institution, academic administrators are "not just letting people put stuff out willy-nilly. They want a say in the meeting [of] student learning objectives." He welcomed this change, stating that it helped catch courses that were "a cheap substitute for a class" in the tradition of "an old correspondence course." While such poor teaching "just comes with the territory" in on ground classes, online courses are determined to be "at least minimally adequate for the students" before launching. Abe described the process at his institution as quite rigorous, including a peer review process and formal rubric analysis conducted by a specific administrative center on campus before launching. He mentioned that the rubric itself was useful, in part because "it just teaches you about all these other aspects… [that] I never thought about." Reid noted, however, that peer

review is not a panacea for ensuring quality. In his experience, even though a course may have gone through peer review, it might still lack important elements of good online course design and may need to be redesigned by a different faculty member in the future.

Time.

Faculty members consistently reported that designing and building quality online courses requires a substantially larger investment of time over and above developing an on ground course. As Martha explained, "It's really front loaded in that you spend a lot of time before the class even starts, developing your class, making sure all the materials are up there [on the learning management system], all the links are working." She continued:

> Because there's such a lack of that human face to face connection, you almost have to overcompensate by making sure that there's quality discussion boards up there, and then there's quality materials. I personally make and record lecture videos.

Other participants also described spending lots of time recording videos, finding and curating other materials, and developing assignments. Theo estimated that he had spent 2,000 hours developing one of his online courses, particularly because of the video recording aspect, though this was on the extreme high side among participants in the study. Simone mentioned that even the revision process for online courses was time intensive, and Rosa connected the amount of time to making sure each course is "well-designed and thought out and robust" because her "undergraduate students will just panic if something goes wrong."

Similarly, when asked whether she thought developing an online course was more work than developing an on ground course, Meg responded with an emphatic, "Hell yes." She indicated that the major element that required additional time was building online assignments, including online discussion boards. Enid, who teaches in the sciences, also noticed a difference

in time expenditure between two distinct online courses that she developed. One of the courses had a well-established textbook with good online practice problems that could be assigned to students, whereas the other course did not have a recognized textbook at all. In her words, "I spent a lot of time trying to find good materials that would be helpful to the students."

Support and training.

Faculty members had surprisingly disparate experiences in training and support provided by their institutions in the process of designing online courses. Some faculty reported substantially higher levels of support, including a dedicated instructional designer and regular technology training, while some reported having no access to an instructional designer and limited opportunities for training. Even among those faculty members with access to support and training, departments and institutions determined whether or not working with an instructional designer or taking a training course was required. Interestingly, Leslie mentioned that at her institution there was "no requirement…for tenure-track faculty or tenured faculty to take a class," they are "starting to require adjunct professors that teach online to take some sort of an online course on how to instruct online."

Lucile, who teaches in the social sciences, described her experience working with an instructional designer that illustrates the more supportive end of the spectrum. From day one she was assigned a dedicated instructional designer, who began their relationship by telling her "If you can dream it, we can do it!" She experienced the relationship with the instructional designer as very positive and was, in her words, "very satisfied with the results of the course." Reid, who teaches in the applied social sciences, described a similar experience, insofar as he viewed his instructional designer as a collaborator in the design process. In his words, "In this course I just designed, I didn't have to run it [decisions] past him [instructional designer], but I did just

because I know that he will see things and think of things that would never occur to me." Hazel's experience with an instructional designer was a bit less collaborative, as the distance education unit at her university had a highly structured format for online courses. The instructional designer that worked with Hazel "set up the skeleton of the course" and added her content to the course according to the template. Enid's experience represents the less supportive end of the spectrum. She reported getting "very little" support in any aspect of building or teaching her online courses, though this was mitigated by the fact that she had been trained in online course design as a graduate student at her previous institution.

Training opportunities were similarly varied across institutions. Most faculty members reported having access to on-demand training for the learning management system, at the very least. Others described optional certification courses they could take at the university's expense in the use of educational technology more generally. Some faculty members came to realize just how little training they have had in teaching and course design as a result of designing an online course. For example, Leslie indicated that in her on ground courses she simply used the teaching methods she experienced as a student in graduate school, whereas online education "is a really different thing that I've had no training in, [so] I've really had to rethink what it means to be a professor and to engage students in a meaningful way." Rosa's interaction with her assigned instructional designer helped her realize that online course design is "certainly not something I'd want to tackle on my own," particularly given her instructional designer's "definite idea of what sorts of features an online course should have" as well as knowledge of "what tools are available out there."

Despite welcoming the change to a "more interventionist approach from the online office," faculty members like Greg understand the frustration of colleagues who "see it as a little

bit of an impingement on their autonomy," particularly given his department's historical "laissez faire" attitude towards on ground teaching. Russ took this criticism even further, particularly in describing his institution's attempts to comply with legal requirements like the Americans with Disabilities Act. "My opinion is that we are beginning to go down a rat's nest of too many hands. And the regulatory process… is becoming more and more complex. So my experience has not been pleasant recently."

Teaching Changes

Interaction and connection with students.

Participants in the study experienced substantial changes in their interactions with students as part of teaching in the online context. Several faculty members mentioned that their communication with students relied more heavily on text in the online environment. Abe, for example, described using the announcements feature of the learning management system to remind students about readings, assignments, and reinforce the topics for each week. Greg reflected on the difference between using discussion boards in his course for students to interact with him and each other and being with them in an on ground course, concluding that while a discussion board is "an acceptable means for communicating, it's not as good as sitting in the classroom together and having real life comment, and reaction, and discussion." Martha's experience with discussion boards was similar. As she noted, "Yes, you do have discussion boards with online learning. I wouldn't say that they quite take the place of actual face to face discussion, though."

Reid, however, described a deeper level of engagement with students through discussion boards than he experienced in on ground courses. Even though he does not prompt his students to comment from a personal standpoint about class topics, he has been "shocked by how much

more…authentically self-revealing" students are on discussion boards. "To me, the comments made [in] written [form] are much more authentic and thoughtful than what people raise their hand in class to say on average." Camila discussed this as well, stating that "in the classroom [students] are not maybe as chatty about what I would call a 'hot topic….' But on the online platform people are more engaged and are willing to type more and talk more." Leslie also experienced more communication with her students because of the online modality, particularly one-on-one. As she noted, "I get a lot more emails from online students than I get my on ground students popping into my office hours," which leads to an increased level of dialogue over and above what she experiences in the on ground classroom. Despite this, she also noted that she does not know "what they look like or what they sound like," which seems to detract from the depth of communication.

Participants in the study also reflected on their increased use of virtual conferencing in online courses. Because she had students who were often reluctant to speak up the virtual conferencing session, Lucile encouraged her students to use the chat function built into the virtual conferencing platform. She noted that through the chat function she was able to "get a lot of conversation going," but that it was also a somewhat disorienting change to her teaching approach. As she explained:

> Now that's turned out to be a bit of a challenge for me. I had to learn to watch that [chat] feed, just sort of spiraling up, sometimes very rapidly when we're talking about something, and learn to react to it and respond, as I was lecturing, or as we were having a discussion.

Rosa described her experience in very similar terms, saying that "it does take some getting used to," and that the chat function in particular requires instructors to "multi-task, because while

you're talking, or while one of the students is talking, there's a constant stream of comments going on in the chat window." Despite the instructional change that this posed for them, both Lucile and Rosa felt that the virtual conferencing environment was a net positive for the classroom environment, as it allowed more students to participate in discussions.

Lewis described the virtual conferencing environment as now nearly replicating the on ground environment, and thinks that in a few more years online teaching will finish "making a full circle" back to face-to-face classes mediated through seamless virtual conferencing. In line with this observation, Stephanie noted that students continue to want more synchronous time in her program in order to "connect and ask questions and get to know each other," such that she has been able to "in some ways replicate the interpersonal kind of skill development and also relationship development through the technology." Abe and other participants also reflected that it is much easier for a student to meet with their instructors in the online environment, as students no longer need to be physically present at office hours to ask a question or get assistance with an assignment.

Though some instructors found these technologies helpful in facilitating communication between instructors and students, sometimes over and above what they experienced in on ground courses, other instructors found the challenges to be more substantial. Perhaps in order to counter the potential disorientation of the virtual conferencing environment, Matt described strictly managing participation of students in this environment. He often mutes all of the student's microphones, which creates "more of a one-way transmission until I ask for participation." Because of this, he has to be "a lot more conscious of driving the interaction." Enid described communication in the online environment to be "a little bit artificial" and that trying to talk about her scientific discipline via the chat function in virtual conferencing or on the discussion boards

is difficult. Many participants reflected that online education does not allow them to get non-verbal feedback in the same way they would in an on ground class. Russ described being able to "read the nuances" in on ground courses in a way that the online context does not allow. Matt missed being "able to read the room based upon body language and other things that can give me a clue of where people might want to dig further." Despite these challenges, Russ slightly reluctantly admitted that in on ground courses he is not able to see "what is going on in [student] brains," whereas in his online courses, he is able to "see who gets it [a concept] and who doesn't."

Many participants in the study discussed feeling personally disconnected with students in the online environment. Course designs that lacked virtual conferencing seemed to be a major impediment to developing this connection. Simone, for instance, stated that her online students "are just a name in the discussion board." Renee, echoing the sentiments of many participants, concluded that "there is nothing like the experience of being in front of a classroom" because of the "energy of a classroom" or the feelings of connection from shared laughter. Greg described feeling "energized" coming out of an on ground class in which he was "hitting on all cylinders" and did not seem to experience this in the online environment. Anastacia described the potential intimacy of a deep discussion about important topics over a shared meal as one aspect of connection that is very difficult to replicate with online students.

Despite the overwhelming sense among faculty members that the online environment was unable to match the communicative immediacy of the on ground environment, many did describe feeling connected to their online students. Meg noted that video conferencing sessions helped substantially with this, as they allow students to "get to know my personality" and develop bonds that often last well beyond graduation. In a similar vein, Camila noted that "it's nice to see

success whether it be on a video chat or… in the classroom," and that felt a similar level of satisfaction in seeing her online students graduate as her on ground students. Martha noted that in her fully asynchronous courses, "the biggest challenge has been feeling connected to the students and them feeling connected to you because there is not face-to-face online class or in-person meeting time."

Feedback and grading.

Faculty members were nearly unanimous in stating that the online environment required them to provide more direct feedback to students and provide it more often than they would in an on ground course. As Reid put it, "I believe that more than face-to-face the quality and the amount of feedback that the professor gives is really important." Leslie provides feedback on student reflection papers based on discussion questions. Laura described picking an exemplar of student work to showcase each week as part of her overall feedback to students, which not only shows the kind of work she is looking for on later assignments but also encourages the students whose work is highlighted. Sanjay talked about using a similar method in calling out particularly strong posts on the discussion boards in his online courses. Matt mentioned that he needed to be "very active in the moderation" of discussion boards, which was supported by an example provided by Lucile in which major errors in subject matter understanding had been shared by students on the discussion board and propagated widely to the class in the span of six hours. She then was forced "to go back and say, 'Stop, everything you know is wrong.'"

Faculty members also connected substantial increases in the amount of grading to the increase in number of assignments mentioned in the course design section above. Abe described spending much more time grading assignments when designing his course with a larger number of assignments. Anastacia was a bit more forceful in her description, stating, "The grading seems

like it never ends online. Ever." Meg concluded that during one term of one course, she graded 3,500 discrete student submissions because of how the course was designed. This level of grading kept her from providing robust feedback to students, however. Martha also concluded that the grading "is more time-intensive" in the online environment. This is in contrast to the on ground environment, in which

> …you may have the participation points, but you go to class, you lecture, and you interact with the students, and then you just record a grade for them for that class, based on how they interacted that day. Whereas, online, you have discussion boards and you may have multiple discussion boards in one week. Across multiple classes, you now have maybe six discussion boards to grade. You have to go in and you have to read all of their initial responses and all of their responses to their classmates. I think it becomes… the grading part, I think, becomes more labor intensive.

These sorts of experiences were repeated by most participants in the study, though participants under the age of 50 and female faculty members were more likely to mention them.

Faculty members also felt that it was important to provide feedback to online students in a timely fashion. Notwithstanding the situation faced by Lucile, above, participants like Greg described wanting "to grade [assignments] as quickly as possible," which leads him to "check in [on his courses] several times a day to see if anybody has submitted." Anastacia reflected that the need for timely feedback might be exacerbated by the fact that online students "are least likely to accept bullcrap excuses as why their papers aren't graded." Laura and Enid both used automated grading as part of their strategy to provide timely feedback to their students, as both teach in quantitatively-oriented disciplines with well-developed publisher content resources. Martha's institution mandated in the online faculty handbook that all assignments must be graded within

one week of submission, which she concluded was “just to make sure that faculty don’t disappear, because that can be easy to do when you’re teaching online.”

Faculty Changes

Attitudes towards online education.

Many study participants noted that their attitude towards online education had changed from skepticism to a more or less enthusiastic embrace of the modality since they had started designing and teaching courses online. Camila recalled being “very skeptical at the very beginning” that online education would be able to match the quality of her on ground courses. Because she was in the vanguard at her institution, she remembered thinking, “I don’t know if this is gonna work. I’d hate to be the first one to fail at it.” Despite this initial reaction, she worked hard to create something of value for her distance students and came to believe that the online environment was at least the equal of her on ground courses in quality terms. Theo recalled sensing a similar shift in his own attitudes toward online education. Though initially skeptical, he recalled thinking that “the more I got into it the more I could see it was vastly better than trying to teach the material live” for the adult and continuing education student population that his institution was committed to serving.

Stephanie described added pressures from being the program director when online education was starting in earnest at her institution. She initially did not think that her discipline could be effectively taught in the online environment because, as an applied social science program, one of its core “values is the importance of human relationships.” She was initially resistant to the idea of putting her program online, until being approached by her Dean and asked directly to start an online program. Despite her misgivings, she worked with faculty members in

her department to build a robust program, ultimately leveraging several new technologies to build a program that was able to embrace the core values of her discipline.

Faculty members also described other aspects of their attitudes to online education that changed over time. Lucile described her concerns that online students would be less academically prepared or otherwise less able to engage in appropriate academic work. What she found was that her online students "are some of the most intelligent, hardworking students" that she has taught, right on par with her on ground students. Lewis noted that he was starting from a place of almost total ignorance about online and had very little sense of how to think about it when it was first proposed to him. He "did not realize the extent of this movement" and experienced it as a "massive shift from live classes." Similarly, Leslie was surprised that teaching online "is a really different thing that I've had no training in." Because of it, she "really had to rethink what it means to be a professor and to engage students in a meaningful way."

Other faculty members described their enduring skepticism around online education. Greg reflected that he experienced

> …some resistance early on in my career to moving into an online format. I just…I didn't like it. I didn't see it as a suitable alternative. I really do feel like my hand was forced on it and I've accepted it now, and I'm not opposed to it, but I think I indicated at least some of those feelings earlier [in the interview].

Greg also noted that "anecdotal" reports from his students indicate that the online courses they take are easier than their on ground counterparts, which leads him to believe that online courses may not be held to the same standards of rigor at his institution. He stated that online education is "the most suitable format for people who can't be on campus," but that he is "less happy when students on campus take online classes." As a result, "My orientation at least at this point in my

career is I see an important need for online, but I'm not ready to go wholesale into everything delivered through an online format." In an impressive bit of self-reflection, however, he also realized that this view was "just part of my old school commitment to face-to-face orientation. I recognize if I were starting brand new right now, I'd probably have a completely different perspective about it. Or maybe not. I don't know." Reid's experience was similar, insofar as he asserted that some parts of his discipline are best taught "in real time, face-to-face, with these noises we make at each other." Though he has had "many good experiences" teaching in the online environment, he felt as though he was "forced into it" through circumstances beyond his control. He stated that "it's going to take some self-reflection…to figure out where the modalities online are really good… and where it's not the best way of doing things. I think we're still learning that."

Increase in technical skills.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, several faculty members noted that their technical skills had increased as a result of developing and teaching online courses. In general, Meg reflected that online education "pushes us to be more technology-focused and technology-savvy ourselves," as well as "forcing us to be current with technology and what we're using and how we're using it." Enid noted that she had become more aware of various online resources that she could make available to her students and how to embed these in the learning management system. Rosa also mentioned becoming much more familiar with visual materials, in particular, that she could make available to students in her online courses. As detailed above, Stephanie initially did not think that her discipline could be effectively taught online, but found that advances in video technologies in general, and her skills with these technologies in particular, now allow her to "assess [and] practice skill development for graduate level" students. Theo described a much

more substantial set of competencies that he had gained because of his approach to working with video. Though he did not claim expertise, he said that “when you’re your own producer and director as well as the number one actor, there’s a lot of things you’ve got to control.”

Some faculty members found the process of learning new technologies to be dislocating to their professional practice as well. Reid, who identified as more of an online education skeptic, described his “baptism by fire” in learning how to use the learning management system in order to teach one section of a course that had been designed by someone else. Describing his initial reaction as “a freak out,” the experience encouraged him to learn from the faculty member who had designed the course and the technical help at his institution. Lucile remembered telling her technical support staff, “Look, I'm not gonna be able to use Canvas [learning management system] effectively unless I have some help."

Online influences in on ground courses.

Perhaps because of their increased familiarity with technical tools, many participants noted that they are using resources and methods from their online courses in their on ground courses as well. Rosa said that she uses “a lot of online tools” in her on ground class because of her online experience, including online “weekly quizzes” and “clips from movies and pictures and so on, and take advantage of some of the online tools for [the class], too.” As described above, Matt voiced his satisfaction with “a different level of interaction” among his students using discussion boards in his online courses, prompting him to integrate them into his on ground courses as well. He reflected that students “had time to process and articulate their thoughts in ways that they may not in the classroom setting, for whatever reason,” which seemed to increase their learning. Reid also integrated discussion boards in his on ground courses in order to increase interaction between students, whereas Lucile reported that she has “learned to maybe

change discussion prompts I use in classes." Despite asserting that teaching online has not "completely changed my experience" of teaching on ground, Abe described changing his on ground assignments and assessments to match his online course and pondering "whether that is something I should be doing with the rest of my classes" as well.

Sanjay mentioned that the expanded set of students in his online courses has encouraged him to rethink the ways he introduces concepts in his on ground course. He found that hearing "new perspectives" from "teachers" or "veterans" provided "a lot of feedback" that suggested beneficial changes for his on ground lectures. Hazel reflected on the fact that developing her online lectures required her to "really clarify the objectives" for each lecture, which she thought had been "really good for my on-campus teaching… I think it's improved my teaching." Camila asserted that her online courses had caused her to reevaluate the rigor of her on ground courses and led her to expect more of her on ground students as a result. As she explained,

> I think that teaching online has taught me to probably push the envelope a little bit more. Meaning that… I feel like I require a lot more online. And I don't know why, but I've taken those requirements and put those more in the classroom. I guess because it feels like, we do eight week sessions, so it's a little bit shorter, so I feel like we have a lot of stuff to put in there, and jam pack them. And I felt like they were reading a lot more online. So in my classroom, I'm like, "You guys can read a lot of this." Because in the online class, they have to read all of it. So, I don't know. I feel like I became harder as a teacher once I started teaching online.

Her conclusion seems to run counter to some of the concerns described earlier about online education not measuring up to on ground courses.

Other faculty members did not perceive any crossover benefits, however. Lewis noted that he conceptualizes teaching "in pretty much the same method" in the two modalities. Martha described being unsure if online teaching had changed her approach to teaching in general, as she felt that she retains "the same approach for when I taught face to face versus teaching online." She described building her on ground "discussion topics around real world issues [and] case studies," and noted that "even when I started teaching online, a lot of my discussion boards had been based around the same things."

Changes to Departments and Institutions

Participants in the study described relatively minor changes, if any, to their departments and institutions as a result of online education. Most of the department changes were experienced as cultural, staffing, or policy changes that did not fundamentally alter the structure or function of departments. At the institution level, faculty members also noted some cultural changes, as well as changes in job descriptions, support structures, oversight, and the types of students attending their institutions. With a few notable exceptions, participants in the study did not perceive the changes resulting from online education as substantially altering the way their institutions function.

Changes to Departments

Several participants noted that faculty members in their departments were hesitant to embrace online education when it was introduced, but that this initial reticence had mostly passed as the modality became more mainstream. Rosa described the initial "resistance to the idea of us having a distance program," such that "some faculty didn't want to be involved in it," but noted that now "everyone views the distance program as an essential part of the department." In her view, faculty members changed their minds because the "program has gained a lot of

credibility and respect," and because of "a lot of support from our department chair [who] actively encourages the faculty to teach distance courses." Sanjay mentioned that his department had experienced a failed experiment in online education, and so were not enthusiastic about his attempts to revive the idea. When they started to see enrollments increase under his leadership, however, his colleagues came around to the idea that online education could be a major benefit for their department. Sanjay also described a very useful follow-on benefit of online education in his department: increased collaboration. As his department worked to determine which students should be advised by which faculty members, the faculty members in the department all became much more aware of the interests and specialties of their colleagues. They started to offer workshops for online and on ground students in their areas of expertise, which led to even more visibility among colleagues. His department has seen substantial gains in research collaboration because of faculty engagement in online education.

Matt described online education within his department as a "nice to have… a good way to round the portfolio" for many years, before academic leaders undertook a concerted effort "to make it part of the home team." This intentional shift in strategy "had an influence on how people have shown up for students" because online education is no longer being treated "as an afterthought or a way to... just make some additional revenue." His department has attempted to integrate online students into the life of the department in many ways, including "having networking sessions specifically for them" or "having alumni gatherings specifically for them" which leads online students to "start to see themselves as part of the broader family." Matt reflected that this has "been a really important piece of why, systematically, [online education] has really become part of our DNA as opposed to… remaining an 'inside but outside' type entity."

Several participants mentioned that department policies had changed in response to online education. In Enid's experience, online education "brought some issues to the forefront that have caused us to think more carefully" about policies like attendance. Laura described the implementation of quality standards in her department and new policies for creating a consistent "look and feel" across courses in a program. A few faculty members also mentioned that changes in staffing had changed the overall department ethos related to online education. Enid's experience was relatively drastic, in that she said, "if you'd asked me last year, I'd say there was no buy in" to online education, but now that her department has experienced "massive turnover" her colleagues are more likely to support online education as a viable activity. Rosa described how the "wave of retirements" helped in increasing support for online education, because the individuals replacing older faculty members tended to be open to teaching online. Her hiring process was itself indicative of the change in department cultures, as she was hired in part because she had a background in computer programming in addition to academic domain expertise. Several other faculty members echoed this shift in hiring practices as part of departmental culture changes related to online education.

Renee perhaps experienced the most substantial negative changes to the culture of her department because of online education. She described her department as being increasingly "factioned out along age lines, with "the old guys… teaching off mimeographs" next to the "folks who are actively embracing online education and the people who are being dragged kicking and screaming into online education." She reflected that this creates tensions within the department that alienate faculty members from one another. In addition, she noted that

> …we all just see less of each other because those of us who are teaching online are in general not in our offices as much because why would you be because if you're in your

> office students are going to come and mess with you… [such that] you can't get any work done, right? So if you can choose to be somewhere else people do.

In her experience, one of the affordances of online education – faculty members being able to teach from nearly anywhere – "socially fracture[d]" her academic department. Theo also mentioned that his department has faculty members "who live all over the world," including himself, which is "a different culture all the way around," but he did not seem to experience this as a substantial dislocation in the way that Renee did.

Other faculty members did not see any substantial changes. Anastacia was adamant that she had "absolutely not" seen any changes resulting from online education, in part because of the leadership of her department remained deeply ingrained in a particularly research-heavy conception of faculty work. Abe, who was new to his department at the time of the interview, said that the culture he experienced from the day he started treated online education as part of "how the department functions." Camila noted that there was resistance "maybe at first, but not now. It's just sorta become the culture. It's sorta what you do." Leslie also described how her department prides itself on

> …saying [that] the same faculty teach the online classes as teach the on ground classes, so the degree's worth the same thing. We don't, yet, have an army of adjunct Master's degrees to teach online classes. We all have PhDs. We all are tenure-track faculty who, or whatever it is person that does it, but we're all fully the same professors who teach on campus as well. The idea is we're offering the same quality of degree.

In a similar vein, Reid, in his role as department chair, attempted to fit instructors into the places they would be most comfortable and most useful to the department, rather than forcing any of his faculty members to teach online.

Changes to Institutions

Participants also perceived only minor changes in their institutions as a result of online education. Nelson described his institution as one of the "early leaders" in the distance education space, and that this change was well-aligned to the land-grant mission of his institution. These days, he reflected, online and distance education "is part of our DNA." Similarly, Theo described online education as directly tied to the land-grant heritage of his institution, and that serving remote students "is ingrained in the culture of the school as it was created and as it has operated for many, many years now."

A few faculty members described changes towards increased institutional oversight for online education. Renee recounted a particularly difficult situation in which new administrators were hired to build a successful online presence at her institution and began "trying to establish ground rules for educators." The move prompted substantial pushback from faculty members, who perceived a "massive disconnect" between administrators with a particular business model "who have not been in education" and their own experiences. As a result of this substantial administrative overreach, all but one faculty member in Renee's department resigned. Russ echoed Renee's sentiments in describing what he viewed as escalating oversight of online education. He described administrators within the institution "beginning to regulate in ways that I don't think we regulate face-to-face [teaching]… I'm cautious about what this means going forward." He further stated that the increasing oversight functions "like any bad bureaucracy" in which regulation becomes "the tail wagging the dog." He described being very frustrated by this oversight regime, such that he was "very close to walking away from a course I've been teaching for almost ten years." This theme was repeated by other faculty members, though more often by faculty members over the age of 50.

Greg also described "a more interventionist approach from the online office" in which they started to demand approval rights for online courses "to make sure that [they are] minimally adequate for the students." While a few faculty members chafed at the idea that the institution would evaluate the quality of the courses, the adoption of quality assurance frameworks within departments seemed to garner much less resistance. Similarly, Rosa described a desire to change on the part of the university coupled with incompetent leadership in managing it. Rather than talking "with people on the ground who have experience with online education" the institution hired "a dean from outside who quits three months later." The result was a net loss for the university.

On a more positive note, several faculty members described increased investment in support structures for online education in their institutions. Laura described the centralization of online support in a new group that provides support "both for face-to-face on campus and the remote" students. Sanjay described receiving excellent assistance from the distance learning office at his institution, particularly in how to communicate with students and how to meet their engagement needs in the online environment. In a slightly more cynical vein, Renee noted that her institution "clearly poured some money into developing their support system" for online education, whereas Hazel described her institutional distance learning office as pushing departments to launch more online courses in order to generate "more business to justify their existence."

Some faculty members mentioned that institutional needs, which will be discussed in more detail below, seemed to drive the adoption of online education. Meg, for instance, described how one department at her institution that vowed never to go online is now offering online courses because of enrollment concerns, and that her department is being held up as an

example to other departments across the institution of how to successfully navigate offering on ground and online programs within the same department. Abe described a similar situation at his institution in which the Dean repeatedly pointed to his department as an example to other departments of how to operate given their successful online program. Reflecting on this, he noted that "it's great that we're not in the [Dean's] bad list, but it's always awkward that we're used to shame other departments." On a more positive note, Rosa described her department getting "some respect from the college" because "we punch above our weight, as far as the size of [our] department" because of their online enrollments.

Similarly, Enid described "a culture change" taking place at her institution, but thought that it had less to do with online education and more to do with an institutional focus on targeting non-traditional students, who tend to study online in greater numbers than traditional-aged students. Theo was even more explicit about the reason for change: "privatization of public education." He opined that online education functioned as more of a symbol than a driver for change, because public institutions, in particular, need to be more concerned with maintaining and growing enrollments in order to offset funding cuts from state legislatures. Simone provided a startling example of this change, as her institution was being forced to cut academic programs because of funding shortfalls. Her program and department were likely to be spared, she thought, in part because of their robust online program that attracted students from across the country.

Faculty members expressed some uncertainty about the core focus of their institutions as online education becomes a larger part of what they do. Lewis reflected on the fact that "there's not a great demand for face-to-face classes" in some disciplines, and that "students are scattered throughout the U.S. and, to a smaller degree, the world." Pondering this shift, Leslie reflected that her institution "lacks a unified identity in terms of whether we are a public liberal arts

university with a strong on campus presence of students versus a virtual university." She described a tension inherent in these foci and forecasted that online education would remain "a huge component of higher education well into the future."

Leslie also described the difference in the types of students that online education tends to attract. Rather than the traditional-age students attracted to on ground programs, Leslie found that her program attracted "high school teachers seeking credentials to get a salary raise… or community college professors who want another Master's degree." Some faculty members saw these shifts as distinctly positive. Camila described how students with different backgrounds, and especially older students with more life experience, helped enrich her courses. Particularly in her discipline, which is more applied, students with job experience often help other students without experience understand how the concepts in courses relate to actual performance in the workplace. Sanjay described the "beautiful" thing about online education as its ability to draw students from "areas which we never even thought about." He was particularly excited about drawing athletes who may not be able to take "enough fulfilling courses" otherwise because of their commitment to sports.

Institutional Motivations for Online Education

Faculty members overwhelmingly perceived the motivations of their institutions for offering online education as market driven. In some cases, participants thought that student demand for online programs encouraged their institution to push for online education, while other faculty members thought that their institutions desired to expand the reach of their institution in line with the mission of their institutions. Many participants determined that their institutions felt the need to invest in online education in order to compete with other institutions,

and nearly all participants mentioned increasing revenues as a major factor undergirding all three of these other motivations.

Student Demand

Particularly among students pursuing Master's degrees, faculty members noted that the students interested in studying with them often had jobs or other life circumstances that made online education a good choice. Sanjay described that his students "don't want to give up their present job" in order to come back to school, so his program found a way to fit within the realities of students' lives. Two populations that faculty members mentioned repeatedly were in-service teachers and military personnel. Leslie noted that "getting an online MA degree while you're working full time is actually really attractive to a lot of people," particularly the teacher populations that her degree tends to serve. Laura mentioned that her institution "has had a long history of working with the military… I would guess maybe 15% [of students] are active duty military." Russ also described a direct infusion of funding from a National Guard unit in order to develop coursework that would serve the needs of deployed personnel. Several participants also described working with corporate clients to offer tailored degrees for their employees. Matt's institution often enrolls dozens of students at a time from a single company in a specific degree program that is designed around the "needs of the companies as clients." The overall student demand for online education continues to grow according to most of the faculty members interviewed for this study.

Institutional Reach

Faculty members overwhelmingly recognized that online education provides their institutions with access to a much wider and more geographically dispersed population base than is possible through solely on ground programs. Meg described previous attempts to bring

educational opportunities to the remote parts of her state as almost always meeting some substantial roadblock that kept students from benefitting to the same extent that they could on the main campus. Because of this, she said, “I think that they just determined that for students… it made more sense to just do it as an online program.” Several other faculty members noted that regional outreach centers where they had previously been asked to teach on ground during intersession terms or on the weekends were being closed down in favor or online options. Abe also talked about the distances between higher education institutions in his state as a motivating factor for students to seek online programs and for institutions to offer them. Greg described the rationale of his institution as “providing for a service to people who otherwise wouldn’t have access to that service, that accessibility to a higher education degree.” Nelson echoed this concern, opining that he does not “hear people talk about it in that way enough.”

Competition

A few participants, particularly male faculty members, discussed the overall changes to the marketplace that had come about as a result of online education. Russ, perhaps most notably, connected the rise of online education to increased competitive pressure on institutions that had historically been insulated from such pressure because of the geographic distances between students and institutions. In this new marketplace environment, however, Russ described his impressions of how some major market players had substantially increased their enrollment at the expense of other institutions, much like Amazon and Walmart did to local and regional retail outlets. He used a banking analogy to drive home his point. It used to be true that

> …if you want to put money in the bank, you’ve got to go to the bank. Well, I don't think so [anymore]…. You can take a photo of a check now and deposit it in my account. I can

> pay all my bills online. It's just different and so the way things used to be is not going to be what it's going to be like in the future.

Institutions that have not realized that they exist in a new era, according to Russ, are not likely to survive. Reid also picked up on this dynamic, though he somewhat cynically described his institution's push into online education as an outcome of "wanting to keep up with the Joneses" and not "be caught behind" by market forces.

Several faculty members noted that their institutions are dealing with population declines in their states, which makes online education more attractive as an option to serve students in geographically disparate areas, as mentioned above. The state that Abe teaches in "has just lost a tremendous number of people because of the economy" and is looking to online education as a way to make up for substantial credit-hour shortfalls based on fewer on ground students. Participants have also been party to conversations in which academic leadership specifically connected the declining numbers of college-aged students in the country overall with a need to be more competitive in the non-traditional student market, which often leads directly to establishing or attempting to grow online programs. Enid noted that the state legislature funds her institution based on the number of students it enrolls, so her institution has embarked on "a pretty ambitious goal of growing the number of students we have." Given that the "pool [of students] is not really gonna grow," however, her Provost opined that they needed to "look outside of that pool" towards non-traditional students. Stephanie also described a meeting with her Dean and the admissions department in which they realized that they were losing students to other institutions "because we didn't have an online option."

Other faculty members like Camila described seizing an opportunity rather than battling existing or future declines in students. She noted that her institution was "doing really well"

financially at the time they started her online degree program and wanted to take advantage of opportunities in the marketplace. Leslie also noted that her program is relatively unique among competitor institutions, so seizing the competitive advantage of being among the first to offer the degree online made sense for her department and institution. Renee noted that her department eventually came to understand that degrees in their discipline were going to be offered online, and that their choice was "between having it happen with us and having it happen without us. And I think once everybody got to that place it was relatively clear that we needed to do it." Perhaps more cynically, she also offered that her institution's president "just wants to be the biggest. That is his legacy."

Revenue Generation

Though each of the three sections above more or less explicitly involve revenue generation, some faculty members were even more overt in calling out revenue as a motivating factor for their institutions in building and growing online education, especially at public institutions. Nelson, who was also a former administrator, put it most bluntly:

> Man, if anyone tells you they're going to [go] online, and they don't say they're doing it at least partially for money, they're just lying to you…. I spent a lot of time around the country working with administrators from a lot of schools, and I never met anyone who thought of distance ed as anything other than hopefully a cash cow at some point.

He was certainly not alone in this opinion. Describing a meeting about a new online program at his institution, Greg opined that his Provost though online education would be a "potential cash cow" because it could help the university grow. In his Provost's defense, however, he also added that

> We were maybe a little too cynical with her, saying that she just views this as a ... infusion of money. The rationale that we kind of came to with it, we recognized that money is a driving force, universities have to be sustainable. All of this by the way is happening as the state is, each year is slashing the higher education budget. Looking for revenue streams was big on the administration's agenda…. The state was backing out. I think we went from the state providing somewhere around 75% of our budget to the current status, where [it is at] about 15% now….they've just been brutal. We're going through another round of budget cuts right now.

Hazel echoed this sentiment, describing her program "as another source of revenue" for the institution in a time "when you have a lot of state funding being cut off."

Russ, again showing his astute observations of the economics of higher education, described in detail to his colleagues why institutions tended to start online programs, particularly the way they prop up systems of cross-subsidies within institutions.

> I'm on our faculty Senate and…my answer to this always is hit the shift key and hit the number four on your keyboard. You know what that is?
>
> [Interviewer] Dollar sign.
>
> [Russ] You're damn right. And they don't get it. What they just don't understand [is] how budgets in higher education work. And so when I say that I can hire an adjunct to teach an online class once it's developed and I can put ten or 15 students in there who are paying at the graduate level, you know, perhaps $1,800 for the class and I'm paying that adjunct maybe three to five [thousand] depending on how long they've been with us and so forth -- I said, 'and what's the overhead on that? Are those students using the gym? Are they using the Health Center? Are they using the library? Are they using the parking

> area? Are they using the snow removal?' …the answer is they're using none of it. And I said, 'Well the truth is these students are subsidizing the expensive programs, which is traditional higher education undergraduate,' and you know... it's a difficult conversation.

Though no other faculty members specifically mentioned cross-subsidies, many other mentioned needing to provide revenue for the central operating units of their institutions.

Conclusion

As this chapter described, faculty members have experienced and reflected on a number of substantial changes to their own teaching practices and conceptions of themselves as educators as a result of online education. Despite this, their departments have not changed substantially, with minor changes in culture towards the adoption of a few specific policies related to online education and a few instances of social changes. Participants judged their institutions to have changed slightly more, including towards more oversight of the online education environment, increased support for online instructors, and changes to the makeup of the student body. Faculty members were very clear about the fact that online education is pursued at their institutions in order to respond to market trends and generate revenue. The next chapter will examine how these findings relate to two major higher education theories, as well as unpacking several potential implications for institutional practices.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion

This chapter analyzes how the findings from this study fit with the two theories of change described in the literature review (institutional isomorphism and academic capitalism) and discuss several additional implications that follow from the findings themselves. In particular, the chapter addresses what faculty members' perceived improvements in teaching skills in the online context might tell us about the on ground context, as well as how we might move beyond discussions of online versus on ground instruction altogether.

Fit with Theories of Change

In order to assess the extent to which the findings of this study support or challenge the change theories that were described in chapter two (i.e., academic capitalism and institutional isomorphism), and thus answer the third and final research question, it is useful to revisit the table from that chapter.

Table 5.1

Academic Capitalism and Mimetic Isomorphism within Kezar's Change Theory Typology

Element	Academic Capitalism	Mimetic Isomorphism
Why change occurs	Economic environment shifts; increased market activity among institutions	Environmental uncertainty; field reification
Process of change	Diffuse, networked, uneven	Imitation, borrowing
Outcomes of change	New institutional structures and work relationships	Institutions becoming more alike
Key metaphor	University as business	Follow the leader
Examples	Patenting and licensing research products	Organizational restructuring to mimic more successful peer
Type of change	Unplanned; dependent on environment	Unplanned; dependent on environment
Context of change	Network of actors internal and external to institutions	Network of actors internal and external to institutions

Tactics	Support marketization of institutional products	Observe and borrow structures and strategies of other organizations
Criticisms	Lack of usefulness for institutional leaders	Offers few alternatives for institutional leaders
Benefits	Breaks down imaginary boundary between institutions and market activities	Deconstructs myth of institutional innovation; recognizes field-dependency of change

Element column adapted from Kezar (2014). Academic capitalism adapted from Slaughter & Rhoades (2004). Institutional isomorphism adapted from DiMaggio & Powell (1983).

This section will discuss how the findings of this study apply to each theory according to the first three items of Kezar's (2014) criteria, which are the most applicable for this analysis.

Why Change Occurs

Faculty members were univocal in pointing to increased market demands as the key driver for online education, including student demand, increased revenue generation, and competition from other institutions. Academic capitalism posits that economic forces are important motivations for change, and positions this change as primarily based on the realization of opportunities rather than forced by competitive pressures. In other words, individual actors within an institution (e.g., faculty members with patentable research products) look to the market for remuneration for their work, rather than being encouraged or forced to change the modality of their degree programs in order to stay financially viable. Thus the desire to capitalize on student demand and increase revenue generation fits squarely within the academic capitalist framework. This explanation does not extend to those cases in which faculty members worked to expand institutional reach while under competitive compulsion, or cases in which they viewed expansion as a way to express their institutional mission, however. Academic capitalism's

account of why change occurs thus only partially explains what faculty members in this study perceived within their institutions.

Mimetic isomorphism points to uncertainty as a key driver for change. Faculty members in the study did perceive the environments in which they were operating to be uncertain and also felt like they were being pushed toward online education as a response to this uncertainty. They also perceived that the adult and non-traditional market was moving steadily in the direction of online education, which fits with the isomorphism's emphasis on increased norming in a particular field as a reason for change. In explaining why change occurs, then, mimetic isomorphism appears to fit relatively well with the observed findings.

Process of Change

Faculty members at different institutions described the process of change related to online education as either driven by one or more individual faculty champions within a department or strongly suggested by institutional administration. Both of these change processes fit well with academic capitalism, which emphasizes the entrepreneurial activities of faculty members and administrators as well as the "capitalist knowledge/learning regime (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004, p. 31)" encouraged by administrators. In the case of mimetic isomorphism, there was certainly borrowing between different academic units in the same institution, including attempts to scale up effective practices through templating or otherwise setting norms. This should be distinguished, however, from borrowing from other institutions, which is the focus of the theory of mimetic isomorphism. Several faculty members mentioned that they had brought practices with them from other institutions in which they had previously taught, which could be understood as a sort of borrowing. There was also some evidence in the research data that administrators looked to other institutions, especially more successful ones, for online education

models to borrow. Faculty perceptions in the aggregate, however, did not give borrowing the same weight as entrepreneurial activity or faculty champions. Furthermore, since administrators were not participants in this study, their strategies for change cannot be effectively analyzed here.

Outcomes of Change

Faculty members noted substantial changes to their roles as well as an increase in para-academic staff on their campuses. They also noted that work structures had changed, including the ability to work remotely and increased oversight of their work. These changes fit well with academic capitalism, as they include both new relationships between areas of the organization and new structural elements within it. In the case of mimetic isomorphism, the relative agreement among faculty members at a range of institutions (though not a representative sample) about the changes to their roles provides some evidence to support the theory's claim to relevance in this area. Despite this, the study did not generate the volume of evidence on institutional structures that would be necessary to fully adjudicate this question.

Summary of Theory Fit

The theory of academic capitalism, in particular, seems to fit the findings of this study quite well. Online education at the institutions represented was described by faculty as primarily a market-driven activity that often substantially changes faculty roles and relationships within institutions. While mimetic isomorphism appears to be a helpful lens in understanding the environment for change, more data, particularly of a structural nature, would be required to adequately assess whether mimetic isomorphism provides a useful explanatory lens for online education.

Additional Implications

One major implication of this study is that either the process of teaching online or the preparation for it — or both — can make faculty members more thoughtful and more skillful instructors. If faculty members are finding their experiences designing and teaching online courses so professionally valuable, why is there no comparable structure for on ground courses? What might it look like for faculty members to work with instructional design staff in their on ground courses as well as their online courses to organize and think through their teaching strategies and content in a structured manner? Furthermore, what if each on ground course needed to go through a quality review like online courses are required to pass at most institutions? The criteria embedded in online quality rubrics typically reflect substantial research into practices that help students succeed in the online context, which could potentially inform the development of comparable rubrics for the on ground context as well. It seems likely that on ground course quality would improve should a model like this be adopted. Whether or not faculty members would welcome the assistance and the effort involved in working in this way is an open question, but it seems to be worth considering given faculty members' perceptions of the increase in quality in their online courses and their decision to adopt practices from their online courses in their on ground courses.

Opening this question, however, would likely raise concerns about faculty autonomy in the classroom. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a few faculty members did feel that their autonomy as teachers was being eroded in the online context, whether through compliance regimes, templates, or imposed rubrics. It is worth asking to what extent, then, is working with an instructional designer and meeting quality and compliance standards a violation of faculty academic freedom? A 2007 statement on academic freedom in the classroom from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) made a strong case that faculty members should

have autonomy to choose the subjects covered in their classes and directly connected faculty autonomy in the classroom with research freedoms. Despite this overall focus on the content of coursework, the document hinted at a broader definition of classroom autonomy: "Although instructors are ethically obligated to follow approved curricular guidelines, 'freedom in the classroom' affords instructors wide latitude to decide how to approach a subject, how best to present and explore the material, and so forth." Later in the same document, contained in a section on introducing supposedly irrelevant material into the classroom, the document pushed further:

> How an instructor approaches the material in classroom exposition is, absent breach of professional ethics, a matter of personal style, influenced, as it must be, by the pedagogical goals and classroom dynamics of a particular course, as well as by the larger educational objective of instilling in students the capacity for critical and independent thought.

These statements, albeit minor points in a document concerned with freedom to choose subject matter for a course, raise substantive concerns about administrative overreach in the online context, and by extension about the instructional design idea sketched. The implicit argument in these statements is that faculty members know best how to teach their subject matter and should be allowed to do so with minimal interference.

Despite these claims of methodological freedom, faculty members who teach on ground are still regularly evaluated by their peers and by administrators through standardized rubrics that evaluate their teaching practices, with at least the tacit approval of groups like the AAUP. To what extent, then, does oversight of faculty teaching practices still conform to the tenets of academic freedom, and when does it overreach? It seems clear that strongly prescriptive

instructional design practices that impose standardized templates on faculty members from disparate disciplines and eliminate the faculty member's ability to make pedagogical choices based on the content of their discipline are a clear threat to faculty autonomy. Instructional designers who work as partners with faculty members and advise them on best practices based in learning science research – but ultimately help faculty members build courses in a way that is consistent with the faculty member's pedagogical choices – seems to be less concerning from an academic freedom perspective. Faculty members in this second scenario will still be evaluated by their students and their peers in line with current practices and may be encouraged by their department or administration to further improve their teaching practices based on the results of these evaluations. Given what we know about how faculty members learn how to teach – typically by experiencing the classroom as a traditional student and repeating these practices in their own teaching – it is not surprising that there is often room for improvement in faculty pedagogies. This improvement should not be forced on faculty members, but faculty members should be invited into the conversation about how students learn and how their courses can be developed in ways that enable more of their students to succeed in the courses that they teach. The hope is that faculty members care enough about their students to make these changes willingly, rather than through coercion that violates academic freedom.

Another implication from this study is that online courses may be of higher quality overall — especially when produced in conjunction with instructional design staff — than their on ground counterparts, while providing different affordances for different types of learners. This may indicate a need to move beyond the "no significant difference" conversation towards talking about how to improve all courses through rigorous course design practices that bring both deep faculty knowledge and instructional design expertise to bear in creating excellent learning

experiences for students. Online education, as perceived by faculty members, seems to be made up of the same kinds of building blocks as on ground courses. Whereas previous attempts at distance education, especially by mail, never became a true substitute for on ground college experiences, online education appears to have made the leap to respectability among many faculty members and has certainly become a viable and mainstream alternative for students. Faculty members in this study strongly suggested that intentional course design and quality assurance processes have enabled this shift at their universities.

Moreover, despite the increase in para-academic staff working on online courses, it does not appear that the worst fears of faculty writers like Noble (2002) have come to pass. Faculty members are still central to the design, development, and instructional processes for online courses, at least among the faculty participants in this study. In fact, faculty members appear to remain central to the process even when they are no longer physically located on campus. There were a few words of warning from faculty members in this study, however. Regulatory compliance is one area that seems to frustrate faculty members, particularly as it gets more complex, technical, and time consuming. It would behoove institutions to be mindful of the increased compliance demands being made of faculty members in online courses and provide structures and support to address these concerns proactively. A few faculty members also felt that their institutions had overly structured the online teaching approach in ways that did not allow them to be full owners of their course design or teaching processes. While instructional designers seem to have a crucial role to play in the online course development process, it is important that all administrators and para-academic staff recognize and respect faculty autonomy. In spite of these potential pitfalls, the institutions reflected in this study seem to have navigated away from the worst shoals of faculty replacement.

Further Research

This study only scratched the surface of faculty role changes and other university changes resulting from online education. More research is needed on the organizational changes taking place within departments and institutions, in particular. This study provides a few suggestions about some potential department-level changes, like a potential fracturing of departmental cohesion or, alternately, more collaboration between faculty members. Participants also suggested that institution-level efforts around online education were either largely ineffective or emboldened administrators to promulgate stricter policies around quality assurance, which hints at larger questions to be answered about the relation of centralized online education efforts to effective online programs and individual faculty members. In addition, online education has become a fertile site to study the economics of the university, including administrators' processes for launching new programs, addressing enrollment declines, dealing with cuts to state funding at public institutions, responding to demographic shifts, or remaining competitive in the crowded U.S. higher education landscape. All of these areas could and should be studied in more detail.

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Appendix A: Semi-structured Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me about your experiences with online education. This interview should take about fifty minutes. As a reminder, your participation is completely voluntary and anonymous. You can stop the interview at any time, for any reason, and you are under no obligation to answer any questions that you do not want to.

1) Can you please describe the course or courses that you have taught online within the last two years?
    a) How many students were/are in your course(s)?
    b) What are the subjects of the course(s)?
2) How did you experience the process of designing and developing an online course?
    a) Was it more or less difficult than creating a face-to-face course? How so?
    b) What kind of support was provided to you to create the course (e.g., department support, institutional support)?
3) How did you experience the process of teaching an online course?
    a) Did you feel more or less connected to your students? How?
    b) Did you feel more or less satisfaction? How?
4) How has teaching online changed your approach to teaching in general?
    a) Have you changed any specific teaching practices?
    b) Has your course design process changed?
5) How were you approached about teaching online?
    a) Were you asked to teach online or required to do so?
    b) Who approached you about teaching online?

c) Did you receive any incentives to teach online?

d) How did you make the decision to teach online?

6) How long has your department offered this particular degree online?

7) Were you involved in the planning process for offering your academic program online?

a) Were you involved in faculty meetings about the online program?

b) Who led the discussions about offering your program online?

8) Did faculty members make changes to the program in preparation to offering it online?

a) Were the courses more tightly integrated with one another?

b) Were course loads shifted among professors?

9) Why do you think your institution decided to offer your academic program online?

a) Did your faculty want to reach a wider audience?

b) Were there financial pressures involved?

10) What rationale was presented to you about offering your academic program online?

a) Who presented this rationale to you?

b) How did the rationale make sense to you?

c) Was the rationale presented as tied to the mission of the department, school, or university? If so, in what ways?

d) Do you agree with the rationale that was presented?

11) Who led the process of offering your program online?

a) How involved was your department chair?

b) How involved were external consultants and/or vendors?

12) How organized was the process of moving your program online?

a) Do you think it was effectively managed?

b) What could have been done differently to make the process better?

13) How do you think offering your academic program online changed your department or school?

a) Do you experience more or less collaboration with other professors teaching online? Developing online courses?

b) Has the ethos or culture of the department/school changed? If so, in what ways?

14) How do you think/perceive that offering online education changed your institution?

a) Have there been any structural changes, like additional hiring or reporting line changes?

b) Has the ethos or culture of the institution changed?

15) How would you describe yourself in demographic terms?

a) Race, ethnicity?

b) Gender or other orientation?

16) Are there any other thoughts or comments you would like to add?

Thank you again for being willing to participate in this study. I deeply appreciate it.

Appendix B: Participant Profiles

Pseudonym	Description
Abe	Abe was the youngest participant in the study and had taken online courses as part of his own studies. He had also taught online courses at a previous institution before moving to his current institution and found the support for development to be much better at his current institution. He felt that the course design process at his current institution was rigorous in a good way and believed that his work in this area would be counted in his tenure application. At the time of the interview he was still relatively new to his current institution.
Anastacia	Anastacia teaches at a very large public institution, primarily introductory courses with up to 100 students per section. She is very intent on introducing anti-racist pedagogies in her courses and believes that communication with students is the most important part of teaching. She volunteered to start teaching online in her department because she was frustrated with the quality of the courses being offered and the number of students dropping online courses.
Camila	Camila was specifically asked by the president of her institution to help start an online program in her field. She was initially quite skeptical of the idea but decided to try it given the individual who asked. She appreciates the flexibility of teaching online, but because of budget battles between her department and the distance education office, the online courses that she developed were given to adjuncts to teach instead of her.
Enid	Enid had taught online at two institutions before starting to teach online at her current institution. Because of this, she has been asked by her chairperson to teach a number of online courses at her current institution. She witnessed substantial attrition in her department through retirements and other departures and noted that the department is much more focused on good teaching than it used to be. Given her experience in online education and the general disorganization of her institution around online education, Enid is a leader in online education at her institution.
Greg	Greg is still not convinced that online courses provide the same quality of education as on ground courses, despite teaching several online courses each year. He prefers to teach on ground, though he realizes that higher education is changing and that he needs to change with it. He expressed the feeling that the administration is pushing online education as a way to expand the footprint of the university and make up for declining state

	appropriations, though he also said that students seemed to be voting with their feet about the modality that they preferred.
Hazel	Hazel is the program director for a social science program that is increasingly moving toward the online modality. Her institution is distinct from any other participant institution because they ask PhD students to teach almost all of the online courses during the regular academic year, as online teaching is not considered as part of regular teaching load for full-time faculty members. Full-time faculty members are paid extra to teach in the summer, however, and she mentioned enjoying the ability to travel while teaching.
Laura	Laura was one of the prime movers for online education at her institution. She is a fully remote faculty member, living hundreds of miles away from the institution for which she teaches, and her role is dedicated to instruction without any research responsibilities. She developed many of the courses in the graduate program in which she teaches and finds the flexibility of online education to be one of its most beneficial aspects. She had a substantial amount of autonomy in how she designed and developed the courses and has set the course design expectations for her department.
Leslie	Leslie teaches almost her entire course load online. She described a strong online demand for the degree programs in which she teaches and declining demand for the same program on ground. During her hiring process, she was asked about her interest and ability to teach online courses, which signaled to her that the institution was serious about expanding in this space. She noted that her graduate program had not prepared her well to teach online, and that the types of class assignments she had experienced as a student do not tend to work as well in the online environment.
Lewis	Lewis has lived through a major transition in how his department within a public institution tries to serve the residents of his state. Whereas they used to have a network of satellite campuses at which faculty members from the main campus would physically teach in the evenings or on the weekends, this structure has been largely dismantled in favor of online education. Though he had more or less retired some years ago, he came back to teaching full time once the online program in his discipline really took off because of student demand.
Lucile	Lucile started developing online courses at a time when her institution was foregrounding their importance and offering substantial incentives to faculty members. She became deeply involved in online education within her department and even directed the online program for a time. While she

	was the program director she changed instruction from a purely asynchronous model to a model incorporating video conferencing as well. She seemed genuinely enthusiastic about the quality of students that she was teaching online and appreciated the diversity of student voices in her online courses as well.
Martha	Martha started teaching online by working as a remote adjunct with course shells produced by other faculty members and eventually customizing them to her liking. Having taken online courses in her own studies, she realized that she needs to be proactive in establishing her presence in an online course, unlike some of her former professors. She was eventually offered a full-time position in residence at the main campus that she declined because it would have forced her to uproot her family. The department responded with an offer to be a fully-remote, full-time faculty member, which she gladly accepted.
Matt	Matt was approached by the dean of his school to transfer a few on ground courses to the online environment. Because a lot of his courses already used the learning management system, he did not feel like he had to completely change his courses in order to teach them online. He seems to appreciate the amount of control that he has in the online environment. Because he often teaches through synchronous video, he can require students to use video, proactively mute their microphones, and otherwise control the conversation to his liking.
Meg	Meg teaches mostly synchronous conference video-based courses and thinks that this allows her to get to know her students better than she would otherwise. She has seen other examples of poorly designed online courses, particularly through the experiences of her husband's master's degree program, and also through looking at courses in other departments around her institution. Her course load is almost completely online and she knew this when she accepted her current position. She seems to genuinely believe in the promise of online education to create opportunities for students who might not otherwise be able to pursue degrees because of life circumstances.
Nelson	Nelson teaches in a program with a very long history of distance education and feels that the program has lost its way with online education. The model he employs is a mixed on ground / online model, in which the lectures he gives on ground are recorded and uploaded immediately for the online students to watch. He does not think that this model provides enough support for online students. Having just returned from a stint in academic administration, he thinks that other faculty in the program fail take the

	student perspective into account as often as they should, and almost always prioritize their research over improving the quality of their online courses.
Reid	Reid has developed and taught several courses in the online context, including redeveloping courses that other faculty members had done a poor job at initially designing. His initial foray into online education was opening a second section of a very popular course that was designed by someone else, so he had the chance to learn from someone who had already designed a course. His department tends to have some faculty members who teach online and some who do not, according to their own preference and skill set, and he thinks this is a good decision by the department chair.
Renee	Renee teaches courses that range from 25-100 students in the same section, which she described as a substantial challenge in terms of getting to know her students. She feels that students have changed over the past ten years, such that they no longer seem to want a human connection to their professors. As a working mom, she appreciates the flexibility that teaching online courses provides because she can take her kids to school, pick them up from school, and generally be around for them in a different way than if she had to be on campus all day.
Rosa	Rosa is the director of the online program in which she teaches, though she started out as an adjunct in the department. As the desire for online courses in her program ramped up over time, she was eventually hired full time in a teaching-only appointment. She thought the administration's handling of online education at the institutional level, with major overlapping and expensive initiatives, overlooked the good work happening within the departments among the faculty and did not capitalize on the knowledge that already existed within her university.
Russ	Russ was among the savviest of the participants insofar as he demonstrated a rich understanding of the economics and institutional drivers of online education. He has decades of experience in distance education and primarily teaches non-traditional students. He described the shift from on ground education to online learning for adult learners as a much more efficient and effective way for these types of students to learn. He was also emphatic that institutions get into adult education and online education as a way to generate revenue.
Sanjay	Sanjay took over a struggling online program in the sciences and completely turned it around over a few years. He convinced the department chair to allow him to convene faculty working groups that redefined the curriculum of the program, redistributed the advising load, and revised the

	marketing for the program as well. He now has more students in the program than at any time in the history of the program, and is now providing his program to students who used to study on satellite campuses as well.
Simone	Simone has developed and taught a number of different courses in the online context, though mostly courses that she has previously taught on ground. She relies heavily on written lectures in her online courses, which appears to be unique among study participants, and will write these when developing any new course so that it can be put online. Her institution was going through a substantial budget crisis when her interview was conducted, and she thought that her department's robust online offerings would likely keep their majors or minors from being shut down by the administration.
Stephanie	Stephanie is the director of the online program in which she teaches and has a long history of teaching at a distance. She was very skeptical in the beginning that her discipline could even be taught in the online context. Since then, she has developed a template for course design that other faculty members in her department utilize heavily, and she insists on alignment between core courses and program outcomes. Despite initially planning her program as asynchronous, faculty and students in her program made it clear that they wanted the synchronous video time to connect with each other.
Theo	Theo was the oldest participant in the study and has a fully-remote faculty position at his institution. He described his institution as catering to the military and to several large companies in his state. In a previous career he had been dean of his school and president of the major professional society in his discipline. He believes strongly in the promise of online education as a way to reach a broader audience, but felt that internal politicking within his institution likely kept it from achieving its potential reach.