

An Open, Online Course Model to Prepare Faculty to Teach Online

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Abstract

Most faculty new to teaching online are trained to use a Learning Management System. Such an approach is too limiting. Faculty preparing to teach online should be offered extensive experience using the web as a broad classroom. Instructors can then learn to teach online in a manner consistent with the open nature of the web itself. The model of the open, online course can be effectively used to prepare college instructors to teach online by emphasizing pedagogy over technology, fully utilizing the affordances of the web, and offering an opportunity for developing connections among online faculty. The use of the open web as the classroom offers a larger, more inclusive view of online teaching. The Program for Online Teaching's Certificate Class is presented as a case study of an open, online class that helps prepare faculty to teach online while emphasizing experience with multiple pedagogical models and tools. The class was developed and is facilitated by a volunteer group of faculty from MiraCosta College in Oceanside, California, and volunteer mentors from both outside and within the class. It is designed to model the possibilities for pedagogy in an open environment as well as exploring various methods and tools for online instruction.

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The web is similar to the wide untamed spaces of the American frontier, a Wild West with many places to go and explore. Learning to teach in it is an experience akin to 19th century school-teaching on the prairie, where there were many types and ages of students and the wilderness beckoned just outside the door. The temptation then, as now, is to tame the frontier by creating the classroom as a separate space, a one-room schoolhouse for learning. The classroom becomes a metaphor for civilization, with the environment controlled by the teacher to the benefit of all. Today our college classrooms lack the wood stove and the inkwells, and have gained data projectors and modular furniture, but the idea is the same. To many faculty and administrators, the classroom is the place where learning occurs, in a room separate from the rest of the environment. This perspective tends to be transferred wholesale when teaching online, leading to a dependence on Learning Management Systems. To many faculty new to the open web, exploring it can be overwhelming. The response is to build a schoolhouse for learning, a separate space on the web, closed off to the outside, to re-create the classroom environment. Faculty assume they should do this, are trained to do it, and often believe it's the way online teaching should be.

LMS: The lure of centralization

Teaching in a Learning Management system, the current model of online education, is restrictive and controlled, like a big city with centralized services. Combine the assumption that a classroom is a closed space with the natural tendency of administrators to standardize and

organize, and it's easy to see the popularity of the enterprise-level course software or Learning Management Systems. Although the idea of college classes taught over the internet is less than two decades old, attempts at standardization occurred as soon as it was technologically possible to build a good online schoolhouse. Before the LMS, faculty had no choice but to build their own classes, usually with HTML and the help of a geeky friend or technologist. Then the LMS came into being, and was adopted as a way to "manage" online classes. Institutional efficiency began to outrun creativity and pedagogical freedom. Years have passed, web pages and websites can be developed without a geeky friend (or the geeky friend is there on Twitter), and people use the internet daily. Yet the trajectory has continued on the plug-and-play model. Many faculty still see themselves as "moving" their classroom courses online. Many teach packaged courses created by companies and teams, and many are required to do so, particularly at for-profit institutions. Faculty who are permitted to design their own courses undergo training at their college. The distinction between such "training" and "preparation" is that training focuses on the technology rather than pedagogy. Training also tends to be site-specific, providing expertise in the local culture of the college as well as the features of the technological systems available.

For many faculty, the only preparation they receive for teaching online is training in how to use an LMS. Most colleges run their own installations or contract with vendors to provide Blackboard, WebCT, Desire2Learn, or Angel, systems that help instructors track student activities, post materials, and keep a gradebook. Newer, lighter versions of the LMS include Canvas Instructure and Coursekit, and innovations now allow faculty to embed multimedia or access research tools. Having been trained to a greater or lesser degree in how to use the system, most instructors begin a class by designing a syllabus and uploading it along with other documents, almost always using the default settings. In fact, the vast majority of instructors use the default settings anyway, without making changes to align with their pedagogy (Dron, 2006). Although outside websites may be embedded, the necessity for additional passwords can be burdensome. The tendency is to seek improvement in teaching through greater proficiency with the LMS instead of moving beyond it. Some institutions choose to instead develop their own suite of institutionally-sponsored tools, perhaps hosting a gradebook or e-portfolios. These have roughly the same effect, and continue to close the classroom off from the outside world. Such standardization fails to take advantage of the learning opportunities available on the fertile frontier of the open web.

Discovering the wild web

The wilderness beckons anyway, and seeing the LMS as the online version of a physical classroom is a mistake. Unlike in a physical classroom, learning on the web means that the rest of the world is only a click away. Many people use the web, and other corners of the internet such as email and Facebook, to socialize, shop and get news. Sometimes they even learn something. To use this world like a vast library, a source for learning materials of all kinds, encourages the kind of active learning that really happens with most people online. A perspective shift is necessary, and yet faculty preparation to teach online still mostly takes place in a physical classroom (where most professional development workshops occur) and encourages the classes to be built in online schoolhouses. Preparing faculty to teach online should instead include extensive experience using the web as a broad version of a classroom. This would enable instructors to teach online in a manner consistent with the nature of the web itself. Such an approach could inspire a more creative approach to designing classes inside an LMS, as well as

introduce the idea of creating courses with open tools instead. And all the web dangers that people fear when they venture out on the frontier (stalkers, copyright, privacy, viruses) can be explored in a safe environment with experienced guides.

An open online class is thus the perfect format for the professional development of online instructors. It provides a trail through the wilderness, contact with mentors and guides, and techniques for managing vast amounts of information. Open courses have no entrance requirements; they welcome global participation, broadening horizons beyond the college and beyond the nation. The organization of such a class should balance guidance with discovery, and be tailored for beginning web exploration even if the faculty have classroom experience.

There are several models from open courses offered in recent years on topics like connectivist learning theory, computer science, digital storytelling, and artificial intelligence. In theory, open online courses could take many forms. In actuality, most have similar features: an expert guide or guides, asynchronous forums for discussion, participant blogs for reflection, and suggested readings and viewings. As courses, they have beginning and end dates, and a schedule of topics if not a full syllabus. Most have an association with an accredited institution, and some of these offer a for-credit option for a limited number of participants, whose work is thus graded more closely. The larger group signs up or signs in as informal participants, and may take part in the whole class or selected portions, often from locations spread across the globe. This approach maximizes learner independence, and treats the open web and its resources as the location of the course. Tailoring such a class to faculty learning to teach online provides several advantages. These include an opportunity to experience the web as a classroom of infinite possibility, a place to find what one wants to support one's own pedagogy. The course structure, with its set meetings and topics, help engender a learning community, which can become a community of practice for faculty. They experience a larger, more inclusive view of online teaching, helping them feel more comfortable on the frontier. Ultimately, they can become trail blazers themselves.

This is not to suggest that big-city, LMS-based life is static. In fact, many faculty are continually exposed to new ideas about pedagogy that could impact the way they teach online. In educational theory, there is always a tension among different ideas and theories of progress. The centralized environment of LMSs and other enterprise-level systems both reflects and supports a pedagogy based on presentation rather than interactivity. The defaults create a course format based on uploaded or displayed documents, threaded forums for discussions, and tracking of student tasks. Even the addition of support for multimedia and research has not changed the basic pedagogical emphasis, which is based on an instructivist pedagogy, often to the exclusion of other modalities. Over the past several decades, however, the philosophy of teaching is shifting away from instructivism or behaviorism to more constructivist approaches. Social constructivism has been increasingly emphasized in an effort to create more active learning opportunities. This transition has been accelerated by the internet, which provides quick access to the sources of knowledge required for the traditional approach: written texts, images and other media. In addition, the web has provided easy access to viewpoints and perspectives that can be critically examined. With the raw material of learning so openly available, the online environment is ripe for what has been called emergent learning, where interactions with resources and communities provide the basis for education (Williams, Karousou & Mackness, 2011). The new theory of connectivism, developed by George Siemens (2005) emphasizes that the sources of learning are actually the connections among people, groups and information. These connections are enabled conveniently, continually, and globally by the web. Anderson and Dron (2009) propose that there are now three distance learning pedagogies (cognitive-behaviorist, social-constructivist,

and connectivist). They propose that a combination of the three, combined with an emphasis on creating social presence and a community of inquiry, provide the best option for learning online. Given the open environment of the web, it would be natural for constructivist and connectivist pedagogies at least to use it as fully as possible. A class preparing faculty to teach online should not only discuss educational theories, but provide an opportunity for participants to both experience some of them personally and consider them for use in their own classes. But doing so involves leaving the safety of the big city, where services are provided and limitations provide safety, and venturing into the wilderness.

A community of neighbors: open education, PLNs, and MOOCs

This new wilderness, of course, isn't really wild – it has its own people, traditions and culture. The first of the wild web models is an emphasis on open education. When traditional classes take place behind closed doors, it is natural to transfer that habit to the web. The LMS creates closed online classrooms, but so do teachers working in isolation. The open education movement seeks to counter these trends, encouraging the creation of class materials on the open web, the use of free or low-cost tools, the development of online communities of practice, and participation in open courses. Although higher education lags behind the culture's move toward greater openness, Wiley and Hilton (2007) note that this is changing. It can be seen in the many lectures now available on the web through MIT, UC Berkeley, Stanford and other major universities. More college faculty are utilizing resources available at YouTube or Khan Academy. Claims for faculty use of social media, however, may be overstated. A current study by Pearson and Babson Research group indicates that faculty use social media sites like YouTube or Facebook frequently for “professional” use (Moran, Seaman, & Tini-Kane, 2011). However, the study also shows that these faculty rarely share their own work there, or make assignments that ask students to post their own work on such sites.

The same tools, however, can provide a foundation for creating individual collections of tools and contacts so faculty can manage their own learning. Individuals can build their own personal learning environments (PLEs) using social media tools, newsreaders, or other desktop or web-based software with the purpose of learning more from web-based information and interactions (Mott, 2010). Such tools help learners manage their own learning (Couros, 2010). Some, such as blogs as wikis, seem particularly well suited to collaboration and reflection (Wheeler, 2009). Personal learning networks (PLNs) can be part of this environment, as learners interact with others on listservs, community websites, social media portals, or in open classes. Some of these, like Facebook or Ning, may be their own closed-door classrooms, part of the internet architecture rather than the open web, but the broader model invites broader participation. In addition to providing a place to post faculty-created artifacts and assignments (Mott & Wiley, 2009), virtual communities become online communities of practice, where ideas and experiences are shared (Lu, Todd & Miller, 2011; Bond & Machedo, 2010). PLNs supplant the “welcome wagon” of technology training with a community of neighbors who can help raise a barn or harvest the crop.

Open online courses provide the most organized example of such neighborhoods on the web. The story of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) begins with open courses offered by online education experts David Wiley at Utah State University (Wiley, 2007) and Alec Couros at University of Regina (Couros, 2007-2010). The first large MOOC was offered in 2008 on the topic of connectivist learning theory, and was facilitated by George Siemens and Stephen

Downes. It set the pattern for future MOOCs. This pattern includes open and global enrollment, posted resources, synchronous sessions for presentations and/or discussion, and participants developing their own Personal Learning Environments as part of their work. The networks created by facilitators and participants are the heart of these courses, since they are based on connectivist learning theory. In connectivism, learners are not just participants in a community or network, but in the creation of knowledge. The connections between and among them are the source of this knowledge, rather than assigned work or the pontifications of “experts”. Knowledge is thus “distributed across the Web, and people’s engagement with it constitutes learning” (Kop, 2011). Participation in MOOCs is the subject of much research, because they rely on a high level of self-motivation by the participants as well as technical knowledge or confidence in learning the use of web-based tools. The lack of structure in some MOOCs may limit the learning potential, since not everyone is equipped to benefit from the autonomy of creation ones own PLE (Mackness, Mak and Williams, 2010). Such autonomy on the wide plains of the web is exactly what some faculty want – the chance to blaze their own trail. But others may need not only a guide, but a map and some supplies.

The Welcome Wagon: Professional Development for Online Teaching

Guides, maps and supplies for higher education are usually provided by professional development programs. Their job is to show faculty the ropes, and help them adapt to the new culture. But the typical systems of professional development at colleges and universities do not encourage the modeling, openness, or experiences necessary to prepare faculty to teach well online. This is not for lack of attention to the issue. Over the last decade, most institutions of higher education have come to the realization that online teaching is different from teaching in a classroom, and may require additional help for instructors. The welcome wagon is sent out to greet the new pioneers, but it contains the supplies intended to recreate the “city life” of a traditional classroom, with on-site training, closed communities and resources, few open web experiences, and little opportunity to reflect or continue learning beyond the program.

Most professional development workshops are held on campus rather than in the online environment. Some try to extend this through online modules or a more hybrid approach (Macdonald & Poniatowskab, 2011; Eib & Miller, 2006). Even among those offering fully online experiences (Teaching Online Certification, n.d.; Bell & Morris, 2009; Chitanana, 2012), none are open to the web nor focused on exploring open resources or pedagogies. The lack of online experience, both in an LMS and on the open web, hobbles the pioneer. Research shows that online faculty who have experienced being an online student do a better job (Tassinari, n.d.), yet most faculty teaching online have never been an online student (Otte, 2005). Community is often a secondary consideration if it is considered at all. Preparation workshops are often facilitated by administrators or technologists rather than online faculty (Shattuck, Dubins & Zilberman, 2011), limiting access to those with experience in web-based pedagogy. Many programs lack any form of mentoring (Dede et al, 2009). When community is made available, it is often in a closed environment controlled by the institution, such as ongoing discussion inside a Blackboard shell (Long, Janus, Kay & August, 2009). If the opportunity to be an online student and participate in an online community is not provided through professional development, it is unlikely to occur unless faculty are exposed to the many chances for continuing education offered on the open web.

Good models do exist, however. Open University UK's program for online faculty is cohort-based and features experiential and collaborative learning (Macdonald & Campbell, 2010). Other programs pair up experienced with less-experienced online instructors, offer workshops in online pedagogy or educational theory, support attendance at distance education conferences, bring in expert facilitators, or award faculty for publication in the field. Such programs are few, however, and we know little about the effectiveness of the workshops and training being offered. There is little information about what effect such programs have on actual practice and student outcomes (Dede, Ketelhut, Whitehouse, Breit & McCloskey, 2009), and most studies' evaluations of professional development programs are based on self-reporting by participants. Such self-reporting focuses on the perceptions of faculty rather than transformation of practice.

Transformation of practice is necessary for survival in a new environment. Big city thinking doesn't work on the frontier. Professional development for online teachers tends to focus on standards and competencies. What's missing is empowerment in the new environment, the encouragement of critical reflection, and the integration of technology skills into new pedagogies (Baran, Correia and Thompson, 2011). According to a major literature review (McQuiggan, 2007), transformation of practice cannot happen without examination and reflection of pedagogy. The default is for instructors to rely on the comfortable, traditional city-style pedagogies of the closed environment. The best way to create change is to roll out a new welcome wagon that contains what's useful to the new environment: strategies to develop ones own approach, tools to realize ones own pedagogy, and community to provide ongoing support.

Blazing a Trail: The Program for Online Teaching Certificate Class

History of the Program

In 2005, a small group of experienced online faculty at MiraCosta College got together and formed the Program for Online Teaching (POT). Over the previous seven years that online classes had been offered, these instructors had become frustrated with the focus on technology rather than pedagogy. They found themselves frequently engaged in helping newer online instructors learn how to teach in the online environment, offering individual workshops approved by the college's professional development program. The group began to structure series of on-campus workshops to focus on pedagogical needs, and web technology as the method to realize teaching and learning goals. As workshop attendance grew, online synchronous sessions were added, and then "simul-learn" workshops where faculty could attend presentations either on-campus or from wherever they were. By 2010, the POT website had expanded with resources and links, and was being accessed by faculty at MiraCosta and other colleges. The Program continues to be comprised of volunteer faculty, and the website is administered off-campus on the open web (POT website, 1). The goals from the beginning have been sharing, openness and faculty helping faculty.

Gradually, some of the extensive materials and on-campus workshops were cobbled together into a "certificate pathway" that required participants to attend a certain number and variety of on-campus and online workshops (POT certificate 2008-10, 2), and create documentation by posting weekly on a central blog administered by a faculty volunteer

(Pedagogy First Typepad website 2010-11, 3). A complete list was maintained of what counted for the certificate, with workshops and online videos divided into categories such as Online Pedagogy, Course Design Elements, and Experiential Workshops. Several workshops were required in each category, and all were approved through MiraCosta's professional development program so that faculty could earn flex hours for attending. At the end of the pathway, participants completing the work received a printed certificate and a badge or icon to place on their website or in a Learning Management System, showing they had been certified by POT. Participants tended to work sporadically, and there were no tracking mechanisms. Despite the challenges, six certificates were given the first year, and those earning them were asked to help with the new participants for the following year.

Class structure

The structure of the POT Certificate Class for 2011-12 was a substantial change in that it referred to the pathway as a "class", expanded the work to a full year, and required participants to create their own blogs. In addition, a textbook (Ko & Rossen, 2010) was added. The course was scheduled to take place over two semesters, but only 12 weeks in each, in order to avoid the busy times at the beginning and end of each semester. A full syllabus was created, with each week containing a reading assignment, appropriate multimedia (such as a recorded workshop by POT facilitators or outside experts), and tasks to complete. These tasks usually involved the creation of online artifacts using free web tools. On-campus workshops were not required; previous workshops had been recorded and were assigned for certain units. Unlike the previous pathway, the certificate could now be completed entirely online, from anywhere in the world.

Participation in the class was open to all. The enrollment process involved emailing the POT director, and filling in a Google Form with information about the participant's name, location, learning goal, and willingness to act as a mentor. Each participant was tasked with creating their own blog in the first week, and tutorials were provided for Wordpress.com and Edublogs.org, the most popular free blogging sites for academics. All blog posts were aggregated in the central WordPress blog site, called *Pedagogy First!* (The name came from the work of Glenda Morgan, who welcomed its use for this project.). The blog was hosted on a low-cost Bluehost account administered by the POT director. Widgets were added with information, links to tutorials, and a form for entering blog feeds so that the items on the Blogroll could post automatically using the Feedwordpress plug-in. Additional pages with tabs provided access to a Certificate FAQ, the full interactive syllabus, a list of distributed activities and synchronous meetings, and some tutorials (*Pedagogy First!* POT Certificate Class 2011-12, 4)..

Synchronous sessions focusing on various topics, led by class participants, were available but not required. Over time they evolved into a weekly meet-up of the mentors and more experienced members, usually in a Google Plus Hangout. Scheduled presentations in the Collaborate environment were also offered, and were attended by about a dozen people each time. As with MOOCs, scheduling for a global audience was tricky, and was based on where the participants were located, to the extent possible. More advance planning and consistent announcing of events via social media would likely have expanded the attendance. Communication of expectations also took place through pages at the *Pedagogy First!* website. Participants were asked to bring to the class a commitment of 4-5 hours per week and an open mind. All links to course materials were available on the syllabus from the beginning, and there were only a few changes. Participants could thus see the entire course and engage the materials

at their own pace (though keeping up with the schedule was encouraged). The existence of the cohort, with everyone following the same syllabus at the same time, created a small amount of peer pressure. This encouragement was also visible every time a participant visited *Pedagogy First!*, since the aggregated blog made immediately evident how hard everyone was working.

The certificate was also intended to provide a focus for completing the class. The Program for Online Teaching certificate is not representative of any university or accredited program, including MiraCosta College. It might be considered more of an informal “badge” than a formal certificate, and is given for completion rather than achievement. Despite this, 62% of participants indicated at the mid-point of the class their intention to earn a certificate. About 38% indicated the certificate as representative of their own goals, while the others claimed it would assist them in getting a job or advancing their training. In addition to the certificate itself, the central learning experience was automatically documented through the blog posts. Since the class is open, employers and evaluators can see what a participant learned in the class and how.

Learning activities

The syllabus was designed to encourage pedagogical exploration and tool exploration simultaneously, so both elements were part of every week. Participants read the textbook (usually a chapter a week), viewed presentations and multimedia, and then posted to their blogs. Synchronous sessions were optional, and could be proposed and organized by anyone in the class, using a Google Document linked from a tab at the main *Pedagogy First!* website. The general schedule of tasks in the syllabus was:

Week 1: Introduction

Participants create their own blog using our tutorials, read a chapter, create a Diigo account for bookmarking, and write an introductory post.

Week 2: Teaching and Learning Online

Participants engage in reading and viewing, looking at other blogs, and learning about RSS.

Week 3: Pedagogy and Course Design

Participants are taken through a series of worksheets with tutorials, designed to help them determine their classroom pedagogy and adapt it to the online environment, using Chickering and Ehrmann’s Seven Principles (1996). The post focuses on participants’ individual goals and objectives for designing their online class.

Week 4: Materials for Online

Text reading focuses on development of a learning sequence, while technology skills are developed through an introduction to HTML.

Week 5: The Online Syllabus

Emphasis on creating an interactive syllabus rather than uploading a classroom syllabus.

Week 6: Creating Presentations

Introduction to creating a screencast or narrated slideshow.

Week 7: The Online Classroom

Focus on building community, through Facebook, blog commenting, and other tools.

Week 8: Creating Community

A continuation of Week 7, with emphasis on synchronous tools. In this week research articles are introduced and assigned for further exploration.

Week 9: Student Activities

An emphasis on creating units or activities, and introduction to teaching via social networks and virtual worlds.

Week 10: Open Platforms for Teaching and Learning

Focuses on blogging and other open ways to teach a class, alternatives to learning management systems, and a pedagogical emphasis on active learning.

Week 11: Class Resources and Intellectual Property

Reviewing legal issues and their impact on creativity, and introduction to accessibility issues.

Week 12: Resources Online / Mid-year Post

Exploring open textbooks and e-books, and participants are asked to create a post linking to all their semester's previous posts and self-assessing each one. A self-assessment quiz and rubric are provided. A break of several weeks follows.

Week 13: Creating Class Elements Part 1: Images and Screenshots

Tool-learning emphasis using screenshot capture and images.

Week 14: Creating Class Elements Part 2: Audio and Video

Tool-learning emphasis including creation of an online video or audio file.

Week 15: Creating Class Elements Part 3: Screencasting and multimedia

Tool-learning emphasis on idea mapping, surveying, and screencasting.

Week 16: Our Students Online

Focus on student preparation, current social analysis of the population, with task related to creating a FAQ for an online class.

Week 17: Classroom Management

Balancing student and instructor-centered activities, record keeping, workload and class size issues.

Week 18: The Course Management System

Exploring issues in using an LMS, choices and options, as well as a critique of the LMS as a learning space.

Week 19: Web-enhanced, Hybrid and Open Classes

Pedagogy of blended formats, using classroom time, and extending the classroom.

Week 20: Introduction to Educational Technology and Instructional Design

Basics of defining these areas and understanding their history and current criticism.

Week 21: Introduction to Online Education Theory

Presentations of constructs involved in instructivism, constructivism and connectivism, and several models for conceptualizing online learning via networks and groups.

Week 22: Personal Learning Networks

Ideas about sharing, creating a PLN, and becoming a networked professor.

Week 23: Presentations

Showcasing participants' learning via presentations and discussion, both synchronous and asynchronous.

Week 24: Assessing and Paying It Forward

Self-assessments inside final list of all second-semester blog posts, plus course evaluation.

Support for participants

The Program for Online Teaching, unlike larger professional development programs that train online faculty, is an independent project staffed only by volunteers. The faculty facilitators are either full-time instructors with full class loads or associates who teach at several colleges. It became apparent early on that supporting participants would be a challenge. The fact that all participants follow a trail helps create cohorts, where a community could form. However, during the first year, when participants were posting to a central blog, there was little sense of a community of practice. The technology (Typepad) was somewhat cumbersome, and commenting on a colleague's post required a separate log-in.

It became clear as the class idea developed that a handful of faculty could not mentor groups of thirty or more participants. To create a more interdependent community of practice, inviting previous participants to help others was formalized. The new model involved both "moderators" and "mentors". Moderators were POT leaders or previous participants who selected a week's topic. They created a video introduction to that topic, which appeared in a "sticky post" at the top of the aggregated *Pedagogy First!* blog. The post was written each week by a POT leader, who tied together the previous week's topic with the new topic, commented on how the class was going, and provided inspiration and encouragement. The moderator for that week was also responsible for tracking the posts and making sure that they were commented upon. This technique was developed so that no participants felt alone, or thought no one was reading their work. It also provided a more focused response to posts about that week's topic.

The idea that previous participants "pay it forward" is even more evident in the new mentoring system. Mentors have volunteered or been asked, both from within and outside the class, to follow four or five participants, make sure they have help, and prevent isolation in their blogging and working. Mentors were those who, even if they did not have much online teaching experience, had extensive experience working in the web environment. About half a dozen of the mentors only mentored; they did not participate in the class itself. Most, however, were course participants, some of whom were there to earn their own certificate. They were asked to mentor as a result of early posts that indicated a high comfort level in the web environment, good communication skills, active involvement in the class, and experience working with others. The results of this approach were somewhat uneven. Some mentors were attentive to their "mentees", while others were less so. However, POT leaders, who were visible through the weekly sticky post and the weekly emails, were always available to help.

Assessing effectiveness

This first offering of the fully online Certificate Class will conclude in May of 2012, so at the time of writing the course is not yet complete. However, much feedback had already been gathered from participants. Evidence from the first half of the class in its new format indicates a number of achievements. The vast majority of participants are happy with the course structure, and feel more capable designing their own online class without being led by the technologies. Participants have gained experience with a number of technologies following an examination of their own pedagogical goals. Most feel part of a community by working in the class, or are content to learn independently.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the course format, surveys will be given at the end of the class. The surveys will focus on the degree to which participants have gained confidence in selecting and implementing tools and techniques that further their own online pedagogy, and feel comfortable designing their own classes in whichever environment they choose. To augment

self-reporting based on reflection, the blog posts themselves can be examined. The content of posts can be analyzed, including the extent to which they were on task or demonstrated progress, used language demonstrating confidence, and solved a pedagogical problem by implementing an online tool. The number of comments, activity in the Facebook group, and the mention of particular colleagues in reflective posts may indicate that a community of practice emerged as part of the class. Although the number of participants completing the certificate could also be seen as indicative of effectiveness, not all participants may need a certificate to complete their learning goals. In this sense, the course's impact will vary widely, with participants determining their own objectives and whether they've been achieved. Our primary concern is to empower faculty to articulate their own online pedagogy and manage the factors designed to limit it. These factors may include bureaucratic centralization and other demands for standardization, the "big city" thinking that inhibits creativity. Providing an opportunity for faculty to thrive in the wilderness of the web, to design their own experiences for their students, creates a shift in perception that broadens the scope of online education.

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Digital artifacts:

1. Program for Online Teaching website: <http://mccpot.org/wp>
2. POT certificate 2008-10: <http://hub.miracosta.edu/teaching-academy/online/cert/>
3. Pedagogy First Typepad website, 2010-11: <http://freetowrite.com/pedagogyfirst/>
4. *Pedagogy First!* POT Certificate Class 2011-12: <http://pedagogyfirst.org/wppf/>

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