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# A STUDY OF INSTRUCTOR PERSONA IN THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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# ABSTRACT

Higher education continues to witness a significant increase in the demand for online courses delivered via the World Wide Web. Institutions are challenged to position and prepare faculty for successfully developing and delivering this increasing number of online courses from a distance. Becoming successful in the online classroom presents difficult and time-consuming challenges to the novice faculty member. Instructors who transition from the face-to-face classroom find that some characteristics, strategies and procedures carryover into the online classroom. The new teaching environment presents an evolving spectrum of possibilities for the online professor, a new paradigm for teaching and learning.

This research provides a multi-dimensional case study of the online teaching persona of four successful undergraduate college professors. The literature presents mounting evidence of the growth and momentum of the online college education. Also, the literature presents evidence that multiple resources become necessary if best practices and strategies are to be successfully integrated into online courses. The research has found that a persona change occurs when the faculty member transitions from the face-to-face to the online classroom. Utilizing this foundation, this study adds to the literature and clarifies the online teaching persona, incorporated characteristics, and strategies used by four successful undergraduate professors in a large university setting in the southern United States.

Using face-to-face interviews and (non-participant) class observation, this researcher determined the transitory nature of the online teaching persona of the four participants in the study. The study revealed the characteristics, methods and strategies that enable the online professor to successfully deliver undergraduate courses using the World Wide Web.

I would like to dedicate this study to the memory of my parents, Mom and Dad, Frank and Katy, my favorite wife, Pammy and to my two sons, Rob and Corey, who have taught me more than any formal education, and to my favorite sister who has inspired and supported me throughout this endeavor. I have to acknowledge my two favorite golden retrievers, Terra and Dande (over the Rainbow Bridge) both of whom fully understand me and appreciate me as long as I offer constant attention and treats.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to advance the literature of online teaching and learning by exploring the teaching persona of four undergraduate professors who experience success in the online environment. Implications for future faculty development and student satisfaction are presented and validated. Although many prior studies have analyzed the factors that affect the satisfaction of students and faculty in online classes, these studies have not studied the role of the online teaching persona or its impact on student success. As such, this study provides insight into how successful faculty construct their online persona based on their perception of its effect on student satisfaction and learning.

For the purposes of this study I define the online teaching persona as Carroll (2002) states, the professional "self" put forth when you deal with (teach) students. A teaching persona is your in-class presence. Consider it your personal style in your classroom. Parini (2005) relates the persona to its etymological roots implying a mask that one speaks through in his or her classroom. Showalter (2003) believes that your classroom persona should match your "critical beliefs" of your discipline. That is, they should match your convictions of your discipline, classroom practices and learning objectives set for your students. Coppola, Hiltz, and Rotter (2002) contend that a teaching persona is a "public teaching personality" or "teaching style." They state that the three cumulative roles of the online teaching faculty, cognitive, affective and managerial roles become one's online teaching persona.

When Tolstoy opened a school on his estate, he professed a teaching philosophy that remains relevant to higher education and still stands today (Tolstoy & Wiener, 1904, p. 58):

> The best teacher will be he who has at his tongue's end the explanation of what it is that is bothering the pupil. These explanations give the teacher the knowledge of the greatest possible number of methods, the ability of inventing new methods, and, above all, not a blind adherence to one method, but the conviction that all methods are one-sided and that the best method is the one that would answer best to all the possible difficulties incurred by a pupil, that is, not a method, but an art and a talent.

The "art and talent" of Tolstoy's day bases itself on face-to-face teaching. Tolstoy's philosophy has many implications for today's online classroom. In addition, Tolstoy's comments resonate with Roger's (1983) notion of the "facilitative' Teacher. Rogers described a facilitative teacher as one who creates a learning environment rather than simply transmitting relevant subject knowledge. Rogers' facilitative teacher emphasizes "empathetic understanding" as a key to student satisfaction. This study explores whether or not the "art and talent" Tolstoy professes, is possible in today's online classrooms.

Showalter (2003), writing in her text, *Teaching Literature*, defines the (teaching) persona as a public teaching self which may be either an exaggeration of or an evasion of our private self. In *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Lang (2007) deals with the challenge of defining his persona using Showalter (2003) and Parini (2005) as examples. Parini notes that persona can be traced back to the theater and that its roots imply a mask one speaks through – not in negative terms. He speculates that we wear a mask to "give

sound to our voices." Most importantly, Parini elaborates his point by stressing that the teaching mask is not exclusively in the classroom. Parini contends that the choices of our dress, talk, and decorations in our office will influence how our students see us in the classroom. Lang summarizes by asking faculty to think about their persona – and decide on the one that will motivate the students to learn.

According to Nkonge (2004), teaching in the online classroom challenges the role of the instructor in many ways, forcing the faculty member to change the design, communication and methods of delivering online content and activities to students. Without the traditional face-to-face interaction, the online faculty member faces the issue of developing behaviors for feelings, attitudes and cognitive levels of learning, challenging the online instructor to question this unique role and how they might teach effectively.

I became interested in the topic of the online teaching persona two years ago when I attended a brief presentation at a Sloan International Conference on Asynchronous Learning Networks by Bold, Chenoweth and Kuchimanchi (2006). They presented to an overflow crowd, inspiring conversations that lasted longer than the session time allotment. The researchers suggested that "identity development" of online teachers be included in training and ongoing support for novice online faculty.

Over the past seven years, I have been participating in faculty development for online teaching at a large university in the southeastern United States. Becoming an effective and successful online instructor is much more than just using the technology and posting online notes. To become a successful online professor, one must shift

paradigms and prepare for the use of the new technology. Therefore, an effective study of the online teaching persona will help us understand developing educational trends and anticipate the future as a "road map or guide" (Hoepfl, 1997) for effective practice or rubrics that "call our attention to important aspects of the teaching situation or environment that we might otherwise miss" (Eisner, 1991).

The popularity of course delivery on the World Wide Web is causing rapid change in higher education, prompting a variety of technological delivery options. These technological advances prompt higher education students of all ages to enroll in online courses at a record-setting pace. Online education is now part of the higher education mainstream (Allen & Seaman, 2005). One statistic that supports this supposition is that 63% of schools offering undergraduate face-to-face programs also offer undergraduate degrees online.

The dramatic evolution of online courses delivered on the World Wide Web is capturing the attention of higher education administrators, faculty, staff and researchers. The Sloan Consortium (Allen & Seaman, 2006) notes that the overall percentage of schools identifying online education as a long-term strategy grew from 49% in 2003 to 56% in 2005.

Many questions arise: Who are the faculty members assuming responsibility for teaching this large number of online undergraduate courses? Where and how do these faculty members acquire the skills to teach and communicate effectively in online courses? How does one locate suitable support and guidance for teaching online? And most of all, how does the successful online professor command the attention, interaction

and respect of his or her students in the online classroom? Wang, Dziuban, Cook and Moskal (in press) found that "students reward instructors who develop effective course organization and evaluation techniques."

This study is a follow-up study to the work of Coppola, Hiltz, and Rotter (2002) who determined that role changes occur when a faculty member moves from the face-to-face environment to online teaching and learning. Using single and multiple-case study research of Yin (2003), this study seeks to reveal and explore the online teaching characteristics, idiosyncrasies, strategies and tactics of the successful undergraduate online teaching persona. The three roles of the online professor defined as (Coppola et al., 2002) cognitive, affective, and managerial, will be explicated in case studies of four successful, veteran, undergraduate online professors on the campus of a large public university. Student satisfaction is used to correlate the results of the study. As in the example of Wolcott (2001), I will be writing in the first person to stress the importance of the role of the researcher in this qualitative study.

Chapter Two will set the stage for the literature review in the field as it relates to: 1. Historical growth of online teaching and learning and student satisfaction 2. Quality or "best practices" in online teaching, and, 3. Online teaching persona (role), 4. Describes why this study of the online persona contributes to the theoretical and practical insight of online teaching. The summary points out the void in the literature as it relates to the online teaching persona. Chapter Three documents the methodology and design of this study. Data validation is presented to substantiate the study and lend credibility to the

research. "Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity (of the case), coming to understand its activity within important circumstances." (Stake, 1995).

Chapter Four presents the four individual case studies of highly effective online instructors. Each study is introduced and the stage is set to illuminate the course each participant is teaching. The online teaching persona of each participant is revealed in their course structure, pace, communication and delivery. Best practices and barriers to their persona are detailed. Following the presentation of each of the four case studies, a multi-case study summarizes compares and contrasts the similarities and differences of the four professors' personas. Each presentation is accompanied by artifacts of the results of their interviews. Chapter Five completes this research with a detailed summary of the study and recommendations for further study.

# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

## Introduction

This study builds on the research in the field of online teaching and learning as it relates to the teaching persona of the online professor. Although studies in online student and faculty satisfaction have examined factors related to online course success, there has not been an exhaustive review of the literature citing the online teaching persona and its impact on student success. The analytic focus on persona enables a significant insight into the work of successful online teaching at the undergraduate level. Anecdotal reports suggest that successful faculty who teach undergraduate online classes contribute significant effort into creating and maintaining their persona, although they were not necessarily aware that they are doing so. In addition, we cannot assume that prior studies on the role of persona in face-to-face classes can easily transfer to teaching online because the issues involved in creating and maintaining a persona may be quite different in an online class when compared to a face-to-face class (Coppola, Hiltz, and Rotter 2002; Twigg, 2001). Although numerous studies of persona in face-to-face classes have identified the characteristics and tactics of successful classroom professors, little analytic attention has been paid to the characteristics, idiosyncrasies, strategies and tactics of the online professor.

## Literature Review Methodology

       This literature review is focused in four areas: 1. Growth of online teaching and learning, 2. Quality or "best practices" in online teaching, 3. online teaching persona (role), and, 4. Describes the contribution of this study to the theoretical and practical insight of online teaching. The summary points out the void that exists in the literature as it relates to the online teaching persona.

       The main purpose of this literature review is to locate influential literature, research or essays relating to the online teaching persona. Citation counts and stature of the publications and organizations will be given priority. In order to fully understand how interrelated concepts of online best practices, student satisfaction and the online teaching persona are coexisting, the three are examined and explicated.

       I use the Coppola et al. (2002) research as a starting point for my review; I search and review their citations at length. My investigation of the literature has a primary focus on the resources in the United States and Canada. A Google Scholar search of my principal terms comprises the following: online learning, online teaching persona (roles), Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), and Asynchronous Learning Network (ALN).

       Also, a search of prominent online journals and organizations is conducted. The Sloan Consortium, EDUCAUSE and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* served as topical and contemporary sources. *The Chronicle* article by Lang (2007) is instrumental in shaping my vision for the online teaching persona. In the article Lang notes that "a

teaching persona should be one that motivates students." A varied approach to this review

concentrates on multiple databases, texts, leading teaching and learning journals and

online resources. A spiral approach to searching the literature organizes the product. This

study encompasses the literature of Education, Medicine (Nursing), Engineering

(Computer Science) and English (Literature). Examples are presented from each

discipline. This review of the literature closely aligns with the recommendations of Boote

and Beile (2004) who propose their *Citation Scoring Rubric*, emanating from Hart's

model (1999), (Appendix E).

## Growth of Online Learning

The rapid growth of online teaching and learning in higher education in the past

ten years creates unusual demands on the faculty of colleges and universities in the

United States. Faculty have been asked to teach their students in online classrooms both

with and without appropriate faculty development and support. Many of these online

professors are challenged with creating an online teaching persona that is successful and

meaningful to their online teaching practices. This review of the literature on the growth

of this online phenomenon helps to establish a perspective on the magnitude of the

challenge facing the online professors.

The Sloan Consortium supports annual reports on the state of online learning in

U.S. higher education, including reviews of the growth in online programs as well as

predictions as to what one should expect in the coming year(s). In 2006, the Sloan

Consortium commissioned Allen and Seaman to study the "nature and extent of online

learning in the 16 state southern region. The 2006 statistics show a "plateau" in the growth or programs, however, almost 3.2 million students were taking at least one online course during the fall 2005 semester. The shocking statistic is the overall 35% increase in the 2.3 million students of the previous year. Over 700 southern colleges and universities contributed to the data collection for this study.

The growth of online learning in the past ten years is a result of learner demand for convenient and flexible access to higher education (Dziuban, Hartman, Moskal, Brophy-Ellison & Shea, 2007). The literature is overwhelmed with these themes with regard to student's satisfaction. Belanger and Jordan, (2000) cite the following reasons for the increase in demand for online learning:

- Lower cost for computer hardware, software and computer services
- Familiarity with technology among younger generations
- Better access to computers in the general population
- More pleasing user interfaces (including multimedia)

In 2001, Twigg explored moving from the traditional classroom to the online environment. She led a Pew Trust symposium on Learning and Technology and asked twenty participants to perform the following three tasks:

- analyze their assumptions about distributed learning
- identify the strengths of multiple distributed learning approaches
- explore what needs to be done to improve online education

Twigg's analysis revealed four significant findings:

• First, to realize the potential of learning technologies, faculty must be willing to move towards a learner-centered pedagogical model.

• Second, to improve student learning through technology use, faculty must focus on what they (their institution) can do with IT that cannot be done without it.

• Third, by virtue of its "anytime, any place" learning possibilities, technology-mediated education provides the potential for greatly increasing access to higher education.

• Fourth, by re-conceptualizing the way courses are designed and delivered, technology-mediated education can be a more cost-effective way to increase access to higher education than the expansion of the traditional classroom.

Dziuban et al. (2007) completing work for the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation on student involvement in online learning, conclude that seven components underlay student satisfaction with online learning. Student satisfaction emerges from the study as a "specific marker" for one of the "metaphorical pillars" in the Sloan Consortium's definition of an effective educations environment. The final model delivered in the study highlights the following elements students desire to attain satisfaction:

Reduced Ambiguity
• Reduced uncertainty about how to succeed in course
• Reduced work and family disruption and constraints
• Improved sense of control

Enhanced Student Sense of Value in Courses

• Faster assessment of assignments

• Higher levels of recognition

• Better able to audit course progress

Reduced Ambivalence

• Reduced stress over class completion

• Increased degree access

• Increased connectedness

Clarified Rules of Engagement

• Course expectations clear from the onset

• Fairer performance assessment

• Clearer definition of involvement

• More opportunity to collaborate

More Individually Responsive Learning Environments

• Continually connected as an individual

• Encourages active engagement

• Facilitates access to outside sources

• Able to audit course progress

Improved Interaction

• Anywhere, anytime communication with peers

• Anywhere, anytime queries to instructors

• Sustained conversations

• Rapid access to independent experts

• Better able to find, evaluate, and use information (information fluency)

Augmented Learning
• More room for individual creativity
• More individually empowered to learn
• Expanded course boundaries

Increased Freedom (Latitude)
• To manage the learning environment
• To expand beyond a course
• From large lecture classes
• From prohibitive logistics

Easton (2003) cites the convergence of "several issues" as the reason for the demand of online courses, and in turn, the challenges of course delivery on the Internet: (a) advances in computer technology, (b) rapidly growing enrollments, (c) changing student demographics, and (d) continued cost containment requirements. Higher education has embraced distance learning as a practical solution that can increase education opportunities for people who might otherwise be excluded from participating in the learning process (Belanger & Jordan, 2000).

Ruth (2006) notes that the growth rate of online learning is increasing approximately 25% year over year. At this rate, colleges and universities add almost 2 million online students each year. He argues that e-learning is "a necessity, a significant convenience, an indispensable service, and a way of life on college campuses today."

"Given the demand for online learning, the plethora of online technologies to incorporate into teaching, the budgetary problems, and the opportunities for innovation,

we argue that online learning environments are facing a "perfect e-storm," linking pedagogy, technology, and learner needs," (Bonk, 2004).

The literature is very clear and decisive on the explosive growth of online learning in the United States. With the explosive growth and continued demand from learners, institutions of higher learning must transition and support their faculty in order to deliver successful online courses.

## Quality Teaching and Best Practices

Quality teaching strategies and best practices have been instrumental in aiding novice online professors to succeed in the online classroom. Much of the current literature in the online teaching venue suggests a need to seek out pedagogical strategies to online education that improve the quality of student learning, stimulate pedagogical growth, and enhance overall academic productivity (Bishop, 2003). This section will highlight the characteristics of the existing literature to build a foundation on which to compare the results of this study with current online best practices and strategies.

Significant commonalities emerge from the literature of online best practices. The goals and expectations for school and learning have changed quite dramatically in the past century (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 1999). This premise suggests the need to rethink such questions as what is taught, how it is taught and how students are assessed (Bransford et al.). Like all learners, new online instructors need hands-on experience, feedback, and ongoing support to become comfortable and proficient in the virtual classroom (Riedinger & Rosenberg, 2006). Ragan (1999, p. 21) reminds us "good

teaching is good teaching! The techniques and artistry of the craft may change depending on the constraints of time and place, but the desired student goal, a marked and measurable change in behavior, . . . [is] clearly the same." The quality of online learning is under the researcher's microscope. The quality of face-to-face instruction has been under the scrupulous eyes of researchers for many years and now the quality of online instruction is under same scrutiny. Barker and Baker (1995) assert that distance education instructors of necessity must be master teachers. They add that the key to success in distance learning is "the teacher." Grandzol and Grandzol (2006) said, "While individual faculty creativity and unique style should not be suppressed, failing to learn from others' experiences and the results of legitimate research inhibits program quality."

Bransford et al. (1999) hypothesize that four perspectives on the design of learning environments align with quality teaching and best practice, they are: (1) student-centered, (2) knowledge-centered, (3) assessment-centered, and (4) community-centered. The student-centered environment brings the learners' prior and current knowledge to the classroom to help them construct new knowledge. Sometimes this prior knowledge supports, and at other times hampers learning. A strong learner-centered environment helps the students make connections with prior and new knowledge.

The knowledge-centered learning environments must contain well-organized content that is accessible in appropriate contexts. A well-defined curriculum will help a student develop an interconnected path within a discipline so they are able to navigate their learning environment, not losing sight of their learning coordinates (Bransford et al., 1999).

The assessment-centered environment highlights the fundamental claim that feedback is essential to learning. Assessment must reflect learning goals and objectives. Summative and formative assessments are necessary for enhanced learning. Effective assessment in the online environment gravitates away from techniques that are objective, non-authentic and non-contextual to ones that are reflective, authentic and contextual (Dziuban et al., 2007).

The fourth environment involves that of community. An effective community of learners maintains sustainable levels of interaction, feedback and learning, recognizing that community connections are paramount to effective learning as well as their individual importance. According to Garrison (2006), there is evidence to suggest that online learning may in fact have an advantage (over face-to-face classrooms) in supporting collaboration and creating a sense of community. Alignment of the four learning environments is a significant factor in effective learning. All environments exhibit the potential for confluence and continually interact with each other (Bransford et al., 1999).

An Asynchronous Learning Network (ALN) uses the World Wide Web to deliver courses from a distance. ALN courses extend the reach of the online classroom by allowing the learners to participate anytime (asynchronous) and from any location. According to Harasim, Hiltz, Teles and Turoff (1995), the online course establishes the emphasis of student-to-student and student-to-teacher interaction and shifts the paradigm to a student-centered classroom from the traditional teacher-centered mode of teaching. This shifting of paradigms causes unique problems of coordination and opportunities to

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support active, collaborative learning (Coppola et al., 2002). According to Dziuban et al. (2007) the fundamental effect of the ALNs gaining momentum and transforming higher education was not predicted. However, the researchers point out that the ALNs "have established a culture of sustainability in higher education providing accessibility to the most diverse population in history" (p. 17).

Chickering and Gamson set the stage for establishing a quality benchmark in undergraduate education in 1987, prior to the ubiquity of online instruction, with their publication, *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*. The pair recommended the following as good practice in undergraduate education:

1. Encourages contacts between student and faculty
2. Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students
3. Uses active learning techniques
4. Gives prompt feedback
5. Emphasizes time on task
6. Communicates high expectations
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning

In 1996, Chickering and Ehrmann, extend the seven principles to the use of new communication and technology tools. Today, *Implementing The Seven Principles: Technology As Lever*, stands in the forefront of higher education technology research. The essay advances the *Seven Principles* with some of the most cost-effective and appropriate ways to use computers, video, and telecommunications technologies in undergraduate education.

Since 2000, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has been

surveying students at over 1,200 colleges and universities each year to determine the

level of engagement with their studies, professors and campus communities. The 2007

survey, consisting of 85 questions, 42 of which contribute to the five primary categories,

show that these activities, though not a direct measure of student success or learning, are

closely associated with student success:

> 1. Level of academic challenge,
>
> 2. Student-faculty interaction,
>
> 3. Extent to which a college offers an active and collaborative
> learning environment,
>
> 4. Opportunities to take advantage of cultural or extracurricular
> experiences,
>
> 5. Whether the school creates a supportive environment for
> different groups on campus.

Kuh (2004) writes that surveys such as the NSSE are good predictors of what

college students regard about their higher education experiences and what they have

learned from those experiences. Opportunities for increased interaction between student

and faculty (Moore, 1989) [Principle 1] are magnified with the use of technology.

Convenience becomes highly relevant when technology is applied as it relates to the

commuter student. The online classroom offers the most promise (Chickering &

Ehrmann, 1996), with its use of asynchronous communication, because the speed of the

interaction (communication, homework, assessment) is rapid.

Also, the technology aids Principle 2: Develops reciprocity and cooperation

among students, (Chickering & Ehrmann, 1996) in that learning can be enhanced in a

community or team environment. Student-to-student interaction (Moore, 1989) increases

when technology facilitates communication. Study groups, collaborative learning, group

problem solving and discussions all can be strengthened through communication tools

that enable those activities.

Technology aids in getting the students more involved and active in their learning,

which is Chickering and Ehrmann's (1996) Principle 3. Students may learn by doing

through online activities, simulation and exercises that stimulate and develop insight and

understanding. Prompt feedback, Principle 4 (Chickering & Ehrmann, 1996) is inundated

with new technology that speeds and enhances the ability for feedback – summative and

formative. Feedback, assessment of performance, observation and critique, collaboration,

editing, e-portfolio storage and access, are just a few examples technology offers to

support this principle.

Time on task, Principle 5 (Chickering & Ehrmann, 1996), can be greatly

enhanced with the use of technology. Technology provides convenience and time-saving

effects on learning. Time efficiency is greatly enhanced using technology to provide

assessment and feedback. Principle 6, communicating high expectations (Chickering &

Ehrmann, 1996), can be communicated explicitly and efficiently using technology.

Expectations and criteria for assessment and grading can be clearly defined and delivered

online.

By offering a diverse array of learning tools and methods in the online classroom,

Principle 7, good practice respects diverse talents and ways of learning (Chickering &

Ehrmann, 1996), can easily be accommodated. An extensive menu of choices are available to the online instructor using technology and tools.

Using the knowledge of Parini (2005), Showalter (2003), Bain (2004), Palloff and Pratt (2001) and Bransford (1999), the essence of the literature is that successful teaching is arduous work and one has to "teach out of who you are," according to Parini (2005). According to Palmer (1998) "we teach who we are" (p.2).

Success in the online classroom is often credited to active and effective interaction. According to Moore (1989) there are three types of interaction: 1. learner-to-content interaction; 2. learner-to-instructor interaction; and 3. learner-to-learner interaction. Moore's research is cited liberally in the literature related to successful online learning having interaction as a factor. He recommends that all three types of interaction are maximized for success in the online classroom.

Student success in online courses is an active and timely research agenda as online teaching and learning sets itself firmly into higher education institutions. Many view student success and "satisfied" students an indicator of success in the online environment. As Dziuban et al. (2007) noted in their summary of research published from 2004 through 2007 (p. 47):

> Unique circumstances exist for each learner, instructor, course, department, program, and institution. An effective online learning course or program that leads to student satisfaction and success requires a focus on the individual student to identify his or her needs, skills, access, and personal circumstances. Then, based on this identification, the levels of advisement, content, and interaction must be consistently applied to the student's course of study throughout his or her academic career.

The researchers go on to note that "in the eyes of students, the two most important characteristics of excellent instructors involve their ability to serve as facilitators in courses and their ability to effectively articulate information and concepts." Both of these characteristics are supported in the literature.

Showalter (2003), writing in her book, *Teaching Literature*, warns that "new technology is no shortcut to success." She also notes that the "most rewarding and revolutionary aspect of the new courseware has been its interactive capacities." Parini (2005) adds that the ideal teacher is that of *primus inter pares* or first among equals, with the teacher as the lead student - technically equal, however, surreptitiously or quietly leading and looked upon as an authority.

Course organization, facilitation and fair assessment stand out in the literature as highly regarded traits favored by students (Feldman, 1976; Marsh and Roche, 1997; Rogers, 1983). Rogers (1983) described a facilitative teacher as one who created a learning environment rather than just presenting knowledge. The communication skills of the college professor have long been a characteristic noted as a recognized standard for effective teaching. Students favor instructors who present effective course organization and assessment techniques (Dziuban et al., 2007).

Online teaching best practices include a plethora of strategies and tactics to involve the student and enable successful learning. Pivotal in the online classroom is first and foremost the teacher, as stated by Barker and Baker (1995). Establishing an effective learning environment is also crucial to student success. Utilizing the seven principles of Chickering and Ehrmann (1996) is frequently cited and routinely recommended for

successful learning. While understanding and effectively utilizing the existing technology to coordinate and sustain an online classroom, teaching online is complicated and without proper training and guidance, many fail in their initial attempts.

## Online Teaching Persona

To establish a baseline of existing literature in the area of the online teaching persona is not a simple task. Current literature purely related to the online teaching persona is lacking. Several investigators have researched the varying roles of online faculty: Coppola et al. (2002); Salmon (2000); Harasim et al. (1995). The online teaching persona is a relatively new circumstance and many online professors have little experience. Therefore, this review of the literature is sparse. I borrow from the face-to-face literature when analogy proves useful. The online teaching persona is paramount to establishing a successful online classroom.

In the past ten years, as online teaching and learning has entered the mainstream of higher education, the research on the role of the teacher in online learning environments is at an early stage (Wallace, 2003). Teaching undergraduate students online differs from teaching in the face-to-face classroom (Frese, 2006). Coppola, Hiltz, and Rotter (2002) report that role changes occur when a faculty member moves from the face-to-face classroom onto the stage of the online classroom. Their data suggests that changes occur in the three roles they defined: (1) cognitive, (2) affective, and (3) managerial. The cognitive role holds the mental processes of learning, information

storage and thinking. The affective role centers on the relationships of students, instructor and the overall classroom environment. The managerial role is associated with the course and class management.

The literature clearly supports the Coppola et al. (2002) findings that the role of the online instructor is different than that of the face-to-face instructor. As such, faculty development required for effective online instruction requires unique training (Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Truman, 2004). Ragan (1999) stresses that "good teaching is good teaching." The techniques, terminology and technology may change, however the desired goal, "a marked and measurable change in behavior," remains the same. According to Nkonge (2004), the challenge for faculty is to seek an effective way to teach online by blending their content expertise, pedagogical beliefs and technology skills. These demands require constant support and training to teach successfully in the online classroom. Smith, Ferguson and Caris (2002) remind us that the lack of a face-to-face persona or presence may lead to a lack of authority in the online classroom. Wallace (2003) noted that faculty presence and immediacy impact student satisfaction and learning. These viewpoints may present an awkward juxtaposition for the online professor.

The current literature related to the teaching persona is heavily weighted toward the face-to-face classroom (Parini, 2005; Showalter, 2003; Lang, 2007; Bain, 2004). The online teaching persona literature is sparse so it remains a mystery as to how the online professor portrays him or herself (persona) to their students in the online classroom and how that persona affects student learning and success. This study will help to fill the void and contribute to the literature of the online teaching persona and these questions.

The following face-to-face characteristics will help to clarify the differences in the contrast of the two classrooms:

- •Use body language, voice inflection, etc. to emphasize comments,
- •Relate anecdotes and personal experiences in the workplace,
- •Meet with students informally before, during, and after class,
- •Work with student teams onsite in business environments,
- •Moderate guest lecturers with face-to-face discussion with students,
- •Take students on trips to other countries for international experiences,
- •Meet out of class with those students having difficulty with course material,
- •Discuss aspects of the course that might be difficult in writing,
- •Discuss personal/confidential student problems affecting course performance,
- •Promote team participation and team communication, and,
- •Coordinate team-teaching and other activities.

Many faculty have taught their students face-to-face for years and developed a style that fits their personalities and contributed to the learning experience (Manning, Cohen, and DeMichiell, 2003). On the other hand, some apparent changes to an online methodology allow instructor and students to:

- •Use technology for more convenience (more flexible time schedule),
- •Emphasize content and not be distracted by personal issues,
- •Communicate more frequently through e-mail and chat rooms,
- •Receive team and individual progress reports via e-mail and chats,
- •Be free from a classroom-intensive schedule,
- •Use the lost classroom time to conduct more research and project work,

•Place more of a burden on the student to comprehend the material, and,

•Place a burden on the instructor to prepare a more structured course.

The contrasts of the preceding examples highlight the significant differences in the face-to-face classroom when compared to the online, technology-enhanced classroom.

Smith et al. (2002) noted that personalities emerge online through styles of written communication, and consistency of written communication creates an identity on the part of the student and the professor. Developing that personality or persona or teaching style from the start of the class is critical to the success of the professor and his or her students in the online classroom (Benbunan-Fich, Hiltz & Harasim, 2005).

Derrick Bell (as cited in Bain, 2004), a veteran law professor at New York University, challenges his face-to-face teaching role and now utilizes the Internet to bring "the real heart of the class" to his students in the form of hour-long discussions on their reflections of case law. Bell invites his students into a "community of learners" to exchange ideas and to contribute to each other's education. Bell sits on the side and occasionally comments or asks questions. He claims these exchanges in cyberspace (and in class) raise "the level of understanding." Bell is interweaving the cognitive and affective teaching roles into his online classroom.

The managerial role (Coppola et. al. 2002) is complex and some would say that it is the most cumbersome to develop in the online classroom. Instructor's abilities to teach online are critical to the quality of online education (Kyong-Jee & Bonk, 2006). In their study, Kyong-Jee and Bonk find that the number one skill required of the online

instructor of the future will be to moderate (manage) or facilitate learning and how to develop or plan for their online courses. The researchers base this on Salmon's (2000) point that online instructors are moderators or facilitators of student learning. Coppola et al. (2002) found that the managerial role required greater attention to detail, more structure, and additional student monitoring in the online classroom.

Coppola, Hiltz, and Rotter (2004) found that by building "swift trust" in the online classroom, stronger interaction and more successful students will emerge. They concluded:

> The most effective online teachers get a good start in the very first week, which is the essence of swift trust, with online communication. Once established, swift trust will carry over into the remainder of the semester if high levels of action are maintained.

Instructors have many concerns about online education. Their primary concern is how online education changes their roles and responsibilities, and how they can adapt to this change (Yang & Cornelius, 2005). For the professor to make the shift from the instructor-centered, face-to-face classroom to the student-centered online classroom, the combined effort becomes the online community of learners (Knowlton, 2000) placing the instructor in the role of the facilitator, coach, counselor, and mentor.

Palloff and Pratt (2001) note that the successful online instructors must pay greater attention to the development of a sense of online community in order for students' learning to be successful. Yang and Cornelius (2005) state that to ensure the quality of online instruction, the qualification of the instructors should be a first consideration.

Since the preparation of instructors is also paramount, those who teach online courses should understand their roles and adjust their attitudes for this change of role(s).

This research bolsters this conclusion and emphasizes the online teaching persona as a critical element in the successful online classroom. The teaching persona is perhaps the single-most significant characteristic the online professor must challenge when first entering the online arena. Teaching "out of who you are" (Parini, 2005) in the online classroom presents many challenges and decisions and the following study will aid in the discovery.

# CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Following the research of Coppola, Hiltz, and Rotter (2002), who found that a change occurs when faculty move from the face-to-face arena to the online classroom, the purpose of this study is to expand the research of the online teaching persona by seeking to answer the following research questions (Appendix A):

> 1. What are faculty participant's beliefs about their online teaching persona in online instruction?

> 2. In the context of your online teaching persona, please provide examples from your online classroom:

>> a. Best practices, characteristics that are effective in your classroom

>> b. Facilitators of your online persona

>> c. Barriers of your online persona

> 3. In your opinion, how do faculty develop an online persona that enhances your success in the online classroom?

>> a. What elements are key to faculty member's developing their online persona?

> 4. What aspect of faculty members' persona remains central in the face-to-face arena?

Using these questions to reveal and explore the online teaching persona, idiosyncrasies, strategies and tactics of the undergraduate online teaching professor, I seek to answer the research questions from the cases. Latitude is permitted for the cases to reveal and detail emerging pathways and characteristics of this phenomenon. The results of this study provide the theoretical and practical significance to move the literature forward. Correlations to student success and faculty development are noted.

The faculty online teaching persona is analyzed in the respective roles: cognitive, affective and managerial (Coppola et al., 2002). The four case studies are reported individually then analyzed in an iterative and recursive manner (multiple-case) to further strengthen the research. Each case study encompasses one fall semester (14 weeks).

These roles are defined more precisely into the following partitions and viewed through their appropriate lenses (Coppola et al., 2002). The cognitive role includes the mental processes of learning, information storage, thinking, and deeper cognitive complexity. The affective role includes the relationships between students, the instructor and the classroom atmosphere, new tools to express emotion, and more intimate relationships. The managerial role includes classroom management, course management, detail, structure, and student monitoring.

Eisner (1991) points out that all "work" at either end of the continuum of scientific through qualitative research is significant:

> There is a kind of continuum that moves from the fictional that is "true"—the novel for example—to the highly controlled and quantitatively described scientific experiment. Work at either end of this continuum has the capacity to inform significantly. Qualitative research and evaluation are located toward the fictive end of the continuum without being fictional in the narrow sense of the term.

The case study utilizes the methodology of Yin (2003) with the supporting structure of Creswell (1998), Merriam and Associates (2002), Cohen and Manion (1994), and Denzin and Lincoln (2000). What follows is the rationale underlying the methodologies of this multi-case study design.

By choosing a qualitative case-study design, rich information is provided that will yield both theoretical and practical knowledge to the field of online teaching and learning. The case study protocol (Appendix A) as outlined by Yin (2003), outlines the research plan of study, design, study questions, data collection, data analysis, explanation, and timeline. Stake (1995) reminds us that the case study is the study of particularity and complexity of the case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances. The four professors and their courses constitute the framework of the circumstances.

The single, then multiple-case study design of Yin (2003) is chosen as the method of determining the methodologies and strategies of the successful, online teaching persona at a large suburban university that has chosen to embrace and promote online teaching and learning. "Successful" will be determined by A-B-C grades received by the majority of the students in the course. The multiple-case study approach will provide suitable design, reliability and replication artifacts for further study of online teaching. The research will satisfy the three tenets of the qualitative method: describing, understanding, and explaining (Yin, 1981).

The specific demographics of each study participant are documented in the demographics word Table B. The four study participants share the following characteristics:

- Veteran (5+ years of face-to-face [F2F] teaching, transitioned to 5+ years of teaching online) faculty,
- successful (based upon Student Perception of Instruction [SPI] data and faculty success A, B, C grades),

- currently involved in undergraduate online teaching of web-based (W) course(s) of average 44 per section or larger size. (Appendix B).

Each of the faculty participants is given pseudo names to protect their identity in the study. The four faculty participants are from varied colleges across the university: Arts and Humanities, Nursing, and Health and Public Administration. Purposeful selection is used, based on the useable population, sampling and willingness to participate in the study.

Each course was reviewed by the researcher using methodologies based on the three roles: cognitive, affective and managerial. A Faculty Interview Analysis (Appendix C1 – C4) was used to review and analyze each course in advance of the face-to-face interview to determine the components, characteristics, pace, objectives and specific variables of each course. The richness of the data is related in the study in the form of the dialog and examples of the professors and their courses.

Following the review of the course, the faculty member is interviewed and audio recorded. A redundant audio recording technique is used to ensure high quality digital audio files. Each interview focuses on the Case Study Protocol interview questions (Appendix A). Additional supporting data is collected from one prior semester course using the course review analysis plan, if necessary. A follow-up interview (phone or e-mail) takes place to clarify or enhance the data, if necessary. Voice recognition software (Dragon Naturally Speaking) is used to transcribe each interview into text. The text is

organized into a visual representation of the data exemplars (Appendix D), the Data

Summary  Table.

The evidence emerges from five of the six categories recommended by Yin

(2003) to validate the construct of the study:

• Documentation–Biographical data, course data,

• Archival Records–Previous course(s), course data,

• Interviews–Faculty interviews (follow-up if necessary),

• Direct (non-participant) observation–Course
observation/Discussions/E-mail/Group activities/Chat, Course
content (Syllabus, protocols, module/lessons, assignments,
assessments),

• Participant observation–Will not be used,

• Physical artifacts–Online courses, handouts.

The case studies answer the how and why questions. They do not require the

control of behavioral events. The studies focus on contemporary events (active classes)

and produce contemporary data and analysis tables (Appendix D). The answers to the

study questions along with the comments and conversation surrounding those answers

provide the study data and results. These results are contrasted to current literature from

the field. Data checking is used to further validate the study. Each participant is asked to

check and prioritize the data points following their interview. Cross-case synthesis is

employed to help formalize any similarities or differences in the cases.

As the principal researcher, I (should) possess the following skills: the ability to

ask good questions (peer reviewed) and to interpret the responses; to be a good listener;

to be adaptive and flexible to react to various situations; have a firm grasp of issues being studied; and, to be unbiased by preconceived notions (Yin, 1994).

## **Limitations**

All studies have limitations. As in the Coppola et al. (2002) study, the location of the study presents limitations of the population and the sample. All cases for this research are selected from one large suburban university located in the southeast United States. Four veteran faculty members who received formal instruction from an award-winning faculty development program (Truman, 2004) have been selected. This is a limitation of the study to use faculty who have received formal training and compensation for their training. Faculty have entered the online classroom for a variety of reasons. Many are enthusiastic and volunteered to teach online. Some have been coerced into the online classroom. Some have been forced online based on the goals of their program or discipline.

The faculty members also receive technology and instructional design support before, during and after they teach their classes, a limitation. A supportive and facilitative campus is a tremendous asset for the online faculty member. Not all online teaching faculty have equal support from their institution. Many faculty become "lone rangers" (Bates & Poole, 2003) and receive minimal support or training from their institution.

The differences in the courses the participants teach are also a limitation. The courses vary in student population from 28 students to 161 students. The differences in the amount of interaction, objectives and faculty participation varies significantly from course to course. All four participants kindly volunteered to participate in this study.

## Definition of Terms

• Best practices: Most efficient or effective method or strategy, noted in the literature as being a recommended standard.

• Online persona: Versions or roles of self. Personality or role one characterizes in public. A social façade or front established in online course.

• Case study: Like other research strategies, is a way of investigating an empirical topic by following a set of prespecified procedures (Yin, 2003). The single case is used to define a unique or revelatory case (Creswell, 1998).

• Multiple-case study: A replication model of the single-case study. An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2003). Yin identified five components that are critical in the case study: (a) the study questions; (b) its propositions; (c) its unit of analysis; (d) the logic linking the data to the propositions; and (e) the criteria for interpreting the findings.

• Web-based instruction (W): For the purpose of this study, Web-based instruction is defined as "...a hypermedia-based instructional program which utilizes the attributes and resources of the World Wide Web to create a meaningful learning environment where learning is fostered and supported (Khan, 1997)."

• Computer mediated communication (CMC): Electronic or digital communication facilitated by the use of computers at each end o the communication process.

# CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

### **Introduction**

I conducted four face-to-face interviews with four full time, undergraduate online teaching faculty members from October 30, 2007 to November 30, 2007, to gather the data for this study. The average time of the four interviews was fifty six minutes and nine seconds. The four faculty members were interviewed with two audio recording devices, one primary and one back up. Each of the interviews was transcribed using transcription software. Each transcript was edited and corrected to eliminate mistakes in the documents, compared to the actual audio recordings. One interview was recorded in a faculty member's office. Three of the faculty interviews are recorded in an audio recording booth for improved sound and a lack of disturbances.

I also observed, as a non-participant, the four courses that the professors were teaching during the semester. This access provided me with a second data point for the study. As a non-participant observer, I witnessed the faculty members' online teaching persona first-hand during the fall 2007 semester.

The data points were gleaned from the audio and text copies of the interviews and Appendix D, the Data Summary Table, was created. An individual copy of the data points was then distributed to the four faculty members for data validation and prioritization (Yin, 2003). Three of the four faculty members complied with this request

to ensure the data is valid. The three validated the accuracy of the data. The data points, by question, are found in tables (Appendix D) in each of the four case studies.

Several similarities in the comparison of the data points evolved from the interviews and the observations of the courses. Unique findings were uncovered. Best practices coming from the four interviews and also from the course observations are closely related to the current and mature literature from the field (Chickering & Ehrmann, 1996; Easton, 2003; Frese, 2006; Moore, 1989; Palloff & Pratt, 2001, Dziuban et al., 2007).

Following the tradition of Stake (1995) I incorporate quotes, vignettes and examples into the description of the case studies to assist the reader with a more comprehensive understanding of each case.  Following, I present the four individual case studies. I then summarize and conclude with a chapter of cross-case synthesis as reported by Yin (2003). The cross-case synthesis reveals the similarities and differences of the cases.

## Case Study: Professor Johnson

This initial case study is based on Professor Johnson (a pseudonym), who has been teaching English for over thirty years and is considered an authority in the field of technical writing. He is well-written and has published four books in this area of expertise: technical writing, technical editing, the relations of literature and science, online help systems, e-learning and science fiction. He teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses. He is a graduate coordinator and full professor. He uses his text

for his undergraduate technical writing course. Professor Johnson adds that his students claim they appreciate taking his course and using his text and consider him a knowledgeable source in his field:

> I use my books, my own books for that course (Writing for the Technical Professional) and some other courses. So I have even more ethos or more authority. And the students like that. They like taking the course with someone who has written the book for the course. It's a big book. It took a lot of my time to write the darn thing, even though it is co-authored.

He successfully completed a faculty development course that grants him the permission to teach fully-online (W) and blended courses (M) at his institution. He mentors new online faculty and many of his online strategies and techniques are widely used at his institution. He was funded to learn to teach online in 1997. According to Professor Johnson, he truly enjoys online teaching and particularly likes the convenience offered him and his students with the W format. He has been teaching online courses for over ten years.

Professor Johnson teaches Writing for the Technical Professional and has 28 students based on the class size limitations mandated by his college due to the writing requirements put on the students. The "W" course that Professor Johnson is teaching for this study is in the fall semester, 16 weeks accompanied by one class session set aside for a final, if necessary. The university course catalog states the following:

ENC 3241 CAH-ENG  3(3,0)

Writing for the Technical Professional: PR: ENC 1102, Junior standing, or C.I. Writing effective correspondence, instructions, proposals, and informal and formal reports. Fall, Spring.

Professor Johnson requires his students to complete the following requirements (Percent of their final grade is noted in parenthesis):

- Class activities (including peer reviews, discussion postings, any exercises or quizzes), professionalism, interpersonal skills, and collaboration skills (15%)
- Complaint letter, refusal letter, and audience analysis memo (15%)
- Instructions (15%)
- Application letter and resume (15%)
- Team proposal in memo format concerning your group's report (10%)
- Individual progress report in memo format on team report (5%)
- Evaluation of team members in memo format (5%), and
- Team report (20%)

Over his many years of teaching, Professor Johnson has created a list of "Personal Qualities to Succeed in Online Courses" for his students. This collection of personal traits and characteristics is shared with many new faculty members as they enter the online teaching arena. His list of personal qualities includes:

- You should be patient;
- You should expect things to go wrong on occasion;
- You should realize that it's not easy to work with other people on a project, but that you will have to make every effort to do so anyway;
- You should be persistent;
- You should be prompt. Don't keep people waiting if they are expecting to hear from you;
- You should be flexible and adaptable;
- You should have a sense of humor;
- You should be honest and do your own work;

• You should be a team player. You have to be willing to work with others to succeed in the online peer reviews and other online collaborative work;

• You should be willing to ask questions when you're not sure how to do something correctly or if you're not sure what is required. I want to help and so do your group members.

Professor Johnson relies heavily on his course structure and schedule to make this course a successful experience for his students. His course routine is based on a Monday through Friday schedule with the majority of the learning and assessments taking place on a Tuesday through Thursday schedule. He firmly believes the students place great value on a Monday through Friday schedule, saving their weekends for personal time. Professor Johnson is sympathetic to the student's busy schedule:

> There's got to be some give-and-take there and most (students) are very good sports about that. I structure courses so that most of their work, depending on the course, is done during the week and not on the weekends. I'm sensitive to their other courses. I'm real sensitive to the fact that in the fall and spring they are taking four or five other classes, they are working full time, many are working part time. My interaction with them is that they are human beings trying to get through four years, the undergraduates.

Professor Johnson's interview lasted for 68 minutes and 40 seconds. He provided a voluminous and articulate interview. His responses to the four study questions revealed an online persona of a caring, encouraging, articulating and professional instructor.

Professor Johnson defines his online teaching persona as being fair, demanding and having lots of expectations. He is cognizant of his strong affective role with his students:

I want to come across as being fair and demanding. I have lots of expectations. I don't cut them a lot of slack. I don't make the course easier than a face-to-face (course). I want them to know, actually even before the course begins, typically two weeks before the semester, that they're in for a challenge and that it's not an easier course (compared to face-to-face). I want them to know that I'm concerned about how well they do. I want them to know that other students have taken me for classes (and) have done well.

Professor Johnson portrays himself as a sensitive and caring professor. He is concerned about his student's success and wants them to know the course routine and rules prior to the start of the semester. He sends each of his students a welcome e-mail up to two weeks prior to the start of the semester. His welcome e-mail is warm and sincere and begins the process of what Coppola, Hiltz, and Rotter (2004) termed "swift trust." That is, quickly conquering the trust of the learner in the online classroom. Meyerson, Weick, and Kramer (1996) developed the term "swift trust" for temporary teams who are formed for a finite time frame. Professor Johnson begins this process early and continues with encouragement throughout the duration of the course using very carefully crafted communication.

Professor Johnson moves quickly to establish the ethos he brings to his online classroom. He begins by encouraging the new students and by asking the students if they are sure they are in the correct course since he wants them to succeed. In his opening introduction, along with those of his students in the "Brief Bio" discussion topic, he introduces himself and points out his home page on the English Department website. He also adds briefly a bit about his background, degrees, area of interest, study and hobbies. He also notes the titles of the four books he has written. His bio is open, candid and

authoritative. His biography is posted late in the first week and most of his students have already posted. He opens his bio by saying, "We certainly have an interesting and talented group." This is an encouraging and positive statement. He asks very deliberate and pointed questions. He is clear and articulate on the technology that he uses and the simple fact that the course, even though it is fully online (W) it is not easier and requires a significant amount of work that requires strict deadlines. He also makes it very clear that in order to successfully complete his course the learner will have to accomplish the following:

> 1) Post at least two responses each week (one typically due by midnight on Tuesday, and one typically due by midnight on Thursday) on the assigned readings in the **Discussions** area of the course
>
> 2) Post occasional completed exercises or occasional responses to quizzes concerning some of the assigned readings
>
> 3) Post a complete draft of a major assignment approximately every three weeks for peer review by another student. (This course relies extensively on first completing thorough and complete drafts of all major assignments.)
>
> 4) Complete and post your peer review of a draft of another student's major assignment approximately every three weeks. (This course relies extensively on careful peer review of the work of other students for reasons explained in the course syllabus.)
>
> 5) Post a final version of each major assignment approximately every three weeks once your work has been peer reviewed.

These examples point out the rigor that Professor Johnson uses to clarify his online teaching persona very early in the course:

> …I go out of my way to convey this persona of someone who is fair, someone who is demanding, and someone, depending on the time…who has a sense of humor, someone who's really careful in his word choices in responses to students, so that I'm encouraging

and not dismissive. Which is so easy to be. If you are curt in your e-mail or you give a short answer or you don't use the right adjectives or other words – because tone is so difficult to convey…online.

He also communicates his encouraging, demanding and yet authoritative persona throughout his welcome and course introduction. An example includes, "Despite the many challenges, most students do well in my online classes."

Professor Johnson's course and online classroom management style rely heavily on Chickering and Gamson's (1987) *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*. Principle one, encouraging contact between students and faculty, is robust in the two weeks prior to the start of the semester and also into the first and second week. He moves quickly toward establishing that "swift trust" of Coppola et al. (2005). The quickness of the delivery of the message is also a huge factor employed by Professor Johnson. Chickering and Ehrmann (1996) detailed the use of communication technologies that increase access to faculty that are critical to the success of Johnson's course; e-mail, in-class discussions, and electronic peer-review. Such technologies have been proven to strengthen the interactions between the students and the faculty member according to Chickering and Ehrmann (1996). He relates his online persona to his encouraging tone and choice of delivery technology and message. Professor Johnson takes the managerial role of his course seriously. He is meticulous with his communication writing and tactics. As noted by Easton (2003), "the skillfulness needed to construct messages online" is time-consuming and cumbersome. He has his course very organized, systematic, and on a strict weekly routine and schedule. He

outlines the schedule before the course begins. He does not make significant changes

during the live semester. He has built in redundancy that he stresses as a significant

attribute of his online teaching persona:

> I craft my e-mails within WebCT now, which is what I'm using. I use announcements and I use e-mail. Sometimes I use…increasingly I use announcements and mail together. Just in case they're not paying attention to the announcements. I didn't always do that. But now they have no excuse for missing my announcements because they're also getting individual e-mails. I don't put together my e-mails quickly. I take some time to put them together and structure them and I try to get the students to relax and try to get them on pace to try to get them to see that it's a lot of work - but you can do it.

Professor Johnson's redundancy is worth noting by an example. In the week three

module he is delivering the assignments for module three. The actual assignment is

spelled-out in the assignment handout and clearly outlines the details of the three-part

assignment. Specific instructions for completing all three parts are spelled out in the

handout. The due dates and progress dates are noted each day of the week in the

Calendar. One example is found below. And he also expands on the assignment

objectives, materials and assignment in the Week Three Module: Application letter and

resume. So he has the Module Three details in three areas of the course. He then makes

an announcement to the entire class the following week when he has released the grades

and notes the grade distribution for the assignments.

The managerial style of Professor Johnson is highly organized, innovative, experienced and includes his strict Monday through Friday schedule. Here is an example of a routine calendar posting for mid-week to remind the students of ongoing participation:

> Wednesday, November 21, 2007:
>
> Work on Report Draft
>
> 12:30 AM – 11:59 PM
>
> Individual team members should be continuing their work (both research and writing) on their sections of the draft report.
>
> And there should be ongoing discussions within the groups about matters concerning the draft report.
>
> Completing a draft report before or just after the Thanksgiving break requires a lot of careful planning. All group members must make sure they are contributing as much as they can to this effort.
>
> Any group member who delays the work of the group in completing a draft report will have his or her class activities grade lowered significantly.

Professor Johnson injects humor in his online course though he readily admits that adding humor is much easier in the face-to-face classroom using expression, body language and non-verbal language. His students who have taken his courses in both modes admit he is much more humorous in the face-to-face classroom. He says he adlibs much more in the live classroom. He is also "quick on his feet" in the live classroom.

Taking another queue from Chickering and Gamson's (1987) *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*, Professor Johnson adds that he responds quickly to his students:

I respond promptly, but never within the hour. Typically, within 24 (hours), and a few other parameters. I am not available to my students on the weekends, by choice. I have to do a little educating there and have no feeling of remorse over that. It's just that my time is my time. If you're not careful and if you let them, shoot, they'll call you at home if you give them your phone number and also they'll e-mail you at the midnight and expect a response in 10 minutes.

Another of the points that Professor Johnson relates to his online teaching persona is that of setting high expectations, being demanding of his students and setting strict deadlines. This characteristic also mirrors another of Chickering and Gamson's (1987) seven principles; Communicates high expectations. Throughout the syllabus, welcome letter and course assignments for his Technical Writing course, he bluntly states that his course is not easy and that he does not grant an incomplete course grade. An example of his "pushing the students to learn more" comes from an announcement he posted to the entire class in Week 12:

Subject: New Category of Links in Web Links

Hello -

I just added eight new links in a new category---Resources for Improving Research Skills---in the **Web Links** area of the Main Menu for the course.

I encourage you to browse through these resources for additional tips and strategies for improving your research skills.

Dr. Johnson

Professor Johnson relates that his current Technical Writing course – its structure, content, pace and organization – is an extension of his online teaching persona. The time on task that he allows for students to complete assignments is indicative of Chickering

and Gamson's (1987) principle to emphasize time on task. Johnson emphasizes his pace

and schedule before the course begins. He is excited to talk about this area of his

expertise and credits his many years of experience to its origins:

> I structure my modules very carefully for the different assignments. I pace them very carefully. I give them plenty of time to do what they need to do as long as they are giving the time necessary to the course. They can't just contribute every other week, they have to be involved. I'm sensitive to what they can do within the time. One of the best practices is how I structure the course. It is very structured. I have on the syllabus from the beginning where they know what is due all the way throughout the semester. And then, with WebCT, I've been using the calendar extensively. So they can pace themselves…

Professor Johnson believes that he is sensitive to the workload of the students and

has organized his courses to help them achieve the goals of the class in a reasonable

manner. During one of the final weeks of this online course, Professor Johnson

introduces a weekly assignment to his students. The assignment is meant to teach the

organization and management of information. The assignment is laid out with two

different options. Option one is straight forward and purely an example that can be drawn

from reading the text. Option two is a little more creative and puts the assignment into the

daily lives of his students. By asking the student to create a workflow diagram from an

example of their prior knowledge, Professor Johnson is building knowledge based upon

pre-existing knowledge most of the students are bringing to the classroom. Bransford,

Brown and Cocking (1999) note that "there is a good deal of evidence that learning is

enhanced when teachers pay attention to students' interpretations and provide guidance

when necessary." This assignment also suggests two different learning styles and gives

his students a choice in their learning.

Professor Johnson points out that one of the strongest barriers to teaching online

is the lack of face-to-face contact. This notion is in line with the earlier research of

Coppola et al. (2002):

> …in face-to-face you can see all the body language, you see the
> facial expressions, you hear the sighs, and you hear the laughter. In
> my case you see the all-white hair. I know that ethos is something
> that a speaker has even before a speaker speaks. Aristotle
> commented on that…several thousand years ago. Ethos is….you
> know…I come into a room with all this white hair and my crazy
> sense of humor. I gesture a lot as I talk. I don't pace. I'm not a
> pacer. So that's my face-to-face persona in part. I think very
> quickly on my feet. I love tough questions in a face-to-face. I love
> questions I've never heard. The students can watch me think. I
> think very quickly. I hope I'm not bragging here.  But I'm seldom
> thwarted by a tough question. I'll pursue it and then I'll go right
> back to what I was talking about a moment ago, and the students
> are a bit amazed I haven't lost my train of thought. Of course, by
> the way, I'm 55 now…so that's not easier every year.  The
> students can see I love their questions. I love listening to them. I
> make eye contact. So to carry that over into the online, the students
> can't see that persona. They have to pick that up from my
> syllabi…the different syllabi for different courses. Well is this guy
> reasonable or not? That is one of the first things students will pick
> up on…

On the major differences of online and face-to-face classes, Professor Johnson

simple states that he does a bit more hand-holding in the online classroom than the face-

to-face classroom:

> So, I do a lot of hand-holding, metaphorically speaking, in the
> online class more so than I would do in the face-to-face because I
> want them to get on board.  Part of that is selfish on my part, I
> don't want 30 e-mails the first day or two. I don't understand

what's going on. Oh, I still get occasional e-mails where it's obvious the students didn't pay attention. But, by the way, part of the persona that I convey is I don't lose patience and never send a student and say just what part of this didn't you understand?

The technology, as much as it is a grand contributor to the effectiveness of online teaching and learning, it is also a barrier when it does not work or misfires. Professor Johnson admits that sometimes the online technology fails and it disrupts his classroom. Students not used to the online classroom sometimes have difficulty making the transition to the online learning. Again, the pace is structured and if the students don't adhere to the routine and the technology fails, havoc reigns. However, in the face-to-face classroom technology is also a major factor. Personal factors also contribute to problems in the live classroom:

> Increasingly, I'm using multimedia and other things and you keep your fingers crossed that the technology is working over in (the) classroom building…someone hasn't…I've given up on even counting on a floppy drive. …but I've gone into the classrooms with a jump drive and no place to plug them in. I go in with my CD-ROM…probably the CD-ROM drives are being damaged.

> I'm teaching several face-to-face classes in the spring that I want to teach and continue to teach as face-to-face and I could teach online if I wanted to. But, I like the change. There are constraints, the technical restraints of just getting set up, there are the distractions of people coming and going, people coming in late, and you're trying to be patient with those who come in late and occasionally getting a little impatient with the ones who come in late. And then there is a dynamic in the face-to-face environment, whether or not the AC is working, whether it is to cold and the lighting. And then there is just that some students are visibly tired and exhausted and others not. And then there is the dynamics of some liking each other and some not. All of that is good if everything is clicking. And then you move over into the online environment if the technologies in place and technology…you don't have to worry about the floppy drives.

You don't have to worry about access if the access is for the most part constant. You don't have to worry about their understanding of the technology if you have explained it well. You don't have to worry about people coming and going late. They have to worry if they post late. But if you set it up so they understand when they must post…and so you can have a fun time with the same group of students, you can kind of fail with them in the face-to-face, and have a better time with them in the online. Because of also, individual learning styles, and part of that is your research I'm sure. Some students react better sitting in the comfort of their dorm room or whatever and contributing. Some are shy. But especially when you get up to 35 students in a science fiction course…First of all, it's hard to get more than 20 to attend, even with a strict attendance policy. It's hard to get all of those students to contribute. But I can require all of them to contribute in the postings and get some good discussions going. So from the student's point of view, the online environment probably speaks more to a variety of their learning styles.

Professor Johnson exhibits a multi-faceted online teaching persona. He brings a balance to the three teaching roles established by Coppola et al. (2002); Cognitive, affective and managerial. He utilizes the three types of interaction reported by Moore (1989); Faculty to student, student to content, student to student. He also relies heavily on his ethos and authority to convey his persona.

Professor Johnson is a very successful online instructor. He relies on his experience, knowledge, organization and communication skills to succeed in the classroom. He has a bright outlook on teaching and learning and continues to try new topics, techniques, and assignments in his classes. He is obviously helping to mentor those who are entering the online teaching arena for the first time. He routinely mentors those in his department and others throughout the institution. He is firmly grounded in the

best practices and principles of quality online teaching and learning. He is confident in

his role and closes with this bit of wisdom:

> …you can craft a persona to work for you work or work against you. I choose to craft it to work for me as much as possible. Knowing again that the persona in the online environment, I'm sure…can be conveyed successfully in a lot of ways but there are limitations to it, compared to the face-to-face, I'm sure.

## Case Study: Professor Matthews

The second case study is based on Professor Matthews (a pseudonym) who has

been teaching college-level courses for over 17 years. He is currently teaching

Humanistic Tradition I fully online (W).  His primary position at the institution is in the

Teaching Academy where he is the Project and Faculty Coordinator. He has been

teaching online courses for over seven years. English and the Humanities are his areas of

interest. He successfully completed the institution's online faculty development course to

learn to teach online courses. He has 60 students in two sections combined, for a total

class size of 120. The undergraduate course is composed primarily of freshman and

sophomore students. Although he does have up to 30% of his course populated with

juniors and seniors. This along with other diverse factors presents unique teaching and

learning circumstances:

> …am I dealing with pure novices? Or am I dealing with intermediate or even advanced students? So yeah, it's a huge spectrum…some honestly are coming from other countries and perhaps cultures where…there's a strong writing component to this

course and they are really under-prepared. So there is remediation
that goes on as well.


Humanistic Traditions I is a foundation course, a survey course, and Professor
Matthews believes his students should leave the course with a "broad foundation of
knowledge. Not necessarily a deep foundation." The course is built to provide a survey of
"humankind's cultural legacy," according to the course syllabus. The students delve into
the "cultural productions" of Western and non-Western cultures. These productions
include: the visual arts, literature, philosophy, religion, music, architecture, dance, film,
and theatre.

Writing is a significant requirement in the course, requiring about 500 words each
week. Humanistic Traditions is a "Gordon Rule" course meaning the course is writing-
intensive and meets the State of Florida's Gordon Rule requirement. "The Gordon Rule
writing requirement is a legislative attempt to address the need by Florida employers and
communities for college graduates who have excellent written-communication skills. All
written work must meet college-level expectations and conform to standardized
documentation guides. Students must earn at least a C- in the course for Gordon Rule
credit to apply."

Professor Matthews closely monitors his students early in the semester. He
follows them so closely that he sends a high priority e-mail to the handful who are failing
the course just prior to the semester drop class date. The e-mail warns the failing students
that the drop class deadline is only two days away and their grade is not sufficient to
sustain the course for the duration of the semester. He also writes to students when he

senses a trend or a poor learning schema on the part of the students. The following is a

portion of an announcement he posted to his students warning them of poor assignment

work and his appeal for a reversal without severe penalty:

> Dear Students:
>
> I have been really struggling for the past few weeks with the wide variability among the class essays. While many of you are writing excellent analysis essays, a large number of students are taking ridiculous shortcuts in the process. Also there has been an increase in the amount of poor documentation and even plagiarism. It does not bring joy to any teacher to be forced into the role of policing dishonest student behaviors. I have somewhat reconciled myself to the fact that teaching large online classes forces me to play more of a curriculum manager role than I prefer, but I still hope that students are in class primarily to learn. While I have given several zeros and threatened to report some of you to the Office of Student Conduct for plagiarism, I must confess, I have not followed through with that and I don't wish to. I would prefer to see all students re-engage authentically with the course goals and demonstrate a higher level of interest and discipline.

The appeal to students is indicative of the nature of Professor Matthew's caring

and sensitivity for his students to succeed in his courses. He appeals for an improvement

in the work ethic of the students. He admits that he has been "struggling" with the issue.

He also admits that he has relented and is giving the failing students a second chance to

improve. He is truly showing compassion toward his students.

The course uses weekly reading quizzes, writing assignments, a creative

production, a mid term and a final to assess the student learning. Each week, of the 16

week schedule, requires reading, writing, and an objective assessment. It is extremely

important that the student be self-motivated, well-organized, and punctual. Poor

performance and poor grades are almost always correlated to last-minute work. All of this

is clearly delivered to the students in the course syllabus. Emphasis is placed on students

being "self-directed."

Professor Matthews also stresses "time management" and informs the students

that self-motivation, organization and punctuality are imperative to achieve success in his

course. In his welcome e-mail, Professor Matthews writes to students just prior to the

course start and welcomes and encourages his students. He introduces the routine, called

a "learning cycle," for the course, acknowledges his requirements and offers his

assistance to students to help them succeed. He even outlines the weekly routine by

telling the students what they should be doing each week:

> 1. Check "Announcements" and "Mail" from the links on the main course menu to the left on your screen.  You should check these links often.
>
> 2. Navigate to the "Learning Modules" tool and select the module for the week.  (Refer to the schedule for this.)  Read the weekly learning module.
>
> 3. Read the chapters in the textbook for that week and the related content in the DVD-ROM and on the "Materials" page.
>
> 4. Navigate to the "Assessments" tool.
>
> 5. Take the Module Quiz or Exam for that week.
>
> 6. Write an analysis paper as directed in the Learning Module.
>
> 7. Post the paper to turnitin.com and to the "Discussion" tool.
>
> 8. Read other discussion postings and reflect on your learning.

Humanistic Tradition I is organized and user-friendly. The course objectives,

content and assignments are clearly stated. He is encouraging and very honest and candid

about his course and the amount of work required to successfully pass his course. He

guides the students into the course and to Module 1, an introduction module and to their

first assignment in his welcome e-mail. He encourages his students to succeed.

Professor Matthews believes his online teaching persona to be composed of a

varied, unique and changing dynamic. He talked about his persona for just over an hour,

one hour and one minute. He was very open and candid with his comments and expressed

his love of teaching and his interest in student learning through his teaching methods. He

begins his interview with a brief summary of his online teaching persona and his disdain

for his large classes:

> Currently, I represent myself as purely a facilitator. I would like to represent myself more as a role model, that is, an exemplar of a scholar engaged in the subject, however the constraints of online teaching especially with the increased enrollments at (name of institution) have forced me to move from a discussion-based format to more of a directed, guided, I would say formulated type of a curriculum designer.

Professor Matthews is very organized in his online teaching approach. His course

exemplifies this organization. He sees himself as caring and innovative. He clearly begins

his interaction with his students with this image. His course and persona closely align

with the concepts put forward by Chickering and Gamson (1987). His facilitation, caring

and interaction are very significant examples of their Principle 1, encourages contact

between students and faculty, and Principle 6, communicates high expectations, and

Principle 7, respects diverse talents and ways of learning. Professor Matthews loves

innovation and changes to his course that encourage student learning.

Professor Matthews, like Parini (2005), cares deeply about his topic, the humanities, and his students. He feels that his persona is "informed, to a large degree, by how I conceive of the need for (these) students." He wishes that his students would graduate "having learned the schemas for organizing historical information and for analyzing historical artifacts…and applying them to their world, their experiences in the now."

Professor Matthews is challenged by his large classes. He combines two sections of 60 students into one online class of 120 students. He states that the large class size has impacted his online teaching and persona. However, he also shares his passion for teaching:

> I think there should be more value placed on this more difficult task of teaching online. But at (name of institution), quite the opposite, it's been less value, they have increased enrollment with the belief that online instruction is infinitely scalable and it often goes to the contingent faculty like myself. I'm adjuncting. Sometimes my calculated weekly pay clock for this task is…you know, below minimum wage. I'm asking myself why the hell do I do this? Well I'm doing it because as a faculty coordinator I need to know what the faculty are experiencing, I think, and because I love it.

Innovation is a major theme throughout Professor Matthew's interview, though he does feel confined "inside" the boundaries of the online classroom, he suggests his innovation and creative ideas continue to invigorate his teaching and online classes. He admits, his "typical face-to-face classroom would look more like a group of equals in a circle discussing a text, analyzing the text, sharing interpretations of the text," he adds that he has moved more toward an accountability-based curriculum because of his

"online experience." However, the creative assignment continues to find a place in his online course. His favorite activity is a synthesis, a multimedia production, the students complete near the end of the semester. His students invest more creativity in this production. They use photographs, images, and graphics, compose a poem or write a composition. They bring it all together or synthesize their thoughts using the available technology. Professor Matthews enjoys the expression and creativity of this assignment.

Chickering and Gamson (1987) found that their sixth principle of good practices respects diverse talents and ways of learning, was so important in seeking different ways to teach and captivate students. Professor Matthews uses these different ways of learning in creative and meaningful activities for his students. One example stands out:

> For example, this is All Souls Day, I'm teaching cultural traditions. This time of the year, across many cultures that have to look forward to a winter. It is a time for a pulling back of energies, moving toward a more reflective time of the year, some for even a time of purgatory. I know that students love holidays, they love them, it doesn't matter where you are, you've got your holidays from your culture, you grew up with them and that's what you associate with mom and dad and grandpa, cousins and your friends and good times. So this actually falls under my umbrella of course content…to make the subject more relevant to my students, I give them an extra credit assignment at this time of the year, October and I asked them to choose a cultural ritual from this period of time that deals with this seasonal shift.

The "shape of (the) curriculum" is also a characteristic of the persona according to Professor Matthews. Showalter (2003) writes that the most effective teachers are those who claim that their (literary) theory is "consistent with their teaching theory and

practice." He considers the "shape" of the curriculum a personal expression of his

persona and in turn, his teaching:

> I consider the shape of the curriculum my personal expression.
> And the curriculum that I've built is a subject-centered
> curriculum… So, when asked the question…your personal…your
> persona, what is unique, what is individualistic, and that doesn't
> sound individualistic…I feel that, the shape of the curriculum is
> my expression….I would say, in the current version, the most of
> me that they (students) are going to see is the combination of the
> structure itself and then the extra credit assignments where I tend
> to steer the options more to my idiosyncrasies. Because I believe
> that many students would share my idiosyncrasies in this.

The "dark side" of online teaching, as Professor Matthews explains, is the time it

takes up front and during the term, grading and taking care of the managerial role of the

classroom. The growing literature of online teaching and learning is overwhelmingly

acknowledging the vast amount of time it takes to deliver successful online courses

(Wolcott, 1997; Conceição, 2007; Frese, 2006). As Easton (2005) reported, "consistently

throughout the interviews and focus groups I heard comments about the time

requirements and challenges of working virtually." Professor Matthews shares that

sentiment about teaching online, he cares about his students and their learning:

> I spend an inordinate amount of time up front, developing a course,
> putting together the course materials, organizing the modules,
> thinking about the assignments. I typically change the writing
> assignments once a year. I typically don't change very much from
> fall to spring although I will be changing some significant
> assignments for the spring semester. But often times, because I
> think I prefer to be a discussion-based, people based teacher, I feel
> like an information manager online. I've gotten away from
> synchronous-based activities with students because of the number,

again, of students and trying to accommodate all of their needs. I feel obligated to provide the same service to each student, so if I'm providing synchronous chat with one, I feel like I ought to be providing it for all.

The "convenience factor" of online learning came up in the interview with

Professor Matthews. He, like many others, claims that teaching in an online,

asynchronous mode is convenient. He, like many others, also claims that his students

enjoy the convenience of the online classroom:

> So, the students, they live in many different time zones, some are traditional students, many are not traditional students. They self-report that they are in my class because of its convenience, you know, asynchronous. They have families, they have jobs, they can do the homework on Sunday morning or Friday night or whenever it's convenient for them. So it's all asynchronous and that's very convenient for me as well. So I can do my grading when I get around to it. I can post the grades when I get around to it. So I am generally on the ball with that…

A serious barrier or concern of Professor Matthews is that of "self-censorship" in

the online classroom. He relates it to Foucault's (1995) work on the implications of the

prison model by Jeremy Bentham from the 19th century:

> I want to add a new barrier. And that is…I don't know where the evidence for this is…..I think it is probably impacting most of us. I am hearing it amongst faculty and I'm realizing it myself. There's a self-censorship that comes from knowing that someone is censoring me or observing me. It's what Foucault talked about, the Panopticon Syndrome, based on Jeremy Bentham's research in the 19th-century. If you want to control people's behavior, you threaten intervention, but you really don't have to use the intervention you can just make them feel like a superior power is watching them. We tend to self-censor (online). There are a lot of

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things that I used to share with students. I was much more frank, but because, an e-mail, a sentence, a phrase in writing, has no context, it can be used against you. And so, I'm fearful of the growing censorship in our culture and that I have to tell you is a barrier. I don't let it prevent me from being successful…but it really, it just removes a lot of freedom, from my responses. I'm always trying to second-guess myself, how might someone take this, if I…reread the e-mail…am I sure…am I really saying something safe?

He adds, related to using humor in the online classroom "You don't see the smile with the sarcastic remark, you just see the sarcastic remark."

As a study participant in the Coppola et al. (2002) research stated, "I give myself more time to think about what they're saying before I respond to them. In the (face-to-face) classroom, I'm more prone to avoid the silence.

Professor Matthews mentors a large number of teaching faculty, face-to-face and online faculty, in his full time role in the Teaching Academy. He is constantly teaching them new strategies or working closely with them on projects and initiatives. He has some great ideas he passes along when mentoring new online faculty. He recommends, "first look at what other people are doing." He also recommends setting aside a large chunk of up-front time for course development. Most importantly, he recommends new faculty "articulate or define their role," in the new environment before they enter the online classroom. A "sense of renewal" and an "interrogation of the literature" should also be a part of their preparedness.

Professor Matthews is changing. He is changing his online teaching and trying very hard to encourage his students to learn in new and innovative ways. He is changing

his online teaching as a result of larger online classes. He continues to maintain a positive

and forward-thinking attitude toward his teaching and the student's learning, in spite of

the challenges of teaching large classes online:

> I feel comfortable with my (online teaching) persona, because it's…it's a set of choices based on needs for myself, for the students…I am looking forward to change, to innovation. I continue to think…the managerial role…I've reached this plateau and now I'm a good manager and I don't have to continue to innovate, is probably not true, but that's my dream, to focus more on the learning and I'd like to do some research on student learning, now that I'm feeling I'm feeling pretty confident in the methods…that's it!

## Case Study: Professor Owens

Professor Owens (a pseudonym) teaches the largest of the four courses in this

study with a class size of 161 students in her online Health Care Ethics course. She has

been teaching for a total of 16 years. She has been teaching online for over seven years.

The size of her online course (W) has grown significantly over the past seven years. She

had 40 students in the course when she began teaching it face-to-face in 1999. This

undergraduate online course is generally populated with seniors from the Health Services

Administration program.  She loves teaching online:

> …that's what I love about this job is…I don't have 9-to-5 hours. If I've got something during the day, I go on at night and I do my classes then. I do, I love the flexibility, just like the students love the flexibility…

Professor Owens is the graduate coordinator in her department and assistant

professor. She has been teaching Health Care Ethics online since she successfully

completed her online faculty development course in the fall of 2000. She says this course

is her favorite. She is enthusiastic and encouraging with her students. She has fun

teaching.

The objective of the Health Care Ethics course is straightforward and allows for

creativity and flexibility of topics and discussions throughout the semester and that is a

motivating characteristic Professor Owens enjoys:

> Course Objective - Upon completion of the course, the competent
> student shall demonstrate an expanded understanding of several
> critical ethical considerations and their application to the health
> care field. This shall include an ability to debate various issues of
> importance which present ethical alternatives to the American
> public.

The course is set up and organized into an easy-to-follow routine and design. It

consists of 14 modules and is based on the following topics:

- Foundations of the Physician-Patient Relationship;
- Hospitals, Families, and Medical Confidentiality;
- Death and Dying;
- Contraception, Abortion, and Prenatal Diagnosis;
- Reproductive Issues and Genetics;
- Human and Animal Experimentation; and
- Allocation, Social Justice, and Health Policy

The course "Guidelines and Protocols" are spelled out in a very clear and

organized manner to help the students understand Professor Owens's rules and

regulations for her class. They include; Assignment protocols, plagiarism protocols, E-mail protocols, discussion protocols, and technical protocols. Professor Owens updates and tries to improve on her "Guidelines and Protocols", semester to semester, as she comes up with changes or as the technology changes. She has the course set up on a points system and likes the simplicity of grading students on a finite points system: Assessment for this course is based on the following point system:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Questions | (6 x 25 points each) | 150 points |
| Cases | (7 x 50 points each) | 350 points |
| Discussion Postings | (4 x 25 points each) | 100 points |
| Debate Preparation | | 75 points |
| Debate Participation | | 100 points |
| Syllabus Quiz | (optional bonus points) | 5 points |
| Quizzes | (3 x 75 points each) | 225 points |
| Total | | 1000 points |

All assignments are expanded upon later in the course syllabus and detailed with a clear and professional voice. Student success is a primary objective of Professor Owens. She gives the students an abundance of information and useful tips in her syllabus. Her "assumptions" for students sets the standard for them to come to class ready to take her class:

• You are a health major or minor, or you have an interest in healthcare,

• You have a commitment to participate in web-based assignments and class activities,

• You know how to use a personal computer, and are comfortable using one to complete assignments.

Professor Owens goes through a very thorough preparation of her course with her students. She has many years of online teaching experience to help ensure her readiness for a class of 160 plus. In the time prior to the start of the semester, one to two weeks, Professor Owens sends an introduction or welcome e-mail to each of her students:

I send out a welcome letter. I don't really have an orientation. They should be seniors. If they are majors, which most of them are at this point, they've taken several Web classes. So in my welcome letter I explain to them where everything can be found. I make them take a protocols quiz. So that I know that they are comfortable and we try to get all of the issues worked out the first week of class so that everybody's comfortable.

The lengthy e-mail welcomes the students to the course in a personable manner. Her welcome e-mail is in keeping with Chickering and Gamson's (1987) first principle of good practice in undergraduate education; 1. Encourages contacts between students and faculty. She then sets off to instruct the students on some technical issues and helps them to access the course in a timely manner. She describes the course since the students won't actually "enter" the online classroom for up to two weeks. She also points out her "flexibility" with regards to deadlines and late assignments. She allows for a "one-week grace period" with a point deduction of 10% per day for late work. She cautions the students to "read…very carefully" the Syllabus, Assignment Guidelines, Protocols, Debate Information, etc. She also elaborates on specific course login and navigation to facilitate the student's quick start and course success. She also adds a note about the

course text and how to locate a copy from the campus bookstore. She again welcomes the

students and closes the e-mail with, "see" you on-line!"

Professor Owens reflects a caring, understanding, hospitable, easy-going and

organized online teaching persona. She professes to be a "helpful resource" for her

students. She enjoys being engaged and involved with her students. She particularly

enjoys a feature in her online ethics course called the "Grape Vine:"

> I have a feature called the Grape Vine, where we get on and we
> gossip and we have face-to-face, or, ummmm, day-to-day ethics.
> This is another feature that allows us to get on and have some
> casual conversations, like we would in the classroom about things
> that are happening every day that kind of veer away from the
> structure of the class.

Professor Owens admits to being on the computer every day, though she does

inform her students that she is primarily available Monday through Friday. She also

admits that when teaching online compared to face-to-face, she is much more accessible.

Prompt feedback is another of the principles of good practice offered by Chickering and

Gamson (1987):

> I go on every day and try to follow up with student's postings in
> the discussion forum and answer my course mail. I'm very
> accessible, which is something that…I'm not as accessible when I
> am in the classroom. I don't know how to say this, like seven days
> a week they expect me to be on the computer. For 24 hours a day
> they kind of expect me to be there, because usually I am. If I am in
> front of the computer and they ask me something, I will go on and
> respond to it. I don't have set days. I'm on every day.

Professor Owens likes to try "radical" or "innovative" assignments and activities. She

admits that one of the characteristics of her online teaching persona is to do different

things online that are much easier to do in the face-to-face classroom:

> I try and do some different things. Like, we have an online debate
> where they (students) are actually formed into groups. They have
> their own chat rooms. They have their own discussion rooms and
> they have to work as a group or a team throughout the semester
> and then I put them in another discussion forum room with an
> opposing side and they do a debate over a week. So, I'm trying to
> get them…instead of just being in their own little worlds, doing
> their work and treating this as a correspondence course…to be
> engaged with the material, with their classmates and with me
> because I jump in and moderate the debates.

> I am a member of every one of their teams. We have 36 teams. So
> I go in on a daily basis and read their discussion postings. They're
> required to do this debate prep in their discussion rooms which
> means that several times a week they need to go on and talk about
> the debate, what links they are finding, review their opening
> statements, talk about what questions they want to ask. And I go
> in and I give them feedback along the way. I steer them in the right
> direction and answer the questions they might (have), tell them
> when they are heading in the wrong direction or if everything is
> looking good. I also go on a weekly basis and tell them you need to
> get posting if you want some points. I don't want them to show up
> at the debate thinking they're all prepared and at that point earning
> zero of a hundred points for the whole class.

Professor Owens admits that the best practices of her course that help to facilitate

her online teaching persona are course organization, variety and the different learning

styles she meets with the organization and variety. She says. "It's very organized and that

helps me and it helps the students…" She has her course organized into weekly modules.

She also has the due dates and assignment information in several locations to help the

students who might not see it in one location. The variety of the different things in the

course baffles her colleagues:

> My colleagues are like, why don't you just give the midterm and
> final and be done with. Why are you killing yourself every
> semester in the grading? Because when you're reading five
> hundred papers a week, it's very time consuming.

The variety in the course and the different learning styles she targets are keys to

her best practices. Some of her students think it is too much, while others "appreciate the

variety and the opportunity to try different learning styles other than their own:"

> …taking some quizzes to test their base knowledge, engaging in a
> debate, answering questions, that only I can see their responses.
> It's a variety of things.  So if you're not a good writer, then maybe
> you're a good test taker.  If you're very analytical, you can do well
> on     some     of     these     and     if     you     are     more
> qualitative/quantitative…there is such a variety.

Chickering and Gamson's (1987) principle seven offers that instructors should

"respect diverse talents and ways of learning." Professor Owens is offering and utilizing

this best practice. Though she cautions that one of her barriers or issues to effective

online teaching is that she offers too much. She believes that she sometimes packs too

much in her online course in order to achieve this mark.

Professor Owens dislikes the lack of face-to-face contact when she teaches online.

She does try to make up for this lack of personal contact in her online course, but she

finds it difficult to be "funny" online:

> I'm pretty funny in the classroom. I can't be as funny online.
> That's why I want to try and use some video and present myself
> more to my online students. In my face-to-face class, the first class,

most of them have never seen me because I rarely get to teach in the classroom. I'll dress down that day. I'll go sit in the middle with my students, and I will start spreading rumors about myself to the students – Oh, my gosh! Have you ever heard of this professor? I don't even know how to pronounce their name. I hope they can speak English and things and - you know – they start cutting up with me – and then, I'm like, oh man, they are five minutes late and I better get to the front of the class and then they just all think it is hilarious.

I play games in the classroom and will do "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" type games to prepare for tests. I do a lot of breakouts into groups. I feel like I can have more fun in the classroom, so I'm constantly trying to find ways that I can have that same level of fun and engagement – not necessarily fun - but engaging fun in the web classes as well. So that's been a challenge. But again, I am trying to embrace new technologies that allow me to do that.

The shifting role of the online instructor complicates communication. Coppola et al. (2002) cited the "critical factor of communication." In the face-to-face classroom the instructor has the verbal and non-verbal queues available. The shift to the online classroom moves communication from the verbal to the written and "diminishes available paralinguistic cues." Faculty also find that the online interactions were more formal and that less humor was used.

Professor Owens dislikes the large class size she has been forced to teach. She began teaching her ethics course face-to-face in 1999 with 40 students and some help from graduate assistants. She currently teaches the course to 161 online students without any help from graduate assistants. She candidly talks about the dilemma and offers her

dismay over the difficulty of offering the varied assignments that cater to the different

learning styles she finds in her online classroom:

> The class size is enormous, as you know. I'd prefer smaller classes. I can't believe there used to be a time when we thought 40 (students) was big. And we were getting help when we had 40 students in our class. And we've quadrupled it. And we think nothing more of…let's go to 200 next semester. Yes, that's been a challenge of having a huge class-size. Especially trying to keep up with those multiple learning style assignments…

Another barrier to an effective online classroom and teaching persona that

Professor Owens brings up is that of trying to add too much to her course and the

difficulties around that effect. She is so enthusiastic about varied assignments and

learning styles, she sometimes accepts the fact that she tries to cram too much into her

course:

> I've tried to test out different assignments, different ways to gauge their learning, assess their learning. It seems I keep adding more instead of taking away because I'll find something that I think really works and I don't want to take away something that I have in the class. So it's been a challenge to try and make it so it's not so overwhelming…trying to understand that the students have maybe four other classes that they are taking at the same time as mine. Mine is not their only class. But I get so excited about some of the assignments and projects that it's hard to say, "I'm not going to do that this semester." I think in the beginning…I was relying more on the testing and had just a few cases or just a few questions and I've just added to that trying to keep the students involved on a weekly basis just as we would in a class.

Professor Owens offers that new faculty entering the online teaching arena need

to be organized and repetitive. The clear, organized precision of the online course is

mandatory to succeed in the online classroom. Precision is required as students can't

simply raise their hands to ask spontaneous question in the online classroom. Coppola et

al. (2002) noted that the virtual professor must be precise and deliver "a certain formality

in laying out expectations for students." Professor Owens adds:

> You need to be very organized. You need to organize your material, whether it is in modules or weeks or chapters or sessions, however you want. Students need that…they need to know that this is the goal and this is what I need to do this week. You need to be repetitive. You can't just say something in one place on your website and expect your students to find it and remember it. I have due dates listed in the modules, listed in the calendar, listed in the drop boxes, on the discussion postings…Protocols. I have my protocols in my modules, on each assignment, in a separate button called protocols, and on the syllabus. I have a quiz on it (Protocols). Repetition!

Professor Owens loves teaching online. She loves the computer. She is teaching her four

year old to use the computer. She has captured many of the best practices found in the

literature and utilizes them in her online Health Care Ethics course. She summarizes her

love of the computer and the online classroom in this way:

> I love the computer. I love the Internet. I have blogs, I use blogs in my class and my personal blog. I have friends who blog. I got an Apple last year and I love playing around with my Apple computer. I tutor students at night, it's a side thing…so even on my off time in the evening I still have the computer on.  If the students need me, my computer "dings" me and I go help them. It's in anatomy physiology and not even related to what I teach. Even my four year old is very proficient on the computer so we are learning things on the computer.

# Case Study: Professor Rice

The final study participant is Professor Rice (a pseudonym) who teaches in the College of Nursing. Her online course (W) is Women's Health Issues. The course draws students primarily from Nursing and a few other disciplines as an elective. She has been teaching for over 32 years, nine of those years have been teaching online at two different southern institutions. Her formal training to learn to teach online was successfully completed in 1998. Her mentor in 1998 was a new instructional designer as the institution had only a small handful of faculty who were fully-engaged in online teaching and learning at that time. She has since gone on to mentor many new online faculty members and she continues to study the online teaching practice as it changes with the changing technology.

Women's Health Issues is her favorite online course. She currently has 44 students in the course. Other terms have seen as many as 70 students in the course. She loves this course and has learned that it can be life-changing for many of her students:

> You know, I think that sometimes students need to be motivated to do something and once they do those surveys (self surveys), they become motivated to hit the gym, to cut out the fast foods and stuff, this course can be life-changing for many students. Life-changing…because they'll tell me, they will e-mail me and say, I was never motivated before, but after taking your course I've lost 20 pounds or I'm sleeping better. You know I'm dealing with…

The course is an undergraduate course that is an elective for all students. It is generally composed of juniors in the Health and Nursing programs. Professor Rice says

that most of the students in the class are very successful and she enjoys their success. She

always has one or two who seem to get behind and fail to meet the course expectations.

Her routine and course structure are very organized and straightforward. The course

objectives are spelled out clearly in the course syllabus:

> • Analyze cultural, educational, and socialization practices that impact women's health,
>
> • Detect environmental and behavioral factors that place women at risk for disease,
>
> • Differentiate factors that promote health and prevent illness in women,
>
> • Evaluate psychological factors impacting health practices of women,
>
> • Examine critically detection, prevention, and management of selected diseases and conditions affecting women,
>
> • Appraise the impact of women's health issues on the individual, the family and the community,
>
> • Evaluate your own health status and develop an action plan to modify identified problem areas,
>
> • Generate strategies to assist women in achieving a high level of wellness,
>
> • Assess current legislative activities, which focus on conditions and diseases in women of all ages and socioeconomic groups,
>
> • Examine current and needed research related to women's health,
>
> • Communicate ideas and thoughts about women's health issues using the Internet.

The one minute video introduction of Professor Rice on the course home page is

very informative and reveals much about the personality of the instructor. Her online

teaching persona is well represented in the video. She is authoritative and precise in the

brief video. In the video, Professor Rice is warm and friendly, smiling and encouraging the students to actively participate and to enjoy the course throughout the semester.

Interaction plays a key role in the learning in this course. Moore (1989) cited the three types of interaction and their positive affects on student learning; 1. Student to student, 2. Student to faculty, and 3. Student to content.

Ragan (1999) stated that "when learners interact with one another, with an instructor, and with ideas, new information is acquired, interpreted and made meaningful. If students feel they are a part of a community of learners. They are more apt to be motivated to seek solutions to their problems and to succeed." Professor Rice outlines the different strategies for learning in her syllabus:

Learning from modules:
• Weekly Readings
• Professional literature
• Essay exam/quizzes
• On-line topic searches

Learning from web mates:
• Weekly asynchronous discussion topics
• Small group discussions
• Synchronous chat sessions

Learning from the experts:
• Community resource visits
• Internet searches

Learning from the instructor:

- Modules/content notes

- Discussion topics

- E-mail

- Assignment Feedback

Assessment is calculated on a possible total of 500 points in this course. Assignments are detailed on the course syllabus. The point values for the course are based on this formula:

| | |
|---|---|
| Weekly Module Quizzes | 130 points |
| Weekly Forum Discussions | 70 points |
| Formal APA Term Paper | 100 pts. |
| Personal Action Plan (APA) | 50 pts. |
| Community visit report (APA) | 50 pts. |
| Essay final exam | 100 pts |
| Total | 500 pts |

An optional course orientation is offered on campus a few days prior to the start of the semester. Each semester the number of students attending the live, face-to-face orientation dwindles. An optional orientation on the use of the course management system is available to the students online in the course.

Professor Rice is an enthusiastic and organized online professor. She says the course in this study, Women's Health Issues, is her favorite course to teach. The course is her primary area of study. She has taught this class over 30 times in the past ten years. Each semester she brings the same amount of enthusiasm to her course. She portrays her online teaching persona as that of an "authority in the field" and she thinks that comes

across in her online class. She garners much of this "authority" from her communication and interaction with the students in the course discussions area. She tackles controversial women's issues and asks her students to discuss those issues. Many times those issues have been or are currently issues her students deal with. Those issues are the primary focus of her online class:

> I would say over the years I have touched a lot of women who have enrolled in my class. I have received e-mails over the years, especially in the area of violence and women…that have been enrolled in my class who have either left an abusive situation based on the class or have confessed that they have either prior to or currently are in…and that, I would say, has been significant.

Professor Rice wastes no time getting her students into her "course community" the first week of the semester. She quickly sets out to establish what Coppola, Hiltz, and Rotter (2004) call "swift trust" with her students. She credits her many years of nursing experience with this talent. She is caring, reinforcing, sympathetic and yet firm and authoritative. Those are the key traits of Professor Rice's online teaching persona:

> …right from the very beginning…I'm not one to waste time. So the very first week they have a module. I ask them at orientation to do their bios under the "Nurse's Lounge" (discussions area) and the ones that aren't there (orientation) usually catch on that that's what they need to. I'm trying to create a sense of community within the class. That's what I think my purpose is, so that we will get to know one another better.

Student-to-student interaction also has a role in Professor Rice's online course. Moore (1989) identified the student-to-student interaction as important to student success as student-to-faculty in his early online teaching research. She encourages the student-to-student interaction in the initial weeks of this course. She finds that the volume of

student-to-student interaction generated can be overwhelming by semester's end. Palloff

and Pratt (2001) recommend setting up a "well-organized course site that includes a place

for students to socialize." The students enjoy sharing and interacting online:

> …in the nurse's lounge they can ask questions of each other. Those that went to orientation, I always say to them, please be willing to answer questions and clarify because you are physically here. Where the other ones (could not attend)… And I have students all over the world. I have students in Germany; I have them in Milan, in San Francisco. They can't come to orientation, so I always say to the students, please help. I like the student-to-student interaction very well.

Professor Rice says that she is a "reinforcer" in her online class. She encourages and

become a "cheerleader" to motivate students to deal with the issues and topics of

discussion that are a part of their everyday life:

> I would probably say I am a reinforcer as opposed to any one of those other three roles, or I can be a cheerleader. Many times if a student comes forward and says, I've always had a battle with a weight issue or this, or that or something else, then I can be a cheerleader and cheer them on…

She relies on self-surveys that are built into her online course in the first few

weeks of the course to help the students discover these issues. The self-surveys give the

students a chance to take the time for introspection and analysis of their issues:

> In the majority of my modules there is self-survey. For their first couple of weeks, the Fitness and Nutrition (section), they have to take self-surveys to find out where they are. This forces them to do introspection and look at themselves and believe it or not there's an awful lot of confession. Yes, I do need to exercise more, yes, I do need to reduce my stress and maybe they've never been forced to look at that and in this class they do.

As Chickering and Gamson (1987) found in their undergraduate research, prompt feedback is one of the seven good practices for quality instruction. Professor Rice believes that one of her "facilitators" of her online teaching persona is the generous and prompt feedback she delivers to her students:

> I will comment on every third posting and if you look at the number of postings at the end of the course, it's well into the thousands. You can pretty much determine that one third of that is mine. So, I make it a point to comment to every student every week and many times, multiple times.

> At the end of the semester in which this study takes place, the total number of discussion postings went over 3000. Of the 207 postings in the first week of the course, Women and Fitness, Professor Rice posted 63 messages.

One of the barriers to her online teaching persona can be the technology. Professor Rice laments back to the year that Florida was struck by several large hurricanes in one season. The technology failed and left many students without an online classroom in which to meet. Failed communication caused many students to drop out of sight from their classes for several weeks:

> Hurricanes…weather has been a factor. We've had four or five hurricanes all in one year. Students lost connectedness. And that challenged me as to what do you do with deadlines when somebody is homeless and their house has been washed away.

Routine maintenance on the technology also impacts the online classroom. Many of Professor Rice's students are working professionals and are only able to "attend" their online classroom on certain days:

> …this semester it seems like they're doing maintenance every Sunday from seven to one and I can tell you that is a bummer. That

is a true barrier because many of my students post on weekends. They're nurses, they're working 12-hour shifts. The only time they have is maybe a Sunday and half of the day, if not less. It is under construction or it's under maintenance, whatever it is, so technology fails us on weekly basis.

When asked to talk about the similarities of her online persona and her face-to-face persona, Professor Rice noted the discipline in her classroom in both modalities. She requires very strict and rigid discipline in her classrooms. She is very much a deadline person. There are no excuses for late work in her class:

> The discipline. The managerial role is absolutely the same. I'm one that's a deadline person, if it's due, it's due and I don't back down. I don't give bonus points. In other words, I'm very rigid from that perspective. If I'm in class or online. When it's due it's due. There is no fluff to the course. You do what's required and that's how you earn your grade.

Her sense of humor is different in the face-to-face classroom. She says she uses less humor online:

> I do use a sense of humor in both settings. And so I think my humor…it probably doesn't come through as much online as it does in class. Because I'm a quipper. If somebody said something in class, I can quip a little bit and they get to see my facial expression. So I think that part is missing to some extent in an online class. There's no quipping…something from the student that can be quipped…can be misinterpreted if it's online as opposed to someone in your class. You can see it's going over well or if it's not. I would not quip, probably, with someone online or in an e-mail because I'm not sure how they would accept it or not except it. So I would think I'm more humorous in a classroom setting, face-to-face, than I am online…I do use humor to some extent online.

Another of Professor Rice's online persona points can be her availability. She is frequently online. She admits that her weekends are consumed with her online courses. She knows her students are online on the weekends and so is she. The long hours spent online are indicative of the long hours online for the student and the instructor (Smith, Ferguson and Caris, 2002):

> …I spend hours and hours. I'm in that class most of the time, almost every day, other than probably Tuesday's when I'm on main campus. Every weekend I am in that class. Many faculty may draw the line there and they don't do anything on Saturday and Sunday. That's when most of the students post, so that's when I am in the course.

Professor Rice is a veteran online faculty member who mentors many new online faculty members each year. She is constantly changing as the technology changes. She has moved many of her face-to-face teaching characteristics to her online classroom. She enjoys teaching online. She often relates that the course she teaches online might not be the same in the face-to-face classroom. The week she asks her students to discuss the topic Women and Violence, she finds many of her students often "open up" and openly discuss many of the issues they have faced:

> Yes, because one of modules is Women and Violence and it touches many of the women and the discussions are very, I would say, revealing. Which I don't think in a live class would happen. But online it does happen and many of them will give us the whole story of what is currently happening or what has happened in the past and what they did to get rid of the abusive partner…so that makes me feel good.

## Multiple Case Study

The similarities and the differences of each study contributor are discussed and analyzed in this cross-case synthesis as defined by Yin (2003) and Creswell (1998). Appendix D (Data Summary Table, Q1 – Q4) summarizes each participant's face-to-face interview data points in a table format. Yin's (2003) methodology of presenting a word table of the data points is presented for each question from each participant.

The cross-case analysis as explained by Creswell (1998), is a thematic analysis across the (four) cases of this case study. It includes assertions or an interpretation of the meaning of the case(s). Yin (2003) explains that the cross-case synthesis is the analysis of multiple cases. He stresses that the cross-case synthesis "can be strengthened by having more than two cases in the study." This cross-case synthesis is drawn from the four faculty case studies. The summary of the cross-case synthesis emphasizes the "lessons learned" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) from the changes that occur to the teaching persona when one transitions from the face-to-face classroom to the online classroom. This study is following the research of Coppola, Hiltz, and Rotter (2002) who found that changes do occur when faculty move to the online teaching arena. That team of researchers found that "roles enacted by instructors in traditional settings are also enacted in the asynchronous learning environment, though each role (cognitive, affective and managerial) is transformed."

Coppola et al. (2002) found that the cognitive role, which deals with the mental processing of learning, information storage and thinking, shifts to a deeper cognitive

complexity for the virtual professors. The affective role, which deals with the

relationships and interaction of the students, requires the use and understanding of new

tools and techniques, yet they found that the relationships were far more intimate and

pervasive. The managerial role, which deals with classroom and course management,

organization and pace, requires greater attention to detail, more structure and

organization, formality and student monitoring.

### Q1 Persona

All four of the online faculty members who were interviewed for this case study

are successful and motivated college professors. First, let's look at the results of the

initial question of the study, Q1; "What are faculty participants' beliefs about their online

persona in online instruction?" The four faculty members answered this question with a

significant amount of sameness and yet, unique diversity. Many of the persona beliefs or

characteristics are similar. Some are unique and some vary according to the

demographics of each case. The similar characteristics follow the current literature of

best practices for online teaching and learning.

In order to analyze the results of question number one, a word table (Appendix D)

was constructed to present and compare the data points from the participants in the order

of their similarities. The word table will help to clarify the similarities. The order is based

on arranging similarities. The order of the data points does not represent a prioritization

of characteristics. The data results of each study question are represented in the table.

Two persona characteristics are almost identical across all four of the participants; Organization and Caring. Each of the four professors stressed these two characteristics as a significant example of their online persona. These two data points also emerge in latter questions of the study. Two persona characteristics, long hours online teamed with extended availability and authority and experience are common in three of the four participants. Humor plays a role in three of the four personas, however, it was noted that humor is much more difficult to express in the online classroom when compared to the face-to-face classroom. The "quipper," professor Rice, noted that it is very difficult trying to "quip" online without the face-to-face expressions. Experience and authority are deemed important characteristics by three of the four participants; the two more experienced professors relied more on their many years of experience. The next characteristic that is also noted by three of the four online professors includes strict deadlines and setting high expectations for the learners. Then, fairness teamed with understanding and sympathy are noted by three of the four professors. This trait could also be linked closely to the original persona characteristic, caring. The final characteristic noted by three of the four professors is a combination of facilitator, encouragement and reinforcer. From that point, the characteristics are more difficult to assimilate; they are varying and unique to each of the four participants. This lack of similarities is noted in Appendix D.

Personal and course organization is paramount to teaching in the online classroom. For a course that is delivered entirely on the Internet, all course content, assignments, schedules and instructions must be prepared in advance of the course

opening. "Course readiness" (Palloff and Pratt 2001) depends on faculty understanding of

the technology in use, the pedagogy required for online teaching, and the logistics of the

course production process. Wilson (1998) found that it takes more time to develop online

courses. She also highlighted that so much time is necessary to fully develop an online

course that junior faculty may find that this time interferes with being their ability to

remain competitive in their field. Contributing to the literature in this area of research,

Bower, 2001; Cohen & Ellis, 2002; and Easton, 2003 all summarized that compared with

traditional face-to-face courses; the online course requires more development and design

time for instructors. Conceição (2006) found that the two primary themes found in the

literature related to the experience of faculty who teach online are: (a) the changing role

of the instructor and (b) the work intensity due to the time involved in the design and

delivery.

Professor Matthews notes that he spends an "inordinate amount of time"

developing his online courses. He states that the time spent is the "dark side" for him:

> …the dark side for me, the experience of online teaching. I spend
> an inordinate amount of time up front, developing a course, putting
> together the course materials, organizing the modules, thinking
> about the assignments.

Professor Johnson laments a similar example:

> …I spend so much time on the assignments, in the modules, in the
> handouts, that it's hard for them to do poorly unless they miss the
> deadlines. Then, I have to say, I don't have too much mercy when
> they miss deadlines…

For students to understand the course objectives and expectations and to reduce anxiety in the initial stages of an online course, the students should be provided with an introductory or welcome communication at the beginning or prior to the start of the class (Bollinger & Martindale, 2004). Three of the four faculty participants in this study provide a welcome e-mail prior to the start of the online course. The fourth faculty member presents an optional face-to-face course orientation where she welcomes the students and moves through an introduction to the course and its schedule and semester pace or routine. All four faculty participants participated in an award-winning online faculty development program prior to teaching online for the first time (Truman, 2004).

Another of the traits that all four faculty participants employ in their online teaching persona is that of being a caring, understanding, and fair online professor. Ken Bain, writing in his book, *What the Best College Teachers Do*, found that "highly effective teachers tend to reflect a strong trust in students and above all, they tend to treat students with what can only be called simple decency." The traits of the "facilitative teacher," as noted by Rogers and Freiberg (1994), emerge from the classrooms of the study professors as "empathetic understanding," a key characteristic of student success. Other characteristics noted by Rogers, et al. include praise, response to students, and use of their ideas.

Professor Johnson exemplifies this "trust" and "decency" in his online technical writing course. Coppola et al. (2002) identified "swift trust" employed by successful professors who quickly established a level of trust among their students in the first few weeks of the online course:

They are always looking at you, even in the online environment, metaphorically. Judging you, cutting you slack, not cutting you some slack. Trying to see if you are fair. Trying to see if you are unfair. Breathing a sigh of relief when they get their grades. By the way, one of the things you will see…I gesture a lot when I talk…in the announcements section. Every time I return an assignment, I give the grade distribution. I don't identify names. You can't do that. But what I do is I put the number of A- to A's, number of B- to B+ and so on. And what they do with that is they look at that and they see there are a fair number of A's and B's only a few C's and D's. I know that relaxes them somewhat, especially at the beginning of the semester. They are taking a course with someone who has co-authored the book. They get a little worried that every little teeny comma or period is going to be fatal. I have very strict criteria…in the handout section. And they read that and say, "oh my God, I'll never do well in this class." When they get their assignments back, they see that I read them carefully. They see I am grading them fairly, if not even too fairly, and the grade distribution helps them to relax. And so that's a part of building trust.

Professor availability to deliver and interact with students during the semester is critical to student success in the online classroom. Smith, Ferguson and Caris (2002) said that instructors find that online courses are labor intensive for both students and the instructors. Professor Owens understands that she has set limits for her availability to students and even with that in place she is available at most any time during the semester to facilitate her students. She readily admits her online availability and her hospitality:

I go on every day and try and to follow up with student's postings in the discussion forum and answer my course e-mail. I'm very accessible, which is something that…I'm not as accessible when I am in the classroom. I don't know how to say this, like seven days a week they expect me to be on the computer, 24 hours a day they kind of expect me to be there…because usually I am. If I am in front of the computer and they ask me something I will go on and respond to it. I don't have set days. I'm on every day.

As stated in the research of Chickering and Gamson (1987), "communicating high expectations" is one of the *Seven Principles For Good Practice In Undergraduate Education*. The literature is robust with their findings and supportive research. All four faculty participants in this study related, at some point in their interview, one of their goals in their online course was to seek higher levels of learning and to push their students to new levels of study. Three of the four participants stated that their online teaching persona sought these higher expectations. Professor Johnson:

> I want to come across as being fair, demanding, I have lots of expectations. I don't cut them a lot of slack. I don't make the course easier than a face-to-face. I want them to know, actually even before the course begins, typically two weeks before the semester, that they're in for a challenge and that it's not an easier course. I want them to know that I'm concerned about how well they do. I want them to know that other students have taken me for classes have done well.

Humor plays a role in three of the four personas, however, it was noted that humor is much more difficult to express in the online classroom when compared to the face-to-face classroom. Easton (2005) noted, "There is no room for sarcasm, and humor is hard to convey. Sometimes you have to hold back from responding and sort of 'sit on it' for awhile."  Professor Owens also admits that it is much easier to be "funny' in the face-to-face classroom than in the online arena. She uses emoticons in her correspondence to students to add humor to her course. She says :

> I try, mostly in the postings, that I post, and in my responses to them. I use a lot of what they call emoticons and things like that. I can be self-deprecating and tell them a funny thing that happened to me or ethical experiences that I've had that can be humorous. So, it's harder to have that personality…online.

Professor Rice, who admits to being a "quipper" in the face-to-face classroom, finds it

almost impossible to use quips in the online classes:

> I'm a quipper and if somebody said something in class I can quip a
> little bit and they get to see my facial expression. So I think that
> part is missing to some extent in an online class. There's no
> quipping. There's no…something from the student that can be
> quipped and then it can be misinterpreted if it's online as opposed
> to someone in your class. You can see if it's going over well or if
> it's not. I would not quip with someone online or in an e-mail
> because I'm not sure how they would accept it or not accept it. So I
> would think I'm a more humorous in a classroom setting, face-to-
> face than I am online. I know I do use humor to some extent
> online.

Teaching experience and subject area knowledge were deemed important

characteristics by two of the four participants, the two more experienced professors. From

that point, the characteristics are more difficult to assimilate; they are varying and unique

to each of the four participants. One characteristic that did surface throughout all of the

studies was the course pace or routine. That is, each of the four participants set a weekly

routine for their courses. They begin to lay the foundation for this routine very early. All

four begin this routine prior to the start of the classes, either in e-mail or in a face-to-face

orientation.

A course routine should be detailed in the course syllabus with explicit and

detailed instructions and guidelines, rules or protocols and assessment criteria. The

instructor sets the tone for online classes with the communication tools and protocols

(Moore, 1989). Online instructors need to learn how to establish a comfortable interactive

online environment (Frese, 2006). The pace of the course should be set by the instructor (Grandzol, Eckerson & Grandzol, 2004). This pace or routine must be set prior to the start of the course and adjusted only in the case of an emergency or natural disaster. Just as faculty should establish a routine for an online course, students should set aside a routine schedule for participating in the course (Conceição, 2007). Instructors may have to rearrange their schedules and become more available to students (Conceição, 2006). The instructor must be able to set the climate of the class and model the qualities of a scholar, both of which require cognitive and affective effort (Conceição, 2006).

Professor Johnson, who has been teaching for over thirty years, places great value in his experience and authority in his field, to establish his online teaching persona. Professor Rice, who has also been teaching for over thirty years, put great value in her experience and knowledge in her field, nursing and women's issues. Professor Owens and Matthews both value their experience and knowledge. The instructor is especially valuable in responding to the learner's application of new knowledge (Moore, 1989).

They don't place as much weight on their "tenure" in their respective areas of study. They are both somewhat younger and have less experience. Professor Johnson explains his experience and authority from this perspective:

> I have the extra advantage…I use my books, my own books for that course and some other courses. So I have even more ethos or more authority. And the students like that. They like taking the course with someone who has written the book, for the course. It's a big book. It took a lot of my time to write the darn thing, even though it is co-authored. And they like the way the book reads and so I have an extra edge there. But I'm convinced, maybe it's unfair for me to say so, maybe it's not modest for me to say so. I have enough experience that you can give me anyone else's book and

because of what I'm able to do in the class…it doesn't matter, I
know the subject so well that the students pickup on it.

Two identical characteristics of the online teaching persona evolved from all four

of the faculty members who were interviewed; 1. Organization, and 2. The trait of being a

caring online facilitator. Two beliefs were recognized by three of the four faculty

participants; 1. Availability and long hours online "teaching" the course, and 2. Two of

the three of these persona characteristics come from the managerial roles as described by

Coppola, Hiltz, and Rotter (2002). The characteristic of being organized and delivering

an organized, structured and well-paced course fall under the managerial role. Though

one respondent, Professor Matthews, traced his curriculum, organization and course

structure to the cognitive or affective role, classifying this trait as a personalized

expression:

I consider the shape of the curriculum my personal expression.
And the curriculum that I've built is a subject-centered curriculum,
it is not a student-centered, it's not teacher-centered, its subject
centered curriculum. So, when asked the question…your
personal…your persona…what is unique, what is individualistic,
and that doesn't sound individualistic. But I feel that the shape of
the curriculum is my expression.

Frese (2006) puts forth the notion that "instructors should create assignments that

are very explicit so that students know what is expected." The lack of non-verbal cues

and no mechanism for spontaneous questions and hand-raising, demand that online

instructors use advance planning techniques and greater organization or formality in an

online course. Instructor organization is paramount to course organization and the trend

toward more formal course structure and expectations found in successful online courses.

More formality and less humor was noted in the Coppola et al. (2002) study. Professor

Johnson notes his course organization, clarity and structure several times in his interview:

> I structure my modules very carefully for the different assignments. I pace them very carefully. I give them plenty of time to do what they need to do as long as they are giving the time necessary to the course…One of the best practices is how I structure the course. It is very structured. I have a syllabus from the beginning where they know what is due all the way throughout the semester.

> …the persona and the online, I do it with the handholding and introductory messages. I do it with the very clear structure. I do it with prompt replies, so that they don't feel ignored. I do it with carefully chosen words in my e-mail to establish authority, to establish an attitude of, you know, I care that you don't understand this and let me try to explain it more carefully.

> …I would advise someone going into the online environment, get even more involved with the students in the discussion postings, in addition to the good structure, in addition to establishing trust with welcoming messages, in addition to sympathetic responses, you known, the things we've outlined before, and I would say spend even more time on clearly structuring your modules and of course…get most of your modules up or at least prepared before you start teaching online.

Professor Matthews echoes much of the same advice when speaking about his

organization:

> I would say, in the current version, the most of me that they are going to see is the combination of the (course) structure itself and then the extra credit assignments where I tend to steer the options more to my idiosyncrasies.

> So my curriculum has certainly become very clear, very organized. My students generally respond very favorably to the organization of the course. Very clearly outlined, what they need to do when they need to do it. I provide opportunities within the course for them to still pursue their individual interests.  But in general, I am

interested in accomplishing very specific tasks with these particular classes, so my persona is informed, to a large degree, by how I conceive of the need for these students.

Professor Owens also chimes in and discusses her organization and course structure:

It's (Health Care Ethics) very organized and that helps me and it helps the students to have due dates on the drop boxes, in the calendar, on the module, in multiple places. I have everything in multiple places I think that stops a lot of the, "I didn't knows," because it's there. Organizing everything into modules where they have one module a week has helped me and the students.

She recommends several "best practices" for new online faculty and emphasizes organization:

You need to be very organized. You need to organize your material, whether it be in modules or weeks or chapters or sessions, however you want. Students need that. They need to know that this is the goal and this is what I need to do this week.

Professor Rice, the fourth participant, agrees and offers her organization tips for new faculty entering the online teaching arena:

The tips that I would give someone it's just beginning. Have the course totally done before you open it up that would be the first thing you don't develop it while the students are enrolled in the class.

## Q2a Best Practices

The themes to emerge from question 2a are similar to the characteristics suggested in question one of this study. Question 2a asks; Thinking about your online teaching persona, tell me about the following in your online classroom: Best practices or characteristics that are effective in your classroom. The word table (Appendix D) helps to clarify the data derived from this question, Q2a. The data is not arranged in a prioritized order, it is arranged to assimilate the data for sameness.

Many of the most common best practices found in the literature of successful online teaching and learning, are found in this summary. Of the seven principles of best practice written by Chickering and Gamson (1987) we find student to faculty interaction, timely feedback, reciprocity and cooperation among students, active learning, time on task (reasonable pace), high expectations and respects diverse talents and ways of learning. All seven of the principles are represented from the four participants at one or more points in this study. The best practice of interaction is the one common tie that all four online professors offered. Interaction, commonly ranked high in the literature for an online best practice, is noted in different ways by different professors; feedback, peer-review, student-to-student interaction, instructor-to-student interaction and routinely, student-to-content interaction.

Three of the four professors also offered the following as best practices:

Welcome and swift trust established early in the course, structure and course organization are considered very important, prompt

feedback and responses to student inquiries, redundancy and variety, including interesting and student-related assignments and relevancy.

Professor Rice offers her weekly current events and self-surveys as best practices that are effective in her classroom and drive her online teaching persona. She spends a considerable amount of time in the current events discussions with her students. She will finish her online Women's Health Issues course with over one thousand discussion postings, with at least thirty percent of the posts her comments and interaction with students. Some of the topics of discussion are highly personal women's issues that her students have encountered. They are very close to some of the topics that are posted. She adds that these areas are where her students gain her respect and admiration when she comes across as a knowledgeable expert with these issues:

> I think they see me as an authority on this topic (Women's Health Issues) and I think that comes across in the class. I think by my comments I make regarding their postings and also the content I present in the class and thirdly the current events that I post in the class weekly. I post current events related to controversial women's issues and then I asked the series of three to four questions about those current events… I think the current event evokes a lot of interaction.

The self-surveys Professor Rice uses in her course are a device that brings the course materials and issues to the student's personal lives with context. The students analyze themselves against a standard to determine the positive or negative impact they might experience. She firmly believes that her students confront their own issues with self-realization when completing the non-graded self-surveys:

> The other thing is the (self) surveys, in the majority of my modules there is self-survey and for their first couple of weeks. In Fitness and Nutrition they have to take self-surveys to find out where they are. This forces them to do introspection and look at themselves and believe it or not there's an awful lot of confession. Yes, I do need to exercise more, yes, I do need to reduce my stress and maybe they've never been forced to look at that and in this class they do. I think the personal surveys are very effective in teaching.

Professor Johnson offers his course organization, structure and pace or course routine as his initial best practices. He also suggests that his use of peer review is a best practice. He finds the interaction of the students reviewing each other to be an effective teaching tool. Chickering and Gamson (1987) suggest that reciprocity and student cooperation as a best practice. Professor Jones agrees. His course structure and organization allow for this comment relating to time on task and best practices:

> I structure my modules very carefully for the different assignments. I pace them very carefully. I give them plenty of time to do what they need to do as long as they are giving the time necessary to the course. If they can't just contribute every other week, they have to be involved. I'm sensitive to what they can do within the time. One of the best practices is how I structure the course. It is very structured.

Professor Owens finds that her course organization and structure along with the diversity of assignments are her top best practices. She adds that her course is built with a great deal of redundancy that helps the students with their organization and pacing of deadlines. She tries to meet a diverse group of learning styles by offering differing assignments based on different course tools and techniques. Chickering and Gamson

(1987) offered this as their seventh best practice for undergraduate education; Respects

diverse talents and ways of learning. Professor Owens speaking about her varied

curriculum:

> …have them do a discussion posting where they are sharing their opinion on something as well as reading their peers and responding back to their peers, then answering a case question or having to put themselves in another role and role-play and respond to that case. And taking some quizzes to test their base knowledge, engaging in a debate, answering questions that only I can see their responses…it's a variety of things, so if you're not a good writer then maybe you're a good test taker.  If you're very analytical, you can do well on some of these and if you are more qualitative or quantitative…there is such a variety.

Professor Matthews aligns his course variety as one of his best practices. He

respects the diversity of his students and offers a wide variety of assignments and extra

credit assignments. His "idiosyncrasies" and his persona shine through on these

assignments by offering his students personal options for writing about their interests. He

thinks his students share in his idiosyncrasies. He says that he is innovative and that is

one of his best practices:

> Compared to face-to-face or even face-to-face, I'm always innovating; I'm always trying to be something else, something better. And so I'm always responding to new situations, different comments from students, student performances…well that assignment didn't really result in what I had intended…so what could I have done differently?  And all of this is part of the persona of the teacher. I always plan radical changes – sometimes I don't implement them. But more and more I'm comfortable with the foundation, of what I am doing.

## Q2b Facilitators

Facilitators of the online persona that the four professors suggest are varied. Pace and course organization are the only facilitators that the four professors agree contribute to their online persona. Three of the four professors note that generous feedback and encouraging comments are significant facilitators of their online persona. From that point, two professors note their individual discussion rooms, the "Grape Vine" and the "Nurses Lounge" as strong facilitators of their online persona. Two professors recommend that an encouraging welcome message and establishing swift trust in the early stages of the course contribute to an effective online persona in their classes. Two professors offer that they believe their continuous improvement and revision contribute. Other characteristics include; Redundancy, strict weekday schedule, no rule changes once the semester begins, variety of assignments and current event discussions.

Again and again, course organization surfaces to become the most highly ranked characteristic or facilitator in the successful online classroom. The literature is acknowledged and advanced by this study. This question drew few responses and less conversation. Most of the professors related most of their facilitators in their best practices. Professor Johnson credits his "ethos" or authority and writing the text he uses in his course as a significant facilitator to his online persona:

> …they like the way the book reads and so I have an extra edge there. But I'm convinced, maybe it's unfair for me to say so, maybe it's not modest for me to say so. I have enough experience that you can give me anyone else's book and because of what I'm

able to do in the class and with the modules in the syllables, with the assignments and my responses, it doesn't matter, I know the subject so well that and the students pickup on it.

Professor Matthews notes that he tries to stay connected with his students by "always being a student" in his online classes. He is convinced that his "experience as a student is never done." He found that as a student he was not comfortable with his professors changing the rules during the course. He says, "As a student I always found that unfair. I don't like changing rules and the students don't either."

Professor Rice and Professor Owens offer their online forums as a facilitator of their online persona; The "Grape Vine" and the "Nurse's Lounge." Both agree that these two strategies in their online courses are great stimulators of conversation and camaraderie for their students. Professor Owens notes that she is online more often than not and she is constantly checking in on the "Grape Vine" for student questions or interaction.

## Q2c Barriers

Faculty were asked to detail any barriers to their online teaching persona in the interviews. They responded with a variety of answers. Some related to student access during natural disasters (hurricanes), some responded to the lack of face-to-face contact, one noted the difficulty with large classes in the online classroom. Two reported that the proper pace or routine of the online course is critical to the success of the course. Similar responses from all four professors include the lack of face-to-face interaction with

students and technology issues. Large class size of certain online classes is also impacting effective online instruction. Professor Matthews is changing his teaching and assignments to cater to over sixty students in each of his Humanities classes. He combines two sections into one and teaches just over 120 students each semester. He does not have time to communicate to each student one on one. Time to plan, develop and teach an online class is also noted as a significant barrier to an effective online persona. Professor Rice spends long hours each weekend during the semester working with her students, many of whom work during the week in hospitals and spend their weekend days in their online course. The final noted similarity in the data, and perhaps the most significant, is that of self-censorship on the part of the professors. That is, two of the online professors noted that they routinely self-censor in their online class and that severely affects their teaching effectiveness.

Professor Matthews is teaching two very large Humanities courses of 60 students. He combines the two sections for one class of 120 to alleviate some of the duplication and managerial issues two sections would introduce. The Humanities courses are "Gordon Rule" classes that mandate specific writing requirements for each student. Each student must write at least 500 words each week in his courses. He swiftly speaks out against the large class size and the changes that he has implemented to manage a class of that size. His semester compensation for teaching that course is identical to that of another course with only 30 students. He summarizes the change in his teaching style that has been induced by the size of his enrollments:

> Currently, I represent myself as purely a facilitator. I would like to
> represent myself more as a role model, that is, an exemplar of a

scholar engaged in the subject, however the constraints of online teaching especially with the increased enrollments at (name of institution) have forced me to move from a discussion-based format to more of a directed, guided, I would say formulated type of a curriculum designer.

I think I prefer to be a discussion-based, people based teacher. I feel like an information manager online. I've gotten away from synchronous-based activities with students because of the number…of students and trying to accommodate all of their needs. I feel obligated to provide the same service to each student, so if I'm providing synchronous chat with one, I feel like I ought to be providing it for all.

Professor Owens echoes the sentiment of Professor Matthews with regards to large online classes. She laments the days when she taught the same course to 40 students. Today she has 161 students in her course. She is working very hard to maintain the interaction and diversity of assignments with the large class though admits it is difficult:

The class size is enormous....  I'd prefer smaller classes. I can't believe there used to be a time when we thought 40 (students) was big. And we were getting help (graduate teaching assistants) when we had 40 students in our class. And we've quadrupled it. And we think nothing more of…let's go to 200 next semester. Yes that's been a challenge of having a huge class-size. Especially trying to keep up with those multiple learning style assignments and things and having to do. And then there's always the down time when WebCT wasn't working...or…sometimes it's hard to…really…if you have three students tell you…..they are on their computers…..out of 160 - whether they had a system failure, was it their own computers, so sometimes the technology can fail.

The technology issues came up in all four of the interviews. Student access or "getting online" was noted as a problem, scheduled system maintenance was noted as an

interference as were the technology issues that surface in the course management system while delivering the sessions. Professor Rice talked about the issues that she has with the technology:

> …this semester it seems like they're doing maintenance every Sunday from 7am to 1pm and I can tell you that is a bummer. That is a true barrier because many of my students post on weekends. They're nurses, they're working 12-hour shifts and the only time they have is maybe a Sunday and even half of the day, if not more is under construction or it's under maintenance whatever it is. So technology fails us on weekly basis. And there have been others in years back when someone cut the cable and it was down for two or three days. Hurricanes! Weather has been a factor. We've had four or five hurricanes all in one year. Students lost connectedness. And that challenged me as what do you do with deadlines when somebody is homeless and their house has been washed away. So there are a lot of barriers to teaching online.

Professor Johnson also noted the technology as an issue. He also raised the issue of the student who is taking an online course who might not be "comfortable" in the online environment:

> Well, there are technological barriers. Some students will have access issues.  Most don't these days. Sometimes (course management system) is down at inconvenient times. But not in my (case)….the way I'm teaching this semester it hasn't been inordinate. Some students are not comfortable with (the online class)…they've told me…this is my first online class.

Professor Johnson also noted that another barrier to the delivery of his online teaching persona is that of the "language" and the pace of the course:

> I am trying to think of other obstacles…the technical ones, there are  language one's in terms of my conveying who I am with my e-mails and there are the timing one's in terms of responding promptly and there are the paced ones. Every course has a certain

pace to it. You can have so much crammed in every week that the pace is exhausting or you can have so little that they are falling asleep. There are pace obstacles. But I deal with those effectively I think. So I am giving you some categories of….then related to all of that…I would just say, personality obstacles because you can be successful with the technology, successful with the tone, and successful with the other language choices in your e-mail and successful with the promptness and the pacing. But your personality still doesn't quite carry over because they don't see you and so much of your personality, one's personality, is conveyed so quickly in a face-to-face situation.

The proper pace or weekly routine of the online course certainly stands out as a characteristic of the successful online professor. Professor Johnson noted this weekly pace throughout his interview. Professor Matthews termed his weekly routine "learning cycles:"

> I give them the whole semester. I tell them this is the weekly cycle, we will read the text at least once, you will take the online quiz, and in the beginning I will allow them to take the quiz twice, because I am after mastery learning for its existence and formative assessment and then I take that away after they learn how to do that. I want them to see their originality reports in Turnitin.com and upload multiple drafts so that they are learning. So it is more of a mastery learning type of a curriculum, but it's a weekly cycle that they can then sketch out their entire semester based on the schedule. Every week the same deadlines. The same kinds of assignments are due.

**Q3/3a Mentors**

Question three and 3a relate to offering advice to colleagues who are entering the online teaching classroom for the first time; How do online faculty learn or develop their

online persona, to become successful in the online classroom? The Data Summary Table (Appendix D) helps to clarify the data results from the four participants. All data is arranged based on similarities of results.

All four professors offered very similar suggestions related to course organization and getting ready or developing their online course. Professor Rice, based on personal experience, recommended beginning the semester with the course fully developed before you open the doors to the students. Professor Matthews cautioned that you must devote enough time for planning and development before the course begins, as this process is very time consuming, "schedule a lot of upfront time before implementation…that typically does not happen." Professor Owens offers, "You need to organize your material, whether it's in modules or weeks or chapters or sessions… Students need that." And Professor Johnson recommends more of a self-assessment prior to entering the online arena. Determine your personality, you technical abilities and your organizational characteristics before you enter. Ask yourself these questions:

- Are you technology minded?
- Do you have a flexible personality, who are you?
- Are you humorous in your classroom?
- Are you arrogant?

Professors Johnson and Owens contributed the suggestion of setting expectations and high standards for the online course early. Chickering and Ehrmann (1996) also recommend setting high expectations, "expect more and you will get it. New technologies can communicate high expectations explicitly and efficiently," (p. 4).

Professors Matthews and Rice recommend finding a mentor or a "web veteran" who can help guide you along this new path. Frese (2006) says, "one strategy to ensure quality is for instructors to have mentors." Professor Matthews says, "First, look at what other people are doing. Get a sampling of the range of programs that can be built." Professor Rice suggests, "I wish I had more exposure to a web vet when I first started teaching online."

## Q4 Online Versus Face-to-Face

The final interview question in all four of these case studies asked the participants to review any differences and similarities of the face-to-face classroom and their online classroom teaching persona. What are the similarities or characteristics of faculty participants' online persona and their face-to-face persona? The results are interesting and are discussed in detail. Again, I have prepared a word table to help clarify the data, Appendix D. Data is arranged for sameness.

Unanimously, the lack of face-to-face contact and communication is the one characteristic noted by all four of the faculty participants in this study, comparing face-to-face and online classrooms. The issue of delivering humor online is very difficult with a lack of face-to-face contact. The increasing body of literature in this area is pointing to the ability to communicate emotion online (Gilmore and Warren, 2007). The online distance learning environment requires of teachers increased written presentation skills, some technical competencies, virtual management techniques, and the ability to engage students through virtual communication (Berge & Collins, 1995).

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Perhaps most troubling is a common thread from two online professors who sense that self-censorship takes place in the online classroom. Professor Matthews cautions that he is sensing a feeling of self-censorship among online teaching faculty as a result of their inability to write their exact feeling or comments to students without being taken out of context:

> I don't know where the evidence for this is…..I think it is probably impacting most of us. I am hearing it amongst faculty and I'm, I'm realizing it myself. There's a self-censorship that comes from knowing that someone is censoring me or observing me. It's what Foucault talked about, the Panopticon Syndrome, based on Jeremy Bentham's research in the 19th-century. If you want to control people's behavior, you threaten intervention, but you really don't have to use the intervention you can just make them feel like a superior power is watching them. We tend to self-censor. There are a lot of things that I used to share with students. I was much more frank, but because, an e-mail, a sentence, a phrase - in writing, has no context, it can be used against you. And so I'm fearful of the growing censorship in our culture and that I have to tell you is a barrier.

Professor Johnson is very careful to craft all communications with his students:

> I go out of my way to convey this persona of someone who is fair, someone who is demanding, and someone, depending on the time this semester, in the assignment, who has a sense of humor, someone who's really careful in his word choices in responses to students, so that I'm encouraging and not dismissive, which is so easy to be. If you are curt in your e-mail or you give a short answer or you don't use the right adjectives or other words…because tone is so difficult to convey…online.

Availability and hand-holding are two of the characteristics that were openly discussed in the interviews. The majority of the participants admitted that they were online, in their courses, for long hours, including weekends when their students were on

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and might have questions. Only Professor Johnson draws the line on a Monday through Friday schedule. He designs the course for a Tuesday through Thursday assignment schedule. He does not go into his online course(s) on Saturday or Sunday.

Professor Owens and Rice both admit that they are much more available in their online courses than they were in their face-to-face courses. Professor Owens says, "I'm very accessible…I'm not as accessible…in the (face-to-face) classroom." Professor Rice says that she too spends a great deal of time online "teaching" her course, "I spend hours and hours, I'm in that class most of the time, almost every day other than probably Tuesday's when I'm on main campus and every weekend, I am in that class."

# CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

## **<u>Introduction</u>**

In Chapter 5, I present a summary of the significant findings, conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations of future study. Writing in the first person to better emphasize the closeness of the researcher to the study, all interpretations and recommendations for future study will be tempered by the background and current knowledge of this researcher who is actively involved in the study, delivery and instruction of online teaching and learning. Palmer (1998) said, "We teach who we are." That simple statement exemplifies the heart of my study. I explore how four college professors teach and interact with their students and how they represent their online teaching persona in their online classrooms. To begin, all four professors display a passion for their teaching and a great deal of compassion and love of the life of teaching and improving the lives of their students. Professor Rice finds comfort spending long hours in her online classroom and seeks to help and encourage her students to deal with the issues of today's women. Professor Johnson is inspired by the talents and abilities of his students and finds satisfaction in his precision and the technical writing maturation of his students. Professor Owens finds her satisfaction in spending long hours online, facilitating her students and the discourse she creates by discussing health care ethics with over 160 students each semester. Professor Matthews finds his satisfaction in his creativity and his student's self-expression in the arts and humanities while sometimes

eating dinner at his computer trying to catch up on grading the 120 plus students he engages each semester. All four professors note the benefits and flexibility of teaching online. Each of these four professors exemplifies exactly what Parini (2005) relates in his guide for young educators, *The Art of Teaching*, "one of the main things I can say to you is that every teacher, like every person, is different. You have to teach out of who you are. That is the only way you will succeed, as a professional, as a teacher and scholar, as a member of a community of scholars." All four of these professors are teaching out of who they are.

## **Interpretations**

With the click of the record button and the start of the first recorded interview for this study, I was excited. The arduous effort of this research study was quickly forgotten when the data began compiling on the audio devices. I was elated that the four interviews produced the volume and detail of the online teaching persona I sought. Not only did the positive data encourage me to write, the negative data also inspired my thinking and creativity. Needless to say, some of the data highlights the negative aspects of online teaching and learning and those issues offer future researchers ample opportunities for investigation and further study.  It is the successes and the positive attitudes of the four participants that helps me to understand, as Ken Bain (2004) says, "Why teachers teach," both in the traditional, face-to-face classroom and in the online, ever-changing, technology-enhanced classroom. All four professors are proud of their online classes and the student learning that takes place under their facilitation.

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## Professor Rice

In the office of Professor Rice, students are coming and going and the telephone is interrupting our interview; the administration of college teaching is in motion. Between questions and answers, Professor Rice was tending to students' needs. She could have silenced the telephone or closed her office door. Without pause, she continued to "teach" throughout the interview. This reflects her caring and compassion for her students and the hope that she can help them to succeed. Professor Rice has been helping students for over thirty years. Four of her students this semester did not pass the course. That too, is part of the exciting life of a college professor. She doles out compassion, fairness and demands timely assignments, tests and communication to pass her course. She is determined to keep her course organized and running efficiently. She loves this course and tends to credit herself for helping her students to maintain better health and avoid detrimental women's issues that can enter their lives. She can be a stern disciplinarian. She relies on her many years of teaching and health knowledge to gain the authority she says she displays in her course. She is a quipper, though like others, finds it difficult to deliver humor online. She notes the issues and the problems that the online professor encounters. She is not thwarted. Next term she will be teaching three online courses, one face-to-face and one senior internship.

Professor Rice's online teaching persona is characterized by the knowledge and authority she exemplifies in her course and through her students. The foundation of her persona is the personal and course organization she exerts. She is a firm disciplinarian

and stands by the deadlines she imposes on her students. She is caring and sympathetic. She supports and encourages her students to improve their lives and to successfully deal with the issues women sometimes encounter. Professor Rice is a compassionate professor. She is guided by her dedication and her strong convictions to facilitate her students to succeed.

## Professor Matthews

Professor Matthews loves teaching. He is coping with large classes and has to adjust his curriculum and assignments to suit the large classes and their demands. He longs for his students to be successful. He reflects a persona of someone who is organized and loves to facilitate his students. He is caring and does not enjoy dealing with the long hours and managerial role he has to endure. His innovative curriculum and assignments are his pride. He loves radical changes though notes that is not always possible when dealing with so many students. Professor Matthews believes his changing curriculum has benefits though he longs to return to more interaction and small group discussion. Socratic teaching under the trees in small groups with the students taking the lead role he prefers. He is inhibited by large classes and the "walls" surrounding his online classes. Professor Matthews is troubled by the issue of self-censorship in his online class. He likens his caution to the "Panopticon Theory" and senses that he and his class are being watched. The self censorship issue is one to be reckoned with in the future. This issue could weaken or threaten full disclosure and open discourse in online classes. Professor Matthews also notes that the online professor with large classes that are getting larger

should be better compensated for the effort. Next semester Professor Matthews will again teach two sections of Humanistic Tradition. Each section will fill to sixty students. During the break, Professor Matthews is routinely working on his course, switching assignments and getting ready for two very large sections of students.

Professor Matthews's online teaching persona is characterized by a caring desire for his students to succeed. He relies on organization and innovation to create successful online courses. The shape of his curriculum is a prized possession. He is successfully dealing with his large sections of multi-dimensional students. He is cautious of the restrictive issues that face the online professor and would welcome additional funding or incentives for the online faculty.  Professor Matthews is spending long hours teaching his online courses and continues to enjoy the challenge.

**<u>Professor Owens</u>**

Professor Owens loves the convenience of teaching online, her students love the same convenience. Professor Owens can handle the 160 students she teaches each semester. She is prepared and knows the strategies that enable her to maintain organization and effective learning with that many students. Professor Owens is caring and understanding. She admits to not being a strong disciplinarian. She uses that to her advantage with her students. She relates to her students. She becomes a student in her own class. She remembered a story of one of her students who had just won a large race in the area. She noted his winning and posted a note for the class. She put this student on

a pedestal. She does that for her students. Although she loves using humor and even self-deprecating humor, she realizes it is difficult to use humor in the online arena. She also notes that she is online quite often; she acknowledges that the convenience of teaching from a distance is the reward. Those intrinsic rewards as noted by Wolcott and Betts (1999) are also the rewards Professor Owens enjoys. The Health Care Ethics course taught by Professor Owens is a course that inspires discourse, controversy and debate. In fact, the debate assignment is one of her favorites. She and her students enjoy the give and take that inspires each team. Professor Owens is flexible and easy going with her students. She is currently gearing up for another round of 160 students as she readies her course for the influx. Next semester she is teaching one online and one blended course. She anticipates over 190 students in the two courses. She enjoys the ride.

Professor Owen's online teaching persona is characterized by her enthusiasm and compassion for her students. She is flexible and likes to be funny. Her persona does not rely on strong discipline. She is constantly trying new teaching strategies and is concerned that her courses are overwhelmed with different activities. The convenience of teaching online influences the teaching persona of Professor Owens.

**Professor Johnson**

Professor Johnson is a veteran college professor who continues to invigorate his teaching with new ideas and strategies. He quickly establishes the trust and attention of his students with his welcome e-mail sent prior to the course start date. He knows his

pace and course routine and begins quickly to teach his students the script. Teaching writing and communication, Professor Johnson admits he writes professionally and communicates clearly to his students. He sets a well-defined example. His students respond favorably. He admits his course might be better designed and faults his sparse interaction in discussion postings. He also admits that his students generally succeed in his course and tells them all they have to do is follow his guidance and make the deadlines to pass his course. He is encouraging and sensitive. He does not require weekend homework or assignments. He has extreme patience with his students and that is always reflected in his course communication. He frequently prompts his students to get ready or begin reading or to stay on track with specific details on assignments. Professor Johnson is proud of his online course success and in fact, a bit embarrassed when told how many novice faculty members have reproduced his "Personal Qualities to Succeed in Online Courses" that he wrote over ten years ago and continues to embrace. Professor Johnson mentors the new, incoming online professors. He is blunt in his advice and often surprises new online faculty with comments they don't expect. He thrives on course organization and has set the standard very high for his online students. He informs them from the beginning that his online course is not easy and don't take it if you are expecting it to be that way. Professor Johnson is teaching who he is.

Professor Johnson's online teaching persona is characterized with swift trust that he establishes with his students before the semester begins. He relies on his knowledge and authority to support his persona. He sets a firm schedule and does not deviate throughout the semester. He is caring and very careful with his communication to his

students. Professor Johnson's persona is based on his patience and composure with his students.

## Strengths

This study follows the widely-accepted qualitative design as outlined by Yin (2003) and Creswell (1998). Data validation was used and three of the four faculty participants agreed with the data results. That is, the data points were sent to the four professors for their edification and to validate the accuracy of the points. Data triangulation was also used (three valid data sources were used) and the characteristics of the four faculty members who participated in the study were well-founded and articulated. All four faculty members are actively teaching fully online (W) courses and are noted on the campus of this institution as being successful and held in high esteem by colleagues entering the online arena. All four participants actively mentor novice online professors in their field and across the colleges. The study is soundly supported by current literature and also breaks some new ground and moves the literature forward to potentially new avenues of future study.

Course organization, communication, student-to-faculty interaction, course management, flexibility, fair assessment and facilitation are key elements found in the online classrooms of the four participants. The convenience of online courses rises to the top of the reasons the faculty and their students enjoy the online challenge. All four set high standards in their courses and three of the four are scrupulous when it comes to managing their students and keeping them on track. The caring and understanding

facilitator is genuinely found in the four faculty participants. All four make strong efforts to communicate and welcome their students into their online classroom before the semester begins.

The four online professors agree that as much as the technology aids in the delivery and asynchronous participation of their classrooms, they note that the technology is sometimes an issue that steals from their teaching. Professor Johnson notes that dealing with face-to-face issues, problems, facilities and personalities can also become a distraction. Perhaps these are exchanged for the betterment of the student's success? Though more difficult to deliver, online humor, does play a role in the personas of all four professors. The lack of face-to-face interaction causes consternation when humor might be applied. Assessment is not a simple methodology in the online classroom. All four professors deal with assessment in unique ways. All four have found a way to assess their students effectively, even in the large class environment. Those large classes are a challenge and are difficult to overcome. Varied assessments are being used to compensate for the size of the classroom. Professor Matthews has modified his assessments to compensate for the time necessary to teach over 120 students in his online classroom. And the time it takes to effectively teach an online class is another challenge. Most of the professors in this study spend long hours on the computer teaching their courses.

**Limitations**

All studies have limitations.  As in the Coppola, Hiltz, and Rotter (2002) study, the location of my study presents limitations of the population and the sample of participants. I use purposeful sampling (Creswell, 1998) from one large suburban university located in the southeast United States. Creswell notes that purposeful sampling should be applied "so that one can best study the problem under examination." All four case study participants were selected based upon their willingness to participate, success in the online classroom, veteran status, undergraduate level faculty and classroom management and organization.  Perhaps future research could include multiple case studies drawn from multiple institutions of higher learning in the United States.

All four veteran faculty members received formal instruction from an award-winning faculty development program (Truman, 2004) at this institution. This researcher participated in the instruction of three of the four participants. Professor Johnson's instruction was finalized prior to my accepting my current position.  This is a limitation of the study to use faculty who have received formal training and compensation for that training. Faculty have entered the online classroom for a variety of reasons. Many are enthusiastic and volunteer to teach online. Some have been coerced into the online classroom. Some have been forced online based on the goals of their program or discipline. All four of these faculty members eagerly volunteered to learn to teach online.

These faculty members also receive technology and instructional design support before, during and after they teach their classes. This too is a limitation. A supportive and facilitative campus is a tremendous asset for the online faculty member. Not all online professors have equal support from their institution. Without this support many faculty

members are considered "lone rangers" (Bates & Poole, 2003) and teaching online with little or no support.

## Future Research

Suggestions for future research should include further, detailed study into the subject of the online teaching persona. Perhaps further study might include a larger sample of participants from a varied population. To better define the accuracy of a study, participants could come from different institutions, countries, fields and tenure. An interesting topic for future research could include the study of novice college professors or a study that brings differing generations into focus as they enter the online teaching arena. In dealing with the findings of my study, I can't help but recommend further study into the notion of self-censorship that Professors Matthews and Rice eluded. This is a topic of study that could have significant ramifications on the openness, candor and instructional freedom challenging the online teaching and learning community. Further, the topic of articulating humor in the online persona could open further study and interesting directions. New technologies such at podcasts, blogs and live video could change the face of online teaching in the future. And one cannot overlook the "swift trust" that Coppola et al. (2004) debated in their research. Swift trust plays a significant role in the success of the online college student. All four professors in this study reach out to their students prior to the first day of class to help establish a relationship and quickly establish that "swift trust." Faculty mentors have long been debated in the face-to-face classroom. Almost all novice teachers are required to complete an early internship

prior to teaching their own class. The online faculty mentor is a commonplace methodology that many institutions recommend or require. Further study into this topic is to be debated.

I can't close without touching on the transitory nature of the online teaching persona. Defining ones teaching persona, as defined by ones self is difficult. Defining the teaching persona of ones professor or a colleague, then too, is difficult. Defining the online teaching persona is therefore difficult and elusive, from day to day or class to class. I have defined characteristics, methods and strategies of four successful undergraduate online professors that point toward the sum total of their online teaching persona. The topic is new and adventuresome. How does one explain the changing nature and the emergence of the online teaching persona? Further study is invited and encouraged to further explicate the topic.

## Final Conclusion

Tolstoy and Weiner (1904) stated that "…the best method is the one that would answer best to all the possible difficulties incurred by a pupil…" This study highlights this premise by Tolstoy and Weiner that was noted early in this study. Simply stated, the four online professors in this study all seek the "best method" and they are doing it to benefit their students and to improve their teaching.

And now I must close so I may return the cart-full of books that I have borrowed to read, quote and study to help prepare this manuscript. In the rubber-stamped words from the Stanford University Library in Stanford, California, found on the last page of an

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online copy of *The Complete Works of Count Tolstoy* (Tolstoy and Weiner, 1904),

"please return this book in order that others may use this book; please return it as soon as

possible, but not later than the date due." I won't return the stacks of printed materials

gleaned from the World Wide Web, the online library from my institution's digital

shelves.  I won't have to return those materials; they are already being used by millions

of others who have access to the Internet. Oh, the technology! Just imagine what the

future might hold.

**APPENDIX A: CASE STUDY PROTOCOL**

## Introduction

The role of the protocol in guiding the case study investigator is to provide an agenda or outline of the study (Yin, 2003). Following the research of Coppola, Hiltz, and Rotter (2002), who found that a change occurs when faculty move from the face-to-face classroom to the online classroom, this study contributes to the research of the online teaching persona and seeks to provide detailed persona characteristics surrounding this change; personality, idiosyncrasies, strategies and tactics. This case study protocol includes the research plan of study, field procedures, data collection procedures, data collection and dissertation schedule, case study questions, evaluation and reporting procedures matrix, and summary and future reporting outline.

## Field Procedures

Interview (4) online teaching faculty with access to their online classroom(s) to analyze the techniques, methods and strategies used to teach their course,

Demographics (Appendix B),

Faculty (Course) Interview Analysis (Appendix C1 – C4),

Observe, as a non-participant, the course and the faculty persona (personality), idiosyncrasies, strategies and tactics (Appendix D).

## Data Collection Procedures

Documentation – Biographical data, course data

Archival Records – Previous course(s), course data, if necessary

Interviews – Faculty interviews and follow-up, if necessary

Direct, non-participant observation; Course observation, discussions, E-mail, group activities, chat, course content

(Syllabus, protocols, module(s), assignments, assessments) communication, trust

Participant observation – Will not be used

Physical artifacts – Online courses, handouts, E-mail, assignments, media

## **Data Collection and Dissertation Schedule**

Sample defined – August 2007

Collection of data – September, 2007 – October, 2007

Analyze data – November, 2007 – December, 2007

Report data – December, 2007 – January, 2008

Complete dissertation – February, March, 2008


Preparation prior to reviews of courses and interviews (including follow-up interviews) – review online course, objectives, content, protocols, syllabus, faculty interaction, student feedback. Complete Appendix B (Demographics) and Appendix C1 – C4 (Faculty [Course] Interview Analysis) prior to interview. Study current literature on topic. Complete Citation Scoring Rubric (Appendix E).

## **Case Study Questions**

1. What are faculty participant's beliefs about their online persona in online instruction?

2. In the context of your online teaching persona, please provide examples in your online classroom:

   a. Best practices, characteristics that are effective in your classroom

   b. Facilitators of your online persona

   c. Barriers of your online persona

3. In your opinion, how do faculty develop an online persona that enhances your success in the online classroom?

     a.   What elements are key to faculty member's developing their online persona?

4. What aspect of faculty members' persona remains central in the face-to-face arena?

## **Evaluation and Reporting**

Appendix B - Demographics

Faculty (Course) interview analysis (Appendix C1 - C4)

Outline of case study report(s) – Chapter 4

       Case Study: Professor Johnson

       Case Study: Professor Matthews

       Case Study: Professor Owens

       Case Study: Professor Rice

       Multiple Case Study

       Data Summary Table (Appendix D)

## **Summary and Future research**

Case study summary

Limitations

Recommendations for future research

# APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHICS

| Case Profile: | Professor Johnson | Professor Matthews | Professor Owens | Professor Rice |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | M | M | F | F |
| Age | 55 | 52 | 40 | 56 |
| Discipline Course Class Size | English; Writing for the Technical Professional/27 ** limited size | Humanities; Humanistic Tradition I/60/120 | Health Care Administration; Health Care Ethics/161 | Nursing; Women's Health Issues/44 |
| Years f-2-f | 33 | 10 | 9 | 32 |
| Years online | 7 | 7 | 7 | 11 |
| Formal training | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Compensation | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Current | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Fall 2007 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Access | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Forced/coerced | No | No | No | No |
| Participate | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Successful | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

** Limited to 28 students by College of Arts and Humanities requirements

# APPENDIX C1: FACULTY INTERVIEW ANALYSIS: JOHNSON

Participant name: Professor Johnson

Discipline/course: English/Writing for the Technical Professional

Number of students: 27-32

Course Objectives:

Clearly stated – Yes, five clearly stated in syllabus

Clearly related to assessment – Yes, directly related to all five

Clearly related to grading – Yes, very clear


Cognitive (Mental, thinking, information storage):

Content (Basics, offer more, explore): Yes, Four multi-tiered modules

Assignments (Critical thinking): Class activities, writing assignments, Instructions, Letters, Resume, Team Report

Assessment (Appropriate): Above

Feedback (Constant, routine, quick, appropriate): Continuous, SPI

Interaction (St-2-St, St-2-Fac, St-2-content): Class, Peer and Group Discussions.

Time on task (appropriate): Quick pace, 16 week course.

High expectations (Critical thinking, offer more, reaching): Examples, peer reviews, modules and text materials.

Learning (active) (appropriate, match objectives): Based on assessments, activities and assignments.

Respects diverse talents and ways of learning (How, #, creative): Various activities and assignments offer varied learning style examples

Flexibility – Yes, not with regards to deadlines. Individual attention given to special situations.


Affective:

Content (Objectives): Faculty wrote text, modules.

Assignments:

Assessments:

Feedback: Swift and personal, appropriate

Interaction/Swift Trust: Begins prior to the start of class, welcome letter.

Time on task: Quick pace, appropriate for assignments and levels of student learning and involvement

High expectations: Yes!

Learning: Yes! Students are overwhelmingly successful

Respects diverse talents and ways of learning: yes!

Flexibility: Personable, not flexible on deadlines unless unavoidable circumstances.


Managerial:

Organization/Content/Syllabus/Schedule/Protocols/Modules/Text -

Describe course organization: Very organized approach, multiple locations of deadlines, assignments and instructions

Spelling: Yes

Grammar: As expected, yes!

Clear direction/flow of course/timeline: Very appropriate

Use of visuals: Limited,  text

Use of outside links and materials: Yes

Text, e-pack, professor. Materials: Faculty-written text

Interaction, timely: Yes, M-F

Feedback, timely: Yes!

Flexibility: Personable, no flexibility on deadlines.

# APPENDIX C2: FACULTY INTERVIEW ANALYSIS: MATTHEWS

Participant name: Professor Matthews

Discipline/course: Humanities/Humanistic Tradition I

Number of students: 60/120 (combined sections)

Course Objectives:

Clearly stated: Yes, three multiple-level objectives (Goals) in syllabus

Clearly related to assessment: Yes, directly related

Clearly related to grading: Yes, above

Cognitive (Mental, thinking, information storage):

Content (Basics, offer more, explore): Course Tools; (templates, guides, resources), Modules (genres), text and DVD. Student Success Tools; Rubrics, links, handouts.

Assignments (Critical thinking): Weekly checklist for students, weekly (module) quiz, weekly paper.

Assessment (Appropriate): Yes, module quizzes, midterm, final

Feedback (Constant, routine, quick, appropriate): Yes, brief and to the point

Interaction (St-2-St, St-2-Fac, St-2-content): All three, brief from instructor due to large class size, S2S discussions.

Time on task (appropriate): Yes, weekly assignments

High expectations (Critical thinking, offer more, reaching): built into course objectives

Learning (active) (appropriate, match objectives): Yes!

Respects diverse talents and ways of learning (How, #, creative): Moderate due to class size limitations

Flexibility: Moderate, based on individual circumstances

Affective:

Content (Objectives) – course structure

Assignments – varied and ever-changing

Assessments – approaches different learning styles

Feedback- Yes, limited yet timely

Interaction/Swift trust - Yes

Time on task - Appropriate

High expectations – Yes, based on course objectives

Learning – measured with assessments

Respects diverse talents and ways of learning - Yes

Flexibility - Some


Managerial: Large class size limits personal contact and interaction.

Organization/Content/Syllabus/Schedule/Protocols/Modules/Text -

Describe course organization: Well organized instructions, content

Spelling: Yes!

Grammar: Yes!

Clear direction/flow of course/timeline: Yes, quick-paced, 16 week schedule

Use of visuals: Many in text and DVD

Use of outside links and materials: Yes, varied

Text, e-pack, professor. Materials: Supplemental student success materials

Interaction, timely: Yes, however limited due to class size

Feedback, timely: Yes, see above

Flexibility: Case by case. Deadlines must be met

# APPENDIX C3: FACULTY INTERVIEW ANALYSIS: OWENS

Participant name: Professor Owens

Discipline/course: Health Care/Health Care Ethics HSC4653d

Number of students: 161

Course Objectives:

Clearly stated: Yes, syllabus, course objective, requirements and expectations

Clearly related to assessment: Yes

Clearly related to grading: Yes, point system (1000)

Cognitive (Mental, thinking, information storage):

Content (Basics, offer more, explore): Modules/Themes/Textbook

Assignments (Critical thinking): Questions, cases, discussions, debate

Assessment (Appropriate): Assignments, quizzes, debate

Feedback (Constant, routine, quick, appropriate): Yes, rich and numerous

Interaction (St-2-St, St-2-Fac, St-2-content): Yes, up to 2000 discussion postings

Time on task (appropriate, fast-paced): Yes

High expectations (Critical thinking, offer more, reaching): Critical thinking and self-awareness of subject

Learning (active) (appropriate, match objectives): Participation is valued

Respects diverse talents and ways of learning (How, #, creative): Yes, multiple learning styles

Flexibility: Yes, loss of points for late work

Affective:

Content (Objectives) – Course content and structure

Assignments – Varied, debate is crucial

Assessments – Varied and meeting several learning styles

Feedback – Vast and timely

Interaction/Swift Trust: Yes, begins with welcome letter

Time on task: Appropriate, rich discussions/debates

High expectations – Yes, with flexibility for ideas/topics

Learning – Measured appropriately

Respects diverse talents and ways of learning – Yes, see assessments

Flexibility: Yes, see above


Managerial:

Organization/Content/Syllabus/Schedule/Protocols/Modules/Text -

Describe course organization: Highly organized with multiple methods of locating information. Routine.

Spelling: Yes

Grammar: Yes

Clear direction/flow of course/timeline: Established in first week of class

Use of visuals: ??

Use of outside links and materials: Yes, highly interactive with weekly current events

Text, e-pack, professor. materials

Interaction, timely: Yes, rich in quality and quantity

Feedback, timely: Yes!

Flexibility: Yes, see above

# APPENDIX C4: FACULTY INTERVIEW ANALYSIS: RICE

Participant name: Professor Rice

Discipline/course: Nursing/Women's Health Issues

Number of students: 44/70 (combined sections)

Course Objectives:

Clearly stated – Yes; Syllabus/11 explicit course objectives

Clearly related to assessment – Yes;

Clearly related to grading – Yes (500 points)

Cognitive (Mental, thinking, information storage):

Content (Basics, offer more, explore): 14 modules

Assignments (Critical thinking): Weekly discussion postings,

Assessment (Appropriate): Self assessments, weekly quiz, discussions/interaction, papers, final essay exam

Feedback (Constant, routine, quick, appropriate): Yes!

Interaction (St-2-St, St-2-Fac, St-2-content): Yes!

Time on task (appropriate, fast-paced)

High expectations (Critical thinking, offer more, reaching): Multiple self-assessment opportunities

Learning (active) (appropriate, match objectives): Yes

Respects diverse talents and ways of learning (How, #, creative): Multiple learning styles

Flexibility: Yes, not on deadlines

Affective:

Content (Objectives) – Self assessments and course organization

Assignments – Varied, weekly routine

Assessments – Varied, weekly routine

Feedback – S2S and F2S, timely and rich

Interaction/Swift Trust: Begins at course orientation, video, weekly discussions, Nurse's lounge

Time on task: Appropriate

High expectations: Yes

Learning: Yes

Respects diverse talents and ways of learning: Yes

Flexibility: Moderate


Managerial:

Organization/Content/Syllabus/Schedule/Protocols/Modules/Text -

Describe course organization: Modules, outside links,

Spelling: Yes

Grammar: yes

Clear direction/flow of course/timeline: Established week 1

Use of visuals: Minimal

Use of outside links and materials: Yes, many in each module, weekly current events

Text, e-pack, professor, materials: Professor and outside links

Interaction, timely: Weekly, daily

Feedback, timely: Yes, weekly, daily

Flexibility: Moderate

# APPENDIX D: DATA SUMMARY TABLE

## Q1: Persona

| Q1 Persona | Johnson | Matthews | Owens | Rice |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Caring | Caring | Caring | Caring |
| | Highly organized. Very thorough course materials and organization | Very organized | Organized | Structure and organization |
| | | Long hours online/developing, availability | Availability, long hours online | Availability/long hours online |
| | Authoritative or strong ethos, experienced | | Helpful resource, authoritative | Authority, Experienced |
| | Humorous | | Humorous, self-deprecating | Quipper |
| | Demanding, high expectations, deadlines | | Deadlines | Strict deadlines, begin firm/stern |
| | Fair, patient | | Understanding | Sympathetic and empathetic |
| | | Facilitator | Encouraging, hospitable | Reinforcer |
| | **Data points below this row are random with limited similarities** | | | |
| | Careful communicator | Innovating, radical changes | Not a strong disciplinarian Flexible and Easy-going | Swift trust |
| | Reasonable with weekly (M-F [T-T]) schedule | Cognitive | | |
| | | Shape of curriculum | | |
| | | Managerial role | | |

## Q2a: Best Practices

| Q2a Best Practices | Johnson | Matthews | Owens | Rice |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Extensive peer reviews for all draft work | Interaction around assignments | Interaction | Student feedback and self-surveys |
| | Establish trust, welcome | | Welcome letter, trust | Welcome postings Sense of community |
| | Structure and organization of course | Organization and structure | | Course routine and organization |
| | Prompt responses | Timely responses and grading, feedback | Timely feedback | |
| | Deliberate redundancy | Student-relevant topics and assignments, creative assignments and variety | Course variety | |
| **Data points below this row are random with limited similarities** | | | | |
| | M-F (T-T) schedule | Midterm assessment of learning | Debates | Knowledge of topics |
| | Explicit directions and schedule, pace of course | Extra credit assignments | Current Events | Current events |
| | Clear communication, Careful, encouraging | Balance of mastery learning with the creative assignments | "Grape Vine" | |
| | Multiple communication points(mail, announcements, assignment handouts) | | Deadlines | |
| | Fair evaluation of group work (individual grades) | | Flexibility | |
| | Humorous when appropriate | | Very accessible | |

## Q2B: Facilitators

| Q2B Facilitators | Johnson (1) | Matthews (2) | Owens (3) | Rice (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pace and structure of course | Organized course structure, weekly routine | Course Organization and course routine | Set routine and pace |
| | Positive and encouraging | | Feedback, open-door policy | Student feedback |
| | | | "Grape Vine" discussion | "Nurse's Lounge" |
| | Welcome message, swift trust | | Welcome letter | |
| | Constant revision, ideas, take risks | | Continuous change and improvement | |
| | **Data points below this row are random with limited similarities** | | | |
| | Redundancy | Don't change rules | Emoticons | Interaction and discussion comments by students |
| | Wrote text | Convenience | | Discussions and current events |
| | Grade distribution | Extra credit assignments | Variety of assignments for varied learning styles | |
| | Troubleshooter | Core objectives | | |
| | Put up own modules | Always a student | | |
| | M-F Schedule | | | |
| | Experience | | | |

## Q2C: Barriers

| Q2C Barriers | Johnson (1) | Matthews (2) | Owens (3) | Rice (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Lack of F2F contact, harder to establish ethos | Lack of F2F interaction | Lack of F2F | Lack of face-to-face |
| | Technology issues | Technology | Technology/down time | Technology and schedule of down time |
| | | Large class size | Large class size | Large class size |
| | | Time, planning, developing | | Long hours online on weekends |
| | | Self-censorship of written words online | | Limited comments online, self-censorship |
| **Data points below this row are random with limited similarities** | | | | |
| | Limited participation in discussions/Need to facilitate more ongoing discussions | Lack of reward for teaching online | Adding too much to online class | Students that don't read and follow instructions |
| | Time (schedule), pace | Alienation | Online testing | Hurricanes interrupt technology |
| | Online humor, adlib difficult online | Teaching novice vs. grad students | | |
| | Some students are not comfortable in online class | | | |

## Q3/A: Mentor

| Q3/A Mentor/How does new online faculty learn persona | Johnson (1) | Matthews (2) | Owens (3) | Rice (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Organized course, structure | | Very organized, clear expectations | Start with course ready |
| | Demanding or set high standards early on | Articulate role | State availability and schedule up front | |
| | | Look at others (web vets) first | | Find a mentor |
| | **Data points below this row are random with limited similarities** | | | |
| | Arrogant? | Schedule lots of time for planning and developing | Use repetition | Use current events if applicable |
| | Humorous? | | Course routine | Ask questions |
| | Who you are? | | | |
| | Technical ability? | | | |
| | Online strategies | | | |
| | Welcome, swift Trust | | | |
| | Be fair | | | |

## Q4: Compare F2F to Online

| Q4 Compare F2F to Online | Johnson (1) | Matthews (2) | Owens (3) | Rice (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Humor is difficult online; Timing, think quickly F2F, able to adlib, easier F2F | Online vs. in person communication, F2F easier | | Much easier to deliver persona F2F |
| | No gesturing or other F2F communication strengths | | Funny easier F2F | Humor and quipping difficult online |
| | | | | Ability to confront a failing student F2F |
| **Data points below this row are random with limited similarities** | | | | |
| | Convenience for student and teacher, comfort | | Flexibility/convenience online | |
| | F2F persona carries over online | | More accessible online | Deadlines are deadlines in both |
| | May hide some weaknesses online | | | |
| | Problems with F2F technology and classrooms | | | |
| | Classroom distractions, people F2F, F2F personalities | | | |
| | Students need more assistance online | | | |

# APPENDIX E: CITATION SCORING RUBRIC

| Criteria | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Scholarliness** | An article, book, or other work that had not undergone any peer or editorial review to ensure quality. | An article, book, or other work that had undergone some kind of editorial review. | A respectable research, synthetic, or conceptual work in a good peer reviewed journal or academic publisher. | A substantial research, synthetic, or conceptual work in a leading peer reviewed research journal or academic publisher. |
| **Currency** | Work that is no longer relevant because it has no bearing on current research. | Somewhat dated work that still has relevance to current research. | Recent work or appropriate historically situated work. | |
| **Appropriateness** | The citation clearly does not warrant the claim being made. | The citation may warrant the claim, but it is not clear. | The citation is clearly appropriate to warrant the claim made. | |

| Citation: | Scholarliness | Currency | Appropriateness |
|---|---|---|---|
| Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2005) J | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2006) J | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Bain, K. (2004) B | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Barker, B. and Baker, M. (1995) M | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Bates, A.W., & Poole, G. (2003) B | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Belanger, F., & Jordan, D. H. (2000) B | 2 | 2 | 2 |

| Citation: | Scholarliness | Currency | Appropriateness |
|---|---|---|---|
| Berge, Z. L., & Collins, M. P. (1995) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Bold, M., Chenoweth, L., & Kuchimanchi, N. (2006) PP | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Bollinger, D. U., & Martindale, T. (2004) J | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Bonk, C. J. (2004) | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Boote, D. N. & Beile, P. (2004) | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Bower, B. (2001) J | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (1999) | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Carroll, J. (2002) P/W | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Chickering, A., & Ehrmann, S. C. (1996) | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. F. (1987) | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Cohen, L., & Manion, L. (1994) | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Cohen, M. S. & Ellis, T. J. (2003 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Conceição, S. C. O. (2006) | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Conceição, S. C. O. (2007) | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Coppola, N. W., Hiltz, S. R., & Rotter, N. G. (2004) | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Coppola, N. W., Hiltz, S. R., & Rotter, N. G. (2002) | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Creswell, J. W. (1998) | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000) | | | |
| Dziuban, C. D., Hartman, J. L., Moskal, P. D., Brophy-Ellison, J., and Shea, P. (2007) | 3 | 3 | 3 |

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| Citation: | Scholarliness | Currency | Appropriateness |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dziuban, C., Moskal, P. & Futch, L. (2007) J | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Easton, S. S. (2003) J | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Eisner, E. W. (1991) B | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Foucault, M. (1995) B | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Frese, J. C. (2006) D | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Garrison, D. R. (2006) | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Gilmore, S., & Warren, S. (2007) J | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Grandzol, J. R., Eckerson, C. A, and Grandzol, C. J. (2004) J | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Grandzol, J. R. and Grandzol, C. J. (2006) J | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Harasim, L. Hiltz, S.R. Teles, L. & Turoff, M. (1995). B | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Hart, C. (1999) B | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Hoepfl, M. C. (1997) J | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Khan, B. H. (1997) J | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Knowlton, D. S. (2000) J | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Kyong-Jee, K., & Bonk, C. J. (2006) J | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Lang, J. M. (2007) P | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985) B | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Manning, R., Cohen, M., & DeMichiell, R. (2003) J | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Merriam, S. B., & Associates. (2002) B | 4 | 3 | 3 |

| Citation: | Scholarliness | Currency | Appropriateness |
|---|---|---|---|
| Meyerson, D., Weick, K. E., & Kramer, R. M. (1996) B | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Moore, M. G. (1989) J | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Nkonge, B. I. N. (2004) D | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Palmer, P. J. (1998) B | | | |
| Palloff, R. M., & Pratt, K. (2001) B | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Parini, J. (2005) B | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Ragan, L. (1999) M | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Riedinger, B. & Rosenberg, P. (2006) J | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Rogers, C. R. (1983) B | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Ruth, S. (2006) J | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Salmon, G. (2000) J | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Showalter, E. (2003) B | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Smith, G. G., Ferguson, D., & Caris, M. (2002) J | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Stake, R. E. (1995) B | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Tolstoy, L., & Wiener, L. (1904) B | 1 | 2 | |
| Truman, B. E. (2004) J | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Twigg, C. A. (2001) J/W | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Wallace, R. M. (2003) J | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Wang, M. C. Dziuban, C. D., Cook, I. J. & Moskal, P. D. (in press) B | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Wilson, C. (1998) J | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Wolcott, H. (2001) B | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Wolcott, L. L. (1997) J | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Wolcott, L. L., & Betts, K. S. (1999) J | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Yang, Y., & Cornelius, L. F. (2005) J | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Yin, R. K. (1981) B | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Yin, R. K. (1994) B | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Yin, R. K. (2003) B | 2 | 3 | 3 |

Key:
J = Journal         W= Website
M = Monograph    P = Periodical
D = Dissertation    PP = Paper Presentation
B = Book

**APPENDIX F: IRB APPROVAL LETTER**

University of

**Central
Florida**

University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901, 407-882-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

### Notice of Expedited Initial Review and Approval

From :  **UCF Institutional Review Board**
**FWA00000351, Exp. 5/07/10, IRB00001138**

To   :  **William O  Phillips**

Date :  **September 11, 2007**

IRB Number: **SBE-07-05116**

Study Title:   **A Study of Instructor Persona in the Online Environment**

Dear Researcher:

Your research protocol noted above was approved by **expedited** review by the UCF IRB Vice-chair on 9/10/2007.  **The expiration date is 9/9/2008.**  Your study was determined to be minimal risk for human subjects and expeditable per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.110. The category for which this study qualifies as expeditable research is as follows:

6.  Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

7.  Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

The IRB has approved a **consent procedure which requires participants to sign consent forms.**  Use of the approved, stamped consent document(s) is required.  Only approved investigators (or other approved key study personnel) may solicit consent for research participation.  Subjects or their representatives must receive a copy of the consent form(s).

All data, which may include signed consent form documents, must be retained in a locked file cabinet for a minimum of three years past the completion of this research.  Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained on a password-protected computer if electronic information is used.  Additional requirements may be imposed by your funding agency, your department, or other entities.  Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.

To continue this research beyond the expiration date, a Continuing Review Form must be submitted 2 – 4 weeks prior to the expiration date.  Advise the IRB if you receive a subpoena for the release of this information, or if a breach of confidentiality occurs.  Also report any unanticipated problems or serious adverse events (within 5 working days).  Do not make changes to the protocol methodology or consent form before obtaining IRB approval.  Changes can be submitted for IRB review using the Addendum/Modification Request Form.  An Addendum/Modification Request Form **cannot** be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at http://iris.research.ucf.edu .

**Failure to provide a continuing review report could lead to study suspension, a loss of funding and/or publication possibilities, or reporting of noncompliance to sponsors or funding agencies.**  The IRB maintains the authority under 45 CFR 46.110(e) to observe or have a third party observe the consent process and the research.

On behalf of Tracy Dietz, Ph.D., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori  on 09/11/2007 10:30:05 AM EDT

*Joanne Muratori*

**IRB Coordinator**

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