Common Challenges Faced by Novice Online Teachers and How Those Can Be Addressed: Lessons Learned from a Case Study Research

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Outline

• Significance of the study
• Research design
• Challenges faced by novice online teachers
• How the challenges were resolved
• Take-aways
Why is it important to study the challenges

Quality of online learning depends highly on the quality of the design and facilitation of online experiences (Allen & Seaman, 2013; Storandt, Dossin & Lacher, 2012; Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000; Vaill & Testori, 2012; Faulk, 2010; Shea & Bidjerano, 2009; Richardson & Alsup, 2015).

Research shows - connection between learning outcomes and the quality of the course design and teaching.

Limited empirical research available on the kind of challenges novice online teachers face and how to address those in programs preparing online teachers.
Research Design

Data
course artifacts, students’ online work, individual interviews – 2 each, individual cases of the participants, analytical memos, a cross-case analysis

Theoretical framework:
Identity theory as proposed by Gee (2000-2001) and explained and used by Luehmann (2007).
## Research Design
*(participants)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Teacher Training</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ren</td>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lupin</td>
<td>Human dev.</td>
<td>Taught some HE courses</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Some in informal settings</td>
<td>TESOL program</td>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>TESOL program</td>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>TESOL program</td>
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<td>Kosovo</td>
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<td>Iris</td>
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<td>&gt;20 years in K-12</td>
<td>K-12 teacher prep.</td>
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<td>K-12 teacher prep.</td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Challenges Reported in the Literature

- Concern about creating a sufficient connection with students;
- Fear of not knowing enough technology;
- Expert teachers feeling like novices again, and losing efficacy; and
- Negative past experiences.
Challenges Faced by Novice Online Teachers

- prior negative experiences as online students that influenced and limited their appreciation of what online learning could do
  - boring
  - sub-par
  - good feedback not possible
Challenges Faced by Novice Online Teachers

• prior negative experiences as online students that influenced and limited their appreciation of what online learning could do

As the semester progressed:

“Online teaching could be the same like the face-to-face.” - Tulip

“There is no evidence that one [modality] is better than the other … they are just two different types of teaching, and both has its strengths and limitations.” – Peony

“Theories and principles that promote effective teaching and learning transcend delivery mode.” – Lupin
Challenges Faced by Novice Online Teachers

• concerns about how to establish a relationship and a community of learners in an online course – or whether it is even possible

- bonding with students
- building trust
- building a caring and close relationship
- lacking excitement and energy
Challenges Faced by Novice Online Teachers

• concerns about how to establish a relationship and a community of learners in an online course – or whether it is even possible

• As the semester progressed:

“Teacher’s pedagogies are the keys to build connection.” – Peony

“Online teaching does offer opportunities for deep learning but in some different ways than in traditional classrooms.” – Lupin
Challenges Faced by Novice Online Teachers

• fear of technology/ feeling insufficiently prepared to use the technology.

“I am afraid I would] spend a fair amount of time instructing students on basic computer commands that take away from the overall class content.” - Ren
Challenges Faced by Novice Online Teachers

• fear of technology/ feeling insufficiently prepared to use the technology.

As the semester progressed:

“I was pleased to see how intuitive and easy to use most of the online tools were but regardless, building content, activities, and assessments is time consuming.” – Lupin

“I think compared to the content, technology is less important.” - Peony
Challenges Faced by Novice Online Teachers

• negative perceptions of online learning and teaching in their field

“If you have the ability to transform your teaching or take a pedagogical method and present it in a different way and put that online so that more students are able to engage with that or interact with that idea or particular teaching method I don’t really care about the negativity of somebody else saying that this isn’t the way to go because I found that the negativity is often linked with something just like unfamiliarity or just an unwillingness to be reflective or just push yourself to learn something new.” -Ren
Challenges Faced by Novice Online Teachers

- negative perceptions of online learning and teaching in their field

“I don’t feel online learning gets a fair shake and I think it’s largely because people may approach it similar to how I would have approached it prior to this course which is maybe uninformed and so I do think that there are some negative connotations out there still.” – Lupin

“I can’t help but be affected by it because I’ve been a teacher longer than I’ve been an online person, so I still go back to that world; it does impact me how my peers look at me.” - Iris
How the challenges were resolved

• Experiences as online learners
• Experiences as online teachers
  - group project
  - individual project
• Learning theories
• Approaches, strategies and tools
Take-aways

• Online teacher development programs should focus on the challenges and support teachers with ways to overcome those.

• *Experiences as learners* can help teachers understand what works and what does not.

• Aspiring online teachers should be provided with necessary tools and strategies to be prepared to tackle the challenges.
For supporting evidence, please see:


https://search.proquest.com/docview/2229722308?pq-origsite=gscholar

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