As higher education institutions around the world become more focussed on quality agendas and accountability, there is growing awareness of the critical function played by faculty in creating, supporting, and assessing high-quality learning experiences (Hénard, 2010). Thus there is a need to ensure that all faculty are adequately prepared, motivated, and supported to carry out all aspects of academic practice including those that take place online or at a distance. We are moving into an era where all faculty need to have a level of competence with online learning and technologies. This is no longer optional but is core to the university learning environment. If this proposition is accepted then it raises the immediate question of how to best support faculty in both online and blended learning contexts.

As a learning modality there is a common understanding about the term distance education in contrast to on-campus teaching; however online and the use of different technologies in teaching and learning are blurring these

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1 The term faculty is used throughout this chapter to refer to academic teaching staff in universities, as this was the term used in Zawacki-Richter’s research (2009).
understandings and also the expectations of faculty. This is particularly evident in institutions where multi-modes of delivery are offered. Conflations of the terms are developing (Guri-Rosenblit and Gros, 2011) as elements of more hybrid, blended modes of delivery increase in popularity, where teaching includes a combination of face-to-face and virtual interactions with students. It is also important to acknowledge, as new technologies are being introduced to all modalities of teaching, the lessons that can be learned from distance education. As Bates observes:

Distance education is now struggling to keep up with technological change, and as a result risks losing its unique identity and function. Nevertheless, distance education has developed procedures and practices that are valuable in ensuring the appropriate use of technology in teaching, and it would be a tragedy if this knowledge and experience were lost because of failure by distance and conventional educators to learn from one another. (2008, p. 233)

Significantly, we are now at a point in time where higher education institutions are enhancing their capacity technologically, and if the capabilities of faculty are also developed, it provides the ability to be more flexible and innovative in the ways that teaching and learning can be delivered and students can engage with learning. Universities are taking advantage of these developments to reach larger groups of students who may be remote and/or on campus but require or prefer more flexible learning modes. Increasingly, universities are using their learning management systems to deliver all services online and there is now less opportunity for faculty not to have some involvement in online teaching. It is therefore not surprising that professional development and faculty support was identified as an important area requiring more research (Zawacki-Richter, 2009).

SCOPING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND FACULTY SUPPORT

This chapter specifically addresses professional development and faculty support and, in doing so, the following considerations shape the discussion.

(1) Given the broadness of the topic, its complexities, and many contextual interpretations, some propositions relating to professional development and faculty needs are made. It is acknowledged that
these statements in themselves are contestable, and there is ongoing debate in the many communities of professional development about definitions, theoretical frameworks, perspectives, and practices. This in itself is an ongoing research project.

(2) Due to the complexities relating to a single understanding of professional development and the vast volume of literature on this and related topics, it is not possible to ensure that all the literature has been scoped. I have limited the search to recent literature (approximately the last five years) recognizing that what is presented is more a sample rather than a comprehensive review of this literature.

(3) Because of the nature of technologies, their developments and adoptions, their application in higher education teaching is a fast-moving and changing area of practice (Tynan & Lee, 2009). What may be a need at one point of time can very quickly move to the norm or be out-dated as a new technology or application is introduced.

(4) Importantly, I pose questions for further research. Again the number of questions and the level of specificity can be extensive and limitless, but I try to focus on key issues to be addressed.

UNDERSTANDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND FACULTY SUPPORT

The need for faculty professional development is well documented and many state this in discussions about institutional engagement in technology and improved teaching and learning (Moore, 2006; Tanner, 2011). The most recent ECAR National Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology (EDUCAUSE, 2011) highlights that faculty need more assistance in their use of technologies in teaching, that students are wanting more online components as part of their learning experiences, and hence there is a need to provide more professional development opportunities.

The terms professional development and faculty support also have multiple meanings and different associations in different contexts. While others have debated and unpacked the meanings of these terms—academic, staff, educational, faculty, instructional, organizational, and professional development (Macdonald, 2009)—rather than repeat this discussion, I acknowledge the different interpretations and nuanced differences and will
use *professional development* and *faculty support* in their broadest sense to encompass the terms.

Professional development in higher education is a young and emerging field of academic practice; a growing body of literature is developing with strengthening international links between countries, professional associations and colleagues in recognising similarities, differences, and research agendas in this work. Some recent discussions provide a good overview of the field, taking into account national differences and histories of this field of practice (Gosling, 2008; Hicks, 2006; Macdonald, 2009; Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy, & Beach, 2006; Stefani, 2011). The *International Journal of Academic Development* (*IJAD*) provides a scholarly forum for discussion and research about this field of practice. It must also be acknowledged that some research on professional development is accessed from within the discipline or from particular modes of teaching, for example, engineering education or problem-based learning.

It is also important to recognise the distinction between formal and informal development opportunities. Discussions about professional development often and almost exclusively focus on formal development opportunities and activities. Informal development or *non-formal learning*, the term that Eraut (2000) prefers, is often under-recognized, but is a powerful and common way for knowledge to be developed and shared. Eraut’s research focussed on how people learn, understanding the meaning of non-formal learning, and the development of a typology to conceptualize this type of learning. Although not evidenced-based, many recognize the value of informal interactions that occur between faculty in staff rooms, chat rooms, and other places. Yet little attention is given to non-formal learning when discussing professional development and faculty support for online distance education. This points to a significant area of further investigation.

- What is the role of non-formal learning in developing faculty?
- How can more non-formal learning opportunities be encouraged and valued?
- Are emerging teacher networks as found through social media, e-mail lists, and others providing new models of non-formal learning and support?

A distinction is often made between technical professional development and support for pedagogy. It is important that these are not separated and
that professional development initiatives are integrated to include technical aspects, the pedagogy of learning, and their interactions (Koehler, Mishra, & Yahya, 2005). We increasingly understand the complex relationships between tools and the way they are used. As Kelly persuasively argues today, and Marshall McLuhan much earlier, “we are now symbiotic with technology” (Kelly, 2010, para. 3).

There are almost as many models of formal professional development as there are educational institutions. Fraser, Gosling, and Sorcinelli (2010) have attempted to conceptualize the different models within a framework that focuses on the individual, the institution, and the sector. Formal development can be organized and delivered by staff acting in defined roles as academic/faculty developers but can also be delivered by others both internal and external to the institution. Telg et al. (2005) raise the issue of the expertise of people delivering professional development. In their important report of the project, A Roadmap to Effective Distance Education Instructional Design, they focussed on the training of distance education trainers and highlighted the need to address the issue of the qualifications and training expertise of the people providing the professional development and faculty support. This poses the following questions:

• What are the qualifications, attributes, and level of expertise needed for delivering effective professional development for faculty?

• How important is it for developers or deliverers of faculty development to have discipline or academic credentials so as to be recognized by faculty for their expertise?

• Are there useful distinctions between training and development opportunities?

While the literature on professional development covers a wide range of areas, I want to make three observations that are particularly pertinent to this discussion:

• the link with the quality agendas

• the difficulty in demonstrating the impact of professional development

• the lack of empirical studies to evidence the field of professional development
Historically the organization of formal professional development activities for faculty, the establishment of units and centres, and the appointment of staff in dedicated roles to deliver these activities was largely due to an increasing focus on quality agendas in higher education—quality improvement and enhancement. More recently, as quality assurance agendas pervade the higher education environment, professional development has become aligned with initiatives and indicators to ensure compliance. Latchem provides an overview of the various approaches to quality assurance in online distance education in chapter 12 of this volume. While an increasing emphasis on quality provides both opportunities and challenges this has become a contested space within the professional development community and has influenced diverse individual orientations and institutional frameworks (Land, 2004; Hicks, 2006).

Higher education environments continue to change, as there is greater diversity in the student population, increased use of technology, increasing competition from the private sector, and more external accountability. As noted by Sorcinelli et al., (2006), “providing institutional support for faculty members facing changing contexts and new demands becomes an essential strategic choice” (p. xviii). It is well acknowledged that support for changing contexts, especially in the area of technology, is needed (Oblinger & Hawkins, 2006), but what are less clear are good models and methods to do this. Understanding where institutions position themselves in relation to quality agendas and the broader context is a critical consideration in any research into professional development and faculty support.

As accountability and standardization agendas become an increasing part of higher education experiences, being able to measure and demonstrate impact of professional development initiatives and interventions also attracts greater attention. Professional development and faculty support are not immune from this scrutiny. But how this is done and with what metrics and indicators is a topic that continues to be discussed and debated within the professional development community (Macdonald, 2009; Sorcellini et al, 2006). Framing the impact and evaluation of professional development for different learning modalities needs to be part of these discussions and inform future research agendas.

Although a strong need to investigate professional development and faculty support for online distance education has been identified, there continues to be a lack of empirical research to answer many critical questions,
such as those raised earlier (Moore, 2006). There are however many case studies at an individual institutional level. While many of these cannot be generalized, they do offer insights into issues for further research. At another level, there is increasing commentary of a larger volume on areas of online education and professional development, and while I touch on some of this, again given that much of this is at the level of commentary and not evidenced based, I draw on them only to highlight some future areas of research. The area of technology-enhanced learning changes rapidly, thus impacting on the relevancy and currency of the research. A faculty needs analysis that is used as the basis for targeted professional development can very quickly be out-of-date.

RESEARCHING FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT FOR ONLINE LEARNING

As mentioned above, while there is a growing literature on professional development, much of this is descriptive in nature and reflects the experience of individual authors rather than based on any large-scale empirical studies. As identified by many, little is known about how to best support staff to teach online (Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008). Moore identified that what is missing “is the perspective of the individual faculty members of their own development” (2006, p. 61).

The Sloan Consortium recently contributed to bridging this gap with a survey of over 10,000 faculty from 69 American colleges and universities in 2008 and 2009 (Seaman, 2009). This survey specifically sought the views and experiences of faculty with online teaching. Importantly and taking the position of online being part of all faculty experiences, the survey was targeted to all faculty members regardless of whether they were teaching fully online or not. Although only one-third of respondents had taught a fully online course, the responses concluded that all sectors of faculty are engaged in some level of online instruction, regardless of their employment type, full- or part-time employment, or age. This confirms some of the assumptions raised earlier, but also suggests that we need a more nuanced understanding of the profile and needs of faculty and their online engagement. Two other findings from this study are relevant to this discussion. The first relates to workload and the second to the quality of online learning. Both have implications for professional development.
The extra effort demanded to develop courses and teach online is often raised as an issue related to workload by faculty. The Sloan study (Seaman, 2009) confirmed these beliefs about effort on task with 64% of faculty stating that it takes more time and effort to teach online than face-to-face and more than 85% of faculty believing that online course development takes more time and effort. Others advocate that significant additional time is required to learn the technologies and then prepare teaching material (Tynan & Lee, 2009). Again, further investigation needs to made into whether this is a result of first-time engagement with technologies, the type of support and development provided and accessed, and the instructional strategies employed by teachers. Longitudinal data, tracking individual experiences over time, would be useful in assisting institutions in determining the right type and quantity of support to promote effective online teaching.

Quality agendas are at the forefront of attention for most institutions, and the Sloan survey tested the perception, held by many, that online courses do not have the same quality learning outcomes as face-to-face instruction. However these views are shifting with greater engagement with online learning. The majority of faculty with online teaching experience believed that “learning outcomes were as good as or better than face-to-face instruction” (Seaman, 2009, p. 7). This again demonstrates that an investigation into the alignment and assessment of effective measures of learning outcomes for online courses and the quality of the student experience is needed.

Two questions in the Sloan survey investigated barriers faculty see to teaching online and the quality of campus support structures. The greatest barriers to teaching online related to the perceived and/or real additions to workload required and the lack of institutional support and recognition for online teaching. Faculty were asked to rank eight areas of institutional support: technological infrastructure, support for online development, support for online delivery, support for online students, policy on intellectual property, recognition in tenure and promotion, incentives for developing online, and incentives for delivering online. The area with the highest ranking of satisfaction was technological infrastructure. This is sending a clear message that, while at an institutional level a focus on technical infrastructure and technical support can (and often does) dominate, institutional positioning that emphasizes quality, rewards, and recognition for online teaching is increasingly important and essential.
The Sloan survey provides the first and most recent large-scale research on faculty views and experience with online learning and provides some excellent base level data and observations for future research. In terms of future research, four areas have been identified across the literature and now shape the remaining discussion in this chapter both in relation to what has been done at an institutional/commentary level and in terms of future research. These include:

- institutional positioning, engagement, and support for online learning
- a more nuanced understanding of the profile of staff teaching online and their needs
- different types of professional development
- the impact of professional development and faculty support on student learning outcomes

While large-scale research studies on professional development and faculty support for online distance education are limited, there are a larger number of institutional case studies. Many offer some insightful perspectives into faculty support but there are great variations in the quality of these studies. Some authors employ a whole-of-institution perspective and others document the experiences of a few individuals at a department or school level. A comprehensive review of all institutional case studies on this topic is out of scope for this chapter, but a selection is reviewed to provide a sample of this work.

**INSTITUTIONAL POSITIONING, RECOGNITION, AND INCENTIVES FOR TEACHING ONLINE**

How an institution values and positions teaching and its different modes of delivery is a critical component of any professional development strategy. As already noted, we are going through a period of time where understandings of online distance education, online education and technology-enhanced learning are variable across higher education institutions. As a result, online education can be and is often treated separately from core teaching activities. The consequences are that activities associated with online teaching are often positioned outside of mainstream teaching activities in terms
of workload recognition, promotion, professional development support, rewards, and incentives for online teaching.

Higher education institutions need to recognize effort and commitment to professional development that includes a focus on online distance education and technology-enhanced learning as part of the mainstream suite of incentives and rewards for good teaching practices and to be quite explicit about what is recognized. At an institutional level, Taylor and McQuiggan (2008) investigated institutional support in their survey of staff at Pennsylvania State University. Faculty were asked to identify the primary incentive that they would want to receive for participating in professional development. No single incentive that stood out against others, the highest percentage being given to recognition towards promotion and tenure (23%). In contrast to the findings of the Pennsylvania State University survey, Wang, Gould, and King (2009) report that Fort Hays State University has introduced financial payments for online course development, rewards for participating in professional development, and specifically recognized online teaching in their tenure criteria. While they report good faculty engagement with the range of initiatives that are offered, what has not been reported are any measures of impact on student learning outcomes.

Others also advocate for whole-of-institutional approaches for supporting faculty teaching online. Fang (2007), in his consideration of development for online faculty, stresses the move from a training model to one that involves greater commitment by the institution. He proposes a new model for performance improvement that is performance based and includes faculty training, communities of practice, performance support, formative evaluation, and knowledge sharing. He reports on the success of applying this model at his university and, while not comprehensive, it is another example of the need for a holistic, systematic institutional approach to professional development and faculty support. Forsyth, Pizzica, Laxton, and Mahony (2010), in the discussion of their university experience, also highlight university governance and organizational culture as one of the key elements in assuring quality online distance education offerings, and one that is often missing.

From an institutional perspective, Tynan and Lee (2009) completed in-depth interviews with a range of stakeholders across their university related to professional development and the integration of technologies in teaching and learning. They concluded with three propositions:
(1) Staff need to be afforded better access to information and strategies to raise their own desire and awareness of how to use ICTs to enhance student learning.

(2) Academics must be encouraged and empowered to approach the use of ICTs to enhance student learning with creativity and innovation.

(3) Institutional frameworks are still needed to provide academics with sufficient guidance and direction in the use of ICTs to enhance student learning. (2009, pp. 104–5)

Underlying each of these propositions are the importance of institutional commitment, the need for an articulated framework, and institutional support of change. Specifically relating to professional development, Tynan and Lee aptly argue, “The future of higher education depends on a holistic, research-informed, looking forward response to academic staff development, in a manner driven fundamentally by personal awareness, responsibility, ownership and agency” (2009, p. 106).

These studies, all focussed at a whole-of-institution level, indicate the importance of institutional support for formal professional development activities and that recognition and reward for online activities as part of campus-based or distance education teaching be mainstreamed with the support, recognition, and reward of good teaching practices. While there will be differences in institutional approaches, further investigation on how different models impact on improved student learning outcomes is needed.

UNDERSTANDING FACULTY NEEDS

If programs and interventions are going to be designed that are more faculty centred, there is a need at an institutional level to understand in more depth the needs of faculty. It is essential to have reliable and valid instruments to readily identify and understand the needs of faculty and the ability to benchmark these needs across the sector (Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008). A more rigorous methodology to collect information about the needs of both faculty and people in faculty development/training roles can only assist and inform the quality of this development and will be of great interest to institutions in their ability to provide more effective and targeted professional development.
The Australian Council of Open and Distance Education (ACODE) has moved in this direction through its benchmarking project. Using a collaborative process across multiple institutions at a national level, eight areas for benchmarking were identified and good practice statements, performance indicators, and measures for each one were developed. Two areas relate specifically to this discussion: professional/staff development for the effective use of technologies for teaching and learning (5) and staff support that makes a distinction between technical support and educational support (6). The benchmarking tools were piloted across seven Australian universities to focus the items and test their usefulness; subsequent reports have attested to their usefulness for institutions to focus on the quality of their practices and suggest strategies and interventions for improvement.

In contrast to using a survey instrument that can be administered to a large target group such as the Sloan survey or at an institutional level in the case of Penn State (Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008), Lackey (2011) has obtained a detailed understanding of the training needs of faculty who are going to teach online through semi-structured interviews using qualitative methodology. Lackey interviewed six faculty from three different institutions about how they prepared to teach online, what activities they accessed which were most beneficial, and areas for further development. Through a detailed analysis of the interview data, the key message is the need for just-in-time assistance, both pedagogical and technical, whether that be in person (formally or informally), via formal workshops or through independent resources. Every person interviewed was at a different level in terms of what support they required, hence they needed the ability to tailor their needs. Lackey concluded, “Going forward, informal and formal training programs should be thoughtfully balanced with technology and pedagogy using a progressive delivery method to provide faculty with the necessary skills to be successful in online teaching” (2011, p. 20).

These early investigative studies make important contributions to our understanding of faculty needs for online teaching; however, there is still considerably more research to be done at institutional levels and across the sector, at national levels and internationally, to better understand current faculty needs and to have validated instruments and methodologies to assess these needs. This again points to an important area of future research.
In addressing professional development and faculty support for online distance education, the discussion can be broad, leading from how development and support is framed and oriented, to specific types of development activities and how they are delivered. In this section I briefly cover some different frameworks, models, and approaches to professional development. Wilson (2011) recently reviewed current practice in faculty development for web-enhanced learning in university teaching. She identified five different perspectives that dominate faculty development practice: cognitive learning theory, constructivist learning theory, situated learning theory, distributed cognition, and distributed expertise. Based on these perspectives and the diversity of frameworks she reviewed, four frameworks through which professional development can be delivered are highlighted: technology-adoption, skills acquisition, scholarly engagement, and resource-based frameworks. This review of different frameworks provides a good overview of different practices and also a structure by which decisions can be made at an institutional level about how professional development is conceptualized and ultimately delivered.

Building on the survey reported by Taylor and McQuiggan (2008) and using adult learning theory as a guiding theoretical framework, McQuiggan (2011) developed twelve essential attributes of faculty professional development programs. This framework and attributes are being used to shape faculty support and they include a three-tier approach: faculty orientation to online education (an eight-week program), mentoring, and ongoing support. The program is being evaluated and, as reported, there are early indications of strong satisfaction from participants with this approach (McQuiggan, 2011).

Across the literature, a large number of individual institutional case studies have been reported and a few representative examples are included to give a sense of approaches that institutions are using. They include an example of an online module to deliver professional development to a dispersed faculty, a team approach to faculty support, and the use of social networking as an approach.

Macdonald and Poniatowska (2011) reported on the development of an online professional development module designed to help faculty at the
Open University in the United Kingdom understand how to support students using online tools. The Open University is the UK’s largest provider of online distance education to over 250,000 students per annum with 12,000 faculty developing and teaching course modules. Offering professional development from this institution’s perspective needs to overcome the major challenge of the sheer number of faculty engaged in teaching and the wide range and diversity of experiences and capabilities that they bring. An understanding of the working contexts of staff was an important driver in designing the module. Through the evaluation of the module they concluded, “community plays a central role in working practices . . . and is clearly of significance to many staff in supporting their professional development” (Macdonald & Poniatowska, 2011, p. 131). Given the profile of the Open University faculty (many geographically dispersed) the online module provides an opportunity to bring faculty together in a virtual way. This is truly an example of using an online distance education approach to providing professional development.

Unlike traditional professional development, which is often focussed at an individual level, there are others who strongly advocate that the development and delivery of online courses is more effective if done by teams (Oblinger & Hawkins, 2006). Wang, Gould and King (2009) report on a team approach to faculty support for the development of online education that they are focussing on at Fort Hays State University in the United States. Driven by a need for a stronger emphasis on the quality assurance of their courses, they have implemented an approach that is more collaborative and team-oriented. Beaumont, Stirling, and Percy (2009) have used a tutors’ forum, to engage subject coordinators, tutors, and casual staff, who are dispersed geographically and time-wise, to develop as a team through an online discussion space. Ward, West, Peat, and Atkinson (2010) advocate a project management methodology with a mix of professional and academic staff in teams to support strategic e-learning development. All of these examples support the importance of communities of practice, a strong approach to professional development that has been adopted by many and well researched by Wenger (2010, 1998).

Given the increasing use of networks and Web 2.0 technologies in many sectors, it is not surprising to find advocates for professional development activities that use these emerging technologies. Anderson (2009, in Ostashewski & Reid, 2010) identifies a lack of research into the use or impact
of online networks and collectives for professional development and learning. Ostashewski and Reid (2010) note that there is little research into using social networking environments to both deliver professional development opportunities and facilitate online communities. One advantage of using these modes and environments for professional development is that they provide first-hand experience for faculty and teachers on how students are learning and engaging in a range of technologies. Ostashewski and Reid report on a study using design-based research that develops an intervention based on networked teacher professional development. They identify a model that supports a new kind of professional learning that combines both formal and informal activities and support. Through the practical application of the Networked Learning Framework, seven design principles have been identified for online professional development, making an important contribution to this discussion.

There is continued and further need to investigate the types, models, and approaches to professional development and faculty support, but the important question that still remains to be investigated is: What impact will different models of professional development have on enhanced learning experiences for students?

THE IMPACT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND FACULTY SUPPORT ON STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

While identifying theoretical frameworks and reporting on individual case studies are important and add value to our understanding of professional development and faculty support in this space, it is critically important to understand the relationship between these initiatives and student learning outcomes. Having identified this focus and the need to use changes in student learning as an indicator of impact, it is important to acknowledge that, as professional development and faculty support focusses on the individual teacher, these interventions and resources are one step removed from the direct student experience. Any evaluation of the impact professional development activities have on student learning needs to be mediated through faculty who are supported or engaged in these activities. This raises the question of how professional development work is evaluated; this has become one of the most significant areas of attention in the professional
practice of professional development (Macdonald, 2009; Brew, 2011). As Stefani rightly acknowledges in the introduction to her book dedicated to this topic, evaluation continues to be a problematized and contested topic due to the “lack of an agreed framework for evaluation of the impact, added value and effectiveness of academic development” (2011, p. 4). Gray and Radloff (2011) rightly challenge the very use of the term *impact*. Yet, in a higher education world focussed on assuring quality and accountability being able to demonstrate these connections continues to be important. This raises further questions for investigation:

- Can effectiveness and impact be demonstrated, and how?
- Can the community involved in professional development and faculty support develop a culture of evaluation and some agreed approaches and tools to meet these needs?

Within this area of discussion Gunn (2011) focusses on evaluating digital environments. She supports an evidence-based approach and advocates for guidance in the areas of evaluation and e-learning, which are based on empirical evidence and multiple experiences rather than individual case studies. She outlines a design-based research approach to e-learning, which has been implemented at the University of Auckland. These approaches apply to any new teaching and learning innovations or initiatives, and yet significant gaps remain in understanding approaches or shared practices.

As has been demonstrated by the studies cited in this chapter, professional development for online teaching faculty is undeveloped and underresearched. It is very clear that more research is needed on the quality of professional development activities offered and, most importantly, on the “impact on institutional and individual performance” (Moore, 2006, p. 62). As Stefani succinctly summarizes, “Our practice should be research and evidence based; and that evaluation should focus on the processes by which developers effect change in attitudes and academic practice” (2011, p. 223). This, indeed, is a research agenda in itself. Conceptual discussions, methodologies of how to achieve this, and well theorised, larger scale studies are needed across institutional boundaries to make a substantial contribution to this discussion.
CONCLUSION

It is generally agreed that clear distinctions between online teaching, distance education, and campus-based teaching cannot and should not be made. With the increased use of technology in teaching, these modes of delivery have converged; the knowledge and skills of all faculty have blurred and, given their interdependence on technologies, continue to change. The need for professional development and faculty support is a critical element in assuring good teaching and learning practices through any delivery mode. However, what is not as clear is how best to do this. I have broadly categorized the discussion of a complex and multi-faceted area of professional practice into four broad areas: institutional positioning, faculty needs, types of professional development, and impact. These areas are not discrete. They draw from multiple disciplines; each is a major research project in its own right. As can be demonstrated throughout this discussion, there are almost as many individual approaches and practices as there are institutions, but having a clearly articulated institutional approach is necessary.

An institutional approach needs to be context specific, flexible, and multi-mode to address the differences in faculty needs and expertise. However, while a range of approaches and interventions are presented across the literature, many are not rigorously evaluated. Faculty satisfaction may be measured with an individual intervention, but taking this harder step further to determine if there has been any change in student learning outcomes is often absent. Critically, this is where the focus needs to be and where future research will be of most benefit for the sector, institutions, and individuals.

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