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Kristin Herman
Old Dominion University, kherm001@odu.edu

Patricia Davidson

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ORIENTATION ONLINE: THE SURPRISING BENEFITS OF VIRTUAL NEW FACULTY ORIENTATION

Kristin Herman[1] & Patricia Davidson[2]

[1]*Old Dominion University;* [2]*West Chester University*

This design case documents the reimagination of new faculty orientation for a mid-sized public university due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. This fully virtual iteration was facilitated during the summer of 2020 and is compared both to previous in-person iterations of new faculty orientation as well as a blended modality version of the orientation program offered in 2021. The redesign is explained using language from Puntedura's (2006) Substitution- Augmentation- Modification- Redefinition (SAMR) model of technology application in distributed learning. Such terminology provided a helpful common vocabulary for a design team pressured to determine which elements of orientation needed to be fully reimagined for successful virtual implementation and where simple substitution would suffice. A description of synchronous elements from the fully virtual orientation as well as artifacts from the asynchronous portions is included. A lack of formal evaluation for the reimagined new faculty orientation space is shared as an element of design failure. The informal evaluation uncovered attendee appreciation of both flexibility and recursiveness, feedback our design team used to combat criticism of a lack of attention during virtual events. The paper concludes with a reflection on the need for transparent communication between event attendees, event designers, and other key invested partners (such as university administration) if the benefits of virtual orientation programming are to be adopted for our institution beyond emergency modalities.

Kristin Herman is the Online and Digital Learning Director for Centennial School District in Warminster, PA, and a doctoral student in the Instructional Design and Technology program at Old Dominion University. She is currently working with K-12 faculty on ways to incorporate opportunities for social-emotional learning competency development in online course design. Her research interests include the ethical responsibility of the instructional design field and the design, implementation, and efficacy of diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings for faculty.

Patricia Davidson is a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN), diabetes care and education specialist (CDCES) and Professor in the Nutrition Department at West Chester University-PA. Clinical positions include in and out-patient diabetes care and education. She is active in the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics on various task forces and serves on the Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialist (ADCES) research and practice committee. She is Fellow of both the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and ADCES. Research centers on technology enhanced diabetes prevention and management, impact of food systems and dietary patterns and pedagogical approaches for enhancing learning environments. She has extensive experience presenting and has authored/co-authored numerous manuscripts published in the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Journal, Nutrition and Clinical Practice, and American Informatics Association Journal.

INTRODUCTION

Design Context

West Chester University (WCU), a mid-sized public university within the Pennsylvania state system, has a robust New Faculty Orientation (NFO) program, run by a large committee of dedicated university faculty interested in service to the institution. This service manifests itself in welcoming new colleagues to WCU culture. Faculty organize, chair, run, and serve on committees designed to make the four-day program a success. This model turns the traditional one-sided view of organizational socialization on its head, choosing to leverage faculty insiders as experts in cultivating programming for their new colleagues.

Each year, new faculty members attend NFO two weeks prior to the start of the fall semester. Orientation attendance

is not compensated, and, as such, is not required, but is strongly encouraged. Most attendees are tenure-track faculty, but each cohort does include non-instructional and adjunct faculty. Faculty assignments are split across the five colleges at WCU: Arts and Humanities, Business and Public Management, Education and Social Work, Health Sciences, and Science and Mathematics. Cohort sizes vary but, on average, contain about 35 individuals.

The NFO committee is larger than each incoming class, typically comprised of about 60 active individuals with robust representation from each college and several university departments. The committee is split among 10 subcommittees which operate systemically and utilize the entire year prior to each orientation cycle to plan and prepare for the incoming cohort. Membership of the NFO committee is dynamic but many members choose to remain part of the committee at large, and their specific subcommittees, for several years in a row. As such, many members of the NFO committee are considered legacy members with several years of comparison data to aid in planning. There are no term limits on service other than the role of the two NFO co-chairs, which is a two-year, rotating position.

Traditionally, NFO is an in-person event that lasts for four consecutive days. Multiple sessions are held throughout the day, totaling about eight-ten hours of orientation time together per day. The first day of orientation centers around the theme "Welcome to Orientation" and includes presentations from Human Resources and Information Services and Technology. The second day of orientation centers around the theme "Welcome to WCU" and includes presentations from the provosts and senior leadership. Additionally, an activity fair is held after the close of formal orientation to introduce new faculty to additional campus resources and groups. The third day of orientation centers around the theme "Professional Life at WCU" and discusses the tenure and promotion process. The fourth and final day of orientation centers around the theme "Teaching Life at WCU" and includes presentations from the Teaching and Learning Center as well as a luncheon with the university president. These sessions are almost exclusively held in two locations on campus and campus groups rotate in to present to faculty (as opposed to faculty rotating around campus to visit presenters.) Breakfast and lunch are provided daily.

Design Opportunity

The key design question guiding this design case was how institutionalized socialization could still benefit organizational newcomers when designed to take place virtually. Author two heard hints from university administration as early as February 2020 that classes for the remainder of the spring semester could be shifting to 100% online delivery in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. As the co-chair of NFO, Author two immediately thought of this event, despite

it being (at that time) half a year in the future. The NFO committee starts planning for each August the September prior, so plans for an in-person orientation were well underway, subcommittees had already formed, and work was in various stages of completion.

Although reaching out almost immediately to the university administration, the provost did not commit to a fully virtual modality for NFO until May. Work normally completed over 11 months of time now had to be reimagined for an event that was less than three months away.

From our perspective, and that of university administration, it was critical that new faculty did not suffer a diminished learning experience due to differences in orientation modality. Relationship and knowledge building that occurs during new faculty orientation is vital to effective organizational socialization. Even though a traditional in-person orientation model would not be possible with pandemic restrictions, simply canceling the event was not an option. NFO would have to be reimagined in a virtual space with a thoughtful eye on how to modify relationship-building opportunities in online environments.

Design Background

Lawler's (2001) theory of affective social exchange has always implicitly guided the design of each iteration of new faculty orientation. As opposed to Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, in which the onus is primarily on the newcomer to acquire, encode, and retrieve information by linking to personal frames of reference, the affective theory of social exchange suggests that socialization is quintessentially a joint activity (Lawler, 2001, p.322). When the responsibility for socialization is split between parties, initial interactions become critical as they establish the quality of the relationship (Miner, 2002). As NFO serves as the initial introduction for new faculty to WCU and the WCU community, a focus on delivering a high-quality orientation program with key relationship-building moments has always been paramount. New faculty have the chance for round-table sessions with their departmental deans, faculty leaders, and students. In 2019 (under Author two's leadership), the WCU faculty mentoring program became part of NFO, pairing each new faculty member with a tenured faculty member outside of their immediate college. Mentor pairings are thoughtfully crafted and based on preference for service, research agendas, and personal interests. This relationship, begun at NFO, runs the entire scholastic year and has the option to extend until the junior faculty member achieves tenure.

Relationship building can be seen as a prerequisite for learning what to do and how to do it well (Korte, 2009), suggesting the establishment of two-sided social exchanges must precede any learning of organizational roles or expectations. Furthermore, the emotions generated by these initial interactions influence future expectations for what one

can provide the organization and what one can expect the organization to provide (Lawler, 2001). As such, perception plays a key role, as how newcomers perceive they are being received will directly affect their ability to learn the myriad of information available at orientation.

Although extensive research exists on effective organizational socialization, there is a lack of such studies in a university setting (Scott et al., 2016). A well-planned faculty orientation can assist in a smooth transition for new faculty, allowing them to quickly engage with work duties and acclimate to the campus culture (Law et al., 2012). Furthermore, an effective new faculty orientation program is often the first step to future faculty retention (Mee et al., 2019). While organization socialization may traditionally be seen as the responsibility of the newcomer, this narrow, one-sided view of learning grossly underestimates the influence of organizational insiders to affect the learning process (Korte, 2009).

POSITIONALITY OF AUTHORS

Our design team consisted primarily of two individuals: Author one was the Learning Technology Specialist in the Office of Distance Education at the time of NFO redesign and Author two is a Professor in the College of Health Sciences and was a co-chair of NFO 2020. This was the second year of NFO committee service for the first author. By contrast, Author two had 7 years of experience serving and had been co-chair of the in-person event during NFO 2019. Both authors have experience in online course design and delivery, and Author two regularly teaches graduate-level courses (even prior to the shift to pandemic modalities) in a 100% asynchronous format.

As two white women, we understand and acknowledge the privilege we have in navigating the social norms of a primarily white, heteronormative public university faculty body. There was a consistent and constant effort to solicit and listen to additional points of view as shared by the various members of the NFO subcommittees to design as inclusive an orientation as possible. We additionally acknowledge that as middle-class women during a global pandemic, much of this design work was done while simultaneously caring for young children and older adults, two at-risk populations. This provided daily reminders of the importance of prioritizing safety through social distancing. Additionally, it provided a firsthand view into the varying levels of quality of replacement online programming.

Additional players in our design team consisted of the alternate NFO co-chair, as well as various subcommittee members, some of whom were able to exert more bandwidth than others for a systemic redesign during a global pandemic.
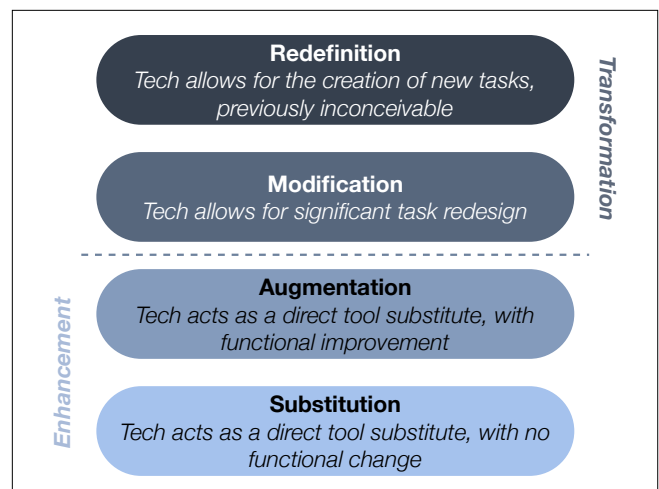
FIGURE 1. Puntedura's (2006) SAMR Model. CC BY-SA Dr. Ruben Puentedura, http://www.hippasus.com/rrpweblog/

DESIGN PROCESS

Framing the Design

At various points within previous roles, both members of our design team had been encouraged to "just put your teaching online" with the implication that strong pedagogical approaches for in-person learners should easily translate to virtual environments. Both experience and research (see Darby & Lang, 2019) suggest that using technology as a mere substitute, without consideration of task redesign is not actually beneficial to learning. In wanting to communicate this misconception to a committee and administration without a depth of experience in distance learning, an established language around designing for virtual spaces was needed. Puntedura's (2006) SAMR model provided helpful language around which the team could discuss design decisions and explain the need for an approach to NFO that took us beyond mere substitution (see Figure 1).

Technology onboarding for new faculty is an illustrative example of an NFO component we had to reconsider in a shift to virtual modalities. Substitution occurs when the same learning is achieved and/or demonstrated regardless of whether technology is utilized. Whether new faculty are given a paper job aid to guide them thru the process of accessing their new campus email or this paper is substituted with a PDF is largely irrelevant; the faculty will learn to access their email (or not!) either way. Augmentation occurs when small adjustments to the learning process are made thanks to the use of digital technologies. PDFs allow for hyperlinks where paper documents cannot. This small adjustment could provide faculty with additional resources beyond what is limited to a paper one-pager. Modification occurs when learning processes are created that would be otherwise impossible if not for digital technologies. A video recording of the process needed to log into email which faculty can pause and review on-demand (as opposed to a

ELEMENT TO CONSIDER	TRADITIONAL APPROACH (IN-PERSON)	SUBSTITUTION / AUGMENTATION — ENHANCEMENT	MODIFICATION / REDEFINITION — TRANSFORMATION
Role of New Faculty	New faculty are learners who attend a mix of lecture and workshop style presentations within various campus conference rooms.	New faculty would attend virtual orientation sessions in Zoom rooms as opposed to on campus conference center. Zoom links distributed via email.	New faculty would be cast not just as learner but as online learner and placed within campus LMS. Links to daily synchronous Zoom sessions can also be housed within LMS course.
Relationship building: NFO committee	NFO ambassadors are present at the margins of the event for directions, questions, and clarifications.	NFO ambassadors will be present in Zoom for new faculty to contact via side channel chat to ask for help.	Breakout rooms can allow for designated time with NFO ambassadors throughout the event to check understanding and provide clarifications to new faculty. A water cooler within LMS course allows for asynchronous question/ discussion capture.
Relationship building: Invested campus partners	Campus partners cycle into conference centers to make presentations.	Campus partners cycle thru designated time slots in one main Zoom session. Screen sharing of information campus partners think is pertinent.	New faculty will reflect on posted resources and preface campus sessions with discussion topics and questions so that conversation can be tailored to need. Breakout rooms will be utilized for focused mini-discussions.
Content Dissemination (policies, procedures, governing rules, etc.)	Presentations are made during set time slots. Some presentations (i.e., the Faculty Union) may disseminate supplemental paper packets.	Presentations will be offered during synchronous online sessions with screen sharing enabled for lecture slides.	Both synchronous presentations and asynchronous resources can be made available. If asynchronous resources included informational overview, synchronous sessions can be reimagined as Q&A. Asynchronous resources remain available in LMS after end of formal orientation.
Parameters of event (Time, Duration, Date)	Four-day event; each day lasts from 8-10 hours. Sessions each day are thematic. Breakfast and lunch are provided each day.	Event will continue to run from 8am-4pm for four days, organized thematically. New faculty will be expected to remain logged on to Zoom during this time.	Orientation no longer bound by space needs also no longer be bound by time. Faculty can engage with resources asynchronously and use discussion boards and email for follow-up.

TABLE 1. SAMR-based design-decision matrix. Highlighted boxes reflect priorities for this design.

live demonstration that happens at a set time) would be an example of modification. Redefinition occurs when a new learning process is created thanks to the incorporation of new digital technologies. Coupling technology onboarding with intelligent agents that can provide personalized troubleshooting to faculty who are attempting the process for the first time, allows for a level of personalization previously unimagined in a technology onboarding session. The myriad experiences that make a complete NFO were often discussed across all four levels of technology application, like the example discussed above, as our design team tried to negotiate where to devote resources across our constrained timeline. (For those wondering, technology onboarding was modified according to the specifications discussed earlier.)

Centering equitable organizational socialization despite differences in modality as our core design value (see Gray & Boling, 2016) helped our design team conceptualize where to focus energy on reimagining design versus where simple substitution would suffice (at least for this initial virtual iteration of NFO.) New faculty are always framed as learners throughout the orientation process, but virtual orientation allowed us to embrace this approach in previously unimagined ways, placing faculty in the role of online students within our campus LMS. Such a reimagining naturally drove

how resources and learning sessions needed to be modified or augmented for effective delivery under this new (albeit self-imposed) design constraint. Choosing to center the role of new faculty as virtual learners also prevented other design decisions requiring massive reimagining from stealing focus, time, and resources during an already truncated timeline. A modified design-decision matrix alongside the elements of the SAMR model shows how our design team's priorities were supported by the technology integration needed to deliver NFO in a virtual setting (see Table 1). Elements that needed to be redefined were prioritized, with additional elements following linearly from the top of the model down; elements to be redefined were designed first, followed by elements to be modified, then elements to be augmented, and finally, elements for which substitution would suffice.

Design and Development

Reimaging faculty as online students themselves was a significant challenge for the majority of the NFO committee. Author two had an ongoing relationship with the Office of Distance Education, having worked with instructional designers to create and facilitate a Quality Matters (QM) certified course and become certified as a QM Peer Reviewer. This was a unique experience that many other members of the committee did not share. Considering NFO could serve the dual roles of organizational socialization while simultaneously modeling quality online course delivery was a difficult reimagination for the committee to embrace. Unlike Author two, most of these faculty members had not experienced online teaching prior to the shift to remote modalities earlier in the semester. Many were drained from trying to facilitate instruction in a new modality; others simply could not envision their subcommittee work in a virtual space. While spring classes always run alongside spring planning for NFO,

external factors made internal sub-committees unable to focus on NFO work at a time when it felt like an entire system needed to be redesigned.

Redefinition

Our reimagination of a virtual NFO was primarily guided by a self-imposed design constraint: the desire to have new faculty experience virtual learning as students, so that when, two weeks later, when they would need to deliver virtual instruction, they would have an empathic approach to course design and delivery. Kouprie & Visser (2009) suggest that empathic design involves being able to relate to the audience of focus instead of simply understanding who that audience may be; what better way to encourage our new faculty to relate to learners thrust into virtual modalities than by providing them with a direct experience of the same?

The benefit of reimagining NFO within an LMS allowed us to collect, curate, and present a variety of resources needing to be accessed at different times and utilized in different ways as an entirely new product. Beyond hyperlinks to word documents or PDFs, the creation of an LMS shell allowed us to share video resources, engage new faculty in asynchronous discussion, and house interactive content. Cognizant of the criticism that a collection of instructional materials without embedded instructional strategies benefits no one (Morrison & Anglin, 2011), materials were coupled with a variety of strategies including module objectives, opportunities for cooperative learning, and advance organizers of university structure and hierarchy. Furthermore, this site remained available as a just-in-time resource beyond the week-long confines of NFO. Whereas packets and physical papers are packed away at the end of a traditional in-person event, somewhat limiting organizational learning to a set

FIGURE 2. Office of the Provost landing page (first click). Used courtesy of West Chester University (2022a).

FIGURE 3. Teaching, Learning and Assessment landing page (second click). Used courtesy of West Chester University (2022b).

FIGURE 4. TLAC Events page (third click). Used courtesy of West Chester University (2022c).

time period, a fully virtual event allowed new faculty to review and revisit presentations as many times as necessary throughout their entire first year. Additionally, these resources were housed within a platform that new faculty would be accessing every day as they facilitated their own online courses.

We posit a designated space to house resources for online orientation is not the same as a reimagined orientation in a completely virtual space. Previous iterations of NFO had

always used the provost's website for the dissemination of virtual resources. These resources were buried under several layers of the WCU website proper, requiring a detailed roadmap to even locate the landing page (see Figures 2-5).

The desire to have new faculty embody the role of students drove the design decision to house the asynchronous portion of NFO 2020 within the learning management system (LMS) used for course delivery: Desire2Learn Brightspace (D2L). During the design proposal, this shift was

New Faculty Orientation

A Letter from the Provost:

Dear WCU Faculty Class of 2021,

Welcome to the West Chester University community! I offer my sincerest congratulations on your appointment as a faculty member. Your department chairperson, dean, and I know that tenure-track faculty hired this year will play a critical role in the future developments of departments and the University as a whole. Therefore, we share a special interest in your future success at WCU.

Part of assuring that success is helping you get a good start as you begin your first year at the University. To assist in this process, we have developed a New Faculty Orientation program that starts in August (8-16-21 through 8-19-21) and has continuing sessions throughout the academic year. The goals of this program include giving you an overview of the mission, values, and strategic goals of the University and providing you with information about what it takes to be successful at West Chester University. During the orientation program, you will have an opportunity to meet faculty and administrators in key leadership roles. In addition, you will meet other new faculty from the "Class of 2021". They will most likely have questions similar to yours about beginning this new experience and they may become your most supportive colleagues.

The elements of the orientation program have been carefully designed and selected to provide you with critical information regarding both expectations of your appointment as well as benefits and resources available to you as a tenure-track faculty member. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to structure your August schedule to attend all of the three-and-a-half-days of orientation sessions.

We are confident that this experience will be both worthwhile and enjoyable. I will look forward to meeting you in August!

R. Lorraine Bernotsky, D. Phil

Faculty Resou...

- New Faculty Checklist 2021
- FAQs, Payroll, and Benefits
- IT Help Desk
- Strategic Plan: Building on Ex...

FIGURE 5. New Faculty Orientation landing page (fourth click). Used courtesy of West Chester University (2022d).

initially difficult for committee members to conceptualize. Committee members who had prior experience with distributed learning were quick to realize the potential of this shift; those with limited prior experience were more hesitant, often challenging the need for resources beyond an agenda, the existing website, and Zoom rooms. To aid in shifting mindset, the Office of Distance Education offered a special two-week Online Faculty Development training session for both NFO committee members and new faculty. This training session was already offered multiple times a year to the WCU faculty at large; however, a dedicated iteration with the intention of having this specific group understand how technology can transform learning was leveraged for committee buy-in.

With our dual goals of organizational socialization and preparing faculty to teach in the online environment, the authors proposed to design a course for NFO 2020 within D2L Brightspace, modeling elements and interactions of effective course navigation and design (Moore & Kearsley, 2005). Our landing page for the course included useful features—such as a schedule overview, with direct links to daily modules (see Figure 6)—as well as features that we did not anticipate would play a large role in NFO but would allow faculty to consider possibilities for their future courses—such as a water cooler discussion board to house general questions.

Clicking on the links within the schedule overview would bring new faculty to daily landing pages, all of which were designed using the same template. Daily landing pages allowed for a consistent way to provide an advanced organizer for each day's thematic resources. These pages also housed the Zoom links for each day's synchronous sessions


FIGURE 6. Daily schedule on orientation landing page. The name of each day links directly to that day's landing page.

in one, consistent location (see Figure 7). New faculty did not have to toggle between the LMS and their email or calendars to locate meeting resources. For a content-heavy orientation event, any strategies to limit cognitive processing irrelevant to learning (van Merriënboer & Kirschner, 2018) were essential.

In addition to the opportunity to engage in our Online Faculty Development training session, various NFO committee members were given intermittent access to the D2L Brightspace course as the build was ongoing. This access was intended to allow for formative evaluation of the course shell; however, the design team discovered that these "sneak
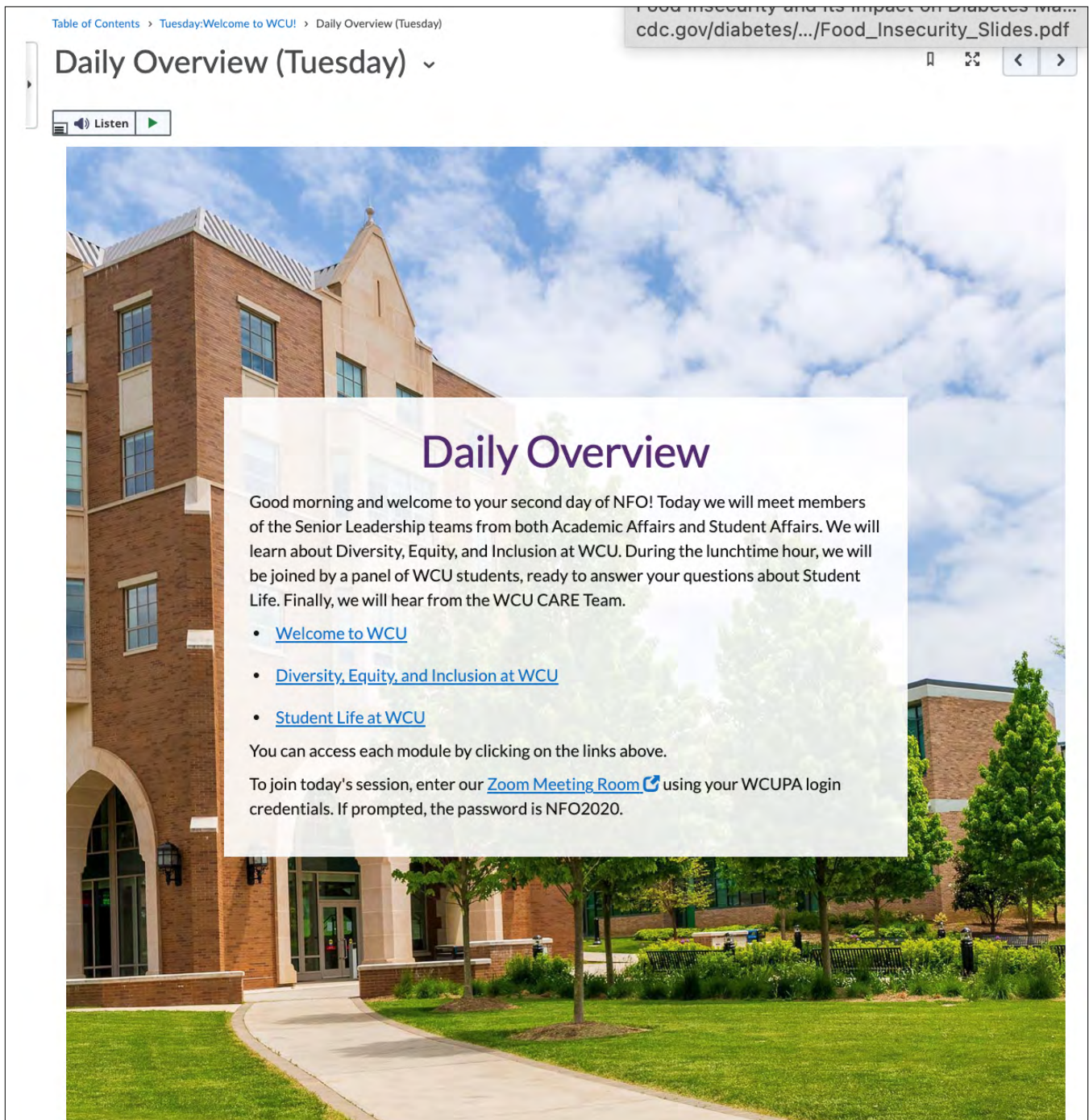
FIGURE 7. Daily landing page. Each module has a direct link on this page. The day's Zoom session is also linked here so faculty did not have to navigate outside of the LMS.

peeks" were most likely to result in a better conceptualization of the redesign for the committee overall.

Modification

NFO has grown in scope over the years since its inception, alongside campus groups and resources. In-person orientation lasts four days and each day can be eight-ten hours long. Reimagining NFO in a virtual space allowed us to

consider how programming had grown over the years. It became quickly apparent that many face-to-face sessions could be modified into asynchronous course materials, presented in daily modules via the LMS.

Modifying materials for a new modality prompted some much-needed updates to content. Previous iterations of NFO had seen groups recycle or reuse slide decks or presentations even when information was out of date. The

announcement that posted resources would be available not only during a set presentation timeslot but throughout the entirety of NFO and beyond, prompted almost all presenters to consider what they were posting and how it could be interpreted even without them on hand to explain. As an additional level of review, all resources were required to be shared with Author one via the embedded LMS media collaboration tool prior to posting. A job aid, explaining how to utilize the collaboration tool was sent out alongside the updated request for resources.

While this new collaboration path did allow for a streamlined build in the LMS, it also limited interaction between campus resource groups and the larger NFO committee. Typically, a committee sub-division will work to arrange and confirm campus resource presentations. To keep these relationships intact and continue to build awareness and trust about the

orientation reimagination, members of the sub-committee were added to media collaboration teams to preview resources as they were uploaded. As materials began to populate the LMS course, members of the NFO committee who were previously doubtful of the vision to approach a virtual orientation with new faculty as students began to see the potential of such an approach.

Each module page was designed with a consistent layout, a strategy Author two dubs "utilizing a recipe page" (see Figure 8). A bulleted overview of the synchronous and asynchronous features of the module was highlighted at the top of the page. The intention behind this design choice was to allow faculty a checklist of items to preview as well as a brief introduction to what would be occurring during synchronous meeting times. Each campus group was given space within a designated module page. Author one partnered

FIGURE 8. Layout of each module page, including overview of instructional strategies.

with representatives from each group to showcase what type of materials could be included within an LMS, and to provide support for those who chose to include video resources or voiceover PowerPoints.

Module resources did vary, which allowed for multiple aspects of engagement. It was an intentional design decision to conclude each set of resources with a discussion board that allowed new faculty to post questions about resources in the moment, without waiting for synchronous sessions to occur. This modification helped committee members and campus resource groups begin to understand how synchronous sessions may be able to shift focus in a virtual setting.

Augmentation

Specific module space within the LMS allowed each campus group to be given a direct line to new faculty; as such, not every group still felt the need to hold a synchronous session. The benefit here was two-fold: we were able to shorten each day of orientation from, on average, nine hours, to, on average, five hours, while simultaneously prioritizing the relationship building that is key to successful organizational socialization. NFO has always had a subcommittee of "Ambassadors" whose role traditionally has been to attend new faculty orientation and be on hand to answer any questions new faculty may have. Utilization of established organization individuals as a resource has been sporadic and uneven both from year to year and across new faculty member experiences as the onus for interaction was placed on the individual. A virtual NFO prioritized designated time for ambassadors to meet with new faculty in small breakout rooms several times each day, creating a joint responsibility for socialization. This time was designated for clarifications on scheduled sessions or asynchronous materials; however, it was discovered that this time was utilized to informally touch base and decompress from what could be long, content-heavy information sessions.

New faculty were also provided multiple breakout sessions with assigned instructional designers from the university's Office of Distance Education. With a fully virtual upcoming semester, allowing faculty to prioritize relationships with individuals who could assist with course design and delivery was essential.

During the remaining breakout sessions, faculty were intentionally grouped with other members of their colleges to have time to meet and begin collaborating with future colleagues.

Of course, some campus groups did still hold synchronous sessions despite having also provided resources for new faculty to preview in the LMS modules. The tone of many of these presentations shifted, thanks to modality, and the ability to have provided preview materials. Instead of formal presentations, many groups did not share content during

synchronous sessions, choosing instead to leave the cameras focused on themselves as they engaged new faculty in conversation or question-and-answer sessions about previously posted materials. Thanks to this shift, new faculty got to guide discussions to topics they found to be essential to their success in their new positions.

Synchronous sessions were recorded and posted to the relevant LMS module the week after each session occurred. These recordings were another component of reducing cognitive load for new faculty, allowing them to be fully present in the active discussion of each session, knowing that they could return to presentations even after each Zoom session had closed.

Some campus resource groups did still struggle with the shift in synchronous sessions; these tended to be those groups who were hoping to simply use Zoom as a substitute platform for their original presentation.

Substitution

Despite the increased affordances of running NFO through our campus LMS, many NFO committee members still struggled with how best to use technology to conduct distributed organizational learning. Honoring hesitancies among these committee members allowed for continued collaboration of the committee as well as a focus for our design team. Not every aspect of NFO was going to be reimagined during this first foray. Compromising on various logistical elements of the event allowed for a committed focus on the core design value of an equitable socialization experience via the reimagination of new faculty as online learners.

Themes remained the same as they were for an in-person orientation: Welcome to Orientation, Welcome to WCU, Professional Life at WCU, and Teaching Life at WCU. The content was not being reimagined so much as modified and augmented to be delivered via distributed means. During in-person orientation, the understanding of how each session relates to the daily theme is often implicit and perhaps even unclear. Redesigning orientation within a virtual space allowed us to regroup daily sessions within each thematic day more purposefully. Each day we covered, on average, three modules, each of which was explicitly listed in our LMS course shell (see Table 2).

One sub-committee that struggled with reconceptualizing its role in a virtual orientation was the food committee. Instead of taking time to uncover the deeper organizational socialization elements that shared meals represent, straight substitution was considered. Gift baskets containing local delicacies and WCU swag were sent to the house of each new faculty member in time for the first synchronous orientation session. As the week unfolded, it was joyful to see new faculty take sips from WCU tumblers or open a snack from Saxby's coffee shop as we joined together for

WELCOME TO ORIENTATION	Welcome to NFO!
	Information Systems and Technology/ Distance Education Resources
	The Faculty Union
WELCOME TO WCU	Welcome to WCU!
	Student Life at WCU
	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at WCU
PROFESSIONAL LIFE AT WCU	Faculty Life: Tenure, Evaluation and Promotion
	Faculty Life: Service Learning, CAPC, Research and Sponsored Programs
	Virtual Resource Fair
TEACHING LIFE AT WCU	The Inclusive Classroom
	Welcome from the President

TABLE 2. Overview of NFO sessions by theme.

synchronous sessions. Such a substitution also allowed the food committee to retain its budget for future iterations of NFO regardless of modality. This was a helpful reminder for our design team that not all socialization experiences benefit from transformation. Sometimes, straight substitution is best- either for the event as a whole or for harmony within the larger design team.

EVALUATION

NFO benefits from having a designated survey committee which collects data on new faculty perceptions of the event each year. This data helps guide and revise design decisions for subsequent cohorts. In previous iterations of NFO, all of which had been held in person, this data was collected daily. This allowed new faculty to narrow their focus of reflection to just the sessions of each individual day. For our 2020 virtual iteration, the NFO survey committee decided to only collect holistic survey data. Neither authors nor co-chairs were part of this design decision and were not informed of it until the survey went out. The rationale from the subcommittee was that this decision was intentional and based on the low response rate to daily surveys in previous years, suggesting it was not our online learning modality that prompted this orientation evaluation modification.

In reflecting as a design team, three additional possible justifications for this design decision emerged. It is possible the survey subcommittee was previously engaged in digitizing their own curriculums for the fall, a large undertaking as the majority of our faculty had no prior experience in teaching online. van Rooij (2010) calls for instructional designers to simultaneously act as project managers. Had the authors more fully embraced these dual roles it's possible we could have provided more check-ins with subcommittee members who may have been struggling with competing timelines. Survey is a subcommittee that has always been self-directed but a formalized series of checkpoint dates would have benefitted the event as a whole.

Second, the number of surveys distributed to faculty throughout the pandemic increased exponentially, as multiple stakeholders tried to gauge reactions and perceptions of the next steps. Multiple fields report data collection limitations due to COVID-19; survey fatigue plagued response rates and the quality of data that was collected (de Koning et al., 2021). It is possible that the survey subcommittee was approaching this design element with empathy to a population that, no doubt, had been surveyed robustly over the previous six months.

Finally, the administration of an online survey may have been perceived as a hurdle. Using the announcements feature within the LMS course homepage, we began advertising the final day survey two days ahead of survey distribution. This announcement was paired with a committee-designed icon to draw attention. It may have been thought that trying to advertise information collection each day would have overshadowed the purpose of the event.

The decision of the survey sub-committee to alter data collection methods during this NFO iteration, amidst a robust reimagination of several elements of the event, was a particular loss. Stolterman and Nelson (2000) suggest that responsibility for elements of design failure can sometimes be hidden in complex administrative webs; it is not our intention to hide such responsibility here. A defined plan for evaluating the efficacy and efficiency of NFO is needed for future iterations, regardless of modality. In taking the time to outline our specific design process for this design case, we have had the opportunity to critically reflect on design decisions made or forgotten in the larger reimagination of NFO. In discussing the failure surrounding formal evaluation methods, we were able to reflect on informal evaluation methods that may be helpful in communicating the success of this iteration of NFO back to invested partners.

Daily synchronous check-ins with new faculty ambassadors were designed to support relationship-building but had the unforeseen benefit of providing another source of ongoing evaluation of the orientation event throughout the week. From these sessions and the survey data that was collected, as well as informal communications with both authors about the event, two benefits of a virtual orientation model emphatically emerged: flexibility and recursiveness.

DESIGNER REFLECTIONS

As the two individuals who spent the most time reimagining NFO, it was abundantly clear to us upon the conclusion of the 2020 iteration that a return to a fully in-person orientation would be detrimental to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the event. Flexibility emerged as one of the major benefits of a virtual orientation model, with new faculty citing their appreciation for being able to attend sessions that they would have had to forego had the event taken place face-to-face. WCU's NFO occurs two weeks before the start of the fall semester, which means the majority of NFO attendees are still employed in previous positions. While the event is not required, it is strongly encouraged. Past employees have cited feeling strained between fulfilling previous contractual obligations and attending an event that provides essential information about their new organization. Previous years have seen fluctuating attendance throughout the four days of the event as new faculty try to juggle the responsibilities of multiple positions. Shifting sessions to a virtual environment allowed new faculty more flexibility in terms of location which multiple individuals cited as a reason for their being able to fully attend and engage in a four-day orientation event. Increased event attendance and engagement are essential for relationship formation.

Furthermore, housing resources and daily recordings within the NFO LMS site allowed faculty to revisit materials for just-in-time learning. Managing cognitive load is an important consideration, especially when designing for a technology-enhanced learning environment (Skulmowski & Xu, 2022). An event that seeks to disseminate information about an organization as complex as a university system has enough inherent germane cognitive load that any extraneous load should be thoughtfully managed. Knowing they would be able to revisit and rewatch learning materials was an essential scaffold for new faculty—and one that allowed them to remain fully present in the moment of the event itself. Research into the efficacy of new faculty orientation programs often notes session timeliness is directly related to perceptions of session helpfulness (Bowman et al., 2018); a virtual platform allows sessions initially constrained by boundaries of time to be more accessible. By leaving the NFO course open throughout the scholastic year, sessions were able to be reviewed as issues and questions arose. The ability to expand the organizational socialization process across multiple months was invaluable to learning transfer.

Despite this overwhelmingly positive response from attendees, the general impression of the NFO committee was that a return to "normal" in the form of an in-person orientation model, was a necessary priority for subsequent years. NFO legacy committee members were most vocal here, and, as these members tend to have more release time (due to lighter teaching loads) able to dedicate to service, these voices carried weight in future plans. University

administration often echoed these requests. Although the immediate reaction to NFO 2020 was 'thanks for a reimagination well done', further communication and sharing of faculty reactions to administrative teams—both locally and university-wide—may have helped break down perceptions of the false benefits of a "return to normal."

Campbell et al. (2009) suggest that instructional designers must regularly also fulfill roles as champions of change management. While designs for NFO 2021 highlighted a reversion to a mostly in-person event, we were able to convince the NFO committee and university administration of the benefit of one virtual day and ongoing utilization of an LMS site. NFO 2021 offered its first day—Welcome to Orientation—in a virtual format, coupled with time for faculty to navigate the asynchronous resources of the LMS site. Unfortunately, with the remainder of the event's sessions occurring in-person, many presenters felt the need for a robust orientation site to be somewhat superfluous and the same attention to creating and curating new resources did not occur.

CONCLUSION

Documenting design is critical as it provides important precedent, enriching the learning design process (Gray & Boling, 2016). While we make no claims towards the universality of other programs considering how best to leverage technology for their own organizational socialization needs, it is our hope that sharing the documentation of our process at least provides other design teams with considerations to adopt or reject as their particular contexts demand.

Like many events during the wake of COVID-19, a virtual orientation was a reimagined design borne of necessity—but one that provided a welcome refresh and many added benefits to an event that was in danger of becoming rote. Unfortunately, what our design team saw as a successful design was not recognized by stakeholders who only bore witness to a portion of the finished product. Perhaps the most important takeaway for our design team was the growing realization of the fluid responsibilities of any instructional designer which increasingly include those more commonly reserved for project and change management. We maintain that virtual organizational socialization was effective for our context; however, we acknowledge attempts at communicating the success of this design to campus administration have been somewhat ineffective towards sustaining permanent change. Regardless, we continue to enjoy and benefit from the lasting relationships we formed with the new faculty Class of 2020 during their reimagined orientation experience.

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