UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PEDAGOGICAL AND POLICY CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING E-LEARNING IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

by

ALAN JAMES KNOWLES 

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Maureen, and our children, Heather and Adam. Their encouragement, understanding, support, and tolerance of the constant intrusion of my research on our family made this journey possible. This thesis is also dedicated to my parents, Robert and Patricia Knowles, whose example paved the way.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY 1

Interest in the Study 2
Need for the Study 3
Purpose of the Study 4
Research Questions 4
Initial Topics and Questions 5
Assumptions 6
Significance 6

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE 8

Information Technology and Higher Education 10
Shifts in Pedagogy 11
Organizational Change and Challenges 15
Implications for Policy 18
Social Work Distance Education and E-learning 22
Summary 37

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY 38

Rationale for Choice of Methodology 40
Study Design 42
Participants 42
Participant Background, Interest, Motivation, and Experiences With E-learning 45
Data Collection and Analysis 45
Description of the Interview Process 45
Research Log and Field Notes 50
Document Analysis 50
Data Analysis 51
Authenticity, Trustworthiness, Verification, Credibility, and Transferability 52
Continuing Contact 53
Triangulation 54
Member Checks and Expert Review 55
Limitations 56
Delimitations 57
Ethics and Protection of Participants 57
Overview of the Findings and Discussion Chapters 58

CHAPTER FOUR: PROFESSIONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGES 59

Professional Challenges 59

The Fit of E-learning with Social Work Education 59
The Importance of Professional Socialization 61
E-equity 63
Key Ethical Concerns 64

Pedagogical Challenges 66

The Importance of Relationship in Professional Induction 66
Loss of Face to Face Interaction, Immediacy, and Personal Connection 71
Enhanced Interactivity in E-learning 78

Rethinking Curricula 82
Competency in E-communication 84
Student Adjustment to E-learning 86
The Importance of Student Choice 87
Content Areas 88
Class Size 91
The Need to Support Multiple Approaches and Learning Environments 91
Face to Face and Observational Contact 93
Enhancement to Field Education and the Role of Field Instructor 94
The Importance of Student Orientation 95
Rethinking Assessment of Learning 96

Faculty Knowledge 97
Knowledge and Approaches to Instructional Design 98
Increased Planning and Strategic Teaching 100
Shift in Role and Online Teaching Skills 102
Instructor Control of the Learning Environment Software 104

The Need for Pedagogical Dialogue 105
Build in a Critique of Technology 112
Evaluation of Online Learning 113

Summary 115

CHAPTER FIVE: FACULTY CHALLENGES 117

Time, Workload, and Compensation 117
Time Pressures 118
Workload 120
Differential Compensation: E-equity for Faculty 123

Setting Class Size Limits 124
Sessional and Pre-Tenure Vulnerability 126
Lack of Recognition 128
The Question of Faculty Choice 132

Instructional Concerns 135
Pedagogical Orientation, Skills, and Role Shifts 135
Need for Teaching Expectations and Guidelines 135
Intellectual Property 136
Collaboration 138
Confidentiality and Privacy 141

Faculty Development. 141
Technical Skills: Basic Literacy, Course Management Software 146
Technical Support and Interpersonal Skills of Support Person 147
Instructional Design Support 147
Informal Leadership 149

Need for Faculty Dialogue and Input into Decision Making 150

Summary 151

CHAPTER SIX: ADMINISTRATIVE CHALLENGES 152

Program and Institutional Leadership 152
Strategic Planning 154
Institutional Support: Rhetoric and Resources 156
Incremental and Thoughtful Implementation 158
Revised Workload and Compensation Practices and Policies 160
Revised Recognition and Incentives 162
Faculty Demographics 163
Student Demographics: Learner Driven Demand 164

Program Structure and Policies: Integrating On-Campus and Distance Learners 165

Revision and Alignment of Academic Policies 167
Develop Confidentiality and Privacy Policies 168
Clear Guidelines and Expectations for Students 169
Maintaining Program Quality 170
Accreditation Standards 171
Need for Research 174

Collaboration 175

Summary 179

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS 180

Themes 180

Transformation 181

Alignment 185
Philosophical Alignment 185
Pedagogical Alignment 186
Policy Alignment 187
Program Structure and Organizational Alignment 188

Coherence 197

Faculty Engagement 202

Resources 208

Leadership 212

Summary 216

CHAPTER EIGHT: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 217

Summary of Study 217
Implications 220
Recommendations 225
Implications for Future Research 233

REFERENCES 235

APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Guiding Interview questions 252
Appendix B: Invitation to Participate – Deans and Directors 257
Appendix C: Invitation to Participate – Deans and Directors, French Version 259
Appendix D: Invitation to Participate – Participants 262
Appendix E: Tables E1, E2, E3 264
Appendix F: Participant Consent Form 265
Appendix G: Confidentiality Agreement – Transcribers 268
Appendix H: Letter to Participants to Review Transcript 269
Appendix I: Letter Inviting Participants to Review Findings 270
Appendix J: Letter Inviting Expert Participants to Review Findings and Recommendations 272
Appendix K: Table K1. Role Shifts in Implementing E-learning 274
Table K2. Areas of Policy Alignment in Implementing E-learning ... 275

LIST OF TABLES

Table E1	Age Ranges: Social Work Faculty – Appendix E	264
Table E2	Number of Years Teaching – Appendix E	264
Table E3	Type of Position – Appendix E	264
Table K1	Role Shifts in Implementing E-learning – Appendix K	274
Table K2	Implementation Recommendations: Areas of Policy Development-Appendix K	275

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Framework for Examining Policy Development and Tasks in Implementing E-learning in Social Work Education	219

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The rapidly evolving context of higher education is requiring colleges and universities to re-examine their policies, cultures, and organizational structures (Bates, 2000; Duderstadt, 1997, 2000; Graves, 1997; Hanna, 1998, 2003; Turoff, 1997; Van Dusen, 1997). In Canada, the Advisory Committee for Online Learning (2001), sponsored by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) and Industry Canada, has emphasized the importance of information and communications technology in post-secondary education. It has also identified a number of challenges facing post-secondary institutions, including the need to develop a pan-Canadian approach to e-learning.

Over the past three decades, social work educators have gradually extended access to their programs through the use of distance education (Coe & Elliott, 1999; Raymond, Ginsberg & Gohagan, 1998; Seigel, Jennings, Conklin & Napoletano-Flynn, 1998). A variety of media and approaches have been utilized including print-based distance education, off-campus site-based programming, audio-conferencing, and video conferencing. More recently, these educators have begun to offer online learning to both distance and on-campus students as a result of the availability of new learning technologies, policy initiatives of the Federal and provincial governments, and a perceived need to incorporate information technology skills and e-learning into curricula. Examples of social work programs in Canada offering online learning include the Faculties of Social Work at Carleton University, the University of Calgary, the University of Regina, University College of the Cariboo, the University

of Waterloo, and the University of Toronto. The Maritime School of Social Work at Dalhousie University has recently launched comprehensive online distance programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and the School of Social Work at the University of Victoria is in the process of converting print-based distance courses to online delivery. Examples of college level social work diploma and human service programs include the Social Work Program at Grant MacEwan College, Algonquin College, and Mount Royal College. Over the next few years, it is expected that these programs, and social work programs in general, will accelerate the adoption of alternative learning environments in response to the rapidly changing environment and the evolving context of higher education (Siegel et al., 1998; Freddolino, 2002). This interest in adopting web-based and alternative approaches to learning in social work education is relatively recent and represents an important area for research.

INTEREST IN THE STUDY

As a social work educator I wanted to understand the use of e-learning environments in social work education. As an instructor, I was interested in the influence of technology on the teaching-learning process, and how social work education and programs are implementing e-learning. As a former department chair, I was interested in the impact of e-learning on program policies and organizational structures and what influence educators have on implementation decisions. I brought to the research process my experience as a social work educator and administrator, as a member of the Steering Committee of the National Sector Study of Social Work, and other roles I have had in life including clinical practitioner, learner, husband,

father, and traveller. I also brought my interest, skills, and experience in developing, teaching, and evaluating online learning.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The literature in social work distance education is limited and there is an identified need for additional research, particularly in the area of e-learning (Burton & Seabury, 1999; Falk, 1998; Freddolino, 1996; Haggenstad & Kraft, 1998; Hick, 1999a, 1999b; Macey, Rooney, Hollister & Freddolino, 2001; MacFadden, Dumbrill & Maiter, 2000; Sandell & Hayes, 2002; Schoech, 2000; Siegel et al., 1998; Thyer & Artelt, 1998; Wernet & Olliges, 1998). Findings of studies that are available have been mixed, ranging from the very negative findings of Faux and Black-Hughes (2000), cautioning against the adoption of alternative learning in social work education, to the very positive findings of Hick (1999a). From these studies, a number of issues have been identified as important for social work educators implementing distance and alternative learning. These include concerns about academic performance and professional development in distance learning, the loss of face-to-face interaction, questions about the types of courses that are suited for distance or alternate delivery, and issues related to course and program quality. Faculty issues include a need for knowledge and skills in the use of technology and distance education, support and recognition for innovation, and the resources to develop high quality learning environments. Organizational issues involve problems related to access, the cost of course development, and faculty and institutional support of alternative programming (Freddolino, 1996, 1998; Folaron & Stanley, 1998; Forster & Rehner, 1998; Miller-Cribbs & Chadiha, 1998; Raymond et al., 1998; Siegel et al.,

1998). Organizational challenges also include the need for post-secondary organizations to develop new policies and organizational structures to respond to changes driven by new information technologies (Bates, 2000; Gellman-Danley & Fetzner, 1998; Hanna, 1998, 2003; Olcott, 2000; Turoff, 1997).

Research examining e-learning in social work education is limited and is primarily focused on social work education in the United States. As a result, there is a need for research on the relevant issues facing Canadian social work educators who are implementing e-learning in their programs.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to identify and develop in-depth understanding of the issues and concerns of social work educators who are implementing e-learning in their programs in Canada. The purpose was also to develop a foundational understanding of the pedagogical and policy challenges involved in implementing e-learning in Canadian social work education and provide recommendations for policy development.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to explore the issues and concerns outlined above, my primary research questions were "What are the challenges in implementing e-learning in social work education?" And, "What are the implications for policy development?" To explore these questions, I developed a number of interrelated topic areas informed by the literature on distance and e-learning in social work education. The following section identifies a number of initial questions I developed for exploration with participants.

Initial Topics and Questions

What are social work educators' experiences in implementing e-learning? How is online learning being utilized in the teaching-learning process? Who is involved? What is the motivation for social work educators utilizing e-learning? How are social work educators responding to the pedagogical shifts involved in e-learning, including the impact on face-to-face interaction, experiential learning, professional socialization, and program and accreditation standards? Which courses are being offered online, and what was the rationale for choice of course(s)? What instructional design models and strategies are being utilized? What support is available for faculty and programs? What are the perceived needs of faculty implementing e-learning? What incentives and compensation are in place for faculty to become involved in e-learning? What implementation strategies have been successful? What has not worked? Does the program have a strategic plan for the integration of technology and e-learning? How is course development funded?

I recognized that this list was beyond the scope of a single study; however, in keeping with the nature of qualitative inquiry, this list provided a broad range of questions that formed a framework to guide the course of this investigation. A complete list of questions that guided the interview process is in Appendix A.

The methodology employed was naturalistic and inductive, consistent with inquiry focused on understanding little known phenomena or innovative systems (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Qualitative approaches are identified as an important methodological approach to understanding complex computer mediated learning environments and implementing educational technology

(Campbell, 1996; Hannafin, Hannifin, Hooper, Rieber & Kini, 1996; Hoepfl, 1997; Lewis, 1999; Romiszowski & Mason, 1996; Savenye & Robinson, 1996). An interpretivist approach to methodology is also consistent with my paradigmatic stance, constructivist approaches to learning and teaching in online learning environments, and the philosophical foundations of social work education. In this study, social work faculty and administrators who were implementing e-learning or involved in implementing technology decisions participated in in-depth interviews.

ASSUMPTIONS

My assumptions about social work and e-learning frame this study. Specifically, I assume that social work educators will continue to integrate e-learning into their programs, that professional socialization and induction in social work education will be a concern, and that policy issues raised in a Canadian context may be unique.

SIGNIFICANCE

This research makes an original contribution by expanding understanding of the use and implementation of e-learning in an area of professional practice. The use of e-learning in social work and human service education is a recent phenomenon and little is known about how social work educators are implementing e-learning in their programs. This research generates new understanding about the challenges facing social work educators who are implementing e-learning, and provides a number of policy recommendations for social work educators and programs to consider. The research findings will be relevant to Canadian social work educators and to educators teaching in other professional programs. One of my goals for the study was to

establish a foundation for a program of research in e-learning and social work education.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The introduction of new information technologies is having a profound and transformational impact on universities and colleges and the future of higher education. It has been suggested that the availability of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) represents a major paradigm shift in higher education – one with as much significance as the introduction of the printing press (Collis, 1996; Hafner & Oblinger, 1998; Van Dusen, 1997). The rapidly evolving context of higher education is requiring colleges and universities to re-examine their policies, cultures, and organizational structures (Bates, 2000; Duderstadt, 1997; Duke, 2002; Graves, 1997; Hanna, 1998, 2003; Turoff, 1997; Van Dusen, 1997). Twigg and Oblinger (1996) suggest that traditional approaches to learning and organizational structures in higher education are being challenged as a result of ICTs, changing demographics, increased competition, and globalization. Graves (1997) emphasizes this point in the following observation:

> Mainstream higher education can choose either to participate in these opportunities of a growing globally distributed educational enterprise or to remain primarily dedicated to its current degree configuration based on a teaching infrastructure of classrooms and contact hours at the risk of becoming the teaching tail that does not wag the learning dog. (p. 103)

In Canada, the Advisory Committee for Online Learning (2001), sponsored by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) and Industry Canada, suggests there is an urgent need to implement a pan-Canadian plan to support e-learning in higher education. Recommendations include the need to involve faculty in the implementation of e-learning, the need for governments to provide funding to support the development of e-learning, the need for research in e-learning, the need to develop a pan-Canadian Online Learning Service, and a recommendation that CMEC develop a charter for learning in the 21st century. The recent development of national consortia such as the Canadian Virtual University (2002), the Canadian Virtual College Consortium (2002), Canada's Campus Connection (2002), and the Collaboration for Online Higher Education and Research (COHERE) (2002) have helped to begin to move these goals forward.

Over the past three decades social work programs have offered distance learning in a variety of formats. More recently, social work educators have begun to integrate e-learning into both distance and on-campus courses. Interest in adopting web-based and alternative approaches to learning in social work education is relatively recent and represents an important area for research.

In this chapter I will examine the impact of ICTs on higher education organizations and the emerging literature on distance and e-learning in social work education. The discussion will include a review of the literature related to pedagogical and policy issues involved in implementing of e-learning in social work education. Implications for future research and policy development will be included in the discussion.

Information Technology and Higher Education

Hafner and Oblinger (1998) identify several challenges to higher education that are being accelerated by information technology. These include: decreased public funding and increasing tuition, changing demographics, greater need for flexibility, and increased external demands for accountability and increased productivity. Shifting demographics include the trends of lifelong learning, the need for new competencies in ICTs, increasing diversity, and the trend toward telecommuting (Advisory Committee for Online Learning, 2001; Collis, 1996; Duderstadt, 1997, 2000; Twigg & Oblinger, 1996). Other key trends identified by Twigg and Oblinger (1996) include: a knowledge explosion, globalization, new definitions of quality and competency, modularized learning, the demand for education to have direct application to the workplace, increased inter-institutional competition and a shift from a campus-centric to a consumer-centric model in higher education. Duderstadt (1997) includes a "seamless web", asynchronous learning, affordability, creating infrastructure, collaboration and student diversity as important future themes and challenges for higher education.

Turoff (1997) summarizes a number of forces that are affecting higher education. A significant force is that ICTs and asynchronous learning networks are dissolving the boundaries of geography, time and space. Turoff also suggests that learners are becoming intelligent consumers, and that distance education will increasingly be a viable alternative for many learners, blurring the differences between distance and traditional on-campus students: "A majority of the course work at universities and colleges will be done remotely and the distinction between

distance and on-campus students will disappear" (p. 12). Collis (1996) notes that traditionally based university education consists, to a large extent, of independent self-directed learning. New information and communications technology are viewed as natural extension of this tradition.

Shifts in Pedagogy

The use of ICTs and emerging pedagogical models in educational technology are influencing traditional approaches to teaching and learning in higher education. Van Dusen (1997) suggests that the use of ICTs is challenging 700 years of university tradition and is a catalyst for a shift from an instructional to learning paradigm. Jaffee (1998) notes that asynchronous learning networks are more threatening to educators than other forms of distance learning because they create another type of classroom, requiring not only a different type of teaching and learning but also a shift in the role and identity of the instructor. In this regard, Jaffee states: "They (virtual learning environments) pose a major challenge to one of the most cherished institutions in the academy" (p. 26). Archer, Garrison and Anderson (1999), drawing on the work of Christensen, assert that distance education is a disruptive technology and that "In ignoring disruptive communication and learning technologies, traditional research universities risk sliding into mediocrity and perhaps irrelevancy as far as the teaching function of the university is concerned" (p. 28). In a similar fashion, Szabo (2002), in examining obstacles to innovation diffusion, emphasizes that new ICTs are a "disruptive and innovative technology" that require incremental and strategic implementation. Collis (1996) identifies four historical approaches in education: one to one mentoring, going away to an expert, the expert at a distance, and, the assembly

line approach. Collis suggests that education is in the process of a major shift to a fifth and emerging paradigm, "interconnectivity", and that this shift is driven by the growing availability of computers, the Internet, and the enhanced capacities of computer and communications technology. However, Collis suggests that education continues to be defined by an assembly line approach to teaching and learning:

> In my opinion, this [assembly line] is the paradigm in which organized education still is defined. Many technologies are involved, but central to the use of most of them is the core idea that experts should be specifying to the learners how and what to learn, and indicating their approval of the rite of passage before the learner can emerge as "finished". There are many layers of experts, almost none of whom are the original subject-area experts, but instead layers and layers of curriculum developers, measurement specialists, textbook authors, learning-material creators and teachers themselves. . . . Completion depends on amassing the requisite number of marks or credits. (p. 581)

As a result, Collis suggests the need for "pedagogical re-engineering" that includes shifts in the balance of instructional components, shifts in instructional strategies, and shifts in how instructors interact with students (p. 366). Information technology and the emerging paradigm of interconnectivity also contribute to decreasing the distance between learners and experts.

Computer mediated communication (CMC), and more recently, web-based learning environments are key technologies that are influencing both traditional on-

campus and distance learning. Introduced into courses in the early 1980s, CMC has evolved from simple text-based asynchronous exchanges over the Internet to incorporate the expanded multi-media capacity of rapidly changing technology of the World Wide Web (Harasim, Hiltz, Teles & Turoff, 1995). Web-based learning environments incorporate the capacity for electronic communication and collaboration through the convergence of a number of computer and Internet technologies. These include e-mail, asynchronous and synchronous computer conferencing, access to the Internet and World Wide Web databases, hypertext and digital object linking, the integration of text, graphics, sound and video, and, streaming audio and video. Core elements of web-based learning are asynchronous and synchronous computer communications and conferencing.

In a comprehensive review of the literature, Romiszowski and Mason (1996) identify several important areas of investigation in CMC. The first involves general issues including learner access, the quality of information in CMC exchanges, and the social impact of CMC. A second key area of research is that of pedagogical issues, including the impact of CMC on interactivity, course content areas suited for CMC, collaborative learning, and shifts in philosophy and teaching and learning and strategies required for CMC. A shift in philosophy refers to a shift from an instructional (objectivist) approach to learning to a conversational (constructivist) approach. This shift, along with the nature of web-based environments, also requires a concomitant shift in the role of the instructor from one of lecturer and expert, to one of facilitator and mentor (Ashton, Roberts & Teles, 2000; Bourne et al.; 1997; Hiltz,

1997; Jonnasen, Peck & Wilson, 1999; McIssac & Gunawardena, 1996; Oulette, 2000; Romiszowski & Mason, 1996).

A third key area for research identified by Romiszowski and Mason (1996) is that of implementation. They suggest a four level planning model for understanding information technology implementation: understanding policy issues, strategic planning and organizational research, instructional research (which content and design issues), and decisions related to hardware, software and information technology tools.

An important issue for distance educators is the level of interactivity and the loss of face-to-face contact between learners and instructors. McIssac and Gunawardena (1996) note there are four types of interactivity: learner-instructor, learner-learner, learner-content, and learner-technology. They further identify that the levels of social presence, immediacy, and intimacy are important elements in distance learning. In this regard, new learning technologies and approaches to instructional design have introduced the potential to increase interactivity, social presence, immediacy, and collaboration in distance education. For learning offered in traditional face-to-face formats, the use of new learning technologies, including online learning, requires a rethinking of the instructional design of courses, including the incorporation of aspects of distance education into the teaching-learning process.

McIssac and Gunawardena identify six critical factors in instructional design and distance education. These are: the method of delivery and access, the extent of learner control, the degree of interaction, the symbolic characteristics of the medium, the social presence created by the medium, and, human-machine interface for a given

technology (p.427). Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2000, 2001, 2003) have developed a framework for understanding and researching CMC in distance education. Based on the assumption that critical thinking is best achieved in a community of inquiry, their model incorporates three overlapping elements: social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence (Garrison et al., 2003). In summarizing their model, Garrison et al. (2003) provide the following definitions:

> Social presence is defined as the ability of learners to project themselves (i.e., their personal characteristics) socially and emotionally, thereby representing themselves as "real" people in a community of inquiry. (p. 115)
>
> Cognitive presence is defined as the extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse in a critical community of inquiry. (p. 115)
>
> Teaching presence is defined as the design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, & Archer, 2001). (p. 116)

Drawing on these models and definitions, the amount of interaction and the level of social, cognitive and teaching presence created by the use of technology and integrated into the instructional design of e-learning environments are particularly important for social work and other human service educators who are concerned about the loss of face-to-face interaction, non verbal cues and immediacy, especially as they relate to professional socialization.

Organizational Change and Challenges

In order to effectively initiate organizational transformation to adapt to ICTs and the changing context of higher education, traditional assumptions about organizations and their learning processes need to be challenged (Duderstadt, 2000;

Hafner & Oblinger, 1998; Hanna, 1998, 2003; Mason, 2003). Van Dusen (1997) emphasizes the need for transformation of both the structure and culture of higher education. Drawing on Blau's (1973) bifurcated model of higher education, Van Dusen identifies the need for change in both the bureaucratic and academic spheres. Hafner and Oblinger (1998) suggest that to date most change has taken place in the administrative (bureaucratic) side of higher education organizations.

Resistance to change in the academic sphere has been greater and includes the perceived threat that ICTs represents to the traditional autonomy of faculty. Van Dusen (1997) recommends that changes to bureaucratic structures and processes be implemented to achieve efficiencies and shift scarce resources to learning purposes. Van Dusen (1998), Graves (1997) and Hafner and Oblinger (1998) all suggest that change needs to come from within higher education organizations. In this regard, Van Dusen emphasizes the importance of a number of key strategies including strategic planning, the importance of a global perspective, not confusing "technological effectiveness" with "efficiency", and the importance of cultivating technology leadership in higher education. He also gives priority to strategic planning: "No issue on the current agenda of governing boards is more timely or pressing that the establishment of a technological and telecommunications policy and a strategic plan for its implementation" (p. 98).

There are a number of issues that organizations need to respond to in order to remain responsive to a rapidly changing higher education environment. The challenges are significant and represent a fundamental change from the traditions of the academy over the past several hundred years. As Duderstadt (1997) notes: "It is

difficult to imagine the roles society will ask the university to play in the century ahead; we can only be certain they will be different from the roles we play today" (p.3). A number of authors emphasize the emergence of new types of higher education organizations in response to the changing context of higher education (Duderstadt, 2000; Graves, 1997; Hanna, 1998, 2003, Roberts, Keough & Pacey, 2001; Twigg & Oblinger, 1996). Twigg and Oblinger (1996) identify four areas of future change: how learning will take place, the structure of academic programs, the financing, and the role of public policy in higher education systems. Projecting ten years into the future, Twigg and Oblinger outlined what both teaching and the higher education system of the future might look like. Key trends include continued digitization of the curriculum, the need for new competencies and a continued expansion of tele-commuting. Coupled with the changing context outlined above, these trends are likely to result in the creation of new types of organizations and partnerships, including alliances with the private sector.

In response to these changing conditions and organizational challenges, Hanna (1998, 2003) has identified several emerging models of higher education organizations. These are: extended traditional universities, distance education technology-based universities, university / industry strategic alliances, degree certification competency, for profit universities, global multinational universities, and corporate universities. Comparing these models with traditional residential universities, Hanna suggests that each of these emerging models is an attempt to respond to the changing conditions introduced by information technology. Key aspects of traditional residential universities that are being challenged include: stable

geographical and regional service areas, non-profit funding structure, central library and physical plant, full-time faculty and effectiveness measured by funding, library holdings, facilities, faculty qualifications, and accreditation standards (Hanna, 1998). Although the models are not discrete and overlap (for example, distance education technology-based and global multinational universities), they do provide a framework for understanding alternative organizational possibilities for higher education, as well as help to identify key issues and the strengths and limitations for each type of higher education organization.

Key issues for higher education organizations in Canada include decreased funding, increased accountability, and the emergence of competition in three spheres: competition between colleges and universities, between higher education organizations and the private sector, and between other international (global) higher education organizations. To date, some variations in Canada to the traditional residential university have emerged in the form of extended traditional universities, distance education technology-based universities and university and industry strategic alliances. Others, such as for profit universities have emerged in the United States, and other jurisdictions.

Implications for Policy

The impact of ICTs on higher education organizations requires that universities and colleges not only consider alternative organizational models, but also examine their policies. In this regard, there is a need for revision and coordination of policies, not just for individual institutions, or even a network of institutions, but on a provincial and national level. Twigg and Oblinger (1996) and Roberts et al. (2001)

emphasize the important role public policy plays in higher education. A number of policy areas related to e-learning have been identified as important. Haughey (2002), in a comprehensive review of Canadian research on information and communications technologies (ICTs), identifies the following policy concerns: infrastructure, administration, learning, teaching (including professional development strategies), content development (including the use of learning object repositories), and implementing larger scale reform. Policies that directly affect faculty are also viewed as crucial, especially given the implications of ICTs significantly altering pedagogy (Turoff, 1997). Faculty concerns include job security, perceived loss of academic freedom, increased workload, the need for professional development, and ownership of course materials. In this regard, Bates (2000) notes that emerging partnerships between higher education organizations and with private sector companies will require detailed and innovative agreements and policies to respond to concerns related to shared curricula and the development of new materials.

These are significant policy issues and have implications for policy development. New organizational structures and partnerships will challenge traditional philosophical foundations of higher education organizations, especially social work education programs that are philosophically grounded in a strong belief that education should be equitably distributed, publicly funded, and managed in a non-profit fashion. This is in direct contrast to the increased influence of market driven forces in higher education.

Revision to policies that relate to accreditation and cross jurisdictional issues are also viewed as important (Beller, 1998; Middlehurst, 2003; Turoff, 1997; Van

Dusen, 1997). Van Dusen notes: "Distance learning and the new technologies raise the issue of whether 20th century standards of evaluation are adequate to the needs, in some instances, of radically reengineered institutions" (p.94). Concerns about accreditation range from a perception of inferior quality in distance education to issues of student support and the quality of instruction by primarily part-time faculty. In terms of cross-jurisdictional issues, the capacity for learning technologies to transcend provincial and national borders requires that programs and accrediting bodies examine policies that govern standards, transfer arrangements, and residency requirements.

Turoff (1997) identifies a number of other policies that need revision in the context of ICTs. These include: budget and parity issues (between on-campus and distance students), program support and supervision of part-time faculty, promotion and tenure policies, recognition of faculty's involvement in information technology as a legitimate activity, and policies regarding teaching loads and class size. Given that ICTs are blurring the distinction between distance and on-campus students, and that global access and competition are likely to result in fee competition, he suggests that parity to distance students is an important issue. As universities continue to have increasingly more part-time and non-traditional and non-residential students, market forces are likely to be an important catalyst for policy change. The need for post-secondary institutions in Canada to adapt to ICTs and the changing external environment is highlighted in the following quotation from the Advisory Committee on Online Learning (2001):

> Implementing this (pan-Canadian) plan is urgent. If we do nothing, our position among the world leaders in online learning will quickly disappear, our own institutions will face stiff and perhaps damaging competition, and Canadians, both as individuals and as members of communities will find themselves trailing the people of the other G-8 countries in the race for jobs and economic growth. (p.6)

Finally, it is suggested that strong leadership will be needed to shepherd these changes, which require the examination and revision of organizational policies, sustained commitment on the part of senior administration, and the development of strong strategic plans for integrating technology (Ashery, 2001; Bates, 2000; Garrison & Anderson, 2003). Leadership and policies that support and recognize innovation (both pedagogical and organizational) are viewed as essential if more faculty are to become involved in integrating ICTs into their courses and programs. Especially relevant is the need to provide faculty with the time and support to learn and integrate technology (Bates, 2000; Hartman, Dziuban & Moskal, 2000). It is equally as important to support organizational innovation that will contribute to the institution's ability to survive and thrive in an increasingly competitive, global higher education marketplace. Although most higher education organizations have identified the need to adopt web-based and alternative learning environments, the commitment in terms of leadership, resources, and organizational structures has not necessarily flowed from this awareness.

In summary, ICTs are having a profound influence on higher education organizations. Previously sheltered from market forces, the availability of ICTs are

contributing to increased competition between universities and colleges and between higher education organizations and the private sector (Duderstadt, 2000). New approaches to teaching and learning are emerging which require a fundamental re-thinking of organizational and academic policies and structures. In order for faculty and programs to successfully engage in this transformation, strong leadership and policy revisions are needed to create and support change processes that respond to an emerging future.

Social Work Distance Education and E-Learning

Social work distance education programs have been offered using a variety of media and approaches, including print-based distance education, site-based programming, audio-conferencing, and interactive television (ITV). More recently, social work educators have become interested in alternative approaches to learning as a result of the availability of new learning technologies, policy initiatives of the federal and provincial governments, and a perceived need to incorporate information technology skills and web-based learning into curricula. Raymond et al. (1998) observe that "The use of web-based technology to provide a venue for teaching students outside of the traditional classroom environment is pushing the boundaries of distance education definitions" (p.2). At the same time, social work educators have been reluctant to offer their programs in a distance format and are generally suspicious of the use of technology in education and practice (Burton & Seabury, 1999; Butterfield, 1998; Marson (1998); Siegel, et al., 1998). Kreuger and Stretch (2000) are especially critical of the impact of information technology on social work

education and suggest that asynchronous learning may negatively affect social integration, mutual monitoring, and increase social distance:

> . . . the authors fear that personal relationships central to social work communication are being avoided, not encouraged. Such electronic 'Post-It note' communication cannot favorably compare to the all-important sharing of streams of consciousness available in face-to-face interaction in traditional social work education. (p. 106)

Siegel, Jennings, Conklin and Napoletano-Flynn (1998), in an extensive survey of accredited social work programs in the United States, note that this reluctance is in part based on philosophical issues and concerns regarding the essence of social work education:

> Distance education is relatively new and has not been embraced with great enthusiasm by the majority of social work educators. Often it is viewed with suspicion and as a nontraditional method that needs to be approached with caution. If one does not teach "face-to-face", as is the norm in our profession, how much is lost in the perceived quality of the classroom interaction, in the potential socialization of students, and in the relationship with the instructor as a mentor and role model? Social work has indeed been careful about redefining the meaning of this relationship. (p.76)

Other barriers identified by Siegel and Jennings include the costs and time associated with conversion of existing curricula and the need for additional technical support in distance learning. Marson (1998) while emphasizing the importance of information

technology for future social work education and practice also identifies the deep rooted value stance of social work towards technology:

> The values to which most social workers cling are contrary to the values behind the original design of the internet. Recall that the original intent of the internet was to deliver weapons of mass destruction. Now, we see social workers employing it as a system to deliver social [and educational] services. (p.45)

Butterfield (1998) and Schoech (2002) note that social workers have been slow to adopt technology compared to other sectors of society; however, increasing access to technology and the changing nature of work and service delivery are influencing the profession's need to integrate technology. Becoming skilled in the adoption of information technology in social work is viewed as crucial for the profession, educators, and students (Butterfield, 1998; Cummins & Hamilton, 2000; Freddolino, 2002; Gonchar & Adams, 2000; Grant Thornton & CS/RESORS, 2000; Lawrence-Web, 2000; MacFadden, 2002; Miller-Cribbs & Chadiha, 1998; Sandell & Hayes, 2002).

Marlowe-Carr (1997), in a survey of social workers using online services, found that 94% felt use of the Internet enhanced their practice. Marlowe-Carr makes a number of recommendations that include requiring Internet literacy for social work students, integrating on-line learning into the curriculum and providing training in the use of technology for faculty. It is equally important that social work educators develop and maintain currency in the use of information technology in order for programs to meet learning and future employment needs of students, and for programs to remain

competitive (Sandell & Hayes, 2002). Sandell and Hayes identify a number of competency areas for social work curricula including ethics and online services, critical evaluation of web resources, confidentiality in online environments, and equity issues in the use of information technology.

Despite the identified challenges of implementing distance and technologically mediated learning in social work education, programs have begun to experiment with integrating distance learning into their curricula (Seigel et al., 1998). Seigel et al. found a gradual increase (5%) in the growth of US social work distance education and an exponential growth (166%) in distance delivery of continuing social work education between 1994 and 1996. Siegel et al. also found that many programs were in the process of considering the development of distance education courses. They identified a number of benefits of distance learning, including the potential to enrich learning through the integration of graphics, enhanced interactivity and more effective course organization and planning. The authors note:

> Models of curriculum delivery are being explored for all levels of social work education. The technological revolution has been explosive, bringing with it myriad tools and techniques that enhance learning, and social work programs are incorporating them for BSW and MSW education and for field instruction. (p.78)

There is a limited body of literature on social work distance education, and even less research available specifically focused on web-based learning and social work education. Research that is available has primarily been driven by a need to respond to accreditation issues, including the need to demonstrate comparability

between traditional on-campus and distance courses. In this regard, the Council on Social Work Education in the United States (CSWE, 2000) has established a number of guidelines to "help social work education programs create and implement distance education components comparable in quality to their main-campus offerings" (p.1). Accreditation Standards in place until June 2002 required that programs offering more than one year of a program in a distance format obtain prior approval from CSWE, and recommended that programs offering individual courses utilize their guidelines in implementing courses. New standards in effect July 2002 do not appear to differentiate between traditional and distance / alternate formats, but instead focus on quality issues in program renewal, encouraging innovation, evaluation of the outcomes of program objectives, and continuous improvement (CSWE, 2001). This shift may be a result of increased experience with distance education and alternative approaches to learning.

In Canada, the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (CASSW) Educational Policy Statement acknowledges the importance of part-time, decentralized and distance education for both undergraduate and graduate programs. However, the CASSW policy also requires that part-time, distance and decentralized programmes "must achieve the same standards of academic proficiency and professional competence as full-time on-campus programmes" and that "Schools shall have sufficient financial resources, personnel and practicum resources to carry out their mission and to meet CASSW standards" (CASSW, 2000, Policy Statements 1.9, 3.6.2, 5.7.2). Likewise, the CASSW Standards for Accreditation (2003) require that part-time, decentralized and distance offerings demonstrate that:

a) these programs have infrastructure adequate to achieve equivalent access to traditional resources, including computing services, written materials, texts, audiovisual equipment and classroom space,

b) that they have adequate community resources to support the field education component of the programme, and

c) that they achieve the same standards of academic proficiency and professional competence as full-time or on-campus programmes. (Standards SB 2.8 and SM 2.8)

Social work educators in general are concerned and cautious about the perceived loss of interaction and face-to-face contact in distance and online learning environments. In this regard, MacFadden, Dumbrill and Maiter (2000) note that:

> Another issue for web-course development involves the political attitude towards this approach to learning. Certain universities and/or professional accrediting associations may not have established a policy towards accepting web-based courses or may not yet accept them as credit towards an existing degree or qualification. . . . In some institutional circles, web-based instruction still needs to establish its credibility and equivalency related to more traditional forms of education. (pp. 37-38)

More recently, the Distance Education Task Force of the CASSW Educational Policy Committee has developed draft policy recommendations for distance programs (CASSW, 2003). The draft policy statements require that programs provide sufficient

resources to deliver programs, ensure quality and equivalent learning outcomes, and use uniform standards of evaluation across learning environments. The recommendations also include the need for programs to align distance education initiatives with the program's mission and goals. As recently as 2002, an earlier version recommended that "a minimum of 25 % of the courses, in addition to field practicum, ought to be delivered face-to-face with faculty in the same room as the students" for BSW programs (CASSW, 2002). The current version of the draft recommends that "(Programmes) shall involve interactive means of delivery and provide adequate opportunities for face-to-face contact with faculty and other students" (CASSW, 2003, p. 7). The evolution of this recommendation seems to be indicative of a substantial shift in thinking about distance and e-learning in social work education and an increased comfort level with e-learning environments.

Several authors have identified the need for further research in social work distance education and alternative learning (Collins, Gabor, Coleman & Ing, 2002; Falk, 1998; Freddolino, 1996; Haggenstad & Kraft, 1998; Hick, 1999a; Macy, Rooney, Hollister & Freddolino, 2001; Sandell & Hayes, 2002; Schoech, 1998, 2000; Siegel et al., 1998; Thyer, Artelt, Markward and Dozier, 1998; Wernet & Olliges, 1998; Wilkinson, 1999). In a study of MSW students' learning via interactive television (ITV) at the University of Georgia, Thyer, Polk and Gaudin (1997) and Thyer et al. (1998) found that in person instruction was preferred over ITV learning. Advantages of distance learning included improved access for students in remote locations. Thyer et al. (1998) further identify that there is little research on the effectiveness of either face-to-face traditional or distance social work education, and

suggest that "caution is warranted before adopting distance learning technology on a wide scale" (p.3). In this regard, Freddolino (1996) suggests that one unintended consequence of introducing distance education has been an examination of the way in which traditional courses have been taught. Forster and Rehner (1998) in a study of eighteen part-time MSW students at the University of Southern Mississippi found that although grade performance was comparable, students learning in alternative ITV courses perceived that they were at a disadvantage. Forster and Rehner also emphasize the importance of relationship issues in the teaching learning process: "We believe our data validate the central importance of relationship to the controversy over the use of distance formats in graduate social work education" (p.19). In a study of distance MSW students at Michigan State University, Freddolino (1998) found that although the majority of students would take the program again, distance learning was "certainly not anyone's preferred option" (p.48). Freddolino found that the motivation for enrolling in a distance program varied, and included accessibility, the flexibility of the program and improved career advancement. He noted that on-campus students tended to select their program as a result of prior knowledge and reputation of the program, while access and career development were more important for distance students. Siegel et al. (1998) identify a number of benefits of distance learning, including the potential to enrich learning through the integration of graphics, enhanced interactivity, and more effective course organization and planning. They also highlighted the need for research to further understand student learning in alternative learning environments, how social work educators learn to adapt to

distance learning environments, and what kind of training is necessary in order to support faculty teaching distance courses.

Although research on web-based learning and social work education is very limited, a small body of literature is beginning to emerge. Stocks and Freddolino (1998) found that academic performance between web-based and face-to-face sections of a graduate social work research course were comparable. Results identified a number of perceived benefits, including greater flexibility, improved questions in the course conference, the opportunity for students to re-visit class notes on the course web-site, enhanced control over the pace of learning and the overall importance of the discussion list (conference). Problems identified by Stocks and Freddolino included technical problems, the challenge of handling large numbers of electronic messages, the loss of face-to-face contact, and delays in instructor feedback. They recommended courses "where immediate feedback is not a necessary component of the course" and identified the importance of preparatory release time for faculty, technical support, utilizing the automation capabilities of information technology in teaching, effective web-site design and navigation (p. 66). In the second iteration of the course Stocks and Freddolino (2000) found that by enhancing the instructional design of the course they were able to increase interactivity and participation of the students. Schoech's (2000) study of a web-based graduate course on computer supported practice did not support the need for face-to-face interaction; however, Schoech noted the absence of informal communication as an important issue and recommends faculty find ways to help build informal communications and networks between learners. Schoech also emphasized that teaching online requires a

different set of skills than traditional teaching and the importance of preparation in online teaching : "You cannot 'wing it' very easily on the Web" (p.472). Organizational issues identified included access, technical support for the instructor, and modifications to registration requirements.

Gasker and Cascio (1998) emphasized the importance of both experiential learning and mentorship in instructor-student relationships in social work education. They also stressed the importance of student-peer relationships and the important role communication plays in teaching. In a study of 41 students enrolled in an Introduction to Social Work course, Gasker and Cascio found that 67 % of the students felt their experience in CMC had a positive effect on student-peer relationships; 85 % reported a positive effect on their learning; 85 % felt the experience had a positive effect on their relationship with their instructor; and, that "No student reported a negative impact" (p.165). Gasker and Cascio also found that there was no significant difference between female and male students in the conference; however, female students tended to defer to their male colleagues in initiating new topics for discussion. In contrast, Faux and Black-Hughes (2000), in evaluating an initial offering of a social work history course, compared three sections the course: one offered in a traditional face-to-face format, one Internet-based, and one that combined Internet and face-to-face learning. They found that a significant number of students felt they could not learn well in the Internet-based course and identified strong reservations about the use of the Internet in social work education:

> The data from the quantitative analysis and the themes found in the qualitative analysis lead the researchers to believe that there are

> concerns about the utilization of the Internet as a primary instructional tool in social work courses. Numerous questions have been raised regarding the effectiveness of the Internet as an instructional tool. This study has laid the groundwork for future research into the effectiveness of the Internet in undergraduate social work education. . . . These students were very direct about not enjoying learning from the Internet or from the computer. Instructors should pay close attention to this set of comments and examine the motivation for putting course information on the Internet. (p.130)

Lancaster, Stokes and Summary (1998), identified a number of positive aspects of computer mediated communication for social work education. These included the potential for more thoughtful responses and participation, particularly for reticent students. This is consistent with the findings of Mason (1993), Collis (1996) and Harasim, Hiltz, Teles and Turoff (1995). They also note that CMC supports individualized learning and can enhance class efficiency, has the potential to facilitate mentoring and collegial relationships, and that positive experiences of relationships, participation and feedback are reciprocally interrelated in CMC. Schoech (2000) found that chat learning was an effective instructional tool, including the participation of guest speakers in the chat discussions. Falk (1998), in a discussion of her use of CMC in a practice methods course, identified a number of benefits of CMC. These include increased access to the instructor, increased participation, enhanced course management, and responsiveness to both group questions and individual learning styles. Disadvantages identified were problems with access, increased stress for less

experienced users and increased workload for the instructor. Falk also suggests that the pedagogy of effective CMC is consistent with social work education's commitment to experiential and collaborative learning. This view is supported by others including Ouelette (2000), who articulates the value of cooperative and constructivist learning principles in tele-learning for social work education. Altman (2000) suggests that there is an "exquisite fit" between the potential for technology mediated learning and the needs of adult social work learners.

Wernet and Olliges (1998), in a survey of 293 undergraduate students from seven disciplines, (including social work) taking courses offered using WebCT, found that both traditional and non-traditional students had good experiences learning in the WebCT environment. They also found that the experience of learning in a online environment was positive for both women and men. The social work students' experience mirrored that of students in other disciplines. Wernet and Olliges and Wernet, Olliges and Delicath (2000), in a subsequent study of social work courses, identified three themes that are important for students and faculty: the perceived utility of the technology, exposure over time, and the importance of orientation and access. Wernet and Olliges suggest three future research questions: Which courses are appropriate for web-based learning? Which (software) tools are effective in offering web-based learning? Are the learning outcomes as effective as traditional face-to-face instruction?

Hick (1999a) in a study of an Introduction to Social Work Course in Canada found very strong support for Internet learning for social work courses. Two thirds of the respondents in his study indicated support for a social work course being entirely

delivered online and 88% of students agreed or strongly agreed that other students take a web-based course. Hick found that experienced computer users preferred Internet courses, and that 79% of students who had previously taken ITV courses, preferred the Internet course to ITV. Hick also found that "learners prefer some kind of Internet component to a course, even when it is not a distance education course" (p.9). Another key finding was that 15% preferred internet only, 5% preferred classroom only, and 80% preferred a mix. Preference for Internet courses was found to be related to level of experience using computers as well as the age of learners, with students 19-34 preferring a mix of web-based and classroom, 26-35 Internet only, and students over 36 preferring classroom only. MacFadden, Dumbrill and Maiter (2000) developed a six week continuing education course focused on enhancing cultural competencies of practicing social workers. They reported that participation in the course contributed to improvements in practitioner's multicultural competency. They also recommended an incremental approach to implementing online learning in social work in order to build expertise and the confidence of programs and institutions who may be uncertain about the value of online learning.

Finally, my own evaluation results of web-based learning in a college level mental health course strongly supported the adoption and expansion of web-based learning in the course and other courses in a social work diploma program (Knowles, 2001). Students had little difficulty in accessing and negotiating the course and found that the learning environment and the technology used facilitated communication and enhanced their learning. All of the students felt that the course content was suited for online learning. A key result was the strong support for asynchronous conferencing

and learning activities based on constructivist and collaborative approaches to instructional design. This is especially important given that asynchronous conferencing is a core element of web-based learning environments. Many students commented on the high learning value of reading and responding to each other's work online. Other benefits included improved computer and IT skills and enhanced knowledge of web resources for their practice.

Limited time and resources are a key issue for faculty and programs (Knowles, 2001; Seigel et al., 1998; Stocks & Freddolino, 1998). Faculty who become involved in web-based learning need to be committed to the value of the pedagogy, learning needs of students and intrinsically motivated to experiment with web-based learning in order to be successful (Schifter, 2000). Related faculty and administrative issues include the need for computer and technical skills, knowledge of pedagogy and instructional design, the skills of teaching and learning in online environments, recognition of faculty for innovation, coping with rapidly changing information technology and the forces affecting higher education in general, and the cost of the development and maintenance of web-based courses (Knowles, 2001). In this regard, Padgett and Conceao-Runlee (2000) emphasize the importance of institutional commitment, including the need for revision of the reward structures for faculty involved in web-based learning and the importance of faculty development and support: "Whether the intent is to augment traditional course material with technological resources, deliver social work content with available technology tools, or create alternative methods of course delivery through technology, faculty training and support are critical" (p. 334). Based on her study of the general use of technology

in social work graduate schools, Ashery (2001) recommends that social work programs develop strategic plans, with active involvement by faculty.

These issues have policy implications for social work programs implementing e-learning. Given the time and resources involved in the development of high quality e-learning, there is a need to develop inter-program collaboration in developing web-based modules, learning objects, and databases. Cummins and Hamilton (2000) identify the need to create social work technology centers, including an "Advanced Professional Information Exchange System" (APIES) to facilitate communication and research as well as develop and disseminate products related to social work education and practice. Examples of similar initiatives include WebCT's development of discipline communities, Telelearn Canada's initiative to develop a web portal where educators can share and distribute learning objects and other resources, the Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT), the Co-operative Learnware Object Exchange (CLOE), EduSource Canada, and the Campus Alberta Repository of Educational Objects (CAREO) (CAREO, 2004; CLOE, 2003; EduSource Canada, 2003; MERLOT, 2004; Telelearn Canada, 2000; WebCT, 2004). To date, there have been no specific initiatives by social work educators in Canada to develop or participate in learning object respositories. Unresolved issues include control and ownership of learning materials, inter-jurisdictional competition, and a lack of funding. They also include philosophical dilemmas grounded in professional and pedagogical uncertainty about the fit of e-learning for social work education as well as concerns about equitable access (the digital divide) and the structure and form that exchange systems might take (non-

profit versus commercial). A small number of Canadian schools of social work have begun to offer selected courses through Canada's Campus Connection (2002), the Canadian Virtual University (2002), and COHERE (2002). It is likely that course offerings through these consortia will continue to expand as social work educators begin to address these challenges and expand e-learning in their programs.

Summary

In summary, over the past five years, social work educators have begun to integrate e-learning in their programs. While e-learning provides a number of potential benefits for social work education, emerging literature identifies the need for further research in understanding the challenges facing social work educators who are implementing e-learning (Collins et al., 2002; Cummins & Hamilton, 2000; Freddolino, 1996; Falk, 1998; Haggenstad & Kraft, 1998; Hick, 1999a; Knowles, 2001; Macy et al., 2001; Sandell & Hayes, 2002; Schoech, 2000; Seigel et al., 1988; Thyer et al., 1998; Wernet & Olliges, 2000; Wilkinson, 1999). Areas for further research include the need for further understanding of the professional, pedagogical, and policy challenges involved in implementing e-learning in social work education.

Notes:

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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The focus of this study was to understand the experiences, issues and challenges of social work educators implementing e-learning and the implications of these challenges for policy development. In this chapter, I will discuss the methodology used in this study, assumptions and the rationale for my choice of methodology, data collection and analysis, procedures utilized to establish trustworthiness, limitations and delimitations, and ethical considerations.

I conducted a naturalistic inquiry of social work educators implementing e-learning in their programs. Social work educators who were implementing web-based learning in Canada were invited to participate in in-depth interviews exploring their experiences in teaching and learning online and in implementing e-learning in their programs. In keeping with the traditions of qualitative research, the study was inductive in nature.

It is important for researchers to situate themselves paradigmatically in the research process. Guba and Lincoln (1998) and Lincoln and Guba (2000) identify several major interpretive paradigms in qualitative research. These include: post-positivism, constructivism-interpretive, cultural and ethnic studies, critical theory, feminist-poststructural paradigms, and participation-action frameworks. Within the context of these general paradigms, I situate myself in the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm. I believe that reality, especially social reality, is co-constructed by people, through both individual and shared meanings. Schwandt (2000) defines constructivism as:

> Constructivism means that human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as we construct or make it. We invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience, and we continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experiences. Furthermore, there is an inevitable historical and sociocultural dimension to this construction. We do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language and so forth. (p. 197)

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) note that a constructivist approach to research focuses on how meaning-making influences the action of individuals: "The meaning-making activities themselves are of central interest to social constructionists / constructivists, simply because it is the meaning-making / sense-making / attributional activities that shape action (or inaction) " (p.167). An interpretivist approach to methodology is consistent with my paradigmatic stance, constructivist approaches to learning and teaching in online learning environments, and the philosophical foundations of social work education.

I believe that a qualitative approach to inquiry was the most appropriate for this study. Eisner (1991) identifies six features of qualitative studies: they are field focused, the self as the research instrument, they are interpretive in nature, they are characterized by the use of expressive language and the presence of voice in the text, attention is paid to particulars, and, qualitative research becomes believable because of its coherence, insight and instrumental utility. The nature of this research was both field and context focused. In particular, conducting in depth interviews provided the

opportunity to explore participants' experiences, beliefs, perspectives, actions and recommendations about a new and emerging way of teaching and learning. It also provided the opportunity to engage in reciprocal dialogue with participants about their experiences and perspectives in relation to individual program contexts. In terms of methodology, the research is interpretive because my focus was on meaning-making. The findings and recommendations will be useful to social work and other educators involved in implementing e-learning in professional programs.

Rationale for the Choice of Methodology

Marshall and Rossman (1995) identify a number of strengths of naturalistic and qualitative research in understanding and exploring phenomena in social context and in understanding peoples' lived experience. These include:

> . . . research that delves in depth into complexities and processes, research on little known phenomena or innovative systems, research that seeks to explore where and why policy and local knowledge and practice are at odds, research on informal and unstructured linkages and processes in organizations, research on real, as opposed to stated, organizational goals, research that cannot be done experimentally for practical or ethical reasons, and research for which relevant variables have yet to be identified. (p. 43)

My research fits several of the types of inquiry identified by Marshall and Rossman. In this regard, e-learning in social work education represents a new area of research. In my study I explored the complex and reciprocal shaping of pedagogical practices, policies, and organizational processes involved in implementing new types of

learning environments in an area of professional education that has a deep commitment to traditional face-to-face teaching, mentorship and professional socialization. An inductive approach to research is congruent with my paradigmatic stance. It is also flexible and adaptable to emerging concepts and themes as the research process evolves.

There are no hard and fast rules in choosing amongst various qualitative methods. However, the eventual methods employed and how data are interpreted and what is done with the data needs to be consistent with the general approach taken. Lincoln and Guba (2000) note that in qualitative research, "There is great potential for interweaving of viewpoints, for the incorporation of multiple perspectives, and for borrowing or *bricolage*, where borrowing seems useful, richness enhancing, or theoretically heuristic" (p.167). Similarly, Creswell (1994) notes "The format is much less standardized in qualitative designs than quantitative designs. A fundamental characteristic, however, should be that the design is consistent with the qualitative paradigm assumptions" (p. 13). Eisner (1991) is less prescriptive about qualitative research and places considerable emphasis on the researcher's ability to build credibility through the use of themselves in the research process and the evolution of the research itself.

> I know of no "method" for the conduct of qualitative inquiry in general or for educational criticism in particular. There is no codified body of procedures that will tell someone how to produce a perceptive, insightful or illuminating study of the educational world.

> Unfortunately - or fortunately - in qualitative matters, cookbooks ensure nothing. (p. 169)

Eisner further elaborates by stating:

> Qualitative inquiry requires a considerable faith that researchers will be sensitive to the significant and able to make the right moves in context. It means that the lines for the research will be less specific; more is left to opportunism and the adventitious. As in a good conversation, one listens to the other, and how, when, and what one says depends upon what the other has said. (p. 170)

In considering a specific approach and methods it is helpful to identify the overall framework and procedures of qualitative research. Under the general caveat that there are few agreed upon procedures for qualitative research, Creswell (1994) identifies the following general activities: identifying assumptions of the design; identifying the type of design; reflecting on the researcher's role; discussing data collection; developing data collection procedures; identifying data analysis procedures, specifying verification steps; and delineating the narrative outcomes of the study.

STUDY DESIGN

Participants

Purposeful selection of participants is a key aspect of qualitative research (Creswell, 1998; Silverman, 2000b). Participants for this study were purposefully selected based on their involvement in online learning, their willingness to participate in the study, and on my perception of their ability to contribute their understanding of

implementing web-based learning. As noted by Huberman and Miles (1998), "Sampling choices typically evolve through successive waves of data collection" (p.204). In this study it was expected that approximately fifteen participants would be interviewed. As my research progressed the number grew to include a total of thirty social work educators and administrators.

The participants in this study were thirty social work educators and administrators who were involved in developing, teaching and implementing e-learning in university level programs in Canada. Twenty five participants were social work educators; five participants were involved in the administration, coordination and development of distance and distributed learning in social work programs. Participants were identified in a number of ways. Through my initial research, preparation, and attendance at related conferences, I established several contacts with faculty who were involved in e-learning in Canada. I also drew on my knowledge of social work education programs through my previous experience as a department chair of a social work program, and as a member of the steering committee of the National Sector Study of Social Work (Grant Thornton & CS/RESORS, 2000). During August and September of 2001 I reviewed the websites of programs, screening for descriptive data regarding distance offerings and e-learning. I also reviewed the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work website, which includes a listing of programs offering distance and decentralized programs and identified programs from this process. Where no information was available, I telephoned programs directly and inquired as to whether the program either offered or was developing e-learning. In October of 2001, a letter explaining my research and a

request for assistance in identifying potential participants was mailed to all Deans and Directors of social work programs offering e-learning in Canada, with the exception of Quebec (see Appendix B). In the case of Quebec and Francophone programs outside of Quebec, I sent a professionally translated letter to programs identified on the CASSW website as having distance courses or programs (Appendix C). I also spoke with a director of a program to confirm this list. Of the programs in Quebec that were contacted, one program responded as having some online learning, however, no faculty were available to participate in an interview in English. One francophone program outside of Quebec had some online learning in development, but no one available for interview.

The letters to deans and directors were followed up by telephone contact and email correspondence. Deans and directors were very helpful in identifying faculty in their programs who might be interested in participating in my study. They also expressed a high level of interest in my research and confirmed that e-learning was an important emerging issue for social work education programs. Letters were then sent directly to potential participants describing my research, and inviting them to participate (see Appendix D). Letters were also sent directly to faculty whom I had previously identified as potential participants through preparatory and developmental work. These letters were then followed up by a second round of telephone and email correspondence in November and December of 2001 to explore participants' interest and to set up interview dates and times. During preliminary contacts participants expressed high levels of interest in my research and began to identify potential issues that they believed were important as well as some of their experiences. In several

instances, participants were enthusiastic to begin a dialogue during our initial discussion. Participants also suggested additional colleagues who might be interested in participating in the study. These individuals were subsequently contacted and invited to participate, drawing on a snowball approach to identifying participants.

Participant Background, Interest, Motivation and Experiences with E-learning

Participants brought a broad range of experience in terms of their involvement in e-learning, including varying levels of experience in teaching and the use of learning technologies, and specifically in online learning. The majority of the faculty participants were between the ages of 40 and 60, had been teaching between ten and twenty years and were assistant or associate professors in their respective programs. Ten were men and fifteen were women. Two participants held non-tenure track teaching positions. Several participants had held administrative positions in the past, and several were involved in program and institutional committees involved in decision making regarding e-learning and program planning (see Appendix E, Tables E1, E2, E3,).

Data Collection and Analysis

This study was conducted utilizing a number of qualitative data collection techniques discussed below. In particular, I conducted in-depth interviews where I explored the experiences, concerns and recommendations of social work educators involved in implementing e-learning in their courses and programs.

Description of the Interview Process

Between December 2001 and April 2002 a total of 28 interviews with 30 participants from twelve programs were conducted. Twenty two of these interviews

were conducted in-person. Six interviews were conducted by telephone where travel to a particular site was not feasible. Two interviews were group interviews (two participants in each interview). Ten of the twelve programs were visited directly. Participants in this study were located in five provinces across three major regions of Canada (western, central, and eastern Canada). I scheduled interviews in small clusters of one to four interviews, travelling to various regions of Canada in blocks of time ranging from two or three days to two weeks. In scheduling interviews I allowed for time between interviews in order to reflect and listen to audio tapes, identify emerging issues and themes, and refine interview questions. Scheduling visits in clusters also allowed for time to reflect and engage in initial analysis between site visits.

As I scheduled the interviews and made travel arrangements, participants were very helpful in accommodating my travel schedule and in offering suggestions for local accommodation and arrangements. In two instances, participants offered to conduct interviews at their home offices to accommodate our respective schedules and for geographical convenience. Participants were very generous with their time, hosting me as a guest to their respective programs and introducing me to colleagues and others who might have been interested in my research.

Prior to each interview, I reviewed a description of my research with each participant and asked them to complete the consent form (see Appendix F). In the case of telephone interviews, the consent form was either mailed or sent as an email attachment for review and signature, and faxed back to me prior the interview. General demographic data were collected during the interviews that included

participants' age (range), gender, type of program, position title, full-time or part-time status, number of years teaching, content areas taught, involvement in e-learning, the format of online courses (supplemental, enhanced, hybrid, fully online, offered on-campus or by distance), and participants' administrative responsibilities and roles related to e-learning.

All interviews were audio recorded for later transcription. Interviews were taped in two audio recording formats to ensure accurate recording, and so that I could have continual access to taped interviews while interviews were being transcribed. Interviews were submitted for transcription as they were completed. With the exception of the first interview, which I transcribed, transcription was done by two professional transcribers. In preparation for this assistance, I met directly with both individuals to discuss transcription protocols and request that each agree to and sign a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix G). All interview and tapes were coded with a numbering system to disguise the name of the participant and program. All tapes, transcripts, consent forms, and demographic data are stored in a locked filing cabinet maintained by myself.

Interviews were approximately 60 to 90 minutes in length. Prior to the first interview I developed a list of general topic areas and questions to guide interviews (see Appendix A). These initial questions were based on my review of the literature, initial research and preparation, which included pre-interview discussions with participants, and on my own experiences of developing and teaching in online learning environments. My list of questions was refined as the interview process progressed.

I began interviews by providing a general review of my research and an opportunity for participants to ask questions about my research and the interview process. Initial questions were intentionally broad and focused on participants' background, interest and experiences in e-learning, type and content of courses taught and general demographic information. Subsequent questions were guided by participants' initial responses and by my guiding set of questions and topic areas. Although interviews were guided by a background set of questions, once interviews began, they were characterized by an open and free flowing dialogue, often involving interesting and related side journeys that participants weaved into their responses. In this regard, interviews could be characterized as reciprocal, with participants often sharing experiences, infusing humour or emphasis, as well as asking questions.

Participants were very open in discussing their experiences, concerns, issues, ideas, and recommendations regarding e-learning in social work education. They were also very transparent in discussing their motivation, knowledge, skills, successes, failures and challenges in implementing e-learning. My perception was that participants were eager to discuss their work with a colleague who shared similar interests, and that they were looking forward to the interview. In a few instances, participants contacted me to ask when they would be interviewed within a few days of receiving their invitation to participate. Some participants also forwarded detailed information describing their background, their interest in e-learning, and areas of particular interest prior to interview dates. The following are examples of participants' interest in my research:

> I think you're doing wonderful research and I think we were all pretty excited down the road when we heard that you're doing this. So

> there's a lot of people who would definitely like to connect with you when you're analyzing your data and bring you out to perhaps share some of it. So I think you're at the forefront of something really new. (Stewart)
>
> Alan: Thank you for your time today and participating in this interview.
>
> Elaine: Sure. It was nice to actually be able to talk to someone who's interested in these issues. I wish my colleagues would listen.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and included relevant notations such as pauses, non-verbal expressions and emphasis, and other relevant contextual information. The transcribers used generic terms such as "I" for interviewer, and "P" for participants. Once I received the draft transcript, I reviewed the entire text while listening to the tape to ensure accuracy, make corrections to words and phrases missed in transcription, and corrected hard to hear sequences. During this process, all identifying information such as names, locations, or other identifiable information was deleted from transcripts. In reporting the findings, I assigned each person a pseudonym and have used them in the data description to allow for identification of individual speakers. Words and phrases that were emphasized by participants were placed in italics, and I made additional contextual notes on the transcripts.

During this review process, I began initial data analysis, coding of interviews, and identifying emerging themes for later analysis. This initial analysis was also used to refine my questions as well as the interview process. In this regard, early interviews tended to be less focused and somewhat choppy. As I gained more experience and confidence with the questions and the process, interviews flowed more effectively.

Transcripts were then mailed to all participants with a cover letter requesting that they review the transcript for accuracy, identify any passages that they would like corrected or deleted, and return a copy of the corrected transcript. (see Appendix H). In total, three participants mailed their transcripts back to me, with minor corrections. Several participants also sent e-mails verifying they had received the transcript, and conveying that the transcript was accurate.

Research Log and Field Notes

Throughout the data collection process I kept a journal and field notes, recording observations related to the interviews and site visits, identifying emerging questions, issues, concepts and themes, and reflections on the research process. Reflecting on my field notes also helped shape and refine guiding questions used in subsequent interviews and make adjustments to my interview process.

Document Analysis

It was expected that additional analysis of documents provided by participants would be utilized to supplement data generated from interviews. Potential document analysis included information about participants' programs related to the development and implementation of e-learning and projects, including strategic plans, accreditation directives, evaluation results of online courses, and review of relevant program and institutional policies. As my research evolved, I focused my analysis primarily on data generated through the interview process. This was for a number of reasons including the volume of data generated through interviews, time constraints and limited documents to evaluate. For example, participants were still in the process of developing revised course evaluations and strategic plans for their programs. In

retrospect, document analysis would likely be more suited for an in depth case study approach looking specifically at documents in relation to recommendations that emerged from this study.

Data Analysis

In keeping with the nature of qualitative research, fixed methods of data analysis were difficult to forecast, and needed to remain flexible as the study progressed. Data analysis included the coding of interviews and categorization of segments, and identifying emerging themes. I also kept field notes throughout the data collection phase to reflect on emerging issues, questions, and themes (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). In this regard, Strauss and Corbin (1998) emphasize the importance of the "reciprocal shaping" that takes place between the researcher and participants and the data, as well as the commitment of all qualitative approaches to "telling participants' stories" and by "giving voice" to the participants (p. 174). Interview questions and processes were refined and informed by previous interviews. The data were coded to identify emerging lines of inquiry and refined as the analysis progressed. Themes and concepts that emerged from early interviews were compared with those of subsequent interviews to inform the interview process, as new categories emerged or saturation was achieved (Glaser, 1992). As noted by Glesne and Peshkin (1992), eventual data display may include the use of concept maps, diagrams, tables and matrices. All interviews were transcribed into computer text documents, identifying information was removed from transcripts, and transcripts were assigned to a disguised numbering system.

Authenticity, Trustworthiness, Verification, Credibility and Transferability

The cornerstones of the positivist and post-positivist traditions and methodology are hypothesis testing, internal and external validity, reliability, reproducibility and generalizability. Qualitative research, by definition, is ontologically different, based on a belief in multiple realities and multiple ways of knowing. Understanding peoples' lived experience in the context of their environments, and the belief that there is not one directly knowable, external reality, means qualitative researchers seek to understand through immersion and interaction with people and social phenomena, rather than attempt to test hypotheses through controlled experiments. Wolcott (1990), in describing his approach to the challenge of validity, summarizes the following strategies: talk little, listen a lot; record accurately; begin writing early; let readers "see" for themselves; report fully; be candid; seek feedback; try to achieve balance; and write accurately (pp. 127-134). In this study I incorporated Wolcott's suggested strategies into my analysis and discussion. My interviews were effective in establishing an open and transparent dialogue and in generating large amounts data relevant to my questions. I have also incorporated relevant quotations from interviews to let the reader see for themselves, to support my interpretations, and to incorporate participants' voices into the analysis. I have sought and incorporated feedback from participants about my analysis and recommendations.

As Huberman and Miles (1998) note, in qualitative research, "The issue is not so much the quest for conventional generalizability, but rather an understanding of the conditions under which a particular finding operates: how, when, where, and why

it carries on as it does" (p.205). As a result, the positivist concepts of validity, reliability and reproducibility, and generalizability are not as applicable, at least in their traditional meaning and application to qualitative research. Instead, these concepts are replaced with the terms authenticity, trustworthiness, credibility and transferability (Guba and Lincoln, 1998; Guba, 1981).

Creswell (1998) suggests an alternative to the past tendency of searching for qualitative research equivalents to the positivist concept(s) of validity (and other concepts). Instead, Creswell recommends replacing the term validity with the term verification, along with four other recommendations. These include: "viewing verification as a distinct strength of qualitative research; employ the Lincoln and Guba (1985) terms of trustworthiness and authenticity; employ different frames of verification if using a post-modern perspective; and recognize that the verification of a study has procedural implications" (p. 201). Creswell summarizes eight verification procedures used in qualitative research and recommends that researchers utilize at least two in their research. The eight procedures are: prolonged engagement and persistent observation; triangulation; peer review or debriefing; negative case analysis; clarifying researcher bias; member checks; rich, thick description; and, external audits. In this study I drew on continuing contact, triangulation, clarification of researcher bias, member checks, thick description and expert review to enhance the trustworthiness of my study.

Continuing Contact

As the researcher I was engaged with participants over an extended period of time, which allowed me to conduct in-depth interviews exploring their experiences

and strategies utilized in implementing e-learning. Continued contact included communication with participants after data collection was completed to forward transcripts, provide updates on how my research was progressing, pose follow up questions, and respond to their questions and feedback. I also wrote to all participants inviting them to review the findings chapters and their quotations in context. Only one person asked to do so. In addition, I asked four participants to review the findings chapters and recommendations.

Triangulation

In this study, data analysis and interpretation were triangulated in number of ways including interviewing multiple participants with a variety of perspectives and roles in implementing e-learning. Data sources included information provided by participants about their experiences, pedagogical approaches, program practices, policies, feedback from students, and strategic and program planning. In my analysis, I also drew on my field notes and observations from site visits. Expert review of my analysis, interpretations, and recommendations was also utilized. In this regard, Richardson's (as cited in Lincoln and Guba, 2000) use of a "crystaline metaphor" rather than that of a triangle is useful:

> The metaphoric 'solid object' (crystal/text), which can be turned many ways, which reflects and refracts light (light/multiple layers of meaning), through which we can see both 'wave' (light wave/human currents) and 'particle' (light as 'chunks' of energy/elements of truth, feeling, connection, processes of the research that 'flow' together) is an attractive metaphor for validity. The properties of the crystal-as-

> metaphor help writers and readers alike see the interweaving of processes in the research: discovery, seeing, telling, storying, re-presentation. (p. 182)

Member Checks and Expert Review

Verification was sought through member checks. All participants were provided with a copy of their transcript for review, correction and comment (see Appendix H). They were also provided with the opportunity to review my draft findings, recommendations, and specific quotations that were integrated into my text (see Appendix I). Four participants with several years experience in the use of learning technologies, distance learning, online teaching, and administration of programs were asked to reflect on my findings, discussion and recommendations (see Appendix J).

The review of interview transcripts by all participants and the review of my analysis and discussion by four participants with extensive experience with learning technologies and distance education confirmed my findings and enhanced the credibility of the findings and recommendations. Feedback from the four expert participants received in September, 2003, included the following comments:

> [I] found your findings to be relevant to my experience. You have done good work in capturing the issues and challenges that are current. The concerns of faculty are stated clearly and you highlight the difficulties and opportunities they face. (Maureen)

> In summary, many of your findings do resonate with my experience, even though a considerable amount of time has passed since you interviewed me. All of your recommendations make sense to me. (Susan)

> I think the issues you identify are some of the reasons (online learning) hasn't taken off more quickly. (Paul)

> I think you did an quite a thorough job with your statement of implications and recommendations. This is an excellent summary of the literature and a good tie in between the literature and your study. (Nancy)

Additional feedback and suggestions from these participants was also incorporated into the discussion and recommendations.

Limitations

1. The results of this investigation are limited by the design and methodology utilized. Given that I was the primary research instrument, the research was limited by my ability to represent and articulate the perspectives of participants, interpret and generate concepts and meaning from the data, and generate understanding and recommendations from the findings.
2. The focus of the study was to gain understanding of the pedagogical, administrative, and organizational concerns and strategies utilized by social work educators in implementing e-learning, and to build knowledge that may be relevant for other educators. Transferability is limited by the contextual nature of the findings.
3. Limited research in the area of e-learning in social work education limits how findings can be compared to other research and theory.
4. The decision to limit the study to social work educators may reduce the transferability of the findings to other disciplines and settings.
5. The study was conducted in the context of rapidly evolving technology.

Delimitations

1. The study was delimited to faculty and administrators in selected university social work programs in Canada.
2. The study was of selected faculty and programs where e-learning was being utilized or considered, and may not be relevant to other programs, curricula, and administrative structures.
3. The study focused on the experiences of social work educators implementing e-learning. It also focused on understanding their perceptions of the strengths and limitations of e-learning, and on their recommendations regarding the implementation of e-learning in social work education.

Ethics and the Protection of Participants

The protection of participants from harm is a primary obligation of a researcher. The purpose and the nature of the research was explained to participants both orally and in writing as they were contacted regarding possible participation in the study. All individuals who agree to participate completed a written consent form, explaining the study and providing their informed consent (see Appendix F). Participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Confidentiality of the data and identity of the participants was maintained by removing personal and identifying information from the data and all transcripts. Individuals involved in transcription of tape recorded interviews signed an agreement to maintain confidentiality and to destroy all data files once transcripts were typed and files transferred to me (see Appendix G). I submitted and obtained ethics

approval from the Faculty of Education and Extension Ethics Review Board prior to commencing data collection.

Overview of the Findings Chapters

Through my analysis of the data I identified a large number of findings that are relevant for social work educators implementing e-learning in their programs. Initial and evolving coding of interviews led to the development of four interrelated categories: Professional Challenges, Pedagogical Challenges, Faculty Challenges, and Administrative Challenges. Professional and pedagogical challenges are discussed in Chapter Four. Faculty challenges are discussed in Chapter Five. Administrative challenges are discussed in Chapter Six. A discussion of the themes that emerged from my study and their relationship to the literature follows in Chapter Seven. A summary of my study, implications and recommendations are found in Chapter Eight.

CHAPTER 4

PROFESSIONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGES

Participants identified a number of important professional and pedagogical challenges in implementing e-learning in their programs. In this Chapter, I will describe these challenges and their implications for implementing e-learning in social work education.

PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES

Although most of the participants in my study were enthusiastic about their experiences in teaching online and the potential for e-learning, they also identified four key professional challenges for social work education. These were understanding and rationalizing the fit of e-learning with the value base and goals of social work education, responding to concerns about professional socialization, concerns about e-equity, and ethical challenges.

The Fit of E-learning with Social Work Education

A key professional challenge identified by most participants was the need to resolve the tension between using e-learning to enhance the teaching-learning process and concerns about sacrificing quality in order to compete and respond to increased market forces in higher education. In this regard, these participants identified a wide range of motivation for using e-learning, ranging from a desire to increase access for learners to improved learning outcomes to scepticism about their institutions' desire to generate increased revenues. An important question for many participants involved the motivation for programs developing online learning. For example, William, who

had taught several iterations of an online course, commented "Why are we doing it? What is driving the move to computer-based learning? And a more pragmatic question, which courses, which types of content can and can't be taught best in this kind of format?" William's concerns included the perception of a shift to consumerism in higher education and that the integration of online learning was reinforcing this trend: "We're so driven by getting the degree, and getting the job, and it's just become - my concern (is) – it's not the learning environment anymore, it's a process, and it's a get the ticket kind of thing". Likewise, Elaine, who taught both face-to-face classes and distance online courses emphasized the tension of efficiency versus quality, not only for social work education programs, but for social work service delivery in general:

> There's a continual demand for doing things more cheaply and I think many of us question whether we've sacrificed a lot of quality in the process and that applies across the board, in all different kinds of social work settings and I think this is just one more example.

Many participants identified the technological imperative, and concerns about competition and market forces in higher education as a primary driving force behind their universities promoting e-learning. For example, Maria, who had been involved in teaching on-campus courses, site-based extension courses, and more recently distance online courses, articulated her concerns in the following way:

> I think sometimes we're letting the technology use us, as opposed to using the technology. A lot of the argument for starting our distance program was "if we don't do it, somebody else is going to do it", and that personally is not a good enough argument for me. I'd rather us be talking about quality of social work education – which we are, and I'm not trying to dismiss that. So I still have scepticism and questions about it. Yeah, as I say, there were strengths that I didn't expect.

While Elaine raised concerns about limited funding and competition in higher education, others identified a number of benefits of e-learning for social work education, including increasing access for students who otherwise would not have the opportunity to engage in studies and increasing flexibility of access for students in general. For example, Theresa, who was involved in coordinating distance courses noted:

> The thing with our students – our distance students – is that they are basically all working full-time and one of the reasons why the distance program is attractive to them is the fact that they can continue to work full-time, that they don't have to uproot their lives to come to campus. So they can basically maintain their lives and do their education, so the additional cost is a trade off for them.

Benefits included the enhancement of curricula through the use of e-learning, increased interactivity (especially for distance students), enrichment of students' learning experience through integration of multi-media and the resources of the Internet, and the enhancement of technical skills of both students and faculty.

The Importance of Professional Socialization

Induction into a set of values, beliefs, a body of knowledge, skills and behaviours, a commitment to ethical practice, and a "professional way of being" are integral goals of professional education programs. Social work in particular is based on a core set of values and principles that permeate all aspects of practice and are integrated into the teaching-learning process. Traditionally, social work education has relied heavily on face-to-face relationships, modeling, mentoring, and field practicum experiences to support the induction process and evaluate students' professional development. The shift to online learning environments is challenging social work educators to rethink and reconfigure the learning process, in particular how

professional socialization takes place. In this regard, many participants expressed concerns about the loss of face-to-face interaction and in-vivo mentoring in the shift to online learning environments. For example, Elaine stated,

> I do think it's (professional socialization) a valid issue. I don't think we should be replacing whole social work programs with online programs. I think that it's fine to offer some courses as long as it's well differentiated that some of the skills are different. . . . In terms of mentorship, I think some mentorship can be done online but I think it would lose a lot of both credibility and effectiveness if there wasn't a strong face-to-face component too.

Participants' views on how e-learning may affect professional induction were influenced by their own professional and academic socialization. In this regard, some participants expressed concerns about what may be gained or lost in offering social work education online. While students may gain greater access and flexibility, they questioned what they may be losing in terms of face-to-face collegial relationships and interaction. In this regard, William commented,

> When I think of my own education background as a student in all three degrees, undergrad, graduate and Ph. D., most of my learning took place with my classmates, and a lot of it took place outside of the classroom, and when we have students taking courses in these isolated, in their bedroom, which is one of the selling features of the program, what are they losing? And also, how carefully can we really monitor what they're learning using this environment?
>
> Alan: So one of the key concerns is what happens to peer-to-peer interaction?
>
> Yes, And not only in terms of learning, but the friends, the colleagues, the support network I built over the years in, you know, taking my degrees. Is that going to happen with these students as they go through this? So what are we gaining, what are we losing by moving to this format? And I don't think we're asking those questions. I don't see it being done.

William's concerns were based on his experience of intensive face-to-face relationships as an integral part of his professional and academic socialization.

Given that William's experience is typical of most social work educators, a related question is how will faculty who were socialized to professional and academic life in traditional face-to-face residential learning environments be able to successfully adapt to online learning? Maureen approached this challenge from a different perspective, suggesting that in her opinion, a successful shift to an online environment was dependent on instructor attitude.

> It will be interesting research if you can tell (at) all from students which profs liked teaching online. Does it come through what kinds of attitudes are conveyed to students online? What do they pick up, what do they take, what level of instructor interest? How is that shown, and how does that seem? You know, how do you convey you care online, or you're interested?

Similarly, Nancy, who also had extensive teaching experience observed:

> My own experience as a teacher has been that how the students experience this is dependent on how I present it to them . . . and so I found my attitude towards it, and my ability to kind of roll with it when I was learning or when they were learning or when there were glitches, (had) a big impact on how (students) reacted to it.

E-equity

A core value of social work is equity. In the educational context, the commitment to equity extends to student participation in the learning process. Potential barriers include limited financial resources, social class, culture, race, disabilities, discrimination, and technological skills and access. Participants identified a number of e-equity challenges for social work students: access to computers and the Internet (including the cost), technical skills, disabilities (in particular, learners who may have visual, hearing or other physical or learning challenges), preferred learning

styles, and student choice of learning environments. They also were concerned about pedagogical equity and ensuring that students' learning experiences in online environments were equivalent to that of students learning in on-campus environments. Concerns about e-equity included differential funding and fees charged to online and distance students (higher than on-campus students), while being provided with a differential level of services (lower than on-campus students). For example, Mark stated:

> There also seems to be kind of a wide-scale resentment – not particularly of this course – but just of this particular distance education cohort, that somehow they were being asked to pay (several) times the fees of the (on-campus) students and they were getting a much inferior product, which was true in both cases.

E-equity for faculty was also a concern expressed by many participants. These concerns included the need for equitable compensation, recognition, and technical and instructional support (see faculty challenges, Chapter Five).

Key Ethical Concerns

In addition to the need to think through their motivation and the fit of e-learning with social work education, participants identified three key interrelated ethical challenges for e-learning in social work education. These were concerns about confidentiality, privacy, and intellectual property. One of the cornerstone values and principles of ethical social work practice is confidentiality. This principle extends to educational environments where students are learning to become effective practitioners. Participants consistently identified questions and concerns about confidentiality and privacy in online environments. Although all participants utilized password-protected course management software such as WebCT and BlackBoard,

they identified a number of unresolved concerns. These included concerns about: who has access to the course, how messages and postings in discussion forums were archived, how long they were stored, who had access to archived communications, and potential liabilities related to stored course discussions (professional, academic, and legal). Many participants identified the need for policies and strategies to deal with their questions about confidentiality, privacy, copying material posted online (students), and instructor rights to their material. For example, Susan, a faculty member with extensive teaching experience in distance and on-campus face-to-face course commented:

> Well, I have some significant issues around who owns the material that's posted and about disposal of that, about archiving of the course after it's delivered and about who gets to make the decisions around what's archived, and who has access to the archive materials. And, the nature of the materials that are being put on a permanent record – the discussions, the personal discussions that happen, and so in a classroom the discussion isn't on a permanent record and you can also sort of take it back, or clarify it or rephrase it or ask that it not go outside the room which is normally honoured. But *on-line*, everything is put into a written record and it's really hard to retrieve that especially. And you have very little control over where that written record then gets disseminated, because the policies aren't in place so far to clarify that institutionally, but also every student has a written record of everybody else's conversation including even transcripts of the chat-rooms. So students can disseminate it wherever. And I have a lot of concerns about that.

Another participant, David, noted that some students had raised questions about the public nature of their postings, and other students having access to their work.

Concerns related to confidentiality and privacy form a complex set of unresolved issues that involve the Social Work Code of Ethics, university and program policies and procedures, freedom of information and privacy legislation, case law, and other potential professional, legal and policy requirements. Participants'

programs had just begun to identify these challenges, and as a result, they represent an important area for future research and academic and administrative policy development.

PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGES

A large number of interrelated pedagogical issues and challenges in implementing e-learning in social work education were identified through my analysis of our interviews. These are organized under four major areas: The importance of relationship in professional induction, the need to re-think curricula, faculty knowledge, and the need for pedagogical dialogue. In the following sections I describe the challenges identified in each of these areas.

The Importance of Relationship in Professional Induction

When I asked participants about what they saw as the key pedagogical issues in implementing e-learning in social work education, they identified the importance of relationship as a crucial element of the learning process and induction into the profession. Peter, a participant with both teaching and administrative responsibilities, emphasized the importance of relationship in the following observation:

> The whole notion of relationship is so critical to social work practice, that I think there is still a very strong need to provide opportunity for social workers to learn how to develop solid, sound, helpful, relationships. And in part, that's with each other. That's where a lot of that [learning about relationships] happens. And you won't find the capacity to do that using web-based learning particularly. I don't think so.

Likewise, Beverly noted,

> Well, relationship, I think, is one of the big issues. That many of the discussions are theoretical and intellectual, that it's so easy to be isolated and not practice your relationship skills, or get feedback on relationships skills, so that certainly is a big issue. I think we need to

> differentiate between, or among courses that are suitable for on-line learning versus things that still have to done in a traditional way.

A number of learning processes and goals were linked to teaching and learning relationships including the need for students to develop self-awareness, the importance of affective learning, and the importance of experiential learning and community building. Maria, who had expertise in both learning theory and social work education, summarized these aspects of relationship in the following way:

> The concept of relationship, the concept of building a learning community is really important, facilitating extensive self-awareness among students in relation to those constructs of race, class, and so on, the need or the fact that learning about that kind of content . . . (social work education) is an affair of the heart as well as the head, therefore one needs to attend to affective learning, emotional learning, as well as cognitive learning. Also using subjective experience of students as a base for analysis would be really important to me as well. So those are some of the principles, and then I use a lot of experiential education methodology in my classroom. So the question then for me came how do I implement those principles, and how do I use experiential ed. in the on-line environment?

Maria stated that she approached the challenge of transferring these processes to an online environment by examining how they were achieved in their face-to-face classes, and thinking through how relationship building and processes can be utilized in an online environment.

Participants emphasized that both instructor to learner, and learner to learner relationships were important in professional socialization. Although instructor to learner relationships were viewed as important for professional modeling and learning, learner to learner relationships were viewed by some participants as more important. For example, Mary made the following observation:

> I think, in our work, yes, we're marginally important to the learning, but what's really important to the learning for social work students are

> each other . . . the peer to peer dialogue and discussion (are) very, very, important, and I consider my job to be facilitating that or constructing curriculum that facilitates that.

In another example, Adelle, who was using online learning to enhance face-to-face learning, identified the link between induction into the profession and the importance of peer to peer in-vivo interaction as a vehicle to achieve this:

> I believe that there's an acculturation to the field that takes place, and it takes place not only because people are in front of me, but because they're with *each other*. So when somebody in my seminar group says she thinks the cuts are a good thing, there are ten collective gulps, and then there's a discussion about what that means. Its not just having me there, it's having them there. In fact, it's having them there, and it's good that I'm there, too. I keep us on track.

Participants also emphasized the importance of instructor - student relationships in professional mentoring. In this regard, David noted,

> Because you know, when you're educating someone, there's obviously a relationship that's developed and sometimes I think it's the influence of that relationship as well that's a major factor, and the issue is what aspects of that are needed in satisfying an effective learning relationship and how can those aspects be imported into an on-line context?

David observed that his experience of relationships with students in an online course were qualitatively different than those of students in face-to-face classes. In his experience, the kind of long term relationships that he had experienced with other students did not develop with the online students. David questioned whether or not it was possible to develop professional mentoring relationships with students in online distance courses.

> But you know, we are sort of big on this idea of mentoring, even though we don't use that term a lot, we talk about developing relationships, and I suppose they're referential relationships, you know, they're, "I like the way you practice", "I like the way you address social policy", "I like your activism that's evident within your

> research", "I want to be like you". And so we've developed special relationships with students that pass through here, and I'm not sure that would actually happen on the WebCT. I know it didn't happen in the course that I taught at [named a university], at least not with people that I didn't have a prior relationship with. There isn't anybody that I taught that course to that I still stay in touch with that I wasn't in touch with before I taught that course. And that's unusual because when I teach a course here I almost always, you know, have an ongoing sort of relationship, even if it's just an occasional e-mail, with students that pass through. And so that was sort of unusual. Maybe I'm less inspiring to that group, I don't know. But I think that might be a function of distance learning.
>
> Alan: It sounds like there (was) a difference between the course that you taught that's entirely on-line, compared with teaching in an enhanced fashion.
>
> David: Oh, very much so, very much so, yeah. It's hard to actually think how mentoring can actually occur, you know, even development of a real collegial kind of relationship can develop on-line. You know, you promote that sense of community, but sometimes the similarity is that we're all different, or the similarities that we're all isolated, or something! You know, we're all in the same boat by virtue of the fact that none of us is in the boat.

Some participants also identified altered dynamics in their relationships with students in online courses. Mark, who taught a distance online graduate course, experienced difficult and unusual interactions and dynamics that negatively affected his relationships with students: "There were just a range of issues that I'd never encountered with other students, particularly they felt that somehow I, (as) the instructor, wasn't taking into consideration their maturity level compared to the classroom students and frankly, I didn't really see a maturity level that was significantly higher in the distance education group than I saw in the classroom group."

In the context of e-learning, an important question then is what happens to relationships between instructors and students and between students in an online

environment? In this regard, participants expressed a wide variety of beliefs and perspectives that ranged from effective learning relationships and mentorship are possible in an online environment, to a belief that online learning should be limited to content oriented courses, sharing information, and as supplement to face-to-face learning. To a certain extent, participants' perspectives on how relationships were experienced online were determined by their theoretical approach to teaching and learning, and on their experience in teaching in an online environment. For example, some participants clearly identified themselves as teaching from an adult learning, constructivist, and experiential perspective. Others were less clear about a specific orientation to teaching and learning. Some felt it was possible to create and engage in effective relationships and mentoring online, while others fell somewhere in the middle of the continuum, recommending online learning for content oriented courses versus practice skills, clinical or more process oriented courses such as group work. Elaine made the observation that in social work education it was very difficult to separate content and practice skills learning in social work education:

> Alan: Some social work educators have suggested that an online learning environment might be appropriate for certain kinds of content in social work like a social policy course or maybe a research course, but that web-based learning would not be appropriate for a methods or practice skills oriented course. Do you have any comments or reflections on these observations?
>
> Elaine: I certainly think there are issues and I try to use some strategies that would deal with that particular issue/concern, I think that the Internet is better for the informational side of the course. I mean, I think when we're teaching social work, I think we're also teaching interpersonal content all the time. I think that's the issue crossing all the courses. Now, in my course for example, one of the things that I feel is relevant to the discussion is that client and social workers in the field are interacting, whether the clients are organizations or whether they're individuals or whatever. They're

> interacting more and more on the internet and so I think that social workers really need to be able to understand some of the things about communication on the internet.

Loss of Face-to-Face Interaction, Immediacy and Personal Connection

Social work educators strive to achieve high levels of interactivity in the teaching learning process and provide learning opportunities that mirror practice realities in the field. Participants identified a wide range of experiences and issues related to the loss of face-to-face interaction, the loss of immediacy, and the perceived loss of personal connection in implementing online learning. Perspectives ranged from concerns about the loss of face-to-face interaction, especially in practice courses, to a belief that by rethinking the learning process it is possible to achieve high levels of interactivity and personal connection in an online environment. Key challenges included building in high levels of interactivity, adjusting to the loss of face-to-face interaction and immediacy, responding to emotional reactions online, and finding ways to facilitate affective learning.

An over-arching issue was the level of interactivity in the teaching-learning process. Paul, who had extensive experience with integrating learning technologies and as a program administrator, articulated the importance of interactivity in social work education in the following observation:

> Because one thing I've learned over the years I've been teaching, is that social work students have to do this – they can't get satisfaction out of anything without doing it – I'm pointing to my hand, I'm showing conversation – they have to talk, they have to communicate, they won't get any satisfaction out of the course. So we try to figure out – how do you create that in an online course where they could connect with each other? You know, that kind of thing. So that combination brought us to the experience we had, and our belief that *you can* construct courses that have a strong interpersonal content on the web.

While Paul believed that it was possible to create high levels of interactivity in online courses, other participants conveyed a perspective held by many social work educators. For example, Mark commented that "Social work is very much a person to person profession, and I think you lose something over the Internet and lose some of that personal connection", and Elaine conveyed that the Internet and computer mediated communication "impose a structure, and that structure is not always user and people friendly." In this regard, Louise, who was the sole faculty involved in offering online learning in her program, related the strong reaction of her colleagues to the suggestion of introducing online learning to an introductory BSW course, and her frustration with the position her colleagues had taken in relation to the need for face-to-face interaction:

> So I said ok, now we have this full year new course at the (introductory) level, and it's supposed to be very practical and so I suggested that we develop kind of maps or practicum seminars - not even seminars, we actually role play. And so I said this would actually be the most wonderful way of introducing the computers. "Oh, no, no, no, we couldn't possibly do that because when they come in when they are fresh students, we have to be able to connect, and you can only connect on a face-to-face (basis)". I mean, I was preaching to deaf ears, they didn't listen to me and I think it's really sad because I think a wonderful opportunity is being lost here. You could design all sorts of practicum exercises and get the students to play around with different intervention methods.

Participants' perspectives on interactivity in online learning were contingent on their involvement and experience in distance education. For faculty who had a longstanding interest in learning technologies or had been teaching in distance programs, the availability of e-learning was viewed as a new opportunity to increase interactivity in their courses. Faculty with less or no experience in distance or

distributed learning were more cautious about shifting to an online learning environment. Susan, an instructor with several years of distance teaching experience observed:

> So first of all I was personally interested in figuring out new ways to deliver the distance courses because I do a lot of distance teaching, and I felt that there ought to be better ways for interacting with the students and in particular for creating (a) more engaging learning climate for the students so that they could learn from each other, and participate in the type of dialogue and discussion around the content of my courses that we have when I teach it on-campus. And there was a lot of pragmatic reasons as well too, I just felt that this didn't serve the purpose well, that group work was very difficult to organize and monitor. So I had a strong interest in doing the work differently. So that's one reason why I became involved.

Mary, a participant with several years' experience teaching with televised courses and print based technologies found that moving to an online environment allowed her to increase interactivity. For Mary, peer to peer interaction was especially important and had been a missing element in her work with students, and integrating online discussions provided a new opportunity to enhance learner to learner dialogue.

> Relationships with students are really, really important to me. I, in many ways, felt badly for the lonesome learner because some of the sites had one or two or maybe three students, and so they were all by themselves.

Mary also questioned the pedagogical value of an instructional design that did not incorporate peer to peer interaction and discourse into the learning process.

> Over the last (few) years we've moved further and further into having listservs and using the computer assisted technology in all of our courses, but we still have a historical reliance on the print package, and I'm trying to sort of shift that practice because I don't think its pedagogically sound for entire curriculums. I think there are select courses that the motivated, well seasoned practitioner out there who's in [city], [province] could do a good job of, but I think there are other courses where the students need each other, they need some sort of critical discourse.

Likewise, Liam stated "if it's compared to print based distance packages, I think that the online environment like WebCT is far superior, I think you can get a lot more interaction between students and a much richer experience."

Other participants were less enthusiastic and more ambivalent about the loss of face-to-face interaction in an online environment, and were concerned about the overall impact on professional socialization and on learning the "art" of social work practice. For example, Mark made the following observation:

> Well one of the losses is the art of social work is not as apparent, we lose something in that respect in on-line learning – the science and technique and so on. I think what's lost is the actual opportunity to interact, and do small group work, although this group became quite - via the web - they really did interact quite a bit with each other and I think develop a strong sense of group cohesion, so I guess I [can't say that was lost completely]. Overall I think the art of social work practice is somehow lost. Something is lost in the teaching of it via the web.

Jennifer, who was involved in coordinating online and other distance courses summarized her colleagues' concerns about the loss of face-to-face in the following way:

> I can tell you what other people see as the fears – are that we're not going to get...people talk about body language and how important that is and interaction between the students and building up that camaraderie and the transmission of professional values. Professional values and *professionalism* that people tend to think are kind of absorbed by being in the same room as the professor. So those things will be a big issue in how we translate to people some of the things that are less concrete in our minds. And how do you evaluate students that you don't see - from a professional / practice point of view? I think that will be an issue. And how do you ensure that students are learning from each other – each other's experience in the field? That's an issue as well – none of which I see as insurmountable. All things that require careful thinking through.

Participants also identified instructor preferred teaching style as an important factor in their interest and comfort level in interacting online with students. In the following examples, Monica and Ann clearly expressed that they preferred face-to-face synchronous interaction in their teaching. For example, Monica stated:

> I acknowledge that it's something that we likely need to be doing within the next few years, but as I said before the tape recorder turned on, I'm hesitant to move forward with that one because for me, I'm more comfortable with more real time interaction. Because I like interacting with students, and one of my concerns is that your lose some of that when you go to modules on the web. You can't pick up their cues. They can't get instant feedback from questions. They can't get instant feedback from questions, asking: "what did you mean by that sentence that you just said?" You know, oftentimes . . . "Can you repeat what you just said!?"

Likewise, Ann commented,

> I really felt deprived of that face-to-face interaction, of the stimulation that I would get from the students, and I really felt that was lacking for *me (emphasis)*. Try to talk to the students about that, and your know, some of them felt the same way, but they felt that the access to learning that they wouldn't otherwise have to courses overshadowed the absence of face-to-face.

In terms of interactivity, participants identified the loss of non-verbal cues, the loss of immediacy, and the potential for missing the nuances of face-to-face communications as challenges for teaching social work in an online environment. Challenges included knowing how to respond without the benefits of cues, emotional reactions to the content and discussion, managing the large volumes of online communication, responding to an increased demand for rapid responses to online communications, misinterpretations and challenging student behaviours, and responding to students who participated infrequently in the online discussions. As a result, creating interactivity in an online learning environment required participants to

learn new online communication skills and strategies and to adapt their role and teaching styles. For example, Liam, who had experience in developing, teaching and evaluating social work online courses stated "It's a bit more difficult to get that interaction going online, and you have to type everything rather than have direct interaction with someone."

Maria noted that processing and responding to affective learning was particularly challenging for participants. She summarized these challenges in the following way:

> The affective learning I found extremely difficult to facilitate in a way that I would have wanted to, and I realized how much I relied on the non-verbal cues, on the subtle kind of responses you get from students, on the subtle group dynamic and interactions that you can observe in a face-to-face kind of thing, because in a classroom context I would surface those if I thought it would be helpful. I might say "What's happening here? It seems to me like . . ." or whatever. I totally couldn't find that in the on-line environment.

Similarly, Peter felt that technology mediated communication limited the ability to experience a full range of emotional experience and interaction usually achieved through face-to-face interaction:

> The other piece – and I think it's important for us to take this into account – there are some really - for us as social workers, there are some other dimensions - sensitivity, to value the whole emotional range of human experiences, that the distance and the technology doesn't really allow us to pay that much attention to. So somehow we have to be able to find a balance between the efficiency and helpfulness of this technology, and conveying knowledge, and finding ways to stimulate people to take responsibility for their learning. While at the same time, not losing sight of that human dimension that requires really that we interact with each other.

A related challenge was that of responding to sensitive emotional content in an online environment. For example, in discussing a course that usually generated strong emotional reactions as a result of the content, Susan commented,

> There's resistance – there's often very strong emotional reactions to the content and the course and to the dialogue that takes place, and also some resistance and conflict. So, *for me*, one of the challenges with the on-line is how do I manage that – all of those feelings and the conflicts, etc., around the curriculum and around the nature of the learning that takes place in this kind of program - *on-line,* because it seems difficult enough in a face-to-face classroom, but it seems like it's really tricky on-line to do that. So, it's a real challenge I think because you can open a can of worms when you open up a discussion on-line. So similar obstacles or *challenges* I guess arise. Except things happen much faster – people respond right away and they want immediate answers and they often type in things without thinking them through carefully. So there's lots of new challenges!

Similarly, William commented on the challenges of dealing with emotionally charged topics in social work education:

> You've also got to be sensitive, some of the stuff that we talk about, not just in child welfare but other things that we talk about - sexual abuse, we talk about suicide, or those kinds of things - you've got students in your class who are, in some way, dealing with that stuff, and there's personal issues for them, and if you just put that stuff on the web, and maybe they can back away from it 'cause it's just words, but you get, we have to think that piece through, too.

Responding to and challenging students in the absence of synchronous cues was identified as a challenge for these educators. Paul summarized this challenge in the following way:

> And this is one of the struggles that I know that we had when we were developing this, is how much to be a presence? When do you intervene, when do you lay off? Like when do you stimulate and when do you pull back? But because of the relative lack of cues - like I can ask, and you can see some things in that, but nowhere near like when you're face-to-face. Like they (face-to-face instructors) can be confrontative at times because they know (the students) can handle it. They can see what's going on usually, and they can handle that. But if

> they're confrontative in (an online environment), they may not be able to see what's happening as well, or they may not know if the confrontation is as appropriate.

Mark, who had experienced difficult and unusual dynamics in teaching an online course stated, "There was a rather bizarre series of events that happened. Now, none of this is usual in my classroom teaching." In this instance Mark also questioned whether or not his experience was in part due to less rigorous screening of applicants for distance courses as a result of the need to generate revenue through off-campus course offerings.

Although these issues are not unique to social work educators, they have particular relevance for social work and other human service education programs given the importance placed on relationships and the tradition of in-vivo modeling and mentoring in social work education. Important questions for social work educators to consider then are: What aspects of curricula need to be face-to-face? How can they achieve high levels of interactivity, immediacy and social presence in online learning? What instructional design models, and what resources are required?

Enhanced Interactivity in E-learning

While participants identified concerns about loss of face-to-face interaction, they also identified enhanced interactivity in traditional distance courses and in courses where online learning was used in existing face-to-face courses. For faculty and programs involved in teaching distance courses, interactivity had been a longstanding challenge. Participants teaching in distance programs had used a variety of technologies to increase interactivity in their courses including video conferences and audio conferences. They also stated that they had mixed success with these

technologies. For these participants, availability of e-learning provided an opportunity to enhance and build in interactivity, experiential learning and integrate electronic resources into traditional distance courses based primarily on a one to one tutorial model of learning. For example, Carly, who was involved in the coordination and administration of a distance program, stated:

> People originally used to use video – they used to use satellite video way back in the beginning and then that was cancelled, so they just did tape, they did tape and shipped them out, and they used to use teleconferences a lot. As people get busier, teleconferences and audio-conferences . . . have been less than successful in terms of involving students in dialogue or conversation around topics in distance education. So we actually think that moving toward more of an on-line model for us is going to *increase* interactivity, whereas I know some people who are newly moving into an on-line model from face-to-face may worry about that they're going to lose interactivity, whereas we're excited we're going to increase it again.

> And Jennifer, who taught and administered another distance program, commented,

> These are distance education students, so they're all over North America and they also have very positive things to say about how good it is to communicate with other students and not just alone with the teacher with the distance ed. department doing a course.

For Carly and Jennifer, utilizing e-learning added the possibilities of peer to peer learning, experiential exercises, collaborative learning, asynchronous and synchronous communication, the integration of digital audio and visual communication and resources, as well as integrating the vast resources of the Internet to their courses. For these educators, the availability of e-learning allowed them to approximate the interactivity previously only achieved in a face-to-face learning environment. For example, Mary noted,

> No, its not a print based - its better than that, and the kind of feedback that we're getting, because we're doing both a formative and a

> summative evaluation of all of this - is there's, once the students got accustomed to this new culture, and dealt with the technical bugs, and whatever, they say, I love this, and the quality of the discussion in groups is amazing. It's absolutely amazing, so I'm pumped about this because I think I've been able to create a virtual classroom with the good grace and the (involvement) on the part of the students.

In terms affective learning, some participants found that it was possible to achieve affective learning in their online courses. For example, Paul made the following observations:

> I mean our own experience with (name of course), the way in which we have seen the ability to be able to share things on the web – personal things and professional things – would suggest to me that you can deal with detailed interpersonal processes and complex and engaging kinds of issues on the web.
>
> And,
>
> When we talk to other colleagues about the nature of our course, they're sort of amazed that we're doing that type of it because they perceive . . . for instance, (a colleague) - when (they were) first telling (them) about this involvement, (they) said "Geez, that's a cool way to teach". Like that's what (they) said – it was a cold way to teach. And (they) said that just on the basis of (their) own preconceptions of what web-based training is about. But I can tell you it's anything but a cold way to teach. Because as you're familiar with some of the research, it suggests there's *more contact* with web-based training than there is in face-to-face classroom.

Other benefits identified by participants included increased access, increased participation, more thoughtful responses, and increased interaction between students. For example, Peter commented:

> What I'm finding with this medium is that a lot of the students who I think would be not as expressive in class - because they have an opportunity to think about what the issues are, and the questions - end up sharing a lot more than they would have normally. So I think for a lot of them it draws them out. The medium is one that they find, perhaps more comfortable, perhaps they get a chance to be more thoughtful, about what they want to say. So I think for some people,

> they're more participative, more interactive than they might be normally.

Maureen identified an increase in the amount of reflective discussion, especially for part-time students who were on-campus for limited periods of time and attempting to balance busy schedules:

> We have a lot of students here who are part-time, they're working and they come to school for a class they're gone – they don't know the people in their classes. They say I will probably have more time to hear what people say and participate in discussions – more reflective discussions - on-line, and I would be with that group for a particular period of time.

A related pedagogical issue was that participants noted the importance of rethinking the weighting of participation in online courses in order to recognize online discussion and interaction as integral components of learning, and to promote participation in the online discussion. For example, Peter commented,

> The other notion I got disabused of fairly early is that I had initially thought that if I provided the opportunity for discussion and participation that the students would kind of leap at it. I discovered much to my chagrin that if I didn't assign some kind of mark to it, concrete indicator – recognition of participation, it wasn't going to happen, at least not any great degree. So the idea of having to build this in as a formal part of the course and the program and recognizing participation in grading . . . some kind of mark . . . seems to be something that we still have to contend with.

Participants conveyed that the use of online learning to supplement face-to-face on-campus courses also enhanced interactivity. For example, James, who taught in both face-to-face and online environments related the following experience in adding an online discussion to a face-to-face class. In James' experience, the discussion that evolved in the online portion of the course was more interesting and effective that that of the face-to-face classroom:

> In fact, we did a (name of) course and they were so keen that it became almost . . . although we met every week in the class, so much of what was happening was happening on-line that the class *almost became a sideline* to the web - what was going on in the web - because all the student participatory skills seminars were on-line.

Interestingly, some participants' programs had established academic policies that specifically excluded participation as an element of assessment in their courses. Given the nature and purpose of collaborative online learning, these policies will need to be examined and modified in order accommodate instructional designs that promote high levels of interactivity, collaboration and participation in online learning environments.

Rethinking Curricula

Participants identified the need to rethink the goals of social work education in the context of changing professional and employment requirements, and in the context of evolving ICTs. For example, Maureen, who had extensive experience teaching distance courses commented:

> I think I have an interest in having training, educating good social workers, and I have questions in general about social work education, and I guess one would wonder if what we do on-campus creates well trained, well prepared, critical thinking professionals. And can we do that on-line? Is our quality . . . what is it we want people to get from their training? What is that experience of studying social work supposed to be? And then, what works, what doesn't work, and is it that much different on-line than on-campus, apart from the face-to-face? Because I have a feeling that somehow if we know the process of or we understand what kinds of experiences you want students to have, then somehow we can piece them together.

And Monica, who had taught distance courses using a combination of online learning and video conferencing, stated:

> We're struggling with that (how to balance the need to promote professional development and introduce flexible learning) as a faculty,

> I think it's part of redefining what social work education is, or what it can be, what it's going to turn into. And sort of more immediately for a faculty of social work, *what we as social work educators want this faculty to be*, and how we are going to interact with our students, and how we are going to, if you like, compete with other faculties of social work which are delivering more and more of the their content online.

While all participants had been involved in offering online learning, most had recently become involved with online learning over the previous year. A few had been involved for a longer period of three to four years as an extension of longstanding interest in the use of learning technologies in their teaching. As noted earlier, participants' interest and motivation ranged from being asked by a director to teach a course, to teaching in distance programs that were incorporating e-learning, to intrinsic motivation.

Through my analysis of the data, the following pedagogical challenges related to rethinking curricula emerged as important for these participants: e-competency for social work students, student adjustment to e-learning, the importance of student choice, content areas suited for online learning in social work, the need for a balance of online and face-to-face learning, class size, the need to provide and support multiple approaches to learning, the need to build in observational contact, enhancement of field education, the importance of student and faculty orientation, and rethinking assessment of learning. Participants also identified a number of interrelated faculty and administrative issues, which will be discussed in Chapters Five and Six. For example, participants were concerned about the amount of time required to develop and teach online courses, compensation and recognition for their work, choice of involvement in e-learning, technical and instructional design support, resources to develop online learning, and administrative and institutional commitment

and leadership. In some instances it was difficult to differentiate pedagogical issues from faculty issues in particular, as teaching and learning is the raison d'etre of faculty's involvement in e-learning, and a reflection of who they are as educators and practitioners. Therefore, it is important to note that the distinction between pedagogical and faculty issues is based on my interpretation of participants' concerns and my understanding of the pedagogy of online learning.

Competency in E-communication

Several participants emphasized the need for social work students and faculty to develop competencies in e-communication. These included general computer and information technology literacy and competency in the use of e-communication, especially given the growing role of online communications in social and health services. This need is consistent with the recent findings of the Social Work Sector Study, where social service employers identified ICT skills as an area for development for social workers and educational programs (Grant Thornton & CS/ RESORS, 2000). The growth of Internet communications since the mid 1990s has affected all aspects of society, including the delivery of social and health services. Many agencies now provide access to services in online environments, and as the growth of the Internet continues, it is expected that social workers and other health professions will be increasingly involved in service delivery using ICTs. The need for computer literacy for social workers and social work educators has also been identified by a number of authors (Butterfield,1998; Freddolino, 2002; Sandell & Hayes, 2002; Schoech, 2002).

Participants were aware of this need, and for several it was an important part of their motivation in integrating e-learning in their courses and programs. For example, Elaine stated,

> One of the things that I feel is relevant to the discussion is that client and social workers in the field are interacting, whether the clients are organizations or whether they're individuals or whatever. They're interacting more and more on the Internet and so I think that social workers really need to be able to understand some of the things about communication on the Internet. I use this opportunity with this course to teach them a little bit about how to communicate effectively on the Internet. In one of the assignments I expect them to evaluate the process – the communication process, and one of the things they do is they talk about the influence of the Internet connection and how it's different around the building of trust and some key social work issues – how different it is from face-to-face. I think that is a really unique learning opportunity for them that I think is very valuable. So while it may lose on some fronts, I think on other fronts there are some advantages.

And Nancy commented,

> I've had a long history of thinking about technology and social work, and *my commitment* really – in trying to integrate on-line learning in social work education - is related to access issues, as well as trying to help our students have the skills and experiences that will enable them to be leaders in agencies in terms of integrating technology in services. So my interest in on-line learning is not only an educational one in terms of providing access to curriculum, but also trying to give students experiences where they will be more comfortable with technology and will be able to then think about it in terms of practice.

Participants also found that students learned about the use of technology through their involvement in online learning, and that this was an important aspect of their learning. For example, Paul noted,

> It seemed like many of them were taking this not just because of the (content / skills area) and knowledge base enhancements, but because they wanted to master the technology. Like they were getting as much out of this in terms of a sense of competency with the technology as they were (with) the content and skills and knowledge.

Student Adjustment to E-learning

Although participants reported some initial student resistance and adjustment to learning online, the faculty who had been teaching in traditional distance education programs emphasized the initial adjustment was greater for these students. This was for several reasons, including access to the Internet and computer and Internet skills. However, a key issue was the introduction of an entirely different way of learning to students than they had previously experienced or had expected to be involved in when they began their programs. Moving from a primarily self-paced distance course to an online course had implications for the students' involvement and participation in online discussions, and in the loss of their ability to work at their own pace and schedules. In this regard, although online learning enhanced interactivity, there was a trade off in terms of the level of learner self- direction. For example, Susan related the following observation in regard to some students dropping out of the course when they discovered it would be offered online:

> I had a number of drops in the beginning – for a variety of reasons. Some for the normal reasons of "I decided I can't handle an extra course right now" or whatever – life got in the way, but some of them I believe were directly related to finding out that it was an on-line delivery that put quite a bit of demand on the students for being engaged in the learning process in a way that they weren't being accountable in the old way where you could sit back there and read and go through your papers.

The shift from self-paced distance to online also had significant implications for faculty's involvement in the learning process, skill set and compensation structures. Faculty who had previously reviewed student submissions at their own pace were now required to shift to a very different way of teaching that included the need to re-design learning and assessment activities, learn new technical skills, log on

regularly to courses, and participate in ongoing online discussions. How e-learning was introduced to distance students (and faculty) in particular was identified as an issue by the participants teaching in distance programs, and has implications for successful implementation. These include the challenge of introducing a new way of learning to students part way through their program, the importance of student orientation and computer literacy, and increased interaction and participation expectations in online courses. In this regard, although online learning provides the opportunity to enhance interactivity in distance learning, there may be less difference between traditional face-to-face courses and online courses than between traditional distance courses and online courses, especially those designed on a self-paced tutor model.

The Importance of Student Choice

A related concern expressed by participants was the need for student choice of involvement in e-learning. As a result of concerns about access, e-equity, individual learning style and preferences, and technical skills, some participants felt strongly that students should have the choice of whether or not they participated in e-learning. For example, Beverly, a senior faculty member who had developed and taught fully online courses and who had advisory and administrative responsibilities stated: "One of the things that the students want is they want a choice about their time in terms of expectations. They want to be told ahead of time how it's going to be offered and then they will decide." David stated that his program had made a decision to promote e-learning as an optional enhancement to face-to-face learning, rather than a requirement. This was in part as a result of faculty concerns about online learning:

> We're tentative about (online learning). We say it's an enhancement rather than a requirement. And we've been very tentative about that partly because some of the people on faculty are not wanting to buy into it, and feel it's an infringement – a burden – on the students.

Several participants also identified the need for programs to provide clear guidelines and expectations for student involvement in e-learning, and clarity about whether or not online learning was optional.

Content Areas

Participants were involved in teaching a wide range of social work content, including practice skills courses. Of 44 courses taught by participants, 21 were offered in a fully online format, 11 were offered in a hybrid format (where some face-to-face class contact was replaced with online learning), and 12 were offered in a web-enhanced format (online learning activities and resources added to face-to-face classes). Eighteen of the fully online courses were offered to both distance and local students. Eight courses were offered to distance students only (three fully online and five hybrid courses). Six courses were offered to local students only (two hybrid courses and four in a web-enhanced format). Where distance students were involved in hybrid courses, this meant that students travelled to the university or faculty travelled to regional sites for the face-to-face portion of the course.

Participants expressed a wide range of views on what content was suited for online learning. Many participants felt that content oriented courses versus practice skills and methods courses were better suited for full online delivery. For example, William commented:

> I think a lot of it also comes down to a question of what content can be taught this way, and what content has to be taught in a face-to-face interactive mentorship kind of way. My area is clinical practice, direct

> practice, I can't imagine teaching any kind of skill-based course in this kind of way. And you could have, you could use it to augment. You could have resources and stuff on the website that, you know, they could turn to for reference and stuff, but there's aspects of what we teach and what students need to know that has to be done interactive, face-to-face, mentorship kind of way.

Some participants felt that no social work courses should be offered entirely online. For example, Adelle commented "I don't think any courses are suited for straight online learning. Having said that, I would think that content driven courses, like law and social work and social policy would be more suited than practice driven courses." At the same time, a few participants who had more extensive experience with learning technologies felt that methods and practice skills could be offered entirely in an online format and challenged the view of their colleagues that methods courses could not be taught online. For example, when asked about concerns expressed about practice skills courses, Maureen responded:

> Have those people taught on-line? That's the kind of comment you make if you haven't necessarily gotten your sleeves rolled up and tried it. That's an academic, you know, that's a toss-off. Because it's obvious you can teach theory courses on line. The real challenge is the interactive nature of social work. So I think that's where the fun is.
>
> Alan: Which is an opposite position to the one I just suggested.
>
> Maureen: Yes. I mean, I think that's the kind of comment – well this is what you can do better, *well it's what you can do easier* – teach a theory course, well you and I could get through a theory course the first time around. But I think the fun part, the challenge, is when you get into these other things – looking at group process, where you are looking at the kinds of skills that you want to teach, and teaching the beginning social work on-campus a couple of years, I know I'm much more familiar with that process and I'm always thinking how would I do this on-line? What could I do? What kinds of exercises? How would I structure the class? What kinds of resource materials, what kind of video tapes, what kind of CD's? Could I get money to do an interactive learning CD? When are we going to get webcams? When is the next leap of technology coming so that you and I can see each

> other and we can do a mock interview or we can watch someone do a role play – as you would in class...observing and get feedback. Like we're so close to this, that I don't think there's going to be huge barriers in a few years.

At the same time, an important contingency identified by Maureen was that developing high quality learning experiences required the availability of adequate resources:

> If you're given the resources to develop. What happens in social work is that you don't get the money to do the creative (development). But I'm saying if they want it, I think a lot of it's doable – maybe not all of it, but a lot of it if we put the resources there.

Participants also identified a need for balance in terms of how much learning in particular courses could be done online. For example, Beverly commented, "I think we need to differentiate between, or among courses that are suitable for online learning versus things that still have to be done in a traditional way". Some participants also identified that they did not think entire programs should be online. For example, James, who had extensive experience in developing and offering online learning stated:

> You have to have a multi-method. Taking a whole social work degree on-line would be dangerous, I think. You *need* to have some kind of coming together of the group and some face-to-face work – for exactly those reasons – the interpersonal connections, the mentoring and all that interaction that goes on.

James conveyed that his program had made a decision not to offer practice skills courses online. For example, James noted, "You can't teach counselling skills (online)". Michelle, who had extensive experience developing and teaching online and was involved in program administration also stated, "The counselling skills and the group skills we don't intend to have online."

Class Size

A key issue identified by some participants was the need to examine class size policies in light of the need for high levels of social, cognitive and teaching presence, interactivity, and the increased time demands in teaching online. In this regard, some participants felt strongly that it was not realistic or possible to continue to teach the same number students in an online course as they would in a face-to-face course or a self-paced distance course, especially those whose class sizes were larger than 30 students. Two participants, Nancy, and Michelle, who had substantial experience in using learning technologies, recommended limiting class size in social work online courses to fewer than 25 students. For these participants, limiting class size was a specific strategy to recognize increased demands on instructor time in teaching in online environments, to support graduated implementation, and to help faculty and programs gain experience in teaching in online environments. Class size for online learning in social work education was identified as an important area for additional research.

The Need to Support Multiple Approaches and Multiple Learning Environments

Another issue that participants identified was the need to provide multiple approaches and formats to learning in order to meet different learning needs, preferences and learning styles. For example, participants suggested that learning should include a balance of asynchronous and synchronous modes of e-learning, and where students are off-campus, provide local support and mentorship. Participants identified the need to incorporate a variety of approaches to learning to respond to

concerns about the loss of face-to-face contact, interactivity and professional socialization. For example, James stated:

> So there's no one learning (model). It's just like in class, it's the same thing – there's no one learning model that's appropriate for a reading class course that people teach – there's no one learning model that we can say works for all the web courses. And that sounds like a really simple thing, it makes sense intuitively, but it's amazing how hard that is to get people to (understand this). Because the university wants to develop a template for all on-line courses, and I've been saying this for almost ten years now that we can't do this! And it's happening anyway.

In particular, participants with more experience in the use of e-learning identified the need to incorporate collaborative and constructivist approaches to learning in the design of social work courses, including the use of collaborative online discussions, case studies, and problem-based learning. Several participants emphasized that interaction needs to be built in to the design of the course. In this regard, they suggested structuring learning activities to include interaction as an integral part of students' learning. Participants also recommended several strategies to promote interaction including: building in opportunities for personal introductions and social discussion; clear expectations and guidelines for participation in online discussions and learning activities, opportunities for synchronous and asynchronous interaction, and linking participation to revised approaches to assessment.

Factors identified as important in selecting learning models included the type of course involved (content versus practice skills), the level of student (for example beginning undergraduate students versus graduate students), student learning preferences, technical ability, ability to engage in independent and collaborative learning activities, and Internet access. Factors considered important for faculty

included instructor knowledge of instructional design and learning theory, orientation to learning and preferred mode of teaching, interest and motivation in experimenting with innovative learning environments, instructional design consultation and support, program and institutional support, and technical skills. Roger, who been involved with technology integration in social work education for several years, highlighted the importance of examining learning models for all learning environments offered in programs in the following comment:

> Oh, it's extremely important for all faculties, and to just talk about on-line - just the on-line courses - I think is problematic. I think you really have to think about it in this wider kind of context and so I think then – because I think there is that need to think about constructivism as opposed to instructivism, problem based learning, collaborative learning, and what do these mean in terms of teaching face-to-face as well as teaching on-line?

Face-to-Face and Observational Contact

Several participants felt it was important to build in face-to-face contact, especially for undergraduate students, in order to recognize the importance of relationship and face-to-face interaction in the learning process, and to allow for direct observation of practice skills. For example, Paul stated:

> Now the one thing that still to me – and I'm still trying to work through myself too is that practice based courses – skill based courses – and in the many cases you still have to be able to see evidence of the skill besides it's verbal or typed presentation of it. So I can still see a need for observational kinds of experiences. So even in those ones that are *strongly* dedicated to web-based learning, they have a piece of it that has - requires observational contact. So that maybe the last frontier for that, but I believe we can do *a lot more* in different topical areas than we ever believed we could.

In undergraduate programs where learning was offered in a distance format, a minimum amount of face-to-face contact had been built in to the learning process

through required residency periods at specific points during the programs, or through required participation in a minimum number of face-to-face courses offered at local sites. Participants seemed less concerned about the need for residency and face-to-face contact for graduate level students, although the concerns about practice methods skills and courses were similar. Several programs at both levels had utilized a teaching model that incorporated locally offered weekend intensive sessions as a supplement to e-learning.

Enhancement to Field Education and Role of Field Instructor

Several participants involved in distance programs identified the need to enhance the field education component of curricula in order to address the loss of face-to-face interaction in evaluation, especially in communication and practice skills courses. Specific challenges included the need to enhance the role of field supervisors, the addition of a workbook to structure practice integration, involving agency supervisors in evaluating practice related assignments, and developing enhanced training and online support for field (agency) supervisors. In reference to the latter, Sally noted that there was a need to develop training for supervisors, especially those outside the local region who may not be familiar with the program. She suggested a training program could be provided to agency supervisors, and, as an incentive, this training could also serve as a continuing education activity for field supervisors. Although these enhancements had been contemplated, at the time of my interviews they had not been fully implemented. Enhancements to field education have unresolved resource and workload implications for programs and will require a concerted effort to implement. Sally elaborated by stating:

> So we're now just starting . . . well, we've been talking about it for awhile - quite awhile actually, but I think we're ready now to really start contracting with someone to do that – to develop the training modules (for supervisors), and in terms of how that would work on-line, we'll need to sort that out, but it needs to be something that people can access and people can interact, and learn from, and I see it as having....we've been doing training here for local agency people. We've done things around ethical issues, and done things around supervision, and anti-oppressive practice, and critical thinking in the field, and a whole list of things. So we'll probably take some of those as starters and develop modules, but then *also ask* the people who supervise our students what kinds of things would be helpful to them. So we'll get the process going but I hope that the people who will supervise our students have a big say in what the training looks like.

The Importance of Student Orientation

Most participants emphasized the importance of student orientation to learning online in their programs. In several instances participants stated that online learning had been introduced quickly, which led to later adjustment problems, and negative reaction from learners in some instances. For example, Maureen noted,

> It was huge – they (the students) had no idea. I mean they'd been told that they'd be using the computer for part of the program but when they actually need to sit down and log on and figure out what to do, it was really difficult for them. There was a lot of resistance on the part of the students - actually it was three years ago - it was *very difficult*. They were not happy, they were most unhappy. When they understood or started to see what was involved, they felt they were in kind of over their heads. Now we've learned a lot since then about handling that, but at that point it was like cold turkey for our students and myself.

Participants suggested a number of specific areas that needed to be addressed to improve student orientation, including the importance of providing an orientation to the technical requirements of online learning, the course management software, and clear information regarding support and technical assistance. Several participants emphasized the need for their programs to provide an orientation to learning online, effective online communication skills, and collaborative learning expectations. In

particular, they emphasized the need for orientation and guidelines to deal with emotionally-laden content and related safety issues, the public nature on online discussions, and confidentiality and privacy issues in the context of the Social Work Code of Ethics, and institutional policies regarding confidentiality, privacy and archiving of course discussions. Clear expectations regarding participation in online discussions, the type of assignments, and student assessment were also identified as important.

Rethinking Assessment of Learning

As a result of the need for instructional redesign, most participants identified the importance of rethinking assessment procedures in shifting their courses online. For those courses that had already been offered in a distance format, this meant a significant shift from primarily print based self-directed learning activities and assignments, to activities that required collaboration, inter-learner communication and structured time frames. It also required a significant shift in the role of the instructor from tutor to facilitator, and an increase in the amount of time required to both teach the course and evaluate online learning activities. Moving face-to-face courses to an online environment also required participants to rethink assessment processes for their courses.

Implementing online learning generated the need to review program policies that affect student assessment for both distance and on-campus courses. For example, several participants stated their programs had policies that did not allow student participation to be weighted in the evaluation of learning. Given that one of the

primary features of online learning is collaborative and participative learning, these policies were immediate obstacles to full use of the online learning environment.

Participants identified a number of challenges in assessing student learning online. These included: rethinking learning activities and assignments, knowing how to assess student learning and participation, the challenge of assessing practice skills and competencies, determining the weighting for participation and collaborative learning activities versus individual assignments, and student reactions to public posting and response to their work. For example, Roger suggested that the need for revised assessment processes included a shift in the involvement of students in the assessment process: "Well two things, I guess, not just assessing student learning but allowing students to manage their own learning in very different ways."

Faculty Knowledge

In my interviews I explored participants' approaches to instructional design in implementing e-learning. In particular, I was interested in their approach to teaching and learning and the instructional challenges involved in responding to concerns about the loss of face-to-face contact, interactivity, immediacy and the effect on learning social work content, skills, and professional socialization. In exploring participants' approach to learning a number of challenges were identified. These were: the need for faculty knowledge of instructional design, the need for increased planning and strategic teaching to promote interactivity, shifts in instructor role and skill set, and control over the design and teaching process.

Knowledge and Approaches to Instructional Design

When the participants were asked about their use of particular approaches to instructional design in their online courses, only a small number seemed to fully understand the question and were able to expand on the relationship between learning theory and instructional design processes and models that are suited for online learning. Most of the participants did not identify specific learning theory or an instructional design process. Participants with a longer-term evolutionary involvement with learning technologies and distance education had a clearer understanding of the link between instructional design processes and effective use of learning technologies, including online learning. While most participants were not knowledgeable about instructional design, they did describe a variety of effective instructional strategies that they had employed in their online courses to achieve learning objectives and to build in interactivity, experiential and collaborative learning activities, and deal with concerns about the loss of face-to-face interaction and immediacy. For example, Monica summarized her approach in the following way:

> So I think I'm less kind of theoretically driven, more pragmatically driven . . . the bottom line is you figure out what it is you need to do and you do it, and you pull together on your previous teaching experience, your experience in working, your knowledge of the profession.

Participants were very open and transparent in their need for additional training in pedagogy and instructional design. In this regard, when I asked them about their approach to teaching and learning online, they identified a number of issues and needs in terms of their experience, knowledge and skills related to teaching and

learning in general, and online learning specifically. For example, John, who had extensive teaching experience and recently become involved in teaching online, stated: "I don't know. You know, I've never had a course on pedagogy. I mean I would have to say I socialized to education by doing it."

Likewise, Peter identified new learning associated with developing online learning:

> I've been quite amazed in terms of getting into the university setting. There's not necessarily a whole lot of knowledge about instructional design, I'm finding, on the part of a lot of us, as university professors. And I suspect part of it is, most of us get into these jobs with a PhD or whatever, but nobody's ever really taught us how to teach, you know. So in terms of basic pedagogy, its catch as catch can. Moving into this kind of medium (web-based learning) makes the whole design piece even more important. So I expect for a lot of people its going to be a huge learning curve. Even basic things like how to you get really good, explicit learning objectives. Getting very concrete learning objectives and tying that into learning experiences, and new ways of testing for that knowledge – there's a lot to be learned there. I think for many of us – probably the whole process of becoming much more explicit about the learning that's in fact going to take place, and becoming a whole lot clearer about how to go about achieving that learning. So, I think it's potentially a very large issue and probably what may be causing some consternation of a few of our people who are worried about this medium.

And, Mary noted,

> No. One of the other things that always makes me incredibly humbled is the fact that no one's ever taught me how to do this thing called teaching. I've taken no educational instructional design courses. Its kind of learned as I went along.

While participants identified a need for enhanced knowledge of instructional design, they also identified a number of benefits as a result of examining their approach to pedagogy in redesigning their courses. Benefits included enhancing their knowledge of instructional strategies for their teaching in general and for their face-

to-face teaching. For example, Michelle noted, "It's made me a far better instructor. It's made me far more aware of what it is I want to teach", and John stated,

> The benefit for me, was how it made me really think about my teaching, and how I related the course objectives to the activities of the class, and their methods of evaluation, and developing a course online really pushed me to clarify those things quite apart from the technical challenges.

Increased Planning and Strategic Teaching

Achieving effective online learning was viewed as contingent on the need for increased planning and structure of learning activities. Effectiveness was also viewed as contingent on experience in teaching on line, knowledge of instructional design, shift in teaching role, and linked to graduated implementation. Many participants commented on the extra effort required to create interaction compared to traditional face-to-face synchronous classroom environments, where instructors can walk in and respond to cues and reactions, "read" the class, and are able to respond in the moment. In this regard, several participants identified the need for thorough planning and structure in order to create online spontaneity. For example, Paul noted, "It's real hard to wing it in an online course. I've found so far it requires much more planning, lay out, identified resources, structure . . . knowing what's happening next week, and it's harder to pull off quick changes." And, Maureen stated,

> It's strategic teaching – it's much more strategic teaching in a way than walking in with some notes on a topic that you've done before, and kind of going in there and seeing what you can create at the time. It's a different experience. I'm not saying one's better than the other, but I find the on-line stuff very strategic and you have to think it through, or, I have to think it through, I don't know if others do.

Similarly, Michelle noted,

> On-line, you've got to be prepared . . . you can't just say "Oh, hi folks, let's see what feels good today". If you're going to do a check-in, you have to let them know in advance because the check-in is not synchronous. So you can't just go into class and see some glum faces and think well maybe we'd better do a check-in . . . you've got to know in advance what you're going to do *and why*. So I think it forces you to become better organized.

Effective levels of interactivity were viewed as contingent on effective use of the learning environment, which included effective instructional design and instructor skill and experience in teaching in online environments. Nancy, who had extensive experience with the use of learning technologies, online learning, and program administration, made the following observation when asked about the concerns identified by other participants and the literature regarding the loss of interactivity:

> I've heard that *a lot* and many of our faculty feel that way. In fact, we've put in video conferencing just recently over the Internet – high end, so that we could have that option. I don't share that concern. I think that you could have very meaningful interaction in fact, I just don't share that. I know that's a concern, and I understand the basis of it, but I also know that you can have *very* meaningful, *very* important interaction, and very deep knowledge of students actually - in an on-line environment. And you do not necessarily have to have face-to-face to do that, but you have to use the on-line environment very effectively. And I think in some ways - if you use it well, you can increase communication between individual students and between yourself and the student. So I don't think it's a worry that will necessarily be supported as we keep advancing.

The need to think through and develop structure in order to create and enhance interactivity has implications for a range of pedagogical issues, policies, and resources including faculty knowledge of instructional design, general skills in the use of ICTs, knowledge and experience in teaching and learning online, the ability for faculty to shift their role, instructor style and preferences, the amount of interactivity

required or desired in a particular course, and instructional design support and resources.

Shift in Role and Online Teaching Skills

> Most of us spend so many years being educated and socialized into a particular ways of learning – in that classroom environment, it's always a bit of a challenge to stop yourself and say is there a way I can do this differently? (Roger)

For the participants in this study, involvement in e-learning meant modifying their role and skills to respond to the pedagogical challenges identified above, including concerns about the loss of face-to-face interaction and immediacy, mentorship, observation and feedback on practice skills, and spontaneity in the teaching learning process. Key challenges included a shift in instructor role from that of lecturer to facilitator. For example, Paul commented, "It's a mixture between sage and facilitator, and it's really hard to in this online medium because you're not getting the cues that you're getting in a face-to-face (environment)."

Overall, the participants thought that the ability to shift roles was contingent on instructors' pedagogical orientation, preferred teaching style, and a willingness to experiment with non-traditional learning environments. They also stated that their ability and motivation to be involved in implementing e-learning was contingent on having the time to learn new approaches to pedagogy and online teaching skills, the time to develop online learning activities, and compensation and recognition for their involvement. In terms of approaches to teaching, the following comment by Nancy identifies the importance of the role shift and instructor flexibility in adapting to new learning environments:

> When I look at learning theory, and I look at the continuum of learning theory from instructivism to constructivism, and instructivism lending itself more to a more traditional lecture format, constructivism to more independent learner kind of format, I would say that (the) on-line environment fits more in constructivism end of learning theory. And so those faculty who are comfortable with lectures have I think more difficulty, more *change* to go through to work in an on-line environment. Because if they try to just put their lectures on-line for students to read, then I think that is very deadly. I think that an on-line - in order to be successful, an on-line environment lends itself more to constructivism where students (can) be more in charge of their learning, and be more pro-active in terms of constructing their questions, and giving each other peer support.

Other key shifts in instructor role and skills were a levelling of the power differential between instructors and students, learning how to manage the increased amount of time involved in participating and responding to online discussions, the volume of messages, adapting to time delays, and learning to respond strategically. Maria summarized these challenges in the following way:

> *The time* (emphasis), to read all those posting – we were up to over 1200 postings in four weeks! It was great . . . but in terms of the collaborative or learner to learner (interaction), I did find that interesting because when you're standing – I'd forgotten this piece, this is prompting this – when you're standing in the classroom and somebody asks you a question, all eyes are to the front, all eyes are expecting me to answer it and are expecting me to answer it *right then*. Well in the bulletin board format, somebody posts a question and I might not see it for two days. And in the meantime there might be five other responses to it in there. So in that sense, I think it did shift that a bit. I think it did shift. The sort of power of the instructor in that way somewhat, in that it could potentially contribute to me not being the all-knowing expert that has it all. So it did shift that I think, I'd forgotten that piece, as we're talking.

And, Stewart commented,

> I think one of the things that's hard is at least when I'm in the classroom, if there's someone who is not actively participating, at least I know they're there. They have to be listening – they may not be observing too much, but they're there. In the WebCT I can check to see how many times people have logged on and what they've actually

> read, but you don't have the sense for those people you can't see and who don't actively participate. What's happening with them? What's going on in their head? Should I be concerned? Should I send them a private Email? Should I call them up and say are you with me? Which is what I'll often do in a break in class or something like that with a student who's really quiet - "Is this okay?", "Oh yeah, yeah"- it's hard to get that sense of losing people.

Instructor Control of the Learning Environment Software

Interestingly, at two sites, participants had not been assigned course designer access by the departments responsible for managing the online course management software. As a result, their ability to manage and modify the learning environment was limited to that of a student participant, and they did not have the ability to delete or edit student postings, or modify online learning materials without submitting a request to others (which usually took several days to activate). Given the concerns that participants identified about the importance of teaching and learning relationships in professional socialization and managing online communication and dynamics, this approach greatly limited their ability to fully adopt a facilitator or leadership role in guiding the learning. In one example, one of my questions regarding managing online communications generated the following reaction from Susan: "Do you mean I can do that, are you allowed?" Clearly, in these instances the faculty were not fully aware of the capabilities of the software and had not received adequate orientation or access. The roles and responsibilities between departments responsible for managing online courses and the individual instructors had also not been discussed. Limiting the access level of the instructor also limited the ability of the faculty to teach effectively in an online environment.

These participants' experiences have implications for policies and implementation strategies that include instructor orientation to course management software, faculty development and the skills of teaching in online environments, and the need for discussion about who has control over the learning environment, including making ethical and pedagogical decisions about online discussions. For example, instructors may need to quickly delete an inappropriate posting, or one that might carry ethical implications in a timely manner, and not wait for a one or two day time delay for a request to be processed. As noted earlier, participants were concerned about who had access to the course and sensitive online discussions in terms of course management software consultants, systems administrators, and instructional designers. In reviewing my draft findings and recommendations, Susan noted, "You discuss varying degrees of designer access and control over the environment. This is still a problem at our institution and I thought you raised some very interesting implications around these issues."

The Need for Pedagogical Dialogue

While interested in the potential of e-learning, many participants identified a strong need for dialogue focused on pedagogical, faculty, and administrative issues. Issues needing further dialogue included: the fit with the values and purpose of social work education, the motivation for putting courses online, pedagogical issues and strategies for online learning in social work, faculty issues, including concerns about workload and faculty equity, and a wide range of program and institutional policies that affect the implementation of e-learning.

Maria summarized the need for pedagogical dialogue in the following way: "I don't think we've dealt sufficiently or adequately with those pedagogical and philosophical, theoretical questions. But we haven't dealt with them in relation to the education that takes place across the street (on-campus) either." In a similar vein, Susan commented, "It seems like we've gone down this road without discussing even taking the journey." Likewise, William stated, "I'm not aware that it (online learning) has been talked about in any place at this level. Certainly not in this faculty, there aren't that many of us that are doing these kinds of courses." In several instances, participants conveyed that their programs had implemented e-learning in an ad hoc fashion, and as a result of a perception that the world of higher education was changing, and that online learning was being promoted by their respective institutions in order to respond to increasing competition in higher education. For example, Maria stated,

> I think sometimes we're letting the technology use us, as opposed to using the technology. A lot of the argument for starting our distance program was "if we don't do it, somebody else is going to do it", and that personally is not a good enough argument for me. I'd rather us be talking about the quality of social work education – which we are, and I'm not trying to dismiss that. So I still have scepticism and questions about it.

And,

> I think from the institution there was a sense of a – and I don't know if this is valid – a financial motivation to do it. I also think there's the institutional global kind of commodification of learning that's happening – the whole marketplace philosophy that education is something you sell to consumers. So there's that whole ideology which I think is a piece of it as well, which I have some real difficulty with. On the more positive side, I think there's a genuine belief that this will make education more accessible

Susan emphasized the need for dialogue at both the program and institutional level to examine the motivation for their involvement in online learning and to generate thoughtful strategies for implementation and evaluation of online learning. In this instance Susan identified a perception of forging ahead without sufficient dialogue, evaluation and planning:

> We seem to be getting into it in a very haphazard way. Someone's interested, or the technology is available and there's a workshop on it. So we take the workshop and then we decide to do it but there doesn't seem to be any leadership from the department or even higher levels of the university – a thoughtful process. Because the dialogue needs to be broader than our department, I think. Like I don't understand why there isn't a steering committee about the introduction of learning technologies at the Dean's level that includes our school and (related helping professions). Because they're having the same experiences. They're starting to use it too, but I don't see that there's been a thoughtful process involved. I don't see that there's been a place where even we've discussed why are we doing this. What is the impact, and is it beneficial to our students and to our mission statement, and what we're wanting to do in terms of social work education? And everybody wants to get on the bandwagon now, like where we had a session on talking about WebCT stuff we're doing, we had sessionals, and new instructors and other instructors asking "How do we get to put our course on WebCT?" Like the 'me too' thing. And I'm sort of (saying) "we haven't even evaluated it". We haven't evaluated it and whether it's beneficial or what way we want to go. We're trying it out and now we're talking about maybe all the courses will go on WebCT. It's scary!!

And, David stated,

> We haven't had that discussion here as much as we should have, about how WebCT, and what your earlier question about how (online learning) may preclude the development of good professional relationships, and mentoring relationships with students. We also haven't had that discussion - much - about what courses WebCT could fit into versus not fitting into.

Several participants also emphasized the need for student input into faculty decisions and dialogue. In her critique, Beverly noted the need to go beyond early

adopters and to draw on the social work processes of engagement as an implementation strategy, rather than relying on a small number of faculty who were promoting the use of technology:

> I think there needs to be a faculty-wide discussion of input from students and faculty, rather than one or two people thinking technology is a good idea, therefore we're going to use it. . . . I find the engagement hasn't been there. It's been one or two people who - I don't want to use the word technophiles, that you come across that, technophobes and technophiles - and it's been kind of the people who are really enamoured with technology saying, or superimposing on the faculty versus saying "here's one option".

And,

> Well, I think the whole engagement, the assessment and engagement process is so important. Rather than having technology laid on faculty that maybe the communication has to be two way. That faculty are able to say what they think about it, and to be able to have open dialogue about it. You know, I find that here we haven't had a whole lot of open dialogue with it, and so people back off with it, just because I think its more the process than the content, that there hasn't been a lot of dialogue, there hasn't been room to criticize or question, or its just been, "okay, it's there so use it".

Most participants identified the need for a broader dialogue with colleagues and other social work educators that included the need for a venue for sharing ideas and learning from each other, as well as enhanced ICT leadership in social work education in general. This was especially true for those participants who were the only faculty member in their program involved or interested in e-learning. For example, Louise commented,

> I think what would also help is if I had someone who was also engaged in doing the same kind of work. I would like to be able to discuss the way I present my lecture material and it would be nice to have confirmed or be criticized so I could change it – the way I develop bringing in the material. So I'm relying too much on student feedback and student feedback is not the same as having the feedback from a colleague because some students like it and others don't, but with a

> colleague I would be able to say "This is the point I'm trying to get across, do you think I'm doing this in the most effective way or are there better ways or am I totally out of line here?"

Even in those programs where several faculty were involved in e-learning, participants felt there had been insufficient dialogue with colleagues within the program about pedagogical issues and strategies. For example, Beverly observed "I'm not – like it sounds like I'm anti-technology. I'm not anti-technology but what I am anti is not thinking things through, and thinking systemically, and developing policies."

In expressing this need, a number of challenges related to initiating faculty dialogue were identified. The first was that the dialogue had not caught up to the speed at which ICTs were evolving and being implemented. For example, Susan suggested the metaphor of driving a new type of vehicle without the user's manual:

> It's like people saying: "I want one of those, too", and we don't even know if that item is a safe thing to own, and we haven't got the users manual developed, so that's what I see happening. I'm driving this car and I don't even know if it's safe to drive!! And whose going to teach them how to use it, I don't know how myself, I haven't found the user's manual!! . . . exactly! . . . you can use that in your report if you want, that analogy!

A related challenge conveyed by participants was that implementing online was perceived as threatening in a number of ways, including: the need to learn computer and technical skills; and, that a shift to e-learning requires faculty to examine their current approaches to instructional design and learn new skills of teaching online. Associated with these challenges were undertones of fear and concerns about what these significant shifts would mean for individual faculty. Concerns included taking on a new way of teaching without adequate skills or

experience, and concerns about how the shift to an online environment might affect their teaching evaluations and potential future employment, especially for part-time and full-time contract faculty. These perceived threats and shifts had contributed to increased tension in some programs where faculty were not interested in or supportive of e-learning. For example, James described initial resistance to e-learning by some of their colleagues. In this instance, the social work school had been the first department in the university to launch an online course:

> I mean there was a very strong negative reaction to the course from the Social Work faculty initially – it was the first course for the whole university – the first 100% delivered on-line course, and it took the university by surprise. They expected it to come from engineering or mathematics or something and here's this *social worker*!! In fact, it's become the model for subsequent web courses on-campus. So, the school's got a bit of status out of that! And it looked a little bit silly for the most innovative school, to be, on the other hand - having sort of a faculty that's forbidding its use!! It was a bit embarrassing in a way! It was that, I think, more than anything else that led to a softening of the position. But there are definitely still faculty that have severe problems with it.

Interestingly, while participants acknowledged that there was a wide range of perspectives amongst their colleagues about the fit of e-learning in social work education, in two instances, participants stated that their programs had been the first in the entire University to offer online learning.

The need for dialogue extended beyond individual departments and universities. Participants conveyed that there was a need for ongoing dialogue in social work education in general about pedagogical issues and strategies of implementing e-learning. Several participants felt isolated as they worked through pedagogical and professional challenges and stated they were interested in participating in our interviews as an opportunity to talk about their experiences and

challenges. For example, Louise commented, "(It) was nice to be able to talk to someone who's interested in these issues. I really wish my colleagues would listen." Participants also identified a need for social work educators to share and demonstrate examples of how they had implemented e-learning in their courses. For example, James stated that although various presenters at conferences reported on their experiences and student outcomes, there was a need to actually see examples of how learning was constructed:

> But like I say, a lot of my colleagues, I have never seen their courses. I even go to their papers and they talk about this is the course, but I've actually never seen them. They're all behind passwords. And this comes up at every conference, and there's not that sharing of (courses). Because you talk about how great it works. Well I could probably learn something by looking at it . . . but sorry, "it's behind a password". So I just heard that there's something that I'm not allowed to see that works really well! So what!

In a similar fashion, Susan commented, "Well, I'd like to see more sessions at social work conferences be devoted to this topic. I think it's wonderful you're doing research on it. I feel like a pioneer and I'm just sort of learning by the seat of my pants, and somehow I don't think I should be having to do that."

> Well, I'd like to see more sessions at social work conferences be devoted to this topic. I think it's wonderful that you're doing research on it. I feel like I'm a pioneer and I'm sort of just learning by the seat of my pants, and somehow I don't think I should be having to do that, because I think there are other people who have quite a bit of knowledge ahead of mine, and experience, but I'm having trouble finding out how to tap into that. So I don't know if that's sessions at conferences that I'm not aware of – like I found out there's a WebCT conference, but didn't even know that was happening – just when I started getting interested in this, and had I known about that – but I wasn't on the list for call for papers or advertisements for it, so I didn't know until after it happened that it had happened. Where maybe a lot of the issues that I'm wrestling with would have been discussed. And I'm also wondering about other social work conferences – whether there are sessions for people, professional development opportunities. I

> find I'm very interested in the pedagogical and non-technical issues of WebCT - the impact of online delivery. And I'm not finding forums for discussion that easily. And so, I'm interested in what those opportunities are and how they can be created – either within universities, across disciplines as well.

Most participants were unaware of what other social work educators and programs were doing across Canada, and many were unaware of resources and opportunities that were available. For example, many participants were not aware of the Annual Technology Conference for Social Work Education and Practice hosted by the University of South Carolina, or professional journals with a focus on technology and social work education and practice such as The Journal of Technology in Human Services and New Technology in Human Services, or the Human Services Information Technology Association (HUSITA), an international association of human service educators and service providers interested in the use of technology use in education and service delivery. In discussing the need for dialogue, most participants emphasized the need for leadership, both within their own departments and universities and within the social work profession. In this regard, Louise recommended that the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (CASSW) take a leadership role in facilitating a dialogue and opportunity for exchange for social work educators in Canada:

> Well I think CASSW could play a role if they wanted to and they haven't done anything in this area. I think maybe an enabling role - sort of a mediating role. When you have these sort different interest forums and learners, there could be one around Internet teaching.

Build in a Critique of Technology

In addition to the need for pedagogical dialogue amongst faculty, several participants recommended that a critique of technology be built into the teaching -

learning process. They suggested this critique should include an analysis of online communication for social work learning and practice, and an analysis of the effect of technology on social and economic forces. For example, Maria stated,

> Okay, let's say you're doing a policy course on the privatization of social work services. What does that mean? How does that tie us into market economy? How that ties us in to commodification? Well you want to do a bit of experiential learning, spend one class talking about – "Well, what about the delivery of your distance (course) and how I'm talking to you right now by typing at you?" "You're buying this course and paying a little bit more for it", and tell them a little bit about the intellectual . . . the struggle around intellectual property, who does this course belong to? So I mean you could do some experiential learning right there and say ok, let's reflect on our own experience right here and how does this relate to this larger issue of commodification and privatization of social work services? So I think there's probably room to work with all that. So it's taking apart all of those concepts and engaging that critique and making sure that what it is we're offering, or trying to do, is not immune from that critique as well.

Evaluation of Online Learning

All participants identified evaluation of online learning in social work as important. Areas requiring evaluation included understanding social work students' experience of learning online, measuring learning outcomes, evaluating practice skills, and the integration of professional of values and ethics. For example, James noted,

> When we develop the learning models, when we evaluate the learning . . . I think we need to ask the students what worked – get their feedback on perception, satisfaction, what worked, use observation kind of evaluations rather than the kind of objective - the ones where we compare the performance. You know, the no significant difference phenomenon that's out there. And still I think the majority of studies being done are measuring the learning and impact on grades and I think we're way off base by doing that because it's the teacher - the effect of the teacher is so important too . . . make sure we're not comparing apples and oranges. So I think what we need to do is more research that has students as the centre of our development and our

> evaluation. And that's what I've tried to do. I think that is where we need to go with the technology – just like when we're teaching an in-class course – you get feedback from students. So if I was going to make one big recommendation to guide us, that would be the one - keep it student centred.

While all participants supported the need for evaluation, only two had used evaluations developed specifically for learning in an online environment. For example, Jennifer noted,

> Well I haven't gotten quite that far yet, but I figure it will have to be some addition to our regular feedback - course evaluation. So it will have to be some additional questions that are tailored to students' experience in learning in an on-line environment. I haven't gotten any further in terms of thinking through that question yet.

Likewise, Roger commented on the need for revised evaluation processes:

> Oh, they're awful when it comes to trying to have students complete them in an on-line course! I would guess that more than half the items just don't make sense, but we're still trying to use them. . . . We've known this for a number of years, those instruments have never worked, and we've been using technology for years now.
>
> And,
>
> They don't have a whole lot of items that relate directly to the use of technology in online courses. And a lot of the items don't fit because we're using online delivery, so I think we need to rethink the way that students evaluate some courses and get much better feedback from them on how the course worked for them. I still don't think we do a very good job of that.

Most participants used their programs' standard course evaluations, which they felt were not adequate. A few participants had expanded the standard course evaluations to include additional questions about online learning. For some participants, the process of evaluation was perceived as threatening in terms their level of experience in teaching online and job security. This was especially a concern for contract and part-time instructors whose contracts were renewed on a term basis. Some

participants linked evaluation to the need to develop guidelines for online teaching and the overall need to engage in dialogue about these issues. For example, Stewart suggested that,

> This is all *new frontier*, so we kind of have a sense of what's a good teacher *in the classroom*, I don't have a sense of what's a good teacher *on-line.* And I think we need to at least have dialogues. And by no means do I think we should have a criteria around this, but administrators need in a way to know how to evaluate their faculty people, because we had stories of people who just said, you know, each week said, "chapter 2, read . . . chapter 3, read . . . " that's it, and "discuss amongst yourselves". I mean is that ok? You know, what are we doing here? (Alan: What are the expectations?) Right, and the skills for teaching and learning online? And *other different skills* – other *truly different* skills that we need to be fostering within our faculty.

Summary

In summary, participants identified a large number of professional and pedagogical challenges in implementing e-learning in their programs. Many were concerned about the impact of the loss face-to-face instruction on professional socialization and modelling. Some participants stated that online learning was not appropriate for entire programs. Others with more experience in using learning technologies, believed that although offering online learning was more challenging, it was possible to offer social work courses in online environments. Many participants identified the need to rethink a number of aspects of curricula in order to implement e-learning. They also expressed concerns about the need for faculty dialogue about online learning in social work education and concerns about their preparation for teaching online. The professional and pedagogical challenges identified in this chapter have implications for program and policy development, which will be

discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight. In the next two chapters I will discuss findings related to faculty and administrative challenges.

CHAPTER 5

FACULTY CHALLENGES

Participants identified a number of inter-related faculty concerns and challenges in implementing e-learning in their programs. These are organized under four major topic areas: Time, workload and compensation; instructional concerns; faculty development; and, the need for faculty dialogue and input into decision making. These challenges have administrative and policy implications for programs that are implementing e-learning, or who may be considering implementing e-learning in their programs.

Time, Workload and Compensation

> But at the moment I'm just thinking, okay, how am I even going to get time to pull together appropriate readings for them, let alone figuring out the additional layer of making it more dynamic, and online, and all that kind of stuff. So, yeah, that would be great! (having time). I wouldn't necessarily be looking for any monetary rewards, it just time to do it. (Monica)

Most participants identified concerns about time and workload. Related issues were compensation, incentives, disincentives, who should be involved, and the question of faculty choice as significant challenges that had not been resolved in their programs. Participants were concerned that program and institutional policies were unclear or had not yet been developed to respond to faculty concerns about workload, compensation, or incentives. Responding to workload challenges was identified as a crucial element of technology integration.

Time Pressures

For most of the participants, involvement in e-learning was time consuming in several ways: it took time to learn the technology, including the necessary computer skills and course management software; it took more time to develop and plan online content and learning activities; it took time to learn new approaches to pedagogy and learning strategies for online learning environments; it took more time to teach online than in face-to-face classrooms; it took time to respond and consult on technical problems, and it took time to maintain and support the continued development of courses. Adelle, who had integrated online learning to enhance her face-to-face courses over the previous year, stated:

> Well, everything is about time, isn't it? So whether it's the time I spent last summer - which *was most* - I didn't go away last summer, so I spent a *huge amount of time*, but a lot of it was just playing, and how can I say "just"? A lot of it was playing and getting used to it, being comfortable with the environment, making mistakes, not knowing how to upload something, forgetting, you know, that sort of thing. So that was a time commitment, and I don't think that I was a whole lot slower than anyone who would be who made that commitment to get that many icons up, and that much information up. It took time.

Similarly, when asked about key faculty issues, Ann, a participant with extensive teaching and administrative experience who had developed and taught fully online courses replied:

> Time and money. It takes so much longer to develop and become prepared to teach a web based course. I don't know, last semester as we were writing these modules and interacting with our instructional designers, I found that my time got to the point that I couldn't do much else, and I was teaching other courses at the time, and doing administrative work, and it always takes longer than you anticipate. So we started writing these modules, organizing writing last March. As I say, we're still writing and the course has started. Actually, yeah, we're still writing the last one, and not all of them have been uploaded to the site. So this has been nine months of intensive work. So it's the

> time. The time to teach the course is heavily loaded at the front end of the course and the students are just getting used to technology, and I imagine as time goes on over the years more and more students will already be familiar with web based learning when they take a course.

And, Elaine, who taught face-to-face and distance courses, observed:

> It took a lot more hours to develop the course than I had anticipated. Now part of that is the medium in which you're developing it, but part of it is there's a difference - well I found when I was developing it, it's a different way of thinking about the course and like I said at the beginning, the Internet imposes structure so you need to apply that structure to teaching and I don't find that to be necessarily a bad thing. I found that having to create a course that worked on the Internet, I had to be very organized and clear in my categorization of what the content was and how I was going to get it across and it first required a lot more clarity on my part. I think that was a good thing, so that meant that the whole process took even longer in the beginning but I've become faster at it now. But it's still, I believe, more time than a traditional course. And it also takes more time over time as you're dealing with the course because students – well, they do communicate a fair bit by Email and to respond to that and when I was the direct instructor of this course, there was a lot of work with the distance ed. people with technical issues – sometimes the students wouldn't have the right kind of technology – they'd be missing some key things. So they'd often write to me and I'd have to negotiate with the distance ed. people and that kind of thing.

Roger, who had extensive experience with using learning technologies, linked concerns about the willingness to invest time to general scepticism about e-learning, and specifically in terms of the fit of e-learning with social work education:

> On a faculty level, time is a big one. Time, I think a lot of faculty have a show-me attitude so they need to be convinced that this stuff has a role and doesn't play a threat. It's not just more, or it's not just getting more bodies into a course, a way of delivering to 500 instead of 50, for example. We have to show them that, that, you know, there are good pedagogical reasons for doing some of this.

John, a senior faculty member with both administrative and teaching responsibilities, summarized his experiences and observations about the time involved in developing online learning in the following way:

> The faculty's experience has been that when you haven't done it before, you really cannot overestimate the amount of work involved in distributive learning. You might think, well, I have no fixed class schedule, or office hours, and really I'll never even meet these students. . . . The amount of lead-time in the technical preparation of these courses was phenomenal. It was actually quite daunting, and that's *with* (strong emphasis) the expertise and service of a continuing education department that has those skills - but they had to train us. And its a completely - the benefit to, for me, was how it made me really think about my teaching, and how I related course objectives to the activities of the class, and their methods of evaluation, and developing a course on-line really pushed me to clarify those things quite apart from the technical challenges. And then, the other thing that faculty found in terms of workload was not only was the lead time quite extraordinary - that was a whole other course effort just getting your first course up on-line, but that the amount of time that was required with students was actually more. You spend more time on-line with them collectively and individually than one would ever do in a classroom.

Workload

Participants' concerns about time were also expressed as a number of interrelated workload concerns. These included compensation for involvement in e-learning (either through release time or financial compensation), competing demands on faculty time and workloads, differential compensation between faculty and between modes of delivery, recognition, incentives and disincentives, who should be developing and teaching online courses, and faculty choice. For example, Paul, Beverly, and Theresa stated:

> I think the biggest issue is workload. When I look at my colleagues - there's a number - I would say there's three or four colleagues that I could see being engaged in this, but the problem that they have now is that they have an incredible workload and they need to be released to do this, and I don't think they could at this point in time. (Paul)

> Workload is going to be one of my first responses. To develop a course online takes a lot of input, or up-front work. I worked for weeks on the modules I created. (Beverly)

> So there are some very serious concerns with regard to workload and support, compensation, and I mean those are issues that certainly faculty expressed concerns about, and I do hear them speak to some of those issues at times...and I don't think that those issues are going to go away really quickly and they're always perhaps resolved in the best of ways. (Theresa)

When asked about whether or not they received release time or compensation, participants reported a wide range of arrangements. Several received no release time or compensation, and commented that they had developed online learning and that it was "just one more thing off the corner of my desk", or as an added expectation to their workload. Others, sometimes in the same program, had received release time, or other workload adjustments, while others were simply not aware of workload arrangements or processes to negotiate workload or compensation. For example, when asked about key faculty issues, Susan stated,

> The first one is workload . . . oh, another thing I didn't mention is that all my work of co-designing, and learning how to mount WebCT courses had been done on my own time on the corner of my desk – like I've had no release time or reduction of workload or anything to handle that. So it's been a lot of extra work just to be able to get into a position to have the ability to do it, and to redesign my courses. So that kind of workload – which I talked about earlier, so I won't dwell on – and that is the increased demand in hours of work, being on the computer, responding to more requests, expectations to respond in a more immediate fashion to requests.

In several instances, release time or other compensation received was contingent on grant funding to develop online courses, either from internal university funds or through external grants. In one program, Louise had to present a case for why teaching online learning should receive equal recognition to a face-to-face course:

> Alan: For your course, do you get some release time or support for on-line teaching?

> No, none. I mean I find this really - the new technology and the challenges it poses are not appreciated. I mean I wouldn't say this is a mean way, I think people who haven't been involved just don't know. That's probably why it gets ignored . . . I mean we at (name of university), we even have to fight to have it fully accepted as a teaching – a full teaching credit – our faculty association had to bring this up to our negotiations because originally we were only given 1/2 of teaching credit.

In contrast, at another institution, faculty were compensated for teaching distance courses at one and one half times the rate for teaching face-to-face classes, in recognition of the extra work involved in using learning technologies and teaching distance courses. In some programs there was recognition of the extra workload involved in offering online learning, and adjustments were made to workloads (for example, limiting class sizes). However, overall, participants conveyed that policies regarding workload were unclear, and that workload concerns represented a key challenge if programs were to move forward with e-learning. Nancy, who had administrative responsibilities for technology integration stated: "So I think the time and the resources issue. If they feel it's just going to increase their workload, then why do it?" David suggested that his colleagues were concerned about workloads increasing with online learning and that faculty agreements and workload arrangements will need to reflect the issue of increased workload in implementing online learning:

> It's been their experience also that delivering a WebCT course is much more, is a much heavier work load than delivering a face-to-face course. That's been their experience, and mine, too. And, faculty contracts are going to have to reflect that additional workload somehow, and they don't right now. One WebCT course is one face-to-face course, and most people that are teaching WebCT are saying, you know, that alone is going to drive me away from teaching on WebCT.

Differential Compensation: E-equity for Faculty

Concerns about differential compensation were identified in four ways. The first was compensation for the development and offering of online courses in general. The second was differential compensation for teaching distance online courses that were in transition from a traditional distance tutor model of instruction to an online model of learning. A third issue was the perception of workload inequity by some participants as a result of how their colleagues approached teaching in online courses. The fourth issue was class size. Although concerns about differential compensation are identified as faculty challenges, they also overlap with pedagogical issues and have administrative and policy implications. For example, funding to compensate faculty may be dependent on external resources; limited funding will likely influence the robustness of the learning model and activities; and, class size may be determined by institutional cost recovery policies. Most participants identified the absence of compensation policies and guidelines for e-learning as an important area for future policy development.

In reference to course development, most participants stated that there was a need for clear policies regarding workload and compensation given the amount of time required to develop online learning. When asked about release time, some participants had not considered this as a possibility, and for Elaine, my question prompted this response "Well, gee, if I . . . I hadn't even thought about it before, but I mean, if I were given a course release so that I could devote the time to developing a web-based course, it would probably move me faster towards adopting web-based

instruction." At one site, Susan noted that distance faculty received compensation for course development, whereas faculty teaching on-campus courses did not:

> What exists for *on-campus* faculty - face-to-face faculty as an incentive to develop a WebCT or on-line component for them in their classrooms, and the motivations would be different and as far as I know, there would not be any financial reward for them to do it, or any release time. It's a totally different structure for on-campus.

For faculty teaching in traditional distance courses based previously on a tutor model, the introduction of online learning had implications for workload and class size. For example, as noted in Chapter Four, moving to an online learning environment required increased instructor involvement in online discussions and collaborative learning activities, a shift in assessment activities from a self-directed and self-paced model to a time based model.

Setting Class Size Limits

In addition to a shift in the learning model and levels of participation, several participants identified class size as an important pedagogical and workload concern, especially in cost-recovery distance programs where programs and institutions have a minimum number of students as a requirement for course offerings. In one example, the minimum had been set at 40 students, and although the question of appropriate class sizes for effective online learning had been raised, the issue had not been resolved. In this regard, Susan made the following observations:

> I think because no one knows whether that's *true* about class size (need for smaller online classes), or how we would deal with it financially, it just kind of sitting out there. It's on our list to be addressed.

And,

> There's always been a differential that doesn't seem fair because there always seems to be larger classes in distance to start with because the maximum is often higher and there's also often a waiting list, so there's great pressure to take a fully subscribed course and maybe a few extras, and as people drop - put more in, and so there's always been that differential. So I always found that the workload is *higher* in each distance course as opposed to an on-campus course already, and then if you add the on-line delivery, then that becomes even more (demands) on us. And there's no differential in teaching credit or pay or anything.

In another example, Michelle, who had extensive experience teaching in online environments found she had to be firm in terms of setting limits to the numbers of students who could be accommodated in online courses:

> There is an issue with online learning that this (institution) has not dealt with . . . especially the way I teach, or we teach, you can't have the same number of students as you do in a regular classroom. In the (name of) course, that I taught last spring, I said I'm only taking 24. This is experimental, and they allowed me to. I wound up with 26. Normally the limit on that is 35. I said I won't do it – find somebody else to do it – I'm not doing it because you have to read everything - you don't have to reply to everything, but you have to read everything.

In two instances, programs had decided to limit enrolment in online courses. For example, Nancy stated her program had specifically decided to limit online courses to fewer than twenty five students. This decision was based on their view of what was pedagogically sound for online learning in social work courses, and as a specific implementation strategy to recognizing that their faculty were new to online teaching. In another program, Theresa noted that her program had added additional sections to help compensate for increased faculty time in teaching online:

> I believe administration is certainly aware of, and there was some movement to make the compensation . . . in keeping the numbers in each course lower or when there's a larger number of students offer the faculty two sections as opposed to one, so they are compensated for the amount of extra effort and time that it takes to deliver to a large number of students.

The question of class size in online learning environments was identified as an important issue for further exploration for these educators, both in terms of workload and in terms of effective teaching and learning. Related issues include how e-learning is being used (for example as a supplement, or fully online course), the type of course (practice skills versus content) and the instructional design and learning strategies being employed (instructivist versus constructivist).

Sessional and Pre-Tenure Vulnerability

A related issue identified by some participants was the involvement of sessional and pre-tenure faculty in developing e-learning? This issue was linked to concerns about differential compensation, part-time versus full-time status, employment security, preferred teaching style, recognition in terms of tenure and promotion, and the question of choice – whether or not faculty had a choice to become involved in e-learning. In this regard, a number of participants raised the question of who should be involved in developing and offering e-learning in their programs. Some participants felt that it should not be part-time sessional faculty who were involved in the development of e-learning. For example, Elaine stated:

> I think it needs to be full-time faculty that do it.
>
> Alan: Why would you make that suggestion?
>
> Elaine: Well because I think that it's hard to do . . . it requires a lot of resources first of all, and I think the full-time faculty have more time to do that sort of thing. I guess I'm saying this from the point of view of having been a sessional when they developed this and now being a full-time faculty also. I just think that when there's something very difficult to put into place like this, like it has a lot of the very touchy challenges, and when there's controversy around whether it should be done, I think it should be the full-time faculty that do it.

> Alan: The leadership for the implementation should come from the full-time faculty?
>
> Elaine: Yes. Because in a way it's kind of like passing the problems on to the lowest possible person to implement, and that person may not have the ability or may not be positioned well enough to deal with some of the controversy and time requirements and that kind of thing.

A similar perspective was conveyed by Michelle, who emphasized the need for full-time faculty to be involved in implementation, and that until full-time faculty were involved, it was unlikely that e-learning would be fully accepted as a legitimate activity. Michelle emphasized both part-time status and gender as elements of potential marginalization of online learning:

> Do not farm out the web based courses to part-time faculty. If web based courses become an integral part of our offerings, they have to be developed by faculty – or an integral part of the faculty.
>
> Alan: And the reason for [this recommendation]?
>
> Because part-time faculty are marginalized and on-line learning is marginalized, and marginalization on marginalization is a way to keep it on the fringes forever.
>
> Alan: Rather than integrate it into the mainstream?
>
> Yes, so I think that has to happen, I also think it has to become a non-gendered activity. Now I don't know - but here's my fear because this was true of (prior learning). Prior learning was mainly a gendered activity, it was women practitioners doing it for women students and also usually done through Continuing Ed, so you may have all of these people on the fringes of the academy – women, continuing Ed., part-time instructors - and so the more that activities that *threaten* - and I use the word threaten advisedly - the status quo, are done by people who are on the margins, the easier it to marginalize those activities.
>
> Alan: Interesting . . .
>
> And it's only when – and you can quote me on this – the white males in the academy start to do these things and the academy will start looking at them seriously.

A related issue for part-time faculty were concerns about receiving negative evaluations from students involved in online courses, and the implications for future employment. Paul stated that in his program a recommendation had been made to place a letter on faculty's files, if case evaluations were negative:

> I've already talked with the (administration) and we're going to put a letter in the files of instructors just to be fair with them – that we've asked them to do this under these circumstances so if their course evaluations are a bit wonky . . . that's there's some explanation of it

Lack of Recognition

A key faculty issue was the need for increased program and institutional recognition for involvement in e-learning and the tension between wanting to explore innovations in teaching and learning, and the need to conduct research and publish. Paul, a participant with extensive experience using learning technologies and who had both teaching and administrative responsibilities, emphasized that this was especially true for faculty who had not yet achieved tenure:

> If they're in a pre-tenure situation, it has to be *valued*, it has to be part of consideration of their tenure. Without that . . . it's really not effective, and it won't be able to carry the day. So all of (those) systemic issues have to be in place for it to become more mainstream. It will become more mainstream - the issue is how sooner or how later, that's my belief.

Overall, most participants did not feel their involvement in e-learning was valued in terms of promotion or tenure. For example, Monica, a faculty member working on achieving tenure, stated, "It's appreciated, you know, but there is no formal reward system", and Louise, a professor with many years teaching experience commented, "I mean I get a full teaching credit, but I do not get any recognition for the considerable and great amount of time that is involved in preparing for an online

course." Louise's motivation for developing and offering online learning was primarily intrinsic, driven by an interest to improve her teaching, enhance interactivity in distance courses, experiment with new learning technologies, and offer improved access and flexibility to students. In other words, improved pedagogy and access. Roger summarized the need for improved ways of recognizing the scholarship of teaching in the following way:

> The other problem is on the back end, when at the end of the year when we do our annual reports and go through a merit process, you know, its pretty easy to recognize things like research productivity and even service, but we sure have a tough time evaluating teaching and really giving good credit for the development work that goes into changing the way that we teach.

The need for revision to recognition processes for non-tenure track faculty was also identified as a concern, including recognition for the purpose of contract renewal.

Participants' enthusiasm about the pedagogical possibilities of e-learning in social work education was tempered by their concerns about time, compensation, and recognition, in addition to the professional and pedagogical concerns discussed previously. Ann and James suggested that what was needed was "rewards, not punishment". For example, Ann commented, "In fact we're coming up to performance reviews, and one of our faculty has been involved in developing web based courses is coming up for tenure, so we'll have to see how (their) involvement is rewarded, or punished." Likewise, James emphasized that given the lack of recognition, faculty needed to have a high level of interest in e-learning: "It has to be something you're just passionate about – *you do not do this to promote your career*! If that's what one's interests are, then *they're mistaken*!" In this regard, several

participants identified that their involvement in e-learning represented a disincentive in terms of meeting research, and other workload demands. For example, Paul noted,

> Our own faculty is very research oriented, the bells and whistles go with the research. For them to learn how to do this, it would cut away time from their ability to be able to do that research. So, for most of them it wouldn't be an attractive kind of thing. I think after they get tenure, then they have a little bit more freedom to choose in that kind of a way, but still, the way our particular faculty is going - it's going toward more research than it even is teaching, or innovations in teaching.

In a similar fashion, Ann commented,

> It's becoming even more difficult to get the faculty interested because of the pressures to publish, and promotion and tenure have, well, has always there's been the pressure to publish, but its increasing all the time, so we'll have to see how much that's recognized, and if it is recognized then that would be some incentive for other members, faculty members to become involved, but right now they see it as outside their research. I mean, they're much more interested in getting those publications on their CVs.

Two participants stated they would actively discourage newer, tenure track faculty from becoming involved in online learning. For example, Ann stated "One thing I wanted to caution (them)[tenure track colleague] about is the fact (they are) untenured, and (they) should be really cautious unless (they're) using this for research." John, in expanding on our discussion about shifting faculty demographics also noted that newer faculty are actively discouraged from becoming involved in e-learning:

> Alan: It's been suggested that because of the demands of trying to achieve tenure, that (taking on online teaching) could be a disincentive for new faculty because they're . . .
>
> John: *Absolutely*! That is part of the struggle. I mean, I think that they - more of them have the technical facility to move in this direction more readily, but, because institutions have not grappled fully yet with the workload implications, some junior faculty are discouraged from

> doing it, and some of us who are senior faculty *actively discourage them from doing it.*

Given these disincentives, I asked participants about their views on whether or not their involvement in developing e-learning could be (or should be) considered as part of scholarship activities or incorporated into recognition processes. Several participants felt that their work in developing online learning should be given more recognition in terms of being a scholarly activity and service. For example, Louise stated "Well yeah, I keep on saying that the Internet courses should be put on the publication list. I mean they're public, but I haven't gotten very far with this idea." In a similar fashion, James, who had several years experience in developing online distance learning, commented on how his work in e-learning was not viewed as important in recognition and promotion processes:

> The other one was the recognition thing hasn't happened. I just got a promotion to (position) and they didn't even want it in my resume. Not only the on-line course, but the other web supplements and resources that I had put up – like the (web site) which is a site for social workers to go to that literally *hundreds of people go to* because there's an on-line glossary and there's all these resources, and more people probably go there than have ever read any of the journal articles that I've published! And no matter how much I jump up and down and say how important this is to the profession, they just (say) you know, anybody can throw up a website ! It's not reviewed by peers. And teaching in general, has always been - at a university - not seen, not regarded as highly. And what they looked at were my publications. That's what gives you the status, so yeah, it's a problem. We just keep - (the) people who are into teaching keep kicking and screaming.

And, Paul suggested:

> Absolutely, there has to be ways to acknowledge this stuff. And to do a really well formed, web-based course - it's quite an accomplishment, quite a product as such, and I think that that should be considered as another type of a product, that's as such eligible for tenure review.

Others, while acknowledging workload and compensation issues, were more sceptical about using the development of online learning or high quality learning objects for publication, unless that development included a formal research component. For example, when asked about the concept of considering the development of a course as equivalent to a publication, Ann responded by saying "you're treading on difficult turf there."

In one example, Roger noted that while there had been some recognition of faculty's involvement in developing e-learning, universities needed to revise faculty assessment processes to recognize contributions to teaching, including the development of online learning:

> Well, for me the incentive that really counts is probably at the end of the year when we go through a merit process. What I would like to see is a much better way of assessing faculty members' contribution to teaching development, and that may be through a peer review process in the classroom, and in on-line kinds of courses it may be a peer review by having me sitting in on-line along with all the other students in a class. You know, there's certainly ways that we can do that. We can have people do a peer review on the course itself, a series of modules, or other things we've got built into a course. So I think it's a matter of finding a way of doing a peer review on what somebody's put together, and then really giving good credit for that . . . I think we just need to get serious about it and make sure that universities *recognize* it as a valuable contribution to a faculty.

The Question of Faculty Choice

Several participants raised unresolved concerns and questions about issue of faculty choice of involvement in e-learning. Concerns included questions about whether individual faculty had the choice of becoming involved in e-learning. For example, Beverly, a senior faculty member who had developed an online course commented, "I see parallels between the student perspective and the faculty

perspective – that they have to agree to it, and they have to know ahead of time, and it has to be a free choice." In some programs, involvement in e-learning was identified as an expectation for newly hired faculty and in teaching contracts. In these instances, established faculty questioned whether or not they could be required to become involve in online learning. For example, Stewart summarized a number of questions that were emerging in his program:

> Something that has come up recently is where does distance ed, on-line, whatever – web-based instruction fit? Can people say "No, I'm not going to do that"? Do you have 50% of your faculty who are skilled on-line folk, and 50% who never do it or should the expectation be that it's equally distributed across faculty? Is it on the basis of content? If you teach a policy course here, then you should teach a policy course in that environment? Are those academic freedom issues? Are those individual issues?

Likewise, Maureen commented,

> One question that comes up, is: do faculty have the right to refuse to teach on-line if it wasn't in their original contract? I don't know how other schools (deal with this), if that comes up with other people, but I think that's one issue here. People have come to the program, and it's not necessarily been stated in their contracts that they'll be teaching on-line. So, when you're hired to teach at a university, are you hired to teach in any way? Or does that only mean on-campus? So it becomes a workload issue, and then that has program implications that faculty have the right to refuse to teach on-line. Then how do you deliver your program, if you have people opting out, or the freedom to opt out – "well I only teach this way, thank you". Or, "don't put me in an on-campus class, I want to do distance stuff."

Faculty choice was viewed as important in the context of a number of issues including scepticism about the fit of e-learning with social work education, instructor skill (both technical and in instructional design), pedagogical orientation and preferred teaching style, interest, concerns about intellectual property, need for teaching guidelines, class size, ethical concerns, concerns about the amount of time

involved and workload demands, compensation, and recognition. For example, Stewart, who had taught one online distance course stated, "I will try this out. This is a new mode of disseminating ideas, and I'm interested in it, but I don't want to ever be forced to be told what mode of teaching I have to do." Likewise, Paul, who had extensive experience in using learning technologies including e-learning stated,

> I do well teaching, I'm a good teacher, I really enjoy it – that's probably the thing (I enjoy most) – and, I could not envisage myself having a teaching workload in primarily distance or online. I couldn't do that. I need to have . . . I like to have face-to-face (contact). That's not saying I couldn't do one or two or anything like that, but I need to have a balance.

Maureen also suggested that there are some faculty who may not be suited to teaching in online environments:

> And there are some faculty from whatever the institution for whom this environment will never be comfortable and perhaps should not teach on-line, as there are students for whom this environment isn't comfortable. So it's understanding that just because you are an effective teacher on-campus doesn't necessarily equate to the fact of teacher in the distance program and perhaps at some level there should be some option for faculty to voice their concerns on those issues.

A related issue identified by Maureen was the question of whether "you run the risk of developing two faculties?", referring to the possible emergence of two types of instructor: online, and face-to-face. In three instances, programs had specifically identified involvement with e-learning as optional and guided by instructor interest. In one program, a decision was made to support innovators and early adopters first, as a specific implementation strategy, with the view that these faculty would be able to share their experience and support others who may become interested in online learning later on.

Combined with concerns about workload and compensation, unresolved questions about faculty choice highlight the need for program strategies and policies to respond to these challenges.

Instructional Concerns

Pedagogical Orientation, Skills and Role Shifts

As a result of the professional and pedagogical challenges outlined in Chapter Four, a key challenge for participants was adapting to significant role shifts in implementing online learning in their programs. These shifts are summarized in Appendix K.

Need for Teaching Expectations and Guidelines

Some participants felt there was a need for clear teaching guidelines and expectations for teaching online courses, both in terms of pedagogical models and in terms of teaching expectations. For example, Maria commented,

> I think there is a real disparity, I don't know if that's the right word - a very different pedagogical approach to on-line stuff among instructors. Like just listening to two of my colleagues - they're both teaching on-line. One of them I think is investing very minimal time in it, the other is investing *maximum, maximum (emphasis)* amounts of time in it. So there's a real disparity there. Whereas it's a little harder to do in the classroom.

Susan also emphasized the need for dialogue about approaches to teaching online, in order to develop a balance between the benefits of e-learning and workload demands:

> And I know the demands on the instructor's time for example, is an issue of concern to other instructors in other schools because I've heard them mention it. Some of them have had to set boundaries about "I'll only be on the WebCT twice a week, or whatever. So there are some very common issues, I think. And I want us to pause and have this discussion not because I think we shouldn't be doing what we're doing, but I think that I we need to be thoughtful about what we're doing. And we might be able to do it in better ways.

Intellectual Property

A number of interrelated concerns about intellectual property were expressed by participants. These included ownership of learning materials, archiving of courses, access to course materials, credit and recognition for developing materials, and compensation for developing material. Underlying these potential obstacles were concerns about the effect of technology integration on their role and identity as educators, and on job security. For example, Stewart stated,

> And one of the fears is that: are we going to be producers of knowledge and then let go, and then have anybody else just post these lectures, and we lose kind of the sense of what a professor is all about.

Maureen noted that the relationships between ownership, recognition, and compensation were also important issues that had not yet been resolved:

> If I write a course – not just online, but if I develop my workbook kind of approach, and my lectures, exercises . . . who owns that? And is it different for on-campus than for online? (If) someone takes my notes and does their thing. Do I get royalties? Should I get royalties? Because when you teach a course as a sessional, what you get is a course outline, and if you're lucky you get a reading pack, a reading list, and off you go – you develop it. But, if you teach my advanced practice course, you come in and take my notes, you may modify them or not, you might not like the exercises, or the cases, but you've got something. You can edit it, and go with it. So, who owns that? And should I get recognition, royalties, whatever. Any say over what you do with my content? – Maybe you change it, to the point where . . . and should I be credited as offering the course? I mean these are issues that are emerging quickly.

The relationship between intellectual property and course quality was also identified as important. In the following example Beverly was concerned about how the online learning she had developed was being utilized:

> Another issue is intellectual property because in one arena it's considered scholarship, and under what guise do people, you know, do

> I give my web course to someone else to use? Well, its mine, and the university, and I know CAUT hasn't come to terms with this. So, for example, I think the web course I developed is quite nice, and I had another faculty come to me and ask if (they) could use it . . . if (they) could have it. And I said, no. One of the issues was I had given a certain individual my (content area) notes for a class and there were major complaints about that class, and my name was on it. Well, I mean, for the web notes it's mine. And you know, who's ultimately responsible for a class that goes wrong?

These unresolved concerns about intellectual property represent a potential obstacle to faculty becoming involved in online learning. They also represent an important area for policy clarification and development. In several instances, participants linked concerns about intellectual property, along with workload concerns, to potential collective agreement conflicts. Overall, program and institutional policies had not kept pace with the rapid adoption of e-learning. On a program level, participants felt there was a need for faculty dialogue about issues related to intellectual property, along with a discussion of other pedagogical and faculty challenges. For example, Stewart stated that in his program, "We feel that we've jumped into this major program and we're not all on board, we all have our hesitancies, and we also are still confused around policies, and ownership and (academic) freedom."

Resolving concerns about intellectual property was viewed as important in order to respond to how learning activities are developed and shared in online learning environments. These include the development of high quality digital learning objects, the emergence of learning object repositories, the potential for pedagogical and administrative efficiencies, and the potential for collaboration across programs, disciplines and institutions.

Collaboration

Given the emerging nature of online learning environments and the cost and time involved in developing high quality online learning activities and resources, I asked whether participants or their programs had collaborated with other programs in developing courses or learning objects. Although a group of programs in one region had collaborated to develop a particular course stream, no other participants or programs had collaborated with other social work education programs in developing online courses, learning activities or learning objects. Three programs had been involved in other forms of collaboration. These included collaboration in co-offering different program levels within a region, collaboration in a government-sponsored certificate program, and collaboration with a social service agency to develop a continuing education course. In two instances, programs had collaborated internally in their own institutions to develop interdisciplinary online courses. In one program, collaboration was limited to distance courses versus on-campus courses, although this was being re-considered in light of the adoption of e-learning for on-campus courses. In another example, Roger stated that his program had considered developing shared learning resources with other programs in their region, although this initiative had not yet been developed:

> Alan: Have you been involved in collaboration with other Canadian social work programs in terms of the development of content and modules?
>
> Roger: No, we've had discussions about it, but we haven't, to my knowledge, done that yet. And there are a number of things that we've talked about, for example, offer basic introductory social work courses, both within the faculty and for students who are not in the faculty. And I know we've had discussions with other schools about maybe coming up with one course that might be good for all of

> (region) - one school would develop that, and our part of the collaboration might to be to develop another module, or another course or a piece of (a) course that comes to everybody. But we haven't, for some reason, taken that extra step to actually make this happen.

Most participants expressed strong interest in the concept of collaboration and in learning from other social work educators involved in e-learning. At the individual faculty level, participants expressed an interest and willingness to share their resources and learning. However, most were also in the beginning stages of implementation of e-learning in their own programs and had not begun to think about expanding their work to include collaborative arrangements. For example, Monica noted, "Oh, there's certainly potential out there, I just don't think we've moved forward enough in our thinking." Likewise, Stewart commented, "I've been wondering about collaboration just within our own school – between the on-site and distance (programs)." Most were unaware of e-learning initiatives evolving in other social work programs and regions of the country, and there were no developed processes for faculty in Canadian social work programs to communicate, consult, or collaborate in e-learning initiatives. Most were not aware of the emerging resources of learning objects and learning object repositories, although discussion about this emerged during our interviews.

While interested in collaboration, participants identified a number of important pedagogical and administrative obstacles, including concerns about intellectual property, the integrity of the learning process, the logistics of sharing learning resources, perceived threats to program integrity, variance in release time and compensation policies between institutions, and the implications for residency and transfer arrangements. In this regard, most programs were at the beginning stages

of implementation and had not yet thought through emerging shifts as a result of e-learning, including the implications for cross-jurisdictional course offerings, inter-institutional collaboration, residency requirements and transfer arrangements, accreditation processes, and competition between programs.

The discussion of collaboration in e-learning raised a number of philosophical, pedagogical and policy issues for participants. Key tensions and unresolved issues were intellectual property and ownership concerns, and tensions involving collaboration versus competition. For example, Jennifer, a faculty member who also coordinated distance education courses, commented:

> I'm just curious whether or not social work will go that way or not (for profit e-learning resources). I mean I can see people entering partnerships with the publishing houses around this kind of stuff in more of a for profit manner, and it will be very interesting to see where this falls down, whether people are feeling collaborative enough in this environment to see that shared kind of stuff or whether they're going to feel that this becomes a way for them to enter into more private (arrangements).

As online learning expands in social work education, programs will need to develop processes to address the influence of ICTs on core curricula and increased inter-program competition, while at the same time find ways to collaborate in order to share pedagogical and professional resources.

Those participants who had been involved in collaboration had selected non-competitive areas for collaboration, as opposed to core program content. Michelle challenged the belief that social work education is collaborative, both in terms of approaches to learning, and in terms of inter-program competition. In this regard she suggested, "I think the rhetoric is collaborative and constructivist, I think the reality is

not. And hence, the resistance is around – this is my analysis – the resistance is around basically a feeling that this might expose the rhetoric for what it is."

Confidentiality and Privacy

As noted in Chapter Four, concerns about confidentiality and privacy in teaching social work were identified as an important area for academic and administrative policy development.

Faculty Development

> I think we all know it's true . . . but it's probably not the nicest thing to say - and it's not all university professors. We all know that we're not trained. Our PhD training rarely, if ever, involves training in teaching. (James)

The pedagogical challenges, role shifts, and technical skills outlined above have important implications for faculty development. Participants saw themselves as requiring a complex set of skills that include competency in the use of technology, a willingness to examine teaching, a willingness to take the initiative, flexibility, and a sense of safety and security to experiment with new approaches to teaching and learning. For example, Elaine emphasized the need for faculty to be open and flexible by stating:

> I think that as faculty, if we're going to use this method, I think we need to be able to admit to ourselves that we don't maybe have as much expertise in the field as we would like to have, to develop such programs and then not be ashamed to come from that place when we're talking to the technologists and keep seeking more learning.

Lori, a program director, in responding to a question about the perceived resistance of social work educators in using technology, made the following observation: "Well, I guess the question I pose back to you is resistance or ignorance? I wouldn't claim - on behalf of our school anyway, I wouldn't claim that

there's been this resistance, just some serious concerns." Lori also emphasized the need to find ways to help faculty develop skills in a supportive and non-threatening fashion:

> My experience is that traditionally social work faculty who are not that technologically comfortable, will resist something rather than saying that they don't have the skill base for it because the institutions are structured such as to sanction people who say they're not totally, fully skilled.

Likewise, Theresa and Carly, who were involved in the coordination and administration of distance courses stated:

> There's a whole different pedagogy attached to distance or distributed learning, so there's a really . . . real huge learning curve for faculty to kind of move away from the traditional delivery mode for education which is on-campus, to this more high tech environment, and that does create a lot of anxiety for people who are highly intelligent and feel that they should be able to figure these things our easily – this transition doesn't necessarily come easy for some people. (Theresa)

> I think a lot of faculty are afraid that teaching an online course is going to just overwhelm them in terms of the amount of time it takes to do it. I think that's a considerable (issue). I think fear of technology – the learning curve of how to teach a course using WebCT has probably scared some off – excited some and scared some. (Carly)

Several participants highlighted their preference for a mentorship model of faculty development, as opposed to general group sessions. In this regard, one to one mentorship was seen as less threatening and more convenient as opposed to attending group training sessions. Monica appreciated the group training sessions but also noted "they are preaching to the converted", noting that it tended to be faculty who were already involved with and interested in learning technologies who attended the sessions, and wondered about strategies to encourage other faculty to become involved. Theresa noted:

> I did attend some of those sessions earlier on when I first started here, but I found that most of the faculty were not comfortable enough with the technology, with the new learning style to get much benefit from those group sessions. The interest was much more on individual, one-on-one sessions and I totally agree with that – that when people are learning this new environment that there needs to be a certain level of one-on-one for them and then once they get to a comfort zone and a comfort level, and they understand some of the challenges with the technology and the pedagogical issues, then I think it's better to move off into different group sessions to discuss best practices, and challenges and that type of thing. But to try to set that up initially is very problematic.

For some participants, the issue of choice of involvement also applied to faculty development initiatives. For example, James stated, "You'd always have to make it voluntary - at least here at (university). It's very hard to give ultimatums – that all faculty must now attend this teaching and learning seminar on a bi-monthly basis – it just wouldn't fly." Given that e-learning is disruptive and threatening to many faculty, combined with pedagogical, professional, and workload concerns of participants, developing effective faculty development strategies and incentives will be crucial if programs are going to successfully adopt e-learning.

Most participants identified a high need for faculty development in several key areas: knowledge of learning theory and effective instructional design, the skills of teaching online, need for pedagogical dialogue, and technical skills. For example, Maureen stated:

> Well I think it's probably the new creative leap for educators. How can we create a learning environment or community on-line? How can we integrate social work values into the way we teach on-line? How can we develop ways of teaching, some of the practice skills that we need to prepare students for? And how can we get the resources to develop some creative, interactive tools for learning?

And, David observed:

> I think WebCT presents a bit more of a different - a bit more of a challenge than just *regular* course development, because you're actually having to learn the technology and figure out how to deliver a course on-line - not just creating the content for the course, but actually trying to figure out how to do that on-line.

Although most participants had access to general faculty development resources in their universities, they also felt that they had been struggling with the pedagogical challenges identified in Chapter Four, without adequate support. For example, James stated: "People are pretty much left to sink or swim on their own in the area of teaching methods." In another instance, when asked about her experience in shifting her teaching to an online environment, Susan stated "Frustrating. Very frustrating, primarily around issues of training and support", and, "I wish I had been in a workshop (on instructional design) before I designed it." Maureen described her initial experience in the following way:

> Part of it was pure hell because there was no . . . there was no support. There was no . . . little understanding of what was involved in teaching that kind of a course. One of my colleagues had taught a research course – sort of a seminar style on-line, and that seemed to go better, but this was looking at teaching anti-oppressive practice and practice issues and some of that stuff, and to try and figure out two things. I hadn't taught the course before so it was a new (course) – (and) writing a new course for me really was two (tasks): using a new technology, and new ways of teaching. So I didn't have any of the . . . there were no guidelines and there was little understanding here of what was involved. We've come a long ways since then. So it was really difficult, I almost quit. But then I figured I'm not going to let something like this beat me, surely to God I can figure this one out, so I did.

Faculty development was viewed as crucial to effective strategic planning and implementation of e-learning. For example, Sally stated:

> I think that that's one of the major difficulties we have, is that we haven't had good support - at any level really, for doing . . . for developing courses, and even developing the field. Like I don't know, I'm not an expert in this area, so I think we need someone who really is an expert in web-based learning who we can draw on to say this is what I want to do, what are the options? How can I do this? And I don't think we've had good support in that area. Certainly I haven't had good support around that.
>
> And,
>
> I think it's like anything new – I always think that doing as much preparation, and having as much training, and the way that you introduce something is so important, and I think that's been a weakness.

Likewise, Theresa emphasized the need for incorporating faculty development into her program:

> And again, I think that's some of the planning that was perhaps not evident – as this program is being developed and there are issues that are kind of coming up after the fact, not before, so there is certainly a need for that. Yes there is in that we should developing something like that because we don't have something in place, we certainly should. But right now we don't.

Of the twelve programs in which participants taught, one had implemented a specific program level faculty development plan and strategy focused on e-learning, which included custom training sessions, consultation in the areas of learning theory, online teaching skills, and technical skills and support. Participants in four programs stated their programs had hired individuals to provide support and consult with individual faculty. In the remainder of the programs, while faculty had access to general university faculty development and teaching resources, they felt there needed to be an additional focus on topics related specifically to the challenges of teaching and learning online specifically in social work education. For example, when asked about what kinds of faculty development had been available, Susan stated:

> Well, there's an introductory workshop on WebCT offered, but it's inadequate for preparing you for teaching. It's focus is on what WebCT is, and what are the possibilities, and what are the components. I've really struggled to learn – and I still am - because I used it very little in the Fall, it was a very small enhancement, and I'm struggling everyday to learn things about the software and about the way to use it. And I haven't had any proper training other than that one little hour and a half seminar or something.

In another example, Mark emphasized the need for faculty development to go beyond technical training and include discussion and skills focused on the nature of social work education, values, and ethical challenges in online teaching:

> Well it's mainly rather technically oriented . . . the technicalities and nuts and bolts of technical development. So that's available and I've taken a little advantage of some of those programs, and very little about the actual art of social work and the - well the value dimension - I think is under-emphasized. I think just perhaps a session on ethical issues, dilemmas in web-based teaching and learning would be helpful - it's never been offered or included - they're mainly technical types of opportunities. The university is very generous in offering those too to the different departments and institutes.

Technical Skills: Basic Literacy, Course Management Software

All participants in this study had been involved in developing and implementing e-learning, and had, as a result, developed technical skills. At the same time, they identified the importance of technical skills as a pre-requisite to teaching online. They discussed their experience in getting started, and commented on the need for continued skill development amongst their colleagues who were not involved in e-learning. For example, in reflecting on his experience, David commented:

> Even though its 2002 we still have some faculty that are not as computer literate as others, and you know, its *rather surprising* because we have a faculty (where) most people have taught a decade or more, and during that time they've had a computer sitting in front of them. And yet some, somehow still WebCT is a bit more technology than they're willing to learn or grasp at this stage. So I think that's still, still a bit of a problem. So it's one more thing to learn, its one

> more technology to develop, and master, and understand. I think that's, that's a significant problem for some faculty.

Technical Support and Interpersonal Skills of Support Person

Participants identified two types of support that they needed in implementing e-learning: technical support and instructional design support. Interestingly, several participants noted that the interpersonal skills of the individual were important. For example, Maria commented, "I think having the real solid technological support offered in a way that is friendly and accessible and offered in a way that supports all the good social work interaction principles is really important for faculty." In another example, Elaine commented, "It's a very important issue, having technical support they've got to be able to speak English (as opposed to technical jargon)" and, "It's not enough just to have the technical knowledge but you have to be able to convey that to faculty in a way that they can work together." For these participants, the individuals providing support needed to have technical expertise, knowledge of instructional design, understand the particular challenges facing social work educators, and have strong interpersonal skills.

Instructional Design Support

Given the pedagogical challenges involved in shifting social work curricula to online learning environments, coupled with limited knowledge of educational technology, participants identified a high need for support and consultation in instructional design. Participants all had access to general support for teaching and learning through institutional instructional support units. Many had also forged informal networks with faculty from other disciplines who were interested in e-learning. Participants in four programs stated their programs had created instructional

design and technical support positions directly in their programs. In these instances, the programs had the resources to hire experts to support their developmental work, and course offerings. In other programs, faculty relied on centralized university resources. In Theresa's program, the administration recognized that faculty needed additional support in order for implementation to be successful:

> When I first started here, the idea was that faculty would be able to do everything i.e., not only design and develop their course, but also do all of the work on the computer necessary to upload the course and design their pages and set up quizzes and all of that. The idea was that they would be as stand alone on the computer as they were in their classroom. And early on when I started here, I *knew* number one that that really wasn't feasible, and certainly I could tell from anxiety level of faculty that it really wasn't a good way to go, because they were just *so new* to everything. It's one thing to perhaps have an expectation for people who are very familiar with this type of environment and do have the background so that you can start moving them off and be a little bit more independent in how they do their courses – which doesn't work with somebody who's just totally new to the environment and the expectation is for them to all of a sudden switch from campus to distance in the blink of a term and then be able to move in this new environment as effectively and efficiently as they could on-campus.

Three programs had created leadership roles to support technology integration in their programs. One program had developed a program-wide initiative that included the creation of a leadership position with the responsibilities of promoting effective teaching, an onsite instructional design consultant, training sessions on pedagogy, course management software, and learning technologies in general. Programs offering distance programs also had established distance education coordinator positions whose roles were now incorporating the support, planning and shift to e-leaning platforms.

One challenge for programs was separate administrative and funding processes for on-campus and distance courses. In terms of instructional design support, a cost recovery model meant that support was dependent on revenues generated by courses, and generally involved a centralized continuing education unit in the university. In one instance, this meant that the individuals involved in developing distance courses had access to superior instructional design support for online learning that was based on an established foundation of distance learning and educational technology, whereas faculty teaching in on-campus courses did not have access to these same resources. In this regard, the availability of online learning, and its adoption in on-campus courses, is requiring these programs to rethink the structure of their programs and related support services, and ultimately, raises questions about the integration of on-campus and distance courses.

Informal Leadership

In several programs, individual faculty had taken on the informal role of providing leadership through their technology interest and initiatives. In most programs, the presence of at least one faculty member with a keen interest in learning technologies and online learning seemed to be a key factor in the program's interest and success in implementing e-learning. For example, Adelle noted:

> I don't have a huge interest in on-line learning. I became involved in it because [name of colleague] wanted to see *this school* up and running. And I think that I'm probably someone who will try something new. So it did not come out of an interest in on-line learning. In fact I was, I was quite concerned about it, but [name of colleague] said to me that (they) would help me - get the course set up, get everything loaded, get my icons done, this sort of thing, and (they were) very positive.
>
> And,

> Getting buy-in of our faculty is critical. I mean [name of colleague] has poured (out) hours of work with different faculty members, and certainly with me.

Carly, who was involved with coordination of another program's distance courses also emphasized the importance of internal faculty leadership:

> It's certainly been a bonus for us to have a full-time regular faculty member who has this as an area of expertise and interest. Prior to that point, I don't think I would say that we had a faculty member who could perhaps take that leadership role around the use of technologies.

In programs where faculty leaders had emerged, their workload was not formally recognized, which in the longer term, will likely be problematic as demand for faculty development and support grows. In this regard, Adelle suggested that her colleague should be provided with compensation for his leadership in technology integration:

> I think that for [name] there still should be a course release. He is teaching everybody in our faculty how to use this, so he should absolutely have a course release, plus there's this huge amount of encouraging people, which he does.

Need for Faculty Dialogue and Input into Decision Making

Overall, while participants were supportive of adopting online learning in their programs, they felt there had not been adequate dialogue amongst colleagues and with their programs about implementing e-learning in their programs. For example, Stewart, Roger and Monica made the following observations:

> We feel we've jumped into it and we're not all on board, we all have our hesitancies, and we also are still confused around policies, and ownership and (academic) freedom. (Stewart)

> I think there's probably a pretty good discussion and a lot of development that needs to happen with faculty before you ever sit down with that piece of technology, and it was a lot of background work that needs to be done, and I don't know if we are particularly good in the universities at doing that background work. I don't think we're patient enough in a lot of cases. (Roger)

> We're struggling with that as a faculty, I think, and its part of . . . if you like, redefining what social work is, or what it can be, what it's going to turn into. And sort of more immediately for a faculty of social work, *what we as social work educators want this faculty to be*, and how we are going to interact with our students, and how we are going to, if you like, compete with other faculties of social work which are delivering more and more of their content on-line. (Monica)

Many participants expressed the need that their programs needed to develop opportunities for dialogue about professional, pedagogical, and faculty challenges involved in implementing e-learning in social work education and for input into program and strategic planning. Although a few programs had recently established technology committees, overall most participants felt they had not had sufficient dialogue and input into planning or decision making.

Summary

Participants identified a number of faculty challenges involved in implementing e-learning. These included workload concerns about time involved in developing and offering online learning, instructional concerns, the need for faculty development, and the need for faculty dialogue about these issues. In particular, many participants felt there had been insufficient dialogue about a wide range of concerns that included workload policies, teaching expectations, recognition and reward processes, intellectual property, faculty development, and program and strategic planning. The faculty challenges outlined above have important administrative and policy implications for programs implementing, or considering implementing e-learning. Findings regarding administrative challenges and specific areas for policy development are discussed in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER SIX

ADMINISTRATIVE CHALLENGES

Participants identified a substantial number of administrative challenges which suggest the need for policy development in a number of areas for social work education programs. In this chapter I will describe the key administrative challenges identified by participants. These relate closely to the pedagogical and faculty challenges already discussed in Chapters Four and Five. They are organized under four topic areas: Program and institutional leadership, program structure and policies, revision and alignment of academic policies, and collaboration.

Program and Institutional Leadership

Given the magnitude of the pedagogical and administrative shifts involved in implementing e-learning, many participants identified the need for increased program and institutional leadership in order to respond to emerging challenges. Although these participants felt their work in e-learning had been generally supported by their programs and institutions, they also felt there was a need for enhanced leadership to facilitate dialogue and develop and revise practices and policies.

For example, Susan, who taught both distance and on-campus courses, commented,

> We seem to be getting into it in a very haphazard way. Someone's interested, or the technology is available and there's a workshop on it. So we take the workshop and then we decide to do it but there doesn't seem to be any leadership from the department or even higher levels of the university – a thoughtful process of . . . so why, first of all . . . why are we getting into on-line delivery and what is the impact of that on our students and our teaching processes? I know we haven't had that discussion.

In another example, when I asked Maria if her program had developed a plan to respond to emerging issues in implementing e-learning, she commented,

> I don't know if we've addressed it yet in more than a piecemeal way. I mean, there have been sort of small conversations attached to other issues . . . but I don't think beyond, sort of the individual level in terms of course delivery we've talked as a faculty yet about the broader issues - about what it does to supervision, about what it does to that sense of collegiality and the socialization that happens when you force people to be on-campus and interacting with another group of students . . . I mean, that's a very important piece.

Nancy, a faculty administrator with extensive experience in using learning technologies, emphasized the importance of program leadership in order to support and sustain e-learning in her program:

> It has to have commitment from the leadership. I think it's very difficult for faculty to do and sustain it if they're trying to do it individually in a program and they don't have support from the leadership. If you have support from the leadership, then I think you can go much further faster, and more sustainable. So I think it has to be policy. It has to be something that the leadership and the faculty – the administrative leadership - support and they're willing to go the distance with it in terms of dealing with the late adopters and the resisters in the faculty and the sceptics among the faculty and the students. And then you have to again be willing to provide the support and the mentoring but it has to come . . . I think it's really difficult if it's an individual faculty person trying to do it on their own and keep it going. So I guess the policy would be that the leadership has to be committed to it, and they have to be able to take the long term view and then provide the support and the resources for faculty and students.

Aspects of leadership that were viewed as important included the development of a program vision for e-learning, with input from students and faculty. For example, when asked about the key administrative issues for social work programs, Monica stated:

> Well . . . boy, I'm going to sound like a management person - (the) key to all of this, though, is a fundamental vision statement, or mission

> statement that . . . if, *and I'm saying if* . . . we haven't really discussed it yet - but if people want to move forward and to more fully integrate alternative instructional delivery/web based/whatever, learning formats into the curriculum, then it has to be driven by our leadership, and again, sort of by our vision statement, mission statement. Without that, it's piecemeal . . . and if that's in place, then the administrative structure follows, the money will be set aside for it, the supports will be there for it.

Participants identified the need for leadership at four levels. The first was academic and discipline specific leadership at the program level, including facilitating faculty dialogue and input into decision making. The second was administrative leadership at the program level to provide the support, resources, vision, and strategic planning for implementation. The third was institutional-wide leadership and the fit of program plans with institutional strategic plans. The fourth was leadership from the profession, other social work educators, and accreditation bodies. The presence of a faculty person with an interest and expertise in learning technologies seemed to be a key factor in these programs moving forward with implementing e-learning. In one instance, Nancy stated her program had made a decision to start with developing leadership amongst early adopters as an implementation strategy: "I think at this point we're more (in) just the experimental stage, and developing faculty who can be models, can report back, and then at that point I think we can plan more."

Strategic Planning

One of the recommendations found in the literature is the need for educational programs to develop strategic plans as part of their technology integration strategy (Advisory Committee for Online Learning, 2001; Ashery, 2001, Bates, 2000; Haché, 1998; Pacey & Keough, 2003; Watkins & Kaufman, 2003). As a result, I asked participants whether or not their programs had developed a strategic plan for the

implementation of online learning. Of the twelve programs, only two had developed strategic plans for the implementation of e-learning; one had developed a business plan. One program had identified the need to develop a strategic plan, and a participant from a fourth program stated that their plan was in development. Other programs had not developed strategic plans incorporating e-learning. For example, when I asked Maria if her program had developed a strategic plan, she responded by stating:

> Not that I'm aware of . . . certainly informal conversations, and probably people have their own individual thoughts, but I certainly wouldn't know where to find it and give it to you!
>
> And,
>
> Well I think the fact that I answered no to both of those questions about strategic plans or models that we're using, I think is problematic. I would like to see that - I think that would be pretty essential, so that again, so we're driving the process as opposed to it driving us. But I feel that way about all program development – that we don't do that enough, that it's not done enough – it's not just us.

In a similar fashion, Louise, who was the only faculty member in her department using online learning, commented:

> Absolutely none. No, none whatsoever. We've relied somewhat on sort of a technology group, if you will . . . there's one or two representatives from each of the schools . . . but within our school there's nothing. I'm sort of "it".

And, Susan, in discussing future needs and directions for her program, stated:

> I think just the need for an overall plan about how WebCT will gradually be phased in and if it's going to be phased in - in terms of all the courses. It's out there and people are using it and developing it, and that doesn't come out (in) a policy statement at this point that says that the whole school is going to eventually deliver all of its distance programs in WebCT. What we're talking about is the need to discuss that policy statement – is that something we want to do? And if so, do we need to pull together a plan to do that?

In the programs that had engaged in strategic planning, one program included a review of their mission statement, and had developed a matrix to identify courses they felt were appropriate for e-learning with plans for sequential implementation. Three participants stated their departments had established technology committees to begin to address emerging issues and questions about e-learning. In other programs, most participants identified that their university had institution-wide committees looking at technology integration, and a few participants had joined informal committees with colleagues from other disciplines as a strategy to learn about and exchange information about online learning. Overall, these programs were in the early stages of planning for e-learning.

Institutional Support: Rhetoric and Resources

A key administrative challenge identified by participants was the need for programs to secure the funding to support the cost of development, implementation, and administration of e-learning in their programs. Securing financial resources was closely linked to the need for leadership, strategic planning, and a financial plan to support e-learning. While some participants stated their institutions supported the adoption of e-learning and the increased enrolments as a result of e-learning, these participants also noted that institutional support did not necessarily translate into financial support. For example, Theresa, a participant with responsibility for coordination of a distance program, noted:

> I think it's very, very important that when the institution is developing their long-term strategy, their blue print or strategic plan, that if they're wanting to go off and explore on-line learning that they be willing to commit to that not only in their business plan, but also at the level of funding. It's one thing to pay lip service to the high level of

> interest, and it's great to see the new students coming in, however, if that interest doesn't translate into funding, then it does create a lot of serious problems. So for me, the absolute initial stage to going in the direction of on-line learning on a large scale is that there is some recognition that the institution supports it – not only as part of their mission but also as part of their funding. . . . I would have to say that the institution is very happy with the increase in enrolment in our school . . . but I would also have to say that no, we do not . . . the recognition is not there, and therefore the funding is not either.

Likewise, Carly, who coordinated distance education at another program, made a similar observation:

> I think too - on a different scale - truly I would like to see the university become more supportive of distance ed. through the provision of funds for development – often we rely on external funding to support the development of a course and every course has a shelf life and requires revision, and it's that ongoing maintenance of our curriculum - our distance ed. curriculum, that often becomes a crucial issue. So we've been able to manage, but always I think at some sacrifice. It's not . . . we don't have the funds that we would like to have in order to maintain our courses.

And,

> They often talk with great pride about the innovations that we've made as a university around distance learning and the present government is (promoting) distance learning as a means of . . . in terms of social work providing education for social workers who so crucially need access across the province. So there's the rhetoric but it would be really great to see some of that financial support to do the work.

And, John, a senior faculty member with administrative responsibility for a program partially offered in an online distance format, commented:

> I think that there are some fiscal considerations that administrators have to grapple with. If you want to do this - and you don't want it to be on faculty overload - then you have to come up with ways of achieving release time, and support technical support and training for them to be able to do it. So I think there are some big resourcing challenges.

Overarching challenges identified included the funding the costs of supporting the development of online courses, responding multiple student demographics and needs, offering different program levels (BSW and MSW), and providing multiple learning models and environments. Ann, who had experience in teaching with technology for many years, also identified the cost of updating and maintaining online courses as an unresolved issue:

> So one needs some resources to help redevelop the course, and the university has not made that available. We applied for it, and the university turned us down solely on the basis that they're not funding that type of development or redevelopment. They're only interested in new courses. Now they're going to be faced with 15 new courses. What are they going to do in 3, 4 years because faculty won't have time to do all the redevelopment? And some of the redevelopment just has to be done to make the course appropriate for the new technology, the new versions of WebCT, so WebCT is always adding new [features].

Participants whose programs had developed strategic plans conveyed that resource strategies should be linked to strategic plans and aligned with the strategic plan of the university. Although some programs are able to generate revenues through cost recovery and entrepreneurial contracts, social work programs in general, and smaller programs in particular, have a limited capacity to generate revenue. This means that programs will need to advocate within their own institutions for support to develop e-learning.

Incremental and Thoughtful Implementation

Many participants recommended a graduated approach to implementing e-learning. This was for a number of reasons: to gain experience and skills in teaching and learning in online environments, to promote faculty development, to ensure quality in the learning process, to evaluate the effectiveness of online learning in

social work courses, to evaluate and address concerns about the loss of face-to-face interaction and professional socialization, to experiment with strategies to deal with these concerns, and to evaluate students' experience and feedback about e-learning. They suggested a number of strategies related to graduated implementation. The first was to recognize that in general, social work faculty and programs are behind in their use of technology. For example, Lori, a program administrator, suggested that a place to start is supporting in-class use of learning technologies to help faculty gain experience with using technology:

> Our faculty have just recently been reviewing and debating using the technology to support our teaching, so as a first step we're thinking about supporting our in-class teaching, and have unanimously concluded that we probably are behind a step, that we need to move ahead quickly. We understand that the technology is very easy to use and to learn.
>
> And,
>
> So I guess our first step is to experiment with things like virtual office hours and see how this plays out. For example, would it be easier to access your professor at 11:00 on Thursday night on-line than it would be to come to, you know, regular offices. So virtual office hours is something we've been debating quite a bit about the kind of the implications of the meetings.

A second strategy, identified by Nancy, was to support early adopters as a way of encouraging other faculty to become involved:

> In terms of the work on early adopters, late adopters, innovators . . . we have that whole range in our faculty, and most of the faculty would probably be late adopters, and they look to others to take the risks and to try it out. And then (we) have a few early adopters, and just a very few innovators. So in terms of that whole range when you're looking at change - and attitudes towards the change - whatever it is, we have that in our faculty. So I find that a good strategy that's worked well in this faculty so far is to identify those people who are willing to take some risk with some support, and give them the support and they then are models for the other faculty. So we've gone from people being

> very sceptical about it to having a good number of faculty now that are willing to use it to at least enhance existing courses and then we have four or five faculty who are willing to do on-line courses.

A third and related strategy was that several programs had made a decision to make faculty involvement in online learning voluntary. Given the expected growth of ICTs in higher education, a longer term challenge will be for programs to move from optional involvement to developing minimum expectations of ICT competence for all faculty. The challenge of how to encourage faculty involvement and respond to higher education drivers also has implications for hiring practices, the development of recognition and reward processes, and faculty development strategies. For programs with distance courses, the need to convert traditional distance courses to online learning was more immediate. Revised instructor and course evaluation processes were also viewed as part of an incremental and thoughtful approach to implementing e-learning. Participants concerns included the need to evaluate instructor skills and devise ways of recognizing faculty involvement with e-learning.

Revised Workload and Compensation Practices and Policies

As a result of the workload challenges described in Chapter Five, participants believed that programs and institutions need to review and revise workload policies to reflect the time demands of developing and offering e-learning. Unresolved workload and compensation challenges included the time required for faculty development, the need for clear and transparent guidelines about compensation available for development, consideration of the format of courses (for example, enhanced, hybrid, or fully online), and the pedagogical model and resources necessary for development and delivery. Assuming a graduated model of implementation, some participants felt

time demands for development should diminish as faculty gain experience teaching in online learning environments. In this regard, a possible strategy of graduated implementation could be matched with initial release time or compensation to develop online learning, which would diminish as courses are successfully launched. Participants identified that workload policies regarding differential compensation in distance courses in particular needed to be reviewed in light of the shift to a different pedagogical model and the increased requirement for instructor involvement in online learning. For example, in discussing her university's approach to distance learning, Jennifer stated:

> I think what they're doing is whatever you got for preparing a distance course or the old correspondence courses, I think they're still using that same model whereas in social work, if we're going to go to...and *that model* doesn't require you to do anything other than mark once you develop the course. You're just marking, so people are compensated for marking at really . . . not a great rate, and it's sort of a minimum amount of money that you get every time your course is run kind of as an extra . . . it's a very minimum amount of money. So this kind of a distance education model is very different, so they have to get their minds around that in the sense that it isn't just you put the course on-line and that's it – you're compensated once and you just do the marking - this kind of model will require interaction and support throughout the course, interaction with the students. So I think it requires a different financial compensation model that I haven't discovered that we have in place here yet in any other kind of program. So, it will have to be negotiated around this program.

Other policies that participants stated needed to be reviewed or developed included class size for online courses, teaching expectations, and who should be involved in e-learning. Several participants suggested that programs needed to consider the balance of full-time and part-time faculty involved in e-learning. Given the pedagogical and faculty challenges, some participants felt strongly that only full-time faculty should be involved in developing e-learning, and that this development should not be

marginalized at the edges of the program. In order to encourage full-time faculty involvement in distance learning, one program had established a principle that tenure-track faculty teach at least one distance course every two years.

A key administrative challenge will be for programs to find the resources to support the need for revised compensation. For example, Beverly stated,

> Well, right now one of our sore points is the faculty's course releases. And we just had a 5 % cutback, we lost positions, we're overusing sessionals, so . . . in the ideal it would be really nice to have course releases to do it, or compensation, but we don't have the money, the resources or anything to do that.

Revised Recognition and Incentives

In order for more faculty members to become involved in e-learning, some participants suggested that programs need to find ways to recognize the considerable amount of work involved in developing and offering effective online courses and learning in terms of promotion and tenure. Some participants also suggested that incentives may be required to encourage reluctant faculty to become involved, especially in during early implementation stages to assist with the pedagogical shifts and time demands in developing skills and leadership in e-learning amongst faculty. For example, Jennifer, a faculty member who also coordinated distance courses, suggested "I think we're going to have to use that kind of incentive program to bring some of the folks along who aren't as comfortable with technology."

Two participants suggested that the development of online learning could also be considered as faculty's contribution to service, as a way of building in recognition and incentives. In this regard, John, a senior faculty member, suggested:

> I think you can make that argument (scholarly recognition), and it crosses over in some ways to the third dossier - important in our

> university, and particularly in our school - which is service, because in a sense it's also a service to the profession. To improve access to graduate - in particular graduate education - but to improve access to social work education overall - is for a remote region, for example, is a contribution to improve service in that area.

Faculty Demographics

Several participants identified the combination of shifting faculty demographics and increasing student demand for flexible access to learning as important administrative challenges for their programs. Beverly, a faculty member with administrative responsibilities commented, "Another issue is finding someone to offer (the courses). Not everyone is comfortable with offering them." As noted in earlier chapters, integrating technology was very recent for the most of the participants. In this regard, Jennifer commented:

> I think the disincentive is we're dealing in social work – I'm generalizing - I think I'm pretty accurate - with an "older group" of professors in the sense that they aren't all comfortable with technology . . . so it will take them longer to become comfortable with it and to learn how to do it and so the time factor – the transitional time factor from going from a course that you've taught for ten years in a classroom, you don't have to do as much preparation and thinking about it, but it's going to be a big time drain to move to put that kind of stuff in an on-line environment.

And Michelle poignantly noted, "And in any kind of educational change, what do you do with the dinosaurs? Easy answer is take them out and shoot them!, and that's what most of the time we feel like doing! But, actually wait for them to die or retire." On a pragmatic level, it unlikely that social work programs can wait until current faculty retire to respond to the rapid integration of ICTs if they hope to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving higher education environment.

Student Demographics: Learner Driven Demand

Another challenge identified by participants was the need for their programs to respond to increased student choice and consumer influence in higher education. Participants noted that the availability of e-learning is shifting higher education from institutional to learner driven as a result of increasing access, competition, and learner choice. For example, Susan related the following reaction she received from students after the students had experienced the interactive nature of online learning, compared with basic email communication:

> I think it's coming from students too– because I have students in my course, which is not in WebCT but will be in (the next term), who took the other course with the WebCT enhancement, and first reaction I got at the start of this term was: "What do you mean it's listserv, why are we going back to the dark ages, where's the WebCT!" And I think we're seeing just the tip of the iceberg there, that's just with my course and it was only a small WebCT component that they experienced and yet they're asking Where's the WebCT?!" So like "Where's the beef question?!" I think that once they've experienced – like now they're in (colleague's course), some of them, quite a few – I think all those people are going to be asking where's the WebCT the next time they sign up for a course. And I think that's going to mushroom! Put huge demands on (the program) from the students who like the WebCT environment.

A number of participants identified several administrative challenges related to shifting demographics. These challenges were: increased demand for flexible learning for adult learners, increased demands placed on program and academic administration as a result of increased access, the challenge of supporting and tracking multiple cohorts in multiple learning environments, varying levels of technical skills amongst learners, the administrative and cost implications for supporting enhanced field instruction, increased demand for supervision of graduate

level projects and research, and emerging challenges about the separation of on-campus and distance learners.

Program Structure and Policies: Integrating Distance and On-campus Learners

A key emerging challenge identified by participants with social work distance programs was the impact e-learning was having on separate administrative structures and on student access to distance and on-campus programs. The students in distance programs had previously been separated by location, teaching model (student to instructor, self paced), and funding structure (cost recovery). The capabilities of ICTs and e-learning were dissolving geographic barriers. Distance learning was also incorporating higher levels of interaction, learner to learner collaboration, moving distance learning away from self-direction to learning that was similar to an on-campus face-to-face course. Some saw e-learning as having the potential to integrate distance and on-campus learners.

A major challenge and obstacle in exploiting these shifts and pedagogical possibilities was the separate funding models used to support distance and on-campus programs. In most programs, distance courses were self-funded through cost recovery tuition paid by students. On-campus programs were generally base-funded from provincial departments of higher education through the universities. As a result, distance students generally paid higher tuition and administration fees, and were separated both academically and administratively. Some participants expressed concern about equity for distance learners. While a cost recovery model for distance courses had generally been rationalized by arguing that concerns about differential fees are outweighed by the benefits of increased access, the availability of e-learning

raises questions about this model given the potential to integrate distance and on-campus learners. In addition to differential fee and funding structures, participants also explained that student movement between distance and on-campus programs had been restricted. When students were separated in their learning by geography, this was less of an issue. The dissolution of geographical barriers through e-learning challenges assumptions about the difference between "distance" and on-campus learners. In this regard, programs were still working through what these shifts meant, pedagogically and administratively. In some programs, students were not able to transfer to on-campus courses as a result of funding restrictions. As Maria asserted, "I think that's really problematic because that's not then saying 'what's the best educational experience for this woman?' It's saying 'no, we need your money so you've got to stay put'." Given the capacity of ICTs, I asked those participants offering distance courses if they had mixed distance and on-campus students in their courses. In this regard, no programs had mixed distance and on-campus students. Maureen questioned whether or not "we are creating two faculties" and two campuses.

Participants' concerns about differential support were expressed in a number of ways: ensuring that distance students had access to university services and resources, ensuring that the quality of the learning experiences were equivalent, and ensuring students had access to support. The introduction of e-learning also created new support challenges for participants. For example, at one site, support to distance students was not available on weekends, only during regular office hours. Given that many students engage in online learning in the evenings and weekends, the lack of

seven days per week support was an immediate concern for participants and their programs.

A key interrelated challenge was that distance students paid higher fees than on-campus students. At one site, although support was a concern for both distance and on-campus students, the distance students actually received better support through the distance education infrastructure of the university, which was not available to on-campus students who were learning online. Susan, who taught both on-campus and distance sections of an online course, commented:

> Now, there was lack of support to students in both cases – on-campus and distance to the students. But again, the DE folks have a help line that the DE students can call that wasn't available for my on-campus students.

A similar observation was made about the level of faculty support, that instructors in distance courses had access to more instructional design support than the on-campus instructors who were developing online learning.

Revision and Alignment of Academic Policies

Over the course of our interviews, most participants identified at least one academic policy that needed to be developed or revised by their programs in order implement e-learning. These included the following interrelated areas for academic policy development:

- Pedagogical Models and Guides for Course development
- Faculty Development
- Online Teaching Guidelines
- ICT Skill Requirements
- Clear expectations and guidelines for students
- Participation policies
- Student support
- Enhanced role of Field Supervisors and Mentors in Distance Programs
- Residency and Transfer Policies

- Class size
- Intellectual Property
- Revised evaluation procedures
- Need for research
- Revised Accreditation Standards

Revision and development of these policies had important administrative and resource implications for programs. Participants identified the need for strong academic and administrative leadership to begin to work through these policies and to facilitate faculty involvement in policy development and planning. Policies not discussed in earlier chapters are described in more detail below.

Develop Confidentiality and Privacy Policies

Given the concerns about confidentiality and privacy in online environments, a number of participants identified that their programs and institutions needed to develop policies that deal with these issues, including who had access to online social work courses, archiving of online materials and discussions, and timelines for deletion of online communications. For example, Liam, who had recently developed and taught an online course commented:

> I think one issue that hasn't been dealt with or I haven't seen dealt with is the issue of confidentiality and privacy. There has been talk that the courses are archived at [name of university] after they're complete, and whether that's true or not, I'm not really sure. So it raises some issues for me that participating in a course they may be archived forever.
>
> And I know the kind of materials that universities can be subpoenaed and things like that. If someone's in a program at [name of university] in 20 years time might be running for a high political office and people might think oh, they were at [name of university], they would have done WebCT and all their comments on a particular issue that would have been controversial 20 years ago could have been archived somewhere. I know that sounds a little extreme, but in a classroom, comments don't stay around. People can explore their ideas and leave things and they don't have to worry about them being written down

> and stored somewhere where people can theoretically have access to them years later.

Clear Guidelines and Expectations for Students

In addition to the need to develop guidelines for teaching expectations for faculty, several participants identified the need for programs to develop clear expectations and guidelines for students that included information on technical requirements, the nature of online learning environments, collaborative learning and associated skills, participation requirements, expectations regarding online communication and behaviours, confidentiality issues and requirements, and online ethics. For example, Mary, a faculty administrator with extensive experience teaching distance coursese, stated, "(Instructors need) really crystal clear description of what the students have to do and when." Susan, who taught both distance and face-to-face courses, also emphasized the need for guidelines for online communication and dealing with sensitive and controversial issues:

> And a good example is in (content area) course, where we talk about basic theories – in the very first week on the WebCT when people were asked to introduced themselves and say a little bit about their experiences, they got into the discussion about (types of treatment approaches) and (competing theories related to particular approaches to issues), and that kind of discussion is usually *very* controversial, and that came out the first week of the WebCT delivery of this course. And that had never come out in that way in the distance delivery before – only in the on-campus one. And those are important debates – those are the debates going on in the field, between practitioners and researchers. So I mean that was very encouraging – but scary too, because the debate becomes very personal and that's where you need all the ground rules. But to be able to see the potential for the theories to be debated in that way, makes me believe that we need to really consider online delivery and its good possibilities but we also need to be very cautious and thoughtful.

In programs where students were already involved in distance learning, introducing online learning posed additional administrative challenges, including the need to shift expectations to fit with new with more interactive and collaborative approaches to learning (for both students and faculty). In these programs an emerging challenge that was identified was dealing with the question of how long the programs could support multiple technologies and course formats.

Maintaining Program Quality

Several participants identified key emerging challenges in relation to program quality and standards. These were maintaining program quality, the need for revised accreditation standards, the need for revised evaluation processes and the need for ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of e-learning in social work.

A key administrative challenge for participants was the need to maintain program quality while taking advantage of the benefits of e-learning. Given the newness of online learning, concerns about professional socialization, uncertainty about what content, what level of study, and the overall effectiveness of e-learning, several participants conveyed it was important to implement e-learning in a way that maintained current program quality. Paul emphasized, "You have to construct it in (a) way that doesn't threaten the integrity of your program. That offers a quality kind of experience, and that you can prove – support with data that is quality." Participants expressed a range of views on the fit of e-learning in social work, ranging from Adelle's belief that no social work course should be entirely online to James' observation that practice skills courses should not be online, to Maureen's view that it is possible to have whole programs online, as long as the appropriate planning and

resources are in place. Mary commented that the shift to e-learning in distance courses had improved learning for distance students and overall program standards:

> I think really helps us in delivering the curriculum and providing the interaction that's really necessary to ensure a good learning experience. So I think it really supports us in achieving the goals of our mission statement.

At the time of our interviews, programs were just beginning to think about the impact that e-learning will likely have on program standards. Areas identified in our discusions included how students are recruited and accepted, library resources, student support, continuity in the learning process, student assessment, and field practice observation and evaluation.

Accreditation Standards

Given concerns identified about maintaining quality in the teaching-learning process and professional socialization and mentorship, I asked participants if their programs' involvement in e-learning had affected accreditation processes. While most participants identified the need for revised accreditation standards and guidelines that included e-learning (and distance learning), they also stated that e-learning had not affected accreditation processes. In this regard, it was clear that the rapid evolution of ICTs had out-paced revisions to accreditation standards. David, whose program had recently been through the accreditation process, stated: "No, not at all. Even though we'd presented that in our self-study, it wasn't responded to at all in the visitor's reports, or in filing the reports, as far as I know. And of course . . . I don't think there's anything in the standards around online learning", and "I think that probably the accrediting body could come up with some more very specific standards around

distance ed. but I also recognize that it's relatively new, too." Another participant, Roger, stated:

> Not that I'm aware of - I think it has implications, but I don't think we've realized what those implications are yet. . . . And I'm not sure if the accrediting bodies of social work programs, in North America at least, have really thought through the implications as extensively as they need to. I think there are a lot of things that are going to happen down the road that we all need to stop and really take a pretty close look at, in terms of accreditation.

Roger also noted that the length of the accreditation cycle was one of the reasons why revised standards had not yet become an issue: "I know with the accreditation cycle being roughly seven years, in most cases, there's a pretty big time period between one accreditation and another, and in seven years the technology can have a pretty dramatic impact." John, who had considerable expertise in accreditation processes, emphasized the point that distance programs were not accredited separately, and that all components of a program must meet established standards.

> So, if your distributed learning program doesn't meet the mark, neither does the rest of your program. So, you know, people have some anxiety about doing this!

At the same time, while accreditation had not yet been a concern for these programs, several participants identified that accreditation and e-learning was an emerging and potentially "hot" issue. Emerging issues included the impact of e-learning on residency, transfer arrangements, program structures and resources. For example, Paul noted "There's no more there." Paul predicted:

> So you watch, my prediction over the next few years is (this) is going to be an ongoing issue with the Deans and Directors of CASSW. They're going to have to articulate a lot more detail . . . criteria for these courses and ways of working relationships up. . . . To some extent like what they've done with current courses – have agreements . . . we have agreements with three universities around, so our students

> could take a course there and it will be credited to our program, but there's limits on that kind of stuff. So, they're going to have to do something like that on a national kind of a scale, and work towards collaboration or it's going to be sort of a virtual competitive . . . it could be very ugly kind of scenario as time goes on.

Likewise, John emphasized accreditation standards for distance learning as an emerging issue:

> I'm certain of this much that they are apprised of the fact that this is an *absolute priority* item for the Association (CASSW), and that they will come up with some policy statement, or statements, but I have no notion at this point what that substances of those statements will be.
>
> And also I'd have to say the Board of Accreditation is very concerned about this, and is very vigilant - that if this becomes simply a way to solve fiscal shortfall, then it really compromises the credibility of programs. And that if they don't achieve comparable learning outcomes, in some ways (the Board of Accreditation) is glad that they're tied.

In addition to the desire to maintain high academic and professional standards, an underlying theme, evident in the quotations above, was the tension and potential interrelationship between accreditation standards and inter-program competition. In this regard, traditional geographical boundaries are challenged by e-learning. A future challenge will be for the CASSW to develop policies and standards that address the pedagogical capabilities of ICTs, and their application in social work education, based on a strong pedagogical and professional foundation, rather than as a response to competitive market forces and dissolving geography as a result of ICTs. Louise recommended that the CASSW take on a leadership role in assisting programs in implementing e-learning that could include providing support, information exchange, and ensuring faculty recognition in accreditation standards: "Well I think the CASSW could play a role if they wanted to, and they haven't done anything in this area."

In contrast to concerns expressed about the impact on e-learning on quality, some participants suggested that integrating e-learning has had a positive impact on their overall standards as a result of an increased focus on pedagogy. Mary, who had extensive experience developing and teaching in distance learning, reframed my question about accreditation standards, and challenged the view that the traditional on-campus course should be the standard used to measure effective learning:

> I would certainly resist any school of social work who said that the only way to deliver social work education is by having the students come to one place, mainly on-campus, so I think that's a *huge* faculty issue is this whole debate right now that's in the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work venue around accreditation standards is: is distance equivalent to on-campus? I don't know why on-campus has to be the Holy Grail. What evidence do we have that the sage on the stage and everyone being in one classroom at one time is the best way to learn?

And, in terms of e-learning dissolving geographical boundaries, Mary stated:

> Yeah, well, that's the issue, and I think because more and more programs are doing the on-line thing, and people are realizing that it's just as pedagogically sound to deliver a course with WebCT or on-line learning as in a traditional classroom environment is that the jurisdictional issues that get out of my potato patch concerns are increasingly problematic. I mean, I think [name of a university] move into delivering the masters program by distance education, which is primarily on-line, has raised some people thinking, oh, gee, you know, well, maybe the students who would have come to my graduate program now aren't going to, because they're going to take that one. This just makes me incredibly sad. There is enough work for all of us. To me, what makes me go is to make sure that people who want to become professional social workers have a better educational journey than I did, and that we focus on the quality of the programs rather than the quantity, or who's delivering what program in who's town.

Need for Research

In addition to individual course and faculty evaluation, several participants emphasized the need for programs to conduct research into e-learning, and to

document the effectiveness of e-learning in their programs. In this regard, John made the following observation: "I think for an extended period of time that it really requires careful vigilance to ensure the balance between accessibility and excellence." In a similar vein, Paul commented:

> I think that as we unfold this, we *do* have to very cautious that we have good accounting, and good kinds of feedback in that we know what the students are getting from this – (what) they're learning from it, that they enjoy it, we fix things that don't work. And then we try and identify: are there some areas, are there some topics, are there some curricula areas that just – that this approach just doesn't work well with and try and be aware of that? . . . So I think we've got to be cautious with this as well as to know what its strengths and limitations are and push it, to see how far we can in different ways, but at the same time ensure that it really strengthens our professional education rather than weakens it in any way.

And, Stewart, who had recently begun teaching online emphasized the need for further research to understand students' experiences and evaluate whether or not online learning supported effective professional learning outcomes:

> Like I haven't bought into it yet, but I'm not totally resistant to it. But I have *no clue* how students are experiencing this, and I'm not sure if we're going to be able to develop the this type of social worker that we envision in the future through this type of mode. . . . We have debates whether we're doing it in the class, so why wouldn't we have debates about (online learning) . . . but I don't know if we're going to foster the *value system* that we uphold in the discipline through online teaching. So it would be nice to have literature that perhaps starts to at least guide us, in at least understanding some of the experience of students and faculty.

Collaboration

Given the resources required to develop online learning, and the similarities in curricula, I explored participants' views on collaboration in the development of online learning. In this regard, many participants supported the concept of collaboration, although they also identified potential obstacles and the need to develop policies and

models to support collaboration. For example, James stated: "A good idea. It would be a touchy one to get rolling. I think – that's a sharing thing again, intellectual property, protection . . . if there's a model for it to work, I think it would be a great idea." Likewise, Paul, when asked about the potential of sharing online learning resources, stated:

> Yes, absolutely. Administratively, resource wise, it makes *imminent* sense to do that. You could afford to put even more resources in your local one if you could establish that reputation, and be part of a consortium that has a high reputation. You could develop quite and attractive group of courses like that.

At the same time, participants identified a number of obstacles to collaboration including unresolved concerns about ownership, perceived threats to job security, variance in collective agreements, workload differences, concerns that courses may not be locally relevant, residency requirements, and transfer arrangements, all of which are disrupted by the availability of online learning environments. An underlying concern was uncertainty about the dissolution of previously stable geographically located student bases, and the potential for competition between programs. For example, when asked about collaboration, Ann made the following observation:

> Touchy area. I don't know that any of the programs who have, which have been developing web based courses, have really sought out any kind of linkages. We certainly haven't looked at this as an entrepreneurial involvement, so we've only promoted the courses to the three institutions that I've previously mentioned, (name of institutions), who don't see this as competition. I mean, they're just quite happy with the arrangements. No, we haven't promoted it outside of (province) or (other institutions). But it's touchy. I mean, we lose student revenue if our students go outside, or are taking web based courses, or programs, entire programs from other universities. And is this a problem for us? Well, our student numbers aren't down, and our

> tuitions aren't down, so, no, it hasn't been a problem. Will it be in the future? It remains to be seen.

Ann also identified the availability of courses from other countries beginning to emerge as an issue that programs will need to respond to:

> I know we looked askance at a course from an American university in ethics, social work ethics, which was being promoted here, and we teach a course in social work ethics, and is that course compatible with our teaching? And it was quite an entrepreneurial effort that arrived here. We were really taken aback.
>
> Alan: What was your response?
>
> We didn't (respond). We ignored it. We figured if the students want to take the course, that's fine, and if they apply for credit, transfer credit, then we'll examine it at that time. So, so far no student has applied for transfer credit.

Apart from pedagogical and administrative obstacles, some participants identified the important emerging influence of learner choice in relation to issues of collaboration and competition. In this regard, Roger emphasized the point that programs will need to respond to emerging learner demand:

> In a lot of ways it, I think that whole competition versus collaboration piece is just incredibly important. And in a lot of ways we think we're in control of that, you know. We talk between universities about who's going to offer what courses, and how, and whether we're going to collaborate or not, but in the end, and in a lot of ways it's not up to us, its up to the students. If there's one thing that technology has done it's allowed them to be informed consumers of education, right. If they don't like what I've got here in this province, they can pretty easily sign up with another program in another part of Canada, or another part of the world, get their degree on-line, you know, at least the majority of it, and never have to deal with me at all, so you know, you and I may think that we're collaborating together, or we may be arguing about competition, but while you and I are arguing, the student is out there, can ignore both of us and sign up with somebody else.

In the same vein, Michelle suggested that students "Will start voting with their feet", if programs are not responsive to their desire for access to flexible learning arrangements.

To date the participants stated there had been very limited collaboration between social work programs in Canada in the development of e-learning. Collaboration that had taken place had been in non-competitive areas. In two instances, participants identified that collaboration was contingent upon funding. In these examples, the funding for the initiatives not only assisted with the cost of development, but provided leverage for collaboration. Michelle, who was involved in one of the projects, suggested that without the requirement to collaborate between universities, collaboration was unlikely to happen: "The province has to come up with a way to develop it, because if each school develops it, they're not going to give it to anybody else." Michelle also suggested that the initiative had lead to higher levels of ongoing collaboration between programs as a result of their experience:

> Oh, it's hard to believe . . . it's been a real boom and there's be much more transparency of curriculum . . . were moving - despite being different institutions, (more) towards one model, and we're doing it voluntarily . . . it's very interesting to participate in. And that was one initiative that government started . . . and then we discovered, oh gee, we could work together, and what's more, we could strengthen ourselves by doing it.

The concept of leveraging collaboration in the development and implementation of e-learning in social work education has important policy implications for provincial departments of higher education and the Federal Government, and social work education programs. Given the need for e-learning resources in social work education, the current climate of restraint, and the obstacles

to collaboration in higher education in general, targeted funding may be one way to encourage programs to explore new ways of developing and sharing e-learning resources.

Summary

In summary, participants identified a number of administrative challenges that need to be addressed in order to implement e-learning. These challenges have implications for academic and administrative policies and practices. They also have resource implications and require organizational changes at both a structural and cultural level. In the Chapter Seven I will discuss the themes that emerged from my study with particular emphasis on the implications for policy and program development.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

A combination of data analysis strategies that involved coding of the interview data combined with reading and re-reading transcripts led to the development of four interrelated categories, which I framed as challenges: Professional Challenges, Pedagogical Challenges, Faculty Challenges, and Administrative Challenges. Detailed discussions of the issues identified under each of these challenges are in Chapters Four, Five, and Six. Through my analysis and intensive reading I identified six interrelated themes linked to program and policy development: transformation, alignment, coherence, faculty engagement, resources, and leadership. These are an inductive reflection of the concerns of the participants. They also form a thematic framework for examining policy issues in e-learning in social work education. In this chapter I describe and link each theme to relevant literature.

Themes

During the past five to ten years there has been extremely rapid growth and adoption of ICTs in higher education. Over the past five years, social work programs in Canada have begun to introduce e-learning in their programs, for both distance and on-campus learners. Overall, social work educators have been cautious in adopting e-learning for a number of reasons, including concerns about the loss of face-to-face interaction with students and professional socialization. At the same time, social work educators are beginning to realize that there is a need to integrate ICTs into both education programs and practice (Butterfield, 1998; Freddolino, 2002, Sandell &

Hayes, 2002; Schoech, 2002). The themes discussed in this chapter form a two-part framework for examining pedagogical and policy issues in implementing e-learning in social work education. The first set of themes, transformation, alignment, and coherence provide a framework for examining policy issues and program development. The second set, faculty engagement, resources, and leadership provide a framework for examining implementation issues and tasks.

Transformation

An overarching theme that emerged from my study was transformation. As a result of the influence of ICTs and the other forces affecting higher education, implementing e-learning was requiring the educators in this study to rethink their goals, the organization and structure of their programs, approaches to teaching and learning, academic and administrative policies, and their relationships with other programs. Participants identified the need for social work educators to adapt to a rapidly changing, ICT-rich, higher education environment and take advantage of emerging learning technologies. At the same time, they expressed concerns about the fit of e-learning with the core values and the purpose of social work education. They were concerned about the effects of commercialization and competition in higher education, a technological imperative, and the effect of e-learning on the quality of professional education. Specific tensions included the need to respond to rapid change, clarify the motivation for incorporating e-learning, respond to shifts and disruption to the teaching-learning process, carefully evaluate the fit of e-learning with the goals and traditions of social work education, focus on quality versus

revenue generation, achieve e-equity for both students and faculty, and resolve ethical challenges related to confidentiality and privacy.

ICTs represent disruptive technologies that require change on multiple levels including changes to established disciplinary traditions, pedagogical models, teaching roles, policies, and organizational structures (Archer, Garrison and Anderson, 1999; Szabo, 2002). In terms of social work education there needs to be a sorting through of the tensions generated by the change process. In particular, participants identified the need for enhanced dialogue amongst social work educators to understand and critique what these shifts mean for the future of social work education and how programs will respond to significant paradigm shifts in higher education. Given the disruptive nature of e-learning to the teaching-learning process, the role of faculty, and the pedagogical challenges identified in earlier chapters, an important strategy will be to differentiate and resolve specific elements and levels of change involved in this transformation process. For example, dealing with philosophical tensions involving core values such as equity and social justice, finding ways to achieve effective learning relationships and professional socialization in the teaching-learning process, building experience in offering social work education in e-learning environments, and developing policies, strategies, and organizational structures that support and incorporate the expanding influence of e-learning.

Implementing e-learning will require that programs transform and adapt a wide range of policies and practices in order for diffusion to expand beyond the initial innovations of individual faculty and programs. It will also require significant sociocultural change. Transformation on both of these levels will require strong

leadership, from within programs and their institutions, and the profession as a whole. The participants in this study were already engaged in the transformation process and were committed to finding ways to resolve the challenges of implementing e-learning in their courses and programs. Future integration of e-learning will require an expanded and concerted effort if programs are to move e-learning from the initial stages of implementation to an integral part of mainstream social work education.

While social work educators will need to resolve a significant number of challenges in order to transform programs and incorporate e-learning on a sustainable basis, these same programs and their faculty are firmly grounded in a tradition of being systemic change experts and advocates. So, while participants reported sentiments amongst their colleagues that included ideological and professional hesitancies regarding e-learning, they also reported excitement as a result of their experience in enhancing pedagogy and the mission of social work education through the integration of technology. For example, despite a critical view of fit of e-learning in social work education, two programs were the first academic units in their universities to offer online learning, and their innovative work became models for other programs. In this regard, the theme of transformation and adaptation is a particularly good fit for social work educators whose philosophical and theoretical foundations are based on negotiating systemic change in the context of shifting environments. In this instance, it is their own higher education environment that is undergoing rapid transformation. Social work educators should be well suited to adapt to these changes, and find solutions to respond to the challenges identified in this study.

This theme is also found in the current literature on technology integration and higher education. It has been suggested that the integration of new information and communication technologies represents a paradigm shift for higher education, one with as much significance as the introduction of the printing press (Collis, 1996, Hafner & Oblinger, 1998; Van Dusen, 1997). Szabo (2002) emphasizes that ICTs are disruptive technologies that require significant sociocultural and sociotechnical change in higher education organizations. The growing availability and integration of e-learning, coupled with a number of forces affecting higher education are requiring programs and institutions to examine their goals, organizational structures and ability to respond to an increasing wired and competitive higher education environment (Bates, 2000; Duderstadt, 1997, 2000; Graves, 1997; Hanna, 1998, 2003; Turoff, 1997; Van Dusen, 1997). In Canada, the Advisory Committee on Online Learning (2001) suggests there is an urgent need to implement a pan-Canadian plan to support the implementation of e-learning in higher education institutions.

Social work programs are not immune from these forces, and are having to incorporate and adapt to the influence of ICTs and e-learning (Freddolino, 2002; Sandell & Hayes, 2002). As identified in the findings, transformation in social work education is required on a number of levels including resolving philosophical and ideological concerns about e-learning in social work, transformation of the role of faculty and pedagogical approaches, revision and alignment of a wide range of academic and administrative policies, and revised program and organizational arrangements. While social work educators have been initially reticent to embrace and adopt e-learning, the profession's expertise in systemic change processes and

skills in understanding changing environments will provide an important foundation in responding to the challenges identified in this study.

Alignment

A key theme that emerged from my study was the need for alignment: philosophical alignment, pedagogical alignment, policy alignment, and program and organizational alignment.

Philosophical Alignment. On a philosophical level, participants conveyed the need to ensure that their programs and initiatives are congruent with the values and mission of the profession. This included resolution of tensions involving core values such as equity, and ethical principles such as confidentiality, privacy, and the responsibility to educate competent practitioners. On a pragmatic level, participants recognized that programs operate within an institutional environment guided by vision and mission statements, goals, and strategic plans, and within the context of a rapidly changing higher education environment. On a societal level, recent shifts to neo-liberalism and fiscal restraint for social services and higher education in general have had a significant impact on both the social service delivery system and higher education.

The integration of ICTs in higher education represent a major paradigm shift for educators. In professional programs, the task of aligning and seeking resolution of value tensions adds a further layer that educators must grapple with. In addition, programs must meet external accreditation standards which have not kept pace with the rapid evolution of e-learning and other learning technologies. Freddolino (2002) observes that in social work education, there really is no choice: he asserts that social work educators need to recognize that ICTs are here to stay and that they will need to

find ways to resolve these tensions. The participants in this study had begun the process of identifying and resolving the professional challenges identified in Chapter Four. One outcome of this study has been to specify and generate further understanding of these challenges.

Pedagogical Alignment. Participants acknowledged that the use of e-learning requires significant shifts in how learning is accessed, organized, offered, and evaluated. E-learning required new skill sets for both faculty and students, increased expertise in instructional design, increased planning, new models of instructional design, and major shifts in the role of the instructor. For participants, it also meant finding solutions to the professional and pedagogical challenges involved in the loss of face-to-face interaction and immediacy, ensuring effective learning relationships, and professional socialization and mentorship.

Aligning pedagogy is a major challenge and necessary task if social work educators are going to successfully implement and sustain e-learning in their programs. It requires an examination of curricula, changes to the structure of learning, integrating learning models that are appropriate for both social work education and online learning environments, balancing asynchronous and synchronous learning activities, changing residency and transfer requirements, enhancing faculty knowledge of pedagogy, technical skills, the ability to teach in online environments, developing new approaches to assessment and evaluation, and resources to develop high quality interactive learning experiences that are specifically designed for a broad range of social work content and professional skill development.

The amount of change and effort required to work through these challenges and align pedagogy for e-learning in social work education is daunting, and will require strong levels of leadership, commitment and resources to implement. At the same time, the experience of these participants in implementing e-learning in their programs was encouraging, and the emerging literature examining e-learning in social work education reports positive results in terms of learning outcomes for students. For example, Altman (2000) suggests there is an "exquisite fit" between constructivist and collaborative approaches to learning in online environments and the traditional face-to-face approaches to social work education. Several participants commented that asynchronous discussion had enhanced the quality of discussion and reflection in their courses, and that their involvement in e-learning had improved their face-to-face teaching as a result of the increased knowledge of learning theory and instructional design. Key factors in aligning pedagogy include having the resources to build in high levels of social, cognitive, and teaching presence and restructuring curricula to enhance opportunities for direct observation and the role of field education, especially in programs that are offered in a full distance format.

Policy Alignment. Participants identified a number of areas for academic and administrative policy development and alignment in their programs and institutions.

Academic policies included developing clear expectations and guidelines for students, revision of participation policies, policies that address confidentiality, privacy and security in online learning environments, teaching expectations and guidelines for faculty, faculty development, assessment processes, clarification of the

roles of various people involved in developing and managing online learning environments, and accreditation policies and standards.

Administrative Policies and practices included workload and compensation policies, incentives, recognition and reward practices and policies, policies supporting shifts in faculty roles, faculty development, faculty knowledge and skill requirements, the balance of part-time and full-time faculty involved in e-learning, and intellectual property and ownership. They also included policies governing funding, tuition, and policies supporting program quality. Again, alignment of both academic and administrative policies will require a significant commitment on the part of program leaders and their institutions.

Program Structure and Organizational Alignment. Given that e-learning is blurring the boundaries between on-campus and distance programming, programs need to examine and align their organizational structure to adapt to these shifts. Participants in this study identified several structural and organizational barriers to student movement in e-learning, including restrictions in the movement between distance and on-campus programs. Cost recovery funding and tuition fee structures for distance programming represented an equity concern for participants. Differential funding and tuition fee structures have generally been rationalized with the argument that the increased costs of distance learning are justified by the increased access provided to learners. This was less of an issue when distance education students were separated in their learning by both geography and learning model, typically a self-paced tutor model supplemented with audiovisual materials and occasional contact with other students through audio or video conferencing.

Participants stated that the integration of e-learning in both distance and on-campus courses not only modified the learning model, but also provided the opportunity for much higher levels of interaction between students, including the potential to integrate on-campus and distance students in courses. However, their administrative structures, support structures, and funding models were not organized to accommodate this integration. Typically distance courses and programs are funded by cost recovery mechanisms, and fall outside on-campus tuition fee policies. They are expected to be self-sustaining and revenues are expected to fund separate academic and administrative support, as well as course development and maintenance. Distance courses are generally linked to a continuing education unit in the university, separate teams of instructional designers and course production support, and separate student support systems. On-campus programs, in contrast, are usually base-funded and supported through centralized teaching and learning support units. In one example, faculty teaching distance courses at one site observed that they had access to more support and consultation than their on-campus colleagues. The integration of e-learning raises questions about the effectiveness and efficiency of these arrangements, given the effort and resources required to implement e-learning, and the blurring of boundaries between distance and on-campus learning.

Through the use of e-learning, participants in this study were integrating increased levels of interactivity and collaborative learning in self-paced distance courses. They were also integrating e-learning in face-to-face courses, adding flexibility and elements of distance learning to on-campus courses. In both instances, the development of high quality e-learning required significant resources. In the

context of limited or reduced funding, it is neither efficient nor sustainable to continue to resource the development of parallel courses in distance and on-campus programming.

Current organizational and funding arrangements represent structural barriers to the integration of e-learning on several levels including the movement of students between distance and on-campus status, the integration of distance and on-campus learners in courses, the separation of distance and on-campus faculty, differential compensation for faculty, an imbalance in the number of part-time faculty teaching and developing distance courses, inefficiencies in course development, and obstacles to shared course and learning object development.

Integrating the administration and funding of distance and on-campus learning represents an important area for program and organizational alignment. There are many barriers to this integration, not the least of which is a cost recovery model that is supported through institutional practice and policy, as well as by provincial ministries of higher education. If programs are going to integrate the administration and support of e-learning in on-campus and distance programming, this will need to be part of a larger institutional initiative to align organizational structures to respond to the continued growth of e-learning. Respective provincial departments of higher education need to be prepared to examine funding models based on traditional full-time-equivalent formulas, and the investment of substantial resources in order to support the development of wide scale e-learning. This is especially true for human service professions like social work, that have little

opportunity to generate revenue alternatives to tuition fees or government grants to use in the development of online learning in their programs.

A further area of organizational development that has potential for social work programs is the development of partnerships with other social work programs to share in the cost of development of e-learning. There has been little collaboration between Canadian Social Work programs in terms of developing e-learning. Exploiting the benefits of inter-program collaboration will also mean that programs will need to align their organization and policies to facilitate collaboration and exchange.

The literature reflects the need for philosophical, pedagogical, program, and policy alignment in social work education. In particular, social work educators have expressed concerns about professional socialization, the loss of face-to-face interaction and the quality of learning in distance education programs (Siegel et al., 1998). Similar concerns have also been identified in terms of e-learning in social work education (Collins, Gabor, Coleman & Ing, 2002; Kreuger & Stretch, 2000). Butterfield (1998) and Schoech (2002) note that social workers have been slow to adopt technology compared other sectors of society, however, increasing access to technology and the changing nature of work and service delivery are influencing the profession's need to integrate technology. At the same time, developing skills in the use of ICTs in social work is viewed as crucial for the profession, educators, and students (Butterfield, 1998; Cummins & Hamilton, 2000; Freddolino, 2002; Gonchar & Adams, 2000; Grant Thornton & CS /RESORS, 2000; MacFadden, 2002; Lawrence-Web, 2000; Miller-Cribbs & Chadiha, 1998; Sandell & Hayes, 2002). Much of the literature in e-learning and social work education has focused on

comparing online learning to face-to-face learning. However, a small number of authors have focused on pedagogical models for social work education. Oullette (2000) for example, emphasizes the value of collaborative and active learning for social work education, Altman (2000) suggests that there is an "exquisite fit" between e-learning and adult social work education. Ashery (2001) in a study that explored the general use of technology in social work programs found that there was a need for increased knowledge of how technology can be used in social work education, a need for increased buy-in by social work educators, and that faculty preferred one-on-one approaches to faculty development.

While initial literature on e-learning in social work education was generally focused on comparing online and face-to-face learning for the purposes of accreditation, more recently there appears to be less of a concern about comparability, and more acceptance and support for programs integrating e-learning as social work educators gain experience teaching in e-learning environments (Freddolino, 2002). For example, in the US, the most recent CSWE accreditation standards do not differentiate between traditional face-to-face learning and other learning environments, and encourage innovation. In Canada, a Task Group on Distance Education has been developing revised policy recommendations for the Educational Policy Committee of the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (CASSW). The need for policy review was based in part on an earlier survey that identified that there was a lack of policies to guide programs in implementing distance learning. The most recent draft recommendations of the Task Group on Distance Education (CASSW, 2003) is proactive and specifically supports programs in offering distance

learning. The draft policy statements require that programs provide sufficient resources to deliver programs, ensure quality and equivalent learning outcomes, and use uniform standards of evaluation across learning environments. The recommendations also include the need for programs to align distance education initiatives with the program's mission and goals. As recently as 2002, an earlier version recommended that "a minimum of 25 % of the courses, in addition to field practicum, ought to be delivered face-to-face with faculty in the same room as the students" for BSW programs (CASSW, 2002). The current version of the draft recommends that "(Programmes) shall involve interactive means of delivery and provide adequate opportunities for face-to-face contact with faculty and other students" (CASSW, 2003, p. 7). The evolution of this recommendation seems to be indicative of a shift in thinking about distance and e-learning in social work education and an increased comfort level with e-learning environments.

Given the challenges identified by participants in this study, there are additional elements that the CASSW could consider incorporating into the policy statement, in particular for e-learning environments. These include specific policy statements about confidentiality and privacy, the skill requirements of faculty, the need for faculty development, further elaboration on instructional design, teaching presence in online environments, interactivity, enhancement of field education and synchronous observation of practice skills, recognition of the shift in role and time involved in developing online learning for faculty, class size, recognition and reward processes for innovation and the scholarship of teaching, revised course evaluation processes, and transfer and residency requirements. The draft recommendations also

focus exclusively on distance courses and programs. Given the blurring of boundaries between distance and on-campus courses as a result of e-learning, these recommendations could be expanded to apply to all learning environments offered by programs.

The need for further pedagogical alignment and the development of academic policies was confirmed through the review of my findings by four expert participants. In particular, Susan and Maureen emphasized a number of continuing concerns that have not been addressed. These included the need for enhancement to the field education component through additional training for field instructors and the need for clearer policies and practices in assessing and responding to difficulties that emerge in field practicums with distance students. They also confirmed the need for proactive faculty development, policies on class size, guidelines for online communication, confidentiality and privacy, instructor control of the learning environment, and the need for pedagogical dialogue. For example, in reviewing my findings, these participants commented:

> I also agree with your recommendation that class size should be less than 30 students in recognition of the nature of intensive online discussions and recognition of time demands placed on faculty. This is still an issue at our university. This recommendation gets shunted aside for items in the budget that are seen to have more urgency. Perhaps this is because the administrators making these budget decisions are not faced with the workload of carrying several online courses and may not have personally experienced the impact of large class size in this environment (Susan).

> Your recommendation for the need to implement proactive faculty development programs which integrate technological and pedagogical knowledge and skills for teaching in online environments is right on the money! (Susan)

> There are areas of potential liability in having students placed outside of your community. Training and education of agency field instructors is an important consideration – in terms of prevention of problems and promotion of learning that complements the studies of students. There is also a need in policy and practice to develop processes that enable difficulties and problems to be assessed and dealt with – I have had to do this by telephone – while we were fortunate to be able to resolve the difficulties, the experiences left me wondering how we would deal with more severe difficulties. (Maureen)

> You discuss ethical issues around ownership of materials, archiving, etc. I would suggest that these issues are still largely unresolved, although we now have developed some preamble alerts to students so that they are at least participating in use of the technology in a more informed way. (Susan)

> There is a real need for social work deans and directors who have e-learning programs to effectively advocate for resources, research, and ethical practice in teaching online and to be proactive in pursuing partnerships and cooperation, rather than getting into a competitive position with other schools of social work. (Maureen)

> You indicate a need for dialogue about specific philosophical and pedagogical challenges involved in e-learning, including challenges of workload, recognition and faculty development. These issues still resonate with me. (Susan)

The need for policy and organizational alignment to integrate e-learning are also identified in the literature (Gellman-Danley & Fetzner, 1998; Olcott, 1996). A number of authors have suggested that the rapidly evolving context of higher education, including the integration of ICTs, is creating a need for higher education institutions to re-examine their policies, cultures and organizational structures (Bates, 2000; Duderstadt, 1997; Graves, 1997; Hanna, 1998, 2003; Turoff, 1997; Van Dusen, 1997). In social work education, Blakely (1992) identified the need for programs to examine and modify policies before they consider involvement in distance education initiatives. In this regard, Blakely notes that:

> The implementation of a model for distance education will be affected by policies – or lack of them – that are related to this concept of educational delivery. Policies related to the current model may involve major changes in university structure that administrators may need to make before they consider distance education programming. (p.6)

Although Blakely's recommendations pre-date the use of online learning, many of the issues he identified continue to apply to the implementation of e-learning in social work education. For example, Blakely recommended the need for revised incentives and rewards for faculty involved in distance education, revision of both academic and administrative polices, the importance of preparing faculty to teach in media rich versus face-to-face environments, and the need to develop adequate teaching resources. As noted earlier, many participants in this study commented on the rapid adoption of e-learning in their programs and felt there had been insufficient planning and policy development. Ashery (2001) in a study of the general use of technology in fifteen graduate schools of social work in the US found that while many schools were involved in some form of distance education, most did not have a strategic plan for the implementation of technology. When I asked participants about strategic plans in their programs, only two had developed strategic plans at the time of our interviews.

Haughey (2002), in a comprehensive review of Canadian research on information and communications technologies (ICTs), identified the following policy concerns: infrastructure, administration, learning, teaching (including professional development strategies), content development (including the use of learning object repositories), and implementing large scale reform. Gellman-Danley and Fetzner (1998) suggest a framework for policy development in distance and alternative instructional delivery. They suggest seven areas for policy development: Academic,

Fiscal, Geographic, Governance, Labor-Management, Legal, and Student Support Services. Berge (1998) suggests that two additional areas be added to this framework: Cultural Change and Technical Systems. King, Nugent, Russell, Eich and Lacy (2000), building on the work of these authors, suggest a policy analysis framework that includes the following policy areas: Academic, Governance / Administration / Fiscal, Faculty, Legal, Student Support Services, Technical, and Cultural. Drawing on these models, the areas for policy development identified in this study fall primarily under academic policies, faculty policies, student support, and administrative and fiscal policies. Some policy areas fall under multiple categories, for example, intellectual property involves faculty and legal policies. Implementing revised policies will require cultural change on academic, administrative, and organizational levels.

Coherence

The importance of achieving and maintaining coherence emerged as an important underlying theme for the participants in my study. The Oxford English Dictionary (1993) provides several definitions of coherence. These include: Logical connection or relation; congruity, consistency; and consistency in reasoning, or relating, so that one part of the discourse does not destroy or contradict the rest; harmonious connection of the several parts, so that the whole "hangs together". Given that ICTs and e-learning disrupt and challenge strongly held beliefs, traditions, and educational practices, participants were concerned about how social work education hangs together in e-learning environments. In particular, participants emphasized the need to find ways to ensure that professional socialization, modeling, skill

development, and quality are maintained or enhanced in implementing e-learning. The unbundling and restructuring of higher education as a result of ICTs (Duderstadt, 1997, 2000) and the need for pedagogical re-engineering (Collis, 1996) are unsettling processes for social work educators who are strongly grounded in a tradition of face-to-face teaching as the primary vehicle for professional development and mentorship.

Coherence was important for participants on several levels, including pedagogical and professional coherence, maintaining high quality educational experiences, maintaining program standards, professional accountability, and accreditation. Important questions for these educators to address on a professional and pedagogical level were: Is the use of e-learning congruent with the values, beliefs, skill sets, and standards of particular programs? How does e-learning fit with the needs of learners? What is an effective balance between asynchronous and synchronous learning? What strategies can be used to ensure high levels of interaction and enhanced observational opportunities? What resources are required to effectively offer social work curricula in e-learning environments? What aspects of programming and levels course are not suited for e-learning, and, what format (fully online, hybrid, supplemental)?

Coherence was also important on a programmatic and organizational level. The participants noted that as social work educators rethink curricula and integrate e-learning, they also need to rethink how program organization and practices support or impede new and flexible approaches to learning. Important questions they identified included: How does e-learning fit with the vision and mission of the program? Does the program have a strategic plan for the integration of e-learning and other learning

technologies? How is the learning organized and sequenced? Who should be involved? Does e-learning fit with overall institutional goals? Does the program have the resources to support well designed and high quality e-learning? What new organizational structures are required to create efficiencies, collaborate, and compete in a rapidly changing higher education environment? Has the program and institution re-aligned academic and administrative policies to support e-learning? What support and resources are available from the university? What resources and support need to be centralized and decentralized?

Participants saw these as important questions that programs need to address in order to achieve coherence as they rethink the structure and organization of their programs. In particular, participants identified the challenges of how to promote professional socialization in e-learning environments and adapt to new forms of communication and learning. Practice oriented courses were identified as particularly challenging. Implementing e-learning, particularly for faculty previously not involved in distance education, requires the development of a new set of skills, increased planning, redesigning learning, new assessment processes, and shifts in the role and identity of the instructor. It also creates tensions involving strongly held values, including equity, and the importance of face-to-face relationships as a vehicle for teaching social work. As noted by Seigel et al. (1998):

> Distance education is relatively new and has not been embraced with great enthusiasm by the majority of social work educators. Often it is viewed with suspicion and as a nontraditional method that needs to be approached with caution. If one does not teach 'face-to-face', as is the norm in our profession, how much is lost in the perceived quality of the classroom interaction, in the potential socialization of students, and in the relationship with the instructor as a mentor and role model?

> Social work has indeed been careful about redefining the meaning of this relationship. (p.76)

While participants identified these challenges, they also were excited about the pedagogical possibilities of e-learning, and committed to finding solutions to integrate e-learning into social work education. Achieving coherence in the learning process was viewed as contingent on a number of issues identified elsewhere in my study, including: faculty interest and skill level, revision of workload, compensation, and recognition policies, the need for pedagogical dialogue, disciplinary and institutional leadership, and having the resources to develop high quality interactive learning.

Coherence on an organizational level is also reflected in the literature on e-learning and higher education. Hanna (2003) identifies the need for institutions to adapt their organizational processes and structures to a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive higher education environment. In this regard, Hanna notes:

> The distinction between on-campus learning and distance learning is blurring at warp speed as campus residence halls are wired, wireless access to the Internet is created, classes with both on-campus and off-campus students are organized through computer conferencing, and multiple formats for learning are provided as options to more and more students. Although the value of campus-based classroom learning and socialization, especially for young people preparing for their lives as adults, will be important long into the future, even a cursory look at how universities are organizing to provide this learning shows a dramatic departure from past educational practices. (p.68)

Expanding on the concept of borderless higher education as a result of ICTs, Middlehurst (2003) also identifies the need for re-alignment of organizational processes as programs and institutions adapt to the dissolution of time, space and geography and increasing competition as a result of ICTs. These include making

decisions about what aspects of educational services can be outsourced, such as registration, assessment, and teaching and learning support, and what aspects are unique and core to university education. In this regard, Middlehurst makes the following observation:

> As functions are disaggregated and shared between a chain of providers, institutions will need to pay particular attention to quality assurance to ensure that the end user (the students) experience programmes and learning opportunities that are relevant and coherent. (p. 9)

Middlehurst also states that new organizational arrangements are emerging including regional and international consortia, partnerships with the private sector, and national virtual universities. She identifies a number features of borderless education, several of which relate to challenges identified in this study. These include dissolving boundaries between on-campus and distance learning and between university programs, collaboration as a strategy to respond to borderless higher education, and the need to respond to the challenges of crossing organizational boundaries such as legal and funding structures and varying organizational cultures. In terms of social work education, programs are just beginning to think through both their internal structures and their relationship with other programs. Given the blurring of boundaries between distance and on-campus learning, programs should consider integrating separate administrative and organizational processes including student and faculty support, course development, and student movement between distance and on-campus learning. Middlehurst also identifies the phenomenon of subject spread, which refers to the range of subjects and resources being determined by market forces. The challenge of developing high quality learning resources is particularly

important for social work educators (Blakely, 1992). Given the limited resources available and the limited commercial value of social work curricula, programs will need to find alternate sources of funding to develop e-learning. Possibilities include collaborative course development, forming regional consortia, and seeking joint funding to develop an e-learning portal and learning object repository for social work education in Canada.

Faculty Engagement

Without significant effort to involve and engage social work faculty, it is unlikely that the implementation of e-learning will move beyond small scale projects, with the exception of those programs already committed to integrating e-learning in existing distance programming. On the other hand, social work educators and programs, including those who do not offer distance learning, do not really have a choice if they wish to stay current and relevant in a rapidly changing learner-driven and technology-laden, higher education environment. An important underlying question then is: how will the majority of social work educators who are not yet involved in e-learning get from here to there? The metaphor of engagement seems particularly relevant, as it reflects a key concept in social work practice theory.

Participants stated that implementing e-learning was contingent on a number of factors including faculty interest and preferred teaching style, having the time to learn new technical and online teaching skills, faculty development and knowledge of instructional design, a shift in teaching role and identity, compensation, incentives, revised evaluation processes, and recognition. They were also concerned about professional socialization, the quality of the learning experience, intellectual property,

and ethical challenges. Without a substantial change of policies that govern release time, compensation, incentives and scholarly recognition, it is likely these barriers will impede wide scale involvement by social work faculty who are already reluctant to consider online learning as a result of these professional and pedagogical challenges. These barriers are not specific to social work educators and similar recommendations have been made in relation to higher education faculty in general (Olcott, 1996a, 2000; O'Quinn & Corry, 2002; Wolcott, 2003). In social work and other health and other human service education programs, concerns about professional socialization and the pedagogical fit of e-learning are an additional set of challenges that need to be resolved.

In spite of these significant challenges and potential barriers, the participants in this study were all willing to engage with e-learning and most were very excited about the pedagogical possibilities of e-learning in social work education. At the same time, most participants were early adopters and intrinsically motivated to experiment with new approaches to teaching and learning. Encouraging faculty who are not interested or involved will require proactive strategies and incentives to encourage wider adoption (Shifter, 2000).

A key aspect of engagement identified by participants was the need for faculty dialogue on a number of levels that include: philosophical dialogue, pedagogical dialogue, and dialogue and input into program planning and policies that affect their involvement in e-learning. In this regard many participants felt there had been insufficient dialogue within their programs about these issues and insufficient preparation and planning for the implementation of e-learning in their programs. As

in the case of policy development and accreditation, the pace of technology integration and sense of urgency to adopt e-learning in a competitive higher education environment had simply outpaced the opportunity for in-depth and widespread debate on questions and concerns, while at the same time generating new challenges as faculty and programs began to gain experience with e-learning.

Participants stated that dialogue needs to take place not only at the program and interdisciplinary level within institutions, but also with faculty at other social work programs across Canada. Most participants were unaware of initiatives in other social work programs in Canada, or conferences such as the Annual Technology Conference for Social Work Education and Practice hosted by the University of South Carolina. They expressed high interest in opportunities to learn and consult with other social work educators involved in e-learning. Several commented that they were looking forward to our interview as an opportunity to engage in dialogue about e-learning. One participant suggested that there was a need for a course in teaching and learning online in social work education.

Another key aspect to faculty engagement is the need for custom-designed and proactive faculty development. Given the significant faculty challenges identified by participants, faculty development initiatives need to include a range of new technical and pedagogical skills, a focus on issues specific to e-learning in social work courses, access to instructional design consultation, and ongoing support. Faculty development could also involve collaboration, exchange and consultation with faculty in other social work programs as part of the expanded dialogue noted above.

A final key aspect of faculty engagement was that of faculty choice. Several participants emphasized the need for faculty (and student) choice of involvement in e-learning. In this regard, some participants stated that their programs had specifically decided to make involvement in e-learning voluntary. This was both as a matter of principle and a specific implementation strategy to encourage early adopters and intrinsically motivated faculty to experiment, gain success and provide modeling and support to other faculty. In other programs, participants were less clear about whether or not faculty had the option of being involved in e-learning. They recommended that there needed to be clearer policies in this regard. The issue of voluntary engagement and involvement in e-learning will be a difficult and delicate one for program administrators to deal with, given the strong tradition of academic freedom in higher education. At the same time, given the expected continued integration of e-learning, including on-campus courses, faculty who are not involved may find themselves unable to fully participate in a technology-rich higher education environment in the not too distant future. It is likely that future faculty will be required to use e-learning, and in two instances participants commented that their programs had begun to include e-learning interest, skill and knowledge in hiring criteria for new faculty.

Faculty saw the inclusion of e-learning as contingent on a number of factors including faculty interest and preferred teaching style, having the time to learn new technical and online teaching skills, faculty development and knowledge of instructional design, a shift in teaching role and identity, compensation, incentives, revised evaluation processes, and recognition. They were also concerned about professional socialization, ethical challenges, ensuring quality learning, and

intellectual property. Given the magnitude of changes required to implement e-learning, social work programs will need to be proactive in their engagement of faculty. Many of these issues have been identified in the previous literature in both social work and education. For example, Blakely (1992) recommends the development of incentives and rewards and enhanced faculty development for social work faculty involved in distance education. Likewise, Ashery (2001) recommends that social work educators should work with their universities in revising tenure policies to recognize technology integration. Suggested examples include the development and testing of software and the development and evaluation of distance learning. Padgett and Conceao-Runlee (2000), in evaluating a technology training program for social work educators identify the need for faculty development, the need for faculty input into faculty development programming, and recommend that faculty development initiatives be linked to rewards, workload, and promotion and tenure processes. In particular, they state:

> Competing demands on faculty members' time present very real obstacles to their participation in faculty development programs. If the institution does not have a commitment to enhance technological literacy, along with an infrastructure of rewards and resources to support that commitment, there will be too many disincentives for a faculty development program to succeed. (p. 331)

Without substantial change in policies that govern release time, compensation, incentives and scholarly recognition, it is likely these barriers will impede wide scale involvement by mainstream social work faculty.

Olcott (1996b, 2000) emphasizes that faculty involvement is central to adapting to alternate learning environments and that it is "Imperative that institutions address faculty policy issues if distance education (is) to become an integral part of

the academic culture" (Olcott, 1996b, p.10). He also states that many institutional policies and practices are barriers to faculty involvement in distance and distributed learning, including lack of release time, compensation and rewards for their involvement. In this regard, Olcott (2000) notes the need for complete restructuring of compensation and reward structures, the need for faculty technology skills, the need for enhanced knowledge of instructional design and faculty development, and revised tenure criteria that value innovative teaching and technology integration. Wolcott (2003) in a comprehensive review of the literature on faculty participation in distance education makes a similar observation: "Accommodating faculty time and effort associated with distance teaching, the creation of online materials, and digital scholarship challenges the existing system for acknowledging and rewarding faculty for their teaching, research, and service" (p.550). Wolcott identified several key disincentives for faculty participation including demand on faculty time, workload, diversion from research activities especially for non-tenured faculty, and lack of recognition in promotion and tenure. COHERE (2002), a group of Canadian educators collaborating on issues related to shared learning objects also note that:

> The lack of value placed upon the scholarship of teaching within the university translates directly into the lack of recognition granted to the development of instructional technology innovations by faculty. The development of high quality learning environments requires a great deal of time to be devoted to instructional and technical development. This process is intimately linked with the scholarship of teaching. (p. 6)

These disincentives were also identified by the participants in this study, who relayed the experience of not having their work in developing e-learning valued, and in their support of the recommendation that involvement in e-learning should be recognized in promotion and tenure. The need for revision to recognition processes and policies

affecting non-tenure track faculty was also identified as a concern. In reviewing my findings and recommendations Paul commented, "Web-based learning highlights many of the fundamental problems in a university. Pedagogical support deficits, lack of finances, different "classes" of instructors", and, "I think the marginalization issue is important. Most of our involvement has been with sessionals and graduate students . . . web-based learning needs to be mainstreamed (for) faculty to survive."

An important aspect of engagement identified in this study was the need for faculty dialogue. Although the literature identifies the need for faculty involvement in policy development (Bower, 2001; Schoech, 2002), the participants in this study identified a number of specific areas for enhanced faculty dialogue in social work education. These included dialogue about the specific professional and pedagogical challenges involved in offering social work education in an e-learning format, as well as the challenges related to workload, recognition, faculty development, and intellectual property.

Resources

A key theme that emerged from this study was the need for resources to implement e-learning in social work education. The participants recognized that the challenges they identified have significant resource implications for programs. Their concern for resource acquisition and the gap between their desires and available resources was evident in many discussions. In this regard, participants stated that successful implementation of e-learning and the ability to respond to these challenges identified in this study were contingent on sustainable funding. Challenges included the need for resources to fund highly interactive learning, technical infrastructure,

enhancements to field education and opportunities for synchronous observation, faculty and student support, release time and compensation, faculty development, instructional design support, and revision to a wide range of academic and administrative policies. The issue of resources is complex and has implications for not only securing funding for the development of e-learning at the program level, but organizational processes as well. To a large extent, programs are dependent on their universities for support and resources are determined by institutional priorities and governed by a wide range of academic and administrative practices and policies (for example, release time and compensation).

As noted earlier, social work programs in general have a limited capacity to generate revenue. Without additional grants from host universities or provincial departments of higher education, it will be difficult for programs to allocate the resources necessary for wider scale adoption. This is especially true for smaller programs and for programs located in institutions with limited resources. Limited resources for e-learning creates tensions on several levels for social work educators. On a philosophical level, participants were concerned about e-equity and the differential funding and tuition structure for distance students. The blurring of boundaries between distance and on-campus learners raised additional questions about the difference between a distance and on-campus learner. In this regard, Olcott (2000) recommends the radical position that universities stop the practice of supporting distance education through cost recovery funding:

> University outreach costs money whether it is done by distance methods or face-to-face. Institutions must allocate hard dollars to their outreach programs and not place unreasonable demands on serving off-campus constituencies on a cost-recovery basis (Olcott, 1997). A

> self-sustaining distance education enterprise is absurd!! It's that simple. Institutions must design their budgets to support the outreach function. Either support it or get out of the business. (p.8)

Given the organization and current funding structures of higher education in Canada, it is unlikely that Olcott's recommendation is realistic or possible to implement without a significant infusion of resources to programs from public sources. At the same time, his point is well taken and helps bring into focus several resource tensions that social work education must deal with: a limited ability to generate revenues, a philosophical commitment to access and equity, expanding mandates and learner driven demand to integrate e-learning, and increasing competition from other Canadian and international universities.

On a pedagogical level, social work educators need resources to develop high quality interactive learning and deal with the pedagogical challenges identified in Chapter Four. While many participants felt it was possible to achieve high levels of interactivity, develop effective learning relationships, and effective learning outcomes in e-learning, they also emphasized that developing effective online learning was contingent on having the necessary resources and support to accomplish these goals. In this regard there is a high need in social work education for access to learning resources and learning objects that specifically focus on social work content and skills that are flexible and modifiable for different purposes (for example, levels of learning, regional differences). The lack of e-learning resources in social work education is a serious barrier to implementation. It does not seem to make sense to have individual faculty and programs working in isolation from each other, all building similar courses.

In light of the resource demands of e-learning, programs will need to find ways to either access new funding through their university or other sources, generate further efficiencies, or increase revenues through tuition fee increases. The latter is the least palatable of these strategies given social work educators' commitment to equity, publicly funded higher education, and their concerns about the commercialization of higher education. Without securing additional resources or implementing the recommendations outlined in Chapter Eight, it is unlikely that large scale implementation will be sustainable in the long run, with the exception of programs that are in a position to able to generate or secure additional funding. Depending on what resources become available, it is possible that programs will become e-learning "haves" and "have nots". As Jennifer commented:

> It will very interesting to see where this falls down, whether people are feeling collaborative enough in this environment to see that shared kind of stuff or whether they're going to feel that this becomes a way for them to enter into more private (arrangements).

The need for resources is also identified in the literature. Blakely (1992) notes the need for resources to develop learning materials for social work distance education. More recently, as programs adopt e-learning for distance and on-campus programming, this need has intensified. Cummins and Hamilton (2000) note that: "To date, few technology-based products are available for integrating technology and imagery into social work classrooms and social service organizations" (p.5). Based on a review of the literature, they identify a number of technology gaps including the need for technology-based learning materials for all levels of social work education and technology training resources for social work faculty.

As noted earlier, limited resources for e-learning in social work education creates tensions on several levels. At the core of these tensions are questions about how social work education programs are going to compete in a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive higher education environment without additional resources to integrate e-learning. In this regard, Sandell and Hayes (2002) suggest that while social work educators are concerned about equity and the digital divide for students, there is also the emerging possibility of a digital divide between programs: "The digital divide among social work programs may become a chasm, leaving programs that are not competitive in this area at a disadvantage" (p. 97). Another key question identified by some participants was whether or not social work educators would be willing to share their e-learning resources and experiences..

Leadership

An important underlying theme was the need for strong leadership to initiate, support and sustain the significant pedagogical and administrative shifts required to implement e-learning. Leadership tasks included the need to develop revised vision and mission statements and strategic plans for implementing e-learning in social work education programs. Several participants emphasized the need for strong leadership to transform faculty roles, implement new approaches to teaching and learning, and revise an extensive list of academic and administrative policies. Participants identified the need for leadership on four levels: faculty and disciplinary leadership, program administration, institutional leadership, and profession-wide leadership. In reviewing the findings, expert participants re-emphasized the importance of program and institutional leadership:

> There is a real need for social work deans and directors who have e-learning programs to effectively advocate for resources, research, ethical practice in teaching online, and to be proactive in pursuing partnerships and cooperation, rather than getting into a competitive position with other schools of social work. (Maureen)

> I also agree with your recommendation for reviewing and adjusting a wide range of academic and administrative policies and practices to respond to the challenges of e-learning. This has not been adequately addressed at my institution. (Susan)

Several participants conveyed that their programs had been supportive and encouraging in their development of e-learning, and in several instances, a shift to integrate online learning had been initiated by program leaders. In two instances, social work faculty had been the first to implement online learning in their university. Many of the participants provided informal leadership in their programs as a result of their interest and expertise in e-learning. Some programs had created technology committees to provide direction and leadership to programs. At the same time, given the magnitude of academic and administrative shifts involved in implementing e-learning, strong leadership and organizational commitment will be necessary for programs to sustain or initiate implementation. Strong leadership is needed on several levels including pedagogical and disciplinary leadership, program and administrative leadership, institutional leadership, and profession-wide leadership.

There is a need for strategic planning to support thoughtful and incremental implementation of e-learning in social work programs. As noted, at the time of my interviews, only two programs had developed specific strategic plans for the integration of e-learning. Other programs had developed some elements of strategic plans, for example business plans, and a few programs had established technology committees. In some programs, participants were the only faculty involved in e-

learning and had forged informal relationships with colleagues from other disciplines in the university with similar interests. In a few examples, programs had created technology leadership or coordination positions. In order to support wider adoption of e-learning, programs will need to establish stronger support structures and leadership. Strategies identified by participants included release time or other compensation for faculty leaders. Given the time demands involved in e-learning, without compensation and recognition they thought it is unlikely that individual faculty would be willing to continue to support and lead their colleagues. Program leadership was also needed to facilitate and expand faculty dialogue, as noted above. Strong leadership was also needed at the institutional level in order to re-align institution policies and structures. Without institutional support and resources it is unlikely that individual programs will be able move beyond small scale adoption of e-learning.

Leadership is also needed at a profession-wide level. Participants identified the need to consult and learn from each other and an interest in collaborating with other social work educators. One possibility, as suggested by one participant, is that the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work could take a leadership role in e-learning. Alternatively, programs could explore other mechanisms for providing profession wide leadership, coordination and collaboration in e-learning.

The need for strong leadership is also identified in the e-learning literature. Implementing ICTs require significant institutional change, vision, and leadership from senior levels of institutions (D'Antoni, 2003). Mason (2003) states that "E-learning initiatives require a change in leadership style and approaches within universities" (p.11). Mason further suggests that in order to be effective, leaders need

to develop, communicate, and support a strategic vision for the university and ensure alignment of policies and organizational structures. The importance of strategic planning in implementing e-learning is also identified by Bates (2000), Ashery (2001), and Haché (1998). In this regard, several participants expressed concerns about a lack of planning in the rapid adoption of e-learning in their programs. For example, Susan commented, "We seem to be getting into it in a very haphazard way . . . " Likewise, Monica stated: "I don't know if we've addressed it yet in more than a piecemeal way."

Beaudoin (2003b) suggests there is a need for both formal and informal leadership and "new millennium thinking" in order to adapt to an information economy and competitive higher education environment. In this regard, Beaudoin identifies the following leadership tasks involved in leading distance and distributed education:

> The tasks to be overseen by managers of both small and large, new and established distance education projects, represent a formidable repertoire of skills which need constant attention and refinement. To identify but a few areas: need assessment, market analysis, strategic planning, fitting technology to needs, operationalizing ideas, resource mobilization, introducing online infrastructure, policy formation, training and support for faculty, collaborating with partners, program evaluation and accreditation, and mentoring the next generation of leaders – all are tasks that require vigilance and guidance. (p.10)

Beaudoin (2003a) also suggests that while individual faculty may continue to experiment with learning technologies, wide scale or efficient systematic adoption will not occur without strong leadership.

Summary

In this Chapter I have discussed the major themes that emerged from my study. In the following chapter I will discuss the implications and recommendations based on the findings. The final chapter will also include a summary of my study, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 8

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Study

In this study I conducted in-depth interviews with thirty social work educators and administrators involved in offering e-learning in their programs. The participants were from twelve programs from western, central, and eastern Canada. Twenty five participants were faculty directly involved in teaching and developing online learning; five participants were involved in program coordination, distance delivery, and instructional design consultation. Many participants had multiple roles including teaching, the development of online learning, field education, administration of programs, technology leadership in their respective departments, program planning, and policy development. Each interview was approximately sixty to ninety minutes in length. My primary research questions were: What are the challenges in implementing e-learning in social work education? What are the implications for policy development? To explore these questions I developed a set of guiding questions and topics that I drew from in my interviews (see Appendix A). Initial questions were intentionally broad and focused on participants' interest and experiences in e-learning, the type of course (distance, on-campus, hybrid), the content of courses, and general demographic information. Subsequent questions were guided by participants' responses and by my guiding set of questions and topic areas. Although interviews were guided by a set of possible topics and questions, the actual conversations were free flowing and in-depth in nature. Many of the participants were

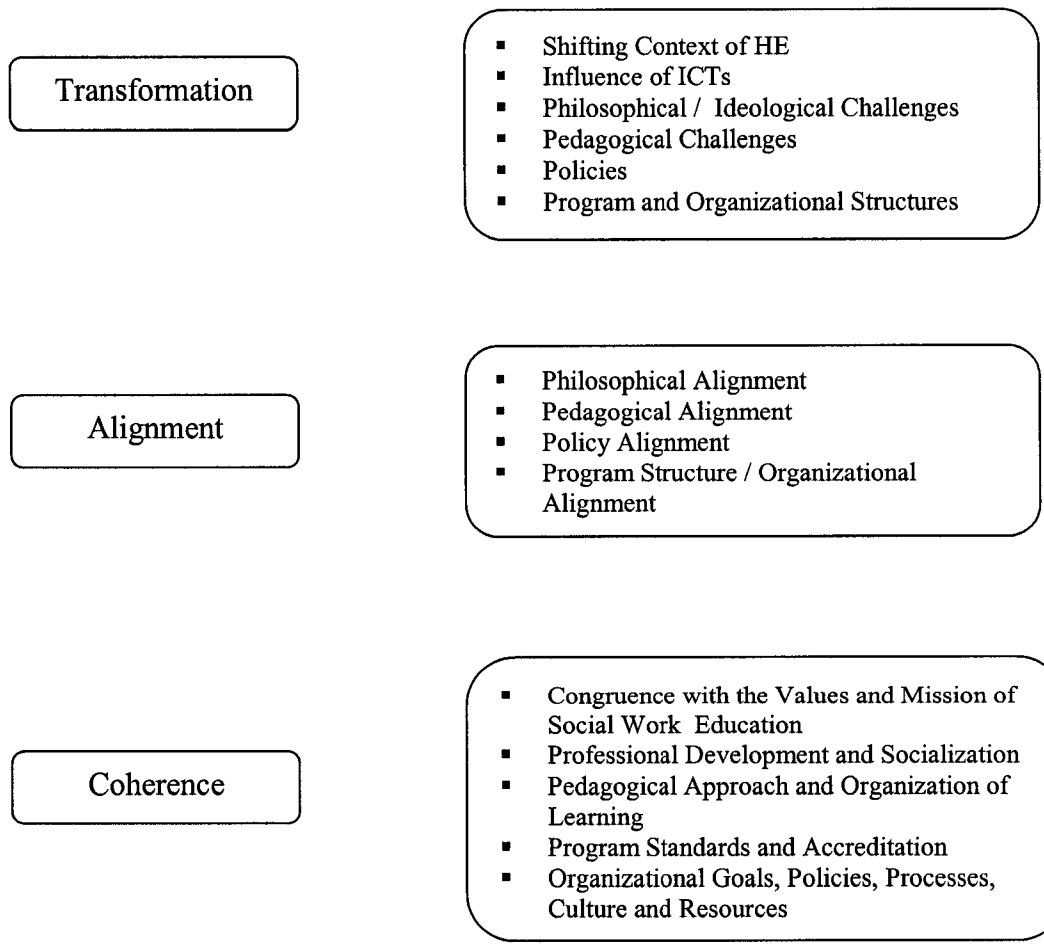
interested in participating in the interviews as a result of their involvement in e-learning and a desire to engage in dialogue about their work and contribute to emerging knowledge of e-learning in social work education.

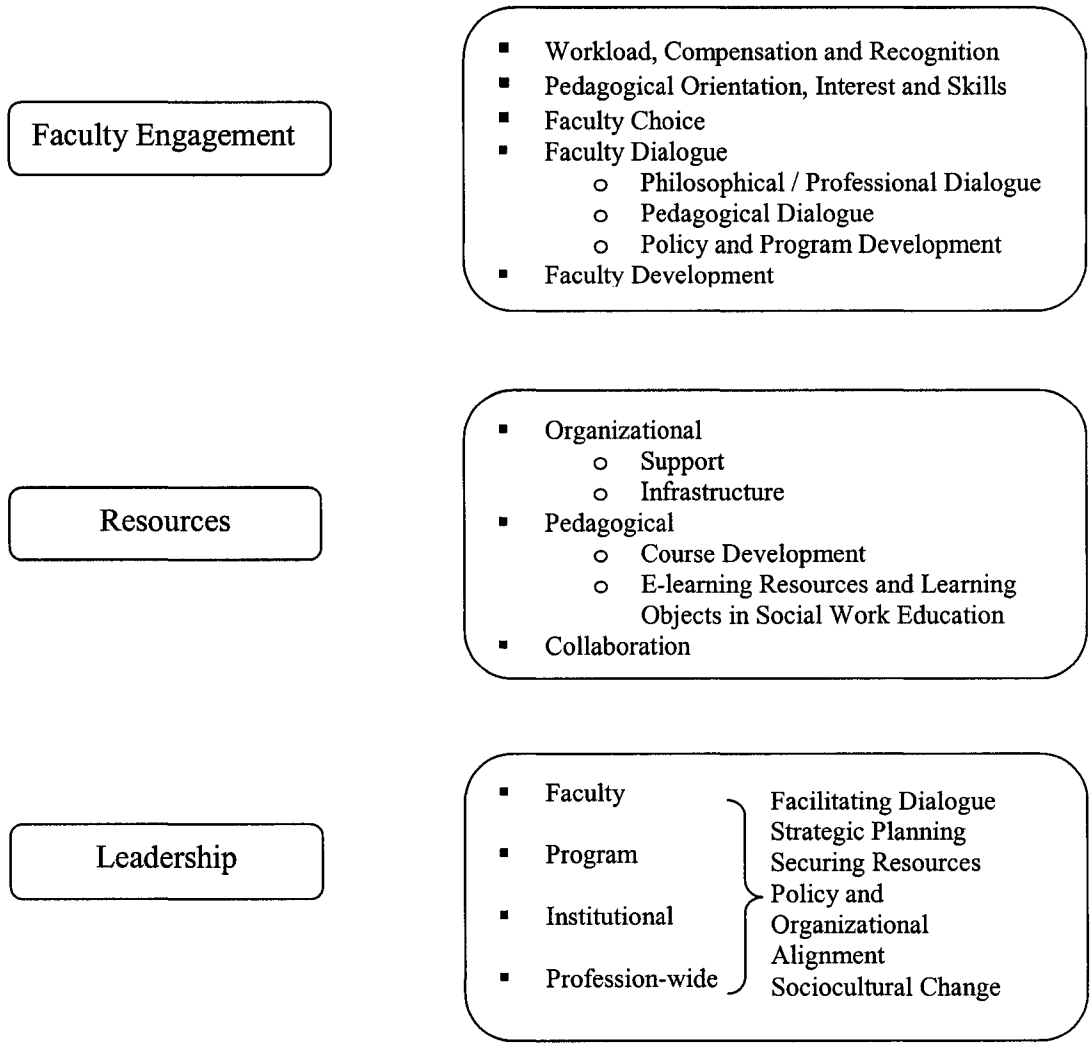
Qualitative data analysis included coding of interviews and categorizing of segments, and identifying emerging themes. I also kept field notes throughout the data collection phase to reflect on emerging issues, questions, and themes. Interview questions and processes were refined and informed by previous interviews. All interviews were transcribed for the purpose of inductive analysis, which continued throughout the study. All participants were provided with a copy of their transcript for review, correction and comment. They were also provided with the opportunity to review my draft findings and specific quotations that were integrated into my text (see Appendix I). Four participants with several years' experience in the use of learning technologies, distance learning, online teaching, and administration of programs were asked to reflect on my findings, discussion and recommendations (see Appendix J). Their observations, feedback and recommendations were incorporated into my analysis.

Initial and evolving coding of interviews led to the development of four interrelated categories, which I framed as challenges: Professional Challenges, Pedagogical Challenges, Faculty Challenges, and Administrative Challenges. Detailed discussions of these challenges are in Chapters Four, Five, and Six. Each category consists of a large number of interrelated issues that have implications for program and policy development. Through my analysis of the data and the

development of these four categories, I identified six interrelated themes: transformation, alignment, coherence, faculty engagement, resources, and leadership. These themes form a two-part framework for examining pedagogical and policy issues in implementing e-learning in social work education. The first set of themes, transformation, alignment, and coherence provide a framework for examining policy issues and program development. The second set, faculty engagement, resources, and leadership provide a framework for examining implementation issues and tasks. The framework is summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Framework for Examining Policy Development and Tasks in Implementing E-learning in Social Work Education





Implications

It is often scary and difficult to let go of old and comfortable roles, to be open to new possibilities and ways of being. Yet change brings with it the possibilities of deeper connections to our students and the potential for serving a much broader range of our society. Growth, both for an institution and for the individuals that comprise it, can come only with a step into the unknown. We move forward together, not recklessly, but thoughtfully – with care and a deep sense of commitment to the lives and dreams of our students. Duderstadt (2000, p.289)

The challenges and themes identified in this study have important implications for social work educators and administrators who are implementing, or considering implementing e-learning in their programs. The large number of professional, pedagogical, faculty, and administrative challenges identified by participants is daunting, and addressing these challenges and underlying themes will require a substantial commitment of time, leadership and resources. Resolving these challenges will also require substantial shifts in how learning and programs are organized, shifts in approaches to learning, shifts in faculty roles, revised policies and organizational structures, and new kinds of organizational relationships. The overall implication is that there is a lot of work to be done, likely in a short period of time, in order for social work educators and programs to integrate e-learning and remain competitive in a rapidly changing higher education environment.

Given the limited resources available to social work education programs, there are a number of possible strategies that social work educators could consider to support the continued integration of e-learning in their programs. The first is increased lobbying of their universities and respective departments of higher education for additional resources to implement e-learning. Social work programs need to make a strong case for support, given their limited ability to generate revenues and public service mandate. There is a limit to how much tuition fees can continue to rise and continue to attract students into social work and other human services oriented professions. Governments have, or should have, a vested interest in supporting professional programs that provide important public services. The need for technology integration in social work education programs was also identified as a

high priority in the recent Social Work Sector Study, funded by Human Resources and Development Canada (Grant Thornton & CS/Resors, 2000).

Secondly, social work educators and programs could collaborate with other programs and jurisdictions to develop online learning, and share resources and other initiatives such as faculty development and exchange. As noted earlier, no participants had been involved in collaborating on the development or exchange of online courses or e-learning resources at the time of our interviews. Some programs had been involved in collaboration in regional initiatives that were non-competitive and complementary in nature. Key challenges involved in collaboration include venturing beyond traditional programming, institutional, and geographic boundaries, resolving concerns about competition, and re-aligning policies that impede collaboration. Policies needing review include policies that govern revenue sharing, intellectual property, compensation, student registration, residency, and transfer policies, and accreditation standards.

As e-learning and other forms of distributed learning expand in programs, it will be a challenge for social work educators to find ways to collaborate in an increasingly competitive higher education environment, align their initiatives with the philosophical foundations of the profession, and rethink how their programs are offered. It is likely that a continued demand for flexible access to learning will require programs to become more creative in how courses and programs are offered. Competition is likely to come not only from other Canadian Social Work Programs, but also from programs in other countries, especially for professional degrees at the graduate level. Government departments of higher education are likely to continue to

promote the goals of flexible access to higher education through higher education policy and funding initiatives.

A third and related strategy is that programs could advocate with their respective provincial governments and the Federal Government to support the development a National organization and partnership to support innovation in social work education, including the development of e-learning resources. At the present time, there is no learning object repository for social work educators in Canada, and limited resources on an International level. Repositories such as MERLOT (2004) and CAREO (2004) have no social work specific resources, and social work is not listed as a topic area or discipline in either repository. Commercially funded repositories, such as resources hosted by course management software companies such as WebCT (2004) and BlackBoard (2004) also have no specific social work resources. Although publishing houses are beginning to bundle e-learning resources with commercially available textbooks, there are very little resources focused specifically on social work content. Much of what is available is from related disciplines such as psychology, or marketed under generic topics such as "counselling". While some of these resources may be useful for social work educators, they require extensive time to locate and determine whether particular elements are appropriate for social work courses. Further, the pedagogical approach may not be suited for social work learning, or incorporate relevant Canadian examples. Useful elements may not be accessible without purchasing the entire package and lack a professional social work orientation.

From a public policy perspective, leveraging collaboration amongst programs could be an effective strategy to assist social work educators contribute to the vision

for a pan-Canadian Learning System as advocated by the Advisory Committee on Online Learning (2001). Two examples from other countries are the Learning and Teaching Support Network for twenty four disciplines in the UK and the Stòr Cùram learning object repository hosted by the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (SIESWE, 2003; Stòr Cùram, 2004; SWAPltsn, 2003). These initiatives have been developed to provide online e-learning resources for social work educators that include information on learning and teaching in e-learning environments, learning object exchange, a discussion forum for social work educators, coordination of funding initiatives, and the development of innovative projects. The development of similar initiatives in Canada would require both funding and willingness for programs to collaborate in the development and exchange of e-learning resources. A fourth strategy is to develop and extend partnerships with commercial publishing houses to develop e-learning resources and integrate these with customized print and video and other digital resources.

Given the large number of challenges identified by participants in my study, more effort needs to be directed towards faculty engagement. In particular, there is a need for enhanced faculty dialogue about the philosophical, pedagogical, policy and program implications in integrating e-learning. In many instances participants felt that their programs had adopted e-learning without sufficient dialogue or planning. The need for dialogue included concerns about the professional and pedagogical challenges identified in my study, workload and recognition, and the need to participate policy development and program planning.

The need for enhanced leadership was also a key implementation theme. A need for leadership was identified on four levels: informal faculty leadership, program leadership, institutional leadership, and profession-wide leadership. A number of important leadership tasks were also identified. These included: facilitating faculty dialogue and engagement; strategic planning for the implementation of e-learning; securing and advocating for e-learning resources in social work education; policy and organizational alignment; and, leading program and organizational cultural change.

Recommendations

The purpose of my study was to identify and develop in-depth understanding of the issues and concerns of social work educators who are implementing e-learning in their programs in Canada. The purpose was also to develop understanding of the pedagogical and policy challenges involved in implementing e-learning in Canadian social work education and provide recommendations for policy development. Based on the findings and the framework discussed above I have generated the following recommendations. These are grouped under policy recommendations and implementation recommendations. It is important to note that these recommendations are based on my interpretation of the findings and specific program contexts. As a result they are not generalizable to all social work educators and programs. Readers will need to reflect on the findings and recommendations to determine whether or not they fit with their own experience, needs and contexts.

Policy Recommendations

1. Programs need to review and align a wide range of academic and administrative policies and practices in order to respond to the challenges identified by participants in this study. These are listed in Appendix K, Table K2.

2. Social work programs and institutions need to revise workload and compensation policies and practices to recognize the amount of time required to develop high quality e-learning, provide for time for faculty development, and respond to concerns about differential compensation.

3. Class size should be limited to less than thirty students in online social work courses in order to: recognize nature of intensive online discussions; the need for cohesion in professional development and the learning process; the need for high levels of interactivity; the need to build in social, cognitive and teaching presence; and in recognition of the time demands placed on faculty teaching online.

4. Social work programs and institutions need to revise faculty evaluation, reward, recognition processes for both tenure and non-tenure track faculty, and find ways to incorporate faculty involvement in the development e-learning projects into recognition and promotion processes. Recognition processes are a significant barrier to faculty involvement in e-learning.

5. Social work programs need to review and balance the number of part-time and full-time faculty involved in developing and teaching online courses.

6. Social work programs need to ensure that there is adequate student support including technical support available on weekends, orientation to course management software, orientation to the skills and expectations involved in online learning.

7. Social work programs need to develop guidelines and policies governing online communication, confidentiality and privacy, and the unique qualities of online communications in the context of social work education and practice. They also need to develop policies governing who has access to online courses and course archives, designer access and control of the course management software, the deletion of course discussions, and the archiving of course discussions.

8. Social work programs need to ensure that there is adequate support for faculty, including technical support, instructional design support, resources to develop high quality interactive learning activities, and faculty development. Ideally, individuals providing technical and instructional design consultation should be knowledgeable about the nature of social work education.

9. Social work programs need to develop teaching expectations and guidelines for faculty teaching in online environments. These should include expectations regarding technical skills, pedagogical approaches and strategies

to promote high levels of interactivity, and social, cognitive and teaching presence.

10. Social work programs need to develop revised course evaluation instruments and processes that are suited for evaluating online learning. In particular, evaluations need to provide opportunities for student feedback on their experiences, perspectives, and recommendations. They also need to incorporate evaluation of instructor online teaching skills and presence in the online environment.

11. The Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (CASSW) should consider additional revisions to the draft policy recommendations on distance education including statements about: confidentiality and privacy; the skill requirements of faculty; the need for faculty development; further elaboration on instructional design and levels of interactivity; enhancement to field education; recognition of the shift in role and time involved in developing online learning for faculty; class size in e-learning environments; recognition and reward processes for innovation and the scholarship of teaching; and, transfer and residency requirements. The CASSW should apply these policies to all learning environments, given the blurring of boundaries between distance and on-campus learning. The CASSW could develop a greater leadership presence in assisting faculty and programs in implementing e-learning.

12. Programs need to align organizational and administrative structures and processes to integrate distance and on-campus programming. Potential areas of integration include shared course development, student support, faculty support, and instructional design support. Programs should revise policies to allow for student movement between distance and on-campus status and build in the flexibility to mix 'distance' and on-campus students in courses.

Implementation Recommendations

1. Social work programs need to develop strategic plans for the implementation of e-learning. Plans should include how programs plan to integrate e-learning, identification of policies and practices that will need revision, resources required to support implementation, how faculty and student support will be provided, the fit of the program's plan with the overall institutional plan, and potential strategic alliances.

2. Integration of e-learning should be incremental and developmental in order to prepare and assist faculty for significant shifts in their role, skills and knowledge and to build experience and confidence in the use of e-learning environments. Ideally, faculty involvement should be voluntary. Programs should establish minimum expectations for faculty skills levels in the use of e-learning that are tied to their mission statements and strategic planning.

3. Social Work Faculty need to be engaged in dialogue in implementing e-learning in social work education. There is a need for faculty dialogue about the fit of e-learning in social work education and for input into strategies to

respond to the philosophical, pedagogical, policy and resource challenges identified in this study. This dialogue needs to take place at the program level and amongst social work educators as a group. Key areas for dialogue include e-equity for students and faculty, rethinking curricula in the context of a rapidly changing higher education environments, maintaining cohesion and quality, and re-alignment of academic and administrative policies.

4. There is a need for social work educators to explore pedagogical models suited for e-learning and to develop interactive online learning resources for social work education. In particular, social work educators need to build in high levels of interactivity and social, cognitive, and teaching presence into the design of online learning and opportunities for direct observation of practice skills.

5. In distance programs, the role of local field instructors should be enhanced to include increased opportunities for direct observation of practice skills. Field instructors could be further involved in online practice discussion seminars. Additional orientation and resources should be available for field instructors that could also be utilized for continuing professional education.

6. Social work faculty and programs need to implement proactive faculty development programs that incorporate technical and pedagogical knowledge and the skills of teaching and learning in online environments. Faculty development needs to include a focus on the professional and pedagogical

challenges specific to social work educators. Programs should consider the use of incentives to encourage faculty development focused on e-learning Programs should encourage faculty development through the linkage of individual faculty development plans and overall program goals for technology integration. Faculty need information on e-learning resources for social work education including relevant conferences, journals, and websites.

7. Programs need to provide strong leadership in order to implement e-learning, including the development of strategic planning. Leadership needs to be provided and supported at several levels: Faculty and disciplinary leadership, by program administrators, and by institutional leaders. Programs should consider developing technology integration committees. Programs should create leadership roles for faculty and provide compensation or release time for faculty who are leading and supporting e-learning amongst their colleagues. There is also a need for leadership amongst social work educators at a national level.

8. Programs need to secure and find resources in order to implement e-learning. Resources are needed for the cost of development, release time and compensation, incentives, cost of hardware, technical support, instructional design support, faculty development, maintenance of online courses, and faculty and student support. Resources for the development of interactive e-learning activities are a major barrier to implementing e-learning in social work education.

9. Resource acquisition and planning should be built into program and institutional strategic plans for implementing e-learning.

10. Programs should explore collaboration within their institutions and with other social work programs in order to share in the development of e-learning resources for social work.

11. Social Work educators and programs in Canada should consider developing a web portal for social work education, including resources for e-learning and shared learning objects. This could take several forms including a collaborative non-profit entity, a portal hosted by the CASSW, a linkage of individual program and regional repositories, and partnership with the private sector or publishing houses.

12. Social work programs should consider approaching their provincial departments of higher education and jointly approaching the Federal Government to secure funding to support the development of e-learning resources in social work education and the establishment of an e-learning resource centre and learning object repository for social work education.

13. There is a need for social work educators to engage in further research focused on e-learning. Areas for research include further evaluation of the specific professional, pedagogical, faculty and administrative challenges identified in this study.

Implications for Future Research

In this study a large number of professional, pedagogical, faculty and administrative challenges and recommendations were generated that have implications for future research. Given the pedagogical challenges identified, there is a need for continued research that examines learning outcomes in e-learning in social work education. In particular, there is a need for research that examines instructional design models and strategies, learning object development, levels of interactivity and social presence in online learning, students' experiences in learning online, examination of learning models as they relate to content areas and level of education, class size, the balance of synchronous and asynchronous learning, and how educators are revising assessment processes. There is a need to develop revised course and program evaluation mechanisms that incorporate the shifts involved in teaching and learning in online environments.

There is also a need to further examine the contingencies in implementing e-learning from both pedagogical and administrative perspectives. For example, there is a need to further understand the relationship between faculty motivation, skill level, preferred teaching style, resources and workload and reward structures. The effectiveness of various faculty development models and strategies to engage faculty also warrant further investigation. In this study participants were all involved in implementing e-learning. There is a need for further research examining the perspectives of faculty who are not using learning technologies or e-learning to further understand their concerns and recommendations.

On an administrative and policy level, there is a need for continued research to evaluate what practices and policies are being implemented in social work education to respond to the challenges identified in this study and the literature on e-learning. In this study I have suggested a framework for understanding policy development and implementation tasks and a number of recommendations for social work educators for implementing e-learning. Evaluating and tracking whether or not these recommendations are implemented is an important area for further research. In particular, the evaluation of approaches to leadership, strategic planning, securing resources, faculty development, program organization, and collaboration are important emerging areas for further investigation.

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APPENDIX A

Guiding Interview Questions

General Demographic Information:

Age (range: 20-30; 30-40; 40-50; 50-60; 60-70)
Gender
Type of Program (BSW, MSW, both)
Position:
Teaching Experience: number of years teaching, full-time; part-time?
Teaching content areas:
Administrative responsibilities related to web-based learning / technology

Initial Questions/Interview Outline:

General

1. Thank you for your interest and participation in my research. During our interview I would like to ask you about your involvement and experiences in web-based teaching, and what you see as the important issues for social work educators who are implementing web-based learning. I am also interested the pedagogical, administrative, and organizational strategies and models that (you / your program) are using to address these issues and to implement online learning.

2. I would like begin by asking you about your interest and involvement with web-based learning? . . .

    - How did you become involved?
    - What is your motivation for utilizing web-based learning? For your program?
    - How are you using web-based learning? Web-enhanced? Full course delivery? Entire Program?
    - What courses / content? How were these courses selected?
    - Who is involved?

3. What has your experience been in teaching and learning online?

Instructional/ Pedagogical Issues and Strategies

1. What do you see as the key pedagogical issues and concerns in implementing web-based learning in social work education / courses?

- What are the concerns and issues that you have identified – particularly for professional social work education / educators - through your involvement in web-based teaching and learning?

- What are the implications of these concerns & issues & what strategies have you developed / implemented to respond to them?

2. How would you describe your philosophy and approach to teaching – in particular how they relate to teaching social work content and courses online?

   - What approaches to instructional design / strategies do you draw on / are being used? And, what is the rationale for your approach....For example, it has been suggested that constructivist and collaborative approaches to instructional design are and "exquisite fit" for sw education...(Altman)

     - How does your approach to teaching and instructional design translate in an online environment? Fit with approaches to social work education?
     - What has involvement in online learning meant for you?
     - Are there particular content areas that you think are suitable for web-based learning?

     - What are the benefits of web-based learning? Disadvantages or challenges?
     - What instructional strategies have worked? Not worked?
     - What are your recommendations regarding instructional strategies and web-based learning?
     - How does what you do fit with program goals and overall institutional goals?

3. What impact has web-based learning had on face-to-face relationships, "social presence", professional socialization and mentorship? What are the issues and challenges for social work education?
   (Importance of relationship in social work; Professional socialization: peer to peer and instructor to student interaction?NB. Garvin & Seabury Quote)

   - What strategies have you / your program used to address these concerns?
   - What impact has web-based teaching had on your approach to teaching and learning?
   - How is IT/ online learning changing your model of delivery?
   - What is the impact / shift on the role and skills of instructor? Your identity as an educator?
   - quality of learning and program standards? time, and resources?
   - Student preparation, faculty preparation – skills and shift in type of learning
   - Implications?...Accreditation standards?

4. How are you / your program working through (What strategies are you using) issues and concerns related to:

    - Loss of face-to-face contact, communication and social presence?
    - Impact on experiential learning?
    - Relationship building and professional socialization/practice integration?
    - Field placement and practice courses?
    - Quality of courses, program standards and accreditation issues?
    - Access and computer literacy: of faculty; of students?
    - Philosophical issues and tensions regarding globalization? Competition in higher education? Commercialization of higher education?

5. What feedback and / or evaluation results have you received: From students? From faculty? From your program / administration?
    - Does your program have a formal evaluation process for web-based learning?

6. What recommendations would your make to respond to these pedagogical issues and challenges in social work education?

Faculty Issues

1. What to you see as the key issues for faculty in implementing online learning?

    - change in teaching role / skill set for online learning? Shifts in "identity" of instructor? Threats related to transforming roles and ways of teaching?
    - multiple learning environments?

2. What kinds of compensation and / or incentives are available for developing and teaching in web-based learning environments? Are there disincentives?

    - Rewards, workload, expectations?
    - Is your / faculty involvement in web-based courses recognized in terms of compensation, workload, and promotion? Models to encourage use?
    - Implications
    - How are faculty who are not using web-based learning responding to the implementation in other courses?...and what strategies are being used to respond to concerns & issues.

3. What support is available to you? Type of support(s)?

4. What kind of faculty development has been available to you?

- Does your program have a FD plan or model for IT?
- Sub-types of training: technical skills?
- Approaches to pedagogy and instructional design? Other training?
- What recommendations do you have in terms of faculty development? How should FD be structured?

5. What strategies have you utilized to respond to these faculty issues? What policy recommendations would you make to address these issues?

Administrative (Program) and Organizational Issues and Strategies

1. What do you see as the key administrative and organizational issues in implementing online learning in your program?

2. Does your program have a strategic plan for the integration / implementation of web-based learning or other forms of distance education or alternate delivery? Does your institution have a strategic plan or policy focused on implementing web-based learning or technology in the teaching learning process?

    - Does your program have a model to guide the implementation...if not, what approaches / models would you recommend
    - What administrative structures and decision making?
    - What policies guide course development and implementation decisions?
    - What impact has web-based learning had on administrative policies and processes?
    - How is IT changing you model of delivery?
    - What strategies are you using or would you recommend facilitating the implementation of web-based learning?
    - Does your program have an individual responsible for implementation, consultation, leadership in web-based learning / LT.

3. What is the motivation for the program to implement web-based learning?

    - Who is the target audience? What is the demand? How is the program structured off & on-campus?
    - Tuition Policy?

4. What impact has web-based learning had on program standards and accreditation processes?

5. What evaluation procedures are utilized? What are the results?

6. What are the costs associated with developing and offering web-based courses? How has course development been funded?

7. Is your program involved in any partnerships or collaboration in implementing web-based learning? Internally? Externally?

    - Possibility of new partnerships and structures (organizations): shared development
    - Learning objects and exchange?
    - Private sector partnerships?

8. What Policy recommendation would you make in terms of implementing web-based learning?

Summary Comments and recommendations:

1. Are there any other recommendations you would make – looking into the future – regarding the implementation of e-learning in social work education? Implications for the re-design of professional education? Future evolution on e-learning in social work education?

APPENDIX B

Invitation to Participate – Deans and Directors

I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. I am also a full-time instructor and the former chair of the Social Work Diploma Program at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton, and a part-time instructor with the Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary. As part of the requirements of my program I am conducting research on web-based learning and social work education. The title of my thesis is: Implementing Web-based Learning in Social Work Education. The purpose of this investigation is to identify and understand the issues and concerns of social work faculty and administrators who are implementing web-based learning and what strategies are being employed to address these concerns and issues.

I am writing to ask for your assistance in identifying potential participants for this study. I am interested in interviewing faculty and administrators who are involved in implementing web-based learning in social work education programs. Potential participants will be asked to participate in interviews, exploring their experiences in implementing web-based learning in social work education. Interviews will last approximately sixty to ninety minutes and will be conducted face-to-face in a location of convenience to participants. Interviews may also take place by telephone, where face-to-face interviews are not feasible. Participants will be asked to participate in at least one interview, with the possibility of a second follow up interview. Information that will be explored includes general demographic information, including age range, number of years teaching, and type of teaching appointment, type of social work educational program, and, type of course(s) taught. Interview questions will focus on the experience and use of web-based learning in teaching, concerns and issues related to the implementation of web-based learning in social work education, and, pedagogical, administrative, and organizational strategies utilized or recommended in implementing web-based learning in social work education.

Interviews will be tape recorded for later transcription and analysis. The identity of participants, and the identity of their program, will remain confidential to the researcher and be replaced with pseudonyms in transcripts, data analysis, and any reporting of the findings. Participants will be provided with a copy of the transcript of their interview(s) and findings in context to review, in case I have inadvertently misquoted or misinterpreted the intent of their comments. Participants will have the right to delete any part of their interview transcript(s). In this instance, all related data will be destroyed and returned. Data analysis may include peer / expert review of my analysis by a colleague or supervisor. Participants will have the right to opt out of the study at any time, in which case, all data related to their participation will be destroyed, interview transcripts will be returned and not included in the study.

In terms of risks and benefits, there are no known harms associated with participation in this research. It is anticipated that involvement in this study involves minimal risk. The Tri-Coucil Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct defines minimal risk for Research Involving Humans as risk "no greater than those encountered by the participant in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research". Potential benefits of the study include increasing understanding about the use of web-based learning in social work education and identifying strategies for the implementation of web-based learning in social work education. Participants will be provided with a summary of the findings.

While information provided during interview(s) will be primarily used for my research dissertation, a secondary use of the data may include use of the data and findings for presentation or published articles and postdoctoral research.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I would appreciate any assistance in identifying potential faculty in your program who may be interested in participating in this study. I will also contact you by telephone in the near future to discuss this request. In the meantime, if you have any questions about this request, I can be reached at: (780) 497-5564 (B) or (780) 463-8732 (H). My email is: aknowles@ualberta.ca. Below I have included the name of an independent contact who can respond to questions about the proposed research.

Sincerely,

_____

Alan Knowles MSW, RSW.
Ph.D. Candidate – Department of Educational Policy Studies
University of Alberta.

Independent Contact:

This study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Margaret Haughey, Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta. Any questions or concerns about the study can be directed to Dr. Haughey at:

Dr. Margaret Haughey
Professor, Department of Educational Policy Studies
7-104 Education North Building
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2G5
Phone: (780) 492-7609

APPENDIX C

Invitation to Participate – Deans and Directors, French Version

Le 2001

Monsieur (Madame)
adresse

Monsieur (Madame),

Je suis candidat au doctorat au département des études de politiques d'éducation à l'université de l'Alberta. J'enseigne également à plein temps et je suis un ancien président du programme du diplôme en travail social du collège Grant MacEwan à Edmonton. Je suis aussi professeur à mi-temps à la faculté de services sociaux de l'université de Calgary. Dans le cadre de mon programme, je dois faire des recherches sur l'apprentissage accessible sur Internet dans le domaine de l'éducation en travail social. Le titre de ma thèse se lit *Implementing Web-based Learning in Social Work Education* (la mise en œuvre d'apprentissage accessible sur Internet en matière d'éducation en travail social). Le but de cette enquête consiste à déterminer et à comprendre les questions et les inquiétudes du corps professoral et des administrateurs qui sont à mettre en œuvre un apprentissage accessible sur Internet ainsi que des stratégies qui seront utilisées pour aborder ces inquiétudes et questions.

Je vous écris pour vous demander d'aider à déterminer des participants éventuels à cette étude. Je désire interroger des membres du corps professoral et des administrateurs qui travaillent à la mise en œuvre d'un apprentissage accessible sur Internet dans leurs cours et dans les programmes d'éducation en travail social. Les participants éventuels seront invités à prendre part à des entrevues visant à explorer leurs expériences dans la mise en œuvre d'un apprentissage accessible sur Internet dans le domaine de l'éducation en travail social. **Il est cependant important de noter que je ne parle pas français et que les entrevues devront se dérouler en anglais.** Les entrevues, qui seront directes, dureront en moyenne de soixante à quatre-vingt-dix minutes et auront lieu dans un endroit convenant aux participants. Les entrevues peuvent aussi se dérouler au téléphone si l'entrevue directe n'est pas possible. On demandera aux participants de prendre part à au moins une entrevue, avec peut-être une deuxième entrevue de suivi. L'information étudiée comprend des renseignements démographiques généraux, y compris la plage d'âge, le nombre d'années dans l'enseignement, la charge d'enseignement, le type de programme d'éducation en travail social et le type de cours enseignés. Les questions porteront sur l'expérience en matière d'apprentissage accessible sur Internet et de son utilisation, les inquiétudes et questions relatives à la mise en œuvre de l'apprentissage accessible sur Internet dans le domaine de l'éducation en travail social ainsi que les stratégies pédagogiques, administratives et organisationnelles utilisées ou recommandées pour la mise en œuvre de l'apprentissage accessible sur Internet dans le domaine de l'éducation en travail social.

Les entrevues seront enregistrées puis transcrites et analysées. Le chercheur ne connaîtra pas l'identité des participants ou le nom de leur programme ; ces renseignements seront remplacés par des pseudonymes dans les transcriptions, dans l'analyse des données et le rapport des conclusions. Les participants recevront une copie de la transcription de leur(s) entrevue(s) ainsi que les conclusions en contexte à des fins d'étude, au cas où j'aurais, par mégarde, mal interprété ou mal repris des commentaires. Les participants pourront éliminer n'importe quelle partie de la transcription. Le cas échéant, tout matériel pertinent sera détruit et rendu. L'analyse des données peut comprendre une révision, par mes pairs ou des experts, de mon analyse par un collègue ou un superviseur. Les participants pourront à tout moment abandonner l'étude et, le cas échéant, toutes les données concernant leur participation seront détruites et les transcriptions des entrevues seront rendues et ne feront pas partie de l'étude.

En ce qui concerne les risques et les avantages, la participation à cette recherche ne présente pas de préjudice connu. La participation à cette étude ne devrait comporter qu'un risque minime. La politique inter-conseils sur l'éthique définit le risque minime en ce qui concerne des recherches comportant des personnes comme «n'étant pas supérieur aux risques que les participants courent dans les aspects de leur vie de tous les jours qui concernent l'étude ». Les avantages éventuels de l'étude incluent une meilleure compréhension de l'apprentissage accessible sur Internet dans le domaine de l'éducation en travail social et l'établissement de stratégies pour la mise en œuvre d'un apprentissage accessible sur Internet dans le domaine du travail social. Les participants recevront un résumé des conclusions.

Bien que l'information fournie pendant les entrevues soit tout d'abord destinée à ma dissertation, les données peuvent aussi servir à des exposés, des articles qui seront publiés ou de la recherche post-doctorale.

Je vous remercie de bien vouloir considérer ma demande. J'apprécierais volontiers toute aide à déterminer les membres du corps professoral éventuels de votre programme que cette étude pourraient intéresser. Je vous appellerai dans quelque temps pour en parler plus longuement. Dans l'intervalle, si vous avez des questions au sujet de ma demande, n'hésitez pas à me joindre au : (780) 497-5564 (B) ou au (780) 463-8732 (D). Mon adresse électronique est : aknowles@ualberta.ca. Je joins ci-dessous le nom d'une personne-ressource indépendante qui peut répondre à des questions au sujet de ce projet de recherche.

Je vous prie de bien vouloir croire, Monsieur (Madame), en l'expression de mes sentiments les meilleurs.

_____

Alan Knowles MSW, RSW.

Candidat au doctoral – Département d'études de politiques d'éducation
Université de l'Alberta

Personne-ressource indépendante :

Cette recherche se déroule sous la supervision du docteur Margaret Haughey du département d'études des politiques en éducation de l'université de l'Alberta. Adressez toute question ou inquiétude au docteur Haughey à l'adresse suivante :

Docteur Margaret Haughey
Professeur, Département d'études des politiques d'éducation
7-104 Education North Building
Université de l'Alberta
Edmonton AB T6G 2G5
Tél. (780) 492-7609

APPENDIX D

Invitation to Participate – Participants

Dear Dr. / Professor,

I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. I am also a full-time instructor and the former chair of the Social Work Diploma Program at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton, and a part-time instructor with the Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary. As part of the requirements of my program I am conducting research on web-based learning and social work education. The title of my thesis is: Implementing Web-based Learning in Social Work Education. The purpose of this investigation is to identify and understand the issues and concerns of social work faculty and administrators who are implementing web-based learning and what strategies are being employed to address these concerns and issues.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. As a potential participant, you are being asked to participate in interviews, exploring your experiences in implementing web-based learning in social work education. Interviews will last approximately sixty to ninety minutes and will be conducted face-to-face in a location of convenience to you as a participant. Interviews may also take place by telephone, where face-to-face interviews are not feasible. You will be asked to participate in at least one interview, with the possibility of a second follow up interview. Information that will be explored includes general demographic information, including age range, number of years teaching, and type of teaching appointment, type of social work educational program, and, type of course(s) taught. Interview questions will focus on your experience and use of web-based learning in your teaching, concerns and issues related to the implementation of web-based learning in social work education, and, teaching, administrative, and organizational strategies utilized or recommended in implementing web-based learning in social work education.

Interviews will be tape recorded for later transcription and analysis. Your identity, and the identity of your program, will remain confidential to the researcher and be replaced with pseudonyms in transcripts, data analysis, and any reporting of the findings. You will be provided with a copy of the transcript of your interview(s) and findings in context to review, in case I have inadvertently misquoted or misinterpreted the intent of your comments. You will have the right to delete any part of your interview transcript(s). In this instance, all related data will be destroyed and returned. Data analysis may include peer / expert review of my analysis by a colleague or supervisor. Audio tapes and transcripts of interviews will be stored by the researcher in a locked cabinet for a period of five years, at which time all tapes and copies of transcripts will be erased and destroyed.

If you agree to participate, you will have the right the right to opt out of this study at any time. Deception will not be used in this study. If you choose to opt out, all data related to your participation will be destroyed, interview transcripts will be returned to you, and not included in the study.

In terms of risks and benefits, there are no known harms associated with your participation in this research. It is anticipated that your involvement in this study involves minimal risk. The Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct defines minimal risk for Research Involving Humans as risk "no greater than those encountered by the participant in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research". Potential benefits of the study include increasing understanding about the use of web-based learning in social work education and identifying strategies for the implementation of web-based learning in social work education. As a participant you will be provided with a summary of the findings.

While information provided during interview(s) will be primarily used for my research dissertation, a secondary use of the data may include use of the data and findings for presentation or published articles and postdoctoral research.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I will also contact you by telephone in the near future to discuss this request. In the meantime, if you have any questions about this request, I can be reached at: (780) 497-5564 (B) or (780) 463-8732 (H). My email is: aknowles@ualberta.ca. Below I have included the name of an independent contact who can respond to questions about the proposed research.

Sincerely,

_____

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Phone: (780) 492-7609

APPENDIX E

Table E1. Age Ranges Social Work Faculty (N=25)

Age Range	
30-40	2
40-50	9
50-60	13
60-70	1

Table E2. Number of Years Teaching (N=25)

Range in Years	Participants
0-5	4
6-9	4
10-15	9
16-20	5
21-30	2
30+	1

Table E3. Type of Position (N=30)

Position	
Non-Tenure Track Faculty	2
Assistant Professor	9
Associate Professor	9
Professor	1
Associate Dean	3
Dean / Director	2
Continuing Ed. Director; Field Education Coordinator	2
D.E Coordinator, D.E Consultant, Instructional Design Consultant	5

Note: some participants had more than one role.

APPENDIX F

Consent to Participate in Research Study

Title of Study: Implementing Web-based Learning in Social Work Education

Name of Researcher: Mr. Alan Knowles, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Alberta.

You are being invited to participate in a research project. The purpose of this investigation is to identify and understand the issues and concerns of social work faculty and administrators who are implementing web-based learning and what strategies are being employed to address these concerns and issues. This study is being completed as part of the requirements of my doctoral program in Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta.

As a potential participant in this study, you are being asked to participate in interviews, exploring your experiences in implementing web-based learning in social work education. Interviews will last approximately sixty to ninety minutes and will be conducted face-to-face in a location of convenience to you as a participant. Interviews may also take place by telephone, where face-to-face interviews are not feasible. You will be asked to participate in at least one interview, with the possibility of a second follow up interview. Information that will be explored includes general demographic information, including age range, number of years teaching, and type of teaching appointment, type of social work educational program, and, type of course(s) taught. Interview questions will focus on your experience and use of web-based learning in your teaching, concerns and issues related to the implementation of web-based learning in social work education, and, teaching, administrative, and organizational strategies utilized or recommended in implementing web-based learning in social work education. Deception will not be used in this study.

Interviews will be tape recorded for later transcription and analysis. Your identity, and the identity of your program, will remain confidential to the researcher and be replaced with pseudonyms in transcripts, data analysis, and any reporting of the findings. The services of a professional transcriber may be used in the transcription of tape recorded interviews, in which case the transcriber will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. You will be provided with a copy of the transcript of your interview(s) and findings in context to review, in case I have inadvertently misquoted or misinterpreted the intent of your comments. You have the right to delete any part of your interview transcript(s). In this instance, all related data will be destroyed and returned. Data analysis may include peer / expert review of my analysis by a colleague or supervisor. Audio tapes and transcripts of interviews will

be stored by the researcher in a locked cabinet for a period of five years, at which time all tapes and copies of transcripts will be erased and destroyed.

You have the right the right to opt out of this study at any time. If you choose to opt out, all data related to your participation will be destroyed, interview transcripts will be returned to you, and not included in the study.

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While information provided during interview(s) will be primarily used for my research dissertation, a secondary use of the data may include use of the data and findings for presentation or published articles and postdoctoral research.

Independent Contact:

This study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Margaret Haughey, Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta. Any questions or concerns about the study can be directed to Dr. Haughey at:

Dr. Margaret Haughey
Professor, Department of Educational Policy Studies
7-104 Education North Building
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2G5
Phone: (780) 492-7609

Informed Consent:

I, _____, confirm that I have read the "Letter of Invitation to Participate" in this study and hereby give my informed consent to participate in the research study described above.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name of Researcher / for further information, contact:

Alan Knowles
Department of Educational Policy Studies
7-103 Education North Building
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2G5
Telephone: (780) 463-8732 (H) (780) 497-5564 (B)
E-mail: aknowles@ualberta.ca

APPENDIX G

Research Confidentiality Agreement with Transcribers

I, _____, hereby consent that in transcribing tape

recorded research interviews submitted by Alan Knowles (the researcher), I will:

- Maintain confidentiality of all tapes and materials submitted for transcription
- Not discuss any aspect of the research discussions between the researcher and myself
- Not discuss the interviews, transcripts, or any aspect of the research with anyone, other than the researcher
- Ensure that all original tape recordings and transcripts are returned to the researcher, along with all digital files, and ensure that any temporary computer digital files are deleted.

Signature _____.

Date Signed _____.

For furthre information regarding the completion of this form, please contact:

Alan Knowles
Department of Educational Policy Studies
7-103 Education North Building
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2G5
Telephone: (780) 463-8762 (H) (780) 497-5564 (B)
E-mail: aknowles@ualberta.ca

APPENDIX H

Letter to Participants to Review Transcript

Dear Participant,

Thank you again for your interest and participation in my research. As we discussed, I have enclosed a transcript of our recent interview for your review. I have deleted identifying names, and, in places where the interview was hard to hear or the wording was unclear, I have made adjustments in parentheses. Please advise me if you have any concerns about the transcript, corrections, or if there are specific sections you would like deleted. I would also appreciate any additional comments or observations you may have about my research and the questions explored during our interview. I appreciated the opportunity to interview you and your willingness to participate in my research.

Sincerely,

Alan Knowles MSW, RSW.
Doctoral Candidate
Educational Policy Studies
University of Alberta
aknowles@ualberta.ca
5113 39B Ave.
Edmonton, AB
T6L 1R9

APPENDIX I

Letter Inviting Participants to Review Findings

Wednesday, August 06, 2003

Dear Participant,

Re: Implementing E-learning in Social Work Education

I am writing to provide you with an update on how my study is progressing and to ask you whether or not you would like to review a copy of the draft findings in order to review specific quotations that I have integrated into the discussion. As you will recall, I mailed a copy of your transcript to you in the weeks following our interview for review and comment. In all instances where I have quoted individual participants, I have removed or altered references to names, persons, places, and other identifying information. The size of my findings and discussion chapters are quite large (approximately 200 pages). If you would like to review the draft findings, I will send you a copy. Alternatively, if you do not want to review the entire draft, you will be provided with a summary of the findings, once completed.

In order to assist me in my overall planning, I would appreciate it if you would advise me of whether or not you would like me to send a copy of the draft findings to you (likely in September, 2003). If you do not want to review the entire draft, I will send a summary of the findings once my study is completed (likely between November 2003 and February 2004).

Thank you for your assistance. Please email your response to me at aknowles@ualberta.ca at your earliest convenience.

Study Update:

In this study I interviewed 30 social work educators and administrators involved in implementing e-learning in their programs. Participants were interviewed from 12 sites in university social work programs across Canada. Using qualitative approaches to analysis I have organized my findings around four main categories, framed as challenges: Philosophical Challenges, Pedagogical Challenges, Faculty Challenges, and Administrative Challenges. At the present time I am working on my analysis at a thematic level, and on recommendations, which will be focused on recommendations for policy and program development, implementation strategies, and areas for future research. I am expecting to complete my discussion and concluding chapters by the end of August, 2003.

Thank you for your interest in my study. Please contact me if you have any questions, or if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Alan Knowles
Doctoral Candidate
Educational Policy Studies
University of Alberta
780.497.5564
aknowles@ualberta.ca

APPENDIX J

Letter Inviting Expert Participants to Review Findings and Recommendations

Wednesday, August 06, 2003

Dear Participant,

Re: Implementing E-learning in Social Work Education

I am writing to provide you with an update on how my study is progressing. Given your experience with learning technologies and distance education I am also writing to ask you if you would be willing to review and comment on my draft findings and discussion. In this regard, I am asking four to five participants to reflect and comment on my findings. If you are willing to participate in this review, I would mail a copy of my draft findings to you in late August / early September.

Regardless of whether or not you are willing to review a copy of my draft findings, I am asking all participants if they would like to review specific quotations that I have integrated into the discussion. As you will recall, I mailed a copy of your transcript to you in the weeks following our interview for review and comment. In all instances where I have quoted individual participants, I have removed or altered references to names, persons, places, and other identifying information. If you would like to review the draft findings for this purpose, I will send you a copy (approximately 200 pages). Alternatively, all participants will be provided with a summary of the findings, once completed (likely in January 2004).

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I would appreciate it if you could email your response to me at aknowles@ualberta.ca at your earliest convenience.

Study Update:

In this study I interviewed 30 social work educators and administrators involved in implementing e-learning in their programs. Participants were interviewed from 12 sites in university social work programs across Canada. Using qualitative approaches to analysis I have organized my findings around four main categories, framed as challenges: Philosophical Challenges, Pedagogical Challenges, Faculty Challenges, and Administrative Challenges. At the present time I am working on my analysis at a thematic level, and on recommendations, which will be focused on recommendations for policy and program development, implementation strategies, and areas for future research. I am expecting to complete my discussion and concluding chapters by the end of August, 2003.

Thank you for your interest in my study. Please contact me if you have any questions, or if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Alan Knowles
Doctoral Candidate
Educational Policy Studies
University of Alberta
780.497.5564
aknowles@ualberta.ca

APPENDIX K

Table K1. Role Shifts in Implementing E-learning

Pedagogical Challenges	Teaching Role and Skills	Technical Skills
Pedagogical Orientation	Knowledge of instructional design	Computer literacy
Preferred Teaching Style	Shift to learner centred facilitation; power shifts	Internet skills
Fit with SW Education / Content	Identity of instructor; Own educational socialization	Knowledge and skills using course management software
	Requires more time	
Professional Socialization	Requires more and advanced planning	Ability to develop / use learning objects
Ethical Concerns: Confidentiality & Privacy	Ability to develop online learning activities	
Loss of F2F, Immediacy	Ability to teach without F2F cues, immediacy	
Importance of Relationship	Skill and confidence in facilitating online communication and teaching	
Content Areas	Ability to manage emotional reactions, sensitive content and challenging behaviours online	
Balance of F2F & Online	Strategic teaching and responding	
Increased Emphasis on Field Education	Ability to develop authentic learning activities	
Rethinking curriculum	Transparency / openness	
Technology exposes teaching	Effective online presence	
Increased Transparency Need for More Planning New Student Assessment Processes	Flexibility Shift to more active role for distance faculty	

Table K2. Areas of Policy Alignment in Implementing E-learning in Social Work Education

Academic Policies	Administrative Policies	Administrative Policies
▪ Faculty Development ▪ Develop models and guides for developing e-learning ▪ Develop Online Teaching Guidelines ▪ Clear expectations and guidelines for students ▪ Confidentiality and Privacy Policies ▪ Intellectual Property ▪ Student support ▪ Enhanced role of Field Supervisors and Mentors ▪ Residency requirements ▪ Transfer policies ▪ Class size ▪ Participation policies ▪ Responsibility and control of learning environment ▪ Revised course evaluation procedures ▪ Revised Accreditation Standards	<u>Workload, Compensation, Incentives</u> ▪ Develop workload guidelines that recognize time demands of e-learning development and teaching contingent on model and format. ▪ Develop incentive programs to encourage faculty involvement with e-learning ▪ Hiring Policies: E-competency and teaching expectations for faculty ▪ Policy / strategy regarding faculty choice and involvement in e-learning ▪ Review tutor model of compensation for self-paced distance courses converted to online learning. Compensation contingent on pedagogical model <u>Recognition</u> ▪ Revised recognition processes; consider peer review of e-learning projects, learning objects ▪ Increased focus on the scholarship of teaching ▪ Revised course and instructor evaluations and processes ▪ Encourage research focused on teaching	<u>Organizational</u> ▪ Develop Program Strategic Plan for technology integration ▪ Establish Technology Steering Committees ▪ Integrate administrative and support structures for distance and on-campus courses ▪ Decisions and policies regarding the maintenance of multiple learning environments and formats ▪ Student Support ▪ Develop structures and processes to facilitate inter-program collaboration and strategic alliances ▪ Secure resources to support strategic plan, longer term implementation <u>Collaboration</u> ▪ Policies regarding shared resources ▪ Revenue and cost sharing of courses or learning materials ▪ Ownership ▪ Registration of students