Peering into the Peer Review Process

Teacher Perceptions and Experiences as Quality Matters™ Course Representatives

Overview

- Problem, Purpose, Research Questions
- Conceptual Framework and Literature Review
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion and Implications
- Questions


Problem,
Purpose,
Questions

Problem

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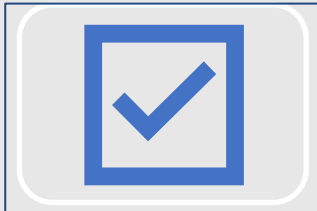
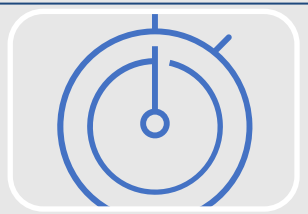
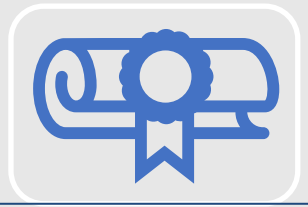


The QM rubric is ubiquitous among online programs, but its impact in K-12 environments is indeterminate (Legon, 2015).

K-12 teachers at supplemental virtual schools primary role in supplemental programs is *teaching* not course design (Linton & Journell, 2015; VLLA, 2022).



Time and professional focus considerations with teachers serving as Course Representative (Gregory et al., 2020; Roehrs et al., 2013).



Participating in official reviews may provide a significant professional development opportunity and enhance teacher commitment (Adair & Shattuck, 2015; Ali & Wright, 2017; Archambault et al., 2022; Baldwin, 2019; Crews & Wilkinson, 2015; Duncan & Barnett, 2010; Schmidt et al., 2013; Sheets et al., 2023; Stone & Springer, 2019).

Purpose

- **Explore** the perspectives of K-12 online teachers who share the common experience of teaching online and serving as QM Course Representatives (Creswell & Creswell, 2013).
- **Guide** K-12 educators on the potential professional impact of serving as Course Representatives for organizational course reviews.
- **Provide** implications for virtual programs regarding teacher professional development opportunities.
- **Drive further research** on the implementation of quality assurance frameworks to enhance educator practice.

Research Questions

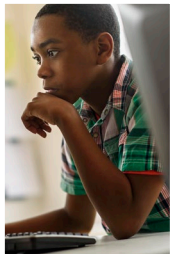
RQ1: What led K-12 virtual teachers to serve as QM Course Representatives?

RQ2: What are the experiences and perspectives of K-12 virtual teachers serving as QM Course Representatives?

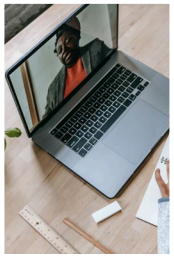
RQ3: What aspects of the Course Representative experience do teachers perceive as significant to professional development?

Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

K-12 Virtual Program Overview



K-12 students require consistent and reliable technology, structured learning environments, and support in learning how to learn online (Barbour, 2007; Lee & Figueroa, 2012; Lowenthal et al., 2020; Roblyer & Marshall, 2002; Weiner, 2003).



The instructor plays a critical role in ensuring students receive the support to engage and succeed in the online classroom (Archambault et al., 2022; Bickle & Rucker, 2021; Kipp & Rice, 2019

The **variations between virtual environments and classroom environments** present several considerations for teachers' professional development and support (Archambault et al., 2022; Davis et al., 2007; Kearsley & Blomeyer, 2004; Storandt et al., 2012, Samuel, 2022).

Instruction and course design frameworks, including the Quality Matters™ rubric guide program and professional practice (ISTE, 2023; NSQ, 2023; Quality Matters™, 2022).

The Quality Matters™ (QM) Rubric

Established through collaborative research to **guide the development, evaluation, and improvement of online courses** (Quality Matters™, 2022).

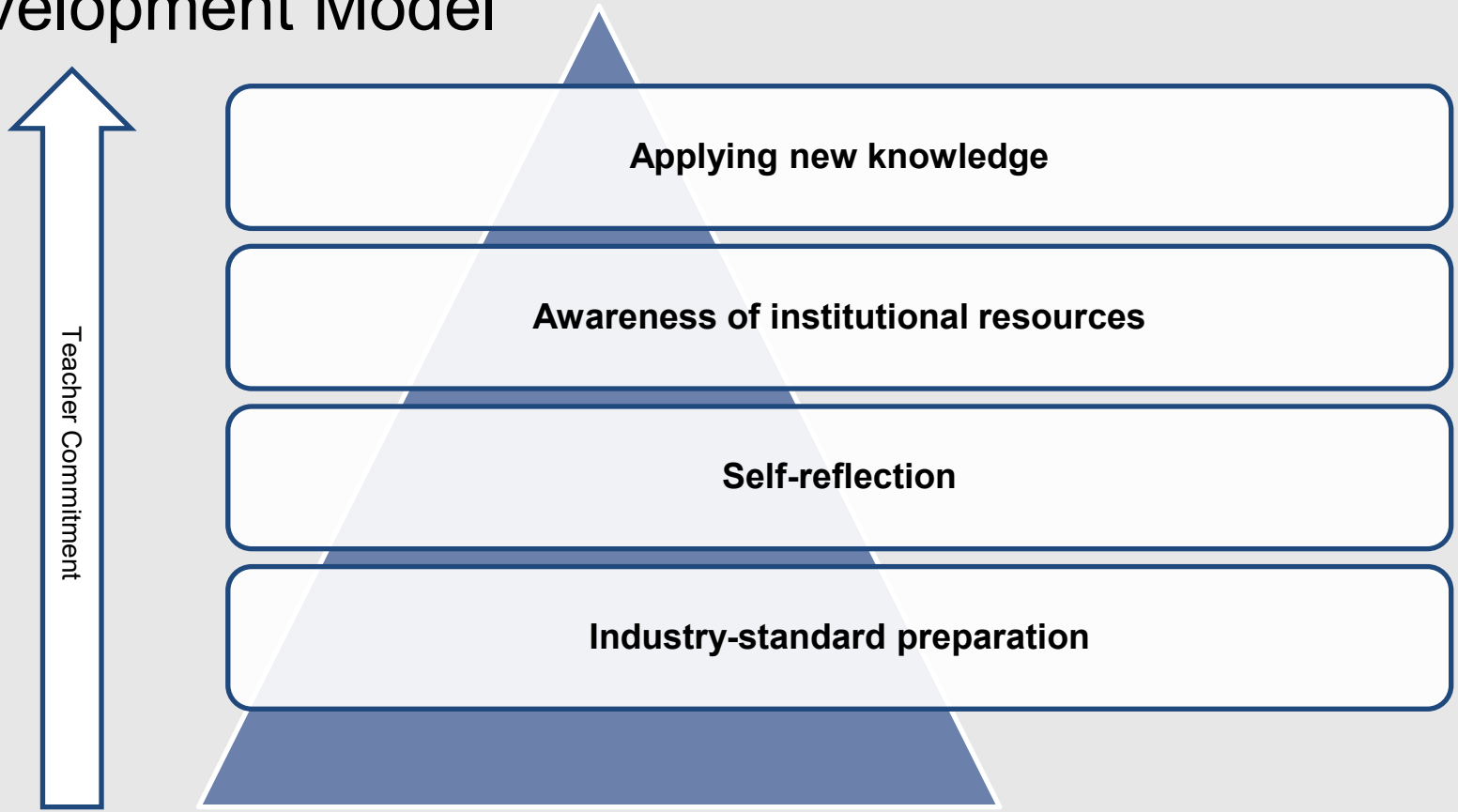
K-12 rubric includes eight general standards and 43 specific standards focused on course design (Quality Matters™, 2022).

QM Rubric

Past studies have researched **implementation and overall program impact** (Cowen et al., 2017; Finley & Bichelmeyer, 2015; Simunich, 2022)

Past research has focused on **perceptions of the rubric**, but most studies **focus on faculty applying the rubric for a course they teach *and* design** (Conklin et al., 2020; Cowan et al., 2017; Hollowell et al., 2017; Kearns & Mancilla, 2017).

Ali and Wright (2017) Online Faculty Professional Development Model



Methodology

Methodology

Social constructivist approach; explores the perspectives of a specific and finite endeavor among a precise group of teachers at a precise program site (Creswell & Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014).

Exploratory case study with seven virtual high school teachers who have served as QM Course Representatives for organization-managed course masters.

Case study design allows for research of a "bounded system" (Merriam, p. 28, 2009) and investigates a precise phenomenon in a real-world context (Yin, 2014).

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Case Setting and Participants

K-12, state-led, supplemental virtual school in the United States

Leadership at case site leveraged teachers to support QM reviews during a time when multiple courses were undergoing a review

Case site did place courses through initial template review

Case site provided training and templates for teachers to follow

Selective sample of seven high school teachers who teach in a contract capacity and have served as Course Representatives for master course peer reviews within the last 6-24 months

All participants were experienced teachers; 15 - 30 + years in education; 5 or more years online

Data Collection

Case Study Database

- Maintained in university shared Drive

Document Analysis

- QM K-12 rubric
- Organization-based Course Representative training and support documents
- Content teachers created to support the peer review process

Interviews

- Semi-structured protocol adapted from Fall, 2023 pilot study
- Incorporated elicit response discussion about the content teachers created for the peer review process
- Recorded (audio-only) in Zoom

Bingham's Five-Step Coding Process

Phase 1: Memo and attribute. Tabular documents maintained for analyzing each document and interview transcript.

Phase 2: Sort data into categories aligned with the research questions. Pause and listen to audio and correct transcripts. Add to memo notes as data analysis continues.

Phase 3: Open coding. Place transcripts and memos in NVivo software; use coding tools to highlight key phrases. Review and analyze highlighted content and begin labeling patterns and categories aligned to research questions.

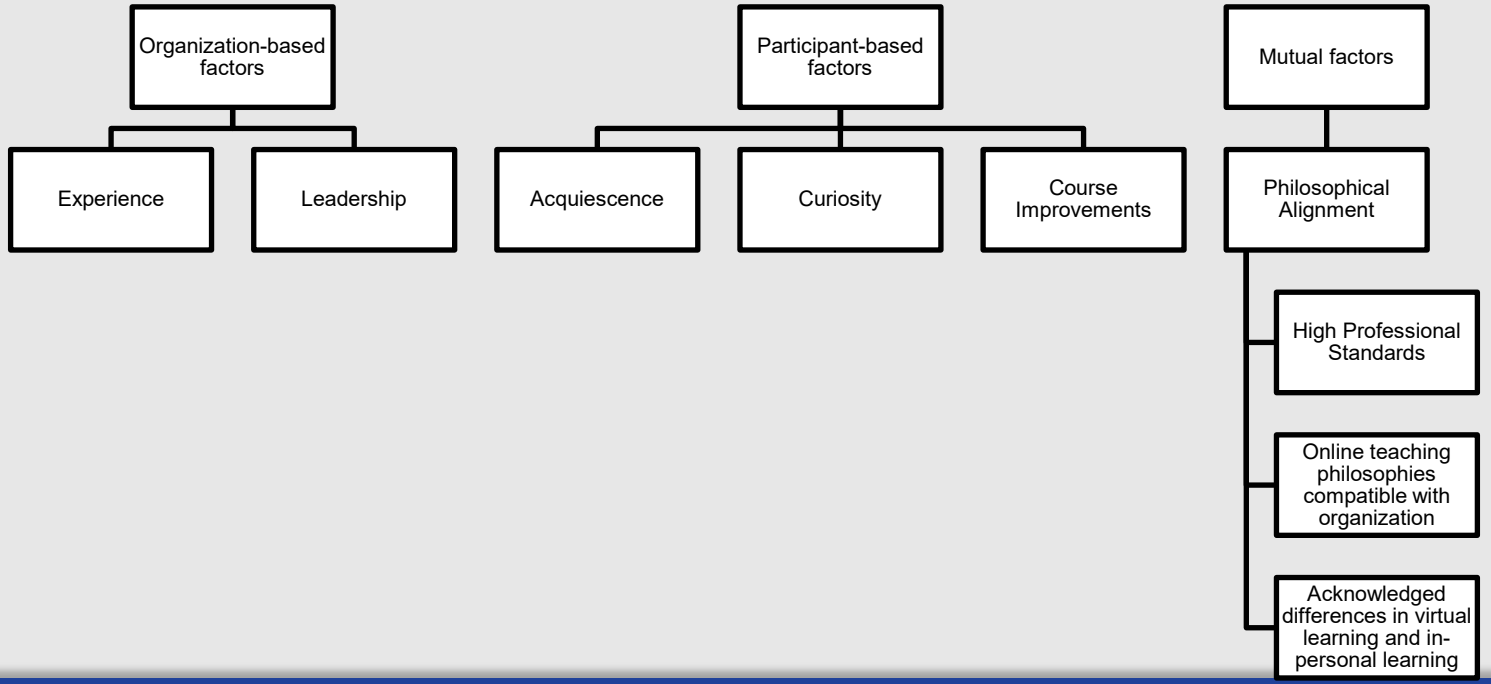
Phase 4 Part 1: Establish and describe inductive themes aligned to the research questions.

Phase 4 Part 2: Apply deductive codes aligned to the Ali & Wright (2017) model and the QM framework.

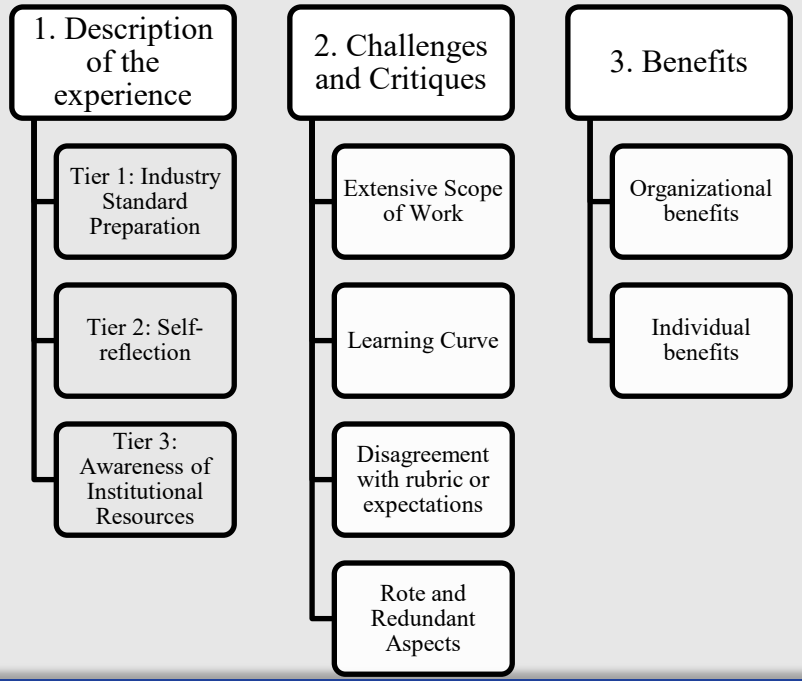
Phase 5: Apply theory and report on findings (Bingham, 2022)


Results

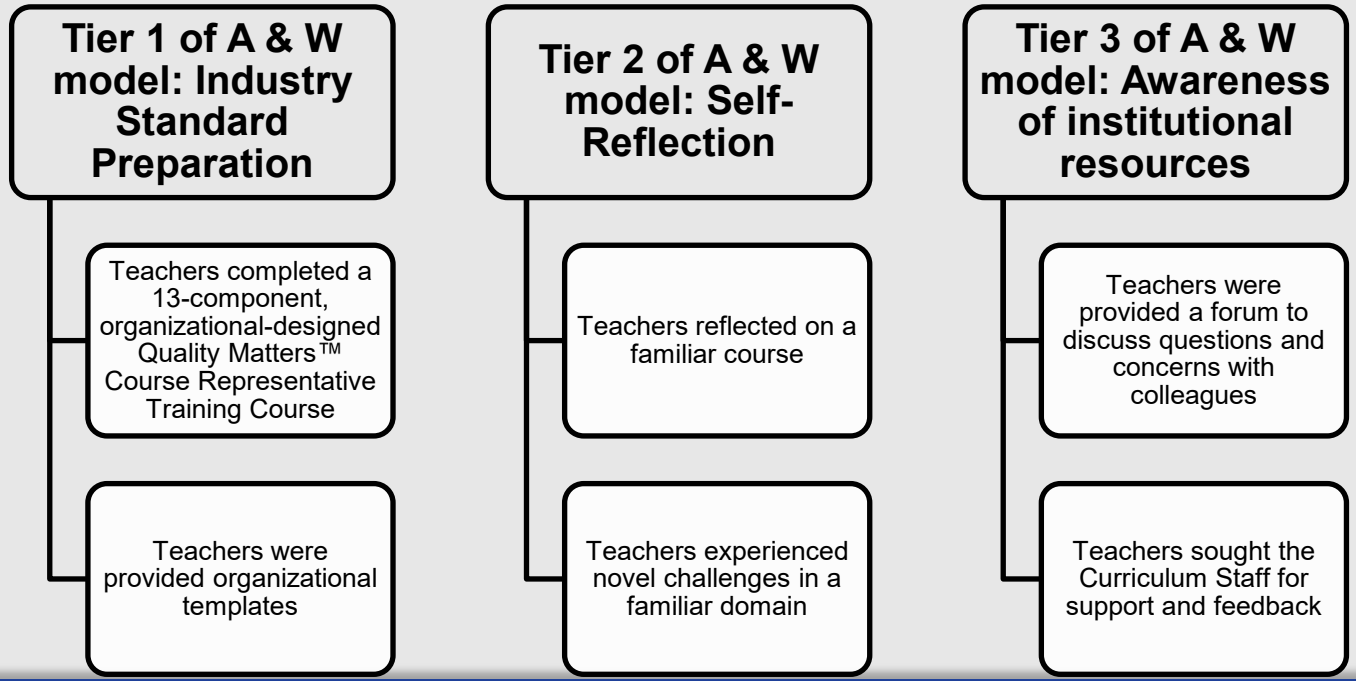
RQ 1: What led teachers to participate before the review?



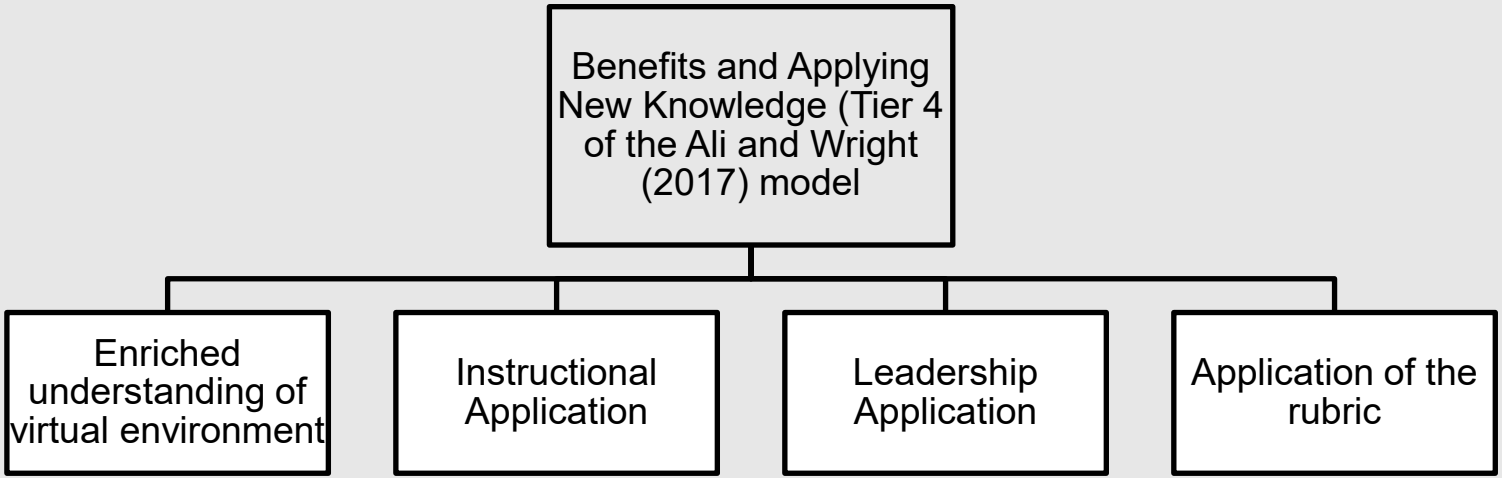
RQ 2: Experiences and perspectives during the review



RQ 2: Deductive themes aligned to first upper-level inductive theme (description of the process)



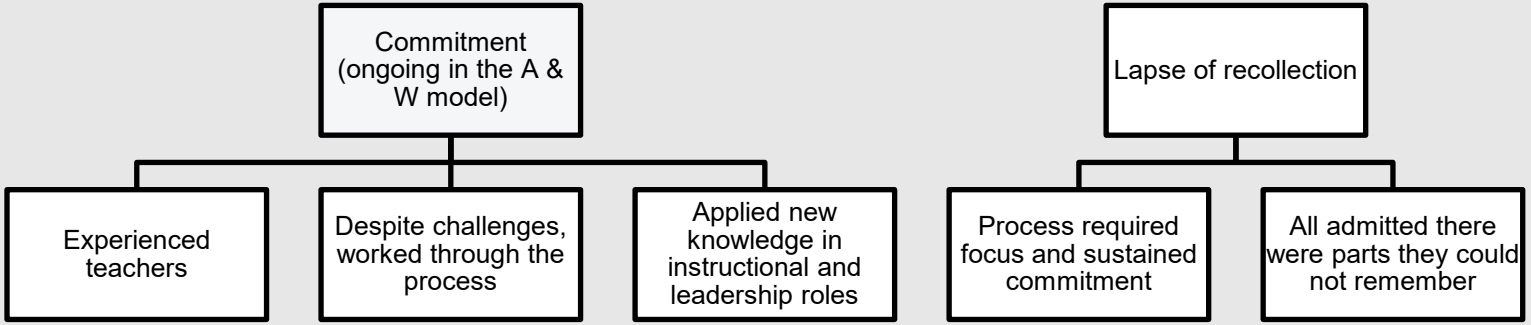
RQ 3: What aspects are significant to professional development (after the review)



RQ 3: Application of the rubric

Standard	Reference
General Standard One: Course Review and Introduction	“The rubric is doing a good job emphasizing that everything has to be explained.” - Joanna
General Standard Two: Learning Objectives Competencies	“The state standards are what we need to pay attention to.” - Stephanie
General Standard Three: Assessment and Measurement	“(The process) also forced me to come up with rubrics and (answer) keys for all the assignments because there was nothing there (3.2 C). - Barry
General Standard Four: Instructional Materials	“This rubric is really about making sure things like … instructional materials…are addressed.” – Beth
General Standard Five: Learner Activities and Learner Interaction	“(We) are making sure there are those interactions (5.3 C)” – Joanna
General Standards Six: Course Technology	“In this rubric, it focuses on that technology piece, which does align with the (course) standards.” – Beth
General Standard Seven: Learner Support	“Our instruction might be different in the online world. The technology supports that are in place, things like that, are all a piece to what we do.” – Beth
General Standard Eight: Digital Accessibility	“Is our content fully accessible to any students that may come into it?’ - Randall

Additional Data



Discussion and Implications

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Case Site: Discussion of Findings

- Online instructional expertise does not necessarily transfer directly to course design expertise (Crews & Wilkinson, 2015; Schmidt et al., 2013; Stone & Springer, 2019; Trinter & Hughes, 2021)
- Training and templates based on QM standards can support implementation (Murillo & Jones, 2020)
- Symbiosis at the case site further enforced the finding that structures of support and a culture of quality are essential to successful quality assurance implementation (Simunich, 2022).

Research Questions: Discussion of Findings

RQ1 (Before)

- Experience, leadership, philosophical alignment, and a supportive culture were significant factors to teachers participating (Simunich et al., 2022; Gregory et al., 2020)

RQ2 (During)

- Training, templates, and support were important for successful reviews (Ali & Wright, 2017, Murillo & Jones, 2020, Abouelftouh & Alsharidah, 2022).
- The novel process provided a “productive struggle” (Trinter and Hughes, p. 2, 2021) which helped participants engage throughout the process.

RQ3 (After)

- Organizational benefits including a mark of quality that can distinguish courses from haphazard ERT (Francom, 2021; Hirsch et al., 2022).
- Participant gained deeper insights of virtual learning environment, particularly course standards alignment (Conklin & Barreto, 2023).
- Rubric seems to be most significant holistically (Legon, 2015), but certain standards did resonate with participants’ instructional and leadership practice.

Implications for Practice (Programs)

- Consider overall program structure prior to implementation.
- Consider professional development offerings.
- Break up training and expectations into manageable segments.
- Establish a “Community of Practice” (Cowen et al., 2017, p. 43) and provide teachers an opportunity to apply new knowledge (Ali & Wright, 2017) and maintain a commitment to program initiatives.
- Consider aligning with instructional frameworks.

Implications for Practice (Teachers)

Time and focus considerations when leveraging teachers.

Possible opportunities to refresh skills.

- Educative learning opportunity
- Online instruction and leadership

Embed self-reflection to provide a more transformational professional development experience.

Limitations

Only involved experiences of teachers in certain subjects

The vantage point of teachers at a single case site

One quality assurance framework

Future Research

- Mixed-method or quantitative research building on themes.
- Studies considering other program and team member perspectives.
- Cross-case studies.
- Further studies on what teachers perceive as effective course design, instructional, and teacher leadership practice

Conclusions

Perhaps “the end does justify the means,” Barry.

The forethought and intentionality of implementing quality assurance initiatives, benefited the program and individuals.

1) Program has successful QM reviews.

2) Educators have takeaways that can enrich virtual educator practice.

Application in teacher leadership roles builds Community of Practice (Cowan et al., 2017) and further refines "applying new knowledge" as defined in the Ali and Wright (2017) Online Faculty Professional Development framework.

Questions and Answers

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