

TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WORKS IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ONLINE INSTRUCTORS: THE CASE OF PBS TEACHERLINE

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ABSTRACT

Research conducted in various settings suggests that preparation and support for online instructors should be considered separately from comparable efforts for instructors in face-to-face environments. However, few studies provide empirical data that outline the ways in which preparation to teach online should differ, and only a handful link these practices to measurable outcomes that help define what is meant by *effective*. PBS TeacherLine's model presents an opportunity to examine a comprehensive, well-established effort to prepare and support instructors of exclusively online courses. Results from a yearlong study illustrate PBS TeacherLine's successes and explores their relationship with outcomes such as instructor retention, quality of online instruction, satisfaction with support received, and favorable learner course grades and re-enrollment rates. Findings reveal promising practices for preparing and supporting any online faculty, whether in k-12 or higher education, and suggest outcomes that may be appropriate for characterizing the effectiveness of these efforts.

KEYWORDS

professional development, online instruction, formative assessment, instruments, virtual faculty support, program management, collaborative learning, professional learning communities, virtual pedagogy, standards for online teaching

I. INTRODUCTION

As online learning has grown rapidly over the past decade, so has the need for effective ways of preparing and supporting high quality online instructors. Current research suggests the skills required to teach online are sufficiently different from face-to-face teaching to warrant separate guidelines and focused study [1, 2]. A logical next question is whether this difference warrants separate preparation and support (e.g. professional development, "PD"), and if so, what these efforts should entail. Various groups have articulated PD guidelines for online instructors, however very few studies provide empirical support for these guidelines, and only a handful link these practices to measurable outcomes that help define *effective*.

The focus of this study was to better understand:

What are successful strategies for implementing professional development to prepare and support instructors of online courses?

What outcomes could meaningfully define PD for online instructors as effective?

This paper first reviews findings from current research, then describes PBS TeacherLine's model for preparing and supporting online course instructors that have delivered their online courses to adult learners nationwide since its inception in 2000. A summary of methods and findings from a yearlong formative-summative research study on PBS TeacherLine's PD model follows. Three cycles of data suggest key quality outcomes, captured from four key perspectives: PBS TeacherLine program administrators, coaches/mentors, PBS TeacherLine online course instructors, and course learners. Appendices provide the documents and procedures that PBS TeacherLine uses to support and evaluate online course instructors.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Studies of face-to-face and online instructional environments agree the instructor plays a critical role in learner success [3]. Yet while we know quite a lot about online learning, there is relatively little available research about online teaching. Examples of strategies that work best in certain teaching situations and measures for assessing online teaching abilities are sparse [4]. Many discussions about online teaching seem to agree that online instructors need PD that is designed specifically for their teaching environment [5] largely because online teaching requires different skills than teaching in face-to-face or hybrid environments [6]. Various groups such as the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and International Association for k-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) have responded by articulating standards for PD that support online instruction. Despite this progress, k-12 teachers and higher education faculty report a lack of adequate preparation to teach online and of support while they are teaching, with existing efforts focusing largely on course mechanics and technology details [7]. Opportunities to reflect on and enhance instructional skills as emphasized by professional standards are similarly limited [8].

While professional guidelines suggest principles that may result in well prepared, effective online instructors, little primary data exists to substantiate these principles *in situ* [9]. Available research is largely anecdotal and describes variations in goals, instructional strategies, media and technologies, time frames, incentives, and other variables of online PD programs [2]. Further, there is a strong need for models that can support benchmarking across programs [4].

A. Recommendations for PD that serves online teachers

Two agencies – the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and iNACOL – have set forth standards for PD that support online instructors spanning k-12 and higher education. SREB outlines the need for flexible, problem-based PD opportunities for teachers of online courses involving the use of multiple strategies [10]. iNACOL echoes SREB's guidelines, underscoring the importance of mentoring and coaching for building social capital among instructors and for providing equitable access to PD across the career span [11]. iNACOL has also itemized indicators of high-quality PD that cross various online instructional roles including: technical skills, online learning pedagogy, state and national standards including content standards, serving students, curriculum, professionalism, and leadership [12]. Broadly, SREB, iNACOL, and others converge on several foundational characteristics of PD for online instructors:

- Offer a variety of PD experiences to meet the needs of an online instructor throughout his/her career.
- Leverage social capital among instructors by partnering experienced and new teachers for extended mentoring and support and create forums where meaningful discussion can occur.
- Develop systems to provide administrative monitoring and support for PD implementation including clearly stated expectations for instructor participation and performance in PD activities, as well as regular evaluation.
- Ensure PD content:
 - Reviews current research and practices on effective online teaching
 - Illustrates models of effective online teaching, communications and strategies, and encourages instructors to role-play situations that apply these skills

- Includes a problem-based element with regular discussions about how to handle difficult situations with learners
- Uses scenarios and case studies to differentiate instruction
- Provides hands-on training and experimentation with the Learning Management System and other technology tools used to deliver and support instruction

Some virtual high schools are designing professional development for their faculty that is differentiated to meet learners' experience levels and learning needs, including content that aligns with the professional standards for online instruction mentioned above [13]. Few reports illustrate examples of PD to support online instructors in higher education, and of those that do, nearly all describe PD provided for online community college faculty. A common call is for PD that supports online instructors by incorporating adult learning theories, moves beyond course mechanics, recognizes the pedagogical differences of online teaching, and spans both k-12 and higher education [12].

B. PD Outcomes

Research investigating the impact of PD on the quality of online instruction and on the quality of online learning, particularly among adult learners, is also limited. Reports include anecdotal accounts of effectiveness and/or some evidence of teachers' positive attitudes toward PD activities, but much more is needed in order to relate specific aspects of PD implementation with outcomes of interest at various levels. Some outcomes have either been studied in the online environment or make sense to explore because of their significance to PD in general:

- Online instructional skills (see below for PBS TeacherLine's definition of these).
- Understanding the roles and responsibilities of an online teacher [14, 15].
- Sense of efficacy as an online teacher [15].
- Interest in taking more PD [16].
- Evidence of professional learning through data-driven practice [17]. Formative assessment has been shown to be an effective mode of learning for instructors because the data collected are designed to support teaching modifications rather than for solely evaluating performance. While formative assessment can be short, medium or long-cycle, research indicates that short cycle formative assessment can have the biggest learning impact for inculcating a continuous improvement process [18].
- Instructor interactivity: Roblyer & Wiencke [15] proposed an early measure of online instructor skills in the online medium a rubric for assessing interactivity in an online class.
- Reduced/low instructor turnover.
- Learner course completion: One study concluded that strong faculty support translates into consistent learner course completion [19].
- Learner course grades: EDC [20] concluded that high-quality online PD for teachers could result in positive k-12 student outcomes such as higher student scores on state tests in mathematics and ELA. No comparable studies of the impact of PD on grades earned by adult learners were available at the time of this review.

III. THE PBS TEACHERLINE MODEL

Since the primary objective of this study was to provide empirical data on promising current practices, we needed to locate an online course provider that has been actively designing, implementing and refining efforts to prepare and support online instructors for some time. PBS TeacherLine has offered a catalog of more than 130 asynchronous online courses, taught by over 100 online course instructors for adult learners nationwide, since the program's inception in 2000. From the beginning, PBS TeacherLine has been preparing and supporting online instructors with purpose-built PD refined regularly to address many of the professional standards set forth by SREB and iNACOL.

PBS TeacherLine's PD model presents an opportunity to examine a comprehensive, well-established

effort that has undergone regular refinements guided by learner and instructor feedback. Although the PD model was originally developed specifically for PBS TeacherLine’s online course instructors, the research basis, adult population of learners, and variety of background represented by PBS TeacherLine instructors suggest that key elements could be transferred to other settings including k-12 and higher education. A study of PBS TeacherLine’s efforts includes these additional advantages:

- Focused study of the elements that work best in a well-defined, exclusively online environment.
- Online instructors as learners who move beyond course mechanics and implementing the LMS, toward enhancing professional skills
- Peer review and formative assessment, applying research-based practices for adult learning and continuous improvement.
- Focused on high-quality online instruction without the parallel responsibility for course development.
- Course content and design modeled on inquiry based adult learning [21], incorporating principles that have been tested in multiple learning environments with understood strengths and limitations, with concrete activities that can be measured and about which researchers can collect data.
- Dedicated resources for supporting and developing online instructors.
- Four six-week terms in one calendar year for rapid adjustments and feedback, as well as efficient study.
- As an independent provider, PBS TeacherLine has the flexibility to select and implement best practices from three key sectors: k-12, higher education and industry.

PBS TeacherLine strives to provide high quality online instruction by first selecting individuals who fit specific selection criteria (Figure 1), then providing initial training, ongoing support and regular feedback to assure continued quality. This study focuses on the primary PD elements of instructor *preparation*, *support*, and *feedback*.

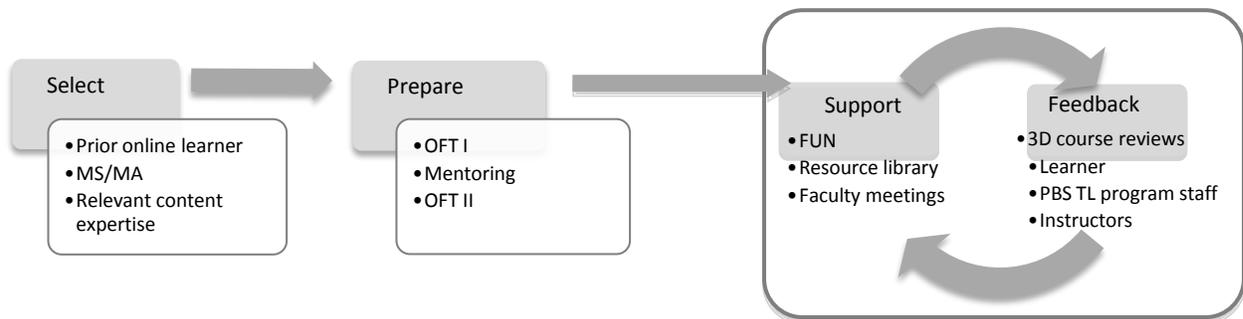


Figure 1. Key components of PBS TeacherLine’s instructor PD model

The key features of PBS TeacherLine’s model are featured in Table 1 and described below. Once hired by PBS TeacherLine’s Associate Director of Online Facilitation, new instructors begin their initial preparation with PBS TeacherLine by enrolling in two online courses—*Online Facilitation I (OFT I)* and *Online Facilitation II (OFT II)*—and receive mentoring support while they teach their first online course. With more online teaching experience, instructors move into an annual cycle of self-reflection and course review that is designed to promote inquiry-based thinking about their professional practice and provide a forum for constructive professional discussions about problem-based instructional issues that take place in a moderated professional learning community called the FUN (Facilitators’ United Network).

Strategies	PBS TeacherLine PD component(s)					
	OFT I	OFT II	Mentoring	FUN	Faculty meetings	3D course reviews
Peer support	X	X	X	X		
Ongoing, embedded guidance	X	X	X	X	X	X
Problem-based	X	X	X	X	X	X
Incorporates primary data	X	X	X	X		X
Delivered online	X	X	X	X	X	X

Table 1. PD guidelines addressed by PBS TeacherLine’s model

Tables 2 and 3 below explain the various roles that will be discussed and analyzed throughout the paper.

Role	Description
Course learner	A K-12 educator who is seeking state/district recertification and/or professional development.
Instructor	A course instructor who is a master’s level or above with previous experience teaching and learning online and must take the PD courses provided by PBS TeacherLine.
Mentor	An experienced TeacherLine instructor who has taught more than 20 courses.

Table 2. PD Participants

Measure	Detail	Response Rate	Appendix																				
1. 3D course review			A																				
2. Background survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographic information Prior experience with and perceptions of PD that instructors have received to date 	n=94/104 (90.4%) of PBS TeacherLine’s instructors	B																				
a. Reflection logs	<p>All instructors were encouraged to minimally complete one log during each term they taught.</p> <p>Level I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided self-critique of online teaching Provided data for 3D course reviews Instructors used a three-point* scale to rate their: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course climate and community building Instruction 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Active Instructors</th> <th>Completed Log Lvl</th> <th>Completed Log LvlII</th> <th>Did not participate</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>F09</td> <td>59</td> <td>47</td> <td>--</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W10</td> <td>62</td> <td>14</td> <td>38</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sp10</td> <td>64</td> <td>10</td> <td>51</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Active Instructors	Completed Log Lvl	Completed Log LvlII	Did not participate	F09	59	47	--	12	W10	62	14	38	0	Sp10	64	10	51	3	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction and discussion facilitation • Course organization • Implementation of assessments • Used by instructors to set goals and self-assess instructional skills. <p>Level II Above, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates completed Level I; appropriate for a more experienced online course instructor • Guided data-driven critique of prior instructional successes and quantification of movement toward achieving goals 		
b. Post-course learner survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All learners were surveyed at the end of each course. • Included scales for rating instructor skills according to the same dimensions that instructors and PBS TeacherLine as part of the 3D course reviews. • Gauged learners' intentions for completing more courses and/or recommending courses to colleagues 	Learners n=2120/4197 enrolled (50.1%)	C
c. Course review rubric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed by the Associate Director for Online Instruction, which includes scales for rating instructor skills that mirror other instruments in the 3D review process. • Includes area for specific comments • Conducted at least annually for each online course instructor 	One completed for each instructor during each course term (n=178)	H
3. Post-course telephone interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explored TeacherLine's PD model in greater detail • Feedback on the process of completing reflection logs was also collected during the interviews. • 9 facilitators interviewed in total; 3 in each group stratified by having completed OFT I, OFT I with mentoring, and OFT II 	Instructors (n=9) and PBS TeacherLine program staff (n=4)	F

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-20 minutes long 		
4. Learner course grades and re-enrollment data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PBS TeacherLine assigns course grades of A, B, C, D and F. • Re-enrollment statistics for all learners and courses offered during the study 	100% of course learners; n=4197	N/A

*A 3-point scale was used during the Fall 2009, Winter 2010 and Spring 2010 terms. A 5-point scale was piloted during the summer of 2010 and is recommended for future use.

Table 3. Measures and participant

A. Preparing High Quality Online Course Instructors

In PBS TeacherLine’s *Online Facilitator Training(OFT) I: Mastering the Skills of Online Teaching*, all instructors that are new to PBS TeacherLine engage with course content in an asynchronous environment that includes online discussions and collaboration with other PBS TeacherLine instructors-in-training. *OFT I*’s course content includes a variety of fundamental concepts and practices such as:

- Philosophy and pedagogy of online learning
- Techniques for deepening online discussion
- Techniques for online, text-based communication
- Strategies to foster online community building and collaborative learning
- Strategies for delivering effective, formative online assessment
- Course facilitation and administration policies
- Strategies for evaluating Web-based resources

In a follow-up professional development experience with *OFT I plus Mentoring*, new instructors undertake the leadership of their own PBS TeacherLine course with the guidance and support of an experienced instructor mentor. Mentors, while non-evaluative in their role, provide valuable feedback and affirmation for beginning instructors by acting as onlookers to instructor-learner communications, advisors for consultation regarding learner questions, partners in dialog about best practices, and resource sharers. PBS TeacherLine provides mentors with a checklist with structured guidance for the mentor-instructor relationship.

Instructors next enroll in PBS TeacherLine’s second online course, *OFT II: Adjusting (or Dusting) your Facilitator Hat*. *OFT II* provides more experienced instructors with additional research-based information about online teaching and learning and is a medium through which they can practice their instructional skills. *OFT II* fosters data-driven practice through instructors’ analysis of their own previous course evaluations or relevant examples of online learning.

B. Ongoing PD for supporting established online course instructors

After *OFT I*, mentoring and *OFT II* are completed, instructors’ primary mode of professional development is the 3D course review process. Course reviews integrate principles of formative and summative evaluation to help structure and contextualize professional growth among online faculty. 3D reviews take three perspectives on a course’s instruction—instructor, PBS TeacherLine program staff and learners—and put them side by side for a specific account of particular strengths and areas of needed improvement (see Appendix A for an example). PBS TeacherLine’s 3D course reviews were designed primarily to promote self-reflection among instructors, to increase professional dialogue about concrete instructional scenarios and to better identify PD needs. Secondly, they served as artifacts that could be used to explore learner trends, review patterns across courses, and convey information about instructional performance. A Learner Feedback Summary cover page (Appendix D) aggregated all learner data collected during a course term to contextualize feedback from learners, PBS TeacherLine program staff, and instructors pertaining to specific course(s). Then, instructors met with PBS TeacherLine program

staff to discuss the course reviews and define instructional goals for the next teaching cycle.

Finally, embedded learning opportunities occurred through faculty meetings, a professional learning community of instructors called the FUN, and a resource library that support instructors' ongoing information needs in real time. Quarterly faculty meetings conducted by PBS TeacherLine's Associate Director of Online Facilitation are held via webinar and feature a Web 2.0 instructional demonstration (e.g. Voki) along with housekeeping agenda items. The FUN offers an online professional learning community that is available to all PBS TeacherLine course instructors, and exists almost entirely as a self-directed forum. The FUN provides supplemental just-in-time professional development by reinforcing good communication and providing access to static information that is always available. Also available is a library of documents that can be easily downloaded, printed, and/or referred to at any time through the course management system.

IV. METHOD

The yearlong case study began during the fall of 2009 and encompassed three consecutive PBS TeacherLine course terms—Fall 2009, Winter 2010, and Spring 2010. Data were collected from all of PBS TeacherLine's instructors at the time, who were required to complete at least a background survey. Instructors also were required to participate in 3D course reviews for each term of the study during which they taught a course. Online surveys and telephone interviews with instructors and key PBS TeacherLine program staff provided data that contextualized quantitative data collected during the study such as learner grades, enrollment figures and course reviews. Efforts were made to secure feedback from every learner enrolled in a course during all terms of the study.

A. Measures

Balancing the opportunity to collect rich data from an entire online faculty was a need for instructors' involvement in the research to be meaningful. The central methods for collecting data on each element of PBS TeacherLine's model were a background survey completed by 92.9 percent (n=94) of the faculty in October 2009, 3D course reviews completed by an average of 85% of active instructors during a given term, and learner grades collected from all learners who completed courses during the study (Table 2.) All instructors completed the appropriate log, had their courses reviewed by PBS TeacherLine program staff, and secured learner feedback about their course during each of the terms they taught while the study was underway as part of the 3D course review process described above.

- 3D Course Reviews (Appendix A)--resulted from following the guidelines described in Implementing 3D course Reviews (Appendix I) for using three instruments to aggregate data into a comprehensive report.
- A general background survey (Appendix B) deployed to all online course instructors at the start of the study gathered feedback about their preparation to teach online and the PD they had received to date.
- Reflection logs (Appendix C)—Logs featured closed- and open-ended questions that guided instructors through a critique of their own teaching in five key skill areas during each course term: course climate and community building, instruction, interaction and discussion facilitation, course organization and implementation of assessments [22]. Reflection logs graduated from Level I to a Level II, indicating a completed Level I log and prior participation in the 3D course review process. Level I logs asked instructors to rate their own performance during a course, while Level II logs asked instructors to also review and comment on the findings revealed by a prior course review. Instructors used the logs to set goals and identify their strengths and weaknesses.

PBS TeacherLine Course Review Rubric (Appendix D)—PBS TeacherLine program staff provided data on course instruction during the study through the course review rubric embedded in the 3D review process. PBS TeacherLine's Associate Director of Online Facilitation rated every instructor's course during each of the three study terms that (s)he taught a course using a rubric with the same six

instructional skill areas as those featured in the instructor self-reflection logs and learner surveys stemming from PD activities. Artifacts such as discussion board activity, landscape posts, and dialogue about learner assignments and assessment represented instructional and learning activities during the course.

Post-Course Learner Survey (Appendix E) - Course learners completed an online survey about their perceptions of instructional quality and course organization during the course's final days. The post-course learner survey included scales for rating instructor performance according to the same five dimensions that instructors and PBS TeacherLine used to assess instruction as part of the 3D course reviews.

- Interviews (Appendix F) - Telephone interviews with instructors and key PBS TeacherLine program staff provided data that contextualized quantitative data collected during the study such as learner grades and enrollment figures.
- Learner Data—Grades and re-enrollment rates were compiled for all learners in all courses offered during the study's three terms.

An evaluative program rubric (Appendix G) was also explored during the study to synthesize all of the data collected and facilitate a better understanding of faculty-wide strengths and needs. The program rubric awards points (0, 1, 2, 3) for the combination of factors PBS TeacherLine defines as priorities: instructor qualifications (11 points total) and performance (31 total points) using assessment data collected through the background surveys and 3D course reviews from PBS TeacherLine. The rubric can also be used to highlight those instructors that have shown a superior or distinguished record of online instruction. All rubric elements align directly with PBS TeacherLine's clearly defined expectations for instructor qualifications, performance and participation in PD.

B. Participants

Over the course of the study, each of PBS TeacherLine's approximately 110 online course instructors participated in the research, though their involvement varied during the study depending on whether and when they taught courses (Table 2). PBS TeacherLine instructors are recruited through local PBS stations and are located in various geographic locations across the United States. As of the fall 2009 course term, instructors were in various stages of PBS TeacherLine's PD model: *OFT I*, (19 instructors; 18.8 percent of the entire faculty), mentoring (12; 11.9%), and *OFT II* (60; 59.4%). Completion of the background survey was mandatory for all instructors, and each of the 94 instructors who completed the survey was paid \$50.00 cash. The first three instructors from each of the three groups to confirm interest were included in interviews for this study. Instructors that completed reflection logs were entered in a drawing to win one of five \$50.00 gift cards for a major online retailer at the end of each course term.

All course learners were asked to complete the post-course learner survey as part of the 3D course reviews. Response rates among course learners increased from 41.3 to 65.1 percent during the study, potentially corresponding with the value that instructors placed on the multiple data sources compiled by the 3D review process. As with instructors, learners who completed surveys were entered in a drawing to win one of ten online gift cards at the end of each course term.

C. Analysis procedures

Quantitative data from reflection logs, surveys and rubric ratings underwent descriptive analysis (mean, range, standard deviation) to identify and differentiate trends according to the study's initial guiding questions. Learners' final course grades from all three terms were correlated with facilitator quality to explore the relationship between effective ongoing instructor support and learner outcomes. Qualitative data collected through interviews and reflection logs were collated and coded using Grounded Theory [23], which allowed raw data to be easily compared and contrasted to reveal common participant experiences as well as those that are unique to individuals. Quantitative and qualitative data were compared to identify similarities and differences that inform the study's final conclusions.

V. RESULTS

PBS TeacherLine strives to ensure high quality instruction by clearly defining and modeling the skills that contribute to learner success in an online environment, and then by providing initial training, ongoing support and regular feedback to assure online course instructors demonstrate these skills. Positive outcomes suggest the program is successful in several key ways.

A. PD for online instructors

PBS TeacherLine's commitment to providing high quality PD for its online instructors has contributed substantially to the program's decade-long history of success. The PD model overall demonstrates key successes in each of its four phases: selection, preparation, support and feedback (Figure 1), which substantiate some of the current PD guidelines for online instructors.

1. Select qualified instructors

As with any program, PBS TeacherLine's instructors must meet minimum qualifications. Before teaching their first course, all of PBS TeacherLine's instructors must hold a master's degree (16.3% hold CAS/EdS or PhD degrees), have prior experience as online learners, and also have subject-area teaching experience in at least one of the four areas in which PBS TeacherLine offers courses: Mathematics, Science, Reading/Language Arts, and Instructional Technology. Prior first-hand experience as an online learner may be the most critical qualification for instructors who proceed through a PD program such as PBS TeacherLine's that emphasizes teachers as learners engaged in critical analysis of the online learning experience. Prior online learning exhibited a bi-modal distribution among PBS TeacherLine's instructors during the study, with two-thirds having enrolled in six or fewer online courses and the remaining third having enrolled in 30 or more online courses as learners before the Fall 2009 course term. PBS TeacherLine also seeks instructors that are actively teaching in higher education, k-12 or both, though they do not necessarily have to be teaching online. Half had been teaching online for more than five years as of the fall 2009 term. Nearly all of the experienced instructors had been with PBS TeacherLine for their entire online teaching career.

2. Define the PD

While PBS TeacherLine's program model of separating course development from delivery provided a natural starting point, PD designers further established a primary focus on instructional skills with a secondary focus on course development and mechanics. The emphasis on instructors and instructional skills may have presented an advantage since 50 instructors (54.3% of PBS TeacherLine's faculty) felt that no other provider offered opportunities to deepen their online instruction skills in the way that PBS TeacherLine's PD has.

For PBS TeacherLine, PD includes activities geared toward instructors who are in various stages of their online teaching careers. In developing its model, PBS TeacherLine asked questions such as:

What does good online instruction look like?

What roles do our instructors fill?

How can we measure our instructors' progress in these areas?

What do instructors need to know? When?

What do our instructors do well? In what areas would they benefit from additional professional development?

3. Make PD relevant

PBS TeacherLine addresses instructors' needs for contextualized and relevant PD in two key ways: by encouraging critical analysis of real teaching and learning situations in all PD activities, and by connecting these analyses to a customized portfolio (3D course review) that demonstrates self-assessment and progress in instructional skills over time. In both ways, instructors are engaged in cycles of using

data to inform their instruction and creating documents that capture feedback for meaningful analysis. Clearly stated and demonstrated expectations for high quality instruction that originated with research-based practices are woven throughout the sequence of activities, with embedded opportunities to address targeted issues related to the LMS or course mechanics.

4. Implement a variety of PD strategies

A combination of sequential online courses, mentoring, professional learning communities, and a library of digital resources contributed to the success of PBS Teacherline's PD model. In addition to online courses and the 3D review process, the FUN, faculty meetings, and resource library played important support supporting roles by providing just-in-time references and timely information. As one instructor wrote,

It is a great source of comfort to have the support of other instructors I can interact with in the PD courses and on the FUN. This is especially true when a difficult situation arises. It is good to get advice from others who have been in the same situation, and who have gone through the same PD courses. The sample templates, responses, and documents that experienced instructors provide in the FUN are extremely helpful because they connect with and extend the concepts presented in the courses, reinforced through mentoring and measured in the [3D] course reviews.

The FUN leveraged social capital among PBS TeacherLine's online faculty to reinforce good online communication skills and provide access to digital references whenever they needed it. Although nearly four in ten instructors were lurkers who referred to the FUN to gain information and/or network more than they contributed to the site, nearly all (n=92) instructors valued the exchanges that took place there. Three in ten instructors felt the FUN was *essential* to their success as TeacherLine course instructors.

5. Feature rigorous PD content

PBS TeacherLine's PD content reflects its goals and design by featuring:

Research-tested strategies that highlight effective ways of teaching and learning online.

PBS TeacherLine ensures that guidelines cited in PD offerings reflect current research and discourse on online teaching and learning. One instructor described how research-supported strategies were the most important factor in determining the value of PD for her, "I *only* take PD that illustrates how the strategies and techniques offered reflect key findings from research on how adult learners learn best in an online environment. PBS TeacherLine is the only provider I have found that does this for their online instructors." Eighty-seven (92.6%) of PBS TeacherLine's instructors said it is essential for PD to focus on research-tested instructional strategies that provide evidence of positive impacts on learner outcomes, and all 87 instructors said that PBS TeacherLine's PD does this "very well."

Extensive modeling of high quality online instruction and guided practice to scaffold learning.

PBS TeacherLine's PD offers modeling and guided practice by positioning online teachers as learners in the online environment. *OFT I* and *II* have instructors model effective online teaching, communications and strategies, and role-play situations that apply these strategies. During the study, 89 instructors (94.7%) said that hands-on PD with extensive modeling and guided practice involving the use of new techniques is critical to their professional growth.

Embedded learning opportunities with immediate applications to real world environments.

Real world applications of PD content are as critical to online instructors as relevant course content is to learners. For example, one instructor said:

[*OFT I* and *OFT II*] have provided the help needed to understand how TeacherLine's PD differs from, and is superior to, online courses from other providers. The inclusion of practical applications is, for me, essential, and both courses include them.

Instructors receive hands-on training and experimentation with the Learning Management System and other technology tools used to deliver and support instruction as embedded components of PD activities.

6. Adopt a data-driven culture

PBS TeacherLine continually strives to support high-quality online instruction by regularly evaluating and updating their PD content and mode(s) of delivery. In online teaching and learning, we have always had data about learners such as enrollment and grades. We collect relatively less data on instructors and have only begun to do so recently. By contrast, PBS TeacherLine has collected data on learners, instructors and courses from the very beginning, and provided some learner feedback to instructors after courses end. The Associate Director of Online Facilitation has traditionally observed course artifacts such as discussion board activity and assessment feedback, and reported back to instructors along with limited learner feedback gathered at the end of the course. Recently, they have aligned data sources, measures, and procedures through the 3D course reviews to generate more meaningful information about online instruction to assist the program and also instructors. PBS TeacherLine's data-driven culture features:

- Leveraging the inherent technology in an online environment to provide accurate, timely and iterative feedback about instructional quality to instructors, prompts for responding to the feedback, and an asynchronous forum for sharing ideas can meaningfully support instruction.
- Aggregating, contextualizing, and sharing data for easy analysis and discussion.
- Defining and implementing a formal review process that connects back to research-tested teaching strategies in the online classroom.
- Transparency, with data collected from many sources.
- Flexibility to grow and change the PD model with the needs of the faculty it serves.

The 3D review process arose from a need to accurately measure PD quality and instructional performance from multiple perspectives and aggregate data for easy analysis and discussion. While learners are still coming on board with their role in giving feedback (only about 50% of learners completed surveys at the end of their courses), nearly all instructors participated actively in the 3D reviews during the study, suggesting their early buy in.

3D course reviews contributed positively to a culture of continuous improvement and provided a meaningful framework for ensuring instructional quality during the study (see tables below.) Instructors used their reviews in a variety of ways, most commonly to identify their strengths and weaknesses. They appreciated seeing primary data about their own instruction from learners and PBS TeacherLine's administrators alongside critical thinking questions to prompt future instruction. Two in three instructors rated the course review process as 'very useful' and the remaining third considered their reviews to be 'somewhat useful'. Eighty-five percent of instructors felt the course review process was meaningful 'as is' without the need for updating or changing.

B. PD outcomes

PBS TeacherLine's implementation of these PD guidelines has received positive feedback from instructors, and key skills emphasized by PD are evident among instructors as rated by PBS TeacherLine program staff, course learners, and themselves.

1. PBS TeacherLine's instructors consistently received high quality ratings from PBS TeacherLine program staff and their learners in the skill areas emphasized by PD content

The program rubric and contributing data from 3D course reviews paint a picture of high quality online instruction across all five online teaching skills measured during the study (Table 4.) There was high overall agreement between learners' (averaged by course) and PBS TeacherLine's course ratings assigned by program staff, with instructors' self-assessment scores consistently lower during the study.

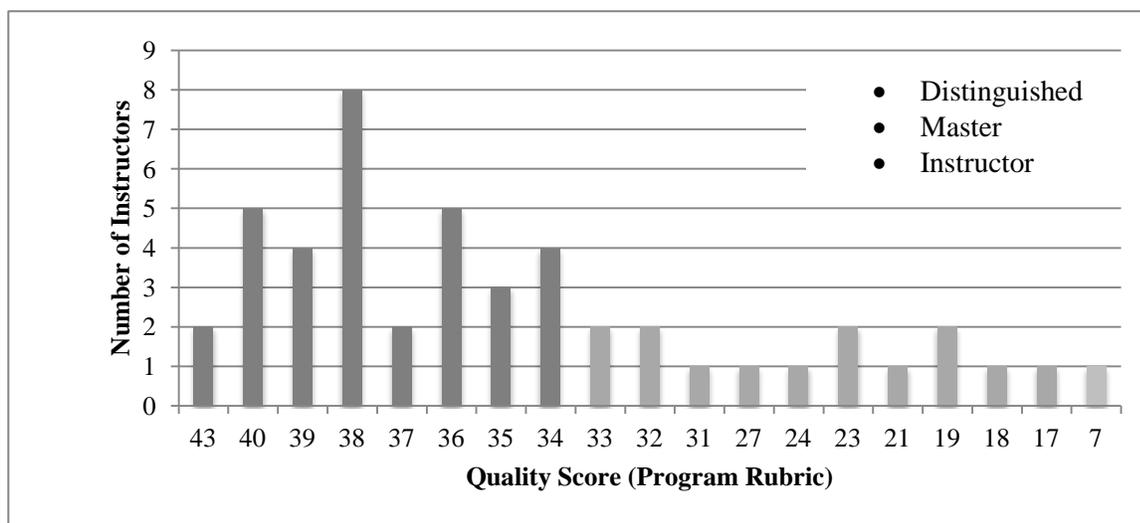
Instructional skill	Mean instructor self-rating ^{1,2}	Mean PBS TeacherLine rating ¹	Mean learner rating ¹
Course climate and community building	2.7	2.9	2.9
Instruction	2.6	2.9	2.8
Interaction and discussion facilitation	2.6	2.9	2.8
Course organization	2.7	2.8	2.8
Implementation of Assessments	2.6	3.0	2.8

1: 3 = Excellent 2 = Satisfactory 1 = Needs improvement

2: Level I and Level II log data combined

Table 4. Aggregate ratings of instructional quality across three course terms

The program rubric contextualizes these ratings with other key experiences that PBS TeacherLine emphasizes in its preparation and support model such as prior online learning and qualifications to teach online. Among 48 instructors with sufficient data during at least one course term, 33 (69/6%) displayed superior quality by achieving *Master* status, with another 15 (31.3%) achieving *Distinguished* status (Figure 2.) All input data sources (PBS TeacherLine, instructor, and learner) must be represented with feedback secured from at least 50% of an instructor’s learners in order to generate an accurate score.



Range of possible scores: 0-48

Figure 2. Histogram of instructor quality scores

Learners most appreciate how their instructors make it easier to implement course concepts in their own environments as was modeled for instructors in their PD. As one learner said,

Our instructor discussed how she uses technology as a teacher, creating an environment of modeling vs. “do what I say.” She walks the walk! [She] was very timely with grading projects and thorough on her very personalized comments.

Nearly all (94.5%) learners said they could immediately apply what they learned during a TeacherLine course in their own professional practice, 98.2 of which had done so before the course was over. Learners rate instructors’ ability to facilitate the application of their learned knowledge very highly.

Instructors also articulated areas in which they could improve their skills: landscape posts, presence on the discussion board, and constructive, valuable and specific feedback to learners. Learners’ ratings in three skill areas were slightly lower than those of PBS TeacherLine program staff’s ratings: instruction, interaction and discussion facilitation, and course organization.

2. Instructors were satisfied with the preparation and ongoing support they have received from PBS TeacherLine.

While instructor competencies cannot be solely attributed to PBS TeacherLine’s PD offerings, instructors unanimously agree PBS TeacherLine’s PD model has been effective for helping them define, practice and improve their online teaching skills. One instructor said, “PBS TeacherLine’s PD shows you exactly what you need to know to administer a course, whether you’re just getting started or you’ve been around a while like I have.” Nearly all of PBS TeacherLine’s instructors gave very high ratings to the content and format of *OFT I* and *OFT II* describing the required courses as “outstanding”, “dynamic”, and “relevant”. They particularly valued the online discussions embedded within the courses for modeling their own discussion board leadership in future courses. Instructors attributed their professional growth in online instructional skills to participating in PBS TeacherLine’s PD. Specifically, instructors said:

- I think that the 3D course reviews are excellent. The evaluation feedback is the most valuable and has led me to improve. I love seeing the bigger picture too.
- *OFT II* had the most positive impact for me. I learned so much about using the rubrics for assessment and how to create interventions.
- I believe *OFT II* has been the most beneficial training to date because it opened up a world of growth for me.

Both mentors and mentees appreciated the mutual affirmation and problem solving that takes place within the mentoring relationship. As one instructor mentee stated,

My mentor affirmed that my instincts were correct, which I really needed. She also covered content that *OFT I* couldn’t by providing examples of correspondence with learners that I couldn’t find in other places. Sometimes there’s a situation that we just didn’t cover in *OFT I* and having my mentor’s support as I worked through it was invaluable to me.

3. High quality PD contributes to a very low turnover rate among online course instructors.

PBS TeacherLine’s loyal faculty has remained relatively stable over the past decade (Figure 3), with average instructor tenure of five years. One instructor summarized the feedback from 85 others who cited PBS TeacherLine’s high quality PD as a significant factor in wanting to stay, “the PD has confirmed that I am working with professionals who know and care about what they are doing. All clearly care about what is provided to learners and have worked hard to make sure learners get it all—top quality instructors with professional knowledge and the best, most current skills. Being part of this group drives me much more than any paycheck ever could.”

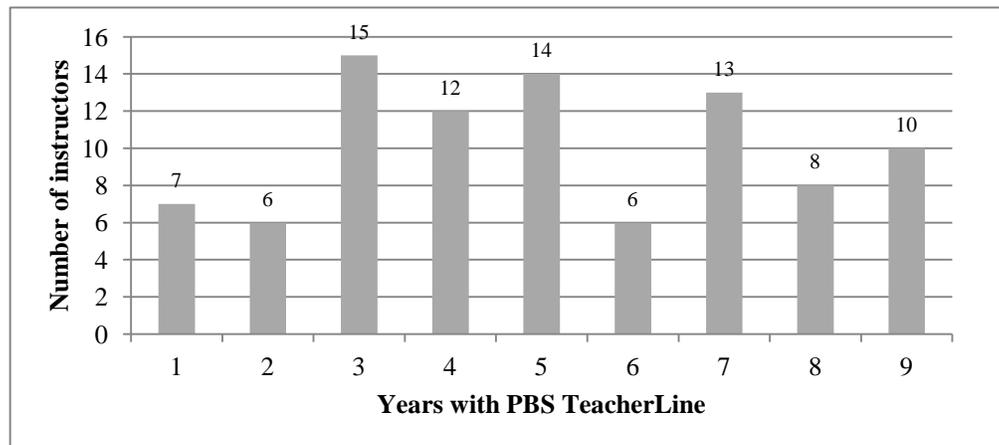


Figure 3: Number of years instructors have taught for PBS TeacherLine

4. High-quality instruction contributed to favorable learner re-enrollment rates during the study.

PBS TeacherLine estimates their learner re-enrollment rate for the five years including the fall 2009, winter 2010 and spring 2010 course terms at 56%. During the study, 96.3 percent of learners revealed the primary reason why they have taken or would take another course from PBS TeacherLine is the high quality of their instructors. One learner wrote

[The instructor] is, by far, the best instructor I have had to date in any online course I have taken. I would take a course with her again and will recommend her and PBS TeacherLine to my colleagues.

Most learners said they would enroll in another TeacherLine course and recommend TeacherLine courses to their colleagues as a direct result of their instructor's high quality, with statistically insignificant differences across course terms.

5. Favorable learner course grades correlated with instructor quality as measured during this study

Learners' course grades did not fluctuate systematically by course term, instructor demographic variables, or an instructor's stage in the PD process during this study. However, learner grades did fluctuate by instructor quality as measured by the program rubric (Figure 4.)

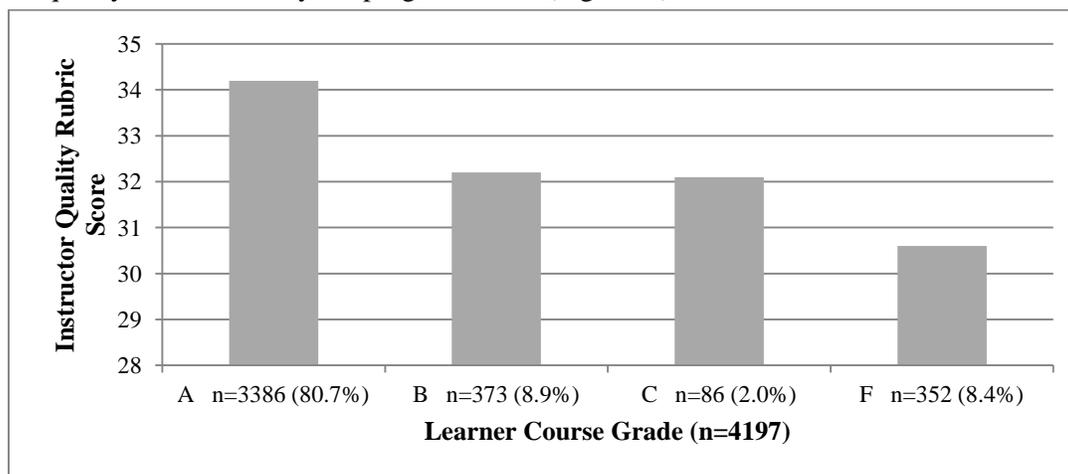


Figure 4: Learner course grades and their instructors' quality rating

VI. DISCUSSION

One of the key findings from this study supports the conclusions of many others – online instructor quality matters. This underscores the importance of providing high quality PD for supporting online instructors. Results from this study showed that PBS TeacherLine's PD model implements various professional guidelines established by SREB, iNACOL and current research such as:

- Modeling high quality online instruction by positioning online teachers as learners in the online environment.
- Offering a multifaceted PD model that includes online courses, mentoring, static materials and an online professional learning community.
- Clearly stating and demonstrating expectations for high quality instruction originating with research-based best practices.
- Leveraging technology to accurately measure PD quality and instructional performance from multiple perspectives by aggregating data for easy analysis and discussion.

- Utilizing the online environment to provide accurate, timely and iterative feedback about instructional quality to instructors, prompts for responding to the feedback, and an asynchronous forum for sharing ideas that can improve online instruction.
- Focusing PD content on:
 - Research-tested strategies that highlight effective ways of teaching and learning online.
 - Extensive modeling of new techniques and guided practice to scaffold learning.
 - Embedded and problem-based learning opportunities with immediate applications to real-world environments conveyed online.

Implementing these strategies has contributed positively to instructor satisfaction, high quality online instruction, and learner outcomes such as academic success and favorable re-enrollment statistics. While post-hoc assessments of the quality of PBS TeacherLine's PD offerings and instructor competencies cannot establish a causal relationship between the two, both instructors and course learners are satisfied and successful.

This study also explores measures that can provide useful starting points for other PD programs looking to implement a continuous improvement cycle. For example, formative assessment such as 3D reviews can be effective for achieving various PD outcomes by shaping high quality online instruction, as rated by program-level staff, instructors, and learners. Going forward, PBS TeacherLine will provide new instructors with two course reviews during their first year and one review during subsequent calendar years in order to meet their continuous improvement objectives. Scales for all measures will become more sensitive than the three-point scale piloted during the study. The course review document itself also serves as a record of performance and PD completion that can be used until credentialed PD opportunities for online faculty become more widespread. Providing such a document to online faculty responds to their need for artifacts that capture instructional strengths and PD priorities, and also align with contemporary discussions about online teaching and learning.

More research is needed to determine whether and how specific PD elements are effective in other environments. Additionally, it will be important to determine which PD elements implemented here, if any, may *not* be necessary in order to achieve favorable outcomes. Comparison testing with validated measures and benchmarking will significantly improve our understanding in these areas. A more robust analysis across sectors (higher education, k-12, industry) and programs involving well-constructed measures will improve the generalizability of these findings.

The implications for this study's findings are limited somewhat by factors related to its design and sample. The study did not utilize a comparison group or randomization of participants into a group that received PBS TeacherLine's PD. This allowed for careful study of the relationship between PD implementation and various outcomes for all instructors, but doesn't provide data for contextualizing gains relative to other PD conditions.

VII. CONCLUSION

Broadly, this study is an example of a systematic attempt to better understand how PD for online instructors that are using professional standards from organizations such as iNACOL and SREB may contribute to positive outcomes that are relevant to the online learning environment. Within this study, data suggest implementing PD requirements may contribute to learner success, particularly among adult learners. In most instances, instructors who performed well on their course reviews also received very positive feedback from learners. A logical next step is to further explore and test this relationship in different settings to enhance the discussion of learner outcomes associated with high-quality PD for online course instructors.

Others are encouraged to consider PBS TeacherLine's PD model as a guide and customize the application of broader concepts to address the particular information priorities that will best support their goals for data-driven practice. For example, the PD experience may be more relevant with built-in weekly, daily or

even real-time instructional data such as those available through data visualization and dashboards for rapid processing. Continued review and discussion of empirical data on PD for supporting online instructors will further illustrate best practices suggested by current professional guidelines.

VIII. ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Barbara Storandt leads ALTA Solutions Group, LLC, specializing in multi-method research and evaluation of technology supported improvement initiatives in education.

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Anna Piacentini Lacher works as an independent consultant with ALTA Solutions Group, LLC, as a research analyst. She contributes to data collection, synthesis, analysis, and interpretation.

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X. APPENDIX A: 3D COURSE REVIEW

LEVEL I

Appendices may be downloaded from altasolutionsgroup.com

This information provides feedback on your facilitation from three perspectives: your self-evaluation, the PBS Associate Director of Online Facilitation, and aggregate survey results from learners in your course(s).

PBS TeacherLine

Facilitator Course Review

Facilitator Name:

Section Number:

Course Term:

Number of Learners:

5 = Outstanding 4 = Excellent 3 = Very good 2 = Satisfactory 1 = Needs improvement

Course climate and community building	Self	PBS	Learners					
			Mean	5	4	3	2	1
Providing, modeling and/or enforcing appropriate standards for learner behavior.								
Creating a safe and comfortable online learning environment.								
Utilizing effective techniques for communicating in a friendly way and remaining accessible to learners.								
<u>PBS Comments:</u>								

Instruction	Self	PBS	Learners					
			Mean	5	4	3	2	1
Strengthening learners' understanding of course concepts through various interactions (e.g. discussion boards, assessment feedback).								
Utilizing techniques for explaining concepts clearly and effectively.								
<u>PBS Comments:</u>								

Interaction and discussion facilitation	Self	PBS	Learners					
			Mean	5	4	3	2	1
Encouraging a range of viewpoints in discussions.								
Encouraging learners' continued interaction/engagement through the use of questions or comments.								
Synthesizing learner posts and stimulating ongoing discussion on the discussion boards.								
Demonstrating high-quality written communication skills throughout the course.								
<u>PBS Comments:</u>								

Course organization	Self	PBS	Learners					
			Mean	5	4	3	2	1

Toward an Understanding of What Works in Professional Development for Online Instructors:
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Coordinating and assisting learners in understanding course requirements and procedures for working online.								
Personalizing the course to accommodate a range of learning styles.								
Responding to learner questions within 24 hours.								
Remaining sensitive to any difficulties that learners have completing assignments or maintaining the course pace.								
<u>PBS Comments:</u>								

Implementation of assessments	Self	PBS	Learners					
			Mean	5	4	3	2	1
Keeping learners informed of their progress during the course.								
Providing detailed, thoughtful and constructive feedback about learners' performance in the course.			*	*	*	*	*	*
Providing detailed and thoughtful feedback about learners' performance in the course.	*	*						
Providing constructive feedback about learners' performance in the course.	*	*						
<u>PBS Comments:</u>								

**Question was combined on reflection log and PBS TL course review rubric, and split between two questions on the learner survey*

Other	Self	PBS	Learners					
			Mean	5	4	3	2	1
Conducting the course in accordance with facilitator checklist and contract deliverables.			*	*	*	*	*	*
<u>PBS Comments:</u>								

** This question was not asked of learners*

Strengths that your learners associated with you:

Suggestions from your learners for how this course could have been facilitated more effectively:

Self Reflection Comments

How you used the information contained in your course review:

Your strengths as a TeacherLine facilitator the data in your course review suggest:

Areas for improvement the data in your course review suggest:

What you found most striking about the data in your course review:

Your goals that address weaknesses suggested by the data in your course review:

How you will carry out these goals:

LEVEL II

This information provides feedback on your facilitation from three perspectives: your self-evaluation, the PBS Associate Director of Online Facilitation, and aggregate survey results from learners in your course(s).

PBS TeacherLine

Facilitator Course Review

Facilitator Name:

Section Number:

Course Term:

Number of Learners:

5 = Outstanding 4 = Excellent 3 = Very good 2 = Satisfactory 1 = Needs improvement

Course climate and community building	Self	PBS	Learners					
			Mean	5	4	3	2	1
Providing, modeling and/or enforcing appropriate standards for learner behavior.								
Creating a safe and comfortable online learning environment.								
Utilizing effective techniques for communicating in a friendly way and remaining accessible to learners.								
<u>PBS Comments:</u>								

Instruction	Self	PBS	Learners					
			Mean	5	4	3	2	1
Strengthening learners' understanding of course concepts through various interactions (e.g. discussion boards, assessment feedback).								
Utilizing techniques for explaining concepts clearly and effectively.								
<u>PBS Comments:</u>								

Interaction and discussion facilitation	Self	PBS	Learners					
			Mean	5	4	3	2	1
Encouraging a range of viewpoints in discussions.								
Encouraging learners' continued interaction/engagement through the use of questions or comments.								
Synthesizing learner posts and stimulating ongoing discussion on the discussion boards.								
Demonstrating high-quality written communication skills throughout the course.								
<u>PBS Comments:</u>								

Toward an Understanding of What Works in Professional Development for Online Instructors:
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Course organization	Self	PBS	Learners					
			Mean	5	4	3	2	1
Coordinating and assisting learners in understanding course requirements and procedures for working online.								
Personalizing the course to accommodate a range of learning styles.								
Responding to learner questions within 24 hours.								
Remaining sensitive to any difficulties that learners have completing assignments or maintaining the course pace.								
<u>PBS Comments:</u>								

Implementation of assessments	Self	PBS	Learners					
			Mean	5	4	3	2	1
Keeping learners informed of their progress during the course.								
Providing detailed, thoughtful and constructive feedback about learners' performance in the course.			*	*	*	*	*	*
Providing detailed and thoughtful feedback about learners' performance in the course.	*	*						
Providing constructive feedback about learners' performance in the course.	*	*						
<u>PBS Comments:</u>								

*Question was combined on self reflection log and PBS course review rubrics and split between two questions on learner survey

Other	Self	PBS	Learners					
			Mean	5	4	3	2	1
Conducting the course in accordance with facilitator checklist and contract deliverables.			*	*	*	*	*	*
<u>PBS Comments:</u>								

* This question was not asked of learners

Self Reflection Comments

How you used the information contained in your course review:

Your strengths as a TeacherLine facilitator the data in your course review suggest:

Areas for improvement the data in your course review suggest:

What you found most striking about the data in your course review:

Your goals that address weaknesses suggested by the data in your course review:

How you will carry out these goals:

The following tables compare feedback on the facilitation of your previous course(s) to the feedback presented above for your Summer 2010 course(s). The data represents an aggregate of responses from all courses facilitated in each term and is intended to compare feedback on your facilitation in general, rather than on a particular course you may have facilitated more than once.

**Previous-Summer 2010
Course Review Comparison**

Fall 2009 Course(s):

Winter 2010 Course(s):

Spring 2010 Course(s):

Summer 2010 Course(s):

F 09, W 10, and Sp 10: 3 = Excellent 2 = Satisfactory 1 = Needs Improvement

S 10: 5 = Outstanding 4 = Excellent 3 = Very good 2 = Satisfactory 1 = Needs improvement

Course climate and community building	Self				PBS				Learners			
	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10
Providing, modeling and/or enforcing appropriate standards for learner behavior.												
Creating a safe and comfortable online learning environment.												
Utilizing effective techniques for communicating in a friendly way and remaining accessible to learners.												

Instruction	Self				PBS				Learners			
	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10
Strengthening learners' understanding of course concepts through various interactions (e.g. discussion boards, assessment feedback).												
Utilizing techniques for explaining concepts clearly and effectively.												

Toward an Understanding of What Works in Professional Development for Online Instructors:
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Interaction and Discussion Facilitation	Self				PBS				Learners			
	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10
Encouraging a range of viewpoints in discussions.												
Encouraging learners' continued interaction/engagement through the use of questions or comments.												
Synthesizing learner posts and stimulating ongoing discussion on the discussion boards.												
Demonstrating high-quality written communication skills throughout the course.												

Course Organization	Self				PBS				Learners			
	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10
Coordinating and assisting learners in understanding course requirements and procedures for working online.												
Personalizing the course to accommodate a range of learning styles.												
Responding to learner questions within 24 hours.												
Remaining sensitive to any difficulties that learners have completing assignments or maintaining the course pace.												

Implementation of Assessments	Self				PBS				Learners			
	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10
Keeping learners informed of their												

progress during the course.												
Providing detailed, thoughtful and constructive feedback about learners' performance in the course.									*	*	*	*
Providing detailed and thoughtful feedback about learners' performance in the course.				*				*				
Providing constructive feedback about learners' performance in the course.				*				*				

*Question was combined on self and PBS surveys and split between two questions on learner survey

Other	Self				PBS				Learners			
	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10	F 09	W 10	Sp 10	S 10
Conducting the course in accordance with facilitator checklist and contract deliverables.									*	*	*	*

* This question was not asked of learners

XI. APPENDIX B: INSTRUCTOR BACKGROUND SURVEY

1. Which of the following best describes the professional development that you have completed through TeacherLine?

Online Facilitator Training I (TECH 525/526)

Online Facilitator Training I (TECH 525/526) plus mentoring

Online Facilitator Training I (TECH 525/526) plus Online Facilitator Training II (TECH 531)

Other (please specify)

2. Overall, to what extent has this professional development prepared you to facilitate a TeacherLine course? Not at all, Somewhat, Extensively

3. Have you taken any professional development for online facilitation, offered by someone other than TeacherLine, that has significantly influenced how you facilitate TeacherLine courses? *Yes, No*

4. Please describe the primary content, format and duration of any professional development for online facilitation, offered by someone other than TeacherLine, that has significantly influenced how you facilitate TeacherLine courses (3 sentences max):

4a. Total number of hours completed:

4b. In what way(s) has/have this non-TeacherLine professional development influenced your facilitation

Toward an Understanding of What Works in Professional Development for Online Instructors:
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of TeacherLine courses?

5. Please use the following scale to rate the quality of the preparation you have received from PBS TeacherLine on how to facilitate online courses to date.

3 – TeacherLine training prepared me to implement this immediately

2 - TeacherLine training gave me good ideas on how to start, but I am not ready to implement

1 – The training covered this topic but I don't feel at all prepared to apply it in my teaching

0 – I have not received any training on this

5a. Course Climate and Community Building

Providing, modeling and/or enforcing appropriate standards for learner behavior.	3	2	1	0
Ensuring that learners knew one another and that each learner feels comfortable interacting with other learners online.	3	2	1	0
Techniques for communicating in a friendly way and being accessible to learners.	3	2	1	0

5b. Instruction

Stressing important points in information resources (e.g. discussion threads, readings)	3	2	1	0
Displaying my knowledge of the subject matter.	3	2	1	0
Strengthening learners' understanding of course concepts through various interactions (e.g. discussion boards, assessment feedback).	3	2	1	0
Techniques for explaining concepts clearly and effectively.	3	2	1	0

5c. Interaction and discussion facilitation

Encouraging a range of viewpoints in discussions.	3	2	1	0
Encouraging my continued interaction/engagement through the use of questions or comments.	3	2	1	0
Synthesizing learner posts and stimulating ongoing discussion on the discussion boards.	3	2	1	0
Demonstrating high-quality written communication skills throughout the course.	3	2	1	0

5d. Course Organization

Coordinating and assisting learners in understanding course requirements and procedures for working online.	3	2	1	0
Personalizing the course to accommodate a range of learning styles.	3	2	1	0
Responding to learner questions within 24 hours.	3	2	1	0
Remaining sensitive to any difficulties that learners have completing assignments or maintaining the course pace.	3	2	1	0

5e. Implementation of Assessments

Keeping learners informed of their progress during the course.	3	2	1	0
Providing detailed, thoughtful, and constructive feedback about learners' performance in the course.	3	2	1	0

6. Please rate the professional development content that you need most in order to deepen your online facilitation.

Very high need, High need, Neither high nor low need, Low need, Very low need

- 6a. Subject-area content (e.g. Algebra, fictional literature)
- 6b. LMS and/or technology content such as web-based social networking tools, webinar software, web browsers and file management
- 6c. Self-assessing content knowledge and/or pedagogical skills necessary to be an effective online facilitator
- 6d. Self-assessing abilities to use essential hardware and software to facilitate effectively
- 6e. Understanding the instructional design of TeacherLine courses
- 6f. Understanding and teaching 21st Century Literacy Skills including: strong academic and teamwork skills, thinking and reasoning skills, and proficiency in using technology
 - 6g. Actively engaging learners by modeling effective communication strategies (e.g. asking better questions, being more receptive to feedback)
 - 6h. Locating and/or critiquing supplemental materials that provide learners with multiple opportunities for interacting with TeacherLine course content
 - 6i. Instructional practices that build on knowledge that learners already have
 - 6j. Multicultural approaches that reflect the cultural backgrounds of learners
 - 6k. Strategies that help ESL learners (or help learners work with their ESL students)
 - 6l. Techniques that promote student engagement (e.g. implementing deadlines within the course, encouraging active participation, etc.)
 - 6m. Knowing when and how to evaluate the learning of the individual and the class, including acknowledging progress and celebrating achievement
 - 6n. Using, advocating and modeling safe, legal and ethical use of digital information
 - 6o. Other (please list)

7. Please rate the format(s) that you would be most likely to attend for acquiring the above professional development content.

Very likely to attend, Likely to attend, Unlikely to attend, Very unlikely to attend

- 7a. Viewing models of effective online teaching, communications and strategies
- 7b. Role-playing situations that apply content
- 7c. Problem-based discussions with other TeacherLine facilitators
- 7d. Problem-based discussions with non- TeacherLine facilitators
- 7e. Coaching/mentoring
- 7f. Reviewing current research and/or best practices
- 7g. Hands-on training and experimentation with technology tools ad applications used to deliver instruction
- 7h. Other (please list)

8. What would be necessary to make you want to immediately implement strategies/techniques you have learned during professional development (3 sentences max)?

Toward an Understanding of What Works in Professional Development for Online Instructors:
The Case of PBS Teacherline

9. To what extent do you feel you have received: *Inadequate Adequate Exemplary*
- 9a. Feedback on your performance as a TeacherLine course facilitator
 - 9b. Opportunities through TeacherLine to deepen the knowledge necessary to be a more effective online facilitator
 - 9c. Opportunities through TeacherLine to deepen the skills necessary to be a more effective online facilitator
 - 9d. Opportunities through a service other than TeacherLine to deepen the knowledge necessary to be a more effective online facilitator
 - 9e. Opportunities through a service other than TeacherLine to deepen the skills necessary to be a more effective online facilitator
 - 9f. Access to technical support that reliably solves technology problems

10. Briefly describe the most positive aspect of the support you have received as a TeacherLine course facilitator to date. This can include professional development, technical support or something else.

11. Briefly describe the aspect of the support you have received as a TeacherLine course facilitator to date that could be most improved. This can include professional development, technical support or something else.

12. Please select the statement below that most closely describes the overall contribution of the FUN to your facilitation experience:

The FUN is essential for successful TeacherLine course facilitation.

The FUN enhanced my skills and/or abilities, but in a way that I could have gotten elsewhere.

The FUN enhanced my skills and/or abilities in a truly unique way.

The FUN is a nice professional networking tool, but doesn't otherwise contribute much to my facilitation experience.

I refer to the FUN to gain information and/or networking more than I contribute content to the site.

I have never used the FUN

Generally, the FUN has not impacted my facilitation experience positively or negatively.

Instructor Reflection Logs (Lv I and II)

Please use the following scale to self assess the course you just finished teaching.

5 – Outstanding 4 – Excellent 3 – Very Good 2 – Satisfactory 1 - Needs Improvement

1. Course Climate and Community Building

I provided, modeled and/or enforced appropriate standards for learner behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
I created a safe and comfortable online learning environment.	1	2	3	4	5
I utilized effective techniques for communicating in a friendly way and remaining accessible to learners.	1	2	3	4	5

2. Instruction

I strengthened learners' understanding of course concepts through various interactions (e.g. discussion boards, assessment, feedback).	1	2	3	4	5
I utilized techniques for explaining concepts	1	2	3	4	5

clearly and effectively.					
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3. Interaction and discussion facilitation

I encouraged a range of viewpoints in discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
I encouraged learners' continued interaction/engagement through the use of questions or comments.	1	2	3	4	5
I synthesized learner posts and stimulating ongoing discussion on the discussion boards.	1	2	3	4	5
I demonstrated high-quality written communication skills throughout the course.	1	2	3	4	5

4. Course Organization

I coordinated and assisted learners in understanding course requirements and procedures for working online.	1	2	3	4	5
I personalized the course to accommodate a range of learning styles.	1	2	3	4	5
I responded to learner questions within 24 hours.	1	2	3	4	5
I remained sensitive to any difficulties that learners have completing assignments or maintaining the course pace.	1	2	3	4	5

5. Implementation of Assessments

I kept learners informed of their progress during the course.	1	2	3	4	5
I provided detailed, thoughtful, and constructive feedback about learners' performance in the course.	1	2	3	4	5

6. Other

I conducted the course in accordance with facilitator checklist and contract deliverables.	1	2	3	4	5
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7. Do you have suggestions about how to improve the content or presentation of the core course curriculum (provided by TeacherLine developers)?

8. Briefly describe one or two aspects of your instruction this term (e.g. interaction with students, facilitation of the discussion board, supplemental content additions, etc.) that you feel are reflective of your strengths as a TeacherLine facilitator.

9. Create a priority list of your plans for improving your facilitation skills and encouraging your professional growth as a TeacherLine facilitator. How will you carry out those plans?

The following questions were added to differentiate Level II from Level I logs:

Last term, you received a course review that incorporated data from PBS TeacherLine, your learners and your personal reflection. Please answer the following questions based on the personalized course review document that you received.

10. When did you open the course review?

Within 24 hours of receiving it

Within 2-3 days of receiving it

Within 1 week of receiving it

More than 1 week after receiving it

I have not opened my personalized course review

11. How many times have you opened the course review document?

Never Once Twice Three times Four times More than four times

12. How much time have you spent, in total, reviewing this document?

0-30 minutes

31-60 minutes

1-1.5 hours

1.5-2 hours

Longer than 2 hours

13. How useful was the information contained in the course review?

14. Please describe how you have used the information contained in the course review.

15. What strengths do the data in the course review suggest?

16. What areas of improvement do the data in the course review suggest?

17. What was most striking to you about the data in the course review?

18. After reflecting on the information contained in your personalized course review, please set at least two goals that address weaknesses suggested by the data.

18a. How will you carry out these goals?

19. Please describe how you would like PBS TeacherLine to use the information in the course review.

20. What did you like best about the course review process?

21. How could the course review process be improved?

XII. APPENDIX C: COURSE REFLECTION LOG

Instructor Reflection Logs (Lv I and II)

Please use the following scale to self assess the course you just finished teaching.

5 – Outstanding 4 – Excellent 3 – Very Good 2 – Satisfactory 1 - Needs Improvement

1. Course Climate and Community Building

I provided, modeled and/or enforced appropriate standards for learner behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
I created a safe and comfortable online learning environment.	1	2	3	4	5
I utilized effective techniques for communicating in a friendly way and remaining accessible to learners.	1	2	3	4	5

2. Instruction

I strengthened learners' understanding of course concepts through various interactions (e.g. discussion boards, assessment, feedback).	1	2	3	4	5
I utilized techniques for explaining concepts clearly and effectively.	1	2	3	4	5

3. Interaction and discussion facilitation

I encouraged a range of viewpoints in discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
I encouraged learners' continued	1	2	3	4	5

interaction/engagement through the use of questions or comments.					
I synthesized learner posts and stimulating ongoing discussion on the discussion boards.	1	2	3	4	5
I demonstrated high-quality written communication skills throughout the course.	1	2	3	4	5

4. Course Organization

I coordinated and assisted learners in understanding course requirements and procedures for working online.	1	2	3	4	5
I personalized the course to accommodate a range of learning styles.	1	2	3	4	5
I responded to learner questions within 24 hours.	1	2	3	4	5
I remained sensitive to any difficulties that learners have completing assignments or maintaining the course pace.	1	2	3	4	5

5. Implementation of Assessments

I kept learners informed of their progress during the course.	1	2	3	4	5
I provided detailed, thoughtful, and constructive feedback about learners' performance in the course.	1	2	3	4	5

6. Other

I conducted the course in accordance with facilitator checklist and contract deliverables.	1	2	3	4	5
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7. Do you have suggestions about how to improve the content or presentation of the core course curriculum (provided by TeacherLine developers)?
8. Briefly describe one or two aspects of your instruction this term (e.g. interaction with students, facilitation of the discussion board, supplemental content additions, etc.) that you feel are reflective of your strengths as a TeacherLine facilitator.
9. Create a priority list of your plans for improving your facilitation skills and encouraging your professional growth as a TeacherLine facilitator. How will you carry out those plans?

The following questions were added to differentiate Level II from Level I logs:

Last term, you received a course review that incorporated data from PBS TeacherLine, your learners and your personal reflection. Please answer the following questions based on the personalized course review document that you received.

10. When did you open the course review?
 - Within 24 hours of receiving it*
 - Within 2-3 days of receiving it*
 - Within 1 week of receiving it*
 - More than 1 week after receiving it*
 - I have not opened my personalized course review*
11. How many times have you opened the course review document?
 - Never*
 - Once*
 - Twice*

Three times

Four times

More than four times

12. How much time have you spent, in total, reviewing this document?

0-30 minutes

31-60 minutes

1-1.5 hours

1.5-2 hours

Longer than 2 hours

13. How useful was the information contained in the course review?

14. Please describe how you have used the information contained in the course review.

15. What strengths do the data in the course review suggest?

16. What areas of improvement do the data in the course review suggest?

17. What was most striking to you about the data in the course review?

18. After reflecting on the information contained in your personalized course review, please set at least two goals that address weaknesses suggested by the data.

18a. How will you carry out these goals?

19. Please describe how you would like PBS TeacherLine to use the information in the course review.

20. What did you like best about the course review process?

21. How could the course review process be improved?

XIII. APPENDIX D: PBS TEACHERLINE COURSE REVIEW RUBRIC

Post-Course Learner Survey

Please indicate the TeacherLine course code for the course that you just completed (also provided to you by your facilitator):

Facilitator name:

Course term:

1. Did you just complete your first TeacherLine course?

1a. If no, how many TeacherLine courses have you taken to date?

2. How many TeacherLine courses have you taken from this facilitator (including this course)

3. Please use the following scale to rate the facilitator's performance during the course that you just completed:

5 – Outstanding 4 – Excellent 3 – Very Good 2 – Satisfactory 1 - Needs Improvement

3a. Course Climate and Community Building

The facilitator provided, modeled and/or enforced appropriate standards for learner behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator created a safe and comfortable online learning environment.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator utilized effective techniques for communicating in a friendly way and remaining accessible to learners.	1	2	3	4	5

3b. Instruction

The facilitator strengthened learners' understanding of course concepts through various interactions (e.g. discussion boards, assessment, feedback).	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator utilized techniques for explaining concepts clearly and effectively.	1	2	3	4	5

3c. Interaction and discussion facilitation

The facilitator encouraged a range of viewpoints in discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator encouraged learners' continued interaction/engagement through the use of questions or comments.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator synthesized learner posts and stimulating ongoing discussion on the discussion boards.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator demonstrated high-quality written communication skills throughout the course.	1	2	3	4	5

3d. Course Organization

The facilitator coordinated and assisted learners in understanding course requirements and procedures for working online.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator personalized the course to accommodate a range of learning styles.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator responded to learner questions within 24 hours.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator remained sensitive to any difficulties that learners have completing assignments or maintaining the course pace.	1	2	3	4	5

3e. Implementation of Assessments

The facilitator kept learners informed of their progress during the course.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator provided detailed, thoughtful, and constructive feedback about learners' performance in the course.	1	2	3	4	5

4. My grade in this course accurately reflects my mastery of course objectives.

Yes, no

5. Because of this course facilitator's knowledge and skills, I would/will:

Definitely not, I doubt it, I might consider it, I am pretty sure I would, Absolutely

- a. Take another TeacherLine course
- b. Take another TeacherLine course from this facilitator
- c. Be able to apply what I have learned immediately in my professional practice
- d. Stay connected with other learners beyond this course Recommend this course to a colleague or friend
- e. Recommend a TeacherLine course to a colleague or friend
- f. Recommend a TeacherLine course taught by this facilitator to a colleague or friend
- g. Seek training on how to be a TeacherLine course facilitator Other
- h. Other (please indicate here)

6. What do you consider to be this facilitator's strengths?

7. Please evaluate, given what you know and have experienced, the performance of this facilitator in relation to this specific course. Do you have suggestions for how this course may have been facilitated more effectively?

8. Do you have any suggestions for how to improve the content or presentation of this course's content?

XIV. APPENDIX E: POST-COURSE LEARNER SURVEY

Post-Course Learner Survey

Please indicate the TeacherLine course code for the course that you just completed (also provided to you by your facilitator):

Facilitator name:

Course term:

1. Did you just complete your first TeacherLine course?

1a. If no, how many TeacherLine courses have you taken to date?

2. How many TeacherLine courses have you taken from this facilitator (including this course)

3. Please use the following scale to rate the facilitator's performance during the course that you just completed:

5 – Outstanding 4 – Excellent 3 – Very Good 2 – Satisfactory 1 - Needs Improvement

3a. Course Climate and Community Building

The facilitator provided, modeled and/or enforced appropriate standards for learner behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator created a safe and comfortable online learning environment.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator utilized effective techniques for communicating in a friendly way and remaining accessible to learners.	1	2	3	4	5

3b. Instruction

The facilitator strengthened learners' understanding of course concepts through various interactions (e.g. discussion boards, assessment, feedback).	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator utilized techniques for explaining concepts clearly and effectively.	1	2	3	4	5

3c. Interaction and discussion facilitation

The facilitator encouraged a range of viewpoints in discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator encouraged learners' continued interaction/engagement through the use of questions or comments.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator synthesized learner posts and stimulating ongoing discussion on the discussion boards.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator demonstrated high-quality written communication skills throughout the course.	1	2	3	4	5

3d. Course Organization

The facilitator coordinated and assisted learners in understanding course requirements and procedures for working online.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator personalized the course to accommodate a range of learning styles.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator responded to learner questions	1	2	3	4	5

within 24 hours.					
The facilitator remained sensitive to any difficulties that learners have completing assignments or maintaining the course pace.	1	2	3	4	5

3e. Implementation of Assessments

The facilitator kept learners informed of their progress during the course.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator provided detailed, thoughtful, and constructive feedback about learners' performance in the course.	1	2	3	4	5

4. My grade in this course accurately reflects my mastery of course objectives.
Yes, no
5. Because of this course facilitator's knowledge and skills, I would/will:
Definitely not, I doubt it, I might consider it, I am pretty sure I would, Absolutely
- a. Take another TeacherLine course
 - b. Take another TeacherLine course from this facilitator
 - c. Be able to apply what I have learned immediately in my professional practice
 - d. Stay connected with other learners beyond this course Recommend this course to a colleague or friend
 - e. Recommend a TeacherLine course to a colleague or friend
 - f. Recommend a TeacherLine course taught by this facilitator to a colleague or friend
 - g. Seek training on how to be a TeacherLine course facilitator Other
 - h. Other (please indicate here)
6. What do you consider to be this facilitator's strengths?
7. Please evaluate, given what you know and have experienced, the performance of this facilitator in relation to this specific course. Do you have suggestions for how this course may have been facilitated more effectively?
8. Do you have any suggestions for how to improve the content or presentation of this course's content?

XV. APPENDIX F: COURSE FACILITATOR INTERVIEWS

Participants: Lv I course facilitators (W2010)

Duration: 15-20 minutes each

Questions:

- What do you feel are your strongest facilitation skills?
- What are the facilitation skills that you feel you need to most improve?
- What are your greatest professional development needs in order to be a better online course facilitator?
- How well do you feel that PBS TeacherLine's current professional development and support meets these needs? How could PBS TeacherLine do better?
- What did you like/not like about completing the reflection log that was part of this research study?

Participants: Lv II course facilitators (W2010)

Duration: 15-20 minutes each

Questions:

- In general, how would you say your facilitation this term compared to last term? What was harder/easier about this term? What went better/worse?
- Did you open the course review that you received after the conclusion of the fall 2009 term? If so, please describe how you used the information contained in the course review. What was most striking to you about the course review process? If not, why?
- How would you like PBS TeacherLine to use the information in the course reviews?
- How could the course review process be improved?
- Is there anything else about PBS TeacherLine’s support of your facilitation or the research process that you would like to share?
-

XVI. APPENDIX G: Program Rubric

5-point rating scale	Points			
	0	1	2	3
Qualifications (11 points)				
Degree/ certifications	Facilitators must have a master’s degree in education, or a related field of study, as well as the appropriate subject matter certification and expertise	Facilitator holds a CAS in education or a related field of study including the subject matter topic (s)he regularly teaches online	Facilitator holds a PhD in education or a related field of study including the subject matter topic (s)he regularly teaches online	
OFT	Successfully completed OFT I	Successfully completed OFT I and mentoring	Successfully completed OFT I and II	Successfully completed OFT I and II and mentoring
Prior online learning	Enrolled in up to 5 fully online course as a learner or up to 5 hybrid online courses as a learner	Successfully completed up to 5 fully online non-TL courses as a learner OR successfully completed 1-2 PBS TL courses as a learner	Successfully completed 6 -15 fully online on-TL courses as a learner OR Successfully completed 3-5 PBS TL courses as a learner	Successfully completed 16 or more fully online non-TL courses as a learner OR successfully completed 6 or more PBS TL courses as a learner
Prior online teaching	Independently delivered at least one fully online course for any provider	Independently delivered at least ten fully online courses for any non-TeacherLine provider OR delivered fully online instruction independently for PBS TeacherLine for up to 3 course terms	Independently delivered at least twenty fully online courses for any provider OR delivered fully online instruction independently for PBS TeacherLine for between 3 and 6 course terms	Delivered fully online instruction independently for PBS TeacherLine for 7 or more course terms OR independently delivered at least one online instructor training course for PBS TL (i.e. OFT I or II)

Performance - evaluated annually (37 points)

<u>Learner Rating</u>				
Course climate and community building	Gathered responses from ≤ 50% of learners	Aggregate learner rating of 3.0 - 3.9 from ≤ 50% of learners	Aggregate learner rating of 4.0 - 4.4 from ≤ 50% of learners	Aggregate learner rating of 4.5 - 5.0 from ≤ 50% of learners
Instruction	Gathered responses from ≤ 50% of learners	Aggregate learner rating of 3.0 - 3.9 from ≤ 50% of learners	Aggregate learner rating of 4.0 - 4.4 from ≤ 50% of learners	Aggregate learner rating of 4.5 - 5.0 from ≤ 50% of learners
Interaction and discussion facilitation	Gathered responses from ≤ 50% of learners	Aggregate learner rating of 3.0 - 3.9 from ≤ 50% of learners	Aggregate learner rating of 4.0 - 4.4 from ≤ 50% of learners	Aggregate learner rating of 4.5 - 5.0 from ≤ 50% of learners
Course organization	Gathered responses from ≤ 50% of learners	Aggregate learner rating of 3.0 - 3.9 from ≤ 50% of learners	Aggregate learner rating of 4.0 - 4.4 from ≤ 50% of learners	Aggregate learner rating of 4.5 - 5.0 from ≤ 50% of learners
Implementation of assessments	Gathered responses from ≤ 50% of learners	Aggregate learner rating of 3.0 - 3.9 from ≤ 50% of learners	Aggregate learner rating of 4.0 - 4.4 from ≤ 50% of learners	Aggregate learner rating of 4.5 - 5.0 from ≤ 50% of learners
<u>PBS TL Rating</u>				
Course climate and community building	≤ 2.9	3.0 - 3.9	4.0 - 4.4	4.5 - 5.0
Instruction	≤ 2.9	3.0 - 3.9	4.0 - 4.4	4.5 - 5.0
Interaction and discussion facilitation	≤ 2.9	3.0 - 3.9	4.0 - 4.4	4.5 - 5.0
Course organization	≤ 2.9	3.0 - 3.9	4.0 - 4.4	4.5 - 5.0
Implementation of assessments	≤ 2.9	3.0 - 3.9	4.0 - 4.4	4.5 - 5.0
Compliance with PBS TL content checklist and required deliverables	No	Yes		
Participation in course review process	Incomplete log(s)	Fully completed Log I on time	Fully completed Log II on time	Demonstrated achievement of goals set in Log II
Post-course learner surveys	Gathered responses from 50% of learners or less	Achieved 50.1% - 74.9% response on post-course learner survey	Achieved 75% - 99.9% response on post-course learner survey	Achieved 100% response on post-course learner survey

Title	Points	
	low	high
Facilitator	0	16
Distinguished Facilitator	17	33
Master Facilitator	34	48

XVII. APPENDIX H: Facilitator Course Review

Please complete this form for each PBS TeacherLine course facilitator. This form is used to provide feedback on the facilitator's performance, and to identify areas of needed professional development. This log will help pinpoint their strengths and weaknesses.

- Facilitator Name:
- Section Number:
- Course Term:
- Reviewer's Name:

Please use the following scale to rate the facilitator's performance during the course that they just finished facilitating:

5 – Outstanding 4 – Excellent 3 – Very Good 2 – Satisfactory 1 - Needs Improvement

5a. Course Climate and Community Building

The facilitator provided, modeled and/or enforced appropriate standards for learner behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator created a safe and comfortable online learning environment.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator utilized effective techniques for communicating in a friendly way and remaining accessible to learners.	1	2	3	4	5

5b. Comments:

6a. Instruction

The facilitator strengthened learners' understanding of course concepts through various interactions (e.g. discussion boards, assessment, feedback).	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator utilized techniques for explaining concepts clearly and effectively.	1	2	3	4	5

6b. Comments:

7a. Interaction and discussion facilitation

The facilitator encouraged a range of viewpoints in discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator encouraged learners' continued interaction/engagement through the use of questions or comments.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitator synthesized learner posts and stimulating	1	2	3	4	5

ongoing discussion on the discussion boards.

The facilitator demonstrated high-quality written communication skills throughout the course.	1	2	3	4	5
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7b. Comments:

8a. Course Organization

The facilitator coordinated and assisted learners in understanding course requirements and procedures for working online.	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

The facilitator personalized the course to accommodate a range of learning styles.	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

The facilitator responded to learner questions within 24 hours.	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

The facilitator remained sensitive to any difficulties that learners have completing assignments or maintaining the course pace.	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

8b. Comments:

9a. Implementation of Assessments

The facilitator kept learners informed of their progress during the course.	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

The facilitator provided detailed, thoughtful, and constructive feedback about learners' performance in the course.	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

9b. Comments:

10a. Other

The facilitator conducted the course in accordance with facilitator checklist and contract deliverables.	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

10b. Comments:

XVIII: APPENDIX I: Course Facilitation Guidelines

Facilitation Evaluation
Guidelines



This document summarizes the procedures and instruments resulting from the 2009-2010 formative/summative research study of PBS TeacherLine's (TL) online course facilitation quality and support. Testing and refinement took place during four consecutive course terms, and was guided by active input provided by TL leaders, facilitators, and TL course learners.

PBS TeacherLine utilizes a multi-tiered professional development experience for online course facilitators that features activities ranging from online professional development courses to personalized

course reviews. The final versions of instruments are designed to gather feedback on each component of TeacherLine’s facilitator support and professional development model:

TL Facilitation Professional Development and Support	
Component	Measure(s)
Evaluating facilitators:	
Personalized course review	Reflection logs I and II, TL course rubric, learner survey
Evaluating the TL facilitation program:	
OFT I	Background survey
OFT II	Background survey
Mentoring	Background survey
FUN	Background survey
Faculty meetings	Reflection logs I and II
Facilitator qualifications	TL program rubric
Facilitator performance	TL program rubric
Facilitator compliance with procedures	TL program rubric
Facilitator participation in course review	TL program rubric

Evaluations of individual facilitators and the entire TL facilitation support program are designed to take place annually, and to inform each other. Consistent with TL’s overall commitment to quality and applying current research-based best practices, this evaluation procedure calls upon multiple sources to assure data integrity. The design balances a need for both individuals and the program to co-evolve and improve. It also respects facilitators’ engagement with the process by asking questions that provoke their critical reflection while simultaneously collecting data on program and facilitator performance.

A. Evaluating Facilitators

Up to two formal evaluations of each facilitator take place annually. Each evaluation uses common research-based criteria and scales to rate a facilitator’s performance from three perspectives: facilitator, a TL leader, and course learners. PBS TeacherLine aggregates and summarizes these data into a personalized course review document that is provided to each facilitator at the end of the term. The instruments that facilitators use to reflect on their teaching are differentiated; Lv II logs ask facilitators to answer additional questions about a prior course review and have been shown to stimulate critical reflection among facilitators.

Here are the steps involved with evaluating individual TL course facilitators through the course review process:

What to do:

1. At the *start* of a course term:
 - a. Deploy Lv II reflection logs to all facilitators that have participated in the course review process at least once during the prior calendar year; Deploy Lv I reflection logs to everyone else. The goal is to have all facilitators complete one Lv II log annually. For newer facilitators, this will require them to first complete their Lv I log.
2. *Midway* through each course term:

- a. Deploy the post-course learner survey
 - b. Remind facilitators and learners to complete reflection logs and learner surveys respectively
 - c. Provide learner survey response rates to each facilitator as the term ends
 - d. Conduct TL course review
3. After each course term ends:
- a. Match each learner’s survey data with his/her facilitator
 - b. Calculate response rates for each facilitator
 - c. Match facilitator reflection log data with learner data with PBS TL data
 - d. Prepare course review and share it with facilitators

Title	Points	
	Low	High
Facilitator	0	16
Distinguished Facilitator	17	33
Master Facilitator	34	48

B. Evaluating TL’s Facilitation Support Program

PBS TeacherLine’s facilitation support program not only provides personalized performance feedback from multiple perspectives, but it embodies many current research-based best practices for professional development including peer support, professional learning communities, and problem-based learning.

PBS TeacherLine’s facilitation support model, compared with research-based best practices

Research-based best practices	PBS TeacherLine
Peer support	Mentoring, FUN
Ongoing, embedded guidance	FUN, Personalized course reviews
Problem-based	Mentoring, FUN, Assignments within OFT I and OFT II, Faculty meetings, Personalized course reviews
Differentiated	Courses (OFT I and II), Dyadic peer mentoring, Learning community through the FUN, and personalized course reviews
Online	All facets take place online

Each of PBS TeacherLine’s online course facilitators evaluates the preparation and support that PBS TeacherLine has provided to them by completing a background survey. The background survey is deployed annually to facilitators who have completed OFT I and/or II and collects feedback about facilitators’ preparation for online instruction, whether provided by PBS TeacherLine or another agency.

Complementing the background survey is a program rubric that can be used to assess the distribution of all facilitators’ performance during a given year. The program can be viewed as a success if at least 60% of the facilitators earn 17 out of 48 total points across the following four areas:

1. Qualifications (11 points) – Recognizes the positive but indirect contribution of continued online experience and other professional development accomplishments to demonstrated excellence as a TeacherLine facilitator
 - a. Degree/Certification

- b. OFT I, II and mentoring
 - c. Prior and continued online learning
 - d. Prior and continued online teaching
2. Performance (31 points) –PBS TeacherLine and learners (in aggregate) weigh in on facilitation performance using a 5-point Likert scale on the dimensions of:
- a. Course climate and community building
 - b. Instruction
 - c. Interaction and discussion facilitation
 - d. Course organization
 - e. Implementation of assessments
3. Compliance with PBS TL content checklist and required deliverables (1 point)
4. Participation in course review process including more than 50% response rate on the learner survey (6 points)

The rubric can be used to score and differentiate facilitators, and/or to evaluate the effectiveness of TL's facilitation support program.

Use rubric to score and differentiate facilitators.

C. Documents:

Program-level:

Program rubric

Background survey

Facilitator-level:

Reflection log Lv I and Lv I 3D course review template

Reflection log Lv II and Lv II 3D course review template

Post-course learner survey

TL course review rubric