Teaching Philosophy: Moving from Face-to-Face to Online Classrooms

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Abstract

This article explores the similarities and differences between Canadian and Australian university teachers' face-to-face and online teaching approaches and philosophies. It presents perspectives on teaching face-to-face and online in two comparable Canadian and Australian universities, both of which offer instruction in these two modes. The key research question was to determine if moving from face-to-face instruction to on-line teaching results in new teaching approaches or in a creative blend of those developed within each teaching modality. Qualitative data were collected using an open-ended survey, which asked participants for their thoughts on their face-to-face (f2f) and online teaching experiences. Quantitative data were collected using the "Teaching Perspectives Inventory," which assessed participants'

Résumé

Dans cet article, les auteurs examinent les similarités et les différences entre les approches et les philosophies d'enseignement en ligne et en classe parmi des éducateurs universitaires canadiens et australiens. Wiesenberg et Stacey présentent des perspectives sur l'enseignement en classe et en ligne dans deux universités comparables se trouvant au Canada et en Australie ; les deux universités offrent les deux modes d'enseignement. La question de recherche clé était de déterminer si la transition d'un enseignement en classe à un enseignement en ligne résultait en de nouvelles approches d'enseignement, ou s'il y avait un mélange innovateur des approches développées à l'intérieur de chaque modalité d'enseignement. Pour cueillir des données qualitatives, les participants ont partagé leurs idées sur leurs expériences

Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education
Vol. 34, No. 1, Spring 2008
pp. 63–79

teaching approaches and philosophies in terms of their beliefs, intentions, and actions. The authors' conclusions address the issue of assisting teachers to successfully make the transition from traditional teacher-centred to newly emerging learner-centred teaching approaches in distributed classrooms.

d'enseignement en classe et en ligne dans un sondage ouvert. Pour cueillir des données quantitatives, les auteurs ont utilisé le "Teaching Perspectives Inventory" [inventaire des perspectives d'enseignement] pour évaluer les approches et les philosophies d'enseignement des participants en termes de leurs croyances, intentions, et actions. Les auteurs concluent en adressant la question d'un soutient auprès des enseignants qui assurait une bonne transition allant des approches traditionnelles en enseignement axées sur l'enseignant vers de nouvelles approches émergeantes en enseignement axées sur l'apprenant dans des salles de classe distribuées.

INTRODUCTION

Today's rapidly changing communication technologies are enabling teachers in all levels of education to move from traditional face-to-face (f2f) classrooms to the new online classrooms. However, in order to make a successful transition, teachers need to rethink their underlying assumptions about teaching, about the learning process, and, most fundamentally, about their role as educators (Comeaux & McKenna-Byington, 2003; Garrison, 2006; McShane, 2006; Palloff & Pratt, 2000; Torrisi & Davis, 2000; Wiesenberg, 1999, 2002). The importance of having a clearly articulated philosophy or approach to teaching in traditional f2f classrooms has been a focus in the teaching literature for over two decades (Elias & Merriam, 1980, 2005; Jarvis, 1999; Mott, 1996; Zinn, 1998). This article adopts Jarvis's (1999) concept of the "reflective practitioner" and utilizes Pratt & Associates' (1998) model of five teaching perspectives to describe the experiences of academics from two different countries (Canada and Australia) who are making the transition from a traditional f2f classroom to a "virtual" classroom, where advanced communication technologies present new teaching challenges, as well as new teaching opportunities.

Jarvis's (1999) developmental concept of the evolving meta-theory of practice over time is related to Pratt's (1989) concept of increasing teaching competence. Pratt's concept involves three developmental stages: initial mastery of skills and procedures (in one's initial professional education or training); clinical problem solving (in the novice professional's application of academic theory to actual professional practice); and critical reflection on knowledge and values (in the experienced professional's ongoing professional growth over the course of a professional career). According to Pratt, the most essential requirement for reaching the third developmental stage is the conscious and intentional interaction between critical thought, professional practice, and professional philosophy or ideology. Pratt & Associates (1998) conceptualized teachers' theory of practice as a "teaching perspective" that consists of an interrelated set of beliefs and intentions that directs a teacher's actual classroom behaviour.

The growing prominence of the use of advanced communication technologies in the learning process over the last decade in higher education is now evident in the large body of research that exists on its effectiveness as a teaching tool (Fisher, Phelps, & Ellis, 2000; Stephenson, 2001; van Schaik, Barker, & Beckstrand, 2003). Often, teachers who are comfortable and competent in traditional f2f classrooms are ill-equipped to adapt to this new modality, as institutions often assume that the old way of teaching will automatically transfer to the new one. Some studies have compared the experiences of teachers transferring to the new modality (Comeaux & McKenna-Byington, 2003; Curtis 2002), but very few have explored how teachers approach the different modalities and if they teach differently in them (McShane, 2006).

This article examines the teaching perspectives expressed by a number of university teachers from two comparable universities in different countries, all of whom were teaching in both f2f and online classrooms. Similarities and differences between their scores (by modality) on a Teaching Perspectives Inventory measure, as well as significant correlations between these scores within each modality, are reviewed. A discussion of the importance of consciously reflecting on one's teaching philosophy when shifting from a traditional f2f classroom context to a virtual classroom context concludes the article. Some directions for future research on this significant issue are suggested, as more and more institutions of higher education begin to offer online programs cross-globally and their teachers must make this modality shift.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection and Analysis

A case-study approach (Stake, 2002) was used, where one university in western Canada and another in the state of Victoria in southern Australia were treated as two separate cases of inquiry, and results were compared between cases. Qualitative data were gathered with a seven-question, open-ended survey that was developed by the researchers; the survey asked participants in the faculties of Education in these two comparable universities to describe their teaching philosophies/approaches within both f2f and online teaching contexts. The survey also gathered demographic data about participants' online and f2f teaching history and experiences, their current teaching workloads, and the size of their classes in both modalities. The literature describes these contextual factors as possible sources of influence on one's teaching approach in both modalities. Quantitative data were gathered with an online tool called the Teaching Perspectives Inventory (TPI), which was developed and validated by Pratt and Collins (Pratt & Associates, 1998; Pratt & Collins, 2006) and is available for research purposes online.

The TPI (Pratt & Collins, 2006) yields five different perspectives (points of view) on teaching by asking teachers structured questions about their actions in the teaching setting, how they intend to organize the learning situation, and their beliefs on fundamental principles of teaching and learning. These five perspectives are: Transmission (lecture and teacher centred); Apprenticeship (experiential and coaching oriented); Developmental (facilitation and learning centred); Nurturing (focused on building learners' self-esteem); and Social Reform (oriented to changing the status quo). This conceptual model of teaching adults and the subsequent TPI were developed within f2f teaching contexts over two decades of research in Canada, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the United States. Over the years, thousands of teachers in many different f2f teaching settings contributed their responses to a current extensive set of norms that are available to researchers on this topic. To date, however, no norms have been developed for teachers who have moved to online teaching contexts. Thus, an important sub-goal of this study was to determine if the existing f2f TPI norms can be applied to online teaching profiles.

The TPI is a 45-item questionnaire (see www.teachingperspectives.com) that results in numerical main scores for each of the five stated perspectives. It also produces three sub-scores within each of these perspectives, which describe respondents' beliefs about their teaching, their intentions (what they try to accomplish), and their actions (what they do within their classrooms).

Study participants were asked to respond to the survey first, and then to the TPI, in order to capture their spontaneous reflections before being exposed to the language and concepts presented by the TPI. The survey responses were subsequently examined for themes within each question, as well as across all seven questions. The researchers each did a preliminary analysis of their participant group data before analyzing the other researcher's data, until both arrived at a consensus on the individual and overall themes present in the qualitative data.

All of the study participants were asked to complete the TPI twice, with half of the sample asked to take it first from their perspective on f2f teaching, and the other half asked to take it first from their perspective on online teaching. This was done to control for a response bias that may have occurred by completing the TPI a second time. The TPI data were analyzed with SPSS software, using a small-sample parametric approach (student's t-distribution) to calculate statistically significant differences between the two sample groups' main and sub-scores for the TPI, as well as for the TPI profile of each group individually. Pearson Product Moment correlations were calculated between all TPI scores and sub-scores and the demographic data in order to calculate statistically significant correlations between these two sets of variables.

Participants

The two groups of participants came from two universities: one in western Canada and one in southern Australia. Although these groups were similar in many aspects of their teaching roles at their universities, they differed in aspects that the literature indicates may significantly influence their approaches to teaching in f2f and online classrooms.

The Canadian participants were all tenured or tenure-track, full-time academics drawn from the Faculty of Education at a large western Canadian university. They taught in several master's- and doctoral-level programs in the areas of educational research and applied psychology. Some 70 faculty members were invited to participate in the study because they met the key criteria of teaching in both f2f and online classrooms; 12 of them returned a complete data set, consisting of the survey and two sets of TPI scores, one for f2f and one for online teaching contexts.

Of the 12 Canadian participants, 9 were female and 3 were male. They taught an average of 4.73 half-courses per academic year, with 47.91% of these courses f2f and 52.09% of them online. Their average f2f class size was 20 students, while the average online class size was 18.5 students. Most of these participants (75%) taught primarily online courses, which are generally smaller than f2f classes. As a group, they had taught f2f an average of 19.3 years; online, they had taught an average of 6.3 years and so could be

described as "early adopters" of online teaching, as they chose to do so out of a professional interest in moving to this modality (Jacobsen, 2000). They held an overall positive attitude toward the use of advanced communication technologies, and in the qualitative data collected from the surveys, they supplied many stories of how it had enhanced several aspects of their teaching role.

The Australian participants were all tenured or tenured-track academics from the Faculty of Education in a large southern Victoria university. They were invited to participate from a pool of faculty members who taught discipline-specific and general-education topics both f2f and online. Of those faculty members, 10 returned complete sets of data. These 10 faculty members taught primarily in the undergraduate teacher-education program in a range of teaching-method areas.

Of the 10 Australian participants, 5 were female and 5 were male. They taught an average of 7.8 thirteen-week-long courses per academic year, with 52.1% of these courses f2f and 37.8% of them online. The remaining 11.1% represent teachers who combined both f2f and online teaching, thus teaching 'blended classrooms.' The average f2f class size for this participant group was 26.7 students, while the average online class size was 21.8 students. They had taught f2f an average of 24.8 years and online an average of 4.9 years and so could be described as "new adopters" of online teaching, given their stronger orientation to f2f teaching. Five of the participants had just begun teaching online and held ambivalent attitudes about the institution's new policy of integrating online communication technologies with f2f teaching. This attitude was reflected in some of their stories about their difficulties adapting to this new teaching context that were in the qualitative data collected from the surveys.

Although the participants in these two groups were comparable in many aspects of their teaching situations, there were notable differences in the amount of time that they had been teaching online (with the Canadian group having a longer history) and the organizational context within which they moved into online teaching. The Canadian group had voluntarily adopted the use of advanced communication technologies in their teaching, whereas half of the Australian group had been compelled by a recent new institutional policy that mandated integrating these technologies into the traditional f2f classroom. As well, the Canadian participants were teaching exclusively graduate-level courses, which tend to focus on the critical analysis of course content, while the Australian participants were teaching exclusively undergraduate courses, which focus more on the application of accepted theory to practice.

Discussion of Results

Survey

Four major themes emerged from the analysis of the seven survey questions; they are described here, first, in terms of the individual participant groups and, then, in terms of the differences and similarities between these two groups.

Theme #1: Beliefs about Teaching f2f versus Online Differed by Country

Both participant groups believed that online and f2f classrooms offer distinct advantages and disadvantages, but the Canadian group saw the movement from f2f to online teaching as representing an important and exciting "paradigm shift" in the practice of teaching, a shift that requires different pedagogies and teaching approaches. In contrast, the Australian group perceived f2f classrooms as superior because their setting offers many more creative teaching options. This group was quite ambivalent, however; they also believed the online learning environment was more conducive to in-depth conceptual learning, as well as more efficient.

Theme #2: Learning Goals in f2f and Online Classrooms Were the Same

Both groups intended to meet the same learning goals in both modalities, but the Australian group perceived that different goals could be met in f2f versus online classrooms.

Theme #3: Teaching Strategies in f2f versus Online Classrooms Were Both Similar and Different

Both groups admitted to using more "teacher-centred" activities (lectures) online than they wished and to putting more effort into responding to and engaging with students online. The Canadian group used three specific strategies: they limited depth-of-course coverage in order to increase breadth of content in f2f courses but limited breadth-of-course coverage in order to increase depth in online courses; they found it easier to control f2f discussions but found less-controlled online discussions more creative and exciting; and they structured online courses more carefully than f2f courses. The Australian group perceived more peer interaction in f2f classes than online and believed that online classrooms had limited teaching possibilities due to the text-based nature of the discussions.

Theme #4: Teaching Modality Does Influence Teaching Philosophy

Both groups thought the two modalities complement each other, with some strategies first developed for one modality able to be successfully transferred to the other (most notably, the importance of being more organized/structured and thoughtful in f2f classrooms as a result of this online-classroom requirement), and require the same philosophy of building a learning community. As well, the members of the Canadian group felt that their online teaching raised their awareness of the need to "equalize" the voices of all students in f2f teaching, while those in the Australian group felt that they had learned to communicate better in written form through teaching online.

Three other factors were notable in the survey-data analysis: 1) the much more positive attitude of the Canadian group about the potential of advanced communication technologies in the teaching/learning process than that of the Australian group (perhaps due to the Canadians' voluntary "early adopter" status and longer history of teaching online); 2) the Australian group's perception that f2f classrooms have more advantages than online classrooms in the teaching/learning process (perhaps influenced by the fact that this group's online class sizes were larger than those of the Canadian group); and 3) the Australian group's ambivalence about text-based teaching (seeing it as limited but also as more conducive to in-depth conceptual learning).

Overall, the two groups appeared to believe that teaching modality does not affect teaching philosophy and that learning from both is not only reciprocal but also additive. Both groups observed that the challenges of learning to teach online caused them to rethink how they taught f2f, most notably, in terms of the importance of being comfortable with silence and being more disciplined and reflective. Interestingly, the groups used advanced communication technologies differently in their teaching roles: the Australian group "blending" f2f and online approaches (e.g., posting materials online for f2f classes) and the Canadian group tending to teach either completely f2f or online. We believe that these differences in the use of technologies may be, at least partially, a function of the different institutional contexts within which the study participants taught—the Australian university offering more blended programs and the Canadian university offering more distinctly distance or residential programs.

The Teaching Perspectives Inventory

TPI Main Scores and Sub-Scores

Paired t-tests on main TPI scores revealed that participants' teaching preferences were remarkably similar across both modalities and for both universities. There were no significant differences between four of the five teaching preferences (see Table 1); however, the much-lower Social Reform TPI scores were significantly higher for the Canadian group than for the Australian group (2.25; $p > .04$).

The Canadian participants' strongest teaching preference for both modalities was Developmental, followed by Nurturing and Apprenticeship, then Transmission, and finally Social Reform, which was significantly lower as the fifth preference. The Australian participants' strongest preference for both modalities was Developmental, followed by Apprenticeship, Nurturing, Transmission, and Social Reform (which was also significantly lower than the other four preferences).

The finding that teaching preferences did not differ significantly for these two modalities is inconsistent with the research literature, which describes considerable differences in teaching approaches between f2f and online classrooms for those teachers who have successfully made this transition (Comeaux & McKenna-Byinton, 2003; McShane, 2006; Palloff & Pratt, 2000). A small body of largely anecdotal literature describes teaching beliefs and actions that appear to contain aspects of Pratt's (1989) Developmental/Apprenticeship/Nurturing perspectives as being more effective in online classes than traditional teaching beliefs, as well as actions that appear to contain aspects of Pratt's Transmission perspective, which is typical of many institutions of higher education that offer primarily f2f programs (Garrison, 2006; McShane, 2006; Palloff & Pratt, 2000).

The finding that Social Reform is the least-preferred teaching preference for Canadian teachers is consistent with Elias and Merriam's (2005) observation that this perspective stands "outside the mainstream of educational philosophy" in North America (p. 147). Instead, the literature describes strong underlying "nurturing" and "socially supportive" teaching beliefs and actions in North American institutions of higher education. This study's finding that the Canadian participants' Social Reform scores were significantly higher than those of the Australian participants may be explained by the fact that the Canadian group of teachers taught graduate-level classes only, which tend to emphasize a more critical analysis of the literature and its application than do undergraduate classes, which made up half of the Australian participants' teaching load.

Table 1: Independent-Samples T-test Results for TPI Scores by Modality and University

TPI	University	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Online Transmission	Canadian	12	31.75	4.77	.32	20	.75
	Australian	10	31.10	4.68			
f2f Transmission	Canadian	12	31.50	4.34	.71	20	.49
	Australian	10	30.20	4.26			
Online Apprenticeship	Canadian	12	36.00	3.54	.57	20	.58
	Australian	10	34.90	5.17			
f2f Apprenticeship	Canadian	12	35.75	4.07	-.63	20	.54
	Australian	10	36.90	4.43			
Online Developmental	Canadian	12	37.75	3.28	-.30	20	.77
	Australian	10	38.20	3.65			
f2f Developmental	Canadian	12	38.00	3.74	.12	20	.91
	Australian	10	37.80	4.05			
Online Nurturing	Canadian	12	36.67	4.23	1.10	20	.29
	Australian	10	34.60	4.55			
f2f Nurturing	Canadian	12	35.75	3.28	-.03	20	.98
	Australian	10	35.80	5.55			
Online Social Reform	Canadian	12	30.00	6.28	2.25	20	.04
	Australian	10	25.30	3.27			
f2f Social Reform	Canadian	12	30.33	6.71	1.84	20	.08
	Australian	10	25.70	5.12			

f2f = face-to-face

As for the fact that the TPI main scores for both participant groups were not significantly different by modality, the possibility exists that this tool, which was developed for f2f teaching contexts, cannot accurately assess teaching philosophies for online teaching contexts. Indeed, our analysis of the TPI items indicated that some of the 15 "action" items may be applicable only to f2f teaching contexts. However, our analysis of the survey data did reveal an apparent difference in participants' teaching perspectives in these two modalities: the Canadian group was clearly more in favour of online teaching than the Australian group. Also evident in the survey data was a great deal of conscious application by the Canadians of their newer online teaching approaches to their f2f teaching contexts, which may have resulted in a growing similarity in approaches to both (Stacey & Wiesenberg, 2006). It is possible that the responses of participants in both groups to TPI items that were not developed to take into account the differences in these two modalities reduced any real differences between their f2f and online beliefs, intentions, and actions.

Table 2: Independent-Samples T-test Results for TPI Sub-Scores by University

TPI	University	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Nurturing Online-Action	Canadian	12	11.83	1.95	2.17	20	.043
	Australian	10	9.90	2.18			
Social Reform f2f-Action	Canadian	12	9.92	2.57	2.10	20	.043
	Australian	10	7.80	2.57			
SR Online-Action	Canadian	12	9.42	2.31	2.02	20	.058
	Australian	10	7.80	1.40			

f2f = face-to-face

The initial paired t-tests of TPI sub-scores revealed a significant difference within the "action" sub-score, indicating that what the two participant groups actually did within their classrooms differed. Further analysis revealed three distinct sub-score differences between the two participant groups. The actions of the Canadian participants appeared to be significantly more "Nurturing" online than those of the Australian participants (2.17; $p>.043$), as well as significantly more "Social Reform" oriented in both f2f (2.10; $p>.048$) and online (2.02; $p>.058$) classrooms (see Table 2).

This finding, which is consistent with the previous discussion of the TPI main scores, may point to cultural differences in teaching beliefs and intentions between the two participant groups. The authors' experiences within both cultures indicate that North American teachers tend to believe that building students' self-esteem is key to successful classroom learning, while Australian teachers tend to believe that developing students' cognitive skill is key. As well, Australian teachers' communication style can be perceived as more direct, which can be interpreted as less nurturing than North American teachers' communication style. Though the affective aspect of teaching is considered important to student learning in both cultures, it may be communicated differently in each culture and in f2f versus online classrooms.

Another factor that may help explain these contrasts is the different institutional cultures within which these two groups of academics taught. The Canadian group's university, while encouraging teachers to adopt the use of advanced communication technologies in their classrooms, had not mandated it; those teachers who moved voluntarily to a virtual classroom were offered a great deal of professional development support as they did so. The Australian group's university had recently mandated that teachers integrate advanced communication technologies into their f2f classrooms, as well as teach online programs, regardless of their teaching modality preference. Consequently, teachers who might not otherwise volunteer to move to a virtual classroom were compelled to do so, and a lack of enthusiasm on their part may have resulted in their reluctance to readily access professional-development support.

Correlations between TPI and Demographic Data

When the two participant groups were combined, a number of TPI main scores and demographic variables were moderately to strongly correlated. Overall teaching load and online Social Reform were negatively correlated (-.48; $p>.05$), perhaps reflecting the enormous administrative and managerial demands of a larger class size on teachers, which, in turn, would leave them less time to advocate for a perspective that is very energy intensive to convey. Number of years teaching f2f and online Developmental (.47; $p>.05$), which was identified as true for Australians only when participant groups were separated, may reflect this group's history of a Developmental perspective in f2f classrooms being carried over to their new online classrooms. Percentage of time teaching online and online Nurturing (.43; $p>.05$), which was identified as true for Canadians only when participant groups were separated, may reflect this group's longer opportunity to more thoroughly adapt their Nurturing preference from their f2f to their online classrooms.

When participant groups were separated by university to detect additional within-group correlations, these moderate to strong negative

correlations were found between the percentage of time that Canadian participants taught f2f and a number of main and sub-scores: online (-.66; p>.05) and f2f (-.69; p>.05) Developmental; online Nurturing (-.64; p>.05); f2f Social Reform (-.60; p>.05); online Beliefs (-.69; p>.05); f2f Beliefs (-.63; p>.05); online Intentions (-.62; p>.05); f2f Intentions (-.72; p>.01); and online Actions (-.58; p>.05). Together, these correlations may imply that the more time this group taught f2f, the less time they had to express their Developmental and Nurturing perspectives, while being more inclined to express their Social Reform perspective. These findings may also imply that higher f2f teaching loads may result in less internally consistent teaching perspectives in either modality, perhaps due to less time available to reflect on one's philosophy. The two strong negative correlations found between the average class size that Canadian participants taught—f2f Transmission (-.65; p>.05) and online Apprenticeship (-.59; p>.05)—tend to support this interpretation.

Two strong positive correlations were found between the percentage of time that Canadian participants taught online: online Nurturing (.75; p>.01) and online Beliefs (.60; p>.05). These findings may indicate that a longer history of online teaching, and a resulting growth in competence in this modality, enables the more consistent expression of beliefs within this teaching perspective.

A number of strong negative correlations were found between the average class size that Canadian participants taught online: online (-.83; p>.01) and f2f Apprenticeship (-.68; p>.05); f2f Developmental (-.59; p>.05); f2f Intentions (-.66; p>.05); and online Intentions (-.73; p>.01). Together, these findings, along with the previously discussed set of correlations regarding f2f class size, point to a reverse relationship between class size and the opportunity to express teaching perspectives that demand more time and expertise, and between one's ability to consistently act on one's teaching intentions.

Two strong positive correlations were found between the percentage of time that Australian participants taught f2f: f2f Nurturing (.66; p>.05) and f2f Actions (.76; p>.05). These were expected, since greater experience teaching in a modality tends to result in greater expertise in it.

A strong positive correlation was found between the number of years that the Australian participants had taught f2f and online Developmental (.70; p>.05), perhaps indicating that a transfer of this favoured teaching perspective from f2f to online classrooms may be, at least partially, a function of one's level of f2f teaching competence.

Finally, the strong negative correlation between the percentage of time that Australian participants taught online and online Social Reform (-.70; p>.05) is consistent with the previous discussion on this issue, perhaps pointing to a deepening aversion to this perspective as this group of ambivalent teachers moved somewhat reluctantly into this new and demanding teaching context.

Conclusions

Overall, the results of this small exploratory study are both understandable, given the limited existing body of largely anecdotal literature on this issue, and intriguingly unpredictable. The study highlighted the importance of key workplace variables (such as length of time teaching f2f and online; overall teaching load; class size; and institutional context) to participants' motivation to move from traditional f2f to newer virtual classrooms, as well as to their perceptions of the advantages and challenges of each. It appears that at a certain point in their experience of teaching in the newer modality, most of the study participants began to successfully adapt effective f2f teaching strategies to their online classrooms, the end result a hybrid or blend of a "best of both worlds" teaching approach in each modality. As well as presenting them with an opportunity to gain new teaching skills, moving from f2f to online teaching contexts also benefited the classes they taught in both modalities, because they had to reflect on how to apply what works well in one (e.g., more formal structure is required in online classrooms) to the other. This is consistent with Pratt's (1989) developmental model of increasing competence, which moves from initial mastery to ongoing critical reflection on one's application of theory to practice.

We believe that our small exploratory case study should be followed up with larger sample studies that delve into the multitude of interrelationships that are possible between the specific workplace variables examined here and teachers' beliefs about the teaching process and their roles as educators, as these factors may impact their transition from f2f to online classrooms. Moreover, the hypotheses we offer for the unexpected results of our TPI data analysis in the "Discussion of Results" section of this article need further examination.

The results of this study also have some implications for those who offer professional-development support to teachers making the transition from f2f to online teaching, most notably, helping teachers adopt advanced communication technologies voluntarily, rather than be compelled to do so. As more and more institutions of higher learning commit to distance delivery of their programs, it makes sense to encourage teachers who are initially attracted to this teaching challenge to lead the way. At the same time, it is important to ensure that these "early adopters" are encouraged to do so by an accompanying reduction in their teaching load and classroom sizes, at least while they gain expertise in this new modality. Ultimately, having a group of teachers who are positively challenged and stimulated by this teaching transition will encourage others to take up this new mode of teaching.

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