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College Faculty Perceptions of the Challenges of Online and Virtual Instruction

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Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Joyceline Poole-Dudley

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2025

Abstract

College Faculty Perceptions of the Challenges of Online and Virtual Instruction

by

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MA, Nova Southeastern University, 2004

BS, Oakwood University, 2001

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2025

Abstract

The problem addressed through this study is that faculty at a local college in the southern United States experienced challenges adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of college faculty about the challenges they have experienced and recommendations for adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college. The conceptual framework was Dawis and Lofquist's theory of work adjustment. Using a basic qualitative design, data were collected through semistructured interviews with nine faculty who were selected using purposeful sampling. Open and axial coding was used with the following themes emerging: (a) students' lack of technology skills as well as distractions and lack of engagement during remote work; and (b) faculty issues with their ability to connect with students, maintain their mental health while having received limited training and support for the increased workload, a lack of peer collaboration, training, workshops, networking and peer groups, and teacher incentives. A policy recommendation was developed to help college administration enhance faculty effectiveness and student preparedness. Positive social change from this study may help create ongoing training programs for college faculty and students, offering continuous support to enhance academic success, professional development, and future challenges.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my parents: the late Roger W. Poole, Sr., who always supported and encouraged me in all my hopes and dreams, and my supportive mother, Carrell Stevens Poole who continuously believed that I could reach the stars. Thank you, Mom, for your unwavering support and fervent prayers. Your steadfast foundation and persistence helped me reach my goal. My second dedication is to my husband, Pernell Dudley. Thank you for encouraging me when times were difficult, and I felt like quitting. You have always encouraged and inspired me never to abandon my dreams. Lastly, I dedicate this study to my beautiful children, Kristen and Kaitlyn. I hope that seeing me work hard to accomplish my goals will inspire you to do the same. Never give up on your dreams. Whatever you put your mind to do, you can do it. Always remember the quote by Muhammad Ali, "If your mind can conceive it, and your heart can believe it, then you can achieve it."

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I want to acknowledge one of my best friends, Lawana McCoy, who encouraged me and checked on me every step of the way. I am blessed to call you my sister and friend. To my close friends and sisters in Christ, thank you for encouraging and supporting me. It means a lot to have friends like you.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The global COVID-19 pandemic posed major challenges in higher education, shifting from traditional in-person education to online learning (Unluer, 2024). The problem addressed through this study is that faculty at a local college in the southern United States experienced challenges adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic. The department chair of education for a local southern college reported that college faculty were concerned with the decrease in enrollment in face-to-face classes, which resulted in the need to schedule more online courses. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of college faculty about the challenges they have experienced and recommendations for adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college. The gap in practice is that students prefer online courses, and faculty want more face-to-face instruction.

College faculty are confronted with many challenges when teaching online versus face-to-face. Egan and Crotty (2020) stated that one difficulty facing online teaching is ensuring students' learning is useable. In addition, Jalal and Butt (2021) commented that the challenges teachers experience when teaching online are a shortage of resources, apprehension and worry, lack of guidance, and uncertain online evaluations for students. Jubran et al. (2023) suggested that teachers are challenged when they require additional effort to communicate online and prepare for lessons. Finally, Liu et al. (2021) commented that teachers face significant challenges when building online lessons and

anticipating learning objectives to be reached. Teachers are challenged to prepare lessons for online teaching that ensure academic achievement.

Rationale

The COVID-19 pandemic assisted in the increase of online learning, but the problem started before the pandemic. Faculty were questioning why students were choosing online courses, and the teachers were required to teach most education classes online. Online learning became an issue because in-person courses were beginning to dissipate. Consequently, I began to explore and understand college faculty perceptions and concerns regarding online instruction. Liu et al. (2021) stated that faculty are presented with many challenges due to the fast adjustment to online learning. In this study, I interviewed college faculty to analyze their experiences and challenges with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic.

An enrollment representative at the study site indicated that approximately 90% of education majors are taking at least 1 of their classes online. The department of education chair stated that in-person learning for education majors had significantly decreased from 2020 to 2023. According to Jubran et al. (2023), teachers have encountered challenges when teaching online, before and after the pandemic, including interaction, evaluation, and student understanding. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of college faculty about the challenges they have experienced and recommendations for adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college.

Definitions of Terms

COVID-19: A worldwide infectious and transmittable virus in 2020 that spread through saliva droplets and discharge from the nose (Bullock et al., 2022).

Face-to-face instruction: Learning in which the teacher and student are together in person (Abed, 2021).

Online learning: Instead of face-to-face instruction at a specific location or facility, online instruction is provided. (Hernandez-Colo & Hernandez, 2022).

Teaching modality: The way teaching is delivered to students, which includes online, hybrid, and face-to-face instruction (Watson et al., 2022).

Work adjustment: The relationship and satisfaction between an individual and their work environment (Osazevbaru & Amawhe, 2021).

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study problem is that exploring it may help fill a gap in practice regarding how a local southern college can help college faculty prepare to teach online courses. Faculty and leaders may better understand the value of providing specific resources for preparing online courses and gain new insights to meet the needs of college students. Professional development for teachers is recommended to develop activities to enhance engagement with students while teaching online (Liu et al. 2021). The gap in practice is that students prefer online courses, and faculty want more face-to-face courses. Jubran et al. (2023) suggested that teachers who are equipped to teach face-to-face encounter a significant challenge when they are not prepared to shift to online teaching.

Research Questions

The research problem addressed through this study is that faculty at a local college in the southern United States experienced challenges adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of college faculty about the challenges they have experienced and recommendations for adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college. Nine college faculty were interviewed from a local southern college to address the study problem. The research results could fill a gap in practice by improving teacher preparedness to teach online. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What are college faculty's perceptions about the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college following the pandemic?

RQ2: What are college faculty's recommendations about the training needed to overcome the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college following the pandemic?

RQ3: What are college faculty's recommendations about the support needed to overcome the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college following the pandemic?

Review of the Literature

The problem addressed through this study is that faculty at a local college in the southern United States experienced challenges adjusting teaching modality from face-to-

face to online following the pandemic. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the college faculty's perceptions about the challenges they face and their recommendations about the training and support needed to overcome online teaching obstacles. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of college faculty about the challenges they have experienced and recommendations for adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college.

To locate pertinent literature, I searched the following databases: Google Scholar, ERIC, EBSCOhost, and ProQuest. I used the following search terms: *online teaching, teacher challenges, higher education, learning modality, pre-service teachers, remote teaching, face-to-face learning, teacher preparation, strengths of distance learning, and learning since COVID-19 pandemic*. Topics covered in the literature review include adapting to the new normal, preparedness of preservice teachers, challenges and implications of online learning, changes in higher education, understanding online learning, perceptions of teachers, teaching modality, and the impact of online learning.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that supported this study is Dawis and Lofquist's (1984) theory of work adjustment (TWA). Dawis and Lofquist's (1984) TWA proposes that people want a sense of harmony between their behavior and work conditions. Dawis and Lofquist (1984) developed TWA by examining how vocational recovery patrons adapt to work. Essentially, information was gathered that focused on individuals' job contentment, workers' views, how well a person performed at their position, history of jobs, involvements in instruction and preparation, skills, desires, awareness, and character

(Dawis, 2005). In this study, TWA was explicitly applied to the concepts of preparation and challenges with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online learning and suggestions to improve preparation for online teaching. Everyone has unique capabilities and expertise, and different skills are used in the work environment (Pertiwi et al., 2022). According to Pertiwi et al. (2022), if a position aligns with an individual's expertise and skills, they may be more likely to perform their duties. Online teaching can be effective when teachers are properly trained to use their skills effectively.

The conceptual framework aligned with this qualitative research study because I focused on college faculty at a local southern college that has experienced challenges adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic. The TWA approach focuses on the connection between workers and the work environment (Pertiwi et al., 2022). I applied TWA to the interview questions used to ask participants their perceptions regarding the challenges they have experienced with adjusting to teaching online. Additionally, I applied TWA when asking college faculty for recommendations about the training and support needed to overcome the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online. TWA states that when companies meet their workers' requirements and conditions concerning their tasks, workers will excel in their duties (Osazevbaru & Amawhe, 2021). Meeting the needs of teachers contributes significantly to their job satisfaction and performance.

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of college faculty about the challenges they have experienced and recommendations for adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college.

Utilizing TWA helped to understand that self-adjustment is important when adjusting to the work environment (Nursucianti et al., 2014). TWA is focused on the relationship between workers, the work environment, and job satisfaction (Dawis & Lofquist, 1981). Recent research has shown that a worker's performance and the work environment correlate (Osazevbaru & Amawhe, 2021). The physical work environment has a considerable encouraging or discouraging impact on workers' performance (Osazevbaru & Amawhe, 2021). Teachers are optimistic and encouraged to succeed when their working environment is supportive of adjusting teaching modality.

According to Eggerth and Flynn (2012), TWA succeeds as a collaborating and shared means between the person working and the workplace. People are perceived as satisfying what is expected of them in the workplace and, in return, have their economic, communal, and emotional needs satisfied (Eggerth & Flynn, 2012). TWA has needs, values, and reinforcers, which include achievement, autonomy, status, altruism, comfort, and safety (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Desrumaux et al. (2023) proposed that teachers have a feeling of comfort at work if it encourages gratification of their needs for autonomy, expertise, and understanding. Given these things, I used TWA as my conceptual framework. Additionally, I reviewed literature about the broader problem regarding online teaching.

Review of the Broader Problem

A New Normal

A new normal involves adapting to new methods and approaches to teaching rather than face-to-face. COVID-19 introduced a new normal, where teachers were

mandated to teach using online and hybrid learning methods. However, transitioning to online and hybrid learning presented challenges for teachers and students. Hybrid learning occurs with both in-person and virtual classes or may be courses where some students are online and others are in the classroom at the same time (Sciutto, 2021). While the world was experiencing a pandemic and many industries were shut down, educational institutions continued operating, and teachers were forced to transition immediately to online learning methods. Many faculty were not prepared to teach students in the online learning environment and integrate technology. Educators were forced to adapt to the new normal in a matter of weeks.

Online teaching was prevalent before COVID-19 at the local college in this study, but the pandemic brought about an increase in students preferring to learn online. Rau (2021) found that the need for online teaching had increased prior to the pandemic, but the need became more complex following the pandemic. Also, Rau (2021) indicated that traditional learning was considered the most effective teaching method in higher education but may not be suitable anymore. Similar to Rau (2021), Jimenez (2021) found that digitized and blended learning increased, with teachers and students slowly adjusting to the new normal. According to Smith and Cole (2022), digitized and blended instruction includes online and in-person content when teaching. Oweis et al. (2022) also reported that higher education has accepted online learning as a teaching tool and has shifted learning from face-to-face instruction to focus on what students need. This relates to my study because online teaching offers advantages for faculty and students, such as

accessible learning, use of various types of technology, and opportunities to reach a greater audience, which make it a key component of modern education.

The pandemic significantly influenced a change from face-to-face learning to online learning at a local southern college. Jimenez (2021) conducted a quantitative study that found teachers were able to utilize technology to provide instruction and activities, which contrasted with traditional face-to-face teaching and focused on online teaching. Similar to Jimenez, Santiago et al. (2021) confirmed that the COVID-19 pandemic affected the change of learning from traditional to flexible learning, making online learning the new normal. Flexible learning involves various technologies to guarantee the continuity of comprehensive and accessible teaching using online, face-to-face, or blended learning (Santiago et al., 2021). Higher education has transformed considerably since the introduction of technology. Therefore, flexible teaching includes various modalities of online instruction (Santiago et al., 2021).

Adedoyin and Soykan (2020) further explained the different types of online instruction. According to Adedoyin and Soykan (2020), synchronous and asynchronous are two types of online instruction. Synchronous teaching is real-time teaching and asynchronous teaching is prerecorded or video teaching, which was utilized during the pandemic (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, educators had to quickly learn how to provide online education. Educators faced with teaching online courses to meet the needs of students must be prepared.

Preparedness of College Faculty

Online learning could be beneficial to students if faculty are prepared to use technologies to enhance their classrooms. Marais (2021) identified the importance of faculty beginning to explore ways to use technology tools in their teaching. Also, Marais (2021) found that faculty must see technology as a new way of teaching and be prepared to instruct using an online platform. Similar to Marais, Tondeur et al. (2019) further explained that faculty should present educational materials using technology. In addition, teachers should be shown new ways of teaching and enhancing learning using technology (Marais, 2021). This relates to my study because training faculty is essential when transitioning teaching from face-to-face to online instruction. Marais (2021) agreed that online learning supports skills that engage students and allow them to gain the ability to use the resources they learn and apply them to their future careers.

Challenges and Implications of Online Teaching

Faculty face many challenges when teaching online. According to Cavazos et al. (2022), some challenges of online teaching include a lack of professional development for online teaching, increased feelings of stress and anxiety, sustained academic honesty with students, and personal issues at home and work. Similarly, Nalla (2022) found that some faculty encounter challenges with weak internet signals, performance of multiple tasks including paperwork and deadlines, communication with students, and faculty questioning whether students are receiving a quality education from learning online versus face-to-face. Likewise, teachers adjusting to online teaching face challenges, including the failure to evaluate what or if students are learning (Mukhtar et al., 2020).

Nalla (2022) found that stress and anxiety among teachers is a challenge educators face when adjusting to teaching online, and Hernandez (2021) found the following challenges that faculty face when teaching online:

The lack of focus due to work related and home related activities, additional expense for internet load, worries during distribution and retrieval of modules, additional purchase of technological equipment, pushes to become digital natives, unrealistic answers of modules for academic records, delimit scope of authority in class, delimit social development and interaction, loosened discipline of learners, and no available space for privacy affect them physically, emotionally, mentally, and socially. (p. 84)

Cavazos et al. (2022), Hernandez (2021), and Nalla (2022) all reported that teachers who are not properly prepared to teach online may face many obstacles that affect their classroom and their health. Thus, the research confirms that teachers face many challenges when teaching online. College faculty, such as the participants in this study, face diverse trials in online teaching that involve numerous challenges and changes.

Changes in College Faculty Post-Pandemic

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in face-to-face education have transpired globally, and online instruction has increased (Zalavra & Makri, 2022). Kidd and Murray (2020) confirmed that the method of teaching face-to-face has shifted rapidly, with teachers having to adjust to online teaching. Olugbara and Letseka (2020) further explained that teachers require technical skills, which are important when

implementing online teaching. Zalavra and Makri (2022) also noted that skills used for teaching face-to-face need to be conveyed in online teaching, which includes the way content is taught, engaging students, classroom enthusiasm, and assessing student learning. This relates to my study because faculty have adjusted their teaching methods due to the high demand for online courses.

Understanding Online Teaching

Due to the increase in online learning since the COVID-19 pandemic, many students have been affected by having to work and learn online instead of in person (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). Similarly, Smith and Cole (2022) found that many universities promptly altered their curriculums to include online teaching to accommodate their students, but this can be problematic for faculty who lack proper training. In the view of Smith and Cole (2022), colleges adopted online instruction without providing adequate assistance to faculty during the swift transition from face-to-face to online teaching due to the pandemic. Sullivan (2021) agreed with Smith and Cole (2022) regarding the concerns related to the professional development of faculty when teaching online. Understanding online teaching also means understanding the many challenges that faculty face. Smith and Cole (2022) offered challenges that teachers encounter when teaching online:

Additional challenges to online learning include limitations of virtual spaces, such as a lack of personal interactions, a loss of non-verbal or body language cues, especially if cameras are turned off, and inequities in access to technology or high-speed internet. (p. 41–42)

Understanding how to teach online and deal with problems that arise will help faculty have a positive perception about transitioning to online teaching.

Perceptions of Teachers

According to Riaz et al. (2021), teachers' perceptions of online teaching comprised concerns about technology, such as poor internet connection and lack of training, and teachers felt that faculty development and support were needed to guarantee a successful online classroom. Riaz et al. (2021) also found that faculty conveyed dissatisfaction about students becoming disconnected during class and students becoming inactive and less engaged by turning off their cameras throughout lessons. Cirit-Isikligil and Gunay (2022) found that teachers suggested that technical troubles excessively utilized learning time. Cirit-Isikligil and Gunay (2022) and Riaz et al. (2021) all reported that faculty suggested providing online professional development to address online teaching for faculty and offering orientations for students would be helpful. Providing professional development may help faculty with the support needed when encountering challenges with online teaching.

Teaching Modality

There are continuous difficulties with faculty transitioning from face-to-face to online teaching due to the lack of training for teaching online classes (Corcuera & Alvarez, 2021). Likewise, Santi et al. (2021) agreed that although faculty experience challenges with teaching modality, having resources and training available, they continue to use their skills to teach and reach their students. Talidong and Toquero (2020) further explained that although faculty are vulnerable to stress due to teaching modality, they are

optimistic about online teaching. Talidong and Toquero, (2020) and Sasan and Baritua (2022) all reported that faculty are innovative and creative with technology to improve their classroom learning environment. When faculty are flexible about learning new ways to instruct, teaching modality may be easier when transitioning from face-to-face to online instruction.

Impact of Online Teaching

COVID-19 has shifted how college classes are taught since many majors, such as education, require face-to-face teaching (Altawalbeh & Al-Ajlouni, 2022). Similarly, according to Altawalbeh and Al-Ajlouni (2022), “teaching in these fields required direct observations, demonstration, and practical work where face-to-face teaching is crucial to achieving all learning objectives such as knowledge, skills, and applications” (p. 49). Likewise, Altowairiki (2021) found that face-to-face instruction with faculty assistance sets the tone in the classroom, demonstrates anticipated expectations, and motivates student achievement and success. Faculty are encouraged to adjust from face-to-face instruction to online instruction and continue the academic success of their students.

Online teaching has affected faculty and presented challenges that include trouble with an internet connection, a lack of proficiency with instructional strategies, and the ability to apply new technology (Altawalbeh & Al-Ajlouni, 2022). Altawalbeh and Al-Ajlouni (2022) also found that faculty showed apprehension about their student’s academic success and did not fully understand their students’ engagement and life issues. Altawalbeh and Al-Ajlouni (2022) further explained that although faculty have experienced challenges, there are advantages to online teaching, which include learning

new practices and instructional skills. Learning new instruction techniques may help faculty understand why students are choosing online learning instead of face-to-face. Staying current with technology enables teachers to use platforms and strategies that enhance the effectiveness of online instruction.

Summary of the Broader Problem

The problem addressed through this literature review is that faculty at a local college in the southern United States experienced challenges adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic. A review of the broader problem focused on adapting to the new normal, preparedness of college faculty, challenges and implications of online teaching, changes in college faculty postpandemic, understanding online teaching, perceptions of teachers, and teaching modality. Teaching online involves utilizing digital tools and fostering interactive engagement and communication, ensuring effective learning. Online teaching modalities encompass synchronous and asynchronous methods that both aim for an effective and engaging learning experience.

Due to the recent pandemic of 2020-2022, college faculty have had to integrate technology into their teaching methods. Online teaching has provided flexibility, accessibility, and various learning opportunities for many students. Understanding these factors helps educators adapt their online teaching approaches to meet the needs of their students. Some faculty may appreciate the flexibility of online teaching, while others may find difficulties in sustaining student engagement and managing technical issues that arise.

Implications

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of college faculty about the challenges they have experienced and recommendations for adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at the study site. Information and research collected for the local southern college will assist in understanding the challenges that the teacher education faculty experience in adjusting to online teaching. This study might benefit college faculty and leaders by helping them better understand the value of providing specific resources with respect to preparing online courses and gaining new insight to meet the needs of education majors. This study has the potential to contribute to addressing a gap in practice and it may promote positive social change by developing a recommendation paper with detail to help college faculty address challenges encountered when teaching online. The findings from this study may have implications for college faculty that would increase their self-confidence in teaching online classes, improve preparation for online teaching, and provide helpful approaches of evaluation to achieve learning success.

Summary

During the COVID-19 pandemic colleges and universities were forced to transition to online teaching and teachers were forced to transition from face-to-face to online. Teachers worldwide face many challenges with adjusting teaching modality to online. This study was focused on college faculty. The literature review was conducted internationally and in the United States, but few published articles were found that address the experiences of college faculty adjusting to online teaching at a local southern

college. The findings from the literature review provided teacher experiences and challenges towards adjusting to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was found that teachers adjusted to online teaching but felt they lacked training, faculty development, and support.

In Section 2 is the methodology, which includes qualitative research design and approach, participants, data collection, and data analysis. In Section 3, I present the project, a policy recommendation paper focused on helping faculty deal with the challenges of teaching online or virtually. In Section 4, I state the reflections and conclusion and discuss the project's strengths and limitations in the appropriate literature.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

The qualitative tradition used for this doctoral study was the basic qualitative research design. Danford (2023) stated that the purpose of qualitative research is to investigate a certain problem or phenomenon and to strengthen the knowledge and experience regarding that concern. Qualitative research is a process that is from a person's point of view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The reason for using a basic qualitative research design was to gather and examine detailed information about college faculty at a local southern college. The basic qualitative research design allowed me to explore faculty perceptions about transitioning to online teaching from face-to-face, and it aligned with my problem and purpose.

The quantitative approach was not chosen because I would not be summarizing the frequency of data. Burkholder et al. (2020) stated that quantitative design is used to review a set of data through frequency, tendency, variation, and position. Grounded theory research design was not selected for this study because I was not developing a new theory. According to Ravitch and Carl (2021), "grounded theory is often commonly used to refer to any approach that develops theory, concepts, models, and ideas from data." Reeves et al. (2013) defined ethnography as a qualitative research design used to observe and discuss information gathered to generate thorough reports of various social phenomena. An ethnographic case study was not chosen because this study was not focused on an ethnic group. Ravitch and Carl (2021) stated that phenomenology research is concerned with understanding individual lived experiences among a group of people.

Phenomenology research design was not selected because it would not satisfy the purpose of this study. The phenomenology research design would also not provide understanding to the research questions that were intended to study the challenges and perceptions of college faculty at a local southern college regarding adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic.

Participants

Participant Selection

Purposeful sampling was used to select nine participants who were college faculty at a local southern college. Research by Ravitch and Carl (2021) showed that using fewer participants allows for in-depth research. Participation criteria were: (a) at least 18 years of age, (b) have at least 1 year of experience teaching at the study site, and (c) have at least 1 year of experience teaching online courses. The participant responses provided data to answer the research questions and address the research problem.

Gaining Access to Participants

I requested a letter of cooperation from a local southern college to include with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application for Walden University. I gained IRB approval from Walden University. Once approved, I obtained names and email addresses to access participants at a local southern college through the appropriate department. I sent an email invitation (see Appendix B) with the informed consent form attached to potential participants. Faculty interested in participating in the research study responded by providing an email confirmation indicating their consent to participate. The research participants had the right to withdraw from participating at any time.

Researcher-Participant Working Relationship

A researcher-participant working relationship was developed by building trust. I built trust at the beginning by reviewing the informed consent form to ensure an understanding of the interview procedure, which allowed me to lead the conversation. I will guide the conversation by asking the interview questions (Appendix C) and recording the conversation, which lasted approximately 45–60 minutes. I did not have any existing or prior relationships with potential participants.

Protection of Participants' Rights

Before conducting the research study, a consent form was sent to all potential participants for confirmation of participation by email informing them of their protection of participants' rights. Participants were assured that their participation would be confidential, that they did not have to answer any particular questions, and that they could leave anytime. Their responses and identifying characteristics were securely stored in a locked file at my house and will be discarded via shredding or deleting from the computer five years after the interview.

Data Collection

Data were collected using semistructured interviews that lasted 45–60 minutes. According to Burkholder et al. (2020), “interview questions are questions you ask participants to obtain data to answer the research question” (p. 316). A self-developed interview protocol (see Appendix C) was used, including research and interview questions. I used an audio recording to record the interview to ensure accuracy. There was a total of eight interview questions. The data collection instrument included four

interview questions for each research question. I scheduled a day and time for each interview, asked interview questions, and recorded the interview. Each interview began with a review of the consent form. I did not collect demographic data.

I used a research log and reflective journal for transparency throughout the data collection process. The research log included dates, times, and interview participant numbers for identification. The reflective journal was used for personal reflections and for writing what came to my mind about the research study. According to Burkholder et al. (2020), reflective journaling is used as a continuing narrative of the researcher's reasoning for the study. Also, new ideas that pertained to coding and analyzing the data were written in the reflective journal.

I have never met or known any of the participants, and I have never worked with any of the participants. One of my biases regarding the topic was knowing the challenges I have personally faced as an online teacher related to the pandemic 2020–2022. I ensured that my bias would not influence the data by restricting my facial expressions or agreeing with statements made by the participants.

Data Analysis

I reviewed the recorded data soon after the interview and transcribed it within 24–48 hours. I used Otter.ai and Microsoft Word to type the transcript. The transcription was written to convey what was said in the interview. Burkholder et al. (2020) stated that “transcription is the process of transferring audio-recorded statements from the recording to printed text” (p. 153). After transcribing, I used open coding, which is used in qualitative research when key ideas are identified and categorized (Babbie, 2014). I used

open coding to label codes by reading through the transcript, and when I came to something significant, I highlighted the word and labeled it. After identifying the open codes, I put the list in a table with three columns labeled *open codes*, *axial codes*, and *emerging themes*. According to Burkholder et al. (2020), axial coding is associated with open coding, where correlations are acknowledged in the categories and topics are discovered with open coding. I reviewed the list of open codes and clustered them into categories using colors. The axial codes were grouped to produce the emerging themes that emerged from the data.

Evidence of Quality

After analyzing the data, I used member checking to ensure accuracy and credibility by sending preliminary findings to each of my participants for their review. I asked the participants if they agreed or if anything was mistaken. During data analysis, if I identified a response that was not similar to most responses, I reported it as a discrepant case in the results section.

Data Analysis Results

There were 16 potential participants who consented to the interview. Of the 16 potential participants, nine were interviewed. Data were collected using semistructured interviews. The inclusion criteria were that participants must be 18 years or older, have taught at least 1 year of a college virtual and or/fully online course, have taught from spring through fall 2020, have taught both before and during the pandemic and have taught at least 1 class that transitioned from face-to-face to virtual and/or online. Email addresses were used to communicate with participants. I sent an email invitation and

consent form to potential participants to participate in the study using all email addresses the provided to me. Two hundred and thirty-one faculty met the inclusion criteria, and 16 were interested in participating. If they consented to participate, I provided interview dates and times for them to schedule the interview.

Interviews were conducted between April 14, 2024 and April 29, 2024.

Participants were reminded of their informed consent and that their participation in the study was completely voluntary. The interviews were audio recorded on Zoom without the video being recorded. There were 14 interview questions and three follow-up questions, but I only used the follow-up questions once because the participants provided sufficient information in response to the initial questions. After each interview, I asked participants if there were anything else they would like to share.

The interviews were transcribed by using Otter.ai. After completing the interviews, I examined each transcript and audio recording to ensure the transcript stated what was in the audio. Participants were provided with a copy of the transcript by email to verify accuracy. Transcripts and audio were used to analyze the data. Audio recordings of the interviews were stored on my personal password-protected computer and later placed on an external hard drive that will be kept in a locked file in my work office for 5 years. I will delete the recordings after 5 years. I am the only one who has access to the password-protected computer and external hard drive.

I conducted semistructured interviews, which were transcribed by Otter.ai, and I then coded and organized the transcripts to identify emerging themes. After transcribing the interviews, I compiled keywords and phrases. I created a sheet with interview codes,

categories, and themes that aligned with the research questions. I used a research journal to keep track of the data. I used open coding to label codes by reading through the transcript, and when I arrived at something significant, I highlighted the word and labeled it. After identifying the open codes, I put a list in a table with three columns labeled *open codes*, *axial codes*, and *emerging themes*. I used thematic coding to better understand the challenges of adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic of 2020–2022. I reviewed the list of open codes and clustered them into categories using colors. The axial codes were grouped to produce themes that emerged from the data. The audio recordings were compared to the transcripts to determine any discrepancies.

The problem addressed through this study is that faculty at a local college in the southern United States experienced challenges adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic. I sought to understand the college faculty's perceptions about the challenges faced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online. The first question of the interview protocol asked college faculty to describe challenges experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to virtual or online. Responses varied, with some faculty identifying students as having a lack of technology skills while others mentioned a lack of student engagement. Connecting with students, students facing distractions with online learning, and faculty working increased hours to create the class were also mentioned.

Research Question 1

The first research question asked college faculty about their perceptions of the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college following the pandemic. Data analysis for RQ1 generated the following themes: students' lack of technology skills, connecting with students, students facing distractions while learning online or virtual, lack of student engagement, and faculty feeling overwhelmed.

Theme 1: Lack of Technology Skills

An area of concern for participants was students not being able to operate technology like many thought they could. P1, P4, P6, P7, P8, and P9 believed students had difficulty because they were not prepared and did not have the technology skills to be successful. According to P4,

Students don't have the necessary skills to use technology and take online classes for the wrong reasons. Students are underprepared to take online classes and take them for the wrong reasons. They don't have technology at home, and they don't understand if you don't have the technology at home, an alternative is to do the class at the college. It's challenging increasingly; every semester, it's getting worse and worse.

With regards to the same issue, P7 stated, "Students are technologically unprepared. They're good on phones, but for things like Microsoft Word, they don't know how to use it. The concept of attaching a document in Canvas is foreign to them." According to P8:

There are students who sign up for online and remote courses who do not have the technical and computing skills to participate effectively. I think that there is an assumption that because this is a digital generation, they are tech savvy, and frankly, they are not. We don't have adequate control over the devices, locations, internet services, application skills, and application period that students use to participate in online courses.

P9 agreed and stated, "Students who do not have the technological requirements needed to be successful or maybe the understanding of how to use Zoom or other technologies or managing the LMS is definitely another struggle that I experienced in the online environment." Teachers perceived that students were good on their cell phones but lacked the technology skills needed to take online or virtual classes.

Theme 2: Connecting With Student

Another theme that developed from the interview was connecting with students. The participants indicated that connecting with students is a challenge in teaching online or in a virtual setting. As stated by P3,

A lot of students have a hard time without personal interaction. Students don't understand or obtain information without personal interaction. We see each other's faces online, but 90% of communication is nonverbal, and so a lot of that is lost when you're online.

According to P9,

It's hard connecting with students in the same way that I do in the classroom. If a student stops turning in assignments or they're not participating as much in

discussions, it's difficult to connect with them in the same way and establish relationships with them the same way that I would in the in-person classroom and I find those relationships and connections and the ability to reach out to students to be crucial in student success.

Theme 3: Student Distractions

The responses provided by the participants during the interview indicated that students faced many difficulties that created challenges to faculty teaching online and virtual courses. Participants reported that students were struggling to maintain a balance between school and home. P1 explained,

Some people have distractions at home. There may be crying children, there may be living with parents whose TV may be loud or they may be on a phone call. I've had a student go to a closet in order to gain what they needed to understand what was being taught. There are others who are at work and have their earbuds listening in.

Similarly, P3 stated,

Some students will not have their cameras on and then I suspect some are leaving the room for extended periods of time. I don't enforce it strictly, but I know some of my colleagues will insist that everyone have their cameras on continuously.

P5 agreed and said,

Some students do not have that balance. One is time management, second is discipline. Especially for the type of students I teach. They are nontraditional

students, meaning that they are adults who have full-time jobs, and most of them do have families.

P8 stated,

I can't necessarily see everyone even if their cameras are turned on. If I require a student to turn their cameras on, they often refuse to comply, or if they don't want to refuse, they will tell me that their camera isn't working. I have students who will comply, but their presence and background are completely inappropriate. They will be taking the class from bed in their pajamas laying down. They turn their cameras on and off and people come in and out of the room. It can be distracting. I also have students who attempt to take the class while walking from one place to another, while at their jobs, or while in their cars traveling. So, all of these things are distractions and disturbances to the online presence.

Theme 4: Lack of Engagement

According to the participants, there are concerns about the lack of student engagement while taking online or virtual courses. P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, and P9 believed their students showed a lack of engagement. P1 stated,

I believe challenges to teaching online stem from people who were accustomed to communicating. Now, people are comfortable with being behind the screen and not having to talk. It just really halted communication with people that interactions just changed, and I miss it a lot.

Similarly, P3 indicated,

One challenge experienced in teaching online classes is participation. There's a certain level of anonymity where students don't necessarily participate, as they might otherwise do so if face to face, and so sometimes they fade into the background. I sometimes worry about their attention spans. There is a little more engagement that comes with face-to-face learning. Another issue is students will not have their cameras on and then I suspect some will leave the room for extended periods of time.

According to P7,

The main challenge is students equate their attendance with their learning. So, they will sign in and then they're not present. They're not participating if we do activities in the chat or polls or anything; they don't join, and then naturally, their success suffers.

Teachers perceived there is a lack of communication from not being face-to-face in the classroom with students.

Theme 5: Faculty Mental Health

The responses presented by the participants in the interview pertaining to mental health indicated that the faculty become overwhelmed with teaching and increased working hours. According to P1,

This has been a difficult and challenging transition. I feel like my work-life balance is not balanced, and my mental health is real. Mental health, I believe, has been one of the most silent challenges for faculty, and that's the reason why we had the great resignation at the onset. Because there were so many moving parts.

There were faculty including myself up in the middle of the night trying to figure thing out in order to help students to be successful. I know faculty who told me they left because they felt like they were a failure. There were times I felt that way as well. However, thankfully, I was able to stick with it because I did not want it to overtake me.

Also, P5 mentioned,

Online requires more time compared to face-to-face, where you have a little more flexibility. Meaning with face-to-face, you know this is the time you are going to have your class. I find that online you must be there more and log in. For me I log in every day to make sure that I don't miss anything. As a matter of fact, the number of assignments to keep up with and the grading has been a challenge especially if you're teaching multiple online courses. So, keeping up with the grading has been a challenge because I make sure students get the feedback that they need.

Similarly, P9 stated,

It is stressful. It is overwhelming. It definitely made me question my effectiveness as an instructor because I was losing students and there were students who weren't coming to class, they weren't turning in assignments, or they weren't understanding what I was looking for in assignments. I think there were a lot of emotional aspects to it that would make you question your ability and become very frustrated with your inability to connect to the students. So, I remember it affecting me and my mental health and just being stressed. In terms of workload,

it radically increased the amount of time I was working, spending time setting up online material, trying to research what I could do in Zoom, and how to set up my class. Even just responding to emails and messages increased. I had so many more messages and many more individual appointments that students were setting up. Those are major things I can think of that affected me negatively, impacting my mental health and increasing my workload.

Research Question 2

Data collected regarding RQ2 generated the following themes: limited training, training to help support faculty, faculty collaboration, student training for e-learning, and increased course load for faculty. Participants were asked for recommendations about the training needed to overcome the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college following the pandemic. The participants shared what kind of training they had received and how faculty and students could be better equipped to cope with the challenges of online and/or virtual learning.

Theme 6: Limited Training

Interviews revealed that participants felt they had received very little training. Many felt they were on their own as they experienced adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online and/or virtual. P4, P7, and P9 all expressed there was no initial training. P4 pointed out,

We were on our own. We had no training. We were still using Blackboard and now we're using Canvas. So, the good news was I had taught on Blackboard

before, so I was familiar with it. A lot of my colleagues had never taught on Blackboard, so it was even worse for them. But as far as training is concerned, we were on our own. It was a really terrible thing.

P7 revealed,

We didn't have anything. And so, I was a faculty developer at the time, so I and another faculty developer started holding brainstorming sessions where instructors could join and talk about what was working and what was not working for them. But initially, there was none and to this day, there's nothing that's been formal or required training. So, it's kind of a learn-as-you-go or learn-on-your-own kind of approach.

Further, P9 stated,

I don't remember getting much of any training. We were using Collaborate through Blackboard, and I think we got some instructions on how to use Collaborate. But that was about it. There really was no training as we moved through. There were some training sessions that we could attend, but they weren't mandatory, and sometimes they didn't always fit the schedule. So, there was optional training on technology that we needed to use to conduct a live online class. That was about it. Otherwise, it really kind of felt like you were thrown to the wolves in terms of figuring out how to do everything.

Theme 7: Support Faculty

The participants' responses related to recommendations about the training needed to support challenges of adjusting teaching modality face-to-face to online and/or virtual

indicated there was training to help support faculty. Participants mentioned training that was not mandatory but was beneficial. P1, P2, P3, P5, P7, and P9 claimed that training and seminars were offered but not enforced. P2 stated, “The school suggested Canvas training. You just follow the suggestions, and they train you to use Canvas, which they did training for when they switched from Blackboard to Canvas.”

According to P1 and P7, training was offered through the Center for Teaching and Learning. P1 explained,

We were able to contact the Learning Center, which we call e-learning, to gain a little more information about what was needed, but it was definitely a huge trial and error process that you had to go through. And once you put in the work, you realize that you are your own best resource because the information is available.

P7 agreed that “Our Center for Teaching and Learning offered additional courses, but initially, there were none.” Similarly, P9 stated,

I took the AQ certification for online classes and I found that to be very helpful. I would recommend for anyone moving to the online environment that they take a dedicated course to online instruction and the AQ course because it broke down various things in terms of core setup, what are some things when you’re setting up assignments that you want to think about in order to clarify on the assignment and make sure the students understand. And so having a course that really broke down some of the major components of online teaching and focused very specifically on that was really helpful because up until then, a lot of training I had received, addressed live online, in person, and online instruction.

Theme 8: Faculty Collaboration

Participants in the interviews mentioned collaborating with other faculty and peers. They indicated it is necessary to brainstorm with other faculty and share information. According to the responses given by P4, P7, P8, and P9, they all agreed that it is important for colleagues to support each other. P4 stated,

One of our colleagues at another campus put together a link to help us make it. I have friends and we are a tight circle of friends. We help each other. But like I said, one of my colleagues at another campus put together a link so we could go on and share ideas, ask questions, and network.

P7 indicated, “I think the biggest thing is networking with other instructors and seeing what they are doing and what’s working for them or asking them to come to your classroom and see how you do things.” According to P9,

I’m working with course developers, helping them with opening up to having faculty and various groups to work together and talk about things they have done, giving them the opportunity to revise lessons or learn about technology that’s out there.

Theme 9: Training

Participants’ responses to the interview questions indicated that students need training for e-learning. During the interview, P1, P3, P5, and P6 mentioned students need training to help students navigate the course better. P1 stated,

I recall when students could not enter the Zoom room I set up. It was very challenging because I did not feel prepared. I spent most of the class time trying

to help them get signed in, so they lost quite a bit of instructional time at the beginning.

According to P3,

In addition to all of the technical issues, students would lose Wi-Fi, and students would be on their phones taking the class. I was lenient but some of my colleagues would say, you can't be in the class on a cell phone. You have to be at an actual laptop or computer.

Similarly, P5 stated,

I send out weekly reminders and I try to make myself accessible even though we're in this online environment. I try to keep up with my emails and I try to answer within 24 hours. I try to make those different tools accessible to students so that they can reach me. I give all these resources but it's up to them to really use it. I try to find ways to connect them, holding different Zoom meetings so I can answer questions. But then there are some who haven't figured out how to manage that environment.

Further, P6 stated,

One of the challenges is getting students to understand just how much it entails to be in a fully online class or to even be live online where there is a Zoom option. The amount of reading that is not always done. The steps that they must follow are a challenge, and having students be engaged and really reading materials and understanding that you have read something before you move to the assignment.

A lot of students are returning students, older students, and students with children of their own at home. So that was an obstacle. A lot of them were not familiar with being this much on the computer, just figuring out how to navigate Zoom and Canvas. So, training to me would be maybe an e-learning department to create some kind of shell for online, and I think the instructors should be required to not just give assignments, but there needs to be some kind of interaction. There needs to be some student conferences there. I would say the training should come in the form of using some interaction having eLearning and maybe some kind of mentor that can help you who's been doing online classes before.

Theme 10: Increased Workload

Responses given by participants suggest there is extra work for teachers to create an online course load. P1 stated,

You are given a sandbox to actually build the course you teach. When you build and design the course, someone from the technology design team will look over it to make sure it's rigorous based on the type of course it is.

According to P2,

The only challenge is if the class isn't written, and I have to write the class. Not all classes are shared across the board. I would have to put in extra time that you're not paid for to create a class. Most of my classes are templated, and I write them, and I just update them, which takes extra time.

P6 also stated,

To be helpful, I've created a lot of different core shells, and I share them with my adjuncts because if you can't have your regular class organized and clear, all the fully online classes are going to be hard for the student. There's no uniformity with courses, so every professor's scores look different, and I don't agree with that. I think if we had some uniformity, I know people want to be academically free, but I think if we had uniformity, it would help the students navigate better to be more successful in the course.

Research Question 3

The third research question generated the following themes: training and workshops, networking and peer groups, and teacher incentives. Participants were asked about recommendations about the support needed to overcome the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college following the pandemic. The participants shared recommendations about continuing to attend training, workshops, and networking with peers. Increased workload was a challenge and participants desired incentives to feel valued.

Theme 11: Training and Workshops

The interviews revealed participants recommended that faculty take training and go to workshops. P1, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, and P9 believed that faculty should continue to learn as much as possible. P1 stated,

Always be willing to learn. I am a learner. I am a lifelong learner. So, I want to learn new things. It just has to show a huge amount of consistency on the part of

the faculty. I know that I continue to learn new things every week. There is always something that I didn't know, and it just strengthens my knowledge, so I am consistent with learning and facing those challenges that come about from students every day.

P3 also responded, "I think that having summer training is really good. And continue to update them also keeping us in the loop about various changes." Also, P5 offered,

I highly recommend the AQ certification that I think every faculty if the college offers the opportunity, and you haven't done it to do it. You will learn so many things that will help add on to what you're doing and help you to do things definitely that you are already doing. You'll learn what will be effective for students in the online environment and for you as the instructor, because sometimes we can do things the same way for so long and think it's working. So, what can I do differently, to help them be more engaged, to help them be more successful, to make sure that we aren't losing students during the semester or withdrawing? The students aren't withdrawing but they are remaining with you because of the best practices you are utilizing, So, the AQ certification training would be my number one recommendation.

Theme 12: Networking and Peer Groups

The responses from the participants provided recommendations related to networking and peer groups. P6 stated,

I think faculty should have a place to go share resources that would be helpful. Many of our professional development we have days that are dedicated to

professional development training. I never really feel like they're useful because they're not hands-on training. They're like how to meditate in the middle of your day. And I'm like, I know I want to be a better teacher. So, if they gave us practical suggestions, practical training, that er could do, like bring your laptop and let's work together on your course, that would be helpful.

P7 also stated,

I think one of the biggest things that we did was working with groups and talking with them, which was emotional support. To hear someone else go, yeah, this is frustrating; we're trying to figure this out. To hear other people that are having the same issue because I was like, well, it's just me. I haven't figured this out and then to hear other people have the same challenges. That emotional support is great and we're here to support each other.

Similarly, P9 stated,

I recommend hearing from other professors and having a support system. I would prefer more peer learning. When I worked with individual faculty members, that was more helpful. So, really having more of a peer learning in terms of recommendation. If there could be a faculty member who had time release and would be able to work with faculty in terms of getting them online or having them look over their courses. I know that when I first started if someone had looked over my course, there would have been a lot of things that they probably would have seen that I didn't know but would have been obvious to someone who teaches online.

Theme 13: Teacher Incentives

The responses given by the participants suggested that college faculty need financial incentives. Faculty don't feel valued, and offering a financial incentive would help them feel appreciated for their hard work. Referring to this issue, P3 said:

I think probably having stipends is always a benefit, even if it's a small amount. So, for example, you gave me a stipend to participate in the survey. And it's like, you feel like you're being valued to a certain extent. So even having a small stipend, maybe \$20 or \$25, or something like that, for adjunct faculty to enroll in programs, I think would be beneficial. A large percentage of our courses at the college are taught by adjuncts. And so, a lot of the training that we do that's mandatory, it's only mandatory for the full timers. But we have to be able to train the adjuncts as well.

Similarly, P4 stated,

More financial incentives are my suggestion. I know with other institutions when you create an online class, you get a stipend. I created one of my courses fully online in Canvas. When I did that on my own there was no financial nothing, no stipend or anything. Because I know, like I said, in other colleges and universities, when you put together a fully online class, you get a stipend. There's a big push not just here, but nationwide for more online teaching. But if you're already a full-time professor, when you create a fully online class, it's a lot of work. It's a lot of work, and you have no financial incentive other than the fact that you just want to get this done because you want to teach the class fully online. So more

financial incentives would definitely help because I think a lot of times people forget that teaching is not volunteer work. This is how we make our living.

One discrepant case was found related to this research question. During this study, P2 was the only participant who mentioned having a data manager to help instructors. P2 stated,

A suggestion is to have someone who data manages the due dates and enters it for you and if you have any special ADA that needs to go through that the professor doesn't track. The school should be tracking it. And then again, it would be fully templated, and any classes they put online would be shared amongst the instructors. I would recommend data support that someone would load your class fully, run the due date so you don't have to change them, and, of course, design a template for that class.

Evidence of Quality

Data were collected using semistructured interviews that were 45–60 minutes. A self-developed interview protocol was used (see Appendix C), which included the research questions and interview questions. Otter AI was used to audio record the interview to ensure accuracy. There was a total of 14 interview questions. The data collection instrument included five interview questions for RQ1 and RQ3 and four interview questions for RQ2. I used Calendly to schedule the day and time for each interview. Each interview began with a review of the consent form. I did not collect demographic information. I used Otter.ai to transcribe the interview within 24-48 hours.

After transcribing, I used member checks to ensure accuracy and credibility. Participants were asked if they agreed with the transcript or if anything was mistaken.

I used a research log and reflective journal for transparency throughout the data collection. The research log included dates, times, and interview participant numbers for identification. I used the reflective journal for personal reflections and writing thoughts that came to mind about the research study. Also, new ideas about coding and analyzing data were written in the reflective journal.

Summary

The problem that prompted this study was that college faculty at a local college in the southern United States experienced challenges adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic of 2020–2022. RQ1 was what are college faculty's perceptions about the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college following the pandemic? The themes that emerged from this research question are lack of technology skills, connection with students, student distractions, lack of engagement, and faculty mental health. RQ2 asked the college faculty's recommendations about the training needed to overcome the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college following the pandemic. The themes that emerged from this research question are limited training, support faculty, faculty collaboration, training, and increased workload. RQ3 asked what the college faculty's recommendations were about the support needed to overcome the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local

southern college following the pandemic. The themes of this research question are training and workshops, networking and peer groups, and teacher incentives.

The conceptual framework that supported this research study is Dawis and Lofquist's (1984) TWA. TWA can be explicitly applied to the concepts of preparation and challenges of adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online learning, as well as suggestions to improve preparation for online teaching. Furthermore, this research study was applied to TWA when asking college faculty for recommendations about the training and support needed to overcome the challenges, they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of college faculty about the challenges they have experienced and recommendations for adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college. The department chair of education for a local southern college reported that college faculty have been concerned with the decrease in enrollment of face-to-face classes resulting in the need to schedule more online courses. The gap in practice is that students prefer online courses and faculty want more face-to-face instruction.

Participants were college faculty during this study. I collected data through semistructured interviews. The findings of this research study have the potential to support college administration by providing policy recommendations with detail to the vice president of academic innovation and strategy for a local southern college. The policy recommendations will include the background to the existing problem and a summary of the findings. Also, the policy recommendation paper will be 15–30 pages and will include major evidence from the literature and my research. Recommendation 1 is related to the challenges that college faculty have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic. Participants suggested that students who are not prepared to take online classes are often distracted and lack engagement. I am recommending that students receive a mandatory orientation when taking an online class that clarifies the expectations of what is expected when learning online/virtually.

Recommendation 2 is related to the training needed to overcome the challenges that college faculty have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online. At the start of the pandemic, faculty felt they were on their own. Since then, faculty have received training in Canvas, AQ certification for online teaching, and training offered through the Center for Teaching and Learning. Currently, training is available but not mandatory. As a result, making professional development mandatory would benefit the college faculty with ongoing training. Also, participants felt they were unappreciated and suggested that financial incentives be offered for continuing training due to the increase in course load.

Recommendation 3 is related to the support needed to overcome challenges college faculty have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online. This study provides data on college faculty recommendations for ongoing support. Participants stated that ongoing support groups would benefit college faculty. I am recommending that support groups be organized and strongly encouraged to support college faculty with continuous support and collaboration.

Rationale

The policy recommendation paper was the best option to disseminate the study's findings and recommendations addressed through this study in hopes of guiding future decisions of faculty development and support. In this study, I found that faculty at a local college in the southern United States experienced challenges adjusting teaching modalities from face-to-face to online instruction following the 2020–2022 pandemic. There were 16 potential participants, and nine of them consented and participated in the

semistructured interviews. Participants were asked to share their perspectives of the challenges they experienced with changing teaching modalities from face-to-face to online following the pandemic.

RQ1 centered on college faculty's perceptions about the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college following the pandemic. An analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that during this shift in teaching modalities, faculty felt that students lacked the technology skills needed for the transition, and faculty felt disconnected from their students. There was a lack of engagement, and the faculty's mental health was a concern. Participants provided recommendations on the training needed to help them better adjust to teaching online. One example of such recommendations was incentivizing faculty to attend professional development opportunities.

RQ2 asked for college faculty's recommendations about the training needed to overcome the challenges they have experienced adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online. According to Ghamrawi (2023), leadership in education should constantly direct faculty and offer professional development. Faculty expressed concern about limited training and recommended support from the college by encouraging collaboration and networking among faculty, planning mandatory ongoing professional development, and giving assistance for increased workload and data entry.

RQ3 focused on college faculty's recommendations about the support needed to overcome the challenges they have experienced. Interview transcripts indicated that support is needed in the areas of trainings and workshops, networking and peer groups,

and teacher incentives. Higashida (2020) found that sharing information allows for exchanging ideas and best practices, which fosters collaboration.

A policy recommendation paper was selected because it was important to share the findings with the policymakers of the institution in hopes that this information will guide future decisions on faculty development and the provision of resources and support needed not only during transitions but now. The recommendation paper was also selected because the findings of this research study could potentially reduce future difficulties college faculty face by defining the problem and providing evidence and recommendations to policymakers. In addition, the findings can provide college faculty with resources and flexibility to maintain a healthy work environment, encourage faculty to form support networks, ensure that faculty know about mental health resources available, and suggest professional learning opportunities to faculty on educational technologies and strategies.

Odegaard and Gunnulfsen (2024) indicated that education reform is a critical focus worldwide, and effective leadership is vital to guiding these changes. As such, the policy recommendation paper will be given to the institution's vice president, who oversees institutional research and effectiveness. The policy recommendation paper will include the background of the problem from the perspective of faculty and a summary of the findings to suggest regular and ongoing professional development opportunities focused on pedagogy, technology integration, networking, and mental well-being.

Review of the Literature

Dawis and Lofquist's (1984) TWA is the conceptual framework that supported this research study. TWA can be applied specifically to the concepts of preparation and challenges of adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online learning, as well as suggestions to improve preparation for online teaching. I examined scholarly articles about policy recommendations for education, student preparedness, faculty training, and ongoing support in the literature review. The literature review was accomplished by retrieving scholarly articles from Sage Premier, ProQuest, ERIC, and Google. In this literature review, I focused on researching credible journal articles and information related to topics aligned with the project. The following search terms were used for literature published between 2020 and 2024: *policy recommendations, white papers, policy papers, higher education, challenges in higher education, lack of technology, engaging students, student distractions, student engagement, faculty mental health, ongoing support, training, faculty collaboration, training and workshops, networking and peer groups, teacher incentives, and mental health.*

Policy Recommendation Paper

Wilcox (2021) stated that policy recommendations highlight political ideologies and influence pedagogical practices. A white paper is another name for a policy paper and can be a part of a broader agenda to implement reform across the higher education and training sectors (Small et al., 2022). Additionally, Agius and Mundkur (2020) stated that a white paper seeks to describe a primary issue and build a practical framework within a reasonable environment.

College faculty faced challenges while adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online. Black (2022) stated that white papers can be used to assess this technological shift in education, its potential benefits, and its limitations. Based on the findings from this study and supporting literature, the policy recommendation paper will support technology integration into educational policies and practices and effectively address the core concerns of college faculty in the education system. Effective care and support systems are essential for addressing the needs of individuals and communities, particularly in education (Roets et al., 2020). Smalley (2023) reported that a white paper emphasizes commitments to invest in education, provide continuous training, and support teachers' development and skills. Similarly, Rodler and Renbarger (2023) confirmed that ongoing professional development should be provided for teachers.

Student Preparation

During the pandemic of 2020–2022, teachers and students were unprepared for the immediate shift from face-to-face to online modality (Dayagbil, 2023). Amir et al. (2020) affirmed that students faced many distractions that impacted their preparation for online classes due to a lack of technology, financial responsibilities, unstable internet connections, and time management issues, making it difficult to focus on learning. Similarly, Klerk et al. (2021) stated that the pandemic of 2020–2022 caused many challenges in higher education, including transitioning to online learning and unprepared students, leading to overwhelming anxiety.

Turnbull et al. (2021) agreed with Amir et al. (2020) and recognized that students experience difficulties with learning in an online classroom that consisted of not having

access to technology, not being competent with technology, trustworthiness, privacy, and confidentiality, and integrating synchronous and asynchronous tools for learning. These studies provided supporting information to affirm recommendations that address students' requirements, challenges, and academic improvements in the online classroom. According to Marek et al. (2021), students become more engaged when their learning environment promotes strong relationships, utilizes effective instructional strategies, and supports social and emotional growth.

College Faculty Training

Online teaching and learning have become an increasingly vital component of higher education, particularly after COVID-19 (Vowell, 2024). Many higher education faculty recognize their weakness in not having the knowledge and skills needed to teach online and, therefore, desire professional development and training that prepares them for the online classroom and student success (McManus et al., 2024). Kim et al. (2024) similarly found that faculty recognized a need for professional development to help create a favorable online environment. Tsekhmister et al. (2023) and Korniiichuk et al. (2021) further explained that changes in pedagogical teaching methods require faculty to continually attend training to work on higher education skills needed to reach their students.

Colleges and their faculty faced numerous challenges during the shift to online and virtual learning, including technical difficulties and software problems that frequently interrupted classes. Students wanting online and distance learning have increased in higher education and professional development is needed to assist in

teaching strategies and approaches (Olney et al., 2024). Olney and Piashkun (2021) agreed that providing college faculty with training proves effective by offering educational tools and activities to enhance the quality of learning. Many faculty in this study stated they received little assistance from institutions, leaving them to manage these disruptions independently, often without sufficient training resources. Continuous professional development in online teaching methods and technologies is crucial for college faculty to overcome challenges, improve technical skills, and ensure the positive performance of online learning (Mesuwini & Mkoena, 2024).

According to Mesuwini and Mkoena (2024), online and virtual instruction increases the workload of faculty members as they must create course materials, manage discussions, and offer individual support. Faculty need continuous professional development to help support inclusive and differentiated instruction that will meet students' diverse needs and learning styles (Haigh, 2020). Online and virtual teaching often fail due to a lack of understanding of online learning and poor planning and management implementation, and therefore, professional development is essential for nurturing a vibrant e-learning innovation in higher education (Modise & Zawacki-Richter, 2023). Modise and Zawacki-Richter (2023) agreed with Olney et al. (2024) that the online learning environment has grown tremendously; however, most faculty members do not have the necessary skills to facilitate it, and there is an urgent need for institutions to better prepare their teaching staff for e-learning and distance education. Teachers need ongoing support to comprehend performance expectations, create effective

strategies for collaboration with colleagues, interpret policies, and improve their communication skills with students (Bedford et al., 2021).

Ongoing Support With Incentives

Faculty experienced higher workloads, greater time demands, limited personal interactions with students, frequent technology issues, and inadequate compensation for their teaching efforts (Szczyrek et al., 2024). Providing ongoing training and professional development for college faculty will help instructors adapt to evolving educational needs and improve their teaching effectiveness (Housel, 2020). Similar to Housel (2020), Venketsamy (2022) also noted that professional development training should be ongoing to ensure educators continuously enhance their skills and adapt to new teaching methods and technologies. According to Garcia-Marinez et al. (2022), collaborative environments enhance teaching effectiveness, promote professional growth, and improve student outcomes while fostering a culture of continuous improvement learning and empowerment for educators. Saunders et al. (2024) further explained that ongoing collaboration and continuous coaching and feedback improve retention of practical strategies that help faculty consistently apply the best teaching practices, leading to better outcomes.

Enhancing the quality of higher education relies heavily on the professional development of faculty in universities and higher education institutions (Kinchaa et al., 2021). Providing incentives to college faculty shows that the administration values their work, which motivates them to work more extended periods, enjoy the process of innovation, and be open to new challenges and experiences (Hao, 2023). According to

Belt et al. (2024), faculty members have numerous priorities competing for their attention, limiting their time and motivation to participate in professional development.

Project Description

This study explored college faculty perceptions about the challenges they have experienced adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college. The project for this study was a policy recommendation paper that was given to the institution's vice president, who oversees institutional research and effectiveness. Due to this study's findings and supporting literature, I recommend a policy requiring college faculty to participate in ongoing professional development and training. I also recommend that a local southern college create a policy for students to receive a mandatory orientation when taking an online class that clarifies what is expected when learning online/virtually. Also, participants felt unappreciated and suggested that financial incentives be offered for continuing training due to the increase in course load. I recommended that support groups be organized and strongly encouraged to support the college faculty with continuous support and collaboration.

Needed Resources and Existing Supports

At the study site, professional development and training were offered but not mandated for faculty to attend at a local southern college. Establishing a policy that requires faculty to attend professional development would require financial resources. It would be essential to the success and preservation of the program if finances were allocated. Recruiting and training individuals and providing them with the tools and supplies needed to hire extra staff to conduct training for college faculty would be

necessary. The additional staff as faculty are willing to support their colleagues; however, additional staff may be needed to build robust programming to meet the needs of the college faculty. Requiring professional development to be mandatory would benefit the college faculty with ongoing training.

Existing support at the study site consists of a center for teaching and learning, whose goal is to create and provide training for faculty. Additionally, the study site has a faculty developer, faculty coaches, and other training offered throughout the college. During the pandemic, some support emerged from the need to help faculty transition from in-person to virtual teaching. The instructional design and training department provided support, but a lot was happening at one time to prepare the teaching force, and some support came from faculty supporting each other. The college also invested in technology tools to help during the pandemic, but knowledge of these things was not widespread. The college has grown in support of faculty needs since the pandemic, and the recommendations made in this study are to ensure that the support is maintained, or additional resources are needed.

Potential Barriers and Potential Solutions to Barriers

Potential barriers for online college students are limited access to reliable devices, poor internet connectivity, and lack of technical skills, which can hinder online learning. Learning virtually requires students to manage their time effectively, which can be challenging without in-person guidance. The study site offers mandatory orientation for new students in general. However, I recommend that students need an orientation for online learning before taking an online or virtual course. Mandatory orientation for new

students would require faculty or someone to conduct such training. A local southern college would have to allocate capital to fund the orientation for new students and continuous professional development with incentives for college faculty. Student services personnel would most likely conduct this training for students with some support from faculty development coaches who oversee Canvas. Finances are needed for a continuous program to survive.

Potential solutions to barriers include providing training programs and introductory sessions on using the learning platform to help students become more confident in online learning. A solution would be to offer an orientation session on the platform before starting the course. Simple guides or tutorials on how to use each tool effectively can help students become more comfortable. Additionally, training on time management techniques should be included in the orientation before students begin online learning. Students can be encouraged through training to set up dedicated study time and given tips for creating an effective learning environment. Instructors can also incorporate regular interactive sessions with break-out rooms, or peer-to-peer sessions can foster connection among students.

Project Implementation

I propose that the vice president who oversees institutional research and effectiveness share the policy recommendation paper with other college stakeholders (academic deans, faculty development, etc.) and adopt a policy for mandatory student orientation for taking online or virtual classes and mandatory ongoing training and workshops for teachers with incentives for their effort and time by July 2025.

Additionally, a departmental faculty collaboration program should be developed where teachers can come together and share ideas and solutions. The development of the program would be completed by June 2026 and fulfilled by August 2026 for the 2026–2027 academic year.

Roles and Responsibilities

My role as the researcher is to provide recommendations for a local southern college by sharing the findings and supporting literature for this study. Based on the results of my study, I will provide recommendations on the creation of a policy requiring college faculty to participate in ongoing professional development and training. Similarly, I will recommend creating a policy for students to receive a mandatory orientation when taking an online class that clarifies what is expected when learning online/virtually. Also, participants felt unappreciated and suggested that financial incentives be offered for continuing training due to the increase in course load. I would also recommend that support groups be organized and strongly encouraged to support college faculty with continuous support and collaboration. I will present this policy recommendation to the vice president, who oversees institutional research and effectiveness, and stakeholders, who are policymakers. The roles and responsibilities of others involved include the vice president of institutional research and effectiveness, who will review the policy recommendation paper and share it with deans, associate deans, vice president of academic affairs, faculty developer, and center for teaching and learning excellence director.

Project Evaluation Plan

The evaluation plan for this project will be a formative evaluation. A formative evaluation is an ongoing process used to assess and improve a program, project, or educational activity as it is being developed or implemented. According to Thamrin and Fahri (2024), formative evaluation is desperately desired in higher education regarding teaching and learning development, and it proposes positive criticism and feedback. The policy recommendations will be given to a college faculty member and a faculty developer to read through for feedback to provide critique and suggestions that I will implement. Using formative evaluation will make the project better, more precise, and more valuable. The overall evaluation goal is to improve the project so it can be helpful and support college faculty and their students.

Project Implications

Possible Social Change Implications

This project has possible social change implications by possibly developing ongoing professional development training for college faculty and providing mandatory student orientation to support the challenges of online and virtual classes. Implementing the policy recommendations for college faculty would increase their self-confidence in teaching online classes, improve preparation for online teaching, and provide helpful approaches to achieve learning success. Furthermore, student orientation and professional development foster innovation and problem-solving skills, which enables teachers and students to contribute positively to the learning environment and their communities. Faculty overcoming the challenges of teaching online can considerably contribute to

social change by empowering teachers with the skills and tools for online teaching so more students can learn and serve their communities.

Importance of Project to Local Stakeholders

The findings from this study can benefit local college faculty and leaders by helping them better understand the value of providing specific resources and tools for online and virtual courses and gaining new insight to meet the needs of college faculty and their students. The policy recommendation paper can offer direction to stakeholders that focuses on overcoming faculty challenges.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

Despite the increased support available at a local southern college following the pandemic, faculty still have expressed a need for (a) student training before taking online classes, (b) faculty training and support with incentives, and (c) peer collaboration. Mandatory training would ensure that college faculty have the skills to teach effectively, especially in an online or virtual setting. Peer collaboration offers opportunities for faculty to share best practices, troubleshoot challenges, and learn from each other's experiences, which can enhance teaching strategies and improve student outcomes. Both training and collaboration are essential to adapt to the continually evolving educational demands of online learning.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Projects Strengths

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of college faculty about the challenges they have experienced and recommendations for adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at the study site. The strength of the policy recommendation paper is that it allows me to share my research findings with the college's vice president, who oversees institutional research and effectiveness, and other stakeholders (academic deans, faculty development, etc.) Another strength of the policy recommendation paper is that it could be focused on the challenges and suggestions the college faculty shared during their interviews. According to Kumalo (2021), values such as public accountability are the foundation of higher education.

Requiring mandatory orientation for students taking online or virtual classes, encouraging peer collaboration, and offering mandatory training and workshops to faculty that include incentives for their effort would support college faculty and let them know their voices have been heard.

Project Limitations

A limitation of the policy recommendation paper is obtaining support and buy-in from stakeholders. Standen (2023) stated that a lack of clarity and support creates doubt about achieving desired outcomes. Developing a new recommendation policy would require funding to hire faculty or additional staff to meet the needs of students taking a mandatory orientation focusing on success in virtual learning. Funding is also needed to offer ongoing training and workshops to faculty with an incentive for their time.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The problem addressed through this study is that faculty at a local college in the southern United States experienced challenges adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic. I sought to understand the college faculty's perceptions about the challenges of adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online. Nine college faculty were interviewed. Data were collected using semistructured interviews. The first question of the interview protocol asked college faculty to describe challenges experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to virtual or online. Responses varied, with some faculty identifying students as having a lack of technology skills, and other participants mentioned a lack of student engagement.

Connecting with students, students facing distractions with online learning, and faculty working increased hours to create the class were also mentioned as challenges.

Participants stated that limited training has been a challenge following the pandemic. Therefore, an alternative approach to solve the problem would be to provide training with incentives to help support faculty, encourage faculty collaboration, and offer mandatory student training for e-learning. The solution is to develop ongoing professional development that teaches faculty what they need to know to engage with online students.

Alternate Way to Study the Problem

An alternate way to study the problem would be a focus group with college faculty who have taught at least 1 year of a college virtual and or/fully online course, have taught from spring through fall 2020, have taught both before and during the pandemic, and have taught at least one class that transitioned from face-to-face to virtual and/or online. According to Hall et al. (2023), focus groups are used to gather knowledge, explore ideas, and achieve outcomes. Focus groups are also ideal for promoting social change (Conde et al., 2024). Holding a focus group with faculty who teach online courses would be valuable for understanding the types of professional development they need to teach online students effectively. Incorporating focus groups could have provided additional insights, allowing college faculty to openly discuss and share their experiences, concerns, and challenges with online teaching.

Another alternative approach to addressing the problem would be through a survey. The goal of conducting research through quantitative data via survey is to collect

accurate and relevant data for its specific purpose (Metallinos-Katsaras & Beto, 2024). Surveys gather insights into the benefits, challenges, and suggestions of faculty who teach online and virtual courses (Soni et al., 2024). A survey could have been an alternate way to study the problem, which would have allowed for more participation in gathering data on the experiences and challenges of college faculty.

Alternate Ways to Resolve the Problem

An alternate solution to resolve the problem of online teaching is to develop a professional program that includes a comprehensive training curriculum and materials specifically designed to equip college faculty with the skills and knowledge needed to engage effectively with online students. Additionally, an internal study could have been expanded to include a larger sample of college faculty to better capture the concerns and challenges they face with online teaching. By increasing the participant pool, the study would have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the faculty's experiences, highlighted common obstacles, and identified specific areas needing support.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

Scholarship

This doctoral journey deepened my understanding of scholarship, project development, leadership, and change. I learned that scholarship is the pursuit of knowledge and learning. Scholarship involves rigorous research and a willingness to question and analyze existing knowledge. I have developed as a scholar and gained knowledge about different methodologies that have helped me identify the best approach

for my research study. Developing my research and project development skills has benefited my critical thinking, essential for effectively addressing complex challenges.

Project Development

The findings of my study suggested that a policy recommendation paper with detail was the most suitable project genre. An evaluation report was unsuitable for this study because the study was not focused on assessing the effectiveness of a program. In this project study, I did not consider a curriculum plan, as it outlines learning objectives, content, teaching methods, and assessment strategies for a particular course or program. Professional development, training curriculum, and materials were considered but not chosen. Each element promoted effective education and ongoing growth for college faculty and students.

Leadership and Change

I have learned that effective leadership is essential for driving meaningful change and that it requires communication and adaptability. Allowing faculty to share their experiences and creating a policy recommendation paper to address their concerns and recommendations has helped me to develop and grow as a leader. As a principal in K-12, this journey has taught me to listen to my faculty and staff. Leaders must inspire trust, motivate others, and foster resilience in uncertainty. Understanding the challenges faculty encounter with online teaching has contributed to my professional growth as a leader and allowed me to share information and evidence-based strategies that can support college faculty in overcoming these difficulties. Successful change requires a goal and approach to implementing and sustaining it.

Reflections

Reflection on Self as a Scholar

As a scholar, I have acquired a greater insight into the dedication and ability required to research information on a doctoral level. I have gained a better appreciation for the commitment and knowledge required to conduct research. I have grown to appreciate the dedication and expertise required for conducting research.

Reflection on Self as a Practitioner

This project study helped me, as a practitioner, understand the needs of college faculty when teaching online or virtually. I do not work in higher education, but my goal is to become a local college or university faculty member, teaching and guiding students in the classroom or online. I am a principal in K-12 and researching challenges that college faculty face connected with my degree emphasis, which is higher education and leadership policy.

Reflection on Self as a Project Developer

Initially, I thought creating professional development would be my final project. However, after reviewing all the data and findings from the research study, a policy recommendation paper was the best option to address the challenges and recommendations of the faculty at study site college. A policy recommendation paper provides stakeholders with research-based evidence that will show recommendations that would positively impact college faculty in addressing the gap in practice. Training college faculty will enhance their confidence and effectiveness, which in turn, supports improved student engagement and academic performance.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

College education has shifted from in-person to online and virtual learning. When faculty need to change from face-to-face to online teaching and are not prepared, it can be challenging, and faculty feel that students who are not prepared cause disengagement. I have learned that education has highlighted the importance of ongoing professional development for teachers, helping them stay prepared and leading to improved student learning outcomes. Given the steady increase in students enrolling in online classes at the local study site, a study examining the challenges that college faculty face with online learning was justified.

This study was important because it supported college faculty receiving ongoing professional development with incentives to enhance the teacher's abilities, positively impacting student achievement. Additionally, college faculty expressed a desire for students to be better prepared for online and virtual classes. Developing a policy recommendation paper to prepare students to take online and virtual classes and provide ongoing support and training to college faculty prepares both students and faculty to do the work effectively. The policy recommendation paper with detail can guide stakeholders in creating a policy focused on online education that addresses the challenges teachers and students face.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The policy recommendation paper has the potential for positive social change because it will help overcome the faculty's challenges with online teaching at a local southern college by providing ongoing training for faculty, developing a support network

with college faculty, and supporting student learning with orientation for taking online classes. The research represented various departments at the college through interviews conducted with college faculty. It is possible that similar colleges and institutions could benefit from my findings as well. Results from the study indicate that faculty desire ongoing training to prepare them to teach online and virtual classes, but they want incentives to feel valued. Creating a policy requiring faculty who teach online or virtually to attend mandatory training and receive a stipend could help with the overwhelming feeling of not knowing how to handle online teaching challenges that arise. A future research recommendation is to explore college students' perceptions about the challenges they have experienced by adjusting learning from face-to-face to online or virtually. Additionally, future research could explore the perceptions of students taking their first online course.

Conclusion

There are challenges in adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic of 2020-2022. The results from this study indicated that college faculty's perceptions about the challenges they have experienced include a lack of technology skills, connection with students, student distractions, lack of engagement, and faculty mental health. Faculty also had challenges that consisted of limited training, support for faculty, faculty collaboration, and increased workload. Recommendations from faculty included ongoing training and workshops, networking and peer groups, and teacher incentives. Colleges should intentionally design or modify ongoing training for

teachers and students, providing comprehensive and sustained support to ensure their success.

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Appendix A: The Project

Background

College faculty faced many challenges when teaching online versus face-to-face. The problem addressed through this study is that faculty at a local college in the southern United States experienced challenges adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic. Faculty identified a lack of technology skills and engagement among online and virtual class students. Ahshan (2021) stated that maintaining students' interest and motivation requires thoughtful strategies regardless of the modality. College faculty in my study identified challenges with teaching online and/or virtual, such as limited training, training to help support faculty, faculty collaboration, student training for e-learning, and increased workload for faculty. According to Dhurumraj et al. (2020), the pandemic created difficulties for teachers; in response, teachers transformed their pedagogical practices to adapt to online teaching and learning, which shifted from traditional classroom methods to using digital tools and platforms, learning new technologies, and developing strategies to engage students virtually.

Although a local college in the southern United States provides existing support through the Center for Teaching and Learning, whose goal is to create and provide training for faculty, college faculty desire peer collaboration, student training to prepare students for online learning, and incentives for ongoing professional development. The college provides mandatory orientation for new students, but faculty recommend that students receive mandatory orientation before taking an online or virtual course. De

Klerk et al. (2021) stated that student orientation regarding remote learning prepares students for virtual instructions and covers critical areas such as online learning strategies, study skills, and handling personal well-being, thereby equipping students with the skills and support they need to succeed in an online learning environment.

Summary of Findings

This policy recommendation paper aims to support the challenges and recommendations for online learning and effectively address the concerns of college faculty at a local southern college. The purpose of the study I conducted was to explore the perceptions of college faculty about the challenges they have experienced and recommendations for adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college. Qualitative data were collected using semistructured interviews. Nine college faculty from various departments were interviewed. The criteria were that participants must be 18 years old or older, have taught at least 1 year of a college virtual and/or fully online course, have taught from Spring through Fall 2020, have taught both before and during the pandemic, and have taught at least 1 class that transitioned from face-to-face to virtual and/or online.

Results from the study I conducted indicated that college faculty identified challenges, such as students lacking technology skills, students facing distractions with online learning, and faculty working increased hours to create their classes. Due to the increased workload, the faculty did not feel valued and recommended offering incentives to participants in training. College faculty in my study also felt they received a lack of support and limited training. Participants recommended more collaboration among

faculty to help better equip them to cope with online and/or virtual learning challenges. Participants collectively expressed a need to continue to attend training, workshops, and networking with peers. Based on supporting literature and the results of this study I conducted, I recommend that a local southern college adopt a policy requiring all students who want to learn virtually and/or online to take a mandatory orientation. I also recommend that college faculty be required to attend ongoing training and workshops, which will include an incentive for their time and effort.

Evidence From Literature and Research

The problem that prompted my research and this recommendation paper is that faculty at a local college in the southern United States experienced challenges adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic. My study explored college faculty perceptions about the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic. A qualitative research method was used, and data were gathered through semistructured interviews with nine college faculty members from various departments. The following research questions directed this study:

RQ1: What are college faculty's perceptions about the challenges they have experienced with teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college following the pandemic?

RQ2: What are college faculty's recommendations about the training needed to overcome the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college following the pandemic?

RQ3: What are college faculty's recommendations about the support needed to overcome the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college following the pandemic?

Data analysis of the individual interviews revealed the following, which addressed the research questions:

1. Students faced many distractions that impacted their preparation for online classes due to a lack of technology, financial responsibilities, unstable internet connection, and time management, making it difficult to focus on learning.
2. Interview participants mentioned the importance of collaborating with other faculty and peers and indicated it is necessary to brainstorm with other faculty and share information.
3. Participants revealed that ongoing training provided by the college was not mandatory but beneficial.
4. The participants shared recommendations about continuing to attend training, workshops, and networking with peers and desired incentives to feel valued.

Findings indicated that the local southern college does provide existing support through the Center for Teaching and Learning, which aims to create and provide training for faculty. Although the college has faculty developers, faculty coaches, and other training, participants requested mandatory ongoing training and more peer collaboration. The participants mutually emphasized the need to address these areas and establish an organized practice to meet the needs of the college faculty teaching online or virtually.

Student Preparation

This policy recommendation addresses the issue of students enrolled in online and virtual classes who are not adequately prepared to take online classes. Student orientation would emphasize the need for better preparation strategies to ensure their success in an online learning environment. According to Amin et al. (2023), before starting online or virtual learning, it is important to assess student preparedness to ensure they are ready for the demands of eLearning. To address the needs of students, a local southern college can provide mandatory training before students can enroll in online or virtual classes. In addition to internet access, skills, motivation, and online learning literacy, the ability to engage in online discussions and conversations should be reviewed (Widyanti et al., 2020). Understanding online learning in detail can guide students in choosing between online and face-to-face learning (Taormino, 2010). Students' attitudes towards online learning should be addressed before they begin class, as participation may be too difficult for some to continue (Koustriava & Chonopoulou, 2022). My study also highlighted the importance of providing proper guidance and support to enhance students' readiness and performance in virtual classrooms. A successful approach a local southern college can offer is mandatory orientation or training to students before starting an online or virtual course, which can be an effective method to help students prepare prior to the start of class.

Ongoing Training With Incentives for Faculty

Ongoing training can significantly improve college faculty by providing professional development, incorporating modern technologies, and continuously

engaging faculty to develop and enhance their specialized teaching skills (Andronie & Gherasim, 2016). Professional development and ongoing training are designed to keep faculty updated with relevant issues, enabling them to make informed decisions and reduce potential challenges (Brackett et al., 2014). Continuous coaching is an effective form of professional development that helps faculty improve their teaching practices and leads to better student outcomes (Saunders et al., 2024). According to Bumagat et al. (2023), notable differences exist in teachers' teaching methods based on their training and technology integration practices.

Instructors are motivated and respond positively to incentives (Ordenes & Ulloa, 2024). According to Skrla & Scheurich (2003), clear and meaningful incentives can motivate college faculty to put in greater effort to benefit their students. Incentives aim to increase teachers' enthusiasm and help to improve their teaching performance (Hao, 2023). Teachers are vital to the classroom, and incentives motivate them and increase their efforts (Mallah, 2019).

Providing ongoing training with incentives would address participants' concerns that ongoing training provided by the college was not mandatory but beneficial, and they need continuing training and workshops that offer incentives to feel valued. Departmental training could be embedded into teachers' work schedules, eliminating time or date conflicts or conducted at times or days convenient for each teacher. The ongoing professional development and training would be customized to address the specific needs of online and virtual teachers.

Departmental Professional Development

Teacher collaboration is when two or more educators share knowledge, skills, and resources to achieve a common goal (Desta et al., 2023). Collaboration involves exchanging advice, engaging in academic partnerships, and aligning around shared interests and goals (Mongomery & DeCosta, 2024). Peer collaboration affirms the value of teachers' experiences and knowledge while providing a shared set of stories, ideas, and values (Bergman, 2016). College faculty collaboration includes sharing information, participating in professional activities, and fostering informal relationships between educators (Desta et al., 2023).

College faculty are more likely to collaborate and engage in meetings when they work together in the same department (Noben et al., 2022). In higher education, departments provide an ideal atmosphere for teacher collaboration because they have independence in designing courses, and staff members are already grouped together, promoting more regular social interaction (Quardokus & Henderson, 2015). Teacher collaboration is essential for educators, enabling continuous reflection and improvement in their teaching practices (Pan et al., 2024).

Policy Recommendations

Based on my study's results and supporting literature, I recommend a local southern college implement the following actions that align with the findings to decrease the challenges of teaching online or virtual:

Develop a Mandatory Student Orientation for Online and Virtual Learning

This policy would require all students enrolled in online or virtual classes to take a mandatory orientation before starting, providing details of what is expected in the course. Implementing this new policy would show a dedication to consistently supporting students in their readiness for online learning while also addressing teachers' concerns for their students to be successful.

Develop a Mandatory Ongoing Training for Online and Virtual Teaching

Implementing a new policy requiring teachers who teach online and virtually to attend mandatory ongoing training would enhance their professional development and growth, ultimately contributing to their students' success. Continuous training will ensure that teachers remain current with the resources and tools necessary to engage and reach students in online learning effectively.

Develop a Departmental Faculty Collaboration Program

Establishing a faculty collaboration program would focus on sharing advice and uniting around common interests and objectives. Developing a faculty collaboration program would enable teachers to learn from their peers and address the challenges of online teaching, fostering success for everyone involved.

Fund the Mandatory Student Orientation Program

The mandatory student orientation program will require additional staffing and financial support. Establishing a mandatory student orientation program is essential but recruiting faculty willing to support their colleagues and additional staff may be

necessary to develop a comprehensive program that addresses the needs of both students and teachers.

Fund the Mandatory Ongoing Faculty Training Program

Funding the mandatory ongoing training program would necessitate additional human and financial resources, including allocating funds for hiring and training. The ongoing training program will require added staffing, funding, and resources to support hiring, training, and equipping teachers.

Implementing the Mandatory Programs

The creation and implementation of the mandatory student orientation for online or virtual learning and ongoing training for faculty teaching online or virtual would be completed by June 2026 and implemented by August 2026 for the 2026-2027 academic year. A proposed timeline for implementing the mandatory programs is outlined below.

Table 1

Timeline for Implementation

Action	Projected completion date
Develop a Mandatory Student Orientation for Online and Virtual Learning	July 2025
Develop Mandatory Ongoing Training for Online and Virtual Teaching	August 2025
Develop a Departmental Faculty Collaboration Program	September 2025
Fund the Mandatory Ongoing Faculty Training Program	January 2026
Implementing the Mandatory Programs	March 2026
Evaluate How Recommendations Are Improving Online Experience for College Faculty and Students	August 2026
	December 2026

Monitor Mandatory Programs

Program monitoring will be vital for evaluating student and teacher success in online and virtual instruction. Monitoring the programs will be crucial in evaluating the efficacy of student orientation for online and virtual learners, as well as the effectiveness of faculty in ongoing training and the positive impacts of practicing peer collaboration. Ongoing evaluation will help identify underperforming areas of the program and assess the need for adjustments.

Evaluate How Recommendations Are Improving Online Experience for College Faculty and Students

I recommend that a local southern college use an implementation evaluation, which includes observations, interviews, and surveys to evaluate the mandatory student orientation and ongoing faculty training programs. The implementation evaluation will measure how successfully and efficiently the program is delivered.

Policy Recommendation Goals

These policy recommendations aim to achieve the following goals:

1. Reveal the background of the existing problem, which led to the research for the study I conducted. The summary of the study's results highlights key findings and potential solutions to address the issue.
2. Explain the challenges college faculty experienced while adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic of 2020-2022.
3. Convey the advantages of implementing a policy where students enrolled in virtual classes undergo mandatory training while teachers receive ongoing support

and incentives to feel appreciated. Faculty collaboration will also contribute to fostering a stronger online teaching environment.

4. Present evidence from literature and research that supports the development of mandatory student orientation, ongoing teacher training, and departmental faculty collaboration.
5. Recommend developing and sustaining mandatory student orientation, mandatory teacher training, and departmental faculty collaboration programs, including financial support for staffing and training and time allocated for collaboration and monitoring the progress.
6. Communicate with the vice president of innovation and research and stakeholders the recommendation for developing and evaluating a mandatory ongoing faculty training program for teachers who teach online, mandatory orientation for students who take online or virtual classes, and departmental collaboration among faculty.
7. The policy recommendation paper outlines the rationale and advantages of creating programs where students taking online courses receive pre-course training, teachers receive ongoing professional development for online instruction, and departments support teachers through peer collaboration initiatives. These measures aim to address the challenges college faculty face when teaching online instruction and improve the effectiveness of both students and faculty in virtual learning environments. This new policy will require the establishment of mandatory programs to support its implementation. Students

succeed in online environments when they are prepared, and a mandatory student orientation for online classes would assist with student readiness. Ongoing training for teachers instructing online or virtually enhances teaching effectiveness, and peer collaboration and support among faculty contribute to greater success in online teaching.

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Appendix B: Email Invitation

Subject line:

Interviewing college faculty (\$25 thank you gift)

Email message:

There is a new study about the experiences and challenges with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online following the pandemic. You are invited to describe your experiences and challenges adjusting to online teaching for this study.

About the study:

- One 45–60-minute phone interview will be audio recorded (no video recording).
- You will receive a \$25 Visa gift card as a thank-you.
- To protect your privacy, the published study will not share any names or details identifying you.

Volunteers must meet these requirements:

- 18 years old or older
- Taught at least one year at the college.
- Taught at least one online course.

This interview is part of the doctoral study for Joyceline Poole-Dudley, an Ed.D. student at Walden University.

Please email XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX to let the researcher know of your interest. Please forward it to others who might be interested.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Welcome and thank you for your participation today. My name is Joyceline Poole-Dudley, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University conducting my research study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. Thank you for completing the consent form. This follow-up interview will take about 60 minutes and will include nine questions regarding your experiences and challenges with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online teaching following the pandemic. I would like your permission to audio record this interview so I can accurately document the information you convey. If, at any time during the interview, you wish to stop using the recorder or the interview itself, please let me know. All your responses are confidential. Your responses will remain confidential and be used to better understand how you and your peers view your experiences and suggestions to improve your preparation for teaching online. The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to explore the perceptions of college faculty about the challenges they have experienced and recommendations for adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college.

At this time, I would like to remind you of your written consent to participate in this study. I am the responsible researcher, specifying your participation in the research project: College Faculty Perceptions Regarding Online Instruction. You have consented, certifying that you agree to continue this interview. You will receive one copy, and I will keep the other under lock and key, separate from your reported responses. Thank you.

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If at any time you need to stop or take a break, please let me know. You may also withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Then, with your permission, we will begin the interview questions.

RQ1: What are teacher education faculty's perceptions about the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college following the pandemic?

1. What are some challenges you have experienced in teaching online classes?
2. Follow up question: Would you give me an example?
3. What challenges were there to changing to teach online?
4. Follow up question: What is an example?
5. Why do you think there are challenges to teaching online?
6. Follow up question: Please give me an example.
7. How are you affected by changing modality from face-to-face to online?
8. What are the challenges of incorporating online teaching with face-to-face teaching?

RQ2: What are teacher recommendations about the training and support needed to overcome the challenges they have experienced with adjusting teaching modality from face-to-face to online at a local southern college following the pandemic?

1. What training for online teaching did you receive to prepare for teaching online courses?
2. What suggestions do you have to improve preparation for online teaching?

3. What are some recommendations about training as an online teacher to help you overcome the challenges of adjusting from face-to-face to online teaching?
4. What are some recommendations about ongoing support for challenges with online teaching?
5. Thank you for sharing your teaching experiences. Before we conclude this
6. interview, is there anything else you would like to share?

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. Once the analysis is complete, the overall summary results will be emailed to you.