12-2021

A Study of Faculty Perceptions of the Quality Matters Professional Development Experience

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A STUDY OF FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF THE QUALITY MATTERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

A Dissertation

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

December 2021

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December 2021

ABSTRACT

Pettus-Wakefield, Sarah Louise, A Study of Faculty Perceptions of the Quality Matters Professional Development Experience. Doctor of Education (EdD), December, 2021, 81 pp., 15 tables, 7 figures, references, 67 titles.

Quality Matters certification is regarded by many American universities, including the university where the study was conducted, as the industry standard for quality online course design. The purpose of this correlational research study was to explore faculty participants' perceptions about the Quality Matters training experience, their satisfaction with that professional development experience, and what impact they perceive Quality Matters had on the quality of their online course(s). This research was aimed at Quality Matters facilitators to aide in determining the effectiveness of Quality Matters training and to help identify possible areas of improvement. Participants for the study included faculty who had completed APPQMR, Applying the Quality Matters Rubric, and were currently teaching an online course at a Hispanic serving institution located along the United States of America and Mexico border. Faculty participants were asked to fill out a survey indicating their prior experience teaching online, their perceptions about the quality of Quality Matters training, and their perceptions about the quality of their online course(s). Statistically significant correlations were indicated between instructor satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience and their confidence to teach online as well as between satisfaction with Quality Matters and instructor perceptions about the quality of their online course(s).

DEDICATION

The completion of my doctoral studies would not have been possible without the love and support of my family. Thank you to my mother, Elizabeth Mason for your support and encouragement and for instilling in me the confidence and rugged determination that I could achieve anything if I was willing to work hard enough for it. Also thank you to my father, Mark Pettus for gifting me with a love of literature and learning and I would like to extend my gratitude to my husband Jason for your loving support and willingness to take this journey into graduate school with me. Most of all to my children Ethan, Joey, Sophie, and Miguel, I love you more than words can express and may you always remember no dream is too far to reach for and with hard work all things are possible. Thank you all for your love and support.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am evermore grateful to Dr. Joseph Rene Corbeil, the chair of my dissertation committee, for all of your mentoring, guidance, inspiration, and advice through not only my M.Ed. but, also through my doctoral studies and with this dissertation. Thank you as well to Dr. Maria Elena Corbeil for your encouragement, guidance, and support. I aspire to be as wonderful a professor as you both are. Thank you both for your astute advice and infinite patience through the last 9 years I have studied under you first at UTB, then at UTRV in the doctoral program. Thank you as well to Dr. Ming Tsan Lu for your time and service on my dissertation committee and for your help navigating the complex world of statistics. I would also like to thank my colleagues at North Central Texas College who helped me revise my survey questions, gave insight from the trainer perspective on what Quality Matters aims to accomplish, and provided sound advice on how to best approach faculty to get input. Also thank you to the Center of Online Learning and Teaching for your help and support of my research. I would also like to acknowledge all of the faculty who participated in the study and helped provide insights into their experiences with the Quality Matters professional development experience. Thank you all!

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INTRODUCTION

In early 2020, COVID-19, a novel coronavirus resulted in a pandemic that quickly circled the globe and has, as of the fall of 2020, infected millions (CDC, 2020). The pandemic resulted in mass school and university closures in the United States, Asia, and Europe beginning in March of 2020. Those school closures created a massive unprecedented shift to online learning. The need to quickly create quality online learning experiences also exposed gaps in training as thousands of university faculty attempted to transition their courses from face-to-face to fully online formats. Prior to COVID-19 Quality Matters was already an established name in quality assurance training for online instruction and professional development for teaching and designing online courses.

According to Dietz-Uhler (2011) student retention is tied to the quality of online course design. Webb (2017) found that students experienced gains in material attainment though engagement with digital learning environments. Although research affirming the effectiveness of Quality Matters in effective online course design is ongoing, research is needed to explore faculty perceptions of Quality Matters training impact on the quality of their online courses, their perceptions of the quality of the Quality Matters professional development, and their satisfaction with Quality Matters professional development experience.

Hence, the purpose of this research study was to explore faculty participants' perceptions about the Quality Matters training experience, their satisfaction with that professional

development experience, and what impact they perceived Quality Matters had on the quality of their online course(s). This chapter presents an introduction to the research study. The need for the study, statement of the problem, study objectives, purpose of the study, research questions, definitions of terms, and the significance of the study will be discussed below.

Need for the Study

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 created an unprecedented demand for online learning. Administrators were challenged to quickly train and prepare faculty to present their courses online. In addition to the time pressure administrators were also faced with the need to train faculty in a way that would protect them from possible exposure to COVID-19. According to a Brandon-Hall (2017) study, online training courses or e-learning is most time efficient manner to train personnel ("Why eLearning works," 2017). Quality Matters presents a solution to both the need to remotely train faculty to teach online and the need for those faculty to then be able to produce high quality online courses. Dietz-Uhler (2011) found that Quality Matters produced high rates of student retention. Although the study was limited in scope, Dietz-Uhler (2011) found the student retention rates for those two Quality Matters courses were far higher than the national norm for student retention in online courses, and she asserts that those findings indicated the "strengths Quality Matters would have in aiding instructors with course design" (p. 111). Although quality design may be related to student retention, questions about whether design is also correlated with effective facilitation and teaching, such as, can a well-designed course offset an ineffective instructor, need to be explored. Accordingly, "if institutions want to increase the number of Quality Matters designed courses, a logical approach would be to make the Quality Matters professional development experience more faculty friendly" (Dr. Rene Corbeil, personal

communication, 2021). Truitt (2011) found that positive training experiences correlated with proficiency. According to Truitt 2011 high motivation also positively correlates with positive training experiences and low motivation with negative training experiences may result in performance gaps.

Although research affirming the effectiveness of Quality Matters in effective online course design is ongoing, research is needed to explore faculty perceptions of Quality Matters training impact on the quality of their online courses, their perceptions of the quality of the Quality Matters professional development, and their satisfaction with Quality Matters professional development experience. This examination produced insight for administrators and trainers looking to make online teaching professional development programs more faculty friendly. This research study was conducted with faculty participants who completed the Quality Matters certification and are currently teaching an online course. As of September 2020, 1,159 faculty members from the participating university were Quality Matters certified (Jessica Sanchez, personal communication, 2020). To be eligible to participate in this study, university faculty had to have completed Quality Matters training within the past two years to address the changes made with the 6th edition of the Quality Matters rubric as well as changes to the course worksheet, glossary, and to the course review management system (QM, 2018). As the majority of the faculty were trained with the 6th edition rubric, the timing of this study could not be more appropriate. In response to COVID-19-related school closures, and in preparation for the university's plan to expand online course offerings for the start of the Fall 2020 semester, 156 faculty underwent Quality Matters training during the summer of 2020, with 21 of those faculty members being recertifications (Jessica Sanchez, personal communication, 2020). Additionally, of the 5,016 16-week courses offered during the Fall 2020 semester, 81% were taught online due

the COVID-19 pandemic. This increase was a dramatic shift compared to Fall 2019, when only 12% of all 16-week courses were offered online.

To respond to the research questions addressed in this study, faculty participants were asked to fill out a survey indicating their experience teaching online, their perceptions about the quality of the Quality Matters professional development experience, their satisfaction with that experience, and what influence they perceived the Quality Matters professional development had on the quality of their online course(s).

Statement of the Problem

Due to the widespread school closures across the US and the globe, universities were met with two unprecedented challenges: (1) to rapidly produce high quality online courses, and (2) to quickly train their faculty, many of whom were new to online teaching. As of 2017, less than 35% of all college students had taken at least one online class (Lederman, 2018). In March of 2020, due to COVID-19, nearly all universities and college across the US pivoted to online instruction (Heath, 2020). As instructors were challenged to quickly design and implement online instruction, many universities turned to Quality Matters professional development, an already widely used quality assurance program to train faculty to be able to teach online. "Faculty perceptions of an initiative like Quality Matters are important, because perceptions impact their intent to adopt and support any new initiative" (Gregory, Rockinson-Szapkiw, & Cook, 2020, p. 108). Although satisfaction with teaching online may only be one facet of job satisfaction for faculty, Banerjee, Stearns, Moller, and Mickelson (2017) assert that, in addition to school culture, teacher job satisfaction correlates with student academic achievement. Accordingly, faculty who have successfully completed the Quality Matters training are equipped

to provide insight into improvements that could be made to professional development seeking to ensure quality assurance in higher education. Those insights could be used to aide administrators and professional development programs in improving faculty's training experiences with the greater goal of increasing successful implementation of professional development for teaching online.

To address the stated problem above, this study will address the following objectives:

Objectives

Main objective. To explore faculty perceptions of Quality Matters and if their satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience correlated with greater confidence in teaching online.

Secondary objective. To explore faculty perceptions of Quality Matters and if their satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience correlated with perceptions of change in the quality of their online course(s).

Purpose of the Study

Quality Matters training has demonstrated, through research, success in improving online course design and that quality online course design results in higher rates of student academic success and retention. Examination into faculty perceptions of the Quality Matters professional development experience was needed to improve satisfaction and completion of the training experience. Gregory et. al (2021) assert that faculty perceptions of professional development initiatives are significant because perceptions influence faculty resolve to implement changes. Therefore, the purpose of this research study was to explore faculty participants' perceptions about the Quality Matters training experience, their satisfaction with that professional

development experience, and what impact they perceived Quality Matters had on the quality of their online course(s).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Looking into faculty perceptions of the implementation of Quality Matters training on quality of online instruction, as well as instructor perceptions of Quality Matters and its impact on their confidence to teach online, this research explored what Creswell (2007) described as new awareness, that will hopefully lead to improvements in what and how professional development programs for teaching online are implemented as faculty perceptions correlate to "faculty intent to support and adopt new training initiatives" (Gregory et. al, 2021). The following research questions were examined in the study

Research Question 1: Is there a statistically significant positive relationship between faculty's perceptions of satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience and their confidence to teach online?

Research Question 2: Is there a statistically significant positive relationship between faculty's perceptions of satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience and their perceptions regarding the quality of the design of their online courses?

Research Question 3: What do faculty perceive facilitators of the Quality Matters professional development program could do improve the training?

This research study sought to determine if there was a correlation between faculty satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience and their confidence teaching

online following the professional development experience. Additionally, the study looked to examine if satisfaction ratings for the Quality Matters professional development correlated with perceptions that Quality Matters professional development impacted the quality of their online courses. In this study, the following research hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between faculty's perceptions of satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience and their confidence to teach online.

Hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between faculty's perceptions of satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience and their perceptions that Quality Matters increased the quality of their online course design.

Definitions of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the below list of terms is defined as follows:

Accessibility

The term accessibility refers to course design that reflects commitment to the Americans with Disability act requirements to ensure equal educational opportunities and usability for all learners (Quality Matters, 2018) and it is included as part of the 8 Quality Matters standards of course quality.

Blue Printing

Blue printing is a process in instructional design where the main components of the course are planned prior to course creation and publication. It is intended to ensure all necessary components of the course are considered when activities, materials, and layout of the course are chosen including audience, objectives, and assessments (Designing a Blueprint, 2018).

COVID-19

According to the Centers for Disease Control (2020) COVID-19 was identified as a pathogen in November 2019, that although may be less severe than other coronaviruses it is significantly more contagious.

Online Course

The term online course for this study will refer to a class offered online via an institution of higher learning to students seeking to obtain institutional credit towards a degree or certificate. Online courses will include fully online synchronous, fully online asynchronous, hybrid, and web-enhanced courses (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010).

Quality Assurance

The term quality assurance (QA) refers to a means to guide the design and evaluate the quality of online courses to increase efficacy in online course design and implementation (Ko & Rossen, 2010).

Quality Matters

According to Quality Matters' website (QM, 2018) Quality Matters (QM) is a non-profit that offers online course quality certification based on a peer review process and professional development program that is aimed at improving online course design.

Self-Efficacy

The term self-efficacy in the context of learner readiness refers to the extent to which an individual's confidence, personality, and attitude effect their abilities by inhibiting or encouraging perseverance (Miltiadou & You, 2000).

Significance of the Study

In March 2020, K-12 and higher education faculty around the world, were forced to transition from face-to-face to online or remote learning with little to no preparation. The COVID-19 crisis strained institution's human, technical, and logistical resources… (Dr. Rene Corbeil, personal communication, 2020). Quality Matters standards provide a blueprint for instructors on how to design quality online courses. COVID-19 presented an unprecedented challenge to universities to rapidly, effectively, and safely train faculty to teach online. Quality Matters offers multiple online professional development programs to prepare faculty to teach and design online courses as well as how to review and rate the courses of their peers. By studying the relationships between faculty's perceptions of the Quality Matters professional development experience and their perceived ability to design quality online courses and teach online, this study seeks to identify ways to make the Quality Matters training more faculty friendly with the expectation that online course quality and teaching will improve when faculty have a more pleasurable learning experience.

Summary

Student retention rates are linked to the quality of online course design (Dietz-Uhler, 2011). Course design is vital to successful teaching and learning in online courses (Gregory et. al, 2020). Although research affirming the effectiveness of Quality Matters in effective online course design is ongoing, research is needed to explore faculty perceptions of Quality Matters training impact on the quality of their online courses, their perceptions of the quality of the Quality Matters professional development, and their satisfaction with Quality Matters

professional development experience. This research was aimed at improving faculty professional development to more effectively prepare instructors to teach online and to meet the Quality Matters quality assurance standards. The subsequent chapter presents a review of related literature.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this research study was to explore faculty participants' perceptions about the Quality Matters training experience, their satisfaction with that professional development experience, and what impact they perceived Quality Matters had on the quality of their online courses. This chapter presents a review of relevant literature including an overview of the background and context for this study and literature related to and aligned with the Quality Matters standards, and concludes with a discussion of self-efficacy and its role in instructor confidence.

Introduction

"The ivory tower as it was once known has now firmly established itself as a digital one" (Fish & Wickersham, 2009, p.283). Although written over a decade ago COVID-19 has reaffirmed the truth in that statement. Mass school closures created the need to quickly pivot from in person instruction to remote learning or eLearning. COVID-19 forced a demand for online instruction that was unprecedented. However, even prior to COVID-19, 2015-2016 estimates were that as many as 43% of all undergraduate students and 46% of all graduate students at both public and private institutions of higher education were taking at least one online course (Digest of Education, 2017). In contrast, as of July of 2020, estimates were that only 10% of students were receiving face-to-face instruction (Heath, 2020). In seeking to prepare

instructors to teach online many universities are turning to Quality Matters training and certification program.

Barrett (2012) asserts that "virtual instructors are challenged to perform more functions that previously required as facilitators, creators, managers, organizers, and even coaches and as roles of instructors have changed professional development to prepare faculty to teach effectively online has been essential" (p.655-656). In addition, "the expansion of online learning has been accompanied by expansion in the number of companies providing principles, guidelines, or benchmarks for how to attain high quality online instructional curriculum" (Irlbeck, 2008, p.25).

Quality Matters

Quality Matters is a quality assurance program that aims to train faculty to design online courses that meet stringent quality assurance standards. Quality Matters is an instructor and course certification program based on a quality assurance rubric that "aims to promote student engagement, learning, and the continuous improvement of course design and presentation" (QM, 2018, n.p.). Quality Matters professional development originally only (APPQMR) *Applying the Quality Matters Rubric* and *Higher Education Peer Reviewer Course* (PRC) now includes multiple training courses such as *Designing Your Online Course* (DYOC), *Addressing Accessibility and Usability* (Standard 8), *Designing Your Blended Course* (DYBC), and *Improving Your Online Course* (IYOC), and *Teaching Online: An Introduction to Online Delivery* (TOL).

According to Rapanta and Cantoni (2014) "APPQMR, often used as a gate keeper in certifying instructors to teach online, is primarily aimed at the soft processes of E-Learning such as alignment, interaction, and usability rather than efficiency of courses" (p. 5). Quality Matters

rubrics are intended for use in course development as well as in course reviews (Moore, 2012). The 8 quality assurance standards in the Quality Matters rubric are discussed below.

Quality Matters Standard 1: Course Overview and Introduction

The Quality Matters rubric emphasizes the need for clear explanation to students of expectations for the course be included in the introduction (Quality Matters, 2017). Casey and Kroth (2013) determined "taking the time upfront to organize and create all the course modules encouraged student self-direction and minimalized questions and reduced teacher work load during the semester" (p.107). In addition Moore (2012) states "clear expectations about student interaction as well as instructor interaction help expedite management of volume and quality of interactions" (Moore, 2012, p. 94-97). In Casey and Kroth's (2013) study, during their syllabus review they found that all of the "excellent professors studied were exceptionally detailed in course layout and expectations and often included charts or tables formatted similarly to those in the course content" (p.107).

Quality Matters Standard 2: Learning Objectives

Snyder (2009) argues that adult learners thrive when they have directions on why they need to learn content and how said content aligns with their greater educational goals. Quality Matters require that each course should have objectives that are assessable and written in language students can easily understand (QM, 2018; McGee & Reis, 2012). Those objectives should provide the framework for activities and assessments within the course to determine student success (QM, 2018).

Quality Matters Standard 3: Assessment and Measurement

Quality Matters emphasizes the need for assessments that measure mastery of clearly stated course objectives (QM, 2018).

Quality Matters Standard 4: Instructional Materials

Activities should align with course objectives and assessments should be based on the mastery of those objectives, such alignment is critical for student success (McGee & Reis, 2012). Quality Matters also emphasizes the importance of a variety of engaging materials that are accessible for all students. (Dietz-Uhler et al., 2008).

Quality Matters Standard 5: Learning Activities and Learner Interaction

Sutton (2014) asserts that successful online students are challenged to "learn, unlearn, relearn," analyze, and apply and can no longer sit passively and expect to learn (p. 1). These new roles are an essential transition that adult learning theory has long espoused needed to occur in higher education (Snyder, 2009). Synder (2009) asserts that adult learners shift from content laiden instructional needs to a desire for problem solving skills. Snyder (2009) further states that constructivism supports the need for learner-centered instruction and asserts the importance of authentic and collaborative work.

Quality Matters Standard 6: Course Technology

Schachter (2012) asserts that the brain is "malleable and learns through patterns and repetition as such cognitive processes can be taught" (p.41). The quantity of repetition required for long term memory transfer varies for each individual and this variance asserts Schachter (2012) is where

technology is more effective in fulfilling the need for diversifying instruction than can be done in a classroom.

Quality Matters Standard 7: Learner Support

According to the US Department of Education (2010) online courses can be more effective in their ability to diversify instruction and provide better learning opportunities for students. Quality Matters (2018) asserts the importance of learner support through clearly articulated instructions or links on how to obtain academic support services or other resources to aide with student achievement. Snyder (2009) argues that learning for adults is impacted by various factors including "social, psychological, emotional, and physiological factors" (Snyder, 2009, p.49).

Quality Matters Standard 8: Accessibility and Usability

According to Moore (2012) **"**the Sloan-C pillar on access includes an emphasis on course design to meet diverse learner needs and consider specialized needs of at-risk and disabled learners and includes mandates for easily accessible opportunities for support" (p. 105). Quality Matters (2017) standard eight emphasizes similar requirements.

Faculty and Professional Development with Quality Matters

In a study of 22,000 participants who had completed a Quality Matters workshop, Kearns and Mancilla (2017) found that over 90% of those surveyed had completed APPQMR. Kearns and Mancilla (2017) found that Quality Matters professional development did influence faculty's instructional practices. In a Hollowell, Brooks, and Anderson (2017) study of Quality Matters they determined that faculty completion of APPQMR lead to better quality course design, as

measured in informal course reviews based on the Quality Matters rubric. The study also indicated a positive correlation between increased Quality Matters review scores and students' course and exam grades (Hollowell et. al, 2017). Gregory et. al (2020) discuss that although the literature suggests that a strong correlation between professional development for faculty and course design quality, "research is lacking about… faculty perceptions and the results of Quality Matters training" (2020).

Faculty Perceptions and Professional Development

Gregory et. al (2020) conducted a mixed methods study of two institutions of higher education, one where Quality Matters was mandated by administration and the second where the Quality Matters initiative was a faculty led decision. Of 470 full-time and adjunct faculty who were invited to complete a survey about their perceptions of the Quality Matters professional development experience, 46 (9.78%) chose to fill out the survey. Of the 46 participants, 8 faculty were chosen to participate in interviews to further explore participants' perceptions of the Quality Matters professional development experience (Gregory et. al, 2020). They found that "when Quality Matters was mandated social influence and facilitating conditions both had an impact on faculty perceptions of Quality Matters and subsequent use of the Quality Matters rubric" (p.135). Perceptions noted by faculty during the interview stage of the study included that "learning to apply the Quality Matters standards through training was more rigorous and time-consuming than anticipated" and that learning content accessibility was particularly challenging such that faculty felt "underprepared or unable to successfully implement accessibility guidelines or check learning objects for accessibility" (Gregory et. al, 2020, p. 134). Gregory et. al (2020) argue that "creating a culture of support for… professional development can positively impact

faculty's perceptions which will positively impact teaching quality and student success" (p.135). "Faculty perceptions of an initiative like Quality Matters are important because perceptions impact their intent to adopt and support any new initiative and faculty buy in is essential for the effectiveness of quality assurance programs" (Gregory et. al, 2020, p.138).

Confidence and Professional Development

Self-efficacy incorporates many criteria including confidence, motivation, and resilience according to Artino (201). This study focused on one component of self-efficacy, confidence, as reflected in faculty perceptions about their confidence to teach online following Quality Matters professional development. Bray-Clark and Bates (2003) found that "high performance professional development integrates key dimensions that support and reinforce skill development and efficacy beliefs" (p.13). Artino (2012) assets that "self-efficacy has been a key component in theories of motivation and learning" (p.1) and that it is not sufficient for individuals to possess solely the knowledge or skill to perform an activity they also need the confidence in their ability to perform in order to do so successfully.

Artino (2012) theorized that self-efficacy in one area does not necessarily correlate with the same level of confidence in a related but, separate skill. An example of this would be a faculty member with a high level of self-efficacy (confidence, motivation, or resilience) in teaching in brick and mortar may not experience the same level of self-efficacy with teaching in another mode such as a hybrid or online course. Ramírez-Montoya, Mena, and Rodríguez-Arroyo (2017) found that teachers with greater digital competence reported more confidence in their abilities to teach online. Ramirez-Montoya et. al (2017) concluded that effective teacher training for teaching online incorporates lessons to raise digital competence to produce greater

confidence and therefore self-efficacy with teaching remotely. In contrast Belt and Lowenthal (2020) argue the need for faculty professional development to teach online that "strives for a reconceptualization of teaching among faculty participants as opposed to technical competency" (p. 254).

Hardy, Sheppard, and Pilotti (2017) found that faculty self-confidence and confidence in their abilities are a source of resilience vital to the teaching profession. Resilience is paramount for new online instructor's self-efficacy as learning to teach in a new modality requires chances in pedagogy and increased digital competence (Belt & Lowenthal, 2020) (Ramirez-Motoya et. al, 2017).

According to Ying, Connor, Yang, Roehrig, and Morrison (2012) self-efficacy for instructors is also tied to student academic achievement and performance as instructors with higher self-efficacy tend to provide a more positive learning environment with more support for students. Ying et. al (2012) further found that instructor self-efficacy had a greater effect on student learning than instructor experience. Hardy et. al (2017) found that instructor self-efficacy positively correlated to instructor perceived responsibility for student success which explain in part why instructors with higher self-efficacy are able to provide a more successful learning environment. Helmke (2020) asserts that the need to build resilience among educators at this moment in history is vital as the teaching profession has experienced drastic rapid chances in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among Helmke's (2020) suggestions the acknowledgement of "the trauma caused by the pandemic and the transition to online teaching," is the first step to building resilience and self-efficacy followed by creating connections among faculty so they feel supported can foster confidence not only through support from peers but, also through sharing of best practices and skills learned to teach in the online environment.

According to Bray-Clark and Bates (2003) professional development for teaching online needs to include self-efficacy for teaching online as "teacher self-efficacy is a key driver of teacher effectiveness" (p.13). Bates (2003) further asserts that self-efficacy, or faculty confidence in their own ability to teach online, needs to be "explicitly included as a central focus in the professional development of teachers" (p.13).

Summary

This chapter has presented a review of the literature relevant to this study, including an overview of Quality Matters training program and the eight standards addressed on the Quality Matters rubric. In addition, research on faculty perceptions of professional development and Quality Matters were presented in addition to research about the impact of instructor confidence on teaching practice. A review of the relevant literature revealed the need for additional research into faculty perceptions of the Quality Matters professional development program thus, there is a need for this study. This chapter has reviewed the literature relevant to the purpose of this research study. Chapter Three, which follows describes the methodology that was used to conduct this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research study was to explore faculty participants' perceptions about the Quality Matters training experience, their satisfaction with that professional development experience, and what impact they perceive Quality Matters had on the quality of their online courses. This chapter presents the methodology for the research study. Research design, participants, instrumentation, and data collection procedures will be discussed in this chapter.

Research Design

This research study applied a mixed method design. A correlational research approach was applied to explore faculty participants' perceptions about the Quality Matters training experience, their satisfaction with that professional development experience, and what impact they perceived Quality Matters had on the quality of their online courses at the participating university. Correlational research is commonly used in explanatory research to investigate causal relationships or connections between variables (Levy, 2017). Correlational research can demonstrate relationships between variables but, it cannot attribute causation as is possible in experimental research. This study sought to determine if faculty perceptions regarding the quality of Quality Matters professional development correlated with faculty satisfaction with teaching online following Quality Matters professional development. It also sought to determine

if there was a correlation between the perceived quality of Quality Matters professional development and whether faculty perceived Quality Matters professional development had an impact on the quality of their courses. The study also employed a qualitative approach through the examination of two open ended questions in the survey to gain a deeper understanding of the results from the correlational analysis.

Participants

Faculty were sampled from faculty at a Hispanic serving institution of higher learning located along the Texas-Mexico border whose primary aim is social justice for minoritized populations. The university is unique in that its Hispanic student population, as of the fall of 2017, represented 89.2% of the total student body. This represented an opportunity for research into professional development to prepare faculty to teach online to serve a traditionally underserved population in a sample rich environment.

941 faculty names were provided by the Center for Online Learning and Teaching Technology at the participating university as having completed Quality Matters training and are currently teaching online courses. Faculty were selected via convenience sampling. There was a total of 96 responses from faculty participants invited to complete the survey. Of the 96 total participants, 47% identified as male and 51% identified as female. The age group 40-59 comprised 58% of the total participants age brackets. Of the faculty participants, 40% percent identified as Latino or Hispanic and 84% of the faculty participants had five or more years of online teaching experience. 62% of the participants indicated that they had taught online prior to completing Quality Matters. Faculty participants were representative in terms of demographics to

the larger faculty population at the participating university. Additional demographic information for the faculty participants can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Demographic Information for Faculty Participants (n=96)

Demographic	n	%
Gender		
Male	43	47.25%
Female	46	50.55%
Other	2	2.20%
Age Range		
20-29	1	1.14%
30-39	15	17.05%
40-49	26	29.55%
50-59	25	28.41%
60-69	17	19.32%
70+	4	4.55%
Ethnicity		
Asian	3	3.41%
Black or African American	0	0.00%
Hispanic or Latino	35	39.77%
Native American or Alaskan Native	0	0.00%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0.00%
White	43	48.86%
Two or more races	7	7.95%
Years of Online Teaching Experience		
none/ never taught online	1	1.08%
1-5 years	14	15.05%
5-10 years	27	29.03%
10-20 years	25	26.88%
20 years or more	26	27.96%
Academic Rank		
Adjunct instructor	2	4.35%
Lecturer	28	30.43%
Assistant professor	17	18.48%
Associate professor	21	22.83%
Full professor	19	20.65%
Other	3	3.26%

Table 2 below details which of the Quality Matters training programs the faculty participants completed.

Table 2

Quality Matters Training Information for Faculty Participants (n=96)

Demographic	n	%
Quality Matters Training Courses Completed		
Applying the QM Rubric (APPQMR)	75	43.60%
Introduction to Quality Matters (INTRO2QM)	50	29.07%
Designing your online course (DYOC)	24	13.95%
Improving your online course (IYOC)	1	0.58%
Teaching online (TOL)	15	8.72%
Designing your blended course (DYBC)	1	0.58%
Other	6	3.49%
None	0	0.00%

Note. APPQMR was the only required training course at the participating university.

44% of the faculty participants completed APPQMR, Applying the Quality Matters Rubric. APPQMR was the only one of the Quality Matters training courses the participating university required in order for faculty to be able to teach online (Jessica Sanchez, personal communication, 2020). 29% of faculty also completed the Introduction to Quality Matters training course and another 14% completed the Designing Your Online Course training. University faculty have also recently undergone an additional round of Quality Matters training to address the changes made with the 6th edition of the Quality Matters (Dr. Laura Jewett, personal communication, 2020).

To qualify for the study, participants had to have completed Quality Matters training and taught online for the participating university. Foreseeably not all the faculty at the participating university are Quality Matters certified nor will all have taught online following or prior to Quality Matters training.

Instrument

Faculty participants were given a researcher created survey to indicate their perceptions about the Quality Matters professional development experience as well as whether or not they perceived an impact from Quality Matters on the quality of their online courses, as well as to provide biographical and background information. There was a total of 38 items on the survey and it required approximately 10-20 minutes to complete the survey. There were 12 background questions and the remaining parts of the survey were divided into three major subsections regarding faculty's satisfaction with Quality Matters, their confidence with teaching online after Quality Matters, and their perceptions about the quality of their online courses. There were 8 questions regarding satisfaction with Quality Matters professional development, 6 regarding faculty confidence to teach online, and 10 questions regarding faculty perceptions of their online course. The questions from each of the three major subsections are in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Survey Subsections on Satisfaction, Confidence, and Perceptions of Quality

Q. 13 Satisfaction with the Quality Matters training experience
On a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = very unsatisfied, 2 = unsatisfied, 3 = neither satisfied or unsatisfied, 4 = satisfied, and 5 = very satisfied, indicate your level of satisfaction with the following elements of your Quality Matters training experience.
What is your level of satisfaction with the …
1. duration of the training course.
2. organization of the training website.
3. appearance of the training website.
4. quality of the instructional
5. resources (videos, notes, handouts).
6. quality of the live meetings, if attended.
7. follow-up training offered
8. What is your overall level of satisfaction with the Quality Matters training experience?

Table 3 Continued

Q. 14 Confidence with teaching online after the Quality Matters training experience

On a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = very unconfident, 2 = unconfident, 3 = neither confident nor unconfident, 4 = confident, and 5 = very confident, indicate your level of confidence to teach online following your Quality Matters training experience.

What is your level of confidence in your ability to…

1. use tools to teach asynchronously online
2. engage students in a remote learning environment
3. build connections between you and your students in your online course
4. build connections among students in your online course
5. create your own online course without a templated model to meet Quality Matters rubric requirements
6. What is your overall level of confidence with teaching online?

Q. 15 Your Online Course

On a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree or disagree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree, indicate your level of agreement for your online course following Quality Matters training.

After Quality Matters training, in your online course …

1. Students receive explanation on how to navigate the course
2. You and your students introduce yourselves to the class
3. The relationship between learning activities and course objectives is explained
4. Assessments measure mastery of learning objectives that are stated in the course
5. Text and images are accessible to students with visual or other impairments
6. Videos include closed captioning
7. Access is provided to student support programs such as the office of student disabilities, student advisors, and/or tutoring
8. Learning activities are included that provide opportunities for interaction among students
9. Opportunities are provided for meaningful interaction between yourself and your student
10. You provide a quality learning experience for students.

Note. The full survey can be seen in the Appendix.

The survey also included questions about demographic data such as the identification of gender, ethnicity, academic rank, and experience teaching online.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The survey relied primarily upon content validity. Internal or content validity according to Johnson and Christensen (2014) refers to the validity that a relationship exists between variables. Content validity was established through the use of an expert panel review of the survey questions. The panel consisted of higher education faculty including Quality Matters trainers. Each of the participants in the panel rated each of the survey questions on clarity, quality, and relevancy prior to being administered to participants in order to judge appropriateness of each question and to present recommendations for rewording items. Once survey questions were revised, they were presented to the review panel again to determine if further revisions were needed. An average was then calculated based on the expert review panel's judgement of the applicability of the survey questions to the research questions. The expert review panel concluded that for the survey instrument the agreement rate was .949. The survey instrument was entered into Qualtrics and sent to faculty participants via email. Once data collection was complete, reliability for the instrument was examined using SPSS to calculate Cronbach's alpha statistical analysis. For the survey instrument in this study the Cronbach's alpha was .968.

A copy of the survey instrument can be found in Appendix A. The section titled *Confidence to teach online"* sought to address research question number one: *Is there a statistically significant positive relationship between faculty's perceptions of the Quality Matters professional development experience and their confidence to teach online?* The section of the questionnaire titled, *"Satisfaction with the Quality Matters training experience" and the section titled "After Quality Matters training…"* sought to address research question number two: *Is there a statistically significant positive relationship between faculty's perceptions of satisfaction*

with the Quality Matters professional development experience and their perceptions regarding the quality of the design of their online courses? The last section titled open ended questions sought faculty input to answer research question number three: *What do faculty perceive facilitators of the Quality Matters professional development program could do improve the training?*

Data Collection Procedures

The survey was conducted online due in part to social distancing safety measures enacted in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, but also as online surveys according to Levy (2017), allow for greater participant inclusion especially when participants may be geographically dispersed. In addition, the participating university has multiple campuses spread across counties so an online survey is preferable for public health and to provide greater inclusion opportunities. An email was sent to participants through the university's email server to all Quality Matters trained faculty at the participating university. The email contained a description of the research along with an informed consent form to sign agreeing to participate prior to completing the survey. Confidentiality was maintained for participants as the survey was completed online with no questions about name, rank, or which college within the participating university the faculty works for.

The survey was distributed via email between April 26, 2021 and June 16, 2021. The survey was deployed to faculty three times, via an initial faculty email with two reminder emails. All faculty on the list were given an opportunity to participate in the study. Survey anonymity of respondents was protected as all potentially identifying data and all study data were stored on a locked computer and prior to completing the survey faculty participants were provided with an

informed consent letter via email. The letter of informed consent included the purpose of the study, why they were selected, period of participation, study procedures, possible risks or inconveniences, benefits of the study, a statement regarding participation in the study as voluntary, and information on the privacy and confidentiality of the study. Faculty participants were only allowed to proceed to the survey after they checked off their acknowledgement of consent on the email.

Data Analysis Procedures

Qualtrics was used to collect data from the survey and to generate initial reports and findings from the data including the calculation of mean, standard deviation, and variance among items in the survey instrument. A response rate of 10.2% was calculated by dividing the number of people who participated in the survey by the total number of people in the population and multiplying that number by 100 (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

SPSS was then used to conduct an analysis to determine if relationships existed between the variables in the study using Spearman's Rho correlational coefficient. Initial analysis was done to examine if a relationship among all of the questions in each of the three subsections of the survey instrument, satisfaction, confidence, and quality of online courses using SPSS to conduct Spearman Rho's correlational coefficient. SPSS was then used to calculate Spearman Rho's correlational coefficient to test the research hypotheses to determine if there was a relationship between faculty participant's satisfaction with Quality Matters professional development and their confidence to teach online, as well as to determine if there was a relationship between faculty participant's satisfaction with Quality Matters professional development and their perceptions of the impact it may have had on their online course.

Research Question 3: *What do faculty perceive facilitators of the Quality Matters professional development program could do to improve the training?,* was examined through two opened ended questions to look at challenges faculty reported during the training as well as what suggestions for improvement for the Quality Matters professional development program. The data were then examined and coded into themes. The data and codes were then reviewed by another researcher to determine if there was an agreement between coding and separation of the data for the two open ended research questions. The additional reviewer concluded that the thematic coding aligned with the data results, and the inter-rater reliability was 95%.

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to explore faculty participants' perceptions about the Quality Matters training experience, their satisfaction with that professional development experience, and what impact they perceived Quality Matters had on the quality of their online courses. This research was aimed at improving student retention by examining faculty perceptions about Quality Matters professional development quality and their satisfaction with the training to prepare them to teach online. As instructor job satisfaction, confidence, and self-efficacy effect instructor output and ability to support students this examination is vital in improving student retention and bettering student academic outcomes. This chapter described the procedures that were used to achieve the purpose of this study. The subsequent chapter will present a discussion of the findings from the research.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this research study was to explore faculty participants' perceptions about the Quality Matters training experience, their satisfaction with that professional development experience, and what impact they perceive Quality Matters had on the quality of their online courses. This chapter describes the results that were obtained when the hypothesis was tested using the procedures described in the previous chapter. The results are reported in tabular, graphic, and narrative form.

Results Obtained for Hypothesis 1

To test Research Hypothesis #1: *There is a statistically significant positive relationship between faculty's perceptions of satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience and their confidence to teach online,* data from the Survey of Faculty Perceptions of the Quality Matters professional development program were analyzed to determine if a statistically significant relationship existed between faculty's perceptions of the Quality Matters professional development experience and their confidence to teach online. Results are reported in tabular and narrative form. Table 4 below contains the survey questions on satisfaction with Quality Matters professional development.

Table 4

Survey Subsection on Satisfaction

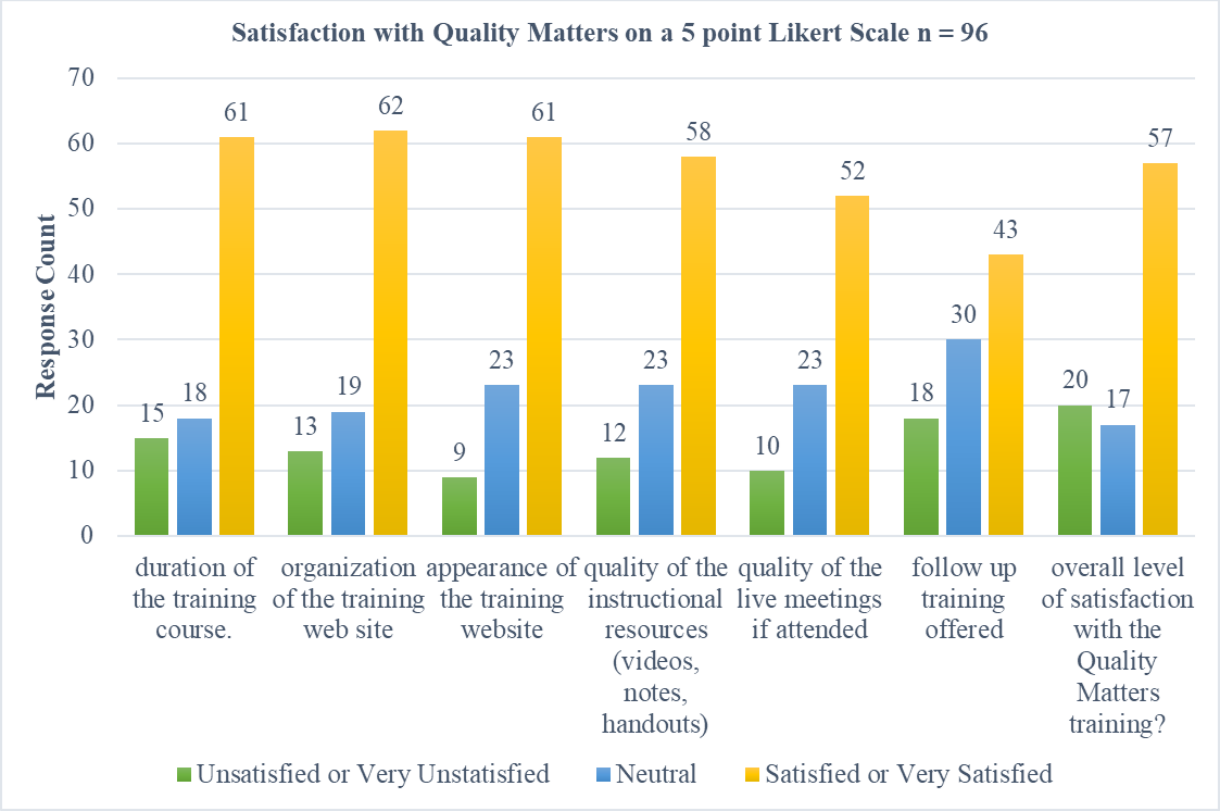
Q. 13 Satisfaction with the Quality Matters training experience
On a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = very unsatisfied, 2 = unsatisfied, 3 = neither satisfied or unsatisfied, 4 = satisfied, and 5 = very satisfied, indicate your level of satisfaction with the following elements of your Quality Matters training experience.
What is your level of satisfaction with the …
1. duration of the training course.
2. organization of the training website.
3. appearance of the training website.
4. quality of the instructional
5. resources (videos, notes, handouts).
6. quality of the live meetings, if attended.
7. follow-up training offered
8. What is your overall level of satisfaction with the Quality Matters training experience?

Note. The full survey can be seen in Appendix A

Question thirteen as shown in table 4 above, asked faculty participants about their satisfaction with Quality Matters professional development program. n = 96, There were a total of 550 responses to the eight questions regarding instructor satisfaction with Quality Matters and 69% of those 550 responses indicated faculty participants were either satisfied or very satisfied with the Quality Matters training they had received while 31% of the 550 responses indicated they were unsatisfied, very unsatisfied, or did not have strong feelings either way with regards to the Quality Matters training program they completed. Figure 1 below details the results for question 13 on instructor satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development program.

Figure 1

Faculty Satisfaction with the Quality Matters Professional Development Program



The highest rates of satisfaction for faculty were indicated in the quality of live meetings, if attended, as well as with the quality of instructional resources used during Quality Matters training. In Figure 1 above, faculty participants indicated the highest levels of unsatisfaction overall with Quality Matters training and the duration of the training course. Table 5 below presents the means, standard deviation, and variance for the results of question 13 regarding faculty satisfaction with the Quality Matters training program.

Table 5

Mean, Standard Deviation, Variance, and Response Count for Question 13 Satisfaction with Quality Matters on a 5-Point Scale

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	N
Duration of the Training Course	3.64	1.19	1.42	94
Organization of the Training Course	3.7	1.17	1.36	94
Appearance of the Training Course	3.73	1.12	1.25	93
Quality of the Instructional Resources	3.71	1.21	1.47	93
Quality of the live meetings if attended	3.75	1.23	1.5	85
Follow up training offered	3.42	1.2	1.45	91
Overall level of Satisfaction with the Quality Matters Training	3.56	1.33	1.78	94

The overall satisfaction rating mean score for faculty participants' satisfaction with Quality Matters was 3.56 on a 5-point scale. The variance for the overall satisfaction rating was 1.78 and the standard deviation was 1.33. Spearman rho analysis was conducted to determine if the sub questions within question 13 of the survey on instructor satisfaction with Quality Matters correlated with instructor ratings of satisfaction in other areas of Quality Matters training. The results of that correlational testing can be seen below in Table 6.

Table 6

Correlational Analysis to Examine Satisfaction Ratings

	Satisfaction Items						
Satisfaction Items	Duration of the Training Course	Organization of the Training Website	Appearance of the Training Website	Quality of the Instructional Resources	Quality of the Live Meetings if attended	Follow up Training Offered	Overall Satisfaction with Quality Matters Training
Duration of the Training Course	1	.756**	.723**	.710**	.690**	.665**	.780**
Organization of the Training Website	.756**	1	.840**	.773**	.700**	.651**	.790**
Appearance of the Training Website	.723**	.840**	1	.817**	.691**	.658**	.790**
Quality of the Instructional Resources	.710**	.773**	.807**		.782**	.729**	.839**
Quality of the Live Meetings if attended	.690**	.700**	.691**	.782**		.746**	.781**
Follow up Training Offered	.665**	.651**	.658**	.729**	.746**		.732**
Overall Satisfaction with Quality Matters Training	.780**	.790**	.790**	.839**	.781**	.732**	

**.Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2 tailed).

Every one of the six subcategories within satisfaction indicated a moderate to high positive correlation to one another. The strongest correlation was indicated between faculty satisfaction with the organization of Quality Matters training website and faculty satisfaction

with the appearance of the training website. Faculty satisfaction with organization and appearance of the Quality Matters training website have a high positive correlation ($\rho = 0.840$, $n = 93$, $p < .01$). Those who were more satisfied with the organization of the website were also more satisfied with the appearance of the website. Another high positive correlation was indicated between overall faculty satisfaction with Quality Matters training and satisfaction with the quality of instructional resources used during the training such as handouts, videos, etc... ($\rho = 0.839$, $n = 93$, $p < .01$). Those who were more satisfied with the training materials used were also more likely to be satisfied with Quality Matters training overall.

Table 7 below details the questions in the survey subsection on instructor confidence with teaching online after Quality Matters. There was a total of six sub questions within question 14 in the survey about faculty confidence in teaching online.

Table 7

Survey Subsection on Confidence Teaching Online

Q. 14 Confidence with teaching online after the Quality Matters training experience
On a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = very unconfident, 2 = unconfident, 3 = neither confident nor unconfident, 4 = confident, and 5 = very confident, indicate your level of confidence to teach online following your Quality Matters training experience.
What is your level of confidence in your ability to…
1. use tools to teach asynchronously online
2. engage students in a remote learning environment
3. build connections between you and your students in your online course
4. build connections among students in your online course
5. create your own online course without a templated model to meet Quality Matters rubric requirements
6. What is your overall level of confidence with teaching online?

Note. The full survey can be seen in Appendix A.

Question fourteen as shown above, asked faculty participants about their confidence with online teaching following Quality Matter professional development and of the 558 responses to the six sub questions in Question 14, 77% of those responses indicated faculty felt confident or very confident teaching online. Overall confidence ratings in teaching online indicated 86%, of the 94 faculty participants who responded to Q.14 sub question six regarding overall confidence level, felt confident or very confident teaching online. Table 8 below details the mean, standard deviation, and response count for each of the sub questions regarding faculty confidence to teach online.

Table 8

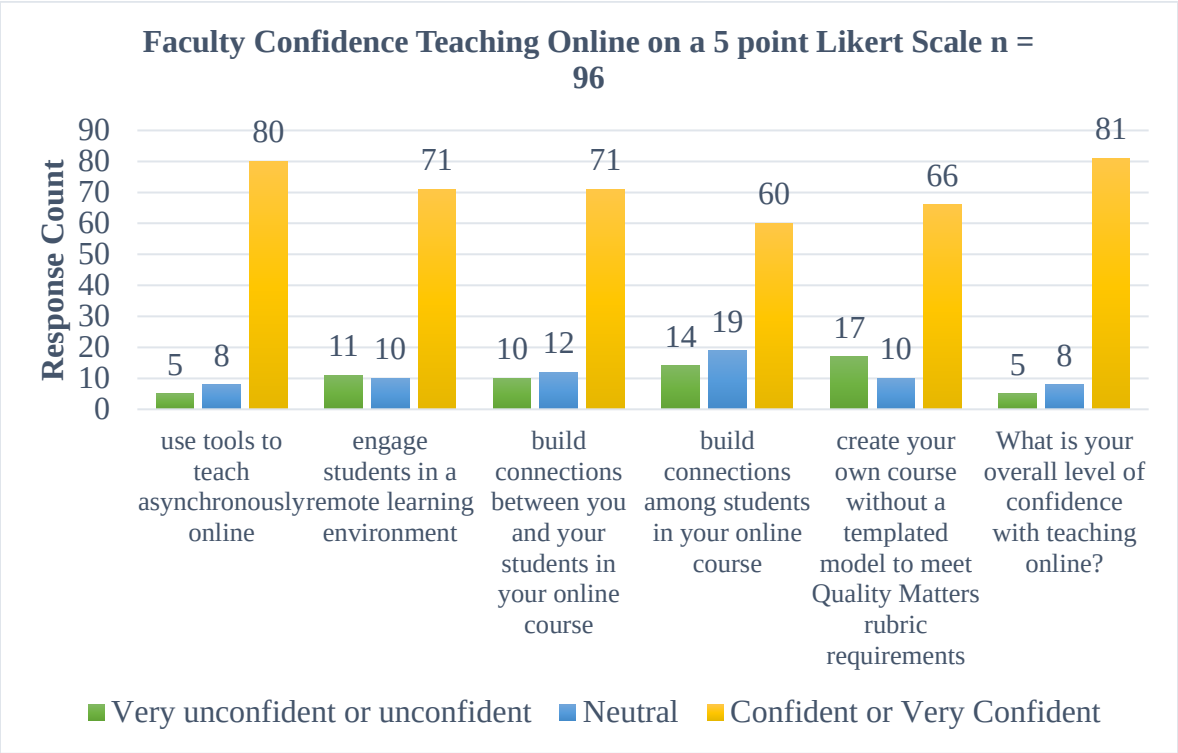
Mean, Standard Deviation, Variance, and Response Count for Q.14 Confidence Teaching Online on a 5-Point Scale

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	N
Use tools to teach asynchronously online	4.15	0.97	0.95	93
Engage students in a remote learning environment	3.93	1.12	1.26	92
Build connections between you and your students in your online course	3.91	1.09	1.2	93
Build connections among your students in your online course	3.68	1.13	1.27	93
Create your own course without blueprinted model to meet Quality Matters rubric requirements	3.8	1.21	1.45	93
Overall level of confidence with teaching online	4.23	0.93	0.86	94

Figure 2 below indicates the responses for each of the sub questions regarding instructor confidence to teach online.

Figure 2

Faculty Confidence Teaching Online



Based on the results from the survey, 86% (n = 96) of faculty participants felt confident or very confident in their ability to teach online. Faculty felt most confident in their ability to use tools to teach asynchronously online and to build connections between themselves and their students in an online course. Faculty also indicated they felt least confidence in their abilities to create a course that met all of the Quality Matters rubric without a templated model. Spearman rho analysis was conducted to determine if there was a correlation between the various faucets of confidence in teaching online for faculty participants. The results can be seen in Table 9 below.

Table 9

Correlational Analysis to Examine Confidence Ratings

	Confidence Items					
Confidence Items	Use Tools to Teach Asynchronously	Engage Students in a remote learning environment	Build connection between you and your students	Build connections among students in your online course	Create your own course without templated model to meet Quality Matters Rubric requirements	Overall Confidence with teaching online
Use Tools to Teach Asynchronously	1	.748**	.727**	.651**	.662**	.686**
Engage Students in a remote learning environment	.748**	1	.814**	.766**	.687**	.679**
Build connections between you and your students	.727**	.814**	1	.834**	.606**	.578**
Build connections among students in your online course	.651**	.766**	.834**		.546**	.553**
Create your own course without templated model to meet Quality Matters Rubric requirements	.662**	.687**	.606**	.546**		.616**
Overall Confidence with teaching online	.686**	.679**	.578**	0.553**	6.16**	

**.Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2 tailed).

Each one of the six subcategories within confidence to teach online indicated a positive correlation to one another. A high positive correlation was indicated was between confidence to build connections between instructors and their students in an online course and the confidence to engage students in remote learning environment. Confidence in building connections between instructors and their students in an online course and the confidence to engage students in remote

learning are positively significantly correlated ($\rho = 0.814$, n = 92, $p < .01$). Another high positive correlation was indicated between confidence to build connections among students in an online course and confidence to build connections between instructor and students in an online course ($\rho = 0.834$, n = 93, $p < .01$). Those who are more confident in their ability to build connections among students in an online course are also more likely to feel confident in their ability to build connections between themselves and their students. Also, instructors who feel more confident building connections between themselves and students are more likely to feel confident in their abilities to engage students in an online learning environment.

A Spearman Rho analysis was then conducted to test hypothesis 1 to determine if there is a statistically significant positive relationship between faculty's perceptions of satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience and their confidence to teach online. Table 10 below contains the findings from the analysis of the relationships between question 13 and 14 of the survey regarding satisfaction with Quality Matters training and faculty confidence to teach online.

Table 10

Correlational Analysis of Satisfaction with QM and Confidence to Teach Online

	Confidence Items					
Satisfaction Items	Use Tools to Teach Asynchronously	Engage Students in a remote learning environment	Build connections between you and your students	Build connections among students in your online course	Create your own course without templated model to meet Quality Matters Standards	Overall Confidence with teaching online
Duration of the Training Course	.597**	.516**	.473**	.506**	.373**	.508**
Organization of the Training Website	.451**	.450**	.376**	.454**	.398**	.372**
Appearance of the Training Website	.521**	.476**	.418**	.468**	.408**	.342**
Quality of the Instructional Resources	.589**	.479**	.437**	.464**	.394**	.422**
Quality of the Live Meetings if attended	.424**	.404**	.353**	.420**	.332**	.388**
Follow up Training Offered	.532**	.488**	.457**	.499**	.425**	.465**
Overall Satisfaction with Quality Matters Training	.533**	.571**	.514**	.578**	.349**	.405**

**.Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2 tailed).

For the variables *satisfaction* and *confidence* according to the Spearman rho analysis a moderate positive correlation exists between satisfaction with the duration of the Quality Matters Training program and faculty confidence to use tools to teach asynchronously online ($\rho = 0.597$, $n = 83$, $p < .01$). Additionally, satisfaction with the quality of the instructional resources included in the Quality Matters training program such as videos, notes, and handouts had a moderate

positive correlation to faculty confidence to use tools to teach asynchronously online ($\rho = 0.589$, $n = 83$, $p < .01$). Based on this outcome, a statistically significant moderate relationship between *overall confidence to teach online* and *overall satisfaction with the Quality Matters training* was indicated ($\rho = 0.405$, $n = 83$, $p < .01$).

Satisfaction with the quality of the instructional resources has a stronger correlation with greater confidence in teaching online following the Quality Matters professional development experience than was indicated for the relationship between overall positive satisfaction ratings with Quality Matters professional development and overall confidence in teaching online. Faculty who were satisfied with the quality of instructional resources used during Quality Matters were more likely to feel confident to use tools to teach asynchronously online. Additionally, faculty who were more satisfied with the duration of the Quality Matters training were more likely to feel confident to use to teach asynchronously.

Results Obtained for Hypothesis 2

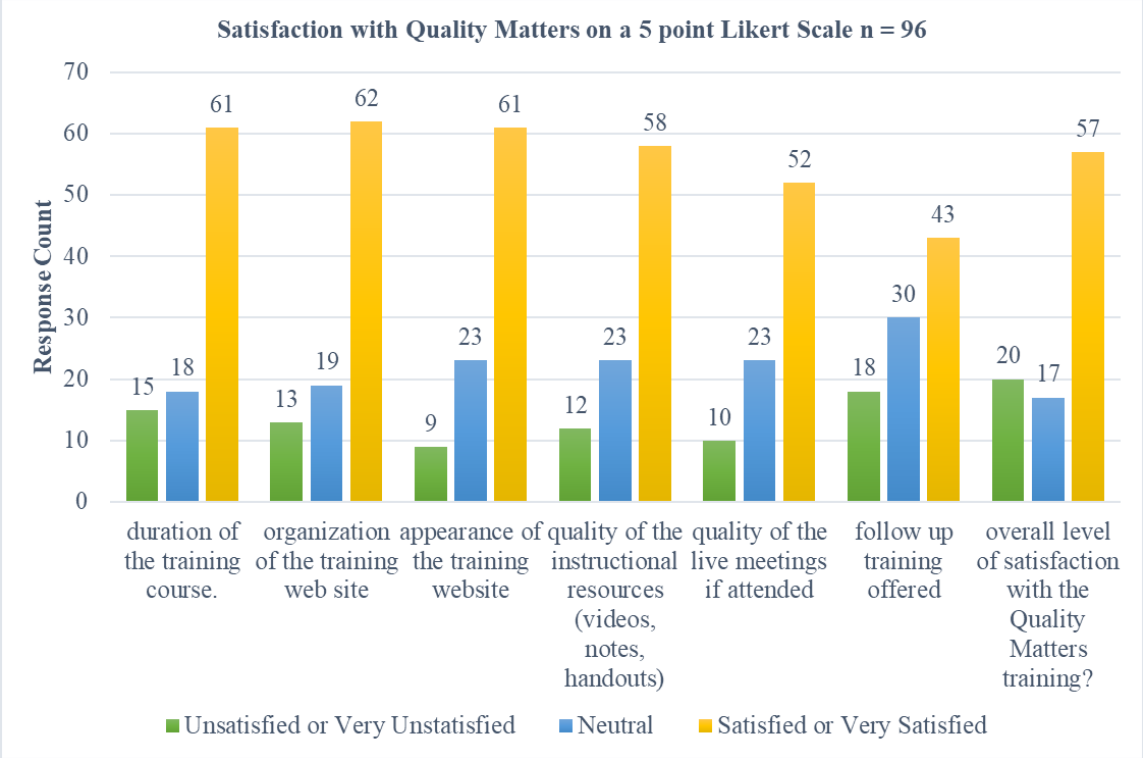
To test Research Hypothesis #2: *There is a statistically significant positive relationship between faculty's satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience and their perceptions that Quality Matters increased the quality of their online course design*, data from the Survey of Faculty Perceptions of the Quality Matters Professional Development Program were analyzed to determine if a statistically significant relationship existed between faculty's perceptions of the Quality Matters professional development experience and their perceptions about the quality of their online courses. The results are reported in tabular and narrative form.

Question thirteen in the survey regarding satisfaction with Quality Matters, asked participants eight sub questions about their satisfaction with Quality Matters professional development program. There was a total of 550 responses from 93 respondents to the questions regarding instructor satisfaction with Quality Matters, with 69%, indicating they were satisfied with the training they received while 31% were either not satisfied or they did not have strong feelings either way.

Figure 3 below details the results for question 13 on instructor satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development program.

Figure 3

Faculty Satisfaction with QM Professional Development



The highest rates of satisfaction for faculty were indicated in the quality of live meetings, if attended, as well as with the quality of instructional resources used during Quality Matters training. In Figure 3 above, faculty participants indicated the highest levels of unsatisfaction overall with Quality Matters training and the duration of the training course. 85 of the 96 participants indicated that they had attended a live Quality Matters training as seen in Table 11 below. Figure 10 below contains the mean, standard deviation, and variance for the results of question 13 regarding faculty satisfaction with the Quality Matters training program.

Table 11

Mean, Standard Deviation, Variance, and Response Count for Question 13 Satisfaction with Quality Matters on a 5-Point Scale

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	n
Duration of the Training Course	3.64	1.19	1.42	94
Organization of the Training Course	3.70	1.17	1.36	94
Appearance of the Training Course	3.73	1.12	1.25	93
Quality of the Instructional Resources	3.71	1.21	1.47	93
Quality of the live meetings if attended	3.75	1.23	1.50	85
Follow up training offered	3.42	1.20	1.45	91
Overall level of Satisfaction with the Quality Matters Training	3.56	1.33	1.78	94

The overall satisfaction rating mean score for faculty participants' satisfaction with Quality Matters was 3.56. The variance for the overall satisfaction rating was 1.78 and the standard deviation was 1.33. Spearman rho analysis was conducted to determine if the sub questions within question 13 of the survey on instructor satisfaction with Quality Matters correlated with instructor ratings of satisfaction in other areas of Quality Matters training. The results of that correlational testing can be seen below in Table 12.

Table 12

Correlational Analysis to Examine Satisfaction Ratings

	Satisfaction Items						
Satisfaction Items	Duration of the Training Course	Organization of the Training Website	Appearance of the Training Website	Quality of the Instructional Resources	Quality of the Live Meetings if attended	Follow up Training Offered	Overall Satisfaction with Quality Matters Training
Duration of the Training Course	1	.756**	.723**	.710**	.690**	.665**	.780**
Organization of the Training Website	.756**	1	.840**	.773**	.700**	.651**	.790**
Appearance of the Training Website	.723**	.840**	1	.817**	.691**	.658**	.790**
Quality of the Instructional Resources	.710**	.773**	.807**		.782**	.729**	.839**
Quality of the Live Meetings if attended	.690**	.700**	.691**	.782**		.746**	.781**
Follow up Training Offered	.665**	.651**	.658**	.729**	.746**		.732**
Overall Satisfaction with Quality Matters Training	.780**	.790**	.790**	.839**	.781**	.732**	

**.Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2 tailed).

Every one of the six subcategories within satisfaction indicated a moderate to high positive correlation to one another. A high positive correlation was indicated between faculty satisfaction with the organization of Quality Matters training website and faculty satisfaction with the appearance of the training website ($\rho = 0.840$, n = 93, $p < .01$). Those who were more satisfied with the organization of the website were also more satisfied with the appearance of the website. A high positive correlation was also indicated between overall faculty satisfaction with Quality Matters training and satisfaction with the quality of instructional resources used during

the training such as handouts, videos, etc... (ρ = 0.839, n = 93, $p < .01$). Those who were more satisfied with the training materials used were also more likely to be satisfied with Quality Matters training overall.

Question fifteen regarding faculty perceptions of the quality of their online courses as shown above in table 3, asked faculty participants about their online course in regard to their perceptions of the quality of the course. 81% of the responses indicated that faculty participants believed their course met Quality Matters rubric standards while 19% did not perceive their course met the Quality Matters rubric requirements. Figure 4 and 5 below detail the results regarding faculty participants' perceptions about the quality of their online course.

Figure 4

Faculty Perceptions of the Quality of their Online Course

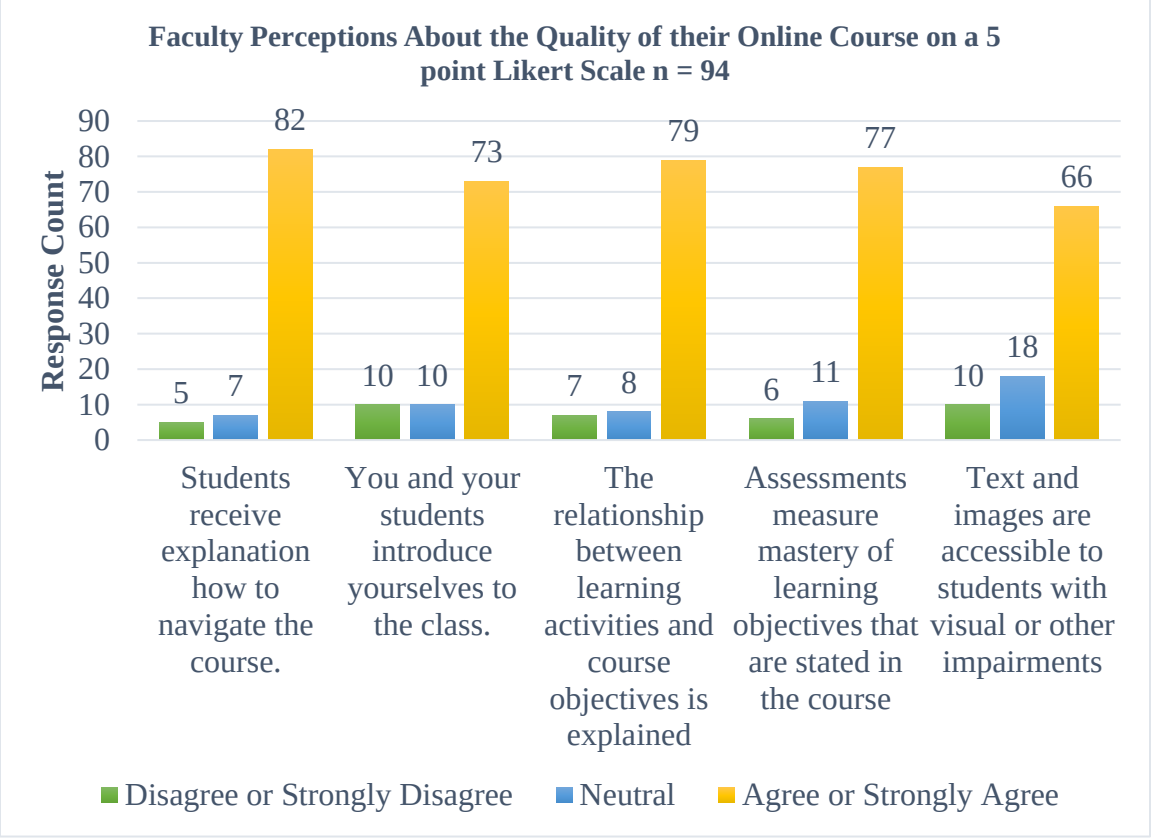
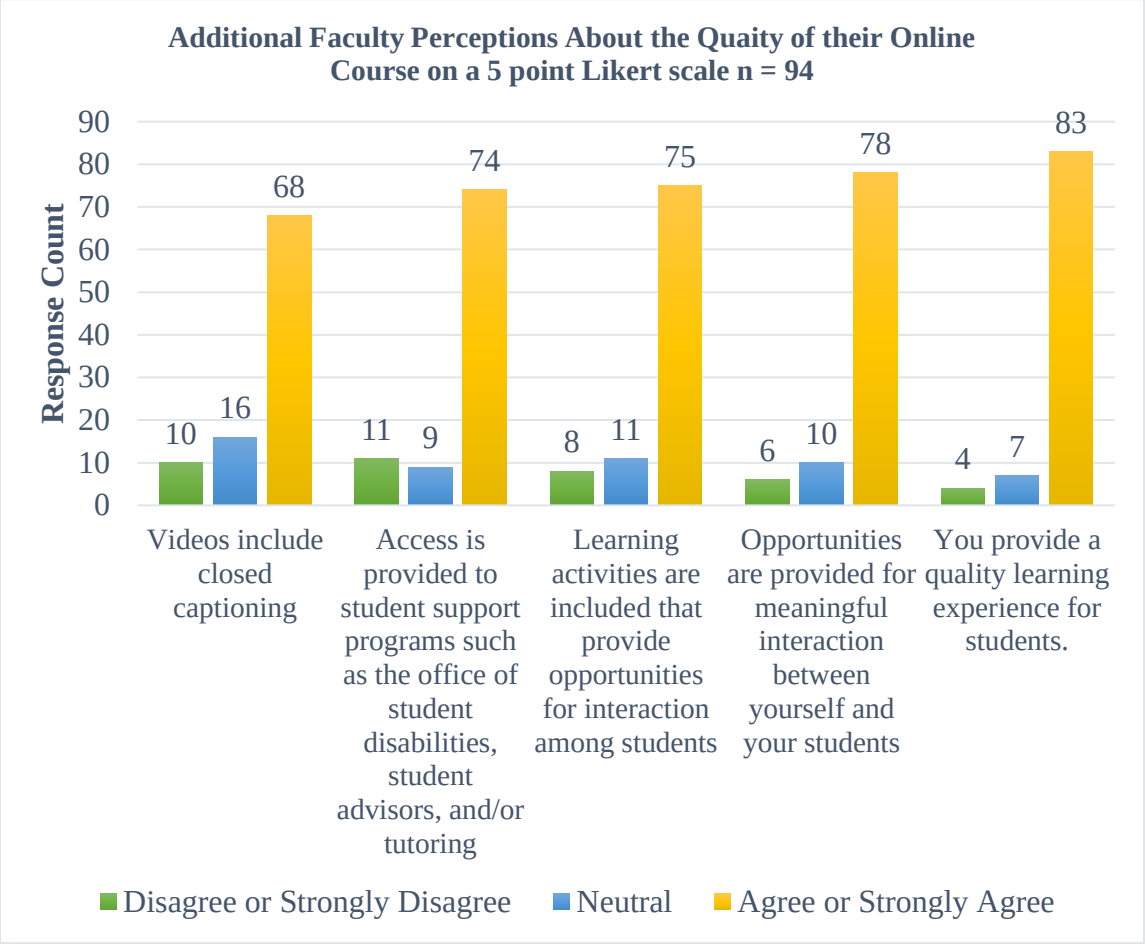


Figure 5

Additional Faculty Perceptions About the Quality of their Online Course



Faculty indicated they felt their course quality overall was the strongest (n = 94), 88% of faculty participants agreed or strongly agreed that their course overall provided a quality learning experience for students. 87% of faculty participants also agreed or strongly agreed (n = 94) that their course included explanations on how to navigate the course for students while 78% (n = 93) of faculty participants indicated that students and the instructor introduced themselves within the online course. However, for the Quality Matters rubric standard regarding accessibility, faculty indicated that regarding text and images being accessible was an area they felt with unsure or

disagreed that their course met that standard. Table 13 below details the mean, standard deviation, and variance for survey question 15 regarding faculty perceptions about the quality of their online course(s).

Table 13

Mean, Standard Deviation, Variance, and Response Count for Q.15 Faculty Perceptions About the Quality of their Online Course on a 5-Point Scale

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	n
Students receive explanation how to navigate the course	4.3	0.97	0.93	94
You and you students introduce themselves to the class	4.17	1.18	1.39	93
The relationship between learning activities and course objectives is explained	4.2	1.02	1.03	94
Assessments measure mastery of learning objectives that are stated in the course	4.18	1.04	1.08	94
Text and images are accessible to students with visual or other impairments.	3.95	1.1	1.22	94
Videos include closed captioning	3.97	1.1	1.2	94
Access is provided to student support programs	4.1	1.14	1.3	94
Learning activities are included that provide opportunities for interaction among students	4.12	1.08	1.17	94
Opportunities are provided for meaningful interaction between yourself and your students	4.2	1.01	1.01	94
You provide a quality learning experience for students	4.28	0.93	0.86	94

A Spearman's rho analysis was then conducted to determine if a relationship existed between any of the ten sub questions within faculty's perceptions about the quality of their online course. The results can be seen below in Table 14.

Table 14

Correlational Analysis to Examine Faculty Perceptions of their Online Course Quality

	In your online course..									
In your online course..	Students receive explanation on how to navigate the course	You and your students introduce yourselves to the class	The relationship between learning activities and course objectives is explained	assessments measure mastery of learning objectives that are stated in the course	text and images are accessible to students with visual or other impairments	videos include closed captioning	access is provided to student support programs	learning activities are included that provide opportunities for interaction among students	opportunities are provided for meaningful interaction between yourself and your students	you provide a quality learning experience for students
Students receive explanation on how to navigate the course	1	.702**	.771**	.722**	.564**	.553**	.635**	.628**	.716**	.724**
You and your students introduce yourselves to the class	.702**	1	.727**	.614**	.528**	.504**	.498**	.762**	.726**	.721**
The relationship between learning activities and course objectives is explained	.771**	.727**	1	.791**	.560**	.600**	.636**	.681**	.771**	.689**
assessments measure mastery of learning objectives that are stated in the course	.722**	.614**	.791**	1	.562**	.586**	.594**	.563**	.641**	.614**
text and images are accessible to students with visual or other impairments	.564**	.528**	.560**	.562**	1	.681**	.491**	.502**	.509**	.512**
videos include closed captioning	.553**	.504**	.600**	.586**	.681**		.613**	.526**	.574**	.624**
access is provided to student support programs	.635**	.498**	.636**	.594**	.491**	.613**		.533**	.622**	.658**
learning activities are included that provide opportunities for interaction among students	.628**	.762**	.681**	.563**	.526**	.526**	.533**		.870**	.747**
opportunities are provided for meaningful interaction between yourself and your students	.716**	.726**	.771**	.641**	.509**	.574**	.622**	.870**		.786**
you provide a quality learning experience for students	.724**	.721**	.689**	.614**	.512**	.624**	.658**	.747**	.786**	

**.Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2 tailed).

A positive correlation was indicated between all of the ten sub questions regarding instructor perceptions of quality of their online as measured by their perception of its adherence to the Quality Matters rubric for online course design however, not all were statistically significant. A high positive statistically significant relationship was indicated between whether assessments measure mastery of learning objectives that are stated in the course and if their online course explained the relationship between learning activities and course objectives ($\rho = 0.791$, $n = 93$, $p < .01$). Those who felt their assessments measured learning objectives were more likely to perceive that their relationship between learning activities and content objectives were also explained within their online course.

A very high positive statistically significant correlational relationship was between opportunities for meaningful interaction between instructors and students and instructors' perception that their course overall provided a quality learning experience for students ($\rho = 0.786$, $n = 93$, $p < .01$). Those who were provided meaningful interactions between themselves and students were more likely to feel they provided an overall quality learning experience for students.

Spearman rho analysis was then conducted to test hypothesis 2 to determine if there is a statistically significant positive relationship between faculty's perceptions of satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience and their perceptions that Quality Matters increased the quality of their online course design. The result of the analysis can be seen in Table 15 below.

Table 15

Correlational Analysis of Satisfaction with Quality Matters and Faculty Perceptions of the Quality of their Online Course

	In your online course..									
Satisfaction Items	Students receive explanation on how to navigate the course	You and your students introduce yourselves to the class	The relationship between learning activities and course objectives is explained	assessments measure mastery of learning objectives that are stated in the course	text and images are accessible to students with visual or other impairments	videos include closed captioning	access is provided to student support programs	learning activities are included that provide opportunities for interaction among students	opportunities are provided for meaningful interaction between yourself and your students	you provide a quality learning experience for students
Duration of the Training Course	.402**	.416**	.526**	.495**	.384**	.297**	.271**	.444**	.396**	.288**
Organization of the Training Website	.303**	.342**	.471**	.497**	.391**	.396**	.257**	.278**	.304**	.264**
Appearance of the Training Website	.260**	.328**	.410**	.381**	.452**	.295**	.304**	.378**	.327**	.231**
Quality of the Instructional Resources	.345**	.462**	.485**	.417**	.370**	.263**	.362**	.357**	.376**	.344**
Quality of the Live Meetings if attended	.345**	.365**	.486**	.466**	.359**	.295**	.357**	.338**	.374**	.346**
Follow up Training Offered	.348**	.324**	.418**	.480**	.494**	.396*	.387**	.326**	.332**	.302**
Overall Satisfaction with QM Training	.335**	.444**	.491**	.493**	.393**	.279**	.200**	.358**	.339**	.284**

**.Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2 tailed).

The Spearman Rho analysis of faculty satisfaction with the Quality Matters training program and faculty perceptions of their online course indicated low positive correlations for all of the questions. A moderate positive correlation between faculty perceptions that their online course explained the relationship between learning activities and course objectives and faculty satisfaction with the duration of Quality Matters training ($\rho = 0.526$, $n = 94$, $p < .01$). Those who were more satisfied with the duration of the Quality Matters training were more likely to indicate that their online course explained the relationship between learning activities and course objectives.

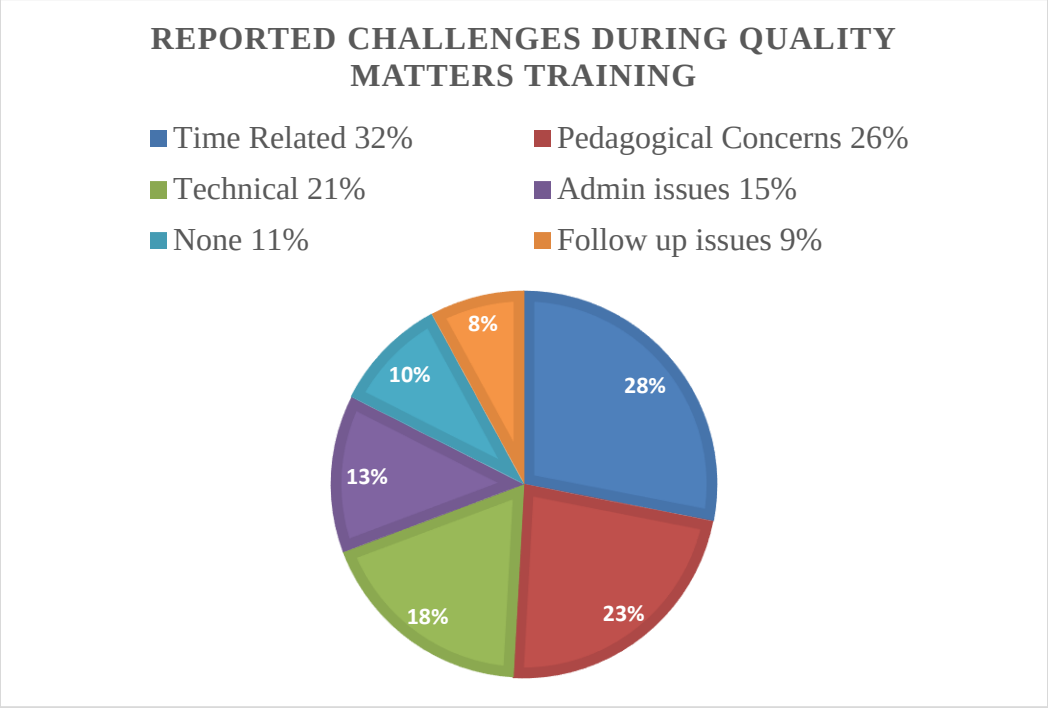
Results Obtained for Research Question 3

Research Question 3: *What do faculty perceive facilitators of the Quality Matters professional development program could do to improve the training?,* was examined through two opened ended questions included in the survey to look at what challenges faculty reported during the training as well as what suggestions for improvement they had for the Quality Matters professional development program.

Question sixteen of the survey asked faculty "*What challenges such as personal, technical, philosophical, time limitations, lack of experience, etc.… did they face during their Quality Matters training*?" The following themes emerged from the data in term of areas of concern: time issues, pedagogical issues, technical issues, administrative issues, no issues noted, and the need for additional follow up. Figure 6 below shows the frequency each challenge was reported.

Figure 6

Reported Challenges During Quality Matters Training



Time related issues composed nearly a third of the total challenges reported and many respondents reported too much time spent in the course while a few noted the need for more time for skill mastery. Pedagogical concerns noted included concern for student impact as "professors are allowed to heavily populate videos, reading materials, and lectures for one week as if it were for the entire course." Additional concerns included Quality Matters focus on the inclusion of objectives in every lesson as the top of the lesson which faculty participants reported concerns that it was mere "legalese" whereas "in a regular classroom" they would "not spend page after page explaining learning outcomes for every single lesson." Pedagogical concerns also noted that participants felt "Quality Matters is absent of quality and rigor" and that it creates a false sense that "all online classes should be presented in the same way" versus "recognizing that content should and could be presented in different ways and helping faculty figure out how to do so."

The technical issues reported included items such as issues with designing accessible course materials and lack of experience with technology including the LMS Canvas, where Quality Matters courses are conducted and the LMS Blackboard which the participating university uses for their online course facilitation. Administrative issues noted by participants included the feeling that Quality Matters training was nothing more than a way for "administration to check off that their faculty have basic accessibility training." Another administrative area of concern noted was the desire by faculty participants to have more opportunities for "meaningful conversations" both with each other during the training and to have more opportunities for "personal contact with trainers." Faculty expressed concern that Quality Matters trainers were not themselves "adequately trained" and therefore "could not engage in meaningful conversations." Faculty also reported feeling the training was "inconsistent" in the feedback and response time from trainers. A notable administrative concern reported was in regard to online cheating.

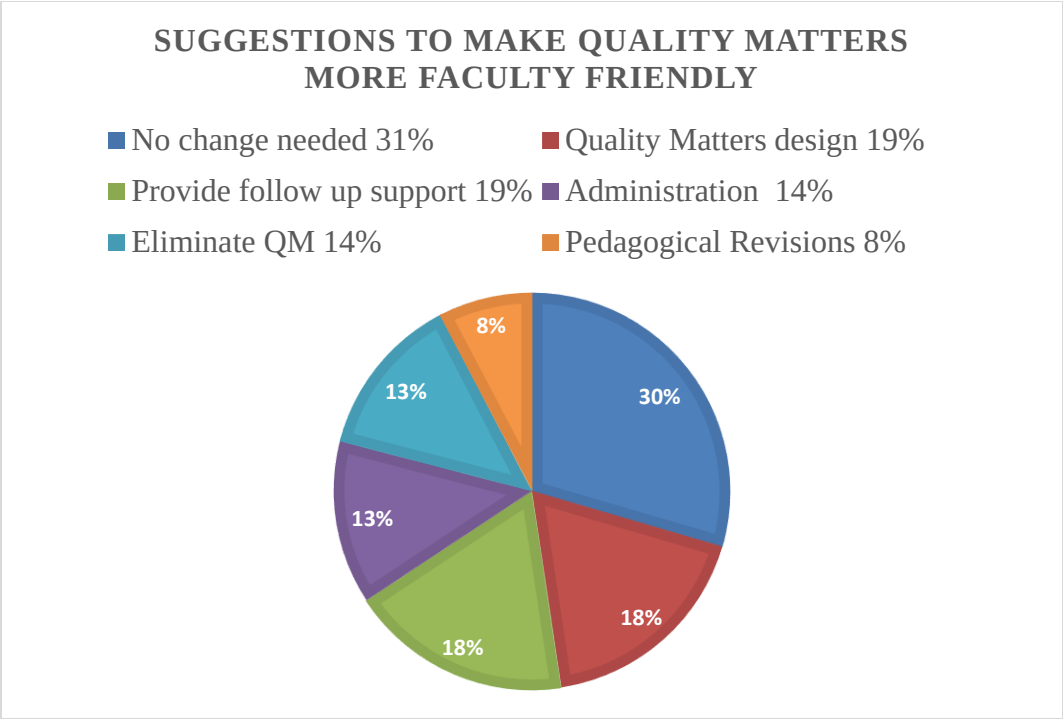
Follow up challenges reported included the desire to have the Quality Matters book as a reference and not having access to it following the course. Additionally, faculty participants noted the need for more support for skill mastery. They also expressed a desire for follow up training on "Blackboard tools to help achieve" Quality Matters training program goals.

Question seventeen asked faculty participants, *"If there was anything trainers could do to make Quality Matters training more faculty friendly?"* The following themes related to suggestions for improvement emerged from the results of question seventeen: follow up suggestions, Quality Matters design related suggestions, administrative suggestions, time suggestions, and the suggestion to eliminate Quality Matters all together. Figure 18 below details

what faculty felt Quality Matters facilitators could do to make Quality Matters more faculty friendly.

Figure 7

Suggestions to Make Quality Matters More Faculty Friendly



31% of the faculty participants who responded to question seventeen felt that no changes needed to be made to Quality Matters training to be more faculty friendly. However, only 7 of the fifty-nine total responses indicated a positive experience with Quality Matters professional development. Suggestions noted by faculty participants to improve Quality Matters design included "simplifying the rubric" and the need for inclusion of more "how to videos" and "examples of appropriately designed courses." Another notable suggestion included for Quality Matters training to be offered on "multiple platforms" so that faculty would have a better idea of the experience students have online. Additionally, participants requested longer question and

answer sessions at the end of the training for those who need additional support and the allowance for those who are quicker to master skills to "test out of modules" in the training.

Follow up suggestions from faculty participants composed near 20% of the total responses. In addition to the requests to have the ability to contact trainers following completion of the course faculty also noted to need for support to create more inclusive courses. Faculty noted a need for "expert support on creating accessible online courses." Participants also requested "peer mentoring and opportunities for faculty to share" their courses with each other as well as more "relatable" examples of well-designed online courses. Faculty also requested follow up "individual coaching sessions" with trainers. In addition, faculty felt there was a need for more frequent training and follow up meetings to address campus specific issues encountered during online course design and teaching.

Nearly 14% of all responses stated the desire to see the requirement for Quality Matters be completely eliminated. Some felt that the university needs to design and produce its own training instead noting that course design "should be decided by departmental needs versus Quality Matters standards." Faculty also noted that "our own in-house training from our colleagues would be much more valuable" than Quality Matters training program.

Administrative suggestions for improvement included increased training for presenters. Scheduling suggestions to administration included "ensuring training participants were trained on Blackboard prior" to be enrolled in Quality Matters training as well as that Quality Matters course enrollment was determined by faculty participant's "competency with technology" and prior experience teaching online. Faculty also requested administration schedule more practice opportunities once training was completed. Additionally, faculty felt that Quality Matters was

better used as a “way to evaluate” existing online courses versus a “gatekeeper” to allow instructors to teach online.

Pedagogical concerns included the need for flexibility in design and considerations regarding the level, undergraduate versus graduate, of the course with suggestions for which elements to include within the course. Faculty felt that Quality Matters needed to be “more connected to pedagogical practices” to include that student work encouraged within the Quality Matters training courses be aimed at “developing critical thinking skills” versus rote memorization such as needed for quizzes and exams. Additional pedagogical concerns about the exams within Quality Matters were presented such as the tests of skill mastery required nothing more than “copy/pasting sections out of a textbook.” Concerns for pedagogical modeling within the Quality Matters professional development program were expressed as well such as the “lack of interaction between trainers and faculty” while Quality Matters desires for faculty to create “interactive activities for students.”

Suggestions from faculty to improve the course including shortening the training time. Faculty also expressed frustration that the online Quality Matters course required a significant amount more time to complete, some noting nearly double the time, than the face-to-face option for the same training. Additionally, faculty suggested that the “allowance to test out of modules” within the training would be more efficient.

The examination of *Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between faculty’s perceptions of satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience and their confidence to teach online,* according to the Spearman’s rho analysis a statistically significant moderate relationship between overall confidence to teach online and overall satisfaction with Quality Matters training. In further examination of the sub-questions in

positive satisfaction ratings and the sub-questions related to confidence in teaching online, a moderate positive correlation ($\rho = 0.508$, n = 83, $p < .01$) was indicated between satisfaction with the length of the Quality Matters professional development program and greater confidence in teaching online following the Quality Matters professional development experience. In addition, a moderate positive correlation ($\rho = 0.589$, n = 83, $p < .01$) was indicated between the quality of the instructional resources included in the Quality Matters training program such as videos, notes, and handouts and greater confidence for faculty to use tools to teach asynchronously online following Quality Matters professional development.

Examination of *Hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between faculty's perceptions of satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience and their perceptions that Quality Matters increased the quality of their online course design,* was also conducted using both Spearman rho analysis. Overall satisfaction with Quality Matters training did have a positive statistically significant correlation with faculty perceptions about the quality of their online course ($\rho = 0.284$, n = 94, $p < .01$). Satisfaction with the duration of Quality Matters training was moderately positively correlated with faculty perception that in their online course learning activities and their relationship to course objectives was explained ($\rho = 0.526$, n = 94, $p < .01$)..

Research Question 3: *What do faculty perceive facilitators of the Quality Matters professional development program could do to improve the training?,* was examined through the use of two open ended survey questions. Faculty participants were asked what challenges (personal, technical, philosophical, time limitations, lack of experience) they faced during the Quality Matters training and if there was anything trainers could do to make Quality Matters training more faculty friendly? Faculty reported challenges such as technical issues, time

constraints, pedagogical concerns, administrative related issues, and follow up related challenges. Time related and pedagogical concerns composed the vast majority of issues encountered by faculty.

Suggestions for improvement ranged from follow up requests, pedagogical concerns, Quality Matters design issues, administrative suggestions, time related suggestions, as well as the request to eliminate Quality Matters all together. 31% of the 59 total responses to the question seventeen indicated that no change was needed. However, pedagogical and follow up concerns composed the majority of the suggestions for improvement.

A statistically significant moderate positive correlation was found between overall positive satisfaction ratings and great confidence teaching online following the Quality Matters professional development experience ($\rho = 0.405$, $n = 83$, $p < .01$). A low position correlation was indicated between positive satisfaction ratings and perceptions that Quality Matters professional development increased the quality of their online course design ($\rho = 0.284$, $n = 94$, $p < .01$). However, the statistically significant moderate connections between satisfaction with duration of Quality Matters training and with instructor confidence ($\rho = 0.526$, $n = 94$, $p < .01$), with further examination into the themes that emerged in the two open ended questions in the survey, sixteen and seventeen regarding challenges encountered during training and suggestions on how to make Quality Matters more faculty friendly, could provide additional insights into the results found for overall satisfaction with Quality Matters and its effect on instructor confidence to teach online and faculty perceptions of the quality of their online course(s).

Summary

This chapter presented the results obtained from the analyses used to test the hypotheses set forth in this study. The next chapter, Chapter Five, presents the conclusions, interpretations, and implications suggested by those results.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, INTERPRETATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this research study was to explore faculty participants' perceptions about the Quality Matters training experience, their satisfaction with that professional development experience, and what impact they perceive Quality Matters had on the quality of their online courses. This chapter presents the conclusions, interpretations for each of the two hypotheses of the research study, as well as limitations of the study. Implications for practice and recommendations for further research are discussed as well.

Conclusion, Interpretations, and Implications for Practice for Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between faculty's perceptions of satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience and their confidence to teach online.

Based on the outcome of a Spearman rho analysis of the data for research question #1, there is a statistically significant moderate relationship between overall confidence to teach online and overall satisfaction with the Quality Matters ($\rho = 0.405$, $n = 84$, $p < .01$). In the survey there were a total of 8 sub-questions in the satisfaction area of the survey and 6 sub-questions related to confidence. The strongest correlation indicated between the sub-questions of satisfaction and confidence was between satisfaction with the length of the Quality Matters professional development program and greater confidence in teaching online following the

Quality Matters professional development experience ($\rho = 0.597$, n = 83, $p < .01$). In the open-ended questions in the survey faculty indicated that some of the time related issues with Quality Matters included "that there wasn't enough time to master some of the necessary skills," more time for follow up and meeting with mentors, and more time dedicated to viewing examples at the university level of excellent courses. Faculty participants expressed "frustration with show us once and think we have mastered it—with no hands on" support and a desire for "expert support on creating accessible online courses" with "peer mentoring and setup opportunities for faculty to share their online course set-ups" with each other. Faculty also expressed that follow up was needed such as "more crossover going over Blackboard tools that would help you achieve the things that are taught in Quality Matters" and "virtual meetings to address issues faculty actually encounter."

On the other end of the time related suggestions for faculty those who felt the time spent in Quality Matters was excessive indicated the need for the ability to "test out of modules" and to eliminate 'busy work' within the training such as copy pasting information from a text. "The training could have taken place in 2/3 of the time. I didn't need 1,000 examples of every concept." Even participants who requested follow up support insisted that Quality Matters needed "shorter training time." Faculty participants also suggested that follow up time with the Quality Matters trainers needed to be more uniform and they were not satisfied with the disparity between time needed to complete the training online versus time to complete the same training courses in person. "I'm mystified why my all-online Quality Matters training took me 8-10 hours of work to complete over 7-10 days while the in-person training was less than 7 hours and completed in one day."

Additionally, a moderate positive correlation was indicated between the quality of the instructional resources included in the Quality Matters training program such as videos, notes, and handouts and greater confidence for faculty to use tools to teach asynchronously online following Quality Matters professional development ($\rho = 0.589$, n = 83, $p < .01$). In review of the open-ended questions of the survey faculty indicated the need for more examples of exemplary courses as well as the indication that a locally created training could be more helpful than a nationally created training in preparing faculty to teach online. Additionally, faculty requested that design decisions be at the department level versus from an outside organization. Perhaps these suggestions for improvement could be met by an exemplary course example for each department that meets the needs of the university and department specifications as well as Quality Matters standards. This type of course could be used as an example by faculty to create and design their own online courses and may provide more confidence for them in their abilities to do so if they are able to see examples designed by their peers. Faculty participants also reported concerns with feeling Quality Matters training consisted of "show us once and think we have mastered it with no hands-on time in a supervised setting." The inclusion of a faculty mentoring program and hands on training follow or even proceeding Quality Matters training could result in better confidence by faculty in their abilities to design high quality online learning programs for their students.

Overall satisfaction ratings with Quality Matters professional development did not indicate a statistically significant relationship with faculty experiencing great confidence overall with teaching online following the Quality Matters professional development although a low positive correlation was found ($\rho = 0.597$, n = 83, $p < .01$). However, the moderate positive correlation between duration of Quality Matters training and confidence to use tools to teach

asynchronously may indicate the need for further examination into best practices for the length of Quality Matters or other professional development programs in order to produce the best possible outcomes in relation to faculty confidence in teaching online so that they feel better prepared to provide students with quality online learning experiences. Additionally, an examination may be needed to look at potential sequencing in professional development programs to allow for greater time to practice skills with the support of a Quality Matters or other instructional design trainer.

Conclusion, Interpretations, and Implications for Practice for Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between faculty's perceptions of satisfaction with the Quality Matters professional development experience and their perceptions that Quality Matters increased the quality of their online course design.

Based on the outcome of a Spearman rho analysis of the data for research question #2, a low positive correlation was found between faculty overall perceptions about the quality of their online course as well as their overall satisfaction with Quality Matter professional development program ($\rho = 0.284$, n = 94, $p < .01$). A moderate positive correlation was found between faculty satisfaction with the duration of Quality Matters training and their perception that their online course(s) explained the relationship between learning activities and course objectives ($\rho = 0.526$, n = 94, $p < .01$). This correlation may indicate a need to examine the length of Quality Matters or sequencing of professional development for instructors learning to teach online to allot sufficient time for instructors to practice and master skills. Additionally further examination may

be needed to differentiate instruction of professional programs such as Quality Matters to allow faculty who are faster at skill mastery to progress through the course at their own pace.

Despite completion of Quality Matters training 19% of the 96 faculty participants did not believe their course in fact met Quality Matters standards. While greater than 80% of the 96 faculty participants do believe their courses met Quality Matters standards the lack of meeting standards by all indicates a need for additional training and follow up to help those faculty feel more empowered and able to meet Quality Matters standards and to produce high quality courses for students. Additionally, a lack of sufficient time to complete the design their online course during training may also have contributed to faculty participants' perceptions that their course did not meet Quality Matters standards versus an indication that their entire course was not well designed.

Further implications for practice include the potential need to differentiate at an administrative level how Quality Matters is implicated at a campus level so that those who need more support receive it and those who are already able to design their courses to meet Quality Matters standards are able to test out of modules of the training they may have already mastered. This type of differentiation not only would benefit faculty but, would serve as an example of the differentiation that faculty could provide for their own students in an online environment.

Limitations of the Study

Correlational research cannot attribute cause and effect to relationships as can be done in experimental research however for the purposes of this study correlational research is the most appropriate methodology for determining if a relationship does in fact exist to allow for the

ground work for future additional research. Additionally, the following limitations related to the study may have impacted the results from the study including its generalizability:

1. **Limitations related to the Sample Size:** The scope of this study was limited to instructors at a Hispanic serving university located along the Texas Mexico border who have undergone Quality Matters training and are teaching online. 10.2% n = 96, of the 941 faculty who qualified for the study participated. Bonnett, E. and Wright, T. (2002) assert that Spearman rho analysis "can be used to generalize from the sample to the population correlation for any monotonic transformation of bivariate normal variables" (p. 25). However, due to the low sample size caution needs be used when attempting to generalize results to similar studies at other institutions with different faculty population.
2. **Limitations Related to Faculty's Attitudes Toward Mandatory Professional Development.** This study only focused on faculty at a participating university where Quality Matters professional development was previously optional but, is now mandatory in order to teach online. The forced implementation of professional development programs according to Tate (2012) may result in lower learning outcomes. Mandatory professional development training may cause faculty perceptions to be more negative than may otherwise have been experienced in professional development training that was offered as an option. This tendency towards causing negative perceptions of the training as it was mandatory at the participation university may have impacted faculty perceptions about the Quality Matters professional development program.

3. **Limitations Regarding Impact of Current COVID-19 Pandemic on Mental Health:** The study was conducted in the midst of a global pandemic, COVID-19, the stress of the current health crisis may have impacted faculty participants perceptions of Quality Matters professional development program.
4. **Limitations Related to Self-Reporting.** Self-reporting may have raised the issue of validity in the context of response bias in that faculty participants may feel apprehensive and may therefore not accurately perceive, remember, or describe their perceptions according to Razavi (2001) and Kreuger and Casey (2009). This study will assume that faculty participants truthfully and as accurately as possible described their perceptions of Quality Matters training while responding to the survey and there may also have existed extraneous variables that may have influenced instructor perceptions and altered results of this study.
5. **Limitations Related to Exclusion of Faculty Who Did Not Complete Quality Matters Training.** As this study was conducted only with faculty who had completed Quality Matters training and excluded those who did not complete training the study's results may have been limited in producing a more comprehensive picture of improvements that faculty may have felt Quality Matters professional development program needed. A more comprehensive view of faculty perceptions to the Quality Matters training could have emerged had all participating faculty been surveyed, even those who did not complete the training.

Summary of Results and Recommendations for Further Research

According to the American Journal of Business Education (2012) online instructors are primarily part-time instructors. Professional development for part time instructors presents challenges as many have full time jobs outside of the college and other demands on their time that limit accessibility to campus-based training programs. Keengwe & Kidd (2010) assert that "at the administrative level, campuses need to place greater emphasis on faculty support with course design, instructional methodology, and development of instructional materials" (p.3). Keengwe and Kidd (2010) asset that not all instructors should be online instructors and requirements for all faculty to teach online will result in lower online course quality.

Keengwe & Kidd (2010) argue that expectations for faculty to inherently transfer their instructional skills from in person online are faulty. Moore (2012) espouses that "campus administrators need to include supports for new online faculty such as mentoring so that they may learn from more experienced instructors" (p. 6). Irlbeck (2008) argues that administration is responsible for creating a learning environment for faculty where they are encouraged to seek additional professional development opportunities.

Allowing faculty to have input on professional development and quality assurance initiatives helps ensure successful implementation (Gregory, et. al, 2020). Faculty buy-in is essential argues Gregory et. al (2020) for implementation of any professional development program but, especially with regards to Quality Matters, APPMQR.

As was perceived by faculty participants in this study, Quality Matters may be wrongly used to assess online courses for faculty 'failures' to meet those standards or as a gate-keeper, in regards to APPWMR, to becoming 'certified' to teach online, versus as a quality assurance tool to look to improve online teaching practice. APPQMR is designed to teach how to review

courses to ensure they meet the Quality Matters standards versus instructing faculty how to meet those standards themselves in their own courses The disconnect between Quality Matters APPQMR's intent and the way it may be presented or utilized presents a need for research to determine the impact administration's implementation may have on the program's success and ultimately the ability of the university to provide quality online opportunities for students. Research is needed to determine best practices for administration of Quality Matters on a campus level. The late Becky Solley, a Quality Matters certified trainer, and E-Learning specialist with over 40 years of experience in education, from North Central Texas College, was vital in examining the applicability of the survey questions used in this research, in her words:

> Quality Matters as a program is not the issue with faculty buy in and satisfaction with the training so much as how administration presents the program to faculty as well as which of the Quality Matters courses, they require faculty to take. Too often APPQMR is used as the end all be all of preparing faculty to teach online when that is not what it is designed for.

In addition to the perceptions of Quality Matters in particular APPQMR as a 'gate keeper' and tool for faculty assessment, the results of this study produced an indication of a statistically significant positive relationship between satisfaction with Quality Matters training and confidence with teaching online ($\rho = 0.405$, $n = 83$, $p < .01$). Additional research into why some participants did not feel confident teaching online despite completion of Quality Matters professional development could produce insights for administrators on additional types of professional development instructors may need prior to teaching online. A strong statistically positive relationship was indicated between *satisfaction* with the length of the Quality Matters professional development program and greater *confidence* in teaching online ($\rho = 0.508$, $n = 83$,

$p < .01$). This result indicates an opportunity for further research to determine if the current time length, allotment for practice, and other activities within Quality Matters does produce greater confidence in teaching online and if any changes are needed to the current design of Quality Matters in regards to time.

A statistically significant correlation was also indicated between the quality of the instructional resources included in the Quality Matters training program such as videos, notes, and handouts and greater confidence for faculty to use tools to teach asynchronously online following Quality Matters professional development ($\rho = 0.589$, $n = 83$, $p < .01$). These results present an opportunity for further research to determine what if any changes are needed to current instructional resources included within Quality Matters. Another possible line of inquiry is to examine faculty's perceptions regarding the Quality Matters training and the perceptions of quality of their online courses 6-12 months following completion of training to allow more time to complete their online course design. As time was a consistent issue noted by faculty participants this may have contributed to negative perceptions of their online course quality and their confidence in their abilities to teach online.

Of the many types of professional development programs offered by Quality Matters none exists for administrators on best practices for implementing the program on their campus. This presents an area of opportunity for further inquiry into administrative best practices for implementing Quality Matters professional development program at the administrative level, for Quality Matters program designers as well as researchers in higher education and educational technology administration.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Background Information

1. What gender do you identify with?
Male
Female
Other

2. What ethnicity do you identify with?
Black or African American
Asian
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
Hispanic or Latino
White
American Indian or Alaskan Native
Two or more races

3. What is your age?
20-29
30-39
40-49
50-59
60-69
70+

4. Approximately how many years have you taught at the university level?
A. none/ never taught online
B. 1-5 years
C. 5-10 years
D. 10-20 years
E. 20 years or more

5. Which of the following most accurately describes your academic rank?

A. Adjunct instructor
B. Lecturer
C. Associate professor
D. Assistant professor
E. Full professor

6. Do you currently teach online courses?
Yes
No

7. Approximately how long have you taught online courses?
A. have not taught online
A. 1 year or less
B. 2-5 years
C. 6-10 years
D. More than 10 years

8. What training did you receive prior to your first experience teaching online?
A. Introduction to Quality Matters (INTRO2QM)
B. Applying the QM Rubric (APPQMR)
C. UTRGV's QM blueprinting design course offered during the spring and summer of 2020
D. Other _____
E. None

9. Have you completed Quality Matters training?
Yes
No

10. If you answered yes to Question 9 how long ago did you complete QM training?
A. Less than 1 year
B. 1 year
C. 2 years
D. 3 years
E. 4 years
F. 5 or more years
G. N/A

11. If you are Quality Matters trained did you teach online prior to QM training?
Yes
No
N/A

12. If you are QM trained have you taught online following completion of Quality Matters training?

Yes
No
N/A

Satisfaction with the Quality Matters training experience

On a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = very unsatisfied, 2 = unsatisfied, 3 = neither satisfied or unsatisfied, 4 = satisfied, and 5 = very satisfied, indicate your level of satisfaction with the following elements of your Quality Matters training experience.

What is your level of satisfaction with the …

9. duration of the training course.
10. organization of the training website.
11. appearance of the training website.
12. quality of the instructional
13. resources (videos, notes, handouts).
14. quality of the live meetings, if attended.
15. follow-up training offered
16. What is your overall level of satisfaction with the QM training experience?

Confidence to teach online

On a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = very unconfident, 2 = unconfident, 3 = neither confident nor unconfident, 4 = confident, and 5 = very confident, indicate your level of confidence to teach online following your Quality Matters training experience.

What is your level of confidence in your ability to…

1. use tools to teach asynchronously online
2. engage students in a remote learning environment
3. build connections between you and your students in your online course
4. build connections among students in your online course
5. create your own online course without a templated model to meet Quality Matters rubric requirements
6. What is your overall level of confidence with teaching online?

Your Online Course

On a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree or disagree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree, indicate your level of agreement for your online course following Quality Matters training.

After Quality Matters training, in your online course …

11. Students receive explanation on how to navigate the course
12. You and your students introduce yourselves to the class
13. The relationship between learning activities and course objectives is explained
14. Assessments measure mastery of learning objectives that are stated in the course
15. Text and images are accessible to students with visual or other impairments
16. Videos include closed captioning
17. Access is provided to student support programs such as the office of student disabilities, student advisors, and/or tutoring
18. Learning activities are included that provide opportunities for interaction among students
19. Opportunities are provided for meaningful interaction between yourself and your students
20. You provide a quality learning experience for students.

Open- Ended Questions

What challenges (personal, technical, philosophical, time limitations, lack of experience) did you face during the Quality Matters training?

Is there anything trainers could do to make Quality Matters training more faculty friendly?

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sarah Louise Pettus-Wakefield has an Ed.D. from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in Curriculum and Instruction specializing in Instructional Technology (2021). She also holds a Masters of Education in Educational Technology from the University of Texas at Brownsville (2014), a Bachelors of Science in History from Texas Woman's University (2003), and an Associates of Science in Fine Arts from Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College (2001). She has Texas teacher credentials in k-12 English as a Second Language, k-12 Special Education, EC-4 ESL Generalist, 4-8 Generalist, and Social Studies 8-12th grades. She has over twenty years of experience teaching in k-16 and started her first teaching assignment as a senior in high school, teaching new immigrants English. She has taught in Oklahoma, Texas, and Florida in a variety of grades and subjects including in leadership roles as Limited English Proficiency Committee Lead and Lead Educator. She has worked as an adjunct professor for the past 6 years in the teacher preparation program for North Central Texas College. Sarah also works as a Learning Engineer for Wakefield Educational Consulting, a training company that provides professional development solutions to businesses in Texas, that she started with her husband Jason Wakefield.

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