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Academic Staff's Motivation and Knowledge Building in Online Pedagogical Studies

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Academic Staff's Motivation and Knowledge Building in Online Pedagogical Studies
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Pedagogical training has been found to increase the quality of teaching and learning in higher education. Pedagogical training, however, is often not mandatory for academic staff (university teachers, lecturers, and doctoral students), leaving academic staff to start teaching without any pedagogical training and without purposefully developing their teaching skills. Adopting the methods by which they were taught is not always effective for students' learning. Thus, it is important to identify the reasons why academic staff pursue pedagogical training and continue to be motivated to seek professional development in the domain of teaching. With an increase of online learning possibilities, limited research has been done on online pedagogical training. It can be beneficial, however, to understand academic staff's motivational experiences and learning quality in these online learning environments.

This study investigated academic staff's motivation, experience, and quality of learning interactions in an online pedagogical training course. Fifteen academic staff from five different universities in Finland successfully completed an online pedagogical training module called Creating and Utilizing Working Life Contacts. To obtain a holistic view of the participants' experience, the data was collected from registration forms at the beginning of the course, video data was recorded during the web meetings, and open-ended feedback questionnaires were collected at the end of the online training. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. Numerical questionnaire answers were presented to reveal that the participants were overall satisfied with the course and their goals were achieved, contributing to their teaching practices and benefiting their students. The results of qualitative content analysis showed that professional development, building connections, interest in the topic, and learning from others were key factors in initial motivation. Factors in sustaining motivation were also analyzed and external support and learning from others were identified as some of the motivating factors. The analysis of the video data revealed high quality learning wherein the majority of the interactions were associated with knowledge building. Suggestions on how to develop online pedagogical training are discussed.

Keywords: academic staff, higher education, interaction, knowledge building, motivation, online learning, pedagogical training, professional development

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and rationale of the study

Online learning has not only grown in popularity, but it has also become essential in providing educational experiences. With a simple connection to the internet, access to a course is now made possible (Caputi & Garrido, 2015). Surma and Kirschner (2020) state that due to the Covid-19 pandemic where regular classrooms and lecture halls are temporarily empty, the effective use of online learning technologies could provide substantial benefits by adding flexibility and widened access to high-quality learning materials. With this flexibility, online learners have expressed how difficult it is to manage their time properly and maintain their level of motivation (Michinov, Brunot, Le Bohec, Juhel, & Delaval, 2011). Compared to traditional learning environments where students physically face instructors on a regular basis, online learning requires students to be more self-motivated (Perry & Pilati, 2011).

According to Banegas and Busleimán (2014), “Online teacher education is of growing interest and so is the study of motivation as a key factor in technology-mediated learning environments” (p. 131). Online courses have historically experienced high drop-out rates (Bolliger, Supanakorn, & Boggs, 2010). Lee and Choi (2011) found that students previous academic and professional experience, learning skills and characteristics can predict their decision to drop out from online courses. Relevance of course, course design and institutional support also influenced dropout decisions to persist in online learning (Park & Choi, 2009). Understanding what motivates learners in an online learning environment is, therefore, important for both learners and developers. Online course developers can design unique environments that help learners accomplish their goals and learners can better understand what motivates them to learn, and thus take effective actions to pursue their goals (Barak, Watted, & Haick, 2016). As noted by Little and Housand (2011), “Online professional development offers a promising direction for providing increased learning opportunities, promoting professional collaboration, and supporting teacher facility with technology resources” (p. 19).

Professional development in terms of developing teaching knowledge and skills has been deemed important also in higher education regarding the academic staff. Usually, academic staff has either a strong interest in research or in teaching (Macfarlane & Hughes, 2009). The European Commission (2016) noted that greater efforts are needed to invest in the pedagogical

training of academic staff, which is an area that has traditionally been less valued than research output. This emphasizes the importance of improving the quality and status of teaching as it is a factor to improve students' learning, as well as overall quality in higher education. Biggs (2001) argues that staff development plays an important role in maintaining the quality of teaching and learning in higher institutions. Through a model of reflective practice, the institution needs to establish mechanisms to allow the teachers to continually review and improve their current practices (Biggs, 2001).

To assure the quality of teaching and learning, many universities in Finland provide pedagogical training for academic staff (Postareff, Lindblom-Ylänne, & Nevgi, 2007). While such training is highly recommended, it is not compulsory. Commonly, such training is designed in the contact teaching mode, as it strives to provide a setting where academics can discuss in groups and learn with and from each other, teachers can also observe each other teaching, evaluate, and give peer feedback (Postareff et al., 2007). Face-to-face discussions and peer-support have been found meaningful in the professional development of staff (Ödalen, Brommeson, Erlingsson, Schaffer, & Fogelgren, 2019; Postareff et al, 2007; Trowler & Cooper, 2010), also for the purposes of dealing with emotion loaded experiences, such as receiving student feedback (Lutovac, Kaasila, Komulainen, & Maikkola, 2017).

On the other hand, with an increase in online teaching and learning, also professional development courses for academics are being increasingly provided online. For example, Vilppu, Södervik, Postareff, and Murtonen (2019) found that even short online pedagogy courses can have an effect on university teachers' interpretations of teaching and learning when they asked respondents to interpret short video clips of teaching situations, before and after participating in online pedagogy courses. Therefore, online learning for professional development can be especially useful for relatively new teachers such as doctoral students in the beginning of their academic careers. However, the research addressing online learning of academics is still scarce, and limited knowledge is available on whether learning in an online environment can be motivating for academics and whether it can yield quality learning.

1.2 Significance of the study

This research will explore academic staff's motivation to take up university pedagogy training in an online environment and what kind of experiences they report to have from online training. Online training can create possibilities for participation and collaboration among academic staff

not only in one university, but across many higher education institutions (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Stes, Min-Leliveld, Gijbels, and Van Petegem (2010) argue that it is important to conduct research on the characteristics of participants who volunteer to participate in professional development programs, and also better understand why some academics successfully persist and complete such programs while others drop out. Moreover, the central emphasis of this study will be placed on understanding what kind of learning can take place in an online pedagogical training, and whether online training can provide sufficient social interaction.

It has been suggested that effective learning takes place when learners externalize and articulate their still developing knowledge (Sawyer, 2006). This educational value of articulation is explained in a theory of mental development which was first studied by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky in the 1920s. Vygotsky “argued that all knowledge began as visible social interaction, and then was gradually internalized by the learner to form thought” (cited in Sawyer, 2014, p. 10). Research has shown the importance of social interaction to participants’ satisfaction and motivation in online learning environments (Barak, Watted, & Haick, 2016; Bolliger et al., 2010; Michinov et al., 2011). Social interactions according to Barak et al. (2016), in the form of online groups, whether large or small, are important for successful learning.

Previous studies have shown the benefits of knowledge building in groups and communities of learners (Cacciamani, Cesareni, Martini, Ferrini, & Fujita, 2012; Cacciamani, Perrucci, & Khanlari, 2018; Popp & Goldman, 2016; Yücel & Usluel, 2016; Zhao & Chan, 2014). Knowledge Building transforms the goal of schools from learning to creating knowledge, this involves collaborative interaction and construction of a deeper understanding of the topic through elaboration, question asking, arguments, explanations, and use of information (Fu, Aalst, & Chan, 2016). Scardamalia and Bereiter (2003; 2006) defined knowledge building as a group activity in which knowledge is intentionally developed and students work collaboratively to solve, discuss, and compare common problems and detail their ideas. It is focused on the continuous work with ideas of value to the community (Scardamalia & Bereiter 2006; 2014).

Hong (2014) found that students in an online knowledge building environment perceived learning as more effective and provided good-quality feedback for advancing their knowledge. Little is known, however, about the quality of interactions in online pedagogical training. The current study will therefore contribute to knowledge by exploring the quality of interactions between academics in an online environment and how these interactions relate to learning.

Social interaction during group discussions in this research will be analyzed and interpreted via the knowledge building theory (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2003), in order to better understand the quality and the level of academics' learning in an online environment.

1.3 Aim and research questions

This study aims to understand academic staff's motivation, experience, and quality of learning interactions in an online pedagogical training course.

The research questions are:

1. What motivates academic staff to study in an online pedagogical training course?
2. What kind of experiences do academic staff have in online pedagogical training?
3. What is the quality of academic staff's learning during online interactions in pedagogical training?

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical framework of this study, and discusses online learning, motivation, and other theories related. In Chapter 3, I describe my methodological choices, i.e. data collection and analysis methods. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study and Chapter 5 evaluates the reliability, research ethics, and limitations of the study. I conclude the thesis with a Chapter 6 where the results are discussed with suggestions and a framework for learners and online course developers to sustain motivation and quality in online learning environments. Recommendations for future research are also discussed.

2 Theoretical Framework

In this section, I first outline the research knowledge regarding online learning, particularly in terms of motivation to learn online, as well as interaction and knowledge building in online environments. Then I present some research done in the domain of academics' professional development with a focus on pedagogical training.

2.1 Online Learning

Online learning can be understood as “learning that is completely or partially accomplished through the internet” (Meylani, Bitter, & Legacy, 2015, p. 203). It fits well into modern lifestyles where the internet is ever present and offers flexibility in learning anywhere and usually anytime (Ally, 2008; Perry & Pilati, 2011). According to Ally (2008), different terms are used for online learning, some of them being e-learning, distance learning, virtual learning, internet learning, distributed learning, web-based learning, and computer-assisted learning. The author further states that:

All of these terms imply that the learner is at a distance from the tutor or instructor, that the learner uses some form of technology (usually a computer) to access the learning materials, that the learner uses technology to interact with the tutor or instructor and with other learners, and that some form of support is provided to learners. (Ally, 2008, p. 16)

The learner and the learning process should also be the focus of online learning and there is some urgency, according to Beldarrain (2006), in being able to provide flexible learning opportunities without compromising the quality of instruction in these online learning environments. Song, Singleton, Hill, and Koh (2004) found that 71% of participants less satisfied with online learning compared to traditional classroom learning stated a lack of community as a major element in their dissatisfaction. In their study of 76 graduate students surveyed to identify components and perceived challenges based on their online learning experiences, they found that technical problems, a perceived lack of sense of community, time constraints, and the difficulty in understanding the objectives of the online courses as challenges impacting the success of an online learning experience. The authors concluded that effective instructional design should not only focus on the technological aspects of the online course, but also on the expectations, objectives, and goals of the learners. Beldarrain (2006) also noted that

“Instructional designers and educators have unique opportunities to foster interaction and collaboration among learners, thus creating a true learning community” (p. 140). In Rovai’s (2002) study of 314 students enrolled in 26 graduate education and leadership online courses, there was significant evidence of the relationship between perceived cognitive learning and students’ perceived sense of community.

Online learning could make interaction and collaboration possible in either asynchronous or synchronous learning networks (Beldarrain, 2006). In asynchronous online learning, students can access the materials online anytime, while synchronous online learning allows for real-time interaction between instructors and students (Ally, 2008). Ally (2008), also mentions that since learners can complete online courses while working a full-time job or in their own space, learners can contextualize the learning by applying knowledge and skills in specific contexts. They are able to use the Internet to access relevant and up-to-date learning materials and can also communicate with experts in the field which they are studying (Ally, 2008). This flexibility applies to the online instructors also as facilitating can be done anytime, anywhere. Online materials can be updated by the instructors and learners can see changes immediately. Utilizing the internet can be beneficial as instructors can direct the learners to appropriate information based on their needs. “If designed properly, online learning systems can be used to determine learners’ needs and current level of expertise, and to assign appropriate materials for learners to select from, to achieve their desired learning outcomes” (Ally, 2008 p. 17-18).

Another common term for studies conducted via the internet is blended learning, which combines face-to-face and distance learning in many ways (Staker & Horn, 2012). In the context of my study, I will use the term Online learning as this course had no face-to-face sessions and the entire module and the data I analyzed was obtained through communication asynchronously and synchronously online via the internet.

2.1.1 Motivation to learn online

Motivation, according to Breen, Brew, Jenkins, and Lindsay (2003) refers to “those inner processes that determine whether learners will engage in a task, the amount of effort they will expend, the length of time they will persevere, and the persistence they will show when obstacles are encountered” (p. 28). It is the drive and energy we put into accomplishing something we want to do, motivation is ever present in our thought and action even if we cannot see or touch it (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Ryan and Deci (2000) distinguished between the

two types of motivation: *Intrinsic motivation*, which refers to carrying out an action because it is inherently enjoyable or interesting, and *Extrinsic motivation*, which refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome. Learning for the love of the intellectual challenge, desiring to achieve mastery of a topic, or practice for the satisfaction it brings are intrinsic motivators. On the other hand, receiving recognition from teachers and classmates, getting a promotion, earning a certificate or diploma are all extrinsic motivators (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Harnett, St. George, and Dron (2011) found that both types of motivation; intrinsic and extrinsic co-exist in online learning and should both be taken into consideration within the context.

Previous literature has shown a growing interest in exploring motivation in online learning. Barak et al. (2016) investigated motivation to learn in two massive open online courses (MOOCs) and found that in the same online course but in a different language of instruction, MOOC participants were driven by similar goals, emphasizing intrinsic motivation and self-determination. Through their mixed-methods research collecting data from pre- and post-questionnaires, forum posts, and email messages, they also characterized MOOC completers according to their learning motivation. The five types of MOOC completers were problem-solvers (MOOC participants who seek solutions for a real problem), networkers (participants who desire to be a part of a community of people with similar interest), benefactors (participants who want to learn for the benefit of others), innovation-seekers (participants who wish to stay updated and informed about innovations), and complementary learners (participants who seek to expand school curriculum with worldwide knowledge) (Barak et al., 2016).

Johnson, Stewart, and Bachman (2015) found that motivation of students in online learning course environment is completely different to that in face-to-face learning. 235 students and 104 faculty were surveyed with motivation measurement scales of four dimensions: online intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and face-to-face intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. With their exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, they found that multiple motivational factors influence educational behaviors. Students who exhibit online extrinsic motivation, in comparison to other motivation orientations, complete greater numbers of online courses. On the other hand, face-to-face intrinsic motivation was indicative of fewer online courses taught by the faculty. This means that academic staff that find face-to-face instruction inherently rewarding are least likely to teach online and continue teaching online. The authors also mention that both, internal and external factors of motivation affect behavior and call for

university leadership to do research to discover how academic staff develop motivation in the online format.

Kiscilzec and Schneider (2015) found that learner motivations can provide a useful lens for understanding online learners. In their research on open-ended responses of 71,475 online learners across 14 courses, motivations are predictive of actual behaviors and can inform design direction of courses to better support learner needs. They also found that a substantial number of learners take online courses for social reasons, despite the fact that the learning experience was designed primarily for individuals. The authors also noted that “Two needs stand out across multiple motivations- the need for social engagement and the need for well-organized and accessible course content” (p. 17). Mayende, Prinz, Isabwe, and Muyinda (2017) also found that course organization structured for online learning groups has the potential to increase individual motivation when they saw students interact more when their peers were motivated.

Barak et al. (2016) observed that research on online courses lacks knowledge about the relationships between motivation and learning in small online groups. This is especially important in the current research, as I will try to find out if being motivated to take up an online course translates into actual learning through the interactions.

2.1.2 Interaction in an online environment

In classrooms, a basic element of learning is communication among students: the ability to ask questions, to share with others, or to disagree with others (Bouhnik & Marcus, 2006). In online learning environments, effective support would come from encouragement of reflective thinking, providing social support for discussions, interaction, and extension of ideas with feedback from peers and facilitators on emerging issues (Mcloughlin, 2002). Meaningful learning online is achieved when there is interaction within online learning groups (Mayende et al., 2017). Moore (1989), for example, described three different kinds of interactions in online learning. Student-student interaction, student-instructor interaction, and student-content interaction (as cited in Abrami, Bernard, Bures, Borokhovski, & Tamim, 2011, p. 86). In online courses, student and instructor interaction could be synchronous, as in videoconferencing and chatting, or asynchronous, such as through discussion boards or e-mail messaging (Abrami et al., 2011).

Bouhnik and Marcus (2006) highlighted that “It is crucial to ensure that the content delivered to the student is relevant to, and may be implemented and found useful in connection with, his or her immediate needs, whether at his workplace or elsewhere” (p. 301). Meylani, Bitter, and Legacy (2015) enumerate desirable characteristics of online environments and stated that scripts or scaffolds for online communication between student groups have positive effects on the manner in which students interact with the online content and with each other. Scripts according to Weinberger, Ertl, Fischer, and Mandl (2005) specify and sequence interactions and activities of learners. These in turn motivate elaboration activities and foster learning. Social Scripts structure discourse according to successful interaction patterns of knowledge construction and help learners acquire more knowledge (Weinberger et al., 2005).

Whether it is face-to-face or distance and online education, it is the level of the interaction that will determine the quality of a learner’s educational experience (Kanuka, 2011). In the view of socio-cultural learning, deep learning and meaningful construction of knowledge can occur in interpersonal relationships and social activities (Heo, Lim & Kim, 2010). Learning is a process of participation in communities of learners and those participating in the learning context form part of the community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In a learning community, according to Crespo (2006), the quality of learning opportunities depends on the quality of the conversations. The author further states that “just as in other educational settings, good conversations do not simply happen, nor do they always happen” (p. 30). This research will try to find out if quality interactions can be achieved in an online pedagogical training course. Moreover, provided that quality learning has been linked to interaction between learners (Weinberger et al., 2005), looking at the interaction between the academics in online pedagogical training can also reveal whether online learning can result in quality learning.

2.1.3 Knowledge building in an online environment

Idea improvement is the core-principle of knowledge building according to Scardamalia and Bereiter (2003; 2006). Through social discourse, the goal of knowledge building is to advance the collective knowledge of a group by producing and improving ideas of value to their community (Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2008; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2003). In that way, it also supports individual knowledge (Scardamalia & Bereiter 2006). Knowledge building is, therefore, a collaborative effort; all participants are valuable contributors in advancing the community’s understandings (Popp & Goldman, 2016). Stahl (2006) states that:

In effective collaborative knowledge building, the group must engage in thinking together about a problem or task and produce a knowledge artifact such as a verbal problem clarification, a textual solution proposal, or a more developed theoretical inscription that integrates their different perspectives on the topic and represents a shared group result that they have negotiated. (p. 3)

Yücel and Usluel (2016) observed that improving the quality of conversations improves learning in online groups. In productive conversations, people actively try to understand others' meanings by asking questions, posing counter examples, and suspending judgment (Nelson, Deuel, Slavit, & Kennedy, 2010). Popp and Goldman (2016) examined discourse indicators aligned with knowledge building. They found that interactivity among participants and exploratory talk reflected the features of knowledge building that are associated with learning. The interactions are characterized by questioning and by give-and-take that involves creating, refining, and improving their collaborative explanation (Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2008). According to Popp and Goldman (2016), questioning, proposing, elaborating proposals, negotiating, and explaining thinking are the five types of discourse moves indicative of talk that is interactive and exploratory. In contrast, discourse moves that represent a more polished, finalized talk about ideas, such as describing and agreeing are not reflective of knowledge building (Popp & Goldman, 2016).

Duvall, Matranga, and Silverman (2020) found that designing for and facilitating knowledge building discourse is critical in online courses. Collaborative knowledge building is different essentially in online settings than it is in face-to-face settings, but it can be possible to have high quality online interactions if we take advantage of what online environments offer that are not available when teaching face-to-face, these are asynchronous opportunities for reflection and discussion, together with automatic archival of these activities (Duvall, Matranga, & Silverman, 2020). Fu, Aalst, and Chan (2016) discovered a growth in student learning outcomes when their discourse patterns were improved to reflect knowledge building, they also suggest using discourse patterns as a frame of reference when interpreting online discourse in online learning contexts.

Much of the previous literature indicates the value of social interaction for learning and sustained motivation in online learning environments in quantitative measures but do not go deeper into the quality of these interactions (Yücel & Usluel, 2016). This current study will use

knowledge building theory to code and understand the quality of interactions in the web meetings in this online pedagogical training course.

2.2 Academics' professional development online

In the domain of academics' professional development, pedagogical training has been regarded as one of the important aspects that contributes to the quality of learning and teaching in higher education (Biggs, 2001). Previous research studied the impact of academics' pedagogical training on attitudes towards teaching and their impact on their students. Pedagogical training generally tends to focus on shifting academics' approaches to teaching from teacher-centered to student-centered. Trigwell, Prosser, and Waterouse (1999) described teachers that embrace a teacher-centered approach, as transferring information from teacher to students. They focus on how the course material is presented and on their own behavior. A student-centered teacher on the other hand, directs focus towards the students and their learning. Postareff, Lindblom-Ylänne, and Nevgi (2007) mention that teaching with a student-centered approach is interactive as it facilitates learning and observing students' existing conceptions. This in turn, encourages students to become independent learners who are able to construct their own knowledge and understanding.

Hanbury, Prosser, and Rickinson (2008) found a significant change in academic staff's perceptions of teaching after a pedagogical training program towards more student-focused and less teacher-focused. Gibbs and Coffey (2004) found that students instructed by teachers who have participated in pedagogical training learned more effectively. The students also rated the teaching quality of the academic staff who participated in pedagogical training significantly higher than those of academics who did not. A panel of 183 university teachers from six Swedish Universities who participated in pedagogical training courses in a study by Ödalen, Brommesson, Erlingsson, Schaffer, and Fogelgren (2019) revealed that participants' self-assessed pedagogical skills increased notably and also their self-reported confidence slightly increased. Additionally, previous research also highlighted positive benefits of social interaction and the opportunity to interact with peers and other academics (Handbury et al., 2008; Postareff et al, 2007; Villar & Alegre, 2007).

Remmik, Karm, Haamer, and Lepp (2011) emphasize the necessity of providing both training courses for teaching skills development and sustained support systems for academic staff, especially for early career academics that learn from their colleagues and bring new knowledge

into the community. The authors state that pedagogical training and mentoring helped to create communities of practice on teaching that give academic staff opportunities to contemplate and discuss their teaching with colleagues. The creation of knowledge through interactive exchange and communication helped to reduce academic isolation for both novice lecturers and more senior academics (Remmik et al., 2011).

Moreover, Kaasila, Lutovac, Komulainen, and Maikkola (2021) noted that pedagogical training can support academics in the development of their teacher identity, as well as the integration of the research and teaching. They refer to the latter as research-teaching nexus and suggest that pedagogical training can help academics see how research is relevant to their teaching and also, how teaching can inform their research.

In higher education, online learning is used for a variety of purposes. Villar and Alegre (2007) explain that online learning allows staff to gain feedback about their professional skill development and it also allows for improving staff performance over time. Little and Housand (2011) noted that:

Online resources for professional development provide a wide range of opportunities for teachers to be actively engaged in their own learning, often at their own pace and from the comfort of their own home or classroom. Collaboration may occur in real time or asynchronously, and teachers who may have limited opportunities to interact in person during the school day have the chance to engage in longer, reflective conversations about their practice. (p. 22)

Villar and Alegre (2007) measured the learning of Spanish university teachers who participated in online staff development courses. In their multiple-case study of 162 faculty members, they found that aside from increasing professional competence and raising awareness of the different learning approaches, training faculty in professional skills with collaborative forum discussions helps the university teachers find a deeper meaning behind learning to teach. Rienties, Brouer, and Lygo-Baker (2013) found that teachers could benefit from online training regardless of their beliefs in teaching. In their research of 33 participants who completed pre and posttests, the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) of these teachers increased substantially, they were more confident in their ability to integrate technology within their pedagogical design and were even putting this into practice. As noted by Chametzky (2014),

learner engagement in online professional development increases when the material is relevant and personally meaningful.

Other options for online professional development are informative websites, self-paced tutorials, live or recorded podcasts and webinars, and even long-term engagement in productive, collaborative activities in online professional learning communities (Little & Housand, 2011). Participants could reflect on their own teaching, share their experiences with colleagues, and challenge their professional identity, this can motivate teacher development even more as Hull (2015) found that when participants are invested in a shared outcome and not just individual certificates, professional development is most successful.

The multiple positive effects of pedagogical training described above have mostly been observed when the training was conducted in the contact teaching mode. The question arises then; can similar positive effects be observed when the pedagogical training is delivered in an online mode? Rienties, Brouwer, and Lygo-Baker (2013) found that teachers could benefit from online training programs irrespective of whether they are more inclined towards teacher-centered or student-centered approaches and how important it is to encourage higher education staff to partake in online training.

Thus, it is important to explore academics' motivation to take up online professional development courses, such as pedagogical training and understand what kind of experiences they have from learning online. Moreover, using the research-based knowledge on online learning, especially on motivation to learn online, and on interaction and knowledge building in online environments, this research aims at finding out if quality interaction and learning can be achieved in an online pedagogical course. This knowledge can help us design, implement, and evaluate better online training courses. With this knowledge, learners can understand their motivation to be engaged and educators and course designers can ensure quality learning interactions in synchronous and asynchronous online environments.

3 Methodology

In this section, I outline the methodological choices made in this study. I first describe the research context and research participants. Second, I describe the research process, focusing on how I collected the data, and how these were analyzed to answer the research questions. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used, allowing me to obtain the information and draw inferences that cannot be achieved by using a single method (Drew, Hardman, & Hosp, 2008).

3.1 Research Context: University Pedagogical Support (UNIPS)

In January 2019, I started working in a project called University Pedagogical Support (UNIPS). UNIPS is a national online learning platform for University Pedagogical studies developed in collaboration with eight Finnish universities and funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The platform provides high-quality pedagogical material readily available online which anyone can use freely for the purpose of self-study. In addition to using the self-study materials, a guided study option is possible. University teachers and doctoral candidates of UNIPS-partner Universities in Finland are able to take short online courses (one study credit per module) to obtain study credits counting towards their pedagogical qualification (UNIPS, 2020). In this guided study model, material can be used in a form of an online collaborative learning to improve pedagogical skills with guidance from a teacher (Laato, Salmento, & Murtonen, 2018; Murtonen et al., 2019). The UNIPS project is one of the three divisions in the larger thematic project "Enhancing pedagogical and digital teaching and supervision skills in higher education" in Finland (UNIPS, 2020).

This study is situated in a pilot course designed by UNIPS in the module called "Creating and Utilizing Working Life Contacts." The purpose of the course is to facilitate the planning and development of working life cooperation in teaching, and support learning of working life skills. Helping students gain good working life skills benefit everyone: teachers, students, the university, and the future employer. Creating and utilizing working life skills plays an important role in a university degree. Some examples include co-operation with the world of work during a course, guest lecturers from the field, or an internship period can bridge theoretical knowledge with practical skills that are needed in working life (UNIPS, 2020). The themes of this module are given in the form of questions and answers: 1) Benefits? 2) Connections? 3) Co-operation? 4) Responsibilities? and 5) Agreements? It is aimed for university teachers, doctoral students, and all the academic staff with teaching duties and interest in cooperation with working life.

I was part of the team working on this module and I added detailed and clear instructions in the Learning Management System (LMS) on how to go through the self-study materials and what is required from the participants in the course. This script is needed to guide the discussion during the group working phase and to “raise specific expectations and awareness of the specific learning sequences and arrangements” (Weinberger, 2011 p. 191). Moodle LMS was used, and the participants accessed the materials on the UNIPS platform. A feature of the online course is that aside from learning with colleagues from different universities, participants also come from different fields and disciplines such as Medicine, Law, Mining, Biotechnology, Information technology, Software Engineering, Natural Sciences, Computer Science, English Philology, and Marketing & International Business.

3.2 Research participants

In this study, I focus on the fifteen academic staff that participated and successfully completed the course “Creating and Utilizing Working Life Contacts.” By academic staff, I refer to university teachers, lecturers, and doctoral students who were the participants in the study. Table 1 presents the demographic information of course completers.

Table 1. Demographic information of course completers ($n = 15$)

Characteristic	Frequency
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	6
Female	9
<i>University</i>	
Aalto University	2
Lappeenranta University of Technology	4
University of Oulu	1
University of Tampere	2
University of Turku	6
<i>Years of Teaching</i>	
0-2 years	7
3-5 years	3
6-10 years	3
More than 10 years	2

<i>Title/Position</i>	
Senior Lecturer	1
Doctoral Student	4
Associate Professor	3
Professor	1
Postdoctoral Researcher	3
Project Manager	2
Research Fellow	1

Among the participants, 6 were male and 9 were female. Five universities in Finland were represented with most course completers coming from University of Turku. Many of the participants had between 0-2 years teaching experience, while the other participants were more experienced ranging from 3 years to more than 10 years teaching experience. The participants were doctoral students with teaching responsibility, Postdoctoral researchers and Associate professors. The course accommodated also one senior lecturer, one professor, one research fellow, and two project managers from different departments.

3.3 Data Collection

In this study, quantitative and qualitative data was obtained. Research data in this study consists of registration forms (N= 15), feedback questionnaires (N=15), and video recordings (total duration 6:16:40). Figure 1 shows the timeline of tasks in the online course, which are helpful in explaining the data collection phases.

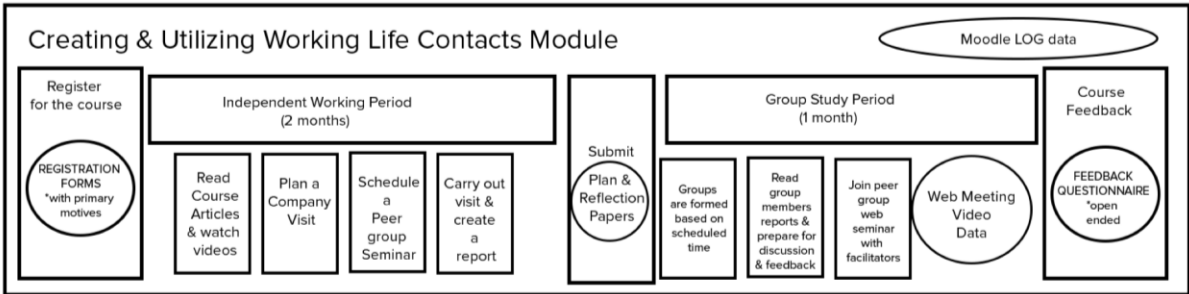


Figure 1. Timeline of online course

In the first phase, the registration forms (see APPENDIX 3) from 15 participants who completed the course were obtained to be used as the data. The pilot course was marketed and

organized in cooperation with University of Oulu, Aalto University, Lappeenranta University of Technology, University of Turku, and Tampere University of Technology. The academic staff registered and began the Independent study period from 21.1 to 17.3.2019. The group study period was conducted from 18.3 to 19.4.2019. Consent forms were given to the participants stating that their outputs from the course will be studied and that the web meetings will be recorded. Since it is an optional online course, registration forms were filled up with primary motives for enrolling to the course. Registration forms were used as the first data set of this study.

In the second data collection phase, video recordings of group meetings were collected. The online course that the participants attended consisted of 2 parts: independent study phase and group study phase. The individual study phase consists of watching short videos and reading literature. The participants then had to contact an employer or company related to their field and schedule a working life visit. They prepare a plan with learning goals and questions to ask. After visiting the company, they write a reflection paper on their experience and how their goals were met. The Plan & Reflection papers are submitted in Moodle Learning Environment.

During the group study period, the participants choose a schedule for a web meeting with facilitators in Doodle online calendar tool. According to their availability, and the ones who have submitted their independent study period assignment, the participants were divided into five groups of either three or four. They were tasked to read each group member's reflection paper before the scheduled online meeting. They prepare a short 5-10-minute presentation on their working life visit of the format of their choice to share with the group (e.g. concept map, slideshow, pictures, or video). During the web meeting, each participant has a time to explain their visit experiences. After each presentation, the group members have time to ask questions, give peer feedback and have an open discussion. The web meetings were recorded in either Zoom or Adobe Connect. All group video data were recorded. I was able to facilitate two of the five groups in the group online meetings. The facilitators allowed the participants to discuss freely after each presentation. In all, online meetings generated a total of over 6h of video recorded data, which was a second data set used in this study.

The third phase of the data collection was conducted in the very end of the course. In the end of the meetings, we asked the participants further questions about their motivation to complete the course and we all discussed course feedback and how the course can be further improved in the future. This phase generated open-ended questionnaires and feedback as the third data

set of the study (see APPENDIX 2). Before receiving their certificates, the participants filled up the open-ended questionnaires and sent back their consent forms. This finalized the online course as well as the data collection of this research.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed in several phases in order to answer the research questions. In the first phase of analysis, I analyzed the registration forms and open-ended questionnaire responses to understand academic staff's motives to study university pedagogy online. I wanted to determine academics' initial motives, what they wanted to learn from the course and where they expected to use this knowledge. First, I calculated the frequencies of the motives expressed via registration forms. Second, I performed content analysis of the open-ended questionnaire responses. I used a process of open coding (Elö & Kyngäs, 2008) where I read through the participants' written responses again and again looking for similar categories. I then used a spreadsheet to organize these responses into themes (Attride-Stirling, 2016). Krippendorff (2019) defines content analysis as a "research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (p. 24). Content analysis is generally used by researchers to describe human experiences and perspectives (Elö & Kyngäs, 2008). By using content analysis, I can increase understanding of particular phenomena, provide new insights, and inform practical actions (Krippendorff, 2019).

After analyzing the qualitative data, the four main themes of what motivates academic staff to register and complete an online pedagogical training course emerged: 1) Professional development, meaning academic staff that were motivated to develop their teaching, 2) Building connections, academic staff that were motivated by networking and establishing working life contacts, 3) Interest in topic, academic staff that were motivated by learning something new and relevant, and 4) Learning from others, academic staff that were motivated by learning with and from colleagues. In this phase, I used inductive content analysis, wherein the categories are derived from the data (Elö & Kyngäs, 2008).

In the second phase of analysis, I analyzed open-ended questionnaires and feedback to obtain the information how the academics have experienced their participation in an online pedagogical training. The participants quantitatively rated their motivation during the individual study phase and then rated their motivation during the group study phase in a Likert scale of 1 to 5. They also rated their goals being met and course satisfaction in a Likert scale of

1 to 5 at the end of the course. These responses were presented in a table to show how all the participants rated their experience. In the feedback questionnaire, academics further explained why they rated their motivation in a particular way and their reasons behind their answers. The responses on motivation were again analyzed via inductive content analysis to identify the main themes, which were: 1) Flexibility of the Course, 2) Building Connections, 3) External Support, and 4) Interest in the topic for the Individual study period. External support came from email reminders of deadlines, clear instructions and peer support. For the sustaining motivational factors in the group study period, the main themes were: 1) Learning from others, 2) External Support, and 3) Interest, personal meaning and value. Data excerpts were also given to deepen the analysis of the course satisfaction and ratings for the participants' goals being met.

In the third phase of analysis, I wanted to investigate the quality of academics' learning during group interactions. Recorded web meetings were analyzed via deductive content analysis, where the structure of analysis is operationalized on the basis on previous research (Elö & Kyngäs, 2008). Utterances were coded within each talking turn. Codes were informed by a previous research by Popp and Goldman (2016) where they examined how teachers talk in professional learning communities (PLCs) contributed to the discussion in groups and how group members' and facilitators' discourse moves supported productive discussion. The mentioned authors derived indicators of knowledge building discourse and examined their prevalence in PLC meetings among teachers.

The coding categories I used were *Questioning, proposing, elaborating proposals, negotiating, explaining thinking, describing, and agreeing* (see Table 2). These categories indicated whether there is *high quality learning*, which is associated with knowledge building or *low-quality learning*, that is not associated with knowledge building. The definitions of the codes with specific examples from data are presented in the table below (Table 2). Based on Scardamalia and Bereiter's knowledge building theory (2003, 2006, 2014) and Popp and Goldman's (2016) coding scheme, I then counted the frequencies of each code to find out the quality of the interactions in the group web meetings.

Table 2. Coding categories in content analysis of video data

Category	Definition	Example
HIGH QUALITY LEARNING (<i>Associated with Knowledge Building</i>)		
Questioning	Seeking information. Could be in the form of prompting, probing, or asking for clarification.	“I was wondering, what kind of skills are needed, required from the students, are they more technical skills from biosciences or some more general skills in order to get an internship in this company?”
Proposing	Putting forth an idea	“What would you think of an idea that your guest lecturer would make a podcast or a webinar before and send it to you so she or he don’t have to be in the place, you just organize a webinar?”
Elaborating proposals	Building on ideas. rephrasing proposals, refining, or giving an example.	“I think that, kind of, your qualifications are not enough for you to stand out. In addition to that, I think you really need to have the right attitude and you have to have really good interaction skills and communication skills, and I think this is something that regardless of the field, if it’s arts, if it’s science, I think we, at university should kind of also prepare our students a bit more for like when we are talking about working life.”
Negotiating	Contesting and compromising ideas. Disagreeing, challenging, disconfirming, or asking for agreement.	“Not really, I’m not really giving that kind of course because we don’t, it’s more like tutoring and guiding and so on.”
Explaining thinking	Unpacking reasoning, including what makes sense and what does not. Explaining reasoning or admitting uncertainty.	“That’s why I want to change my course to kind of reflect and prepare the students for real life practical uses”
LOW QUALITY LEARNING (<i>Not Associated with Knowledge Building</i>)		
Agreeing	Indicating concurrence. Agreeing through repeating, confirming, or affirming.	“mhmm, yeah”
Describing	Reporting details about an event by recounting or relating.	“I would say it was well received, but usually they are rather passive in a sense that they wait for us to engage, especially this software company, but I think it will be easier now after we have established the initial contacts, because we have some other companies that come to us and propose different topics and propose these hackathon events for example.”

4 Results

The findings of this study are presented in three sections, I answer each research question after the different phases of analysis. First, what motivated academics to study online, second how they experienced pedagogical training, and then lastly, I analyzed their interactions from the video data for the quality of academic staff's learning.

4.1 What motivates academic staff to study in an online pedagogical training course?

Table 2 displays the answers from the registration form on why the participants decided to study pedagogical training online.

Table 2. Primary motives ($n = 15$)

Primary Motive	Frequency
I am interested in developing my teaching	13
My manager requested me to enroll	1
I will add these studies to my doctoral studies	3
Other reason	5

*Participants can answer more than once

Development of teaching skills would be the primary motive of academic staff to study pedagogical training online. Some participants also stated other reasons for registering to the online course, such as that the course may be useful for developing all kinds of research collaboration, professional development and skill updating, including the pedagogical training to their doctoral studies, wanting to complete the required 60 credits for teaching qualification, and developing a new university course.

After completing the online course, the participants filled up an open-ended questionnaire stating their learning goal and main motivation to complete the course. After the qualitative content analysis of the questionnaires, four themes about what motivates academic staff to register and complete an online pedagogical training course emerged: 1) Professional

development, 2) Building connections, 3) Learning from others, and 4) Interest in topic (see Table 4).

Table 4. Motivating factors and Learning goals of Course completers

Motivating Factor	Frequency	Example from Data
Professional Development	9	“I expect to use this knowledge in the development of my teaching material and in actual class teaching as well.”
Building Connections	13	“I want to consciously expand my network using this course.”
Learning from others	4	“From my course mates, I wanted to both share my experiences and learn from theirs.”
Interest in topic	5	“Utilizing working life knowledge in teaching has been on my mind for a long time, therefore I wanted to learn about the instructions on how to do that in this course.”

The motivating factor to continue with the course that most participants mentioned was Building Connections. Some participants said:

This course got me thinking about all of the connections I have made in a meaningful way and to make decisions about when and how to re-connect with them. (Participant #3)

First, what I wanted to learn, relearn and perhaps unlearn revolved around the process of establishing contacts that would both be useful, this time not only for me but for students and perhaps for future research collaboration. (Participant #13)

I wanted to learn about routes and both written and unwritten rules for establishing working life contacts. (Participant #9)

The second motivating factor in studying university pedagogy in an online environment is professional development. Some participants mentioned that they would use the knowledge they gain in their teaching and continuous work (Participant #3). An example of one participant motivated to use this online course for professional development said:

I want to learn more about how to create and maintain work life contacts, get new ideas and insights on how to use them for the benefit of the students and teaching. (Participant #15)

Other statements include:

And I hope to be able to use these in my own (future) teaching. (Participant #12)

I hope to use this knowledge to develop my teaching. (Participant #3)

Genuine interest in a topic can be a major source of motivation in completing an online course.

One participant recalls:

Working life knowledge in teaching has long been in my mind, therefore I wanted to learn the instructions how to do that from this course. (Participant#2)

Other participants said:

A course about Creating and utilizing working life skills is an idea I have thought about for a long time. Once I heard about it, I felt it was a confirmation that this is a great idea. (Participant #13)

I wanted to go and do an industrial visit and see what kind of problems exist in industry and how is the work life different from academia. (Participant #7)

Another aspect of an online course that can be motivating is learning from others:

Third, I also wanted to learn from other scholars the theories, concepts and how they perceived the creation of work life contacts. (Participant #13)

It was interesting to hear about the experience of other participants. (Participant #6)

to get to know how other people do it via their experience. (Participant #11)

Academic staff's motivation to study in an online pedagogical course comes from wanting to establish connections to improve students learning experience, to develop their teaching even further, and for possible future collaboration. An online course that is relevant and interesting to academic staff can lead them to be motivated and an opportunity to interact and learn from colleagues and other participants can encourage them to pursue pedagogical studies online.

4.2 What kind of experiences do academic staff report to have in online pedagogical training?

I examined participants' experiences via their ratings of goals being met, course satisfaction, and how motivated they were during the individual study period and group study period (Table 5). Each was on a Likert scale of 1-5 and they further explained the reason behind their ratings.

The participants also explained how they maintained their motivation to continue and complete the course. To go deeper into understanding of the motivation of academics to complete an online course, content analysis was also done in the open-ended questionnaire answers.

Table 5. Participants’ responses to Likert scale ratings for motivation, goals, and course satisfaction. (n = 15)

	1 Lowest	2	3	4	5 Highest
Motivation in Individual Study Phase	0	0	4	3	8
Motivation in Group Study Phase	0	0	0	7	8
Goals being achieved in the course	0	0	2	6	7
Course Satisfaction	0	0	4	3	8

The participants reported the highest motivation in the group study phase. After a content analysis of their reported reasons, three themes emerged. 1) Learning with and from others, 2) External Support, and 3) Interest, personal meaning and value (see Table 6).

Table 6. Motivating factors in the group study phase

Motivating Factor	Frequency	Example from Data
Learning with and from others	8	“It was interesting to read and hear the experiences of peers from different fields with different interests yet all sharing the same course objective”
External Support	4	“I remembered by deadline and when I received the e mail from coordinator someday before the deadline, I acted upon on it.”
Interest, personal meaning and value	4	“This was the most interesting part of the course for me. I was really excited to visit a new workplace and I was able to plan the trip and learn a lot from the trip.”

Learning from others was a motivating factor for this phase of the course. Participants said:

I am motivated to see what other persons have done in their studies in this course and try to learn from their experiences and share my experience with them. This is one way to get more out of this course. (Participant#2)

It was interesting to read and hear about other participants' visits. (Participant #12)

This part of the course was very helpful. I really enjoyed reading my groupmates' report. This comparison not only gave me new ideas but also showed me that my interview was well done, different, but well done. (Participant #3)

It was interesting to read and hear the experiences of peers from different fields with different interests yet all sharing the same course objective. (Participant #15)

Both external support and internal value is needed as evident from the academics' responses. Some said:

Of course, in the future I plan meetings and trips, I will remember this course. (Participant #6)

My group member is my colleague at the department, so it is easy to keep communications and common goals. (Participant #3)

During the individual study phase, deadline reminders and clear instructions gave the participants motivation to continue. After a content analysis of their reported reasons, four themes emerged: 1) Flexibility of the Course, 2) Building Connections, 3) External Support, and 4) Interest in the topic (see Table 7).

Table 7. Motivating factors in the individual learning phase

Motivating Factor	Frequency	Example from Data
Flexibility of the Course	4	"I like the flexibility of the online course, so I keep my own pace"
Building Connections	4	"I tried to make the working life contact and do the work very early. It was easy to be motivated during this portion because I was excited to speak with the contact."

External Support	6	“Periodic e-mail reminding about the deadline was also important especially finding the right link right there.”
Interest in the topic	4	“Utilizing working life knowledge in teaching has been in my mind for a long time, therefore I wanted to learn the instructions on how to do that in this course.”

Aside from deadlines, external support also came in the form of clear instructions, credit accumulation and using it as part of their work. Interest in topic, developing teaching, and flexibility of working schedule was also evident in the participants’ responses. Some examples were:

Part of the motivation came from the excitement before and after the visit. Additionally, the idea that this can be used as a case study, so I needed to write things down kept me moving. (Participant#13)

Well to keep the motivation was easy, the course has really clear plan. (Participant #10)

The set deadline was pushing me to study. (Participant #11)

Realistically, I wanted to get the course credit for assessment purposes. Also, I found the course topic interesting. (Participant #5)

The participants were generally satisfied with the course and all have mentioned that their goals were achieved. Building connections, professional development and learning from other academic staff from different universities and backgrounds were the mentioned reasons. Positive experience of the course was influenced by clear instructions and good content. Some technical difficulties might have influenced satisfaction.

I felt, it was a great course and I had a chance to hear from people with very different backgrounds, other than that there were some minor technical glitches on the video conferencing software, it works on Mac, but not on Linux. (Participant #7)

The course was practical. It required getting out of one's comfort zone and actually meeting business people at their premises and adding one more contact to a portfolio of health-service industry connections. (Participant #13)

I connected with a former colleague that I would otherwise not have contacted. I always thought of these as personal contacts, for the purpose of future career possibilities. I had not previously thought of using these contacts to strengthen the content and goals of my courses. (Participant #3)

In these data excerpts, the participants enjoyed connecting with colleagues, getting out of their comfort zone, and learning from other academic staff from different backgrounds. Other participants were happy to achieve all the goals and objectives of the course, this is what they said:

I felt, I was able to achieve the goals laid out in the course, I was able to contact a senior researcher in industry and schedule a visit for myself. I had a great visit and finally I was able to present and share my experiences with fellow colleagues and people who attended the course. (Participant #7)

The instructions are very clear and easy to follow. Each step in this course has been well planned and I have been well informed what and how to do at each step. (Participant #2)

Video content was good, contact with a company was also a good practice for me, final discussion with other course participants at the end was interesting and instructive. (Participant #15)

This data shows that the course content was relevant to the participants and that the experiences they had from the course was practical and useful.

Academic staff can have a positive online pedagogical training experience when they are able to learn with and from other colleagues from different departments and universities. This was the main motivating factor during the group study phase. External support during the individual study phase was most helpful in sustaining motivation. External support came from regular email reminders of deadlines, of having clear instructions in the Learning Management System, even reminders from their peers about the upcoming deadline helped them continue and complete the online course. These can motivate academic staff to continue and complete online training. Finally, course satisfaction comes from the relevance of the online training to their own teaching and professional development. Even with a few difficulties on scheduling with a work-life contact and with software, academic staff mentioned that they were able to continue and complete the course tasks well achieving the goals they set in the beginning.

4.3 What is the quality of academic staff’s learning during online interactions in pedagogical training?

The analysis of the video data of two group meetings revealed a high quality of learning wherein most of the interactions were associated with knowledge building. Table 6 shows the frequency of occurrences for each discourse move and percentage.

Table 6. Coding categories, frequencies, and percentage.

Category	GROUP 1 Frequencies	GROUP 2 Frequencies	Percentage of total discourse moves
HIGH QUALITY LEARNING (<i>Associated with Knowledge Building</i>)			
Questioning	7	29	34.29%
Proposing	3	2	4.76%
Elaborating Proposals	4	3	6.67%
Negotiating	0	2	1.90%
Explaining Thinking	7	16	21.90%
TOTAL	21	52	69.52%
LOW QUALITY LEARNING (<i>Not Associated with Knowledge Building</i>)			
Agreeing	8	13	20%
Describing	1	10	10.48%
TOTAL	9	23	30.48%

The analysis shows that most of the discussions and discourse moves were associated with Knowledge Building (69.52%). Asking questions and explaining thinking were noted the most during the web meetings. Discourse moves associated with knowledge building show high quality learning. Therefore, the participants from this online pedagogical training course had high quality interactions and learning.

To illustrate the multiple types of discourse moves, I next present the excerpts from two group discussions.

4.3.1 Group discussion 1

The group discussion 1, which I present next is situated in the online meeting where the participants discussed about meeting the needs of the course and finding a guest lecturer to help

the students link theory with practice. Prior to the excerpt, Gabrielle just finished presenting her working life visit to the group. In this excerpt Gabrielle answers questions from her group mates and reflects on her teaching practice. This also leads another group member James, to reflect on his own course and teaching. Note that I also indicate the code for each turn. (See Method section, Table 2 for definitions and examples of coding categories)

Sophie: So you had also asked the person you met to be a lecturer in some of the courses, how are you going to ensure that the lecture is connected to your other lectures? (Questioning)

Gabrielle: That's a good question because I quickly realized that I would have to do some restructuring of my lectures, because I tend to teach the kind of what we call this dogmatic legal preparation, you know, they start memorizing the law, and memorizing code, but what I would have to do to prepare them for her lecture, to get the most out of her lectures is change the course a little bit actually so that they are prepared to do this sort of practical work within the course that I teach. Because I don't teach practical lessons, but it's really important, so for next year when I teach this course, I will do a lot of restructuring so that when she comes in and she talks about taking this textbook knowledge from the classroom into the workplace, they will have some frame of reference. But before, and you are absolutely right, before that was not how the course was even structured. (Explaining Thinking)

Sophie: Mmmhmm (Agreeing)

Tina: Would you recommend this kind of visit to your colleagues or some friends? (Proposing)

Gabrielle: Yeah, I would and more importantly I would recommend this course because I like the way that it kind of gave me an opportunity, because the one thing that I'm very careful with, I think I'm very good at networking. I think the way I utilize the networking in the past was different, but I'm quite good at networking. The other thing I think I'm good at is not over exhausting my networks and constantly contacting them and kind of annoying them before some practical use before their help can come up, so I think what was good about this course is really structuring why I was approaching her and real clear framework for what I had to say to her and it wasn't wasting her time, it wasn't just I'm just reaching out to you to make sure you're still a hot connection that I can plug into later, it actually had structure to it and meaning to it, so I think that was quite important. I would recommend doing it, I would recommend that other people do it, but it would have to come with that sort of preparation. (Elaborating Proposals)

Tina: How about James, do you have some questions? (Questioning)

As seen above, the excerpt starts with Sophie posing a question about a guest lecturer meeting the needs of the course. Gabrielle responds by going deeper to explain her thinking and thinking aloud even further about what she can do better in her class in the future. Then, Tina proposes a question about recommending a working-life visit and Gabrielle elaborates on the proposition. The discussion continues as follows:

James: I'm thinking about more in general lines that if we want to steer the guest lecturer towards some topic, or perhaps that if the guest lecturer doesn't have the same idea on the course with the teacher, then how this would affect it, but I think in this case it's a non-applicable issue, but as I understood you knew her quite well beforehand and you sort of have the same idea or the ideology on how these things are taught, so in this sense it was sort of a good contact and will be a safe selection as a guest lecturer so to speak. Did I understand this correctly? (Questioning)

Gabrielle: Yeah you did, but actually, because we were able to talk and the one consensus we came to, the one area she felt her education was kind of lacking, was in the fact that we never practiced, when we studied, how to prepare legal reports. And she does this everyday. And so she said that that's what she would like to take the students through actually, a real world kind of legal reporting exercise, so like I said, that's what I would like to change in my course. I would have to change my course to reflect or prepare the students. Actual examples of her reporting. (Explaining thinking)

James: Well, that's actually a very good thing because although your results were more practical thing that the university keeps missing, mine was more of a motivational speaker. I think it was targeted towards more, my guest lecturer was more about the first year students and then perhaps internship later on but yours has a real practical thing that she wants to talk about because it was a thing that needs to be addressed when you are working in real life. (Explaining thinking)

Above, James asks a follow up question about the guest lecturer and allows Gabrielle to explain thinking even more and James to reflect on his own course and explain thinking as well. All in all, this excerpt includes examples from five code categories across nine talking turns: questioning, agreeing, proposing, elaborating proposals, and explaining thinking. Many of the group discussions involved questioning and explaining thinking which was more evident than passively agreeing and describing.

4.3.2 Group discussion 2

Group discussion 2 is situated in the online meeting where the participants discussed about needing specialization in a particular field and the skills needed by students to succeed in the

industry. Prior to the excerpt below, Helena presented her working life visit. Answering questions from the members of her group allowed her to reflect and infer meaning from her working life visit, experiences, and state her opinion. This in turn led the other members of her group to reflect on the idea, clarifying the learning experience, and gaining deeper knowledge.

Kelly: Very interesting, you said that you needed a specialization in a particular field, specialization meaning not just fiction and nonfiction, but specifically like biology or something? (Questioning)

Helena: Yeah, well you don't need it, but sometimes it can help because you know um, what could be a good example, for example, forestry. Maybe all of a sudden, they decide to publish a whole series of books on a topic and then they need someone who is specialized in that. So it's kind of something that is important for translators to be thinking about already during their MA studies, that you know, maybe I could specialize in Medical terminology or biology, or (Explaining Thinking)

Kelly: So it's like a minor, not just an English major, you have to have something else? (Questioning)

Helena: Exactly! (Agreeing)

Kelly: So that employers can hire you, or can consider and if you want more opportunities, you need to have a specialization. (Describing)

Helena: Yeah, that's true (Agreeing)

Kelly: Does anyone have other questions? (Questioning)

Valerie: Yes (Agreeing)

In this excerpt, Kelly asks a clarifying question about needing specialization in a particular field in relation to Helena's working-life visit, Helena responds to explain her thinking. Kelly then asks a follow-up question about needing a minor and Helena agrees. The discussion continues with Andrew's question:

Andrew: Yeah, I have one question, Sorry, what did you study? Or what qualifications do you have? I missed it earlier. (Questioning)

Helena: Yes, I have a Master's degree from the University of Helsinki in the English Philology, and at the moment I am a PhD student at the University of Turku. That's why I'm taking this course. (Describing)

Andrew: Okay, okay, thank you. (Agreeing)

Kelly: Valerie you have a question? (Questioning)

Valerie: A question, yes, you mentioned that, or it was in the slide that, that it will be required to have a Master's of Arts degree, is that something that's required by the company or is it like in general because if you think like, especially for more rare languages, if you're a native speaker for example of two languages, would those be eligible for this kind of job? (Questioning)

Helena: Yes, no, it's not a requirement but I kind of, was a little bit unclear probably on that, obviously to be an official translator, you do need the degree, but like say, as I mentioned also at the company for example, they do hire translators to do translation samples, so if you know, or if your skills were to be really good in a rare language, or really any language, then yeah, definitely. I mean, they would consider that as well. But I must add, this has nothing to do with the actual presentation, it's kind of more personal opinion and experience. Even if you're a native speaker of a language, it doesn't necessarily make you a good translator. (Explaining Thinking, Proposing)

Valerie: Of course not, but I think that's still, coming back to your question about specialty, like if you have studied a completely other, like in science or technology, or something, then I think you would have an advantage as a translator (Negotiating)

Helena: Yeah, At least for like, I would say non-fiction, because then again for fiction, you kind of need to be able to sort of, um, I feel, The way I feel about fiction translations is that they're kind of like artworks of their own, (Elaborating Proposals)

Valerie: Yeah, that's different (Agreeing)

Kelly: Yes, it's more creative (Describing)

Helena: You can't just change the language, you kind of need to change a lot of other things in a way and it becomes its own artwork, so that's kind of what I meant by it's not enough to have those. But yeah, you're right, for them to kind of be able to use you, the degree is not a requirement. What you can do is what counts. (Elaborating Proposals)

Valerie: It's good of course that the degrees are appreciated. (Explaining Thinking)

Helena: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Definitely (Agreeing)

Kelly: Yes. I think you have to have some sort of creativity also, if it's fiction, you have to have read a lot of books, or the style, rather than a degree or specialization. But that's interesting. Any other questions? (Explaining Thinking, Questioning)

Above, Andrew asks a simple question about background studies which Helena describes. Then, Valerie, having reflected on the previous question and presentation asks a question about

needing a Master's degree to work in the profession which brings both Kelly and Helena to describe and explain thinking and end with an agreement. Bellow, Ella's questions opens up a further discussion:

Ella: Just a comment, I think the tips for job seeking were very good and concrete, and it seems like this field is really, well, highly competitive but also interesting to work in. I was wondering how, what do you think, how could a student stand out among other applicants, when applying to this kind of job? (Questioning)

Helena: I think that kind of your qualifications are not enough for you to stand out, in addition to that, I think you need to have the right attitude and you have to have really good interaction skills and communication skills. And I think this is something that regardless of the field, if it's arts, if it's science, whatever, I think we, at university, should kind of also prepare our students a bit more, for like when we are talking about working life, it's a lot to do with how you communicate with people, how you come across, because at least in the field of languages, you know, most of our students are women who got the great ten for everything at school and they are very studious and they read a lot, but they might not be very good with people. But once you actually go out there, whether you become a teacher, or if you are hired at a publishing house or wherever training, you need to be outgoing or learn to be outgoing. I don't think that you need to be an extrovert to be able to get hired, but you need to learn certain skills. And I think universities need to do a lot in that department in Finland. It's somehow been kind of disregarded, but I think it's increasing in importance all the time. (Proposing, Elaborating Proposals)

As seen above, Ella poses a question about what can benefit their students more which brings Helena to deeply think, propose and elaborate on her proposal. This excerpt includes examples from all code categories across twenty-four talking turns and clearly shows how the learning was made visible through interaction and elaboration. Again, many of the coded discourse moves were questioning and explaining thinking. Deeper learning was achieved when the participants reflected on the ideas and elaborated on them even further. Most of the coded discourse moves were associated with Knowledge Building.

To conclude, the academic staff that participated in this online training were motivated to communicate and learn from other colleagues, this led them to ask more questions, improve ideas, and deepen their knowledge. It could also be observed that this academic staff were, at least based on their reported thinking more student-centered. They were discussing and sharing ideas to find more ways to support their students learning, knowledge, and experiences. This

led them to question their thinking and their current practices and have deeper discussions. With this high level of learning, academic staff benefitted more from this training and were encouraged to continue developing their teaching practice further to benefit not only their professional development, but also their students learning.

5 Evaluation of the research and its limitations

5.1 Reliability of the study

Patton (1999) states that to enhance the quality and credibility of a research, triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data can strengthen its reliability. The current research used both quantitative and qualitative measures to describe and clarify academic staff's experiences. Combining both the qualitative and quantitative data, the study explained complimentary aspects of the same phenomenon. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) suggest ways to validate qualitative data and my research meets both internal and external validity in the triangulation of the data as it strengthens the credibility of the conclusions drawn. Hunter and Brewer (2003) state that reliability "refers to the degree to which a measurement can be replicated" (p. 581). With regards to this study, the same assessment and measurement was used with a previously established research by Popp and Goldman (2016) in measuring the quality of learning during online interactions, therefore increasing its reliability.

The five general standards for validity in educational research was described by Eisenhart and Howe (1992), the first two standards were "The fit between research questions, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques" (p. 657) and "The effective application of specific data collection and analysis techniques" (p. 658). I chose to analyze online pedagogical training to provide a rich description of the experiences of the participants. The data analysis sought to answer each research question, thus the data that was collected gave sufficient information to answer these questions. The third standard was "Alertness to and Coherence of Prior Knowledge" (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992, p. 659). Prior knowledge on Motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), online learning, and Knowledge Building Theory (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2003) supported this research.

The fourth standard for validity in educational research according to Eisenhart and Howe (1992), is the value constraints, both external and internal. It is important to motivate academic staff to partake in online pedagogical training to enhance the quality of higher education teaching and learning (Biggs, 2001). It is also important to understand participants' experiences in online training. External value of this current research informs and improves educational practice. The results of this research can inform both online course developers to design unique environments that help learners accomplish their goals and learners to better understand what motivates them to learn, and thus take effective actions to pursue their goals (Barak, Watted, &

Haick, 2016). Internal validity refers to research ethics and the current research follows the ethical principles stated in the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Ethics (2009) which I further explain in the next section. The fifth standard to ensure validity in educational research is “comprehensiveness” (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992 p. 662). Each phase of analysis was explained thoroughly with both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the data. Consent forms were given, and the research was explained to all the participants. The aim of the study was to understand academic staff’s motivation, experience, and quality of learning interactions in an online pedagogical course, and each phase of analysis and findings were explained.

Lewis and Ritchie (2003) list five questions to ensure reliability and appropriate design and conduct of the research. The first question is “Was the sample design/ selection without bias, symbolically representative of the target population, comprehensive of all known constituencies; was there any known feature of non-response or attrition within the sample?” (p. 272) I collected my data in an online pedagogical training and from the academic staff who completed the course. The data was therefore naturally occurring, rather than simply collected for the purposes of this study. The second question is “Was the fieldwork carried out consistently, did it allow respondents sufficient opportunities to cover relevant ground, to portray their experiences?” (p. 272) The research covered the entire module online from the registration, during the module, and after the course had completed. From this viewpoint, the participants’ responses were examined in various time points throughout the study, obtaining a holistic view of their experiences.

The third question is, “Was the analysis carried out systematically and comprehensively, were classifications, typologies confirmed by multiple assessment?” (p. 272) The data in this study was analyzed systematically in multiple phases to answer each research question comprehensively. Using both, qualitative and quantitative methods also provided a more in-depth insight into the examined phenomena. The fourth question is “Is the interpretation well supported by evidence?” (p. 272) In this study, detailed excerpts from the data were provided after each phase of the analysis to support answering each research question. Lastly, the fifth question is “Did the design/ conduct allow equal opportunity for all perspectives to be identified or were there features that led to selective, or missing, coverage?” (p. 272) The data was analyzed to answer each research question. In the third research question, to find out the quality of learning through the interactions, the data was analyzed with a specific framework in mind. Various perspectives within that framework were taken into account thus, all perspectives of the participants were identified.

5.2 Research ethics

This research follows the ethical principles from the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2009; 2012). The principles in the humanities and social behavioral sciences involve respecting the autonomy of research subjects such as avoiding harm, insuring privacy, and data protection. Participation in this study was voluntary. An informed written consent was obtained from the participants, who could revoke it at any time during the online course (see APPENDIX 1). All participants gave their consent to use their written outputs. Three participants did not give their consent to be included in the web meeting, thus those groups were not included in the analysis of the video data. Written information in the consent form included the researcher's contact information, the research topic, the method of collecting data, the purpose for which data would be collected, and the voluntary nature of participation was provided to the participants (Finnish Advisory Board on Research Ethics, 2009, p. 7). In addition to the written information, I also mentioned the research during the web meetings. The data was collected as part of the online course, which means that it did not involve additional effort from the participants. The data collected were only such that were needed for the analysis and report of the research. For the data analysis phase, participant's names were replaced with numbers and changed to ensure anonymity and protection of privacy. Video data was handled with care to assure that no one else, but the researcher, i.e. myself has the access to it.

5.3 Limitations of the study

While this study provided insight into academic staff's motivation, positive experience and quality of learning interactions in online pedagogical training, it is not without its limitations. The small sample size would be one critique to this research. However, Polkinghorne (2015) states that the trustworthiness of qualitative research is related to the selection of the sources that give a deeper understanding of the experience investigated. The holistic account of the online participants in this research gave depth and the experiences of the participants were described in each phase of the analysis. Thus, even if it is a small sample size, meaningfulness and insight into the phenomenon is rich. If I would have had a chance to compare my current results with the data from the participants that dropped out, the research could have further shed light on the issue of motivation of academic staff in online learning.

Another limitation that needs to be considered is that the data collected about the participants' motivation during the individual and group study phases were collected in the open-ended

questionnaire after the course finished. The participants had to rely on their memory in order to rate their experiences. The results could have been more accurate had the participants done the rating following a particular experience. For example, during the individual study period or right after submitting the reflection paper in the middle of the module, participants can reflect right away how they perceive the course and how motivated they were. However, the participants were able to reflect on their experience and explain well by discussing their motivation rating further in the questionnaire, thus being suitable to answer what I sought to investigate. A feature could be added in the online platform to capture motivations in real time such as a pop-up button to rate and audio recording of think aloud reflections.

Finally, only two out of the five group discussions were analyzed, which is another limitation of the study. Although majority of the participants gave their consent to be recorded and analyzed, one person in each of these groups gave the consent to allow only the use of their written answers but have not consented to be included in the analysis of the video. In a collaborative discussion, one person's input may affect the quality of interactions of the entire group and it would have been difficult to use the group's data without the data produced by those participants who did not give their consent. Thus, I decided to include in the analysis only those groups where the entire data of their meetings could be used. The in-depth analysis of the two videos, however, shows the quality of the interactions and provides the answers to the research questions.

6 Discussion and conclusion

In this research, I sought to understand academic staff's motivation, experience, and quality of learning interactions in an online pedagogical training course. The results showed that academic staff - university teachers, lecturers, and doctoral students were motivated by professional development, building connections, interest in topic, and learning from others. Their motivation was sustained during the course due to flexibility of the module, clear deadlines and instructions, relevance of online training, and the social aspect of interacting with others. Participants were overall satisfied with the course and their goals were achieved, contributing to their teaching practices and benefiting their students. The analysis of the video data revealed that it is possible to achieve high quality learning interactions in online pedagogical training. Thus, it can then be concluded that motivation to study online can lead to high quality learning interactions. In the following sections, I discuss the results in a wider perspective connecting them with previous studies on pedagogical training, motivation and learning.

6.1 Academic staff's motivation to study in an online pedagogical training course.

Four factors were evident in the initial and sustaining motivation of successful course completers. The first was *professional development*. The successful course completers were strongly motivated to improve their teaching practice. This shows a strong internal desire to improve. According to Chametzky (2014), motivation and engagement are related in online learning, thus if the material of the course is relevant and personally meaningful to the academic staff's work, their engagement and motivation will increase. Online professional development allows academics to readily access information they need and be more willing to implement best practices in their own classrooms. One example is the study by Rientes, Brouwer, and Lygo-Baker (2012), after an online professional development course, they found that academic staff's post-test scores were higher than pre-test scores measuring Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), effectively designing and implementing technology enhanced learning in their classrooms. Lee and Choi (2011) also suggest three strategies to address the high dropout rates among students enrolled in online courses. These are acknowledging students' challenges and potential, developing high-quality courses, and providing supportive service to students' difficulties. Similar to this current research, supporting participants needs and developing relevant courses can contribute to learner success in online environments.

The second factor for initial and sustaining motivation was *building connections*. In this particular online pedagogical training course, participants were driven by networking, creating useful contacts in working life, and to benefit their students' experiences through these connections. Kiscilzec and Schneider (2015) found that even if the online learning experience was designed primarily for individuals, a substantial number of learners take online courses for social reasons. Barak et al. (2015) also characterized online course completers according to their learning motivation and found that one characteristic was the networkers. These were "participants who wish to be a part of a community of people with similar interest" (Barak et al., 2015 p. 56). The academic staff that were driven by this factor were motivated to meet people with similar expertise and interests to be able to share ideas, collaborate, and have future partnerships such as being a guest lecturer in their own courses. Perry and Pilati (2011) also found that many of the students dissatisfied with online learning stated a lack of community as a main reason. Thus, it will be beneficial for an online pedagogical course to provide opportunities to connect people and form communities of practice which define many possibilities for learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The third factor was *interest in the topic*. This shows intrinsic motivation and willingness to learn. According to Ryan and Deci (2001), intrinsic motivation exists when an activity is enjoyable and promotes feelings of fulfillment and competence, this results in high quality learning and creativity. With regards to this online course, academic staff were intrinsically motivated to create meaningful working life contacts which contributed to completing the course. Goolnik (2006) notes that successful professional development programs are those that acknowledge academic staff's interests. A study by Kunter et al. (2008) revealed that mathematics teachers that are interested in developing their teaching showed higher quality instructional behavior than teachers interested solely on the subject matter. Finding ways to enhance interest in pedagogical training will only be beneficial for higher education staff, students, and institutions.

The last factor that academic staff mentioned motivated them to complete the online course was *learning from others*. Sogunro (2015) stated that the most effective way to teach adults in higher education is when it is interactive. Online learning can feel isolating at times but when learners have opportunities to interact and listen to other people going through the same things they are going through; it motivates them to keep going. Chametzky (2014) also pointed out that interacting with peers allow learners to develop deeper learning, which is an "acquisition of in-depth, meaningful learning, built into pre-existing knowledge" (p. 815). This result aligns with

what Rydbrink (2017) states that a disadvantage to online learning is a feeling of isolation from the students' point of view. Thus, social groups or communities within the online environment acts as an incentive to motivate the students. McMillan, McConnell, and O'Sullivan (2016) also found the importance of providing empowering communities of practice in continuing professional development of teachers. A community of practice can then lead to a sense of ownership among academic staff, both to the online course and their own continuing professional development (Hull, 2015). The results of this current study show that understanding the motivations of the learners can contribute to improving online pedagogical training. If professional development online courses can be related to some aspect of the participants lives, and they also learn with other colleagues, motivation will increase.

6.2 Academic staff's experiences in online pedagogical training.

Academic staff that participated and completed the online pedagogical training were satisfied with the course and mentioned that they achieved the goals that they set. Motivational factors during the individual and group study periods were also mentioned. An interesting finding was that during the beginning of the course, in the individual study phase, majority of the participants highly benefitted from external support. This means that course instructors and developers can maintain academic staff's motivation by simply giving email reminders and clear prompts. Gregori, Martínez, and Moyano-Fernández (2018) also suggest sending messages, reminders through emails, and a virtual classroom as an effective way to motivate students. These extrinsic forms of motivation have an important role in encouraging academic staff to participate in professional development opportunities (Leibowitz, 2016). Johnson, Stewart, and Bachman (2015) also found that online extrinsic motivation predicted the number of online courses students completed. This is an important finding as more than internal factors; external support can influence both initiation and persistence in online education.

Academic staff were also motivated by interest and personal meaning. In agreement with prior research (e.g. Chametzky, 2014; Lee & Choi, 2011; Park & Choi, 2009), the results suggest that learners' satisfaction and relevance of the online course to their job, prior knowledge and experiences are major factors in motivation and persistence. Perceived relevance of an online course is one of the best predictors of motivation and course satisfaction according to Kim and Frick (2011). Wlodkowski (2003) also mentions that relevance is what leads to interest, "the emotional nutrient for a positive attitude toward learning" (p. 43).

Kizilcec and Schneider (2015) suggest that understanding online course motivations can provide a lens for understanding learner behavior, which in turn can inform the design of online learning environments. This is especially useful for achieving the goals defined by both the learners and the instructor. Kizilcec and Schneider (2015) also mention that across all motivators for online learning, there are two needs that stand out: the need for well-organized and accessible course content and the need for social engagement. Banegas and Busleimán (2014) however, had a different result in their research on motivating factors for online language teacher education in southern Argentina. They found that participants experienced challenges in collaborative learning and preferred more individual activities. That however was influenced by a lack of webtools which facilitate social engagement for learning and the characteristics of the learners who preferred to work on their own time.

It is important to understand the motivations of the online learners therefore in this current study, academic staff were motivated to network and engage in discussion which in turn created a more meaningful collaborative learning experience. By understanding the characteristics of learners in an online environment, we can ensure that their experience will be successful. The findings of this study show that academic staff were motivated by set deadlines, clear instructions, flexible working time, and they were motivated by the fact that they would be sharing their experiences with other academic staff and learning from the experiences of others.

A notable finding was that the academic staff genuinely wanted to support their students and give them good experiences. This, according to Biggs (2001) would assure and enhance the quality of teaching and learning in universities. This type of quality transforms students' perceptions as they apply their knowledge to real world problems, and it also transforms teachers' conceptions of their role as a teacher (Biggs, 2001). Even beyond professional development, online pedagogical training can give a deeper meaning to why these academic staff do what they do.

6.3 Academic staff's quality of learning during online interactions in pedagogical training.

The content analysis of the learning quality revealed that motivation to study online can lead to quality interactions when participants are encouraged to question, propose, elaborate, negotiate, and explain thinking. These led to more productive discussion and collaborative interactions. In order to ensure high quality of learning in online pedagogical training courses, participants

need to be able to have good quality discussions and not merely agreeing or describing. Merely interacting is not always effective. Through elaboration, arguments, question asking, use of information, and explanations, the participants were able to engage in a collaborative interaction and construct a deeper understanding of the topic (Fu et al., 2016).

According to Dillenbourg and Hong (2007), “learning outcomes are related to the emergence of elaborated explanations, the negotiation of meanings, the quality of argumentation structures, and the mutual regulation of cognitive processes” (p. 6). Thus, it can be beneficial to guide learners’ interactions through scripts which prompt and model sequence of discussion (Weinberger et al., 2003). It is also important to note that knowledge building is about improving ideas, not about winning arguments (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2003). Academic staff’s quality of learning can be enhanced through continuous discussion and improvement of ideas. Therefore, it is important to design courses which enable the learners to question and voice out their opinions. Based on previous research and the results of my study, I created a framework which can support both learners and course developers to sustain motivation and quality in online learning (See Figure 2).

Sustaining Motivation and Quality in Online Learning

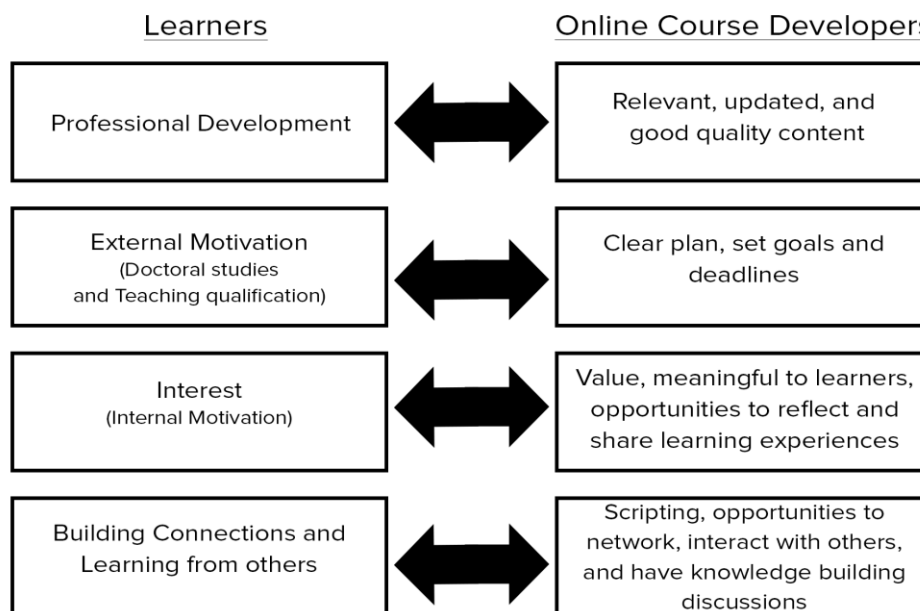


Figure 2. Framework for sustaining motivation and quality in online learning

The four motivational factors of academic staff can be further enhanced by online course developers to contribute to successful learning experiences. Since academic staff in pedagogical training are highly motivated by professional development, this means that online course developers should ensure that the materials are relevant to the learners. Learners also notice the quality of the content and if it is up to date. This helps the learners keep their interest and internal motivation. Another way to sustain motivation and quality in online learning is providing a clear plan, goal setting and deadlines. Messages from the instructors and email reminders of deadlines are also proven ways to sustain motivation of academic staff in online pedagogical training. Knowing the needs of the learners is also important. Online course developers can encourage learners both externally and internally by showing how the content would be meaningful to them. Giving learners opportunities to reflect and share their learning experiences has also been beneficial for them, as seen in this study. Minor external rewards like credits and adding qualifications can help encourage them to pursue and complete online studies.

Lastly, the results of this research clearly show that learning from others and building connections has been the factor that motivated the participants the most. Giving learners opportunities to network and interact with colleagues can sustain motivation and help learners pursue their goals. Remmik et al. (2011) also found that pedagogical courses helped reduce academic isolation when academic staff are given opportunities to contemplate and discuss their teaching with colleagues. This can then create communities of practice and can be meaningful for academic staff. Moreover, scripting the discussions can be even more beneficial for deeper learning to occur. Fischer (2018) also mentions that it is important to include support that is given through sincere interest, deep care, and trust. Online course developers need to understand their learners to provide optimal online learning environments. With this framework, online pedagogical training can be successful for both learners and developers.

6.4 Implications of the research

High quality online learning environments are now, due to COVID-19 pandemic relevant more than ever before. Online pedagogical training can be an important tool for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in higher education. It can be a source of reflection, to continually review and improve current practice and if done well, can encourage academic staff to continuously improve to benefit their students. As seen in this research, motivation can translate to higher quality online interactions. With this knowledge, it can be applied to other forms of

online training and professional development; motivating learners and supporting their online learning experiences. Course developers can make sure that the material is clearly stated and relevant for the learners. The findings of my study can also extend to writing better scripts to guide online interactions and that the Learning Management systems, which deliver and manage instructional online content are user friendly and designed well, thus resulting in more successful online courses.

One relevant finding of my study is that at the beginning of the online course, the academic staff were motivated by external support. To lessen dropouts, educators and online course providers can support their learners through email reminders and having clearly defined objectives. Another relevant finding is that academic staff are motivated by networking and the chance to learn with not only their colleagues but with other academic staff in different departments and different universities. Providing opportunities to network, having discussions, learning from colleagues, and forming communities of practice can help academic staff to sustain their motivation to complete online courses.

Students give better feedback to their teachers that attend professional development training courses (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004). Pedagogical training positively affects how students learn and positively influences attitudes of teachers in their own teaching. Lutovac, Kaasila, Komulainen, and Maikkola (2015) suggest that pedagogical training can provide meaningful guidance to coping with student feedback and motivate them to develop their teaching even further. Thus, improving the experience of academic staff in pedagogical training, including training provided online, will not only be beneficial to the teachers, but to the students and the university.

6.5 Future Research

Additional research is needed to gain more comprehensive understanding of the factors that motivate or demotivate participants in online pedagogical training. While the information gained from the fifteen course completers was valuable, further studies are required to find out more sustaining motivational factors with more participants and how their students benefit from their instructors attending such training. A follow up study could provide an insight into the effect this pedagogical training had on the students of these academic staff, and how much it benefited their practice. It would be interesting to see how these connections and pedagogical training have developed these academic staff to be more student-centered and effectively teach

and support the learning of their students. Possibly comparing traditional pedagogical training with an online one within the same design as in this study is another potential research topic. Further questions arise: How academic staff that are experts in their fields continue to partake in online pedagogical training? What else can online learners do to be able to succeed in online learning environments? Further research can be done to find out more ways to be a successful online learner as an academic.

Another future research I would like to explore is user interfaces in online Learning Management systems and enhancing the online learning experience. These are infrastructures and platforms where the instructional materials are delivered and managed. It can also provide support in the learning process. A good design can allow the learners to focus more on the learning process rather than spend time figuring out how things work in the system. Online pedagogical training will gain a more positive impact with further enhancements of the learning environment adding to continuous professional development and life-long learning.

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Appendix 1



1(1)

Motivating Factors for Participation in Online University Pedagogical Training

Katherine Tingzon is a Learning & Educational Technology student at University of Oulu and is conducting research for her Master's thesis. Supervisors of the research are Essi Vuopala and Sonja Lutovac.

This research will contribute to our understanding of the motivating factors of University teachers in an online learning environment. It also aims to provide evidence of self-regulation processes in online pedagogical training and for future implications for life-long learning.

Would you like to participate in this research?

If so, your outputs from the Creating & Utilizing Working Life Contacts course will be studied and the web meetings will be recorded. It does not require any additional time on your side.

Your participation in the study is voluntary and will be kept confidential. Even though the group discussions will be recorded, your personal information or other details will not be disclosed at any point of the study to anyone else.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me at katherine.tingzon@oulu.fi

Consent for Participation in Research "Motivating Factors"

I have read and understood the information about the research and have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

I agree to take part in the research. Taking part in the research includes being recorded in web the meeting.

I consent to my words/writings produced in CUWLC-module to being used for research purposes. I understand my personal details will not be revealed to people outside the research.

I allow to be contacted for further research purposes. If so, please provide your email address.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name

2. Title/ Position & Department/ Unit (e.g. Doctoral Student, Astronomy)

3. Years of Teaching

- 0-2 years
 3-5 years
 6-10 years
 More than 10 years

4. What did you want to learn from this course? Where did you expect to use this knowledge?

5. How would you rate your goals being achieved in this course?



Lowest 1 2 3 4 5 Highest

6. Why do you think so?

7. How satisfied are you with this course?



Lowest 1 2 3 4 5 Highest

8. Why?

9. The best feature of the course is?

10. The course can be improved by?

11. Do you have teaching responsibility? What were your reasons for being a teacher?

12. One characteristic of a good teacher is?

13. Rate your motivation in the INDIVIDUAL STUDY PERIOD?



Lowest 1 2 3 4 5 Highest

14. Explain how you worked in this part of the course. How did you maintain your motivation to continue?

15. Rate your motivation in the GROUP STUDY PERIOD?



Lowest 1 2 3 4 5 Highest

16. Explain how you worked in this part of the course. How did you maintain your motivation to finish?

17. How has completing the module contribute to your practice?

18. In the future, I would register to an online course if

Appendix 3

REGISTRATION FORMS

1. Name

2. Student Number

2. Gender

- Male
 Female

3. Mother tongue

4. Title/ Position

5. Department/ Unit

6. I have contract of employment in...

7. Are you appointed to Tenure Track or Lecturer Career System in your university?

- yes
 no

8. Email Address

9. Do you have previous pedagogical studies? What?

10. My primary motive to enroll on this course is:

- I am interested in developing teaching
 My manager requested me to enroll
 I will add these studies to my doctoral studies
 Other

11. Where did you get information about this course?