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**Title**

Investigating the online teaching preparation program “Online Learning Academy” – the case study of examining the usefulness and perception of the course among online instructors at Dakota State University

**Abstract**

During the COVID-19 period, most of the classes were shifted from traditional in-class to online learning for many universities across the globe. Some university instructors may have no or limited experience in online class settings and delivery. Many institutions provided training on how to design online classes to their instructors, but the covered topics were scattered. This qualitative research was aimed to investigate the needs of the program, its usefulness, perceptions, and scope of topics that should be covered in the online teaching preparation program. As result of this research, the skills and characteristics of effective online teachers were identified and discussed as well as details on mandatory topics that should be included in the training. The information on how to better prepare new online instructors was also discussed. The research findings were applied to the existing DSU online teaching program or "Online Learning Academy" to enhance the preparation for online instructors, and they can also be applied and utilized to similar professional development at other institutions.