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Creating an Online Employee Training System Based Upon Adult Learning Theories

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CREATING AN ONLINE EMPLOYEE TRAINING SYSTEM BASED UPON ADULT

LEARNING THEORIES

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A Capstone Report
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Doctor of Education

School of Education
in the Graduate School
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CREATING AN ONLINE EMPLOYEE TRAINING SYSTEM BASED UPON ADULT

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HaYee Hong Teska

A Capstone Report Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

in the field of Educational Administration

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DEDICATION

In loving memory of Mom (1940-2002) and Dad (1933-2020) for teaching me that anything is possible through education and hard work. Mom instilled the importance of education in me and that it is the key to success. One can never be too old to learn. There is not a day that passes that I do not wish she was here to see what I have accomplished. Thank you both for the love and sacrifices you have made to help me to become the person I am today.

Much gratitude to my loving husband for his never-ending support, humor, attention, and encouragement through my educational endeavors. Thank you for believing in me and never doubting my abilities.

Sincere appreciation and love to my little sister for always saying, "You'll do just fine," when I had struggles along the way.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HEADING 1

ENGAGING ADULT LEARNERS TO BE SUCCESSFUL THROUGH FOCUSED

ONLINE TRAINING

One might wonder why some educational courses are more satisfying and successful than others, or why some courses seem to fall short in a learner's estimation. There are many factors that can affect the learning experience for the adult learner and the educator. Educators who are cognizant of adult learners' traits and work to incorporate various elements into their course can help ensure that the adult learners have a positive learning experience. When engaging with adult learners, one needs to understand that the adult learners' prior experiences can influence their experience in the classroom.

When instructing traditional learners, the educator determines the format of how the teaching materials are presented (Bhowmik et al., 2013). The learning environment is controlled by the educator, and the learners are expected to comprehend the learning materials as presented (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). On the other hand, teaching adults can be challenging, because they bring their various backgrounds and experiences to the learning environment (Bhowmik et al., 2013). Adult learners are individuals who are responsible for their decisions and their life (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). The educator acts as a manager or a facilitator of the learning experience when instructing adult learners (Thoms, 2001). For optimal learning to occur with adult learners, certain conditions need to exist in the learning environment to encourage learning (Knowles, 1980). Additionally, barriers may need to be removed from the learning environment to promote learning for adult learners (Falasca, 2011).

Developing andragogy with adult learners requires the educator to provide opportunities for adult learners to make connections between the materials presented with their personal life

(Ozuah, 2005). It requires the educator to employ various strategies, such as role playing, or case studies in the learning environment to encourage and facilitate learning with adult learners. Opportunities for the adult learner to be successful early in their learning experience will boost the adult learner's confidence level regarding their learning (Ross-Gordon, 2003).

As an online educator, one should be adaptable in their roles and responsibilities because their role can vary between categories such as pedagogical, social, managerial, and technical roles (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). A learning environment that is positive and productive can result when the educator combines these four categories which encourages learning. When adult learners recognize the value or benefits of what they are learning, this stimulates or reinforces learning, especially, if the adult learner realizes that the newly, acquired knowledge can be used in their personal life to resolve a problem (Ozuah, 2005).

In online courses, establishing and maintaining an online instructor presence is important because the online instructor presence helps build an online community, which can encourage student participation (Martin et al., 2019). Creating an online instructor presence requires the educator to be responsive to their students while creating a supportive and encouraging learning environment for the learners (Martin et al., 2019). Being an online educator requires additional commitment in time and effort than if one were teaching in a traditional classroom face-to-face course (Esani, 2010). The online educator should be well versed in the technology used in the online course to assist the students, if necessary.

Academic institutions that offer online courses should provide training to their faculty who are interested in teaching online to properly prepare them to deliver online courses. Carlson and Carnevale (2001) contend that institutions often are not prepared to provide the necessary training or support to the faculty (Kentnor, 2015). This results in faculty and students being

frustrated due to the lack of clarity and organization concerning the online course experience. Teaching an online course requires more effort than the instructor uploading their presentation slides to a learning management system (LMS) when conducted correctly.

Online courses should contain basic components such as an introduction video from the instructor and a course orientation to help provide an effective and positive learning experience for students (Martin et al., 2019). An introduction video from the online instructor can help to set the tone of the online course and a thorough course orientation helps to inform students what they can expect in the online course. A detailed course orientation will also provide students with a map on how to navigate the online course. All of these components can be helpful to ensure student success in an online course (Martin et al., 2019).

Taking online courses requires one to properly manage their time to be successful and to take a more active role in their learning. Online learners need to self-advocate because the instructor is not always available for questions or clarification like in a face-to-face course. Online learners might have to wait for their instructor's response or feedback before they can proceed with learning or understanding the materials (Martin et al., 2019).

Educators teaching in an online setting can utilize various methods to engage the learners and help them become active learners in the learning process. Some of these methods include demonstrations, simulations, and discussions (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016). When lectures are primarily used in an online learning environment, this tends to place the learner into a passive role, which can negatively affect the learner's engagement in an online course (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016).

In my planning process for creating this online training, I was mindful of current adult learners employed in the program/student advisor role in the Southern Illinois University (SIU)

Carbondale's Extended Campus unit and what factors would help to facilitate learning. A program/student advisor for SIU Extended Campus works alone at the off-campus location and must be able to effectively assist students at their off-campus location. I created the online modules that I write about in this document to improve training for the SIU Extended Campus program/student advisors.

Job responsibilities of program/student advisors are outlined and documented in the online training sequences to prepare trainees to assist students effectively, accurately, and efficiently. Various duties such as recruiting students for SIU, degree evaluation, and assisting students with their academic degree needs are part of a program/student advisor's role. The online training modules provide documentation on the multitude of job duties as a reference source for the program/student advisors when they need this information. Working independently in an office to assist students can be overwhelming and intimidating, but with adequate training and backup resources such as other program/student advisors and online training resources will provide support to the trainees. Having necessary support in one's role is important when one considers their job satisfaction and longevity in the position. Providing online resources that are centrally located and readily accessible will potentially minimize frustration, confusion, and time wasted on searching for assistance on the adult learners' part.

The training materials will vary in format to accommodate different learning styles and will be readily accessible to the adult learners when the need arises. The training materials will help to guide the adult learner in their job duties and responsibilities and be housed in a central location. The training consists of two parts: one for general employment at SIU Carbondale, and one more specifically for the program/student advisors' role in the SIU Extended Campus offices. I have created these training modules within the Desire2Learn course management

system at SIU Carbondale.

In this document, I cover concepts that are involved in teaching adults and recognizing how adult learners are distinct from traditional learners. Characteristics and conditions regarding adult learners are discussed along with goals and various strategies for accomplishing learning with adult learners. Instructors can either utilize strategies alone or in conjunction with other strategies when teaching adult learners.

Online instructors require a different skill set from what is required for the traditional face-to-face instructor. Roles and responsibilities of an online instructor revolve around creating an online instructor presence and accommodating adult learners' needs and differences in the learning environment. Including an introduction and course orientation as components in an online course can provide opportunities for adult learners to be successful. Designing online courses require technological skills, additional time and planning to help ensure a positive and successful experience for both the adult learner and instructor.

Lastly, I discuss how I arrived at my decisions when constructing the online training sequences for the SIU Extended Campus unit. The implications and possible future refinements for the training sequences are discussed and based on the trainees' scores, this feedback will help guide additional revisions or additions for improvement.

HEADING 2

CONCEPT OF TEACHING ADULTS

The word "teaching" can appear to be a simple term; however, the concept of teaching is not so simple (Bhowmik et al., 2013). According to Bhowmik et al. (2013), teaching is comprised of activities, which assists individuals to obtain skills, knowledge, attitudes, or interests. The teaching process is often interactive between the teacher and the student (Bhowmik et al., 2013). It requires that educators utilize various teaching strategies since there is not a single strategy that will work for all learners (Bhowmik et al., 2013).

Through the years, teaching has evolved because of research findings and advancements in technology that can be used in teaching. Advancements in technology have made the teaching field more adaptable and interactive for both the educator and students. Educators now have the option of supplementing their lessons with online videos, presentation slides, guest speakers who are located at a distance, and the option to reinforce or clarify a lesson objective by retrieving additional information or resources from the Internet. All of these options can effectively assist an educator in delivering a successful and meaningful lesson. Educators have more resources at their disposal regarding various teaching methods, types of learners, and strategies to hopefully achieve better teaching results.

According to Boyd et al. (as cited in Knowles et al., 2005), "learning" refers to the act or the process by which behavior of an individual changes, or the individual acquires skills, habits, knowledge, and attitudes. As stated by Smith (as cited in Knowles et al., 2005), learning refers to the following: 1) the acquisition or mastery of what one already knows, 2) the extension or clarification in the meaning of one's experiences, and 3) an organized and intentional process of testing ideas that are relevant to issues. Mainly, learning must involve change and is concerned

with obtaining habits, knowledge, and attitudes in an individual (Knowles et al., 2005). From this learning, the individual will be able to adjust their personal or social settings (Knowles et al., 2005).

Learners are categorized into two groups; they are either traditional learners or adult learners and their differences are based on how they learn new materials. The focus will be on andragogy, which involves adult learners and the assumptions made regarding learning (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). In andragogy, the instructor plays the role of a mentor or guide, which assists the student to develop (Forrest & Peterson, 2006).

For adult learners to accomplish learning, certain conditions must exist such as a suitable physical and psychological climate (Knowles, as cited in Ross-Gordon, 2003). Learning environments that are open, which provide mutual respect, collaboration, support, and engagement are more conducive to learning for adult learners (Knowles, as cited in Ross-Gordon, 2003). By involving the adult learner's life experiences in the learning environment, this allows the adult learner to be an active participant in their learning process; they no longer play a passive role in their learning (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). Learning does not occur only in a classroom, and for most people they must be a constant state of learning as they go through their daily activities (Merriam & Bierema, 2014).

Advancements in technologies have reshaped the classroom, students' learning environment, and what students expect from their educational learning experiences. According to Allen and Seaman (2017), out of all the students that were taking at least one online course, 48% were enrolled in only online courses. Between the years 2012 and 2015, student enrollments on a traditional campus (not taking any online or distance courses) dropped nearly one million (931,317) (Allen & Seaman, 2017). Per Allen & Seaman (2017), approximately six million

students participated in at least one higher education institution online course in 2015 and in 2002, there were 1.6 million. The upward trend for online learning presents both opportunities and challenges to institutions who wish to offer online courses.

Online courses require careful planning and delivery to be effective for those involved. Some tend to view online offerings as a way to cutback expenses and increase faculty workloads (Sims et al., 2002). The online environment has to compensate for the lack of physical infrastructure, which relies more on asynchronous methods of communication between the students and instructor (Roddy et al. 2017). Online learning environments also provide flexibility such as anywhere, anytime to instructors and students, and are not restricted as traditional learning environments.

According to the Higher Education Research Center (as cited in Zhang & Walls, 2006), there are major advantages of distance education, which include the ability to reach a wider and greater student audience, the flexibility and customized learning and teaching, and can provide for greater interaction between the instructor and students. According to the Higher Education Research Center (as cited in Zhang & Walls, 2006), faculty report negative feelings toward distance learning for various reasons such, including: the lack of human contact; it requires more effort on the instructor; technology can be unreliable; and the technological skills which are required by the students.

By being aware of the upward trend with online learning, institutions and faculty can better prepare to offer what students are currently seeking. This also allows online instructors to deliver courses that would fulfill the necessary components and structure to meet the learning needs of adult learners. Per Moore and Kearsley (1996), an instructor does not simply upload their notes and PowerPoint presentations to the learning management system and then expect the

course to be successful (Miller & King, 2003). In order to deliver an effective online course, there are many variables to consider such as reliable computer equipment, strong internet connection, and a learning management system, which meets the educator's needs (Phillips, 2016). Planning is essential for an online class environment (Phillips, 2016). Online learning requires remarkable effort to plan course material delivery and learning activities; it should incorporate collaboration, communication, and foster engagement (Sims et al., 2002).

Along with having reliable computer equipment, faculty members who wish to teach an online course should possess certain competencies to deliver a successful online course. Per Alvarez et al. (2009), university instructors' role in online courses were obtained from being a traditional teacher. As noted by Martin et al. (2019), online instructors will take on various roles, such as course designer, teacher, mentor, facilitator, "cheerleader," and a "rule-setter" while teaching online courses. Each of these roles means a shift in the mindset of the online instructor to effectively deliver an online course. An online instructor must act as a promoter and a coach to their students; not just be a transferor of knowledge (Alvarez et al., 2009). Instructors transition from being the "subject expert" to a "performance coach" (Alvarez et al., 2009). Competencies that an online instructor should possess includes: technical skills, a willingness to learn, knowledge of how people learn, content expertise, course design skills, and skills to assess student learning (Martin et al., 2019). Challenges that online instructors often face are linked to interacting and communicating in an online setting; it not limited to knowledge and experience (Alvarez et al., 2009).

An institution who wishes to offer online courses should bear responsibility in providing training to faculty who wish to teach online because teaching in an online format is not equivalent to teaching a traditional face-to-face course. A 1997 National Center for Education

Statistics (NCES) report stated that approximately 60% of higher education institutions provided training opportunities to faculty regarding distance learning; other factors which cause faculty to pause before committing to teaching online is the fear of appearing incompetent because they have not been trained properly and are unaccustomed to being on camera (Bower, 2001). Other factors, which cause hesitation in faculty with teaching online are: the lack of administrative support; the concern of the quality of online students; the lack of technological background; and the increase in workload without additional compensation (Brooks, 2003).

According to Gibbons and Wentworth (2001), allowing instructors to teach online without formal training could be setting them up for failure. Training opportunities should be provided to students who wish to take online courses as well because participating in online courses can require new skills for the student (Bower, 2001). Online courses shift the learning experience from being instructor-centered to learner-centered (Bower, 2001).

Definitions

In this project, I utilized the following concepts which are not teaching techniques, but philosophies that educators utilize as guidance for foundational goals of teaching (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). I provide definitions here as the terms have both general and professional connotations.

Pedagogy. When dealing with traditional learners, pedagogy helps to promote the wellbeing of students, educators, and it improves students and educators' confidence (Bhowmik et al., 2013). According to Csibra and Gergely (2006), pedagogy usually involves communication of generalizable knowledge, therefore the teacher needs to specify additional details of the lesson they will be presenting to traditional learners. Pedagogy can be referred to as "teacher-directed" instruction that places the student into a submissive role, which promotes

dependency on the educator (Tomei, 2010).

        Andragogy. Andragogy is defined as the art and science of teaching adults and these adults have taken on adult roles in society, regardless of their age (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). Assumptions made regarding andragogy are that: adults have a self-concept of a self-directing personality; they bring a wealth of experience to the learning process; adults approach the learning process ready to learn; and adults look for immediate application of the learned knowledge (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). Two additional assumptions were later added by Malcolm Knowles, which are: adults need to know the reason why they learning something, and adults are driven to learn by intrinsic motivation (Forrest & Peterson, 2006).

Distinctions Between Pedagogy and Andragogy

        The main difference between pedagogy and andragogy is how the learning materials are presented to learners. In pedagogy, the educator is in charge of how the materials are presented to the learners and the learners' background is not taken into consideration by the educator. The educator controls the order and structure of the learning materials for the students. The students are then tasked with understanding the materials in the manner presented.

        The adult learners' experiences are taken into consideration by the educator in andragogy and the educator is mindful that adult learners are self-directing in their learning, which is opposite in pedagogy. Adult learners' prior negative learning experiences, could hinder the adult learners' current and/or future experiences.

HEADING 3

STRUCTURE OF THIS TRAINING PROGRAM

Advances in technology have provided additional alternatives for educators when presenting learning materials to students. For instance, educators can "bring in" guest speakers who are geographically separate to join their students in the classroom using computer technology. Educators can choose to supplement their lessons with technology by introducing materials using presentation slides or online resources such as, videos, websites, or audio clips. These additional resources can help to enrich or clarify lessons, or provide a deeper exploration of the materials for the learners.

When instructing adult learners, it is important to understand adult learners and their various characteristics. This could help an educator to be more intentional and effective at reaching and teaching their adult audience. Adult learners are often a full-time employee, a parent, a caretaker, or a service member when they add the role of student to their existing responsibilities (Merriam & Bierema, 2014).

The development of this online training was guided by the characteristics and needs of adult learners who are in the program/student advisor role with the Southern Illinois University (SIU) Extended Campus office. Methods that promote learning with adult learners has played a large part when creating these online training materials. Online training seeks to reduce or minimize barriers that adult learners encounter in the learning environment (Falasca, 2011). Conditions that negatively impact the learning experience for adult learners will be avoided, when possible.

Adult learners come into the learning environment with their feelings regarding prior learning experiences (Bhowmik et al., 2013). Depending on the nature of the adult learners' prior

experiences, this learning experience will either promote or hinder future learning experiences; this can also affect the adult learner's confidence regarding their learning. As an educator, being mindful, respectful, supportive, and encouraging of adult learners will help to create positive learning experiences (Bhowmik et al., 2013).

Optimal learning for adult learners occurs when the adult learner recognizes a need to learn something new, or if there is a need for additional knowledge for the adult learner to obtain in order to solve a problem. Adult learners tend to be more intrinsically motivated to learn than traditional learners (Pappas, 2013). Adult learners, however, can also possess external motivators for learning such as a job promotion or an increase in their job compensation.

The intent of this online training was to provide adult learners in the role of program/student advisors with a central location, which housed documented job processes and resources. The online training materials are readily available to the adult learners when the need arises since adult learners do not learn in the same manner. Therefore, the online learning materials will be presented in different formats to accommodate the various learning types. An example of the format of training materials will be written and detailed tutorials, which will contain screen captures to guide the adult learners through the job process.

Appropriate contact information will be provided within the introduction of the online training materials and the adult learners can reach out for additional assistance. When the adult learners reach out for additional training, these sessions will be conducted either via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. This will allow for additional hands-on training via video-conferencing, which can be a more positive learning experience for the adult learners.

Due to additional responsibilities and demands on an adult learner's time, they can be more cognizant and intolerant to poorly structured learning experiences (O'Toole & Essex,

2012). According to Pappas (2013), adult learners are results-oriented and have higher expectations regarding their own learning. Therefore, this online training has been structured to best utilize the adult learners' time by providing clear and concise documented resources.

Characteristics of Adult Learners

An adult must meet the following two criteria: fulfilling roles which are considered adult roles by society, such as being an employee, spouse, parent, soldier, or a responsible citizen; viewing themselves as being responsible for their own life (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). There are two classifications of learners: the traditional learner and the adult learner. The primary focus of this section of the literature review is the adult learner and the various characteristics that adult learners possess. An adult is also self-directing and takes responsibility for making their own decisions (Knowles et al., 2005). Often, one does not meet these criteria until one leaves school or college, obtains a full-time job, gets married, and starts a family (Knowles et al., 2005).

Other characteristics of adult learners include the following: set habits and strong tastes; an established rational framework such as values or attitudes, which is used for decision-making; and a desire and ability to change themselves (Thoms, 2001). Adult learners tend to thrive through three processes: learning from reinforcements; developing a group behavior that is consistent with their needs; and having a strong sense of pride (Thoms, 2001). The way these processes are demonstrated varies with each individual adult learner (Thoms, 2001).

An adult learner adds an additional role, student, to their other full-time roles such as caretaker, worker, and parent (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Adults are in a different position in their life than a child or a traditional college-age student, and at a different stage developmentally. Consequently, the life experiences, learning needs, and interests of adults vary

from children's experiences, learning needs, and interests (Merriam & Bierema, 2014).

According to Chen (2014), educators need to recognize that adult learners are developmentally distinct from traditional-aged students. Knowing the differences between adult learners and traditional learners allows one to be better prepared when delivering their lessons to their audiences. Per Laird (1985), when teaching adults, their primary role is to manage or guide the learning process, unlike when teaching the traditional learner (Thoms, 2001).

Adult learners differ from traditional learners because adult learners come with their prior experiences and tend to play multiple roles in life (Thoms, 2001). Chen (2014) observed that adult learners are self-directed; when their personal experiences are recognized and used in their learning process, learning is optimal. Adult learners tend to be more mature in age and be intrinsically motivated (Pappas, 2013). Because to adult learners possessing their own life experiences, how they learn and obtain new knowledge can be affected (Thoms, 2001). Adult learners are results-oriented, have higher expectations regarding their learning, and use their personal experiences to guide their learning (Pappas, 2013).

Knowles et al. (1984) stated that there are assumptions regarding the adult learner such as: adult learners prefer to establish their own learning goals and outcomes; and adult learners bring their extensive experiences to a learning environment and an instructor should realize the value in these experiences (Ross-Gordon, 2003). Adult learners tend to learn best when they discover a need to learn or do something more effectively; tend to be more problem-oriented when they approach learning; and it is often presumed that adult learners will respond to external motivators, but their internal motivation to learn is much stronger (Gregson & Sturko, 2007). Since adult learners are more intrinsically motivated, they often seek collaboration with their peers to learn additional strategies that they can apply to their personal or work situations

(Gregson & Sturko, 2007). Often, adults are motivated to learn to improve their adult life situation, whether it be for personal, work, social, or community-related reasons (Merriam & Bierema, 2014).

Per Knowles (1980), characteristics of adult learners include the following: are self-directed and autonomous; have obtained a wealth of life experiences and knowledge from work-related activities, family responsibilities, previous education; and are more problem-centered versus subject-centered in learning (Falasca, 2011). When adults realize the need and have an interest in the materials, this helps to motivate them to learn (Knowles et al., 2005). Per Tough (1979), adults tend to invest more of their energy inquiring what benefits might be gained from learning the new materials and what the negative consequences of not learning the materials might be (Knowles et al., 2005). As an educator of adult learners, one of the first hurdles is to assist the learner to become aware of what they need to know (Knowles et al., 2005).

Tomei (2010) describes adult learning as: experiential, problem-based, immediate, and self-directed; once adults realize why they need to learn something, then learning can be optimal when they can utilize the new information immediately. Per Tomei (2010), adults tend to accept partial responsibility for their own learning and they expect their learning environments to be constructed to accommodate adult learners. If the adult learner has experienced negative events during prior educational events, they may have low self-esteem regarding learning (McGrath, 2009). Knowles (2005) stated that the role of adult educators is to move adult learners away from their old learning and into new patterns of learning so that they can be self-directed and accept responsibility for their own learning (McGrath, 2009). Due to adults having greater experiences, this can have a negative impact on learning due to mental habits, biases, presuppositions that may result in the adult learner being closed-minded to new ideas and perceptions, and alternative

ways of thinking (Knowles et al., 2005). According to Knowles (1980), by providing adult

learners with early opportunities for successful experiences, this can help adult learners to

develop positive self-concepts regarding learning. It can be helpful for adult educators to help

adult learners to explore their habits, biases, and open their minds to be receptive to different

approaches through value clarification, meditation, and sensitivity training (Knowles et al.,

2005).

According to Gibbons and Wentworth (2001), traditional learners tend to rely on the

instructor's knowledge and information is disseminated in a lecture format from the "teacher-to-

student." Adult learners learn what they need to know; are responsible for their own learning;

have diverse life experiences and backgrounds and respond to external motivators (Gregson &

Sturko, 2007). Internal motivation, however, is more powerful and they must be ready to learn

(Gregson & Sturko, 2007). Gregson and Sturko (2007) posit that adults are more receptive or

motivated to learn when they are able to realize how the information can be applied to their life

or work situations and they are more problem-oriented in their learning. Traditional learners are

expected to accept the information as it is presented without question and learn the information

in the same format as it was presented to them (Gibbons & Wentworth, 2001). When dealing

with adult learners, the instructor should behave as the facilitator in the learning process since

adult learners want to be responsible for their own learning (McGrath, 2009).

Adult learners might respond to external motivators such as pay increases, job titles or

perks, academic credit, or promotions, but internal motivators like one's desire to grow,

improved self-esteem, quality of life, and job satisfaction are often more important to adult

learners (Gregson & Sturko, 2007). According to McGrath (2009), adult learners do respond to

external motivators for learning, however, internal priorities with adult learners tend to be more

important. Adult learners tend to engage in learning as a response to the pressures they are feeling from their current life situation and education is a way for adult learners to improve their coping abilities to life's problems that arise (Knowles, 1980).

O'Toole and Essex (2012) stated that adult learners tend to have a low tolerance to poorly constructed learning experiences and they are more apt to compare the value of the learning against the relevance to their lives and needs when acquiring new skills or knowledge. Adult learners are more vocal about their displeasure regarding the learning experience if it fails to meet their expectations (O'Toole & Essex, 2012).

Conditions That Motivate Adult Learners

Adult learners' more diverse life experiences, education, and personalities which (become more defined with age), can either have a positive or negative impact on one's motivation to learn (Lawler, 2003). These individual experiences can be positive or negative and can influence one's motivation for new learning (Lawler, 2003; Thoms, 2001). For some adult learners, their memories of their learning experiences could be negative because they were treated with disrespect and their fear of failing is so great that this creates a barrier to further learning as an adult (Knowles, 1980; Thoms, 2001).

Another distinction with adult learners is that they no longer view themselves as full-time learners, but rather begin to view themselves as producers or doers (Knowles, 1980). According to Knowles (1980), adult learners tend to gain self-fulfillment from their performance in their roles as workers, spouses, parents, and citizens. Adults tend to derive their self-identity from their experiences and they define themselves based on the accumulation of their unique experiences (Knowles, 1980). Adults are also responsible for their own decisions, their own lives, they have a deep psychological need to be recognized, and viewed by others as being

capable of self-direction (Knowles et al., 2005).

According to Tough (1979), adults are often motivated to continue growing and developing, but this motivation can be blocked by barriers such as a negative self-concept as a student, inaccessibility of opportunities or resources, time constraints, and programs, which violate principles of adult learning. External motivators such as a better job, a promotion, or a higher salary can elicit learning in adult learners, but these factors are not as influential as internal motivators such as a desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, or quality of life (Knowles et al., 2005).

Teaching adult learners is not the same as teaching traditional students and being aware of the differences in adult learners will result in a more effective learning experience for those involved (Thoms, 2001). As an adult educator, creating learning experiences, which provide adults with opportunities to transition from being dependent to self-directing learners will help to facilitate learning rather than treating the adults like children, which causes conflict for the adult learner (Knowles et al., 2005).

Nontraditional learners are most responsive to learning environment, which allow an opportunity to apply theory to their experiences and they bring a variety of life and work experiences to the classroom (Gibbons & Wentworth, 2001). The diversity, which adult learners bring to the learning environment makes helping them to learn a challenging, rewarding, and creative activity for adult educators (Falasca, 2011). Nontraditional learners possess a life-centered orientation to learning unlike traditional learners who have a subject-centered orientation (Gibbons and Wentworth, 2001).

Certain conditions must exist in adult learning programs to facilitate learning (Gregson and Sturko, 2007). Some of these conditions include: a) a learning environment that is respectful

and inclusive; b) relevant learning experiences; c) learning experiences, which involve the adult learner's values and perspectives; and d) being able to connect their learning experiences to real-life experiences (Gregson & Sturko, 2007). The learning environment for adult learners should also have active participants and opportunities for adult learners to reflect on how the information can be applied to real-life situations (Gregson & Sturko, 2007). When adult learners are working together, it helps to create a sense of community in the learning environment, which helps with facilitating learning (Gregson & Sturko, 2007).

Similarly, principles for optimal learning with adult learners occurs when certain conditions are met: 1) a non-threatening environment; 2) there is a need or desire to learn something; 3) the individual's learning style is met; and 4) the adult learner's previous experience is valued and utilized (Ozuah, 2005). Sufficient time must also be provided for the adult learner to assimilate the new information and an opportunity to practice and apply the newly obtained knowledge (Ozuah, 2005). Optimal learning can occur with adult learners when there is active cognitive and psychomotor participation in the process, a focus on relevant issues and practical applications of the concepts, and feedback to assess progress towards the adult learner's goals is provided (Ozuah, 2005).

According to Lawler (2003), when the social and physiological environment are conducive to adult learning, this helps to create a climate of respect. This requires an instructor to be accepting of the different characteristics of the adult learners such as: their learning styles, their educational background, their experiences, and their goals for professional development (Lawler, 2003). Being cognizant of these variables of adult learners is not enough; as an online instructor is planning the design and delivery of a course, their understanding of these adult learner variables need to be incorporated into the course (Lawler, 2003). Adult learners have

various roles and responsibilities in their lives and the instructor needs to understand this about

adult learners (Lawler, 2003). Adults also bring different quality of experiences to the learning

environment than youths, and these experiences have consequences on adult education (Knowles

et al., 2005).

According to Knowles (1980), the behavior of an educator plays a large role in the

climate of the learning environment because it conveys whether they are interested in the adult

learners, if the educator respects the adult learners, and if the educator respects the contributions

of the adult learners. An educator can demonstrate caring, respect, and support to adult learners

by listening to what adult learners are sharing in the learning environment (Knowles, 1980).

According to Rogers (1969), the educator of adult learners plays the role of a facilitator

of learning and the relationship between the facilitator and the adult learner is crucial (Knowles

et al., 2005). Rogers (1969) explains that facilitators of learning must possess certain attitudinal

traits such as: 1) realness or genuineness; 2) caring, prizing, trust, and respect in a non-possessive

manner; and 3) understanding, sensitivity, and good listening skills (Knowles et al., 2005).

According to Smith (2014), Rogers felt that these core conditions needed to be present for

learning to occur. When a facilitator is being real with an adult learner and accepting of the adult

learner as an individual person, the facilitator is more effective at building a positive relationship,

which encourages learning with the adult learner (Smith, 2014).

Another factor that can affect the goals of adult learners is the educator's instructional

practices such as their introduction and teaching of course materials; assessment of student work;

and how adult learners are recognized for their successes (Karge et al., 2011). The goals of the

adult learner can influence one's motivation (Karge et al., 2011). Once a respectful learning

environment is established, the instructor needs to encourage active participation of the students

because adults tend to learn more effectively when they are actively participating (Lawler, 2003). Engaged participants in a classroom also helps to demonstrate a cooperative environment (Lawler, 2003). However, an effective instructor must be able to discontinue any discussions that are not conducive to the materials presented (Thoms, 2001).

Educators of adult learners need to recognize and accept that adult learners bring with them their personal life experiences (Thoms, 2001). Depending on the life experiences the adult learner has experienced, this can sometimes pose a barrier to learning if those experiences were poor or ineffectual (Lawler, 2003). Adult learners tend to bring an abundance of first-hand experiences to the classroom and this can be either an asset or a hindrance to the class discussions (Thoms, 2001). Adult learners want to apply their learning and make connections between their educational experiences and their lives (Lawler, 2003). When adult learners are able to see how they will be able to apply the newly gained information in their lives, this helps to cement the learning process because they can see the relevancy and applicability of the materials (Thoms, 2001). In McGrath's (2009) estimation, before adult learners are willing to participate in learning new knowledge, they must know the reason for the new knowledge and they tend to take responsibility for their own learning, unlike children. Optimal learning for adults occur when they are able to use what they already know and incorporate new skills and knowledge into the existing information they possess (Thoms, 2001).

When working with adult learners, one needs to be cognizant of external and internal barriers, which can affect adult learning (Falasca, 2011). External barriers (also referred to as situational barriers) are beyond the individual's control but can indirectly affect the adult learner's ability to learn such as changes in one's health (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). These barriers can be the effects of aging, which affect one's vision or hearing, or changes to the family

or work roles; internal or dispositional barriers are variables such as the adult learner's personal attitudes towards learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

The optimal psychological climate for adult learners is one that permits adults to feel accepted, respected, supported, and to allow them to express themselves without the fear of punishment or ridicule (Knowles, 1980). Adults tend to view their experiences as being "who they are." Therefore, if these experiences are disregarded, adults will perceive this as a rejection of their experiences and them as an individual (Knowles et al., 2005). Instructors should allow for maximum participation from the adult learners to facilitate learning (Thoms, 2001). It is ideal for instructors to manage the process, but not manage the content through two-way communication and feedback when dealing with adult learners.

For optimal learning to occur, barriers must be overcome by the adult learner (Falasca, 2011). As previously mentioned, it is important to create a safe and supportive learning environment for learners to succeed (Falasca, 2011). Ways to help adult learners to succeed are involving adult learners in recognizing their own learning needs, encouraging learners to find available resources they can utilize to accomplish their goals, and in evaluating their learning can help adult learners to succeed (Falasca, 2011).

Adult learners are motivated to participate in learning when they feel the need to learn and if they can see a personal goal that learning will help them to achieve (Knowles, 1980). According to Knowles (1980), adult learners will expend their energy making use of the available resources such as the instructor and readings as long as they see the relevance to their needs and goals. Considerable learning results when adult learners are involved in the methods and techniques that allow for self-directed inquiry by the individual (Knowles, 1980). Other factors that can influence adult learners' motivation for learning include: the quality of

instruction; the quality of the curriculum; interactive classrooms and effective management practices; progressive assessment and timely feedback; self-directedness; conducive learning environment; relevance and pragmatism; and effective advising practices (Sogunro, 2015).

Quality instruction requires that educators plan and organize their course materials effectively to spark motivation in adult learners (Sogunro, 2015). Items that are considered as part of the course curriculum are: the course syllabus; course objectives; expectations of the adult learner; grading standards; course activities; and course meeting times (Sogunro, 2015). If the curriculum is not relevant and pragmatic, adult learners will likely consider it to be abstract, dull, and hypothetical (Sogunro, 2015).

Goals for Developing Andragogy with Adult Learners

O'Toole and Essex (2012) stated that a key to improving the learning experience when dealing with adult learners is to recognize that adults will have different needs, expectations and limitations to what they want and need to know, and how they are prepared to experience it. Adult learners enter the learning environment with feelings from their prior learning experiences, which could either hinder or help future learning experiences (Thoms, 2001). Accordingly, adult learning does not only take place in a classroom; it can occur in the workplace of the adult learner (O'Toole & Essex, 2012). Adult learning can occur as mentoring in the workplace and can be more meaningful learning because it allows the adult learner to associate the learning with their role in the workplace, which increases the learner's motivation and the relevancy of the materials (O'Toole & Essex, 2012).

Cranton (1997) discusses how reflection and taking action based on one's learning empowers the adult learner (Lawler, 2003). When adult learners are able to change their environment as a result of a learning experience, they are empowered (Lawler, 2003). Working

with adult learners does not consist of utilizing one strategy, since individuals learn in different manners which requires an effective educator to adjust their teaching methods to cater to various learning styles of the students (Martin et al., 2019). When adult learners realize that the new knowledge, skills, understandings, values, or attitudes will help them to accomplish tasks or handle issues that arise in their life, they are motivated to learn because they can see how it applies to real life (Knowles et al., 2005). Learning is most effective for adult learners when new materials can be applied to real-life situations (Knowles et al., 2005).

Postsecondary Strategies for Teaching Adults

When working with adult learners, Ross-Gordon (2003) suggested certain practices to provide a learning environment that is conducive to adult learners. These practices include providing opportunities for adults to decide their personal goals and select learning strategies; providing or creating opportunities for adult learners to make the connections between knowledge gained in the classroom and how this connects to knowledge gained in their personal life, such as work and family; and using activities, which stimulate cognitive development and growth in adults that help them to better deal with everyday issues that arise (Ross-Gordon, 2003). It is also important to be cognizant that many adults will encounter life-changing events immediately before or after enrolling in college (Ross-Gordon, 2003). By utilizing course designs and instructional activities that provide learning environments (either learner-centered or instructor-centered) to meet the needs of adult learners and being sensitive to adult learners' differences will help to facilitate optimal learning among adult learners (Ross-Gordon, 2003). Creating opportunities for adult learners to succeed is vital for them to become more confident in their learning abilities (Ross-Gordon, 2003).

When educating with adult learners, educators should keep the following in mind to

encourage learning: presenting information in smaller chunks to allow for mastery; presenting

new information that is meaningful and practical; and using feedback and frequent

summarization for reinforcement of the materials (Thoms, 2001). Adult educators must accept

that individuals learn at different rates, that learning is continuous, and that learning occurs as a

result of stimulation and is beneficial to the learner (Thoms, 2001). Learning can be boosted

through positive reinforcement, supporting group work to improve learning among adult

learners, and understanding that individuals learn by doing therefore hands-on experiences are

ideal (Thoms, 2001). Learning occurs at the appropriate time, so it is best to not introduce new

information if the adult learner does not need the knowledge for several months (Thoms, 2001).

      Certain strategies tend to work better when teaching adult learners and these strategies

include: role playing; case studies; simulations; and self-evaluation (Tomei, 2010). According to

Tomei (2010), these strategies can be enhanced with technology when delivered to adult

learners. Research by Gregson and Sturko (2007) indicates that dictating to adult learners what to

learn causes the adult learners to become passive learners and their negative attitude will hinder

or prevent the learning process. Adult learners who have been away from school for some time

can also lack confidence and underestimate their ability to learn (Knowles, 1980).

      Other ways to successfully facilitate learning in adults is to place greater emphasis on

learning activities that will draw upon the adult learner's experience such as: group discussions;

the case method; simulation exercises; the critical-incident process; role playing; field projects;

action projects; laboratory methods; demonstrations; seminars; work conferences; counseling;

group therapy; community development; and skill-practice exercises (Knowles, 1980). Adults

want hands-on training sessions that are practical, rather than general, theory-oriented classes

(Thoms, 2001). According to Knowles (1980), it is beneficial for adult learners to plan on how

they will incorporate or transfer their new knowledge to their day-to-day lives. Class exercises should replace lectures to allow adult learners to participate in discussions and debates (Knowles et al., 2005).

Adult learners must also accept that they play a large role in their own success for learning new materials, skills, values, or attitudes (Daily & Landis, 2014). Adult learners can be more successful in their learning by taking the initiative and responsibility for their learning; having an attitude of humility and acknowledging when one does not know the answer; and asking questions to seek answers (Daily & Landis, 2014). Adult learners can also develop a system to stay updated, be able to critically reflect on oneself, setting goals based on one's educational needs then creating a plan to accomplish those goals; being open to learning from classmates and peers; and learning how to incorporate new knowledge in a way that makes sense to them as the learner (Daily & Landis, 2014).

Summary

Educators of adult learners should be aware of the characteristics that comprise adult learners, what motivates adult learners, what barriers adult learners may encounter, how adult learners feel about learning based on their previous experiences, and what conditions help to facilitate optimal learning for adult learners. By understanding and being mindful of these various factors, it can allow an educator to be more effective when teaching adult learners by providing a learning environment that is supportive of adult learners.

Adult learners add the role of student to their other roles and responsibilities such as a full-time employee, a parent, a caretaker, or a service member (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). Due to the various demands on an adult learner's time, they tend to be more critical of their learning experiences (O'Toole & Essex, 2012). Optimal learning for adult learners occurs when the

learner realizes the need to learn something and how the new information can be utilized in their life (Tomei, 2010). Providing opportunities for successful learning experiences for adult learners will help them to develop positive feelings regarding their learning (Knowles, 1980).

According to Gregson and Sturko (2007), certain conditions must exist in a learning environment to facilitate learning for adults. A respectful and inclusive learning environment, which provide learning experiences that involve the adult learners' values and perspectives are necessary conditions for adult learners (Gregson & Sturko, 2007). When instructing adult learners, an educator may play the role of a facilitator per Rogers (Knowles et al., 2005). The relationship between the adult learner and facilitator can affect learning of the adult learner (Smith, 2014). Having a positive relationship between the facilitator and adult learner aids learning for the adult learner (Smith, 2014).

External and internal barriers to learning must be overcome by adult learners for learning to occur (Falasca, 2011). External barriers directly impact learning of the adult learner but they are not within the learner's control (Merriam & Cafferella, 1999). Personal attitudes of the adult learner are considered as internal barriers (Merriam & Cafferella, 1999). Adult learners are motivated by quality instruction and curriculum, interactive classroom, and effective management practices (Sogunro, 2015). When the adult learners find the curriculum to be irrelevant or abstract, they will find the materials to be dull and hypothetical (Sogunro, 2015). Learning for adult learners is continuous, can occur at different rates, is beneficial, and is a result of stimulation to the learner (Thoms, 2001). Activities such as role playing, simulation exercises, or group discussions in the learning environment can result in the adult learner retrieving from their own experiences, which can lead to more successful learning (Knowles, 1980).

HEADING 4

CHARACTERISTICS OF ONLINE TEACHING AND CONDUCTING ONLINE

COURSES

Teaching online requires an educator to shift from being teacher-centered to student-centered, and low interaction and initiator to high interaction and initiator (Beck & Ferdig, 2008). The educator employs a supportive role and acts as a mentor to students in an online course (Forrest & Peterson, 2006; Martin et al., 2019). An online educator's role can be classified into four categories, which are: pedagogical; social; managerial; and technical (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). When these four categories of roles are combined, this can result in a positive and productive learning environment that supports learning.

There are various ways to create an instructor's presence in an online course to ensure a successful learning experience for students (Martin et al., 2019). According to Martin et al. (2019), such ways include: providing an introduction video by the instructor, establishing a personal connection with students, and being present during the synchronous online class discussion forums. Other roles that an educator must fulfill when teaching online include course designer, mentor, and technical support, if needed. Being knowledgeable and capable with the technology that is used in the online course helps to minimize time spent on becoming acclimated to the technology (Roddy et al., 2017).

Online Instructor Roles and Responsibilities

Online courses can be delivered either asynchronously or synchronously. Regardless if the course is asynchronous or synchronous, a detailed and thorough course orientation is a necessary component to ensuring student success (Cho, 2012). Preparing an online course for delivery is a time-consuming process since it requires careful planning and design (Bower, 2001;

Roddy et al., 2017). Ideally, the online course is structured and the content is uploaded prior to any students accessing the materials. Once the course is accessible by students, it can be confusing to the students if changes to the contents are made (Beck & Ferdig, 2008).

Online instructors' responsibilities and roles to fulfill to provide an ideal learning environment for the adult learner to be successful are similar, yet distinct from those of an in-person instructor. According to Beck and Ferdig (2008), an online instructor's role shifts from being teacher-centered to student-centered, low-interaction to high-interaction, and low-initiator to high-initiator. In an online teaching environment, the content of a course is prepared prior to the start of the course, which allows the online instructor to focus more attention on facilitating students' understanding of the course materials, rather than spending their time lecturing to the class (Beck & Ferdig, 2008). When online courses are student-centered rather than teacher-centered, this helps students to feel more supported in their learning and this can result in a more positive learning experience for everyone (Beck & Ferdig, 2008). An important factor of online teaching is that an instructor's role will shift from being engaging, to being supportive, and a mentor to students as they move through the online course (Martin et al., 2019).

According to Keengwe and Kidd (2010), an online instructor's role can be broken into four categories: pedagogical; social; managerial; and technical. Under the pedagogical role, the instructor is the facilitator of the educational content, while the social role consists of the instructor creating an online learning environment that is conducive to student interaction and learning (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). The managerial role of an online instructor includes setting the agenda, setting of objectives, and rules for the online course; the technical role requires that the instructor become comfortable with the technology used in the course and be able to assist students (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). These four categories work together to provide a learning

environment for students, which is positive, productive, and encourages learning.

Instructors often embody different roles when teaching online including: cognitive roles, affective roles, and managerial roles (Coppola et al., 2002). Research according to Coppola et al. (2002), states that the cognitive role involves the mental processes that are associated to learning and perception, information storage, memory, problem solving, and thinking. Whereas, the affective role is the instructor's ability to influence and develop intimate relationships with students in the online learning environment (Coppola et al., 2002). Coppola et al. (2002) report faculty felt that their relationships with students online were more connected. Lastly, the managerial role of an online instructor involves their behaviors concerning course planning, organizing, leading, and controlling the learning environment (Coppola et al., 2002). The online instructor's behaviors often reflect their motivation, and controlling the learning environment can be accomplished by monitoring and evaluating student learning outcomes (Coppola et al., 2002). The managerial role regarding class and course management in an online setting requires the instructor to provide greater attention to detail, more structure than in traditional courses, and frequent monitoring of students' progress (Coppola et al., 2002).

According to Martin et al. (2019), online instructors report feeling that student engagement was part of an instructor's role because through student-to-student interaction or student-to-instructor interaction is how students can learn. Online instructors need to play the role of a facilitator and establish an instructor presence to ensure a successful online course for the students (Martin et al., 2019). Per Beck and Ferdig (2008), instructor-student interactions help to boost student learning and serving as a facilitator in an online course is challenging because it requires constant evaluation of the learning environment for necessary adjustments to encourage learning. The facilitator must also assess student learning through assignments and

assess how well the students have grasped the materials or concepts from the current manner the information was presented (Martin et al., 2019). Training for online instructors to fulfill the facilitator role should include training on how to be respectful of the adult learners' maturity and motivation for learning (Gibbons & Wentworth, 2001).

Aside from being a facilitator, the online instructor is also the course designer; teacher; mentor; and "cheerleader" (Martin et al., 2019). Online instructors' roles tend to fall into three areas, which are not exclusive of each other, but rather they may overlap during the course: 1) planning and design; 2) socialization; and 3) instruction (Alvarez et al., 2009). Online instructors can facilitate the course and create an "instructor presence" through the following ways: creating an introduction video of themselves for the start of the course; incorporating activities early in the online course to allow students to become comfortable with the technology and engaged in the course with the other students; establishing a "personal connection" with students; assisting students with managing their time to be successful in the course; resolving student issues and questions; and being present during the class discussion forums (Martin et al., 2019). Of course, this list is not inclusive; there are other examples that can help create an instructor presence.

Brooks (2003) posits that faculty being able to respond to student questions quickly helps ensure students have a positive experience in an online course. Often times, this can be challenging for even the most experienced faculty (Brooks, 2003).

Per Savery (2005), in order to be an effective online instructor, one should utilize the VOCAL approach, which stands for Visible, Organized, Compassionate, Analytical, and Leader-by-example. Employing the VOCAL approach helps to promote an effective learning environment, which is supportive, challenging, constructive, rigorous, and can be more productive, which can result in a more positive learning experience for students (Savery, 2005).

The VOCAL approach requires that the online instructor be visible in the online setting and responsive to student questions (Savery, 2005). Being organized in the course development and structure ensures that students do not waste time on trying to figure out the intent of the instructor regarding an assignment. If students know that their instructor is compassionate towards them, students conceivably could open up to share more details regarding their personal life than they would in a traditional class setting (Savery, 2005). Savery (2005) also notes online instructors should also be analytical and provide timely feedback to students regarding their performance. Feedback regarding progress towards the learning objectives of the online course should be provided. Lastly, the instructor should be a leader by example because students will tend to mirror the instructor's behaviors in the course (Savery, 2005).

Another role an online instructor will play is a course designer. Part of a course designer's responsibility is to establish learning objectives, ensure that the course design is appropriate for the materials presented, and that the course is accessible and compliant with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) (Martin et al., 2019). Tasks to complete during the planning and design phase of an online course includes activities, which will help to foster communication with students and among the students in the course, which align with the learning objectives and course content (Alvarez et al., 2009).

A critical component of effective online courses is the preparation of instructors by the institution, which prepare instructors to develop skills that are necessary for successful pedagogy in an online setting (Roddy et al., 2017). Creating an environment that is inclusive, supportive of engaging students, and a sense of community are responsibilities of the institution and the online instructor (Roddy et al., 2017).

Removing barriers such as affective and cognitive barriers from the online learning

environment to provide a more equitable learning environment for students is known as humanizing (Pacansky-Brock et al., 2020). By creating an online learning environment that is inclusive and supports the cognitive and affective differences within the online course will help to enhance the success of the adult learners (Pacansky-Brock et al., 2020). Humanizing also could help to promote an inclusive online learning environment (Pacansky-Brock et al., 2020).

O'Quinn and Corry (2002), stated that factors related to faculty hesitation regarding teaching online include the lack of monetary support; increase in workload; lack of salary increase; lack of technological background; lack of administrative support; and concern about the quality of students who enroll in online courses (Brooks, 2003). Institutional support related to these factors can have a large impact on the success and perceptions of online courses by the faculty, students, and all of the individuals involved in online education (Brooks, 2003).

Often times, the instructor's role of a course designer will depend on the institution the instructor is employed by because the level of support provided to online instructors will vary from institution to institution, depending on the availability of support and the institution's structure (Martin et al., 2019). For instance, at Southern Illinois University (SIU) Carbondale, there is a Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) office with instructional designers to assist faculty members with designing and planning online courses, as well as students, staff, and teaching assistants.

The remaining roles of an online instructor are: course manager; subject matter expert; and mentor (Martin et al., 2019). Being a course manager consists of controlling the online course content and determining the format of the materials presented (Martin et al., 2019). As an online instructor, one needs to be knowledgeable about why certain instructional methods are useful; one must stay up to date on research, techniques, and theories regarding online teaching

(Martin et al., 2019). Online instructors may serve as a mentor for students who are in need of guidance regarding their academic and professional development (Martin et al., 2019). Research by Martin et al. (2019) finds that online instructors felt that their main responsibility was to create a positive, productive, and effective learning environment for their online students by being present, engaging students in positive interactions, and being responsive to students.

Martin et al. (2019) also observe that instructors felt that the most common task they engaged in aside from teaching was course design. Course design consists of locating and deciding what information will be included in a course. Materials need to be organized into manageable units or modules for the learner in order to be effective and not overwhelming. As the course designer, one must decide what format is effective for presenting course materials. Decisions regarding course content, how content is arranged, the type of activities required of the students, when materials will be released to students, and how the students' learning will be assessed are things that need to be determined.

Time at the beginning of an online course should be spent on getting to know the students through introductions and a welcome message from the online instructor (Martin et al., 2019). It is a good time to come to know the students and to ask them what they perceive to be challenges for them in an online course. Per Martin et al. (2019), an online instructor should ask questions on how students feel about the course and is there anything they need to know about the student. A part of the social role of the online instructor is to accompany and mediate the students' learning process as a mediator, moderator, coach, tutor, or facilitator (Alvarez et al., 2009).

The online instructor's behavior will influence students' relationships with the instructor and other students (Alvarez et al., 2009). Unlike with traditional courses, the sense of community that is created in a face-to-face course often does not exist in an online setting (Zhang & Walls,

2006). Depending on the technology used to conduct online courses, the instructor may not receive visual cues from the students (Zhang & Walls, 2006).

Instructor Competencies for Teaching Online

An online instructor should possess technical skills that enable them to navigate email, internet searches, file uploads and downloads, and generation of PDF files, along with the ability to use the learning management system (LMS) (Martin et al., 2019). Online instructors should be able to create course materials in various formats to demonstrate to students that they are actively participating in the use of technologies (Martin et al., 2019). This could help to appeal to various learning styles of adult learners.

Online instructors should possess technical writing skills because creating audio and video materials is different from presenting materials to students in a face-to-face setting (Martin et al., 2019). The ability of online instructors to communicate effectively, manage technology, deliver and assess content becomes very important in an online learning environment because there is less time to become acclimated to technology (Roddy et al., 2017). Developing student rapport in an online setting is not as easy as in face-to-face settings (Roddy et al., 2017).

According to Martin et al. (2019), online instructors' willingness to learn and grow in terms of technological skills and pedagogy are important and commonly mentioned competencies. To have a successful online course, instructors need to allocate more time than perhaps they are accustomed to when teaching a traditional course, because interacting with students through technology often requires more time and presence than in-person instruction (Martin et al., 2019). If an online instructor's comfort level with technology is high, this allows them to assist students with their technical issues if necessary. Online instructors should keep current on theories and research regarding different online teaching techniques, to better

understand why certain things are useful (Martin et al., 2019).

A misconception about online courses is that they are easier than traditional face-to-face courses, however online courses often require more time dedication (Brooks, 2003). According to Malcolm Knowles, the responsibility to become better time managers and self-directed learners is on the learner in an learning environment (Smith, 2002). To better assist and prepare students for online courses, instructors should gauge the students' ability level by asking about their experience level with online courses, sharing the hardware/software requirements for an online course, and providing any prerequisite work that students may need to be successful in an online course (Brooks, 2003).

Understanding how students learn in an online setting is another important competency that is necessary in online instructors to engage students (Martin et al., 2019). This knowledge allows an online instructor to create course materials to encourage student learning based on students' preferences (Martin et al., 2019). For instance, according to Martin et al. (2019), some individuals learn in an auditory fashion and would prefer course materials as podcasts or videos. It is important and helpful as an online instructor to be aware of a student's preference for a social or solitary learning style when developing course activities and assignments (Martin et al., 2019).

In addition to a faculty member's willingness to teach online, the institution should bear some responsibility and investment to prepare those who are interested in teaching online. College administrators are applying pressure to faculty to participate in teaching online and other technology-related endeavors, however, some of the reasons why faculty resist entering the distance education teaching environment is due to the significant time and energy required to create an engaging online course (Bower, 2001). The additional work is sometimes considered

part of the faculty member's workload with no additional compensation provided (Bower, 2001).

Faculty usually begin planning their courses by considering the content, rather than stating course objectives in a clear and concise manner for students (Stark & Lattuca, 1997). Faculty spend very little time on conceptual planning activities prior to teaching an existing course (Stark & Lattuca, 1997). Faculty members tend to continuously revise their course by fine-tuning or making adjustments as they go along, rather than concentrating their efforts on planning the course in advance, like one would do with a new course (Stark and Lattuca, 1997). In their 1997 work, Stark and Lattuca reported that college professors stated that little change was needed to their courses because students tend to be similar from semester to semester in age, ability, and interests. Since faculty take for granted the contents of the course, they tended to focus on the instructional activities early in the planning process (Starks & Lattuca, 1997).

Components of Online Courses

Online course planning, design, and delivery is an intense process that is time-consuming for those individuals involved. Ideally, the course structure and contents should be established and in place prior to students beginning the course (Beck & Ferdig, 2008). Once students begin accessing the course, it can be confusing for them if the instructor decides to rearrange the components of the course. It can also be difficult to move online course components once users are in the course shell. These are some of the reasons why online courses must be planned and structured before going "live" (Brooks, 2003).

Online courses require different planning and delivery than a traditional course because the instructor is not always available when a question arises for a student, unlike in a traditional course. According to Roddy et al. (2017), development of online courses is more complex than traditional courses, requiring careful planning to maximize the available technologies to meet the

different needs of students and assessment modes. When preparing to teach online, one should

not simply replicate one's traditional face-to-face strategies for the online learning environment

(Sims et al., 2002). Teaching in an online environment requires the instructor to be specific in

their directions and numerous with communications because students are not physically present

(Beck & Ferdig, 2008).

Online courses need to be thoughtfully and completely organized, because students who

select online courses want to know what is expected of them and details of required assignments

to organize their time to fulfill the course requirements (Savery, 2005). Ideally, instructors will

have prepared materials with clear instructions for all assignments to avoid any delays or wasted

efforts in an online setting (Savery, 2005). Per Brooks (2003), an online course that is clear and

well thought-out will help to alleviate student concerns if these are taken into consideration

before the students begin the course.

Online courses can be either in an asynchronous or synchronous format. The closest

replication of a traditional course is an online course delivered in a synchronous format, which

allows for live, two-way interaction (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016). Methods and tools

which support real-time communication include: being available by telephone, holding virtual

office hours, utilizing streaming video in the online classroom, conducting live chats, and

offering web conferencing sessions (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016). Utilizing these

tools provides opportunities for students and the instructor to participate and interact "live" with

others in the class (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016).

Asynchronous courses allow students to access the course materials and interact with

other students at their convenience (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016). In asynchronous

courses, verbal communication is primarily by text and the instructor's response time directly

affects their online social presence, which can influence students' attitude towards learning (Savery, 2005). Song et al. (2004) suggested that students felt that asynchronous online courses provided for more reflection time to compose their responses. For instance, asynchronous discussion boards can provide a more structured way for addressing questions and facilitating discussion in an online course (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016).

In asynchronous online courses, there are several options to deliver course materials to students. For instance, lectures can be pre-recorded by the instructor and slide presentations with the instructor's voice pre-recorded over slides can be uploaded to the learning management system for students to retrieve at their own pace (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016). Other options in online courses include: communicating via email; discussion forums or boards; Google Drive or other collaborative tools; and virtual tutoring centers or virtual resource centers for additional support (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016).

Instructional methods such as simulations and games in online courses provides students with hands-on experience in a virtual environment to apply practical knowledge and gain experience while mastering the necessary skills and concepts of the lesson (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016). These two strategies can increase student participation, which could be beneficial to the students' learning (Online Education Research LLC, 2016).

Discussions within online courses supports learning and it allows students to become actively engaged in the learning process (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016). During discussions, there are opportunities for students to ask questions for clarification and express their ideas, which can help to facilitate learning. When the objective of a lesson is to convey concepts and processes, utilizing demonstrations in an online classroom can help promote learning, especially if the demonstrations are recorded and available at the students' request

(Online Education Research, LLC, 2016). Per Gibbons and Wentworth (2001), well-designed discussions that are application-based and relevant to the adult learner's current life events and problems can help to facilitate critical thinking.

Case studies and problem-based learning projects in terms of instructional methods encourages student participation in an active learning role while exercising their skills and knowledge to solve the presented issues (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016). When these instructional methods are used in a collaborative way, it helps to provide additional opportunities for online students to connect and learn from other students (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016). Another appropriate instructional method is guided design, which is inquiry-based that encourages online students to become familiar with the available resources in their local communities by tasking them with finding answers to open-ended problems (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016). This also requires students to complete the work outside of the class (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016).

One of the most crucial success factors for adult learning is communication and interactivity in an online setting (Sims et al., 2002). Interactivity affects communication between the participants and instructor and the overall effectiveness of the course experience (Sims et al., 2002). Since the learner often works independently in online courses, the effectiveness of the communications (interactions) ultimately determine the efficacy and effectiveness of the learning environment (Sims et al., 2002). Opportunities for direct communication between the students and the instructor make learning management systems more appropriate for online courses (Beard et al., 2004). Direct communication methods such as email, discussion boards, and virtual chat rooms encourage student interaction (Beard et al., 2004).

Designing Online Teaching

Teaching adult learners has changed due to technological advances, which can make the learning environment more challenging. Educators now have the ability to incorporate different strategies to accomplish learning for adults. Some of these strategies include presentation slides, online video materials, and guest speakers who are located in a different geographical location from the students.

According to Cho (2012), an important component of online courses to ensure student success is an orientation of the course. Such orientation would cover the nature of online learning, how to use the learning management system, what technical requirements are needed for the course, and what skills and motivation are needed for online learning (Cho, 2012). A comprehensive overview containing details on the course structure, the necessary time commitment and expectations of students, an acclimation of the instructional media and software, and guidance on the communication tools necessary for student and instructor interactions would be beneficial to ensure student success (Roddy et al., 2017). Interactions with other students and the online instructor is instrumental to students' success in an online course (Cho, 2012).

There are various instructional strategies faculty could employ when teaching in an online environment: lectures, discussions, demonstrations, simulations, games, case studies, problem-based learning projects, and guided design (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016). These strategies can be used in conjunction with each other or separately. Lectures are the most common method of information delivery in online and traditional courses; however, this method tends to place students in a passive role, which could negatively affect engagement in an online learning environment (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016).

Blair and Hoy (2006) suggests that there are differences between adult online learners

versus traditional college students in terms of their needs, motivation, and production. Online education requires more independence from a student because they must be able to learn some of the course materials without the instructor present (Online Education Research, LLC, (2016). Successful online instruction consists of varied interactions between the students and the instructor to foster a better sense of community in the learning environment (Blair & Hoy, 2006). The feeling of community in an online course can affect how students perform in an online course.

Creating assignments that require discussion within the online classroom setting provides opportunities for the adult learners to develop ideas, discuss issues that are related to class and their assignments, and it also helps to build a sense of collaboration and community (Blair & Hoy, 2006). A sense of community does not just happen on its own because the opportunities are present; it requires the instructor to be active in encouraging the students to share their expectations and needs with each other (Blair & Hoy, 2006). An advantage of online courses is that the interactions that occur within the online learning environment are captured by the learning management system to be retrieved later as a reference, if needed (Blair & Hoy, 2006).

Students' teamwork orientation and group cohesiveness in an online setting are variables, which can predict student learning (Williams et al., 2006). Learning can be elevated through group assignments, and individuals who prefer group work are more likely to interact more frequently and share information, which can lead to more learning (Williams et al., 2006). Group cohesiveness describes learners' likeness for each other and their inclination to remain as part of the group (Williams et al., 2006). Carron and Spink (1995) drawing from their research posit that collaborative team assignments can boost motivation, completion rates, student satisfaction, and even performance, depending on the size of the group.

Online courses should provide support for the instructors and students to ensure that they have a positive experience within the learning environment. Often, it could be a student's first experience with an online course, which requires them to work collaboratively and independently; therefore, having support available to them would affect their success in the online course (Sims et al., 2002). For online learning to be successful for the adult learner, the online course should provide adequate feedback, minimize feelings of isolation through the sense of community, address technology requirements to avoid frustrations, and minimize anxiety or confusion by the student (Miller & King, 2003).

When an individual's knowledge, habits, skills, or attitudes are modified, this is known as "learning" (Boyd et al., 1980; Knowles et al., 2005). From these changes, an individual is able to make changes to their personal or social settings (Knowles et al., 2005). According to Knowles, often for adult learners to accomplish learning, certain conditions in the learning environment must exist such as a mutually respect, collaboration, support and engagement that is conducive to learning (Ross-Gordon, 2003). A learning environment that is respectful and inclusive in order to foster learning is also known as humanizing the learning environment (Pacansky-Brock et al., 2020).

When teaching adult learners, an educator should be cognizant of the various characteristics of adult learners, to be more effective when delivering course materials. Being aware of how adult learners obtain new knowledge, what motivates them to learn, and how they are different from traditional learners can be very helpful (Ozuah, 2005). Adult learners also bring their prior experiences to the learning environment and these prior experiences can be negative or positive (Thoms, 2001). Based on prior experiences, this can promote or hinder one's motivation for the learning process of the adult learner (Thoms, 2001).

Learners are classified into two groups; they are either traditional learners or adult learners. For an individual to be classified as an adult learner, one must meet two criteria, such as fulfilling roles that are considered adult roles (employee, spouse, parent, soldier, or "responsible citizen"), and the individual must be of the mindset that they are responsible for their own life (Thoms, 2001). Adults also take responsibility for making their own decisions. Adult learners can face unique barriers which influence their motivation to learn. Some of these barriers are negative educational self-esteem, time constraints, and inaccessibility of opportunities or resources (Ozuah, 2005). Motivation of adult learners can be influenced by internal or external factors (Daily & Landis, 2014; Ozuah, 2005). Internal factors, however, tend to be more powerful in terms of motivating an adult learner (Daily & Landis, 2014).

Learning for adults can occur best if certain conditions are present. Some of these conditions are: a non-threatening environment, a need or desire to learn the materials, the adult learner's previous experiences are valued and utilized, and opportunities for the adult learner to apply the new knowledge (Ozuah, 2005). The psychological learning environment needs to be one where the adult learner feels at ease, too (Knowles, 1980). If adult learners feel accepted, supported, and respected, they feel more comfortable to share with others without fearing that they will be punished or ridiculed (Knowles, 1980).

Adult educators need to facilitate maximum participation among students to encourage learning and students' experiences should not be disregarded, or ignored (Thoms, 2001). The behavior of an adult educator plays a large part in the climate of the learning environment because it can provide reassurance to students if the faculty member is respectful of the contributions made by adult learners (Knowles, 1980). By listening to adult learners, the educator can show students that they care, are supportive, and are respectful of them (Knowles,

1980).

Rogers (1969) stated adult educators should possess certain characteristics to build a relationship as a facilitator of learning with adult learners (Knowles et al., 2005). According to Rogers (1969), traits such as being genuine, caring, respectful, understanding, and a good listener are critical to being a facilitator of learning with adult learners (Knowles et al., 2005). When these characteristics are present in a facilitator, adult learners tend to be more likely to participate in the learning environment (Lawler, 2003).

Working with adult learners means providing many opportunities for adult learners to make connections between the knowledge gained in the classroom with knowledge in their personal life (Ross-Gordon, 2003). A wide variety of practices can be used to provide learning environments that are more conducive to adult learning (Ross-Gordon, 2003). It is also helpful to adult learners to present materials in smaller chunks, providing meaningful and timely feedback, using positive reinforcement to boost learning, and supporting group work, which can improve learning (Thoms, 2001).

Adult educators should be mindful that various educational strategies must be employed to facilitate learning (Tomei, 2010). Some of these strategies are: simulations, role-playing, and case studies (Tomei, 2010). These strategies can be more effective when combined with technology (Tomei, 2010). Per Daily and Landis (2014), ultimately an adult learner needs to accept their responsibility in the role that they play in their own learning.

For learning to occur with adult learners, many factors should be considered by the adult educator and the adult learner. The most effective factors involve an educator being mindful and open to their adult learners' contributions and experiences in their classroom (Thoms, 2001). It can also be more productive for everyone when the adult learner is receptive to the different

strategies used in a learning environment (Lawler, 2003).

Due to technological improvements, teaching environments have changed and it is now possible for an instructor and students to engage with one another while being in different locations. The rise of online education increased the need for institutions to provide support such as training and monetary incentives to faculty who wish to teach in an online setting (Allen & Seaman, 2017). Teaching in an online setting is not equivalent to planning and delivering a traditional face-to-face course.

Learning how to plan, structure, and deliver online courses to achieve learning for the adult learner requires certain competencies in an instructor and there are roles they must fulfill. The roles may shift depending on the student or the stage of the online course. According to Martin et al. (2019), an online instructor may play the following roles while teaching an online course: course designer, teacher, mentor, facilitator, rule setter, and a "cheerleader." An institution that wishes to offer online courses needs to bear responsibility in preparing their faculty members to be successful in providing online courses by ensuring that the necessary training and support are available (Brooks, 2003).

In addition to the roles an online instructor plays, there are also responsibilities they must complete as an instructor to promote learning in adult learners. A large part of an online instructor's role is to establish and maintain an online presence in the learning environment (Martin et al., 2019). Interactions that occur between students and the instructor tend to stimulate learning (Beck & Ferdig, 2008). There are various methods in which an online instructor can create an "instructor presence," including sharing an introduction video at the start of the online course or incorporating activities that helps students to interact and form connections with other online learners (Martin et al., 2019).

Creating effective learning environments requires that the online instructor be well versed in the principles of online, interactive, and engaged learning (Sims et al., 2002). Savery (2005) coined the acronym VOCAL, which stands for Visible, Organized, Compassionate, Analytical, and Leader-by-example. Instructors who utilize the VOCAL approach can ensure that one is promoting a learning environment that is supportive, challenging, constructive, rigorous, and can result in a more productive and positive learning experience among students (Savery, 2005). Per Cho (2012), an orientation of the online course is a very important component in ensuring student success. The goal of an orientation is to familiarize students with what is expected of them and how to navigate the online course (Cho, 2012).

One of the roles of the instructor as a course designer can vary based on the amount of support provided by the institution. An instructor also plays a social role in the online teaching community through their behaviors, which will likely affect the students' relationships with other students and the instructor (Alvarez et al., 2009). Online courses need to have certain components in order to stimulate adult learning and can be delivered synchronously or asynchronously.

There are various methods and tools that support real-time communication that allows the instructor and students to interact "live" with others (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016). Careful planning and organization are crucial to online courses because students need to know what is required of them in order to be able to organize their time due to the various commitments adult learners possess (Savery, 2005).

When teaching online, an instructor can select from different instructional strategies and they can elect to use these strategies independently or in conjunction with another strategy (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016). Some of the instructional strategies include: lectures,

discussions, demonstrations, and simulations (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016). Even though lectures are the most common instructional strategy, it places students in a passive role, which could negatively affect student engagement in an online learning environment (Online Education Research, LLC, 2016).

Successful learning for adult learners in an online setting must include interactions between students and the instructors to foster a sense of community in the course (Blair & Hoy, 2006). Another variable that could help to predict student learning is the student's teamwork orientation and group cohesiveness in the online setting (Williams et al., 2006). According to Williams et al. (2006), learning is often elevated for students when they are involved in group assignments with students who prefer frequent group work interaction.

It is important to remember that when one is teaching online courses to adult learners, instructors need to be flexible in accommodating adult learners because they typically have various roles, responsibilities, expectations, experiences, and learning styles. Adult learners are often more cognizant of their learning needs and are more in control of their own learning experiences (Tomei, 2010). When instructors provide an online environment that is collaborative, encourages engagement, and allows for a sense of community, this can result in a positive and productive learning environment. Institutions should also be willing to adapt to meet the changing needs of their students to ensure success for all those involved (Pacansky-Brock et al., 2020).

Summary

Faculty who wish to teach in an online setting should be provided adequate training and support from the institution by which they are employed in order to have a successful experience (Roddy et al., 2017). Proper training and preparation of the faculty member can help students to

have a positive learning experience in the online classroom.

      Ideally, the course content is prepared prior to the start of the course to minimize students' confusion and allow the online instructor ample time to facilitate students' learning (Beck & Ferdig, 2008). Online educators must fulfill various roles and responsibilities when teaching online which include: course designer, mentor, and technical support (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). According to Martin et al. (2019), online instructors also embody the role of course manager and subject matter expert.

      Online courses can either be delivered asynchronously or synchronously. However, either format should contain course components such as: a course introduction, a course orientation, and an online instructor's presence (Cho, 2012; Martin et al., 2019). The instructor's behaviors in their online presence will reveal to the adult learners if the online instructor is inclusive and supportive of adult learners' differences (Pacansky-Brock et al., 2020). Optimal learning for adult learners in an online setting should include interactions between students and instructor to build a sense of community in the online course (Blair & Hoy, 2006).

HEADING 5

CONSTRUCTING THE ONLINE TRAINING

Currently, I serve as the Associate Director for the SIU Extended Campus unit. Part of the job responsibilities as the Associate Director is to oversee the off-campus staff members who are located throughout the United States. Drawing on my 18 years of experience working in various roles with off-campus, I determined what content was relevant to be included in the online training modules for the off-campus program/student advisors. For instance, I specifically drew upon my experience to create and compile online training materials relating to the various student information systems since proficiency in utilizing these platforms is necessary to effectively and properly advise students on their degree progress.

Some of the regulations and information I have included in the online training modules reflect changes to the program/student advisor role and duties over the past eight years due to the University's restructure of the off-campus programs. Prior to the University's restructure, some off-campus locations were staffed with two employees. One employee was responsible for recruitment and advisement of the students and the other employee handled administrative tasks. Upon the restructure, the recruitment and advisement duties were combined with the program/student advisor role and each off-campus location only employed one staff member.

Based on my interactions and communications with various program/student advisors who are located at the off-campus sites, I realized the need for standardized training for the program/student advisor role. This would help to ensure consistency across the various off-campus offices and help to provide students with similar customer service experiences when they attend SIU, regardless of whether they attended the location at San Diego Naval Base, Mount San Antonio College or Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point.

To date, there has not been a training manual for the program/student advisor position. Through the years, each site staff adopted their own ways of completing the necessary job tasks. This has caused issues when off-campus students did not receive the same response when they corresponded with multiple program/student advisors. Further, military students in the off-campus programs could be transferred to another off-campus location due to their military responsibilities, increasing the chance of their receiving inconsistent advising. Consequently, it is important that off-campus students be provided with consistent responses and accurate academic degree evaluations.

The SIU off-campus locations struggle with high staff turnover, due to the amount of compensation received for the program/student advisor role and the lack of upward mobility that is available at the SIU off-campus locations. While this online training cannot remedy issues of promotion or compensation remediation, it could help minimize staff members' frustration during their onboarding process with SIU Extended Campus. Storing online training materials in one location eliminates confusion of staff members when a need for information arises.

My intent for these sequences was to provide a complete resource to off-campus program/student advisors that was accessible when needed. This helps to ensure consistency among the off-campus locations and that new employees are properly trained in their off-campus position. Additionally, this online training will assist program/student advisors to become more proficient in their role and minimize errors when advising students on their academic progress at our University. These factors affect an individual's job satisfaction, which in turn can affect their longevity at a position.

In this document, I will be using the terms "program/student advisor" and "adult learners" interchangeably. The program/student advisor position is responsible for recruiting

qualified students to the SIU programs offered at the off-campus location, assisting students through the admissions process and continues with the student until they have completed their SIU degree. Consequently, individuals hired by SIU Extended Campus are adult learners who themselves have personal learning experiences and work experiences.

One intent for the two training sequences is to provide a resource to guide employees for necessary information on demand. All resources are housed in a central online location that is accessible at any time, provided that the employee has their SIU network ID and password.

The second reason for the online training sequences is to provide accurate, consistent training (and assessment) for new program/student advisors. The two online training sequences replace the need for hard copy training manuals and are easier to update since all documents are housed electronically. Sharing file updates via this new repository through D2L will be simpler, more effective, and more efficient. There is no longer a need for SIU Extended Campus to mail hard copy training manuals and relying upon off-campus employees to replace the prior training sections with the updated sections. All of this is now handled through D2L, all online training materials note the most recent date in every document footer.

Updating physical copies of training manuals could be very time-consuming, costly, ineffective, and unreliable. If a site has a vacancy due to staff turnover, SIU Extended Campus cannot ensure that an updated copy of the training manual is in the off-campus office when a new employee is hired for the site. The only way to ensure that hard copy manuals are updated every time is to send out complete copies each time there is an update, which is not cost-effective. Therefore, creating the online training sequences ensure our employees access to the online resources when they need the information.

I decided to create two online training sequences, which separate the learning materials,

because I felt it was less intimidating, potentially more effective to separate the basics of SIU employment procedures and policies from those more specifically focused on SIU Extended Campus. Adult learners learn more effectively when materials are relevant, and they see the benefits of utilizing the information in their role (Thoms, 2001). By separating the materials into two sequences, the adult learner can visualize themselves completing the training sequences. Leaving materials in one in-depth training sequence would likely have resulted in adult learners scrolling further down on their web browser, and potentially feeling intimidated or overwhelmed. Separating the training sequences into more manageable components provided opportunities for the adult learner to be able to complete the training and have positive feelings of success, a factor for optimal learning.

The first sequence, "SIU Extended Campus: Employee Training," will need to be completed by all newly hired SIU Extended Campus employees. Relevant information regarding the various types of employees used by SIU Extended Campus is contained in this first sequence: details regarding one's pay period, required forms, policies, and work hours. Upon completing this training sequence, the new employee will be granted access to the second training sequence, which will cover the SIU Extended Campus advisement information.

The second online training sequence, "SIU Extended Campus: Advisement," contains pertinent information for employees in the program/student advisor role with SIU Extended Campus. The sequence contains online training materials, covering various SIU student information systems, commonly used terms, helpful links, and details regarding other possible job responsibilities. After completing the second training sequence, the new employee must also complete the existing online eLearning materials that are required by SIU before they are granted access to the various student information systems.

The home page of each training sequence contains an introductory, welcome message, which instructs the trainees to begin the sequences at the overview page. The employee training welcome message provides new employees a brief view of the topics contained within that sequence. My contact information as the role of Associate Director, SIU Extended Campus, is in both of the welcome messages.

My intent when I created the overviews was to provide the trainees with a visual guide on how to navigate the online training sequences. Including screen captures on where to click to proceed to another module within the training sequence, will orientate new users who are not familiar with learning management systems. Based on my previous experience with adult learners, including images with written directions is quite helpful in guiding the learner on a task: visual cues, such as screen captures helps to reassure the adult learner that they are on the correct path and it alleviates confusion because the written documentation provides an overview of what to expect. As an adult learner myself, I tend to prefer instructions with images, which informs me that I am performing the task correctly or on the right path.

While creating the overview messages, I tried to anticipate what my needs would be if I were the trainee, an adult learner in the training sequence. I then sought to provide concise responses to these questions to help alleviate any frustrations or feelings of being overwhelmed by the online training. Within the overview, I explained some of the particular components in the sequence to provide clarification on the purpose of the items. For instance, the trainee can review their progress in the training sequence by the checkmarks located to the right of each topic within the sequence.

When developing the two online training sequences, I tried to be mindful of the adult learners' needs, creating documentation that is concise and easy to follow. I included screen

captures as a visual guide for the adult learners along with clear, written instructions on how to complete job responsibilities. All of these factors provide opportunities for the adult learners to be successful.

In each training sequence, I created a glossary of commonly used terms at SIU and helpful links to websites or webpages used by employees of SIU Extended Campus. The glossary will familiarize the trainees to SIU terminology, acronyms, and provide hyperlinks to commonly used web sites, which probably will be helpful to employees who do not have a background in student advisement or higher education.

The advisement training sequence first orientates a new trainee by providing a brief overview of the position. My intent with the "What is a program/student advisor" module is to answer questions that new employees might have when starting this new position. Knowing what to expect in the position can help alleviate confusion or frustration on the employee's part, which I hope, will reduce staff turnover and better prepare trainees for their advisement position, by providing consistent training and resources.

The online training sequence provides an outline of the program/student advisor's job responsibilities. It does not, however, supersede the employee's job description or their "Notice of Appointment." If the trainee is uncertain about their job responsibilities, the training sequence has been notated to direct them to contact their immediate supervisor for clarification.

Once the new trainee has read the overview message, they can proceed to the glossary section of the advisement sequence. The advisement sequence is structured for new trainees in the program/student advisor position to review the contents of each module and become more familiar with their job responsibilities. When the trainee has reviewed all contents of the module, they can advance to the next module.

The training modules are placed in the order that a new trainee would need to learn to be able to successfully assist off-campus students. Prior to any training on the various student information systems, a trainee needs to be versed in the different types of financial assistance that are available to an off-campus student. The financial assistance module covers options such as military tuition assistance (TA) or Veterans Administration (VA) Educational Benefits.

Upon completion of the financial assistance module, the trainee will proceed to the module on the various student information systems. SIU Carbondale utilizes various platforms to retrieve student data and the systems are not all interconnected. One must know which platform to access depending on what type of student information they are seeking. The glossary contains names of the various current student information systems and what type of student data is housed in that platform.

Student advisement is a significant part of a program/student advisor's role and this involves providing students with clear guidance regarding what requirements must be completed for a degree. Degree plans and degree audits must be completed accurately for students. Students receiving input from a program/student advisor that is not correct affects a student's degree completion date and results in resources being used that are not necessary. Being able to evaluate a student's academic history is part of preparing a degree plan for students, and this evaluation is based on how course work is articulated by SIU. By providing training resources on the various student information systems, trainees will learn where to locate information that is used to create students' degree plans.

The remaining modules in the online advisement sequence pertain to other potential job responsibilities in a program/student advisors' role, such as conducting an annual inventory of the office equipment or serving as the point of contact for an audit of the student records. The

off-campus locations are staffed with one program/student advisor, who at times might feel overwhelmed. Additional resources, such as how to prepare for a recruiting event or coordinating an off-campus commencement ceremony are also included in this training sequence.

By providing access to the online training sequences to all program/student advisors, the written documentation gives a good starting point when one program/student advisor is trying to assist another. They can begin their conversation by using the online training materials to discuss where additional clarification is needed or where the confusion lies. Connecting the program/student advisors with their colleagues, I believe, will help to minimize feelings of isolation and provide an opportunity to build professional relationships with others.

HEADING 6

IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR REFINEMENT

When SIU Extended Campus identifies a candidate to employ for a program/student advisor position, hiring paperwork is emailed to the candidate to complete. Once the candidate returns the hiring paperwork to SIU Extended Campus, up to two weeks can pass before the individual is officially entered into the SIU System. New employees are entered into SIU systems such as Human Resources and Information Technology, through which they are granted a DawgTag number. The DawgTag number is used to identify each employee and used to grant them access to the SIU student information systems.

Prior to a new employee being assigned a DawgTag number, the Associate Director of SIU Extended Campus will grant them access to the "SIU Extended Campus: Employee Training" training sequence, using the new employee's personal email address and a temporary password. This provides new employees access to begin their training while they wait to be fully vetted in the SIU system and assigned an SIU DawgTag number, by which in turn allows them to start learning about their new position at SIU Extended Campus.

Upon completion of the online training modules in the advisement sequence, the trainee must complete a quiz, consisting of 25 questions. The trainee must score at least a 75% to pass the quiz. I decided on 75% as the passing score because this is a "C-average" and is reasonable to expect from trainees. Ideally, a trainee's score would improve as they spend more time in their position. If the trainee does not pass the quiz on the first attempt, they will have a second attempt with the quiz. Should the trainee not achieve a passing quiz score in the second attempt, additional questions will be emailed to the trainee by the SIU Extended Campus administrator, to ensure the trainee understands the content of the advisement training modules.

Once the quiz has been completed, the trainee can submit the quiz for scoring. When the quiz score is displayed, the questions that the trainees missed will display on the screen with feedback. My intent in designing such feedback is to guide the adult learner on which module to review for additional information on that topic.

The intent of the quiz is to assess the effectiveness of the training materials and where improvements are needed; it is not for evaluation of the employee or to be punitive. Results of the quiz will be used to gauge the trainees' retention and comprehension of the online training materials. For instance, if several trainees miss the same question, the SIU Extended Campus administrator who is responsible for the sequence could review the training materials and how the content is presented. Perhaps the materials presented were not in a clear and concise manner for the trainees, or perhaps trainees need additional details to help clarify the training document.

If a trainee does not earn at least 75% on the quiz, they will receive additional questions from the SIU Extended Campus administrator via email. These additional questions are open-ended so that the trainee can respond with what they know regarding the topic. The trainee's direct supervisor will be copied in this email to inform them that the trainee was not successful in the two quiz attempts. This will help their direct supervisor or the SIU Extended Campus administrator to gauge whether additional training must be conducted or if the online training materials need to be restructured to be more effective. The additional questions cover the same topics contained in the advisement sequence, but are posed as open-ended questions. By allowing the adult learners to supply their response in their own words, the direct supervisor can have a better indication of the employee's understanding or retention of the online training materials.

Potential Future Revisions

A potential component to be added to the advisement training sequence is a "Frequently Asked Questions" section. The "Frequently Asked Questions" section, offers answers to common questions by other program/student advisors. This section could be a rich resource to prepare new trainees in the program/student advisors' role with examples on how to respond to questions or resolve various issues that arise when assisting their students.

Incorporating video recordings that provide an overview of the various student information systems could alleviate any feelings of intimidation by the new program/student advisor. Being an adult learner, I often feel more comfortable being able to watch a task be demonstrated before I attempt to perform the task on my own, and that is what the videos could do. The intent of the short videos is to meet the adult learner's need for the information to be relevant and ready when it is needed.

These recordings should be short in length (less than 10 minutes) and cover common tasks in a program/student advisor's role. Lengthy videos can be overwhelming and could result in the loss of the trainees' attention because the information is not presented in a readily, accessible format. Also, creating short videos, updating information changes or needs would be an easier task to replace (as opposed to correcting an hour-long video).

In the future, SIU Extended Campus could explore adding additional quizzes at the end of each module, rather than just having one quiz at the end of the advisement training sequence. Results from trainees' scores might take several weeks to compile since SIU Extended Campus might only hire two new program/student advisors for the off-campus locations each year. Newly hired program/student advisors per SIU policy have a one-year probationary period. SIU Carbondale mandates that new employees be evaluated at three months, six months, and again at one year on the job. After that, all program/student advisors will be evaluated on an annual basis.

The trainees' quiz results from the advisement quiz could be used as a tool to measure their comprehension and progress in their position. Ideally, their quiz results will improve with the time they have spent in their role. The SIU Extended Campus unit can use the quiz results to provide additional training sessions for off-campus staff members to help improve their understanding of the job responsibilities and enhance their job knowledge.

As long as I remain employed at SIU Extended Campus, I will be maintaining and adding additional materials to the two online training sequences. All online training documents and files are housed in D2L and the D2L administrator for SIU will have access to the contents, ensuring that the next person who is tasked with training for SIU Extended Campus will be able to continue with the online training. Any necessary updates or additions to the materials can be easily accomplished by the next person and transitioning the responsibility of these training sequences should be seamless since all files are contained within D2L.

Currently, the advisement training sequence is unlocked (i.e. able to be viewed out of sequence) for review purposes of this project. Once the online training sequences are open for the employees to utilize, the modules will then be locked and the trainees must complete one module at a time before they can advance to the next module. When the trainees have completed all of the advisement modules, the advisement quiz will be available for completion and submission. This is to ensure that the training materials are reviewed in the order that I had intended. Only upon completion of all of the training modules will the trainees be permitted to take the advisement quiz.

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