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# EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ONLINE TEACHING

Educational Development for Online Teaching

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### Abstract

This paper discusses a case study that explores the impact on educators' teaching practices, particularly their assumptions and beliefs about teaching and self-efficacy, as a result of their participation in an educational development programme designed to prepare college educators to develop and teach online and hybrid courses. The data were collected through an online survey of 34 participants, face-to-face interviews with 18 participants and documentary evidence review of 6 participants, and was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach. The findings suggest that the knowledge and experience that college educators acquire when participating in educational development for online teaching can produce a positive increase in technological and pedagogical knowledge and understanding of accessibility. This new understanding, in turn, can result in changes to both online and face-to-face teaching practices of educators. The results also indicate that for some educators, participation in an educational development programme for online teaching encouraged more student-centred teaching approaches and helped to dispel misconceptions about the lower quality and value of online learning. Participation in educational development for online teaching was also found to increase some educators' technical and pedagogical confidence, although a few participants experienced an initial decline in self-efficacy.

*Keywords:* educational, development, online, teaching, practice, student-centred, college

## Educational Development for Online Teaching

### **Introduction**

As online learning in higher education has grown rapidly over the past decade, so too has the need for educational development to prepare educators to teach online. A growing body of literature suggests that when educators move from traditional to online classrooms, they require a transformational shift in their approach to teaching, and often need to re-examine their underlying assumptions about teaching and learning (Garrison, 2006; Kreber & Kanuka, 2006; Scagnoli, Buki & Johnson, 2009; Wiesenberg & Stacey, 2008). Therefore, it is particularly important that educational development initiatives prepare educators for online teaching and support them as they reconstruct their teaching approaches and instructional practices when learning to teach online.

### **Statement of the Problem**

While educational development for online teaching has become more commonplace within higher education institutions, little is known about the changes in teaching practice resulting from educators' preparation to teach online (Herman, 2012). Most of the literature to date has focused on the types and frequency of educational development programmes and on educator preferences for professional development (Allen & Seaman, 2013; Herman, 2012; Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005; Pagliari, Batts & McFadden, 2009). In addition, few studies have explored the impact of educational development for online teaching on conceptions of teaching and self-efficacy, and the limited research available is focused mainly on full-time or tenured educators in the American university sector. There is a need for research focusing on educators within the community college sector in Canada, as this setting is not currently represented in the literature.

### **Context of the Study**

Realizing that teaching in the online environment involves different teaching and learning approaches than required in the classroom setting, many higher education institutions have begun to offer educational development programmes to prepare educators for teaching online (Lane, 2013). Educational development programmes vary greatly, from single workshops to longer intensive programmes, and range in focus from technology to pedagogy (Herman, 2012). In an effort to support educational development for online teaching, the Centre for Academic and Faculty Enrichment at Durham College in Oshawa, Ontario, Canada developed a course, known as the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute, to prepare educators to teach online successfully, as well as to help them design or modify a course for online or hybrid delivery.

The Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute began in 2011 and is designed to familiarise educators with best practices in online teaching. It employs an active learning approach in which participants engage in a hybrid learning environment while applying principles of course design and delivery to a course they are preparing to teach online or hybrid. The curriculum is focused on defining and creating student-centred learning experiences and examines effective design of content and activities, as well as implementation of successful assessment and facilitation techniques. The following are the learning outcomes of the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute:

- Identify the similarities and differences between face-to-face and online course design and delivery.
- Describe a student-centred approach and how it applies to online learning.
- Discuss relevant learning theories and how they might be incorporated into online learning design.
- Develop online learning modules which utilise an interactive, student-centred approach for at least one online/hybrid course.
- Develop evaluation strategies that address the challenges and opportunities of online delivery.
- Develop familiarity with a variety of online tools and strategies by participating as a student in a hybrid course.

- Participate in a cohort model of development wherein educators share ideas and support each other's development.

The Institute is offered in both a compressed seven-week format (3 hours face-to-face per week and 3 hours online per week) in the spring semester and a fourteen-week format (2 hours face-to-face per week and 1 hour online per week) during the fall and winter semesters. The face-to-face time during the first half of the Institute is spent discussing theory and showcasing best practices for online course design and delivery, and the online time is devoted to the practical application of the theory to the participants' own course development. The content of the Institute includes topics such as planning your online/hybrid course, online teacher competencies, active and student-centred learning strategies, assessment and evaluation strategies, academic integrity, creating a positive climate for learning, building community, supporting students, facilitating discussions, managing group work, accessibility and Universal Design for Learning, and copyright and fair use. During the second half of the Institute, the face-to-face time is devoted to peer sharing and review, and the participants have the opportunity to showcase their on-going course development and obtain feedback from each other. At the time of this study, in the fall of 2014, there were a total of 91 educators who had participated in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute.

### **Research Questions**

This study set out to answer the following main and sub research questions:

#### Main Research Question

- How does participation in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute impact college educators' teaching practice?

#### Sub-Research Questions

- What changes, if any, do educators experience in their previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching as a result of participating in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute?

- What changes, if any, do educators experience in their confidence in their ability to teach (self-efficacy) as a result of participating in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Educational Development and Conceptions of Teaching**

The literature has identified a continuum of teaching conceptions which range from strongly teacher-focused and content-oriented conceptions on the one end, to strongly student-focused and learning-oriented on the other (Calderhead, 1996; Kember, 1997; Trigwell & Prosser, 2004). Educators' conceptions of teaching have been shown to affect the way they approach their teaching. Educators who conceive teaching as transmitting knowledge are more likely to adopt a teacher-centred approach to teaching, while those who view teaching as more of a facilitative process are found to use more student-centred approaches (Eley, 2006; Kember 1997; Kember & Kwan 2000; Postareff, Lindblom-Ylänne & Nevgi, 2007; Prosser, Trigwell & Taylor, 1994; Samuelowicz & Bain 1992;). Studies also suggest that a similar continuum of teaching conceptions and approaches to teaching are evident in the online environment (Ellis, Steed & Applebee, 2006; González, 2009; Gonzalez, 2010; Lamerias, Levy, Paraskakis & Webber, 2012; Roberts, 2003). It has also been established that when student-centred approaches to teaching are adopted, students tend to present deeper approaches to learning and achieve better quality learning outcomes (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004; Hanbury, Rickinson & Prosser, 2008; Ho, Watkins & Kelly, 2001; Trigwell & Prosser, 2004).

The literature confirms that participation in educational development programmes has the potential to impact educators' conceptions of teaching and that there has been evidence of a shift from teacher-focused to student-focused approaches in teaching and learning following participation in educational development programmes (Butcher & Stoncel, 2012; Cilliers & Herman, 2010; Gibbs & Coffey, 2004; Ginns, Kitay & Prosser, 2008; Hanbury et al., 2008; Ho et al., 2001; Hubball, Collins & Pratt, 2005; Postareff et al., 2007; Stes,

Coertjens & Van Petegem, 2010). Studies have also found that the experience of participating in educational development can lead towards change in both the face-to-face and online teaching practices (Barczyk, Buckenmeyer, Feldman & Hixon, 2011; Buckenmeyer, Hixon, Barczyk & Feldman, 2013; Crowne & Marlowe, 1964; McQuigan, 2012; Owens, 2012; Shea, Pelz, Fredericksen & Pickett, 2002).

### **Educational Development and Teacher Self-Efficacy**

Past research indicates that teacher self-efficacy may also influence an educators' approach to teaching as well as student achievement (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Yang, Kao & Huang, 2006). Educators with high self-efficacy tend to be more willing to explore new teaching strategies and methods, and employ more student-centred learning practices in their classrooms (Allinder, 1994; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2004; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy & Hoy, 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990; Wheatley, 2005). High levels of teaching self-efficacy beliefs have also been consistently correlated with higher student achievement and deeper approaches to student learning (Ashton, Buhr & Crocker, 1984; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Henson, Kogan & Vacha-Haase, 2001). Conversely, low levels of self-efficacy correlate with more teacher-centred approaches to teaching and poorer student achievement (Robina, 2008).

Researchers have also found that participation in educational development programmes can lead to increases in educators' sense of self-efficacy (Horvitz & Beach, 2011; Postareff et al., 2007; Prieto & Meyers, 1999) with longer training periods resulting in greater increases. It has also been suggested that participation in educational development programmes can initially result in a negative effect on self-efficacy because they raise the educators' awareness of good teaching practices, which can make them more uncertain about themselves as teachers (Postareff et al., 2007; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Bandura (1977; 1997) proposed four possible sources of self-efficacy: (1) mastery experiences; (2)



vicarious experiences; (3) verbal persuasion; and (4) physiological arousal. Educational development programmes that provide hands-on opportunities for participants to try out tasks and experience successful completion have the most potential for raising self-efficacy beliefs. In addition, educational development programmes that encourage peer observation and allow participants to see the successes of others can contribute positively to self-efficacy. The inclusion of encouraging facilitator and peer feedback through verbal persuasion, along with a positive learning climate can also help to build self-efficacy among participants.

## **Methodology**

### **Case Study Design**

A single descriptive case study approach was determined to be the most appropriate method for this study, as it allowed the researcher to capture the rich and detailed experiences of the educators in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute (Yin, 2009). A retrospective design was utilized because the research questions were focused on the impact of the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute on college educators' teaching practice. According to the literature it is possible for educators to experience a shift from teacher-focused to student-focused approaches in teaching and learning and self-efficacy following participation in educational development programmes, although changes can be slow and it can take some time before positive changes emerge (Postareff et al., 2007).

### **Study Participants**

After receiving ethics approval, a list of all educators who participated in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute from spring 2011 to winter 2014 was generated which included 91 potential participants. An invitation was sent via email to this list of educators inviting them to participate in the research study in late September 2014. A total of 34 educators completed the online survey and 28 indicated that they were willing to participate in a face-to-face interview. A purposive sample was then used to select potential

interview participants that met the following inclusion criteria: (1) had at least one year of experience teaching face-to-face at Durham College prior to taking the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute in order to have accumulated some assumptions and beliefs about teaching in higher education; (2) were currently teaching at least one face-to-face course at Durham College; and (3) had taught at least one online/hybrid course since completing the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute. Of the 28 participants who indicated in the online survey that they were willing to participate in a face-to-face interview, 21 met the inclusion criteria. A total of 18 educators ended up replying to the email and participating in a face-to-face interview.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The data collection for this case study consisted of an online survey, in-depth interviews with educators, and an analysis of educator-provided documentary evidence.

**Online survey.** An online survey was developed to provide background for the data analysis and to gather demographic data in order to identify a purposive sample of potential interview participants. The survey included questions related to basic demographic information and asked respondents to indicate: age, gender, department and programme information, discipline, years of teaching experience, employment status, highest level of education completed and when they had participated in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute. The survey also included several questions that focused on the impact of the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute on educators face-to-face and online/hybrid teaching practice and self-efficacy.

**Interviews.** The goal of the interviews was to gain an understanding of how educators applied what they learned from the Institute into their teaching practice and how their approaches to teaching or self-efficacy changed as a result of participating in the Institute. The interviews ranged in length from 30 to 60 minutes. To prepare for the

interviews, participants received a copy of the interview protocol and questions. The interviews were semi-structured, in that they addressed a common set of questions; however, the answers and the way the discussion progressed were dependent upon the interviewee (Roulston, 2010).

**Documentary evidence.** Interview participants were asked to provide documentary evidence (i.e., course outlines, content, assignments, and assessments) to illustrate specific changes that they have made as a result of participating in the Institute. Participants were provided with the interview questions in advance of the interviews so that they could prepare the documentary evidence to bring to the interview.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

**Online survey.** Frequencies and percentages were examined for each question related to demographics (i.e., age, gender, department and programme information, years of experience, employment status, and highest level of education completed) and face-to-face, hybrid and online teaching experience. The questions that focused on the impact of the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute on educators face-to-face and online/hybrid teaching practice and self-efficacy were also analysed in terms of frequency and percentage.

**Interviews.** The data analysis procedure for this study consisted of a thematic analysis of the interview transcripts based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach (Phase 1: familiarising yourself with your data; Phase 2: generating initial codes; Phase 3: searching for themes; Phase 4: reviewing themes; Phase 5: defining and naming themes; Phase 6: producing the report) to identify, analyse, and report the patterns/themes within data.

**Documentary evidence.** Noaks and Wincup (2004) explain that documentary evidence can be a valuable resource in qualitative studies and, accordingly, it has an important part to play in the triangulation of methods used in a study. The documents that

were submitted were used to supplement and give illustrative examples of the findings obtained from the interview data analysis.

## **Findings**

### **Online Survey Data**

**Demographics.** All of the online survey respondents were faculty members of Durham College who had completed the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute. Of those respondents, 24 were full-time, 6 were part-time (teaching up to and including six hours per week), 3 were partial load (teaching more than six and up to twelve hours per week) and 1 was sessional (teaching more than twelve hours per week). A total of 27 females and 7 males responded to the online survey during the five weeks that it was available. There was greater representation of female respondents (79.4% female and 20.6% male) compared to the overall Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute participation (68.1% female and 31.9% male). The majority of the respondents (79.4%) were between the ages of 40 and 59. The respondents taught in various academic schools at Durham College, with a little over half (54.5%) coming from the School of Interdisciplinary Studies. This is fairly consistent with the overall participation level (57.1%) of this School in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute as this academic school offers the most online and hybrid courses in the College.

**Perception of impact of Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute.** The first two questions related to the perception of the impact of the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute asked about the application of learning from the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute to face-to-face and online/hybrid teaching practice. These questions used a three-point scale that included the responses of Yes/Somewhat/No. These questions revealed that many of the respondents were able to apply what they learned through the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute to both their face-to-face (61.8%) and online

(77.4%) teaching practice. The next two questions in the survey focused specifically on whether or not participants implemented more student-centred teaching strategies as a result of participating in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute. This question was designed with a Yes/No response option. The results of this section were a little more varied with regard to face-to-face teaching practice, with only 66.7% of respondents agreeing that they implemented more student-centred teaching strategies in their face-to-face teaching. In terms of online/hybrid teaching practice, a large majority (80.0%) agreed that they implemented more student-centred teaching strategies in their online/hybrid teaching. The final three questions in the online survey asked about changes in approach to teaching face-to-face and online/hybrid and increases in self-efficacy since participating in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute. These questions used a five-point scale that included the following response options: Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree. The majority agreed or strongly agreed that their approach to teaching face-to-face (73.5%) and online/hybrid (87.1%) had changed since participating in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute. In addition, a large number (79.5%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their confidence in their ability to teach (self-efficacy) had increased as a result of participating in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute. In general, the online survey data seemed to indicate that the majority of the respondents had perceived some changes in teaching practice, previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching, and self-efficacy after participating in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute.

### **Interview Data**

**Demographics of interviewees.** The interviewees represented a subset of those who completed the online survey. There was fairly even representation of interviewees from each cohort of the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute from Spring 2011 to Winter 2014.

Of the 18 interviewees, 12 were full-time, 2 were part-time, 3 were partial-load, and 1 was sessional. Similar to the online survey, there was a greater representation of female interview respondents (13 female and 5 male) and the majority of the interviewees (72.2%) were between the ages of 40 and 59. The interviewees taught in various academic schools at Durham College, with a large number (66.7%) coming from the School of Interdisciplinary Studies and Employment Services.

**Motivation for participating in the Institute.** When asked to explain why they enrolled in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute, the interviewees identified a number of different factors that motivated them to participate. The intrinsic motivators that emerged came primarily from a desire to increase their technological or pedagogical knowledge, and to be early adopters or proactive leaders of online/hybrid teaching and learning. The extrinsic driving forces towards participation in the Institute included personal benefit or interest, especially from non-full-time participants, recommendation or mandate from administration, and in one case the specific desire to reduce the failure rate in a course.

**Benefits of the Institute.** The interviewees found the interdisciplinary cohort model of the Institute to be beneficial as it allowed them to interact with colleagues from diverse backgrounds and to build lasting connections with other educators across the College. Several interviewees mentioned this as being key to their experience, and at various points in the interview most of the interviewees mentioned the collegial support that they received by participating in the Institute. The interviewees also enjoyed being able to follow the course development of their peers as they were able to get new ideas that they could translate into their own practice. The active learning design of the Institute was also identified by the interviewees as being beneficial, and several commented on the effectiveness of the hands-on approach that allowed them to work on their own course development as well as the hybrid

design which provided an opportunity to experience the online environment from a student's perspective.

**Impact of participation in the Institute on teaching practice.** Several participants were able to put the theory and examples from the Institute into practice. This theme flowed through many of the comments from interviewees as they described their increased use of digital tools and the LMS, and the planning of their lessons using an active learning model. Others made adjustments by incorporating community building activities, chunking information, and modifying assignments. Participants also became more aware of accessibility issues and the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework was also embraced by some interviewees who provided greater access to content online and afforded opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning in multiple ways. Even when no changes in practice were specifically attributed to the Institute, the interviewees indicated that they still had a sense of support from colleagues and reinforcement of their current teaching practices.

**Impact of participation in the Institute on assumptions and beliefs about teaching.** Many of the interviewees mentioned a shift to a more student-centred teaching approach as a result of participating in the Institute. Several of the interviewees commented on moving away from the transmission mode of teaching and incorporating further opportunities for practice and formative feedback. A few interviewees also explained that the Institute helped to reinforce the notion that they don't always have to be at the front of the class lecturing, that it is okay to transfer some of the content delivery online, and that in many cases this leads to more effective and engaging learning experiences. The Institute also seemed to encourage a greater appreciation for the value of online teaching and learning and the effort that goes into developing successful online learning experiences.

**Impact of participation in the Institute on confidence in ability to teach (self-efficacy).** Many of the interviewees expressed that their participation in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute affected their feelings of confidence (self-efficacy) in their teaching ability. Some felt that the Institute improved their technological confidence level and they were more comfortable incorporating digital tools and utilizing the LMS. Others described increased feelings of confidence related to their pedagogical knowledge and explained that participating in the Institute encouraged them to consider developing or teaching future online or hybrid courses. In addition, participation in the Institute seemed to reduce some interviewees' fear of the online environment, and led to greater risk-taking and the courage to try new teaching methods and strategies. Two interviewees expressed that their participation in the Institute reduced their feelings of confidence in their teaching ability. This may be a temporary reaction to their exposure to sound pedagogical models and principles, which they may not have been following in their teaching to date. It is hoped that the initial decrease in self-confidence will be followed by a slow increase as they make changes in their teaching practice to more closely follow the recommended models and principles.

**Perceived impact of participation in the Institute on students.** Several interviewees indicated that their participation led to an improved learning experience for the students, as their teaching was more engaging and active, and students were exposed to well-designed and thoughtful learning experiences. One interviewee was also able to reduce the failure rate in one of her courses as a result of being able to put some of the course material online to support student success. A few of the interviewees also implemented UDL principles which made the learning experience more accessible for students and allowed the interviewees to reach a more diverse population of students.



### **Documentary Evidence**

Interview participants were asked to provide documentary evidence (i.e., course outlines, content, assignments, and assessments) to illustrate specific changes that they have made as a result of participating in the Institute. Six out of the 18 interview participants supplied documentary evidence. The documentary evidence consisted of a variety of different types of artifacts including screen captures of online activities, links to interactive practice activities, copies of lesson plans, evaluations and course outlines, as well as links to online videos. The evidence that was provided was consistent with the interview responses and helped to provide further evidence of the impact that the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute had on participants' teaching practice. Each of these artifacts demonstrated how the participants were able to transfer what they had learned from the Institute into their current teaching practice, both face-to-face and online.

### **Discussion**

The literature suggests that when student-centred approaches to teaching are adopted, students tend to present deeper approaches to learning and achieve better quality learning outcomes (Trigwell & Prosser, 2004). The impact on student learning outcomes can lead to greater student engagement and rates of retention, performance measures commonly scrutinised by funding sources. In addition, as the number of students learning online has dramatically increased (Allen & Seaman, 2013) the need to ensure quality online teaching has also become very important. If institutions want to increase online education and maintain teaching quality, they should invest in educational development programmes, particularly through institutional policies that provide for adequate resources for effective educational development. This study may be helpful when determining institutional policies for educational development for online teaching as it provides an indication of the scope, format and resources required to develop an effective educational development programme. Given

the growing emphasis on accountability in higher education, it is possible that institutions will increasingly be required to provide research evidence supporting the efficacy of educational development initiatives and programmes (Wilson, 2012). The methodology presented in this study may also offer a potential model which could be adapted or expanded as a way to gather concrete evidence of the impact of educational development initiatives for online teaching. The use of a mixed methods approach utilizing an online survey, face-to-face interviews, and documentary analysis may provide a useful framework for other institutions or educational development centres interested in measuring their own initiatives.

This study also has several implications for institutions of higher education and those responsible for the design and delivery of educational development. Based on the findings of this study, other institutions interested in creating an educational development programme for online teaching should take into consideration both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors that can influence educators' willingness to participate in such initiatives. Consideration of motivational factors can be used to guide promotional efforts for educational development and to develop relevant incentives to encourage participation.

Educational development programmes for online teaching should also be designed to provide opportunities for faculty to engage purposefully with one another and should emphasise a collaborative focus to the programme. The value of an interdisciplinary cohort model was supported by this research and additional literature that emphasises the importance of communities of practice (Britnell et al., 2010; Beach & Cox, 2009; Cox, 2004; Heath & McDonald, 2012; O'Meara, 2005) and opportunities for mentoring and learning with peers (deNoyelles, Cobb & Lowe, 2012; Gilbert, 1995; Herman, 2012; Kinuthia, 2005; Lu, Todd & Miller, 2011; Maier, 2012; Shattuck & Anderson, 2013). The findings of this study also propose that educational development programmes developed for online teaching incorporate active learning strategies and provide faculty with hands-on opportunities to apply their

learning in authentic situations. As part of learning to teach online, educational development should also include opportunities for faculty to learn online in the role of a student.

The results of this study reveal that learning to teach online can be an impetus for changes in teaching practice both face-to-face and online. Participants in this study described an increase in technological knowledge and greater use of digital tools and the LMS, greater pedagogical knowledge and the implementation of active, student-centred lessons, as well as a greater understanding of student accessibility issues as a result of participating in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute. Such knowledge could encourage more educational development opportunities for online teaching given the potential for far-reaching impacts, thereby maximising the value of these programmes for educators as well as institutions.

The evidence of a shift to more student-focused approaches to teaching and learning and changes in assumptions and beliefs about the quality and value of online learning following participation in the Institute may also help to inform practice. Given the focus on teaching and learning quality within the field of higher education, many institutions are looking for ways to promote more student-centred teaching and learning environments. Programmes that focus on educational development for online teaching provide institutions with a potential mechanism to help encourage more student-focused teaching practices. In addition, as more and more educational institutions are embracing online learning, educators are experiencing increased pressure to become engaged in the design and delivery of online instruction (Kang, 2012). Although some educators welcome this new adventure, many are hesitant and even resistant to teaching online which can be a barrier to the growth of online programmes within an institution (Shea, 2007). Given that participation in educational development for online teaching helped to encourage a greater appreciation for the value and quality of online education among participants in this study, institutions that face resistance to

online teaching by educators may want to consider educational development as a potential solution to help address this resistance.

Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that educational development for online teaching has the potential to affect educators' feelings of self-efficacy in their teaching ability. This provides further support for other institutions interested in implementing similar educational development initiatives, as self-efficacy has been shown to improve overall teaching performance and to promote greater student success. In addition, this study demonstrated that for some educators, participation in development programmes can initially have a negative effect on their sense of efficacy. This knowledge can be important when designing educational development initiatives, as facilitators may want to inform participants of this possible decline and plan additional support mechanisms to ease feelings of uncertainty.

Finally, participation in educational development has potential ripple effects on improved student learning outcomes and other gains, such as student engagement and retention (Ashton et al., 1984; Gibbs & Coffey, 2004; Hanbury et al., 2008; Ho et al., 2001; Prebble et al., 2004; Trigwell & Prosser, 2004). It is clear that educational development for online teaching is a significant, relevant, and multifaceted issue that has implications for educators, educational developers, administrators, institutions, and, by extension, students. With greater attention being paid to the quality of teaching in higher education, and greater demand for online learning, institutions will increasingly be required to provide educational development initiatives to help support educators as they make the transition to the online environment. The results of this study provide valuable insights for other institutions that are interested in developing effective educational development for online teaching that can impact teaching practice, assumptions and beliefs, and self-efficacy.

### **Limitations**

One of the main limitations of this study is that it relies on self-reported data. The use of self-report has the potential of creating a social-desirability bias that may cause participants to under-report behaviours deemed inappropriate and over-report behaviours viewed as desirable (Barczyk et al., 2011; Crowne & Marlowe, 1964). Also, given that only six of the participants provided documentary evidence to support their self-reports, it is possible that the reported data may not fully reflect the actual changes that occurred to teaching practice, assumptions and beliefs, and self-efficacy. The retrospective nature of this research creates a limitation as varying amounts of time had passed between educators' participation in the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute and the data collection. It is possible that some of the participants' recollections may have been inaccurate or incomplete given the amount of time that had passed. Furthermore, the Online/Hybrid Course Development Institute is voluntary, and educators who choose to participate may differ from the general pool of educators and may be more motivated to improve their teaching practices. Educators who chose not to access educational development for online teaching were not captured in this study.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, this study suggests that an educational development programme that targets online teaching and that is designed using an interdisciplinary cohort model and active learning approach has the potential to positively impact college educators' teaching practice. Participants' changes in assumptions and beliefs about teaching and gains in self-efficacy provide evidence that this type of programme can be an effective tool in helping educators make the transition from face-to-face to online teaching. This study also proposes that participation in educational development for online teaching provides a good opportunity to impact teaching and learning far beyond the online environment and can provide an impetus

for the transformation of teaching practice. When educators are exposed to new ideas and teaching and learning approaches during the process of learning to teach online, they are persuaded to rethink their conceptions of teaching in light of the student-centred strategies that they see elicited by the online environment (Shea et al., 2002). The new concepts and techniques that they encounter during the educational development programme for online teaching can, in turn, transform what they do in their traditional classrooms (Lowes, 2008). In short, educational development for online teaching can effectively become a stimulus for educators to reflect on and evaluate their current teaching practices. The results of this research demonstrate that educational development for online teaching is effective at helping educators implement new pedagogical strategies into their teaching practice, both face-to-face and online, and can encourage educators to transform their assumptions and beliefs about established methods of teaching and can increase levels of self-efficacy.

The future of higher education depends upon knowledgeable educators who are continuously improving their teaching and learning abilities, and who are able to adapt to the fast-paced and ever-changing education climate. The need for ongoing educational development for post-secondary educators is well documented, and this is especially true for educators at community colleges. Educational development programmes for online teaching can help educators obtain the confidence they need to provide students with valuable learning experiences in a variety of environments. Well-trained and supported online educators can transfer their skills into the classroom, and improve the student experience overall.

Participation in educational development for online teaching presents an opportunity for educators to look at education through new eyes and to envision new possibilities for creating enriched and meaningful teaching experiences. Educational development for online teaching can also provide institutions with an important opportunity to promote excellence in teaching and can help support the goal of placing students at the centre of their learning experiences.

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