

## Foreword

Distance delivered courses are nothing new. They have been around at least since the mid to late 19th century as correspondent courses. Modern, technology driven online teaching, however, has its roots firmly planted in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, awareness of the need for effective virtual training and mentoring of online instructors is a recent phenomenon. Early efforts were often impractical or, worse yet, grounded in traditional, face-to-face (F2F) training models. Fortunately, recent advances in technology along with an emerging understanding of the value of best practices have afforded us better opportunities for the delivery of effective virtual training and mentoring experiences. In fact, as an increasing number of institutions worldwide shift toward online workshop delivery, emerging research, such as what is shared in this volume, shapes our understanding of ways of doing so effectively.

It is within this context of ongoing change and reflection, that this volume seeks to reside; examining the evolution of our thinking across place and time even as it provides a broad, but fundamental, context for thinking about the emerging concerns that will shape what training and mentoring is needed. The volume does so primarily by addressing the urgent need for a dialogue focused on how virtual training programs influence online teaching and learning. Across the volume, a number of authors, including Johnson (Chapter 3) and Herbert (Chapter 7) make a case for the importance of this dialogue identifying some of the key pedagogical, technological, geographic, and interpersonal issues that complicate the process. Likewise, volume authors demonstrate that the era of delivering online professional development exclusively using F2F methods are over.

As technology has evolved, so too has our understanding of how to use fully online, blended, and web-facilitated courses to maintain a competitive edge even as we make classes accessible to a growing population of both traditional and non-traditional learners. Building on this foundation, several authors make a case for specific pedagogical strategies, including mentoring, social presence, augmented reality, and the integration of video technologies into instructors' professional development plans. For instance, Garrigan (Chapter 8) argues that we must move beyond checklists of required or best practices to careful considerations of the specific and unique needs of individual online instructors and then mentor their development of these skills across time. This is an important point that the volume illustrates well across its chapters: Personalized professional development, grounded in mentorship and advanced technologies, is key if we are to prepare online instructors capable of moving beyond teacher directed instruction to a place of active, engage student centered learning. While some authors address the topic holistically, others, such as Shambaugh (Chapter 2) and Lim (Chapter 15), make a case for the use of specific methods and technologies, including video and augmented reality.

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In summary, this volume serves as a starting point for serious consideration and discussion about whether faculty offering online courses should be certified prior to teaching online and, if so, what that certification should include. It also expands our understanding and fuels our thinking on these topics even as it provides concrete examples of how virtual training programs influence and improve online teaching and learning. In this regard, the volume proves useful for administrators, educators, instructional designers, and other stakeholders interested in assuring quality online instruction.

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