Because it's the last week of our semester, and also because I'm just a little bit lazy, instead of conducting face-to-face interviews, I threw together an online survey in which four members of our faculty graciously participated. The sample is not "clean" – in one way or another, I have a personal connection to each. As the identified trainer of my "interviewees", I was pleasantly struck by the candor of their respective answers.

While, as my friends, we would expect that they all have *something* in common, they are a somewhat demographically diverse group. They are a group of three men and one woman. One man teaches at all levels (100 – 500), one teaches undergraduate level course, one teaches continuing education (CED) and graduate; the woman teaches at all levels (100 – 500). Across the group, they are currently teaching 16 "face-to-face courses that incorporate online resources", two graduate "blended" (or hybrid) courses, and seven "online" courses. The online courses break down to include four 500 level, two 400 level, and one 200 level course. The only instructor who has taken an online course is the one who teaches only undergraduate; he, in fact, took his second masters online. Two instructors teach blended and or face-to-face undergraduate courses at other institutions; both are humanities (music, "creative minds") and computer science instructors. The two instructors who teach only at our institution are instructors in the business department.

Each of the four sees their respective role just a little differently: the one woman admits to acting the "sage on the stage" in the non-graduate level courses, while she considers herself a "facilitator or mentor" in upper division courses; another labels himself as a "leader, facilitator, resource"; the undergraduate instructor calls himself a "demonstrator with some lecture added in" – this is the one who has taken many online courses himself. My favorite response to the style question, and I suspect the most telling came from the CED, graduate instructor: "I am a 'cat-in-the-bag, bag-in-the-river' type of instructor. I ask questions and shape direction, but allow students to take their own journey…even more so online."

All four of the respondents consider themselves self-taught, although all have participated in at least one presentation or workshop. Each admits to having taken something valuable from a workshop and or presentation; none identified any one learning opportunity as less valuable than another. One mentioned that a particular workshop was valuable because it identified what *not* to do in the online environment. When asked if they had been peer-mentored or if they mentor others, all reported that at one time or another one other faculty member had helped them with the technical aspects of the particular CMS, and that they are apt to assist others in the same way; the bulk of help with methodology or pedagogy was in the form of another instructor handing off an old course format. All four research their own methods via the web or textbooks, and learn through trial and error inside the online course.

The most informative – and interesting - responses for me were their answers to the question, "What do you feel is the best way for faculty to learn to teach online?" As a group, they suggested 1) discussion groups (online and

face-to-face) with other faculty who teach online; 2) taking an online course; 3) training sessions specific to the *technical limitations* of the CMS; 4) training sessions in the "pedagogical aspects" of learning and teaching online; 5) "try it" and "jump in and do it!". One offered the following advice: "…remain open to ideas… collaboration could be useful, as well. …approach of 'trying a lot of things and keeping what works.' Perhaps we could have a 'best practices' discussion board for all who teach online classes."

Interestingly, all four have deliberately backed away from formal training sessions over the past several years. They cite "conversations with people familiar with…" and "literature review" as their most productive form of learning about the online environment. The undergraduate instructor admits that he has shied away from teaching online at all with, "I was slow to take it on, taught online for a few years, and now do so only reluctantly. I will use online systems as a support for my courses, but I prefer to teach more in class than online." He questions the "…quality and integrity of the [online] education…"

Each of the respondents has successfully converted a face-to-face course to an online course; one has never taught an online course that she hadn't first taught in the traditional classroom. The group reported mixed success with the "conversion" of traditional team work and face-to-face discussion groups to the online classroom: "…discussion board to replace certain critical discussions; they failed flat."; "…discussion board … primary function for exchanging ideas and experiences."; "team activities don't seem to work as well…" . They all use the discussion board for a variety of reasoning, but primarily because it "…comes close to replicating…" face-to-face discussions; one gets the sense that particularly quiet students are much more comfortable in the online discussion forum, and are more apt to participate. Only one has used CHAT successfully, and seems to prefer it as an instructor, although, as a student, he preferred the discussion board.

In response to the question about barriers to learning how to teach online, all four reported that having many opportunities to experience a course from the perspective of the students would be helpful. They all feel supported in that when they do have a question there's someone (me) nearby to help. One writes that "the only barrier to learning how to teach online is psychological. It's a major shift in pedagogy that can be difficult… one has to be willing to 'fail forward' initially, and maintain flexibility." Another writes, "it takes imagination and a willingness to try different things." Each reported a different reason for being not quite satisfied with the training they received. One would have preferred discussion or focus groups with other online instructors for the dual purpose of debriefing and for learning about others' tricks. Another was surprised at how much time is required for an online course – prep and participation; he would have liked to have been fore-warned. A request for more convenient training times was reported by the adjuncts. Only one reported satisfaction with training on specific techniques. [Unfortunately, his praise is confounded: he lives with me and so listens to my presentations at home, and then attends my workshops - because it behooves him to do so ;-)] All four repeatedly report that they mostly "…find [their] own way…".

I threw in one last question that is one of my "signature" questions: "Tell me anything else you'd like me to know." Rather than parse out their individual answers into a relatively coherent paragraph, I offer you their quoted responses. These are really their hints to me for improving my workshop series. I also recognize several comments specifically intended to be used by me in the various meetings that I attend.

> The online experience has required adjustments to course organization, assignment record keeping, and the tracking of student work. Features such as the discussion board and dropbox have provided good alternatives for communication outside of class. Other variables that also need to be considered when creating and using online course functions are the level of knowledge, "comfort" and experience of the students in using online resources. Students need training in how to use the resources and features of the CMS. *Dennis*

> I feel quite strongly that some courses are not good candidates for an online format. Introductory level classes present a challenge, since students do not have the skills to interact well on a discussion board. If discussion cannot be facilitated, and all the course does is provide power point presentations and online testing, it will probably be a very poor experience for the student. (I have students who have had this experience and they have not enjoyed it.) *Pat*

> At this point, I use my online resources more for testing and file-sharing than anything else. My undergrads are too immature to care about their education for the most part, so attempting to do more than this simply annoys them and wastes my time. Or possilby (sic) the other way around. *Jim*

> teach CED and Grad courses, but that was not an option for question #1. Being open to outcomes, rather than invested in outcomes, is helpful for instructors. *John*