WAYS OF MEANING-MAKING THROUGH CRITICAL CHANGE EVENTS: A JOURNEY THROUGH FACULTY CHANGE NARRATIVES

By

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To my closest collective of creatives who reminded me to laugh when overwhelmed, to press in when challenged and to always go deeper than I thought I could.
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WAYS OF MEANING-MAKING THROUGH CRITICAL CHANGE EVENTS: A JOURNEY THROUGH FACULTY CHANGE NARRATIVES

By

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Chair: Dale Campbell
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Major: Higher Education Administration

This inquiry explores the dynamics of community college faculty experiencing a critical change event. The study is situated in faculty response to environmental paradigm shifts, evolving organizational mission contexts and changing roles and responsibilities that are a result of the transition of one traditional community college organizational structure to the baccalaureate degree-granting state college model. Faculty ways of making meaning through change effectively reflect the state of the college in that the external pressures that define organizational change pathways always filter through the watershed of faculty perspective. How this perspective is shaped can determine the defining boundaries for a framework for faculty meaning-making that can describe the efforts of individual faculty negotiating the paradigm shift their college has experienced. Unique faculty perspectives for framing change at this study institution provided an ideal setting for determining their responsiveness to within-college change impacts, individually and as a collective group. Studying faculty as they navigated their college culture-in-transition revealed the essence of how individuals define and modify identity relative to the dissonance produced by external change
factors. This framework for faculty meaning-making through college change is a move toward clarification of the unique position state college faculty occupy within the higher education landscape.
CHAPTER 1
CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF STUDY

Study Context

This study represents an exploration of the changing roles of community college faculty through organizational change—in this case, an institutional transition to the community college baccalaureate (CCB) model (Floyd, Skolnik and Walker, 2005). Specifically, this study focuses on how an individual’s identity is impacted by cultural and structural shifts within an organization: evolving mission contexts and changing responsibilities that define the space occupied by faculty within a community college.

The process of organizational change produces significant impacts on a variety of key stakeholders who are engaged and involved in a complex dynamic relative to the organization’s progress (Hoy and Hoy, 2006). As central figures within a college’s organizational culture, responsive to a variety of inputs and influences, faculty are uniquely positioned through their work with leadership, as well as their work with students on the path to educational attainment, to provide the benefit of diverse perspectives toward framing community college change effects.

The voices of newly contextualized CCB faculty provide a timely and relevant narrative about these types of change effects, specifically the impacts of these changes on their identity within the college and relative to their constituency (McKinney and Morris, 2006). These change effects include the context in which faculty are being prepared for ongoing service (professional development), as well as expectations for the ways in which their knowledge base will be developed and applied (practitioner research and pedagogy).
The intent of this study is to contribute a deeper understanding of the perceptions of community college faculty through the organizational change dynamics they experience. Given the increasing roles community college faculty play in preparing diverse students for various career paths and paths for ongoing educational attainment, it is important to understand the motivations, frustrations, and aspirations of this group that is responsible for so many complex educational missions within the emerging CCB framework. (Levin, Kater & Wagoner, 2011)

As community college faculty face the complexities of college change as they simultaneously engage in the work of college teaching and learning, reflexive teaching and learning contexts are necessary, cultivating an awareness of changing roles. This study examines the role and place of meaning-making (reflexivity) in relation to changing community college teaching and learning practices through what Hutchings & Shulman (1999) described as a process of simply asking questions, making inquiries, and investigating issues as they relate to faculty practice—in order to better understand how faculty are situated relative to college change.

**Problem Statement**

As community colleges change their mission contexts toward the four-year state college model, they provide an increasingly broader range of baccalaureate educational opportunities marked by more focused instruction and lower faculty-student ratios than those found in traditional baccalaureate granting institutions.

Investments in structured leadership and organizational development toward this entrepreneurial shift-in-perspective were made by existing college administrators with a vision towards carving a new niche in postsecondary education. Russell (2010)
regarded the resultant shift toward the community college baccalaureate from a holistic national perspective and with mixed reaction, stipulating the broad range of responses from states to the premise of offering baccalaureate degrees through the community college. The divisiveness this issue has generated, polarizing community college traditionalists and the entrepreneurial-minded leaders committed to meeting the federally mandated call for increased postsecondary graduation rates, has thrust a slow-developing trend into the postsecondary education spotlight—prompting states to align themselves with either camp. Though a number of states have taken a furtive step toward baccalaureate offerings in the teacher education and nursing disciplines, it is the State of Florida that has made the most headway in this regard, with eighteen institutions taking up the baccalaureate model through 2010 (FCS Annual Report, 2011).

Floyd, Garcia Falconetti, & Hrabak (2008) chronicled the State of Florida’s transition from a community college system to a state college system, finding that this transition was a response to the need for cost-effective pathways toward baccalaureate education and, ultimately, a higher percentage of credentialed workforce entrants within the state. Community college organizational change initiated from a needs-based, within-college orientation produced outcomes that operationalized institutional effectiveness with the key benefit of an understanding of the cultural context of the college and the social environment in which it exists (Watts & Hammons 2002).

Bragg (2009) suggests that the transition to the CCB model has an impact on faculty’s instructional strategies, both relative to pedagogical approaches and a shifting understanding of student characteristics within the state college baccalaureate model.
Levin, Kater & Wagoner (2011) indicated that in their practice, community college faculty have traditionally come to their respective disciplinary programs with a variety of life and professional experiences. These individuals maintain strongly vested interests in their program areas and it is their roles as reflective, pedagogic and discipline-focused specialists that need to be well defined relative to their practice. Community college faculty are unique in their multiple roles as consumers of education, producers of knowledge and responders to industry-specified needs within this postsecondary educational setting.

The transition to this emerging CCB framework has been a challenge for existing community college faculty, with the primary issue being one of faculty development relative to institutional accreditation requirements. Glennon (2005) writes, in order to meet accreditation standards, changes are likely to be required in the make-up of faculty. Although the Higher Learning Commission does not prescribe specific degree requirements for faculty, it expects institutions to follow good practices. In general, this means that faculty members who teach general education courses should hold a master’s degree and have completed substantial graduate coursework in the discipline being taught.

Faculty teaching undergraduate courses should hold a master’s degree in the discipline being taught. In practice, however, most baccalaureate courses are taught by PhDs; although exceptions are common in certain fields such as vocational/technical, where professional certifications or experience carry more weight than academic degrees. In evaluating a proposed program, peer reviewers, who are experts in the
subject area, assess the curriculum, faculty qualifications, implementation plan and other criteria, to determine whether they meet accreditation standards.

Glennon (2005) suggests that community colleges may have difficulty attracting and retaining qualified faculty, which also may contribute to misgivings about the quality of education. With or without incentives, it will be difficult to convince the "best and brightest" to participate in a "second-rate" degree program if other opportunities are available. As a result, it becomes necessary to examine the potential issues of faculty morale that may emerge due to inequities in pay and teaching load among lower and upper division faculty, as well as potential issues concerning the mission of the institution, such as disagreements over academic research versus applied and technical learning.

**Study Rationale & Significance**

This study explores community college faculty perspective in response to the change effects of an institution transitioning to the community college baccalaureate model. The impacts of this organizational paradigm shift—in this case, a transition from the traditional community college to the state college organizational framework has displaced faculty career and developmental pathways (Floyd, Skolnik & Walker, 2005). Specifically, this inquiry focuses on how faculty identity is impacted by cultural and structural shifts within the college; that is, evolving mission contexts and changing responsibilities that define the space occupied by faculty within the college. This study helps to define and structure the method by which faculty perspectives are shaped, while also providing a vehicle for describing the meaning-making efforts individual faculty engage in to negotiate the paradigm shift their college has undergone.
Study Purpose & Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to determine the meaning-making methods faculty employ as they experience the effects of organizational change within a college undergoing transition from a traditional community college framework to a state college, baccalaureate degree-granting model. The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How does community college organizational change impact faculty roles through the transition to the community college baccalaureate model?
2. How do community college faculty change their practice to meet evolving college needs?
3. How does community college change affect faculty recruitment and development?
4. How do the perceptions faculty develop toward community college change impact their professional identity?

As educators involved with the burgeoning Community College Baccalaureate movement, community college faculty are consistently challenged to consider, explore, and most importantly practice what it means to be a professional committed to serving not only their community, but also their own discipline (Shulman, 2007). Such challenges prompt faculty to recognize, confront, and negotiate the relational complexities of colleges-in-transition.

This study examines the role and place of faculty reflexivity in relation to changing community college teaching and learning practices through what Hutchings & Shulman (1999) described as a process of simply asking questions, making inquiries,
and investigating issues as they relate to faculty practice—in order to better understand how faculty are situated relative to college change.

**Study Implications**

There are salient implications for theory development and practice that can result from examination into organizational change effects that impact faculty behaviors, competencies, communication strategies, and investments in professional development that can inform successful and sustainable community college change. Levin et al. (2011) suggested that given the multiple and changing missions of community colleges and the way in which faculty respond to these shifting contexts, it is necessary to reflect on how community college faculty can reconstruct their profession, while also creating new professional roles in their professional spaces. Research on how faculty develop new identities that are as adaptable as the working conditions they occupy can be the basis for considering just how competencies for faculty practice within the CCB model can be defined.

Larger considerations for future inquiry that this study’s findings have precipitated include:

1. If successful faculty adaptability can be empirically observed and defined, can it also be successfully replicated given similar organizational change contexts?
2. Does the transition to the CCB model reflect a core re-thinking of the original structures that drive faculty recruitment and development?
3. As colleges face increasing issues resulting from changes to organizational mission that necessitate reconsideration of curricular and pedagogical
approaches, can a valid and reliable model for successful faculty adaptability be developed?

**Study Organization**

This study examines the significance organizational change impacts on community college faculty as they experience the transition from a traditional college model to the community college baccalaureate model. The study has been conducted at one Florida community college that has initiated several Community College Baccalaureate programs that are in varying stages of development and implementation. The study utilizes a five-chapter structure for the report format.

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the history and impacts of the transition of traditional community colleges to the community college baccalaureate, four-year state college model. This organizational transition is the context for the examination of change impacts on faculty identity, practice and development.

Chapter 2 establishes the need within the field to examine impacts of community college change on faculty identity, as well as the way faculty make sense of their changing roles and professional contexts. Chapter 2 explores organizational change and faculty development literature to identify the gaps in perspective on community college workforce development. The chapter then explores the literature on the history of the Community College Baccalaureate and studies on the impacts of this transition on community college faculty. The gap in research on how faculty experience this organizational change establishes the need to draw from meaning-making literature to develop a study to examine this aspect of community college faculty experience through organizational change.
Chapter 3 explores the research design and the selection of the narrative inquiry method used to explore community college faculty experience. Sample selection, methods for data collection and organization, data analysis, study design limitations and researcher subjectivity are established within the chapter.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the qualitative inquiry into the faculty experience through community college change. The emergent themes are organized and defined using open coding toward a taxonomy of themes that frame the faculty experience of meaning-making through their changing professional landscape. Chapter 5 is a discussion of the findings in Chapter 4 to address the research questions posed in Chapter 1 regarding how faculty negotiate college change; how their responses to organizational change impact their practice and how change dynamics affect their opportunities for further development. Implications for potential ongoing research stemming from this study are discussed in detail in the chapter.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The Changing Purpose of the Community College

The prototypical community college of the 1960s and early 1970s was a community resource intended to keep pace with community needs and work with community organizations and leadership to build a strong, localized base for life, business and growth (Cohen and Brawer, 2008). This was happening at a time when there was a growing awareness of the needs of underserved populations. The mission of the community college was access and the extension of opportunity—community college educational access was intended to empower underrepresented populations.

O’Banion (1997) suggested that the end of the twentieth century marked a clear need for community colleges to disengage from a then-current process model for educational attainment that was predicated on the needs of the industrial-age student. It was clear on the eve of the twenty-first century that the information age education consumer needed a vastly different infrastructure within which to design educational pathways—an infrastructure that subsequently necessitated educational leaders approach college reform through a more holistic lens; a lens that took into account multiple inputs from a broad range of stakeholders: “this inherited architecture of education places great limits on a system struggling to redefine and transform itself into a more learning-centered operation.” (23)

O’Banion suggested that the institution of education could serve as a major player in the social transformation occurring within larger turn-of-the-century transitions—with various other social agents making quantum leaps toward integration
of information sources and channels, the college and university were well-positioned to not only facilitate social transformation, but to be transformed themselves. However, this process has been slow going to date; the organizing principles that drive nimble growth in the corporate and technology sectors, even in health care, continue to elude educational leaders and change agents—limiting the institution of higher education to a reactive dynamic within a rapidly shifting social paradigm.

Though the concept of business intelligence has been evolving over the past two decades, knowledge-based organizations have been steadily growing beyond the corporate sector within social institutions such as healthcare organizations or higher education institutions. Driven by the push for greater accountability in research and practice, data or information-driven institutions have been utilizing multiple data points to piece together a holistic picture of what the organization looks like in practice in order to identify weaknesses in process and principle. Davis and Botkin (1994) defined information as data that has been organized into meaningful patterns. They made an important distinction between information and knowledge—knowledge is the organization and synthesis of all the available patterns of information in order to produce learning, which marks the beginning of the meaningful use of information toward organizational transformation.

Davis and Botkin (1994) acknowledged that the organizational goal for sustainable learning involved one important factor: the ability for knowledge-based programs and processes to adapt to changing circumstances; to self-modify in reaction to external influence. This built-in ability for responsive change also allowed for easy
customization of programs and processes that could help make organizations nimble within their socioeconomic contexts.

Arreola (2005) suggested that the “sorting” function higher education maintained during the industrial age education boom had been transformed through the proliferation of information age resources; namely, the technology resources that enabled individuals to be highly selective consumers of higher education—across institutions, modalities and socioeconomic strata. This is the primary impact technology has had on higher education institutions: an unprecedented diversification of the consumer base that has impacted the way education is delivered; the way educators are trained to deliver that education; and the way in which colleges and universities grow into the future.

Furthermore, Arreola maintained that the proliferation of technology resources within the workforce had the unexpected consequence of creating jobs that required highly-specified technology training—necessitating learners that have a very narrow focus now, but one that may change as industry needs shift. This provided colleges and universities with a very difficult moving target at which to aim their resources and human capital. Arreola termed this phenomenon the “new marketplace paradigm” and it is a paradigm that demands of higher education institutions a new strategy for organizational survival and sustainability.

Bennet and Bennet (2004) posited the intelligent complex adaptive system (ICAS) as “a new theory of the firm” in response to the rising need for creativity and innovation (indicators of the underlying need for organizations to be able to adapt quickly to sudden changes in environmental contexts) in organizational strategies, as these indicators had been consistently touted as key success factors for the past
decade: “The leading organizations strive hard to become learning organizations so the entire workforce will learn while working and have the ability to adapt quickly to market changes and other environmental perturbations.” (11)

The learning organization, so termed in both public and private sectors, has increasingly become the model for responsiveness to the environmental factors of accelerating change, increased uncertainty (with regard to funding and demand for services), and increasing complexity (resulting from the increased infusion of technology that makes real-time responsiveness an expectation rather than an exception). However, even within such uncertain footing, Bennet and Bennet noted that organizational adaptation was not necessarily indicative of a hard and fixed moment of change that could either be embraced or avoided to one’s own detriment—rather, it was a process in which multiple opportunities for change were presented and, often, change agents were pushed in a positive sense toward exploring new possibilities. The community college, in both its traditional and evolving sense, presents an interesting opportunity to examine how an organization institutionalizes its adaptive capacity at all levels—mission through individual faculty—and whether such strategies are made apparent more through institutional culture or policy.

As with any major undertaking involving systemic change leveraged against a static and longstanding paradigm, the prospect of increasing institutional offerings at the community college is challenging, to say the least. Given an imbedded culture of “demand-response” (Gumport, 2003), in which community colleges are quick to adapt to the changing needs of the social microcosms in which they exist, decision processes often lack adequate consideration regarding the long-term ramifications of such
adaptation, making a trend toward informed, evidence-based decision-making a difficult journey for many community college administrators.

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (2007) had suggested that higher education stakeholders are increasingly calling for higher education to demonstrate holistic accountability, but with special regard to instructional services and student outcomes. According to AASCU, the academy had not been able to effectively demonstrate and communicate the core value of the higher education experience that could resonate with the diverse members of the constituency it served. AASCU had charged its members with the task of developing a larger system of institutional accountability that could specifically provide perspective on the status of student outcomes in higher education.

Gumport (2003) suggested that community colleges had often been stigmatized as being unduly passive and acquiescent to whatever demands were made of them; often at the expense of a cohesive administrative direction. Cohen (2000) suggested that, as organizations such as the League for Innovation in the Community College and The Community College Roundtable had done, community colleges could establish and standardize comprehensive sets of indicators that adequately defined the varied missions of the community college into measurable sub-sets and thus establish performance measures that could yield quantifiable results indicating the success, or lack thereof, of community college missions.

With the onset of the community college baccalaureate (CCB) model, shifting mission contexts have found their way into a space that was originally intended to be a social equalizer by way of open access academic pathways. While the community
college baccalaureate may be an appropriate response to a U. S. workforce needing specifically skilled participants in order to maintain global competitiveness, it may also represent a threat to the community-based, community-strengthening ideals on which these colleges were first founded.

**Defining Change Relative to Community College Contexts**

Levine (1996) shares an interesting, almost predictive perspective in this regard, stating that fragmentation exists within higher education contexts: marked by a lack of integration throughout the learning continuum, inadequate understanding and articulation of the appropriate competencies for teaching professionals as reflected in recruitment and development practices and an inability to meet the needs of an increasingly heterogeneous student population with diverse reasons for determining and pursuing their educational pathways. However, Levine is quick to point out that it is disingenuous to criticize higher education institutions for an apparent lack of responsiveness to external pressures and challenges—or to expand upon such criticism to suggest that colleges and universities are responsible for various social ills. Higher education institutions are, in fact, inextricably linked to society-at-large and the fate of one is directly proportionate to the fate of the other.

This relationship does not make it easy to determine or define causality such that colleges may be easily held responsible for the state of the American workforce or economy—it is much more feasible to examine the evolution of the curriculum and the manner in which learning is transmitted in order to understand aspects of social and cultural evolution on a larger scale and how these continue to be impacted by higher education institutions.
Sociocultural evolution can be defined as the process by which organizational frameworks are affected through time, eventually producing a form or structure that is qualitatively different from the ancestral form (Korotayev, 2004). Change, a concept defined by the rapid pace of innovation, forming and reforming alliances among institutions, organizational dynamics and market influences, is driven by a connected economy; it creates an environment of urgency within organizations and an increasing need among leaders to respond, adapt, and anticipate (Regine and Lewin, 2000). The connected economy at the heart of organizational change dynamics is a new and rapidly evolving context built on the technology-driven, real-time awareness of all the driving and restraining forces impacting an organization.

In the context of the higher educational institution, leaders have the simultaneous access to and the burden of data that impacts their decision-making. This data is comprised of considerations about economic factors driving the workforce needs of the communities they serve, the socioeconomic indicators that impact student access to their classrooms, the market competition that can help or hinder enrollment, as well as impact their ability to recruit and develop arguably their most important commodity: the faculty that function as their product delivery system.

According to Clifton (2011), unless the United States and other top economies create new jobs at a furious pace, China and other economies will surpass it. Clifton argues that the solution to creating good jobs must be found within the resource bases of urban centers, not in looking to the federal government. Promoting entrepreneurship and job creation must be the sole mission and purpose of cities’ business leaders, government officials and philanthropists. Clifton asserts that cities will succeed by
declaring an all-out war: “I don’t use the term ‘war’ lightly. This really has to be a war on job loss, on low workplace energy, on healthcare costs, on low graduation rates, on brain drain, and on community disengagement,” he says. “Those things destroy cities, destroy job growth and destroy city GDP. Every city requires its own master plan that is as serious as planning for war.” (11) He further states that great colleges and universities are the origination point for the most highly successful startups and a critical part of new company formation; they are the most differentiating global asset in the “war for jobs.” (13)

Gleazer (1998) reflects this perspective to a certain extent in asking whether community colleges, as part of a macro-social philosophy of lifelong learning, can function as institutions providing on-demand learning experiences across individuals’ lifespans. More specifically, the college, in this context, embodies the function of social responsiveness, providing resources just as community needs develop in response to larger social and economic drivers. This places a heavy burden of adaptability on the community college—especially when considering institutional policy with regard to program development, implementation and closure and faculty recruitment and development.

Considering the story arc Gleazer (1998) generated to describe the state of higher education as a social institution in the early 1980s, it becomes remarkably apparent that this narrative is just as applicable today. Education remains a low-priority item in the minds of the public and on policy-maker agendas and, as Gleazer points out, it is as necessary as ever for the utility of education to be made clear in order for it to be considered in the same light as “that dollar problem, and the energy crisis, and the need
for sense of purpose and direction in government.” (2) He continues to write that, for educators, “the basic, inexorable, unmistakable fact and force to deal with is that of CHANGE—unparalleled and unprecedented change that perplexes the public, confounds the authorities, and demands response from education, one of its instigators.” (3)

It is in this statement that Gleazer presents one of the best summative descriptions of the considerations surrounding the evolution of the community college to date; one that resounds as clearly today as it did a generation ago. He writes that as community colleges have changed from their inception and continue to do so, it falls upon policy-makers to consider whether to validate these directions for change—to codify this change within the larger scope of the institution of higher education. This is an amazingly prescient perspective on this organizational paradigm that establishes the groundwork for this continued examination of community college change, another generation removed, facing the same organizational and external challenges and requiring the same, if not intensified, formative and summative evaluation regarding the feasibility of continued investment in the organizational mandates that currently drive community college growth.

In his foreword to Gleazer’s 1998 edition of The Community College: Values, Vision, and Vitality, Campbell asks which values should community college leaders carry forward into the 21st century: expansion toward the baccalaureate model; mission centralization or decentralization to service the needs of community, college or industry partners; the nature of the institution’s relationship with emerging competition in the form of online and/or for-profit service providers; or the taking on of the responsibility to
compete within the global market? Gleazer then asked community college leadership about their perspectives on evolving community college mission contexts.

So, given Campbell’s pre-millennial update on the emerging concerns regarding the mission of the community college, this study is chronologically well positioned as a platform for reconsidering Gleazer’s original inquiry in order to: (1) examine the deeper effects of community college change pathways; and (2) better understand the within-college dynamics most affected by such change.

**Positioning the Community College within Macro-social Change Contexts**

Educational attainment is not just a course of action based on impersonal reason and assessment; it is a personal choice and a vehicle for the expression of one’s individual conscience—a manifestation of purpose. Then again, educational attainment is often seen as a very necessary means to an end—an end that is primarily valued as a mark of individuation, self-determinism and independence—a secure job. The community college has long been seen as a panacea in this regard; a universal cure-all for the social ills of class warfare, a dwindling middle class, grinding economic downturns and, perhaps, the fading of the American dream.

Within the contexts of funding shortfalls, this higher education institution has consistently struggled to meet expectations for an improved socioeconomic outlook for the past half-century. Broad, sweeping initiatives have come and gone since the early 1990s—all intended to bolster the status of the community college as an avatar for prosperity, promise and social mobility. However, though the community college has endured, it has often been without the full actualization of these policy mandates.
There is a schism within the national sociological framework that separates a self-perceived working class from an intellectual elitist class often blamed for the growing economic disparity between the two. Higher education institutions often draw criticism for producing the intellectual elites that go on to inform policy agendas that may further alienate the working class that is considered by social conservatives as the foundation of a national economy. Community colleges have long occupied the space between political ideologies, seeking instead to champion the cause of individuals within localized contexts. This has positioned the community college to be able to efficiently serve the needs of its constituency in a relatively politically neutral manner.

Via the American Graduation Initiative (AACC Policy Brief, 2009), $12 billion were committed over a ten year time frame toward community college reform that called for an additional 5 million community college graduates by 2020, as well as the tools to prepare those graduates with the necessary skills to compete within the global workforce. However, since 2011 community colleges were once more placed in an untenable position, facing funding shortfalls due to resources being redirected toward a growing national healthcare crisis.

The Florida College system (FCS Business Plan, 2010) reported that economic crises resulted in displaced workforce members enrolling in colleges in unprecedented numbers. These individuals sought to earn new credentials and improve their education and skills via affordable, localized training opportunities, without which the only option was long-term unemployment. During the post-2010 recession, enrollment within FCS colleges increased 29% (FCS Report, 2013), placing these higher education institutions in the unenviable position of having to meet increased demand with dwindling resources.
resources. There was an increasing solidarity of opinion among State of Florida legislators that the Florida College System represented an effective response to the state’s economic challenges. Considered a haven for the unemployed, Florida’s state colleges welcomed mid-career adult learners seeking re-training or, more specifically, focused, in-depth training via newly available baccalaureate offerings.

The Florida Department of Education reported (FCS Report, 2013) that the Florida College System had positioned itself as a potential solution to the state’s workforce challenges. “As employment declines (and unemployment rises) enrollment in Florida’s colleges increases. Given the weak employment outlook, The Florida College System is going to continue to be a primary destination for unemployed Floridians to improve their jobs prospects.” (6)

The overarching mission of the Florida College System remains economic sustainability on the local level. Projecting through 2015, the FCS intended to maintain credentialistic productivity and continue to increase graduation rates, ultimately seeking to double the number of credentialed graduates by 2020. Florida Taxwatch, in a 2006 annual report on community colleges, stated that the FCS was uniquely positioned to positively impact the state’s economic growth through the development of a stronger workforce that subsequently strengthened the state’s consumer dynamic. The Florida Department of Education more recently corroborated this statement, reporting that Florida Taxwatch found the benefits produced by Florida’s colleges outweighed the costs, with a rate of return on investment of 33.9% (FCS Report, 2013).

The transition toward the community college baccalaureate (CCB) made by the FCS was a response to “high-demand, critical shortage areas in Florida’s workforce”
(FCS Annual Report, 2011). The collective response of an entire postsecondary education system in a high-volume state like Florida marks a notable degree of organizational adaptability. By meeting externally imposed needs on a number of levels—local (community), state (legislative), and national (federal workforce)—the FCS multi-tasked holistic responsiveness to a number of change criteria.

**Examining Within-College Change Dynamics**

Increasing numbers of community colleges are changing their mission contexts toward that of the four-year state college model, providing an increasingly broader range of baccalaureate educational opportunities marked by more focused instruction and lower faculty-student ratios than those found in traditional baccalaureate granting institutions. This call to transformation for community colleges comes in the same fashion as did the call to create the original system—on the heels of growing socioeconomic stressors. Detailed via the Skills for America’s Future initiative (Aspen Institute, 2011), the American Graduation Initiative saw renewed life within a national coalition serving as a marketplace for ideas intended to maximize American workforce potential by focusing on a uniquely 21st century concept: workers emboldened with a depth of skill yielding increased employability. This initiative positioned the community college as a uniquely entrepreneurial entity that transcended traditional forms of postsecondary education toward providing colleges macro-social agency, functioning as a transformative catalyst for economic renewal.

Investments in structured leadership and organizational development toward this entrepreneurial change were made by existing college administrators with a vision
towards carving a new niche in postsecondary education; a renewal of sorts for the community college.

Russell (2010) regarded the community college baccalaureate phenomenon from a holistic national perspective and with mixed reaction, stipulating the broad range of responses from states to the premise of offering baccalaureate degrees through the community college. The divisiveness this issue has generated, polarizing community college traditionalists and the entrepreneurial set committed to meeting the federally mandated call for increased postsecondary graduation rates, has thrust a slow-developing trend into the postsecondary education spotlight—prompting states to align themselves with either camp. Though a number of states have taken a furtive step toward baccalaureate offerings in the teacher education and nursing arenas, it is the State of Florida that has made the most headway in this regard, with eighteen institutions taking up the baccalaureate mantel through 2010 (FCS Annual Report, 2011).

Floyd, Garcia Falconetti, and Hrabak (2008) chronicled the State of Florida’s transition from a community college system to a state college system, a new entity that provides a third dimension to the landscape of postsecondary education in a state previously comprised of public and private universities. This transition was a response to the need for cost-effective pathways toward baccalaureate education and, ultimately, a higher percentage of credentialed workforce entrants within the state.

Community college organizational change initiated from a needs-based, within-college orientation produced outcomes that operationalized institutional effectiveness with the key benefit of an understanding of the cultural context of the college and the
social environment in which it exists (Watts and Hammons 2002; Brown et al 2002). It
is in this regard that the Florida College System occurred as an ideal context for
examination—contributing and confounding variables, operational dynamics, policy
influences and impacts and programmatic outcomes all within reach for the investigator
intending to paint a holistic picture of the interaction between organizational transition
and its effects on its component parts and stakeholders.

Changes to Faculty Roles Relative to the Community College Baccalaureate

Community colleges are in active pursuit of qualified instructional faculty to
function within the CCB model that takes many existing faculty outside of their
pedagogical comfort zones. The American Association of Community Colleges’
Leading Forward (2005) initiative asks, “What type of individual is the right fit to help
carry community colleges into the future?” There are two particular points of interest
that define this investigation. The first involves competencies that AACC described as
necessary toward effective organizational leadership. AACC findings produced six
competencies indicative of an effective leader. These competencies can considered
relative to faculty practice, as compelling measures of faculty involvement toward
college success. Each of these six competencies for effective community college
leadership are reframed below to reflect how college faculty can best express these
competencies in practice:

1. Organizational Strategy: faculty can strategically work to improve the quality of
the college, protecting the integrity of curricular offerings and promoting the
success of all students; sustaining the college’s evolving mission based on
knowledge of the organization, its environment and future trends.
2. Resource Management: faculty can equitably and ethically sustain human resources within the department through professional development efforts and maintain the instructional processes that help fulfill the college’s mission, vision, and goals toward curricular expansion.

3. Communication: faculty can engage in honest, open dialogue at all levels throughout the college community to both promote student success and support the college mission.

4. Collaboration: faculty can develop and maintain responsive, cooperative, mutually beneficial, and ethical internal and external relationships that nurture diversity, promote student success and sustain the college mission.

5. Advocacy: faculty can help promote understanding, commitments to, and advocacy for the mission, vision, and goals of the college.

6. Professionalism: faculty can ethically set high standards for their own practice and work to continuously improve that practice, demonstrate accountability to and for the college, and ensure long-term viability of the college in its relationship to the community.

With regard to preparation, AACC suggested higher education graduate programs nationwide are not yet focusing on the development of community college-specific faculty. The need for individuals who can work as knowledge producers, as well as consumers of knowledge and who are more focused on teaching and learning imperatives is steadily becoming more apparent. However, the knowledge and competencies base for this evolving teaching and learning dynamic within community colleges is actually being defined and manifested outside of degree programs designed
to be specific to the community college itself. Community college faculty that practice within the new college paradigm can be developed in a number of ways including grow-your-own programs, AACC council programs, university programs, state system programs, institutes, mentoring, coaching, and online/blended approaches.

Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) suggested that professional development within the community college system has occurred largely as a function of professional development within the ranks of colleges, as well as employee mobility between colleges. These college effects depict a picture of a closed-circuit organization that operates with acute levels of cultural specificity that exclude the perspectives, involvement, and input of other higher education entities. Given this consideration, the significance of faculty professional development that draws upon a pool of candidates within the existing ranks of the college becomes a necessary function of organizational change and transition strategies.

While the concentration of doctorates among existing community college leadership is focused within the population of presidents and chief academic officers, less than half of community college professionals overall hold a doctoral degree. While most of the doctorates held by upper-level administrators are in the field of educational administration, the majority of graduate degrees held by other professionals, faculty in particular, occur at the masters level and range across multiple disciplines. This suggests the potential importance of in-service learning toward growing instructional leaders that can serve within an evolving college framework, but it does not speak to elevated levels of faculty practice within CCB program models.
The community college leadership development pipeline continues to be supported by professional associations such as AACC, ACCT, and the League for Innovation in the Community College. However, several factors are coming into alignment to greatly impact this existing paradigm, including whether or not the pre-professional training and education that characterizes the development of college administrators should be concomitant with training that prepares community college instructional leaders with the capacity to adapt to changing teaching and learning models.

Approaches to Understanding Changing Faculty Roles

The infrastructure of an exploratory study such as this is usually predicated on a unifying theme, such as the way college faculty have come to make meaning, to make sense of their workplace dynamics, through major structural shifts like transitioning toward a CCB model.

Weick and Sutcliffe (2007) offer an ideal framework within which to consider the flexibility, or adaptability, of key organizational agents such as community college faculty. Weick’s High Reliability Organization (HRO) is described as “much more capable than others of maintaining function and structure in the face of drastic change and of bouncing back in a stronger position to tackle future challenges.” (31) Weick suggests that the organization on the path to becoming an HRO must initially face what he terms as a “brutal audit,” a profound and unexpected challenge that stresses the existing paradigm that defines the organization. The brutal audit exposes the structures currently in place to respond to change, whether appropriate or drastically lacking.
The community college can be generally described as a responsive organization, but the real issue is whether or not any particular college can exhibit the functional proactivity that marks it as an adaptable organization—one that, as Weick puts it, is defined by an ongoing awareness to change signals. Bourdieu’s (1992) concept of habitus, as applied to the macro-organism of the organization, offers another lens enabling a deeper study of the existing patterns and dispositions that mark organizational culture. With this and Weick’s concept of sensemaking in organizations (1995) it becomes possible to categorize a college’s potential for adaptability in the face of change, especially by its stakeholders—particularly a discontinuous type of change that suddenly alters the status quo.

Riley, Griffin and Morey (2010) offer a perspective on Neotribalism as an intersubjectivity framework. It is in such a context that faculty at the college level can engage in a more common type of participatory politics that transcends hierarchical considerations and allows for a personalized approach to organizational decision-making and an ownership of such a process. The interesting outcome of viewing the faculty experience through such a lens is the emergence of a need to consider such alternative frameworks of political participation as a necessary function of the self-organization of groups such as college faculty into the modern tribes that they have come to represent.

As Glennon (2005) suggests, without a holistic understanding of the place of the community college baccalaureate granting institution within the postsecondary education continuum, the existing efficient partnerships and articulations formed along that continuum may be in danger of breaking down. These partnerships, many argue,
currently serve students effectively, though not necessarily in the volume stipulated by recent federal mandates. However, at greater issue for the study institution, is the place within the community landscape that it can maintain following such a transition — and the longstanding cultural impacts such a shift can have on the stakeholders within its immediate campus community and throughout the community-at-large within its service area.

These are the issues at hand; issues that are critical to consider when thinking not only toward the workforce impacts such an institutional shift can have within a community, but also the impacts on individual identity that may be felt by many faculty. At its most basic, this study is intended to inquire as to whether an organizational paradigm shift, such as transitioning to the community college baccalaureate program model, can be a sustainable change model or will it ultimately displace so many established cultural values that the very relationship a college cultivates with its community is completely transformed?

**Examining Faculty Roles through Community College Change Contexts**

Educators have tremendous impact on individuals in classrooms, influencing learners across the lifespan, shaping educational policy, educational practices, and, thus, very much contributing to the well-being of their communities. Educational researchers' cognizance of such responsibility is heightened through participation in studies centered on teaching and learning, especially as these processes are shaped by and responsive to externally imposed change dynamics. As Golde (2007) explains, educational researchers have become stewards of the discipline who “have the responsibility to apply knowledge, skills, findings and insights in the service of problem
solving or greater understanding [and] adopting a sense of purpose that is larger than oneself.” (14) As stewards of such a charge, researchers cannot underestimate the need to learn how to make meaning from one’s own world, even as their findings may guide the shaping of others’ worlds toward empowerment in practice. This examination of how individuals make meaning within their various contexts of practice is a critical aspect of the educational practice along a continuum of change effects. In much the same way as the CPED initiative prompted educational scholars to consider the best ways in which to deploy practitioner-focused training via practice-focused faculty pedagogues, so too is the dynamic of community college faculty impacted by the need to reconsider how to best implement CCB programming. Furthermore, the inquiry drives down into what it is that graduates of CCB programs should be able to know and to do. The same outcomes emerged from the CPED Initiative’s efforts into examining practitioner competencies of graduates of the education doctorate.

Noddings (2003) claims this ever-enlarging and deepening understanding of “self” in relation to the world, for both practitioners and researchers, holds the “goods” bestowed on teachers and students through relational practice; necessitating, in this case, an exploration of the opportunities that must be created and nurtured in order to examine the goods of lived theory/practice relations, which, alongside the input of community college faculty themselves, should be valued as productive for their professional growth.

According to Shulman (2007), “A true scholar is a well-prepared professional. She is not simply one who does the work; a scholar is someone who regularly and constantly steps back from the doing and reflects on what it means.” (7) Hutchings,
Huber, and Golde (2007) note, being a professional also encompasses the personal aspect. As a researcher, in addition to having one’s academic needs met with regard to engagement, scholarship, practice, and inquiry, one’s professional development necessitates meeting needs in a holistic manner that nurtures growth in dual contexts—as individuals and professionals. This is a theme that finds its way from the researcher’s perspective directly through this study into the process of faculty meaning-making through changing contexts: “Higher education’s future depends on the creativity with which it can provide for the professional growth of all faculty and for flexibility in the shape and timing of their careers” (Hutchings, Huber, & Golde, 2007).

Becoming effective stewards of higher education practice and contexts can be achieved by redefining the lens through which we examine the ways in which organizational evolution impacts the transformation of individual roles (Levine, 2007; Shulman, 2007). Becoming professionals necessitates a willingness to take risks in dramatically changing perspectives on what it means to be faculty in changing environments, or as Shulman (2004) explains, “otherwise, the familiar furniture of the mind will remain in its place, and we will be able to do little to replace it.” (3) Valuing the work of teaching and learning practice is very worthwhile territory for the examination of community college faculty as the professionals they are, and are becoming, along the continuum of change.

Thus, the researcher has the responsibility to think beyond individual needs for practice and to consider what current and future community college faculty practitioners need in preparing for the challenges that mark the ever-changing community college landscape. Facing such issues as utilizing emergent technologies, addressing concerns
associated with diversity of all kinds, socioeconomic status, and community involvement, using assessments and evaluations to show accountability, closing the achievement gap, and meeting the demands of a society becoming more mobile and more global, researchers desiring to become stewards of the discipline of higher education must conduct inquiry that provides perspective on faculty practice that is more sophisticated than what has been traditionally considered sufficient in the past. Such perspective can be achieved by making a clear distinction between the top-down expectations for community college faculty practice and the on-the-ground reflexivity that is occurring in the midst of change contexts and the implications such perspectives can have on future faculty development and practice.

Lesser and Storck (2001) suggested that as organizations grow in size, scope, and complexity, sponsorship and support of communities of practice (or groups whose members regularly engage in sharing and learning based on common interests) could improve organizational performance. This model for communities acting with shared goals can be applied across higher education environments through the development of knowledge communities. Knowledge communities, also commonly referred to as communities of practice, can become self-sustaining because they are member-driven entities—what the authors described as a valuable mechanism for harnessing social capital within the college.

**Examining Changing Community College Faculty Roles**

Wright (2005) states that as many new faculty commence their careers at universities, they often express frustration regarding the administration’s unstated expectations for their involvement with the teaching role. Many junior faculty state that
the hiring institution maintains an attitude that they should already know how to teach as a function of their graduate experience, but the paradigm in which they have developed is more akin to academic collegiality, rather than traditional pedagogy.

Johnson and Ryan (2000) suggest revised definitions of faculty roles and a revised understanding of the context in which faculty teach in order to best evaluate the process of teaching and student learning outcomes at the postsecondary level. If faculty roles should emphasize collaboration with engaged learners, as well as with peers, regarding the facilitation of learning, then it stands to reason that the community-based model in which faculty best explore the scholarship of teaching and learning with their students can also be the model in which students can best navigate the cognitive complexities with which they are presented through interdependent inquiry.

However, Shugart (2013) maintains that change can only be navigated successfully through “deep and meaningful conversation” (14) and that it is leaders who are obligated to create the spaces in which these conversations can occur, though they may reveal conflict or dissonance. Shugart suggests that unlike existing exchange around college change that serves to affirm leadership positions and further politicize infrastructures, it is instead important to generate opportunities for disruptive conversations. He writes that the type of college change that intentionally reshapes institutional culture from an “industrial model of productivity toward a model that is learning-centered.” (15) begins not only with criticism of the status quo, but an intentional displacement of the hegemonic culture by another emerging culture. This is what Shugart identifies as a rising trend in community college politics—the emergence
of the teaching-focused, learner centered faculty practitioner that seeks to practice and develop within a new college model.

Follins, Paler and Nanin (2015) build on the existing concept of faculty development programs, traditionally designed to address gaps in job satisfaction, faculty performance or developmental opportunities that might be present, writing that successful development programs are necessarily aligned with college mission. As campus climates shift or college culture evolves, faculty development endeavors have not necessarily been of support to faculty experiencing such change contexts. The authors suggest it is essential for college leadership to approach faculty development with an understanding of the unique and situational needs of faculty. Follins et al suggest the Faculty Interest Group as a mechanism leadership can utilize to gain specific understanding of faculty issues. The FIG is designed to provide faculty the opportunity to discuss challenges within a space that welcomes diverse perspectives. The outcomes are practical—to provide solutions customized to the needs of the group that emerge through FUIG discussions. The authors describe the way the groups are modeled:

As experienced counselors and group facilitators, the co-facilitators possess skills in group dynamics and are mindful of creating an environment of emotional safety. They emphasize the confidential nature of the group and the co-facilitators model appropriate levels of disclosure. The co-facilitators also select monthly readings that are assigned for all to read and elicit topics of import from the group (see the Appendix). The identification of group members’ career goals (reappointment, promotion, tenure, publication, research) is also a consistent focus of the group. (845)

It is important to note that Follins et al place great value on the co-created environment of safety and openness—both necessary conditions to the facilitation of discussion that produces deep meaning through honest expression; without which any
leadership approach to aligning college change with evolving faculty perspectives is severely hindered.

Goldfien and Badway (2014) state the importance of “Bridge” programs necessary to help transition minority community college students toward increased representation in STEM programs. However, such an effort requires faculty buy-in—commitment to engage students in developmental learning to improve their academic profiles toward STEM work. Developmental education has been a pathway for practice traditionally avoided by faculty. The authors suggest that faculty buy-in can be attained by providing the space for faculty perceptions, based in years of practice, to impact higher-level decision-making about core curriculum measures. The disconnect between leadership and faculty often emerges when hollow measures to collect faculty perceptions do not visibly translate into impacts on curriculum design or implementation.

Bringing teams of faculty and decision-makers together on collaborative spaces is essential:

[The] instructional team included both full-time and part-time faculty. Through the efforts of supportive administrators, the team benefitted from extensive time to collaborate, support from several sources of funding, and schedules that were coordinated to allow for joint planning time. This joint planning time was crucial because it took time for the team to understand their shared purpose. (125)

The authors conclude that college faculty have a tendency to self-isolate relative to their practice and that intentional interventions on the part of leadership to bring them into the active planning stages of programs like this one is necessary to align faculty engagement with shifting student needs and evolving college missions.

In order for college leadership to engage faculty through this lens of active collaboration, it is necessary for the perception of faculty value to shift in the eyes of
administrators. Channing (2016) reports that most administrators, in assessing faculty performance, tend to view teaching effectiveness as the primary measure of faculty value. Faculty, in the other hand, tend to hold the majority view that development as educators is the primary measure of faculty value—in that the ongoing developmental support of faculty speaks to their roles and identity within the growing and changing college community.

However, Channing suggests that both faculty and administrators are aligned in perceiving faculty assessment or evaluation as not being problem-based. Rather than addressing problems as they arise, both groups agree that problematizing practice and developing a shared narrative around continuous improvement should be the collective ideal.

**Impacts of Community College Change on Faculty Roles**

Dickinson (1999) stated that community college faculty function within an educational model that has remained static since the earlier part of the twentieth century: individuals who have received graduate training in a specific field of discipline organize their work into departmental units and deliver information through rudimentary instructional delivery models comprised primarily of lectures. Barr and Tagg (1995) identified a pre-millennial focal shift in higher education from teaching to learning, thus necessitating new approaches toward achieving student learning outcomes. However, community college faculty remained behind the curve in providing instruction developed toward teaching the whole student, based on indicators ranging from subject matter competency to cognitive development. Institutional policy toward faculty research that could shed light on the particular needs of community college students remained
inconsistent and the majority of such studies continued to be conducted by entities external to the community college environment.

Fugate and Amey (2000), having surveyed faculty at community colleges, reported that community college faculty, though having selected this career path for its focus on teaching, are concerned with being continually responsive to the shifting needs of their changing student populations. College faculty described research that contributed to their responsiveness toward student needs as a necessary and desired component of their practice, in addition to the primary role of teaching. However, faculty reported often having to rely upon research (on teaching and learning at community colleges) that had been conducted by scholars that were not directly situated within their field of practice. This created a gap between the majority perceptions of college functionality and efficacy, as seen through the lens of scholarship, and what was experienced in-field, in-practice from the front-lines perspective of college faculty.

Dickinson (1999) suggested that the community college paradigm shift, from an instructional focus to a learning focus, was where the concept of empowered faculty came in; the increased responsibility faculty have regarding student learning outcomes, combined with the increased freedom to develop appropriate pedagogical responses to student learning needs, positioned community college faculty in an ideal stance from which evidence-based solutions promoting student learning gains could be developed. Dickinson’s perspectives toward an integrated learning process for students derived from faculty consideration of localized and context-specific research, along with interdisciplinary and cross-functional considerations, moved community college faculty
beyond the strict parameters of teaching, of specific content knowledge, towards an active consideration of students’ subject matter competency.

Citing research that identified a shift in the outcomes and goals of the community college from expanded access to teaching and learning excellence, Van Ast (1999) suggested a renewed focus for community colleges in addressing the labor market’s increasing need for cognitive complexity in students hailing from diverse social contexts with varying levels of educational attainment. The author further noted that a discrepancy in perception between faculty and students regarding the scope and process of learning was a possible hindrance to improved student learning outcomes. Van Ast suggested that improved alignment of faculty teaching agendas with theory regarding improving student outcomes was necessary, possibly resulting from administration’s investment in faculty development that focused on pedagogy, as well as increased efforts at faculty self-assessment relative to achieving student learning outcomes.

Though there are varied perspectives on the practitioner priorities of community college faculty and even some discrepancies regarding the niche these higher education professionals fill within the postsecondary education landscape, there seems to be an emergent unifying theme that describes the plight of faculty as being frequently tasked with the unenviable goal of remediating students who are the product of a deficient background educational context, while simultaneously legitimating the paths of students eager to cross the mythical threshold of the community college into the reward-filled world of traditional postsecondary education and professional success. The professional practice of community college faculty is comprised of many varied force
factors that bend and shape the parameters of faculty existence within the college. The often-tenuous relational dynamic between college faculty and administration may sometimes contribute to a common goal of improved student learning outcomes and, at other times, is overtly detrimental to the joint achievement of any shared goal.

Faculty and administrators do not often share common perceptions regarding educational outcomes for the students at community colleges, which is indicative of a systemic problem with regard to internal and external expectations for community college student outcomes. Brown et al (2002) suggested that future community college educators need a multicultural perspective on educational leadership that includes sensitivity to diverse meaning-making and decision-making strategies, an understanding of organizations as cultures with symbolic dimensions, and a balance between theory and practice that includes concept application, reflection, and an understanding of the future by way of the past. The authors surveyed a population of instructional leaders at several hundred colleges, primarily designated as Chief Academic Officers, and identified appropriate competencies in the areas of leadership, communication, institutional planning and development, management, policy, research methodology and application, higher education law, higher education finance, technology, and faculty and staff development as necessary indicators for appropriate leadership of community colleges given their diverse mission contexts.

Brown et al (2002) noted that respondents to their survey identified the ability to communicate within the specific cultural context of the community college as the chief competency necessary for successful college leadership. The authors further suggested that though continuous evaluation of college faculty and the need for
programs that develop contemporary leadership may be in place, such evaluation is not necessarily systematic, nor is it necessarily research based. This level of inquiry and institutional self-reflection is necessary for colleges to be responsive to changing stakeholder needs via proactive institutional programming. Interaction between administrators and faculty is necessary to form a cohesive vision for the future of community colleges that triangulates the goal of improved educational outcomes among the influencing factors of administrative visioning, faculty perceptions, and student expectations. The development of college faculty operating out of a holistic vision for institutional effectiveness toward improved student learning outcomes is articulated by faculty as key to the aligning of institutional mission with student outcomes.

Watts and Hammons (2002) suggested the best way to address community college faculty development needs is through a multi-tiered approach that utilizes both pre-service (graduate study) and in-service (in-house programs and professional associations) solutions. The authors emphasized needs assessments as critical to the identification of gaps in faculty structures relative to the obligations the college has to its specific set of stakeholders. Such a needs assessment, in anticipation of adapting faculty to emergent stakeholder needs, is commensurate with the cultural paradigm of the community college as a service provider responsive to the specific needs of its constituency. On a smaller scale, the responsiveness of faculty to the specific and changing needs of diverse student populations can also benefit from localized inquiry into best practices for meeting the needs of these stakeholders. Van Ast (1999) conducted research resulting in the identification of tension points between community college faculty, their institutions, and students. These tensions were directly related to
the lack of faculty development that can contribute to mobility, inadequate institutional standards incapable of promoting student learning gains and the lack of resources that promote healthy student-faculty interaction.

The convergence of disparate dialogues regarding student outcomes and what methods can best promote these outcomes continue to be hindered by two major factors: (1) faculty at community colleges continue to have a difficult time overcoming their teaching loads in order to pursue scarce opportunities to expand their knowledge base regarding student learning; and (2) administrators are so far removed from the core processes of student learning that drive the momentum of their college that they fail to realize that institutional effectiveness is entirely contingent on improved practice toward those student learning outcomes.

Fugate and Amey (2000) reported community college faculty as predisposed to functioning within an application-based environment in which theory is translated into practice. However, the authors also found that faculty operate out of disparate background contexts comprised of varying levels of educational attainment, as well as divergent paths of socialization that result in disparate perspectives on the type of theory best applied toward positive student learning gains. These findings identified the need for professional development of community college faculty toward evidence-based decision-making with regard to pedagogy, student outcomes assessment, and the utilization of appropriate theoretical frameworks regarding faculty practice.

Whereas faculty tend to share common perceptions regarding the best articulation of professional development opportunities, many also demonstrate a trend toward maintaining an increasingly ineffective educational method defined by students
interacting with faculty in a deficit-based, authority-dependent model. These are the faculty that perpetuate a systemic problem that originates within a broken model; these faculty can best benefit from professional development opportunities that may expand their perceptions toward more complex pedagogical models. However, without adequate support from college leadership, such efforts, especially within the college, often serve to create fragmentation among faculty groups resulting in opposing factions with regard to which pedagogical approach is best.

Murray (1999) reported that community college faculty articulated administrator approval of faculty development opportunities, such as attending professional conferences and grant funding for development activities, as being of primary importance. Though Murray cited a lack of appropriate structure for faculty development initiatives at community colleges as the chief reason why faculty may feel underappreciated and marginalized by administration, it is the concept of faculty ownership over their own developmental processes that was emphasized as a strong concern. Community college faculty perceptions about the lack of freedom to take initiative regarding participation in professional associations and developmental opportunities potentially reflect a corollary issue regarding their inability to take ownership over student learning outcomes, the assessment of those outcomes, and the responsiveness necessary to improve said outcomes.

Fugate and Amey (2000) suggested a deeper understanding of faculty motivations and the development opportunities available to faculty was necessary in order for administrators to continue to build the ranks of an understaffed component of the community college labor force. The authors suggested that many faculty found their
way to the community college as a function of their desire to teach and put theory into application, rather than placing primary emphasis on the publish-to-advancement model found at traditional universities. The problem with this potentially successful theory-to-practice model is that faculty tend to avoid a cohesive and standardized path to employment (with regard to established practitioner competencies) and lack a firm foundation on which to build their practice.

Murray (1999) suggested that the important components of any effective faculty development program at the community college are: administrative support and a climate that fosters and encourages faculty development; a formalized, structured, and goal-directed development program; a connection between faculty development and a defined reward structure; faculty ownership over the continuing developmental process; support from colleagues for investments in pedagogy; and a belief that pedagogical development is valued by administrators. Taking a speculative approach on the future roles of community college faculty, Dickinson (1999) suggested that the decentralization of the management of learning processes could empower faculty to maintain greater control over the learning paradigm, shifting away from the provision of teaching and toward the production of learning, focusing on the collaboration of faculty and students as co-producers of knowledge.

How Organizations Make Sense of Institutional Change

Examining the way community colleges have adapted through the transition to the CCB model can yield an understanding of the functional dynamics of the community college along a dynamic change continuum. This examination can also help determine the indicators of college that can inform an ongoing discussion of faculty practice
through evolving college mission. Boisot and Child (1999) described adaptive systems as those that must match the complexity of their environments in a systemic way in order to either achieve organization-environment fit or to establish an autonomous framework within which to operate independent of externally imposed constraints. The organization, in this case the community college, is a system having to adapt to external influences that originate within other systems that impact its mission and purpose, such as the needs of the workforce.

This dynamic shapes not only the nature of the community college's response to change drivers, but also the channels through which that response occurs. Boisot and Child (1999) defined such systems as interpretive. Interpretive systems provide two options through which organizations can respond to the complexity of their environment: (1) they can either reduce it through understanding and direct action; that is, elicit the most appropriate single representation of that imposition of complexity and summon up an adapted response to match it; or (2) they can absorb it through the creation of options and risk-hedging strategies; that is, consider multiple and sometimes conflicting representations of environmental variation and develop a range of responses within the cultural lexicon that are functionally less specialized than the environmental input and so, operationally, non-reductionist in approach.

Birnbaum (1988) offered a simplified perspective on this organization-environment transactional model: (1) systems receive inputs; (2) systems transform inputs; and (3) systems return transformed inputs to the originating environment. In the context of this study, do community colleges “absorb” complex inputs and take the situational approach of responsiveness or do they “reduce” the input?
In considering this responsiveness dynamic, it is important to consider causality; that is, the nature of the complex environments in which community colleges exist. More specifically, Orton and Weick (1990) asked whether organizations are determinate, closed systems searching for certainty or indeterminate, open systems expecting uncertainty—or both. Weick posits, via the theory of “loose coupling”, that any system, in any organizational location, can act on both a technical level, which is closed to outside forces (coupling produces stability), and an institutional level, which is open to outside forces (looseness produces flexibility).

Miller and Page (2007) suggest that social science has been largely unable to model human behavior. That is to say, the challenge in modeling human behavior lies in being able to predict human behavior—more specifically, predictors for human behavior in evolving organizational systems or, as Miller and Page term them, complex adaptive systems, are rare or inaccurate. The authors further suggest that the best path toward understanding human behavior through complex adaptive systems is to assume that behavior is adaptive and that such adaptability is necessarily tied to the nature of the adaptation within the system. The authors’ research found that individuals within such systems adapted to change contexts in ways that defied rational predictions for behavioral response. That is, individuals did not often take the rational course of action, sometimes acting against self-interest or, at other times, forsaking the community’s interest for self-preservation. Miller and Page write:

> We have good evidence that humans do not always act like rational agents and that adaptive behavior may lead to very different outcomes, and thus we need some flexibility to be able to explore the interest in between strategic extremes we have come to rely on. (221)
In the context of this study, the community college, as a complex adaptive system, interfaces with its complex environment by both absorbing complexity, as well as reducing complexity—enabling the organization to both maintain internal cultural stability, given the over-arching guiding vision of the community college as a social institution, as well as a consistent adaptive response to external factors that may diversify an individual organization’s mission in response to unique localized variables.

Weick (2001) explained this organizational dualism by suggesting that the design of an organization can be considered along a continuum that ranges from a static “blueprint” to a more dynamic recipe. In Weick’s model, the organizational design blueprint can be a static conceptualization of how the work of the community college makes sense to the agents (faculty) within the organization (college)—whereas the organizational design recipe provides a more dynamic understanding of how the various aspects that comprise the organization, including policy, values, strategy, mission and pedagogical practices interact to provide the organizational agent (faculty) with that sense of how the organization works. The “blueprint” model of organizational design provides the agent with a sense of what, while the recipe model provides the agent with a more nuanced understanding of how. This study is situated within the space between these two models—seeking clarity on what it is that faculty perceive their professional space to be through the organizational paradigm shift and how they will navigate that space to sustain their practice.

In trying to understand the community college as a dynamic organization, Weick’s (2001) use of the process of *improvisation* as a vehicle for what he terms sensemaking within the organization is most appropriate in this case—he suggests that
to best understand the organization, one must first understand the process of organizing: to understand being, it is best to understand becoming. Improvisation is, in addition to the lens of the complex adaptive system, another valuable vantage point from which to view the community college as an evolving and responsive organization.

**Faculty Meaning-making through Transition to the CCB**

Weick (1993) suggested that sensemaking is a highly contextualized and localized activity and can occur on the level of near-ritualism. As these contexts shift, even subtly, based on larger change factors that may transcend the experience of a particular individual within a day-to-day context, there is a danger that the delicate framework for sensemaking may break down. This can yield outcomes of unanchored personal identity and a disintegration of interpretive practices relative to organizational culture and meaning. Though this level of cognitive dissonance may occur most prominently at the individual level, there are significant repercussions for organizational stability.

Cooksey (2000) described the impacts of not examining the complex organizational dynamics that impact the sensemaking that individuals within those organizations engage in. He stipulated that contextual factors should be “explicitly embedded within any account of the organizational decision-making process.” (9) Cooksey further related that current decision theories and approaches are context-independent and have “rather poor performance records as predictive devices for decision outcomes, and because their outcomes translate rather poorly from the frequently idealized laboratory conditions under which they are tested to the more naturalistic conditions where decisions are made.” (10)
Cooksey (2000) developed a model, the *Complex Dynamic Decision Perspective*, to describe the “complex intermixing of positive and negative system feedback” (10) that ultimately describes very unpredictable behavior at the level of the individual within the organization. However, Cooksey stated that it is these unpredictable behaviors that most contribute to the overall texture of individual sensemaking. The dynamic systems Cooksey defined are nonlinear and there are no “simple pathways through them to some end state or outcome.” (12) He suggested that changes in input at one point in the decision process or context, even if negligible, may cause huge changes in decision outcomes: “a pattern characteristic of sensitivity to initial conditions.” (12) Decision system dynamics can be made even more complex if the character of the information on which the decision processes are enacted is unfocused rather than precise in nature, which is the reason this study is an attempt to examine the processes in one college in order to codify the various information pathways that impact sensemaking.

Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld (2005) suggested that individual sensemaking is a process comprised of both organizing and communicating:

Communication is a central component of sensemaking and organizing—an ongoing process of making sense of the circumstances in which people collectively find themselves and of the events that affect them. The sensemaking, to the extent that it involves communication, takes place in interactive talk and draws on the resources of language in order to formulate and exchange through talk...symbolically encoded representations of these circumstances. (16)

It was important, in the context of this study, to verify the lexicon faculty and administrators utilized to communicate about change effects and their impacts. As Weick et al. suggested, it was in the interactive discourses that faculty established,
whether within communities of practice or learning/development communities, that they best co-constructed means to negotiate organizational change.

Weick et al (2005) further wrote that sensemaking is a process that begins in “disruptive ambiguity”, such as that which emerges when organizational paradigm shift places professional identity in flux, and then proceeds along a continuum of individual processing that involves “noticing, retrospect, interdependence and a culmination in articulation that shades into acting thinkingly.” (18) It is this continuum of individual processing that served as the platform for the inquiry protocols that shaped this study.

**Faculty Perspectives on College Change**

Berryman and Bailey (1992) initially described social change and its drivers, suggesting that the pre-millennial socioeconomic environment was marked by growth and completion requiring greater flexibility, responsiveness, innovation and creative fiscal management from organizations. This environment necessitated a workforce able to adapt to constant change—individual workers able to cope with the circumstances that often exceed their static job descriptions. Such a workforce demanded a production entity (namely, the community college) that could produce a labor force comprised of higher skilled workers with more focused skill-sets that would be able to capitalize on their educational attainment—requiring less training, becoming involved at multiple organizational levels, enabling a decentralization of managerial responsibility and maintaining cross-functional perspectives more conducive to continuous innovation.

These indicators all pointed toward the community college that, conceptually at least, was positioned to meet such workforce development needs. However, what are the organizational factors that continue to enable the community college to respond to
such needs; especially along a complex continuum of change? More specifically, with regard to its essential human capital, how does the community college leverage its faculty to provide curricular options that stretch beyond the boundaries of the established culture of the institution?

Levin, Kater and Wagoner (2011) indicated that in community college practice faculty have traditionally come to their respective disciplinary programs with a variety of life and professional experiences. These individuals maintain strongly vested interests in their program areas and it is their roles as reflective, pedagogic and discipline-focused specialists that need to be well defined relative to their practice. Community college faculty are unique in their multiple roles as consumers of education, producers of knowledge and responders to industry-specified needs within this postsecondary educational setting.

Community college faculty practice can be both very rewarding and frustrating; often defined by selfless action that may go unnoticed by colleagues and college leadership, perhaps even students. Faculty practice can also be a source of great gratification and fulfillment. Individuals that pursue a faculty career at a community college may not do so for financial rewards, but rather for an abstract sense of satisfaction that is not easy to quantify. (Levin et al, 2011)

Community college faculty develop and deliver curricula in order to help their students to reach their full potential. They can be a great source of inspiration to students and can help to identify goals and advance as yet unarticulated professional agendas. Most students that work through a community college education owe a debt of gratitude to faculty that not only helped them to obtain the necessary tools to pursue
a career path or further education, but also helped them to define and articulate their short-term and long-term goals, while introducing them to a new and foreign culture of postsecondary education.

What prompts an individual to pursue the path of community college faculty? Who are community college faculty? What are the challenges and frustrations faced by faculty in the changing environments of community colleges? How do these faculty respond to the challenges, frustrations, and changes they face in their professional practice? These are the guiding questions that drive the inquiry that defines the exploratory research described through this study. The outcomes of this inquiry can contribute a deeper understanding of the reactionary perceptions of community college faculty to the organizational change dynamics in which they exist. Given the increasing roles community college faculty play in preparing diverse students for various career paths and paths for ongoing educational attainment, it is important to understand the motivations, frustrations, and aspirations of this group that is responsible for so many complex educational missions. However, the course of community college faculty development has not been a very progressive one; generally it has not been a developmental pathway that has displayed the same level of responsiveness to externally imposed needs as has been exemplified by the responsiveness of the colleges themselves to changing industry demand.

Creating New Professional Identities

Levin et al (2011) suggested that given the multiple and changing missions of community colleges and the way in which faculty respond to these shifting contexts, it is necessary to reflect on how community college faculty can reconstruct their profession
in order to not only move forward in what the authors termed the New Economy, but also create new professional roles in this space. This is a call to faculty to develop new identities that are as adaptable as the working conditions they occupy—which must be the basis for considering just how these new identities should be defined. This study focuses in on one college that meets multiple criteria for this type of examination. The study institution is equally responsive to local industry workforce needs and to serving the transfer function for students seeking to transition to the local, large traditional university.

The study institution is also a strong demonstration proof site for the successes and challenges that come with the transition to the CCB model. Ultimately, however, the study institution is comprised of diverse faculty with equally diverse perspectives on what it means to exist in that profession. Their ability and willingness to reflect on an evolving professional context, within an evolving organizational context, at an institution that is representative of the driving and restraining forces many similar institutions face makes the faculty voices accessed for this study essential to adding qualitative value to the work that Levin et al (2011) began in socially constructing faculty roles in what the defined as the *nouveau* college—an institution that is increasingly responsive to external constituencies, moving away from the traditional community college focus on the local service area.

This study is an exploration of the dynamics of the community college faculty mind against the backdrop of organizational paradigm shift—in this case, a transition from the community college to the state college; namely the community college baccalaureate (CCB) model (Floyd, Skolnik and Walker, 2005). Specifically, this inquiry
focuses on how an individual’s identity is impacted by cultural and structural shifts within
an organization: evolving mission contexts and changing responsibilities that define the
space occupied by faculty within a college. The state of the collective faculty mind
effectively reflects the state of the college itself, in that the external pressures that
define organizational pathways always filter through the watershed of faculty
perspective. This study constructs the reality of how this perspective is shaped, while
also describing the sensemaking efforts individual faculty make in order to negotiate the
paradigm shifts their college has undergone.

Change itself is the penultimate constant, because it is inevitable; it is the
process by which destinations are arrived at or outcomes are achieved (Bennis, 2003). However, the process of organizational change is one that cannot be successfully
accomplished, especially in a postsecondary educational environment, without
significant impacts on a variety of key stakeholders who are engaged and involved in a
complex dynamic relative to the organization’s progress (Hoy and Hoy, 2006). As
central figures within a college’s organizational culture, responsive to a variety of inputs
and influences, faculty are uniquely positioned through their work with leadership, as
well as their work with students on the path to educational attainment, to provide the
benefit of diverse perspectives toward framing community college change effects.

The voices of newly contextualized CCB faculty provide a timely and relevant
narrative about these types of change effects, specifically the impacts of these changes
on their identity within the college and relative to their constituency (McKinney and
Morris, 2006). Other effects include the context in which faculty are being prepared for
ongoing service (professional development), as well as expectations for the ways in
which their knowledge base will be developed and applied (practitioner research and pedagogy).

The benefit of a study conducted in a specific postsecondary educational space and focusing on a particular set of individuals within that space is the ability to center on the narratives that each uniquely define that space. These narratives not only tell a very human story regarding change impacts on individual identity through crisis, but also yield a social discourse that points to larger issues relevant to community college change.

The narrative data this inquiry yielded provided emergent themes that framed a surprising discourse. This change discourse emerging from various faculty narratives did not necessarily reflect a thought process of “whether or not this new organizational model is sustainable” but rather, “am I sustainable in this new model?” This understanding of the emergent discourse prompted a reductionist approach to the data analysis; driving the inquiry down to the person level, the most basic unit of analysis: the faculty. Studying cultural identity at the organizational level yielded insight into the shifting identities of community college faculty in transition. However, study data pointed to the real story of community college paradigm shift as being, perhaps, not one of organizational-level change effects, but the perceptions of faculty regarding how change will impact their “ways of being”. This evolving understanding of the discourse indicated deeper layers of meaning with regard to faculty responsiveness to organizational change effects; more than was readily revealed in just what was made directly available via faculty interview content. It was in the context of what was
happening to individual identity that the real story of organizational change emerged through faculty experience.

The Community College Faculty Change Narrative

The story of the lived community college faculty experience is one that has been unfolding for over five decades. The newness of the community college paradigm within a larger higher education framework has provided researchers with a unique opportunity to study the genesis of a revolutionary model for open and accessible education—a democratic construct in the spirit of Enlightenment era ideals. The story of the community college is grounded in high cultural concepts—of social service, social responsibility and social justice. These ideals not only marked the birth of the institution, but also its next great transition to the four-year, state college/small college model. As the community college evolves within a symbiotic and fluid relationship with a broad society as its consumer base, so too have the ranks of community college faculty been required to adapt to match the growing need for production of future workforce members necessary to inject new life into a struggling economy.

There has been much written about the adaptability and responsiveness of the community college as a social institution—even more about college leadership as adaptive innovators. What about community college faculty? What about the human capital colleges rely upon to deliver the product they provide? What is that product exactly and how has it shaped faculty minds and attitudes toward their lived experience? This is a story not just about community college faculty adapting to or resisting the organizational change that has marked their career contexts and pathways. It is a story about human beings and how they respond to change, both expected and
unexpected—a story about the fundamental aspects of the human experience and the ongoing “dance of reality” that finds people struggling to find meaning in the midst of uncertainty and the unknown.

The community college faculty story is essentially a story about cognitive dissonance; that is, discomfort within the changing mental spaces we occupy in reaction to shifting environmental contexts. The faculty story is also about adaptability—the ability to not only survive, but thrive in fluid dynamics. Community college faculty have made their careers in professional contexts that many other educational practitioners may have found too unpredictable to negotiate. In fact, these faculty have created an entirely new professional competency centered on the idea that professional development must match the fluidity and volatility of a professional space that does not necessarily guarantee the implementation of newly developed knowledge, skills or abilities.

Think of the implications such a dynamic can have on human psychology. The essence of change drivers that impacts minds to bring about positive transition is itself transformed—there isn’t necessarily a return on investment of time and energy; the objective of a particular development pathway may not necessarily be there once the path is completed. This represents an entirely different take on the archetypal concept of the “journey”. Campbell’s (1949) idea of the monomyth, which represents basic patterns found in narratives that have existed across cultures and throughout history, does not apply cleanly to the community college faculty narrative.

Whereas the “hero” or protagonist in Campbell’s journey structure is expected to transition through three main phases of the journey: Separation, Initiation and Return,
the archetype of community college faculty is expected to respond to a subtly different and consistently changing monomyth structure. This is a structure that no longer positions faculty in a space of responsiveness to the needs of a community, a collective of human beings, that itself requires new knowledge to prepare for and respond to social change—rather, this new monomyth requires faculty to instead be reactive to shifting economic drivers that seek to shape the community to serve the needs of the marketplace—a space that exists outside traditional community contexts.

The marketplace is an economic entity; it is a social construction of reality predicated on the concept of exchange—interaction that is intended to yield mutual benefit to both parties involved. However, over time, the capacity to engage in economic exchange has become a valued commodity beyond the actual terms of the exchange. The marketplace has become a conceptual framework that can drive decision-making, as opposed to the inverse relationship that has historically driven the development and evolution of the marketplace. It is now that marketplace that assigns value to social contexts and it has increasingly become the role of social institutions such as higher education to create social agents to convey that value further. The community college, traditionally the space in which individuals could increase their social value and engage in the marketplace to bring more value to their community, has now become the space in which individuals are prepared, with marketplace values as drivers, to carry those values back into the marketplace and further drive the growth of said values.

And what about the faculty that exist within the community college space? What has their role become and how do they respond to that changed role? To better
understand the dynamic of tension between one mental space and the other, it is important to consider the transition that college faculty have experienced and continue to experience given the further shifting of organizational paradigms. Just as college faculty began their journeys with the near collective notion that theirs was a path toward the increased cohesion of communities, not only with regard to economic indicators, but also social indicators, many faculty have now begun to find that their role is steadily becoming that of a producer of utilization-focused human capital toward economic ends that often transcend the wealth of a particular community.

Drawing from Quinn’s (1997) idea that society can only self-correct given a shift toward a “new tribal revolution”, that is, toward the natural social state of sustainable tribal living, we are able to make the conceptual leap toward a view that community college faculty are, in fact not so much the leaders of tribal communities, but rather the meaning-makers within said tribes that are able to reveal new ways of being that can help members sustain and grow the tribe. The inverse vision is one of a larger culture, a culture of consumerism, demanding social agents to further its economic ends and drive consumption, looking to the college as a means for the production of cultural capital—a workforce that is trained to drive production of what the marketplace demands.

In this case, faculty roles shift from those of helping individuals self-actualize toward helping said individuals purposefully lose individual identity—to become defined by a socioeconomic role that now defines personal reality. According to Quinn, a “vision” is a world-view that inevitably influences member behavior within a given culture, while “programs” are organized but insufficient efforts to alter those behaviors.
Quinn (1997) says: “Vision is the flowing river. Programs are sticks set in the riverbed to impede the flow. The world will not be saved by people with programs. If the world is saved, it will be saved because the people living in it have a new vision.” (p.27) This metaphor aptly describes the duality of the community college faculty lived experience—an existence somewhere between “vision” and “programs”—a pathway that can either move toward the sustainability of human endeavor or the perpetuation of potentially non-human and unsustainable socioeconomic capital.

The discussion of this study’s outcomes begins with a deeper dive into the framework of human responsiveness through environmental change derived from the findings. This framework describing stakeholder response to organizational change that impacts both individual and collective identity is best viewed through an evolutionary biology lens, specifically that branch of research that attempts to explain the social-behavioral phenomenon of the evolution of cooperation. As Axelrod (1980) wrote, the evolutionary approach to examining organizational behavior is a simple one: whatever is successful in practice is most likely to appear more often in the future. In this context, it is important to study the impacts on organizational structures and the mechanisms by which the most successful responses to these impacts are institutionalized. That is, in essence the basis for this study and the primary lens with which the findings may be considered.

The primary themes that describe faculty through organizational change at the study institution—the Ways of Seeing, Being, Doing and Building—yield an example of what Nowak (2006) described as selfish replicators foregoing some of their reproductive potential to help one another. The author suggests that in social frameworks, evolution
is fierce competition between individuals and should only reward selfish behavior. However, given external impacts on a particular organizational system, Nowak found that instances of interpersonal cooperation temporarily overrode natural mechanisms to respond to changes in the environment. Examining faculty response to organizational change through this lens can frame a similar view of the formation of a type of cooperative that helped faculty at the study institution make sense of their changing expectations, priorities and pathways.

However, in order to gain a clear understanding of how this process of meaning-making occurred within this change context, it is important to first understand, from the vantage point of the faculty themselves, their pathways to this work, their philosophies on practice and the development opportunities they seek to be able to adapt to changing workplace contexts.
Figure F-1. Faculty Meaning-making through CCB Transition.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

An Analogy of Organizational Change Impacts on Individual Identity

It is important to situate this study in a larger inquiry framework with which the researcher has been involved: the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED). It is this research base that first defined for the researcher the varying dimensions in which faculty operate across the higher education landscape. Just as there are varying values by which faculty develop through their careers, so too do many faculty desire an education base that develops them for the specific pathway in which they may want to practice. The primary distinction that the CPED project drew was between research and practice as professional expressions. The faculty at the study college indicated a further refinement of their practice as pedagogical expression. So, it is the groundwork that CPED laid in asking the questions around appropriate preparation of faculty practitioners that situates this study design.

In 2007 the Carnegie Foundation implemented CPED in order to encourage collaborative discussions on how educational doctoral programs could be redesigned and transformed to meet the distinct needs of both practitioners and researchers. This mandate stemmed from the increasingly perceived need for improved approaches to training practitioner-focused educational professionals at the doctoral level—which, in turn, necessitated a focus on the preparation of programs and program faculty to deliver this new model for the education doctorate. This change dynamic, which impacted colleges of education at postsecondary institutions nationwide, impacted the identities of program faculty within these colleges, not only in considering how they would approach
this new pedagogical model, but who they would become in doing so. This is a very similar dynamic experienced by community college faculty considering the “how’s” and “who’s” of change relative to the implementation of the community college baccalaureate.

With regard to the preparation of quality practitioners, Shulman et al. (2006) explained that schools of education had struggled to provide a “high level of preparation for practice or leadership found in other professions.” (3) This discussion point was highlighted throughout CPED in the question of what future professional practitioners of the educational doctorate would be expected to be able to do, in a particular setting, and how well. This point of inquiry has strong implications for community college faculty relative to how they are supposed to educate individuals through CCB programs and who these individuals are supposed to be once they have exited these programs. The nature of CCB faculty practice and the manner in which their students are prepared for their own disciplinary practice through increasingly diverse educational contexts becomes an essential considering given colleges’ growing provision of CCB degree offerings.

By drawing upon the initial work of the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate (CID), colleges of education were encouraged by CPED leadership to look at new models for developing professional practitioners. One model that was referred to throughout the literature was that of medicine. In the medical model, professional practices are developed from practice and repetition within a field based setting, the hospital. Shulman (2007) compared teaching hospitals, which represent the intellectual community that prepares medical doctors, with the concept of a teaching university that
would prepare educators for practice. In this example of a laboratory of practice, Shulman (2007) presented the teaching university as a site where education faculty members were engaged in “sustained programs of collaborative, accountable evidence-based inquiry and action.” (6) It was noted that laboratories of practice were not exclusive to the university; rather they could be any site that would provide a “communal, intellectual community that could even transcend institutional boundaries as it links together working scholars with shared interests and investigations.” (7)

The community college’s organizational context, though fluid and tentative, nevertheless offers a similarly ideal laboratory of practice in which the status of faculty practice and the needs of students within CCB programs can be examined. The relationship between community college faculty practice and the continuum of programmatic change along which colleges find themselves relative to CCB implementation necessitates a reconsideration of whether or not existing faculty roles and development frameworks are sustainable. Within the CPED program implementation framework, college leadership considered similarly whether existing faculty pedagogical approaches would be of continued benefit to the students who required more practitioner-based sensibilities in an educational model. The CPED Initiative then sought to establish existing education doctorate programs and those that were planning implementation in the near future as demonstration proof sites that could address these considerations. Faculty perceptions on changing program frameworks and individual identity became linchpin considerations for program leadership as they moved forward with program agendas.
When educational settings move “teachers and their wisdom of practice from the margins to the center of investigations about teaching” (Mace & Lieberman, 2006, 4), college faculty can be positioned to actively participate in “the scholarship of teaching [that] would not be some newly conceived arena of work, or a new route to tenure, but a characteristic of the institution that took learning seriously” (Hutchings & Shulman, 1999, 15). The notion of the institution as collaborative learning and professional practice space was introduced by Huber and Hutchings (2005) and involves the creation, use, and sharing of knowledge and experience within “an intellectual community space provided to enrich and encourage exchange of knowledge about teaching and learning” referred to as The Teaching and Learning Commons (Knowledge and Media Laboratory, 2006).

As community college faculty become more involved in this sphere, they can derive knowledge from their experiences and use it to collaborate with and learn from their colleagues across disciplinary boundaries. Faculty can bring to this commons their positional perspectives as teachers, learners, and professionals with a wide variety of resources with which to effectively encourage and support change. Through their inclusion and involvement in changes at the college level, faculty can provide information about not only what changes they would like to see, but also support those ideas with evidence, research, and theories about why certain changes might be more powerful than others. Faculty participation in the defining of the community college change continuum is not only invaluable, but essential if this organizational evolution is to reflect what students, educators, and institutions truly need in order to meet the challenges of preparing the next generations of workforce entrants.
Meaning-making and the Culture of Traditional Undergraduate Education

In order to assign value to the education people receive, it is necessary to first define the scope of that education within a larger social context. The core of knowledge that is the common lexicon used to communicate human ideas, social values, communal knowledge and customs comprises a base set that is expected of people when they are considered to be educated individuals. Institutions of higher education are expected to impart to students an education that affords them the social distinction of functioning as educated individuals with considerable social capital. However, contemporary higher education is comprised of a disparate collection of diverse knowledge bases strung loosely together by pedagogical similarities and common curricular ground, rather than any shared sense of educational purpose.

Perusing an undergraduate academic catalog reveals a myriad of educational disciplines arranged simply in alphabetical order, by department, or by vocational benefit. Beyond this organizational approach, not much thought is given to a relational framework for the varied disciplines. The social institution of higher education has not been able to define a common academic goal for the myriad disconnected disciplines that comprise the academic offerings at colleges and universities. General education requirements at colleges and universities are ideally intended to comprise a core curriculum for the preparation of life-long learners. This knowledge base is intended to provide an introduction to, and build a curiosity for, all the academic disciplines, while also developing an individual’s professional, intellectual and social sensibilities toward the diversity within the human diaspora.
In actuality, the general education curriculum fails to achieve these goals, because there is no clear strategy for the integration of knowledge offered within such a curriculum, nor is there any indication of the way in which varied disciplines are connected. This represents a lack of institutional determinism for the general education curriculum, which promotes a pervasive sense of disinterest among students for disparate bodies of knowledge. This is a condition that impacts faculty identity as well as the capacity for sensemaking relative to college change, as well as within-college organization of disciplinary frameworks. This type of organizational framework, or lack thereof, impacts the manner in which faculty collegiality occurs or the means by which faculty can form communities of practice.

Though faculty and administrators at colleges generally agree on course or credit hour requirements necessary for students to attain a particular baccalaureate degree, they may not clearly define the meaning of that undergraduate education and what should comprise the outcomes of that educational experience. Colleges are also consumer-driven institutions and curricular offerings tend to be market-driven, reflecting contemporary socioeconomic trends. The contemporary social environment is also employment-driven and students are increasingly demanding educational offerings specific to their workforce goals, deeming faculty identity within the context of the CCB program model an even more difficult landscape to negotiate.

If the goal of undergraduate education is to develop the whole person (Evans, Forney & Guido-DiBrito, 1998), then it should be preserved as a unique experience that should exist independent of social influences that demand specific, workforce related outcomes. The undergraduate experience should be devoted to the depersonalization
of the individual so that the student is not focused solely on vocational skills
development, but instead realizes his or her part within the greater framework of human
experience. This is an opportunity through which the student can develop socially and
individually, with growing sensitivity toward human interdependence. The current goal
for baccalaureate-seeking individuals is to minimize the time spent gaining a
generalized core of knowledge in order to maximize the time spent preparing for a very
specific professional goal through the study of a very specialized branch of knowledge.
This is often accomplished with little to no social or educational context provided as a
groundwork of consideration for such concepts as a purpose for knowledge gained, its
role as seen from a larger macro-social perspective or, perhaps, a moral and ethical
consideration surrounding the practice of such a profession or the utilization of such
knowledge.

In this context, effective college faculty are primarily concerned with the individual
student. The learning gains of each student within the college comprise the foundation
on which organizational success is built. Effective faculty operate out of a learner-
centered perspective rather than a teacher-centered model of instruction. As students
gain mastery over subject matter, effective faculty ensure that they also gain the ability
to critically assess and adapt to new inputs. These students are able to engage in
ongoing learning and, in fact, “learn how to learn” rather than gaining finite, subject-
specific knowledge. Effective faculty promote holistic student success through
integrated learning experiences that unite previously disparate knowledge fragments;
faculty are thus responsible for systemic organizational success as students are able to
move seamlessly through programs and perceive learning as an experience along a continuum.

Creating a Space for Examining Shared Faculty Narratives

Lesser and Storck (2001) suggested that as organizations grow in size, scope, and complexity, sponsorship and support of communities of practice (or groups whose members regularly engage in sharing and learning based on common interests) could improve organizational performance. This model for communities acting with shared goals can be applied across higher education environments through the development of knowledge communities. Knowledge communities, also commonly referred to as communities of practice, can become self-sustaining because they are member-driven entities—what the authors described as a valuable mechanism for harnessing social capital.

Communities of practice, as defined by Wenger (1998), are social groups engaged in the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise. Participation consists of the shared experiences and negotiations that result from social interaction among members within a purposive community. According to this definition, the community of practice can be representative of the community in which doctoral students in education pool their shared experiences and make meaning. Pallas (2001) described the process of teachers within a school coming together to share their experiences in practice and suggested that it is through this process that these teachers defined what it means to be an educator within that particular school. Their community of practice had defined the context of their practice. Pallas further suggested that communities of practice produce concrete representations of practice, such as tools, symbols, rules, and documents;
even concepts and theories that define the way in which knowledge is produced within that particular context of practice.

Murphy (2002) questions the legitimacy of the knowledge base that drives the practice of educational administration and suggests that re-culturing is necessary with regard to how the practice of this discipline is approached. However, simply producing new theories to impact educational administration is not adequate, as the process may necessitate a different practitioner point-of-view, prompting the consideration of how research findings can be applied in practice.

Copland (2003) suggested that institutional success is contingent on the concept of distributed leadership, which necessitates all stakeholders within the organizational structure accept responsibility for the outcomes valued most by the institution: student learning. Copland also suggested that distributed leadership is predicated and contingent on the idea that education professionals must be attuned to continually refining their knowledge base regarding student learning and development. The author described a “cycle of inquiry” that occurs within communities of practice centered on select critical issues and institutional problems.

Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001) stated that it is insufficient for researchers to study educational administration within the context of what practitioners do. Rather, it is necessary to build an understanding of how individuals engage in their practice and also why they do so. Distributed leadership is the conceptual framework in which Spillane et al conducted their study. Shields (2003) suggested that communities of practice are essential to the successful inquiry-based approach to organizational problem-solving, because they are catalysts for the application of a scientific method
toward problem solving. The scientific or experimental approach is comprised of a willingness to tackle the problem using working hypotheses that guide the collection and interpretation of data or facts.

Hutchings and Shulman (1999) suggested that most developing educators are not conditioned to be self-reflective about the methods of their research and practice. Successful program implementation or content delivery often precipitates a mindset of complacency regarding methodology. Often, consideration is primarily given to whether methodological approaches maintain a standard of rigor appropriate to the discipline, but the authors suggested that the questions about human behavior are ultimately questions about phenomena as they occur in local, particular contexts, such as classrooms. Therefore, the authors suggested that the inquiry-based approach to practice should not be solely concerned with proof, but also with an exploration of phenomena that can inform the development or reformation of conceptual frameworks that currently drive practice. Inquiry from within the field, as well as an investigation of the practice of inquiry itself, is a central component for practitioners who seek to become effective innovators-in-practice.

At the center of improvement-driven organizational change is inquiry: practitioners who can utilize inquiry-based approaches in their work are able to recognize problem trends before they grow into issues that have adverse impacts on the organization. Quinn, Greunert, and Valentine (1999) suggested that data collected as an organizational improvement initiative commences should always serve as a baseline for ongoing data collection and analysis. The authors made recommendations for data-driven instructional leadership that operates within a culture of inquiry, rather
than a reactionary culture. They defined the data-driven culture as an inquiry-based approach to organizational change. It is grounded in a cycle of reflexivity comprised of continuous consideration of ongoing practice, exploration of the need for change, ongoing assessment of progress, and documentation of achievements. The authors suggested that it is only through purposeful inquiry that an understanding of all the factors that influence teaching and learning practice could be achieved.

The first component of this framework is an understanding of the adult learner. It is important to define the adult learner (within the context of adult learning theory) as a unique type of learner, with motivations, capacities and challenges unlike other students in higher education. Understanding adult learners by defining the ways in which they learn is essential to understanding how reflexive inquiry can fit into the curriculum that serves them. Defining a learning theory component within this framework is also necessary to match the inquiry curriculum to the way in which adult learners receive, even co-produce, knowledge. Communities of practice are contexts that can optimize learning for adults, as they provide good person-environment fit according to the way in which adult learners develop most efficiently.

Knowles (1984) defined adult learners as individuals that need to know the reasoning behind the education they attain and why it is relevant to them. Adult students also need to learn experientially and perceive the process of learning as a process of problem-solving. This definition is part of Knowles' theory of Andragogy, which attempts to describe the experience of adult learners. The theory assumes adult learners are self-directed and autonomous in their educational attainment. They engage the learning process and acknowledge responsibility for their learning gains.
According to Knowles, adult learners are driven by a number of motivating factors. These students need to make associations and form social relationships. Knowles described adult learners as having a need to fulfill the expectations or recommendations of a formal authority figure. He also suggested that adult learners are generally altruistic and concerned with promoting the welfare of their community. They seek stimulation via their educational experience to achieve some degree of contrast to the other aspects of their lives. They are interested in educational attainment for the sake of self-development and, in this regard, resemble the higher education ideal of the lifelong learner. Adult learners require the freedom to direct their educational experience. Faculty, as a result, are put in the position of creating circumstances under which these students can increase their level of involvement and participation in the learning process. Faculty are faced with the task of having to redefine their roles to serve as facilitators for adult learners. They have to determine adult students’ perspectives on their educational attainment goals and create opportunities to co-produce a curriculum that allows students to pursue projects that reflect their interests.

Glowacki-Dudka & Helvie-Mason (2004) suggested that educators of adult learners have come to favor this adaptability of teaching and learning applications provided by students’ attitudes toward their learning experience. However, educators also have to achieve a balance between the demands for specialized education made by adult learners and maintaining uniformity in the curriculum that can help establish adult education as a formally recognized approach to educating educational practitioners.
Research Design

Though the study of navigating and deconstructing organizational change processes forms a strong literature base, the study of community college faculty as they negotiate paradigm shift within one of the most adaptable social institutions in the modern era presents an opportunity to explore the human story through organizational change.

The community college has long been positioned at the intersection of social need and personal hope. Beyond most types of postsecondary institutions, it represents the greatest nexus of social legitimation. Signifying the pathway toward individual self-determination and meaning-making, the community college is an unlikely cultural icon. However, good ideas only become great through being challenged. The opening act of the 21st century has seen the community college heavily tasked to meet the need for economic growth through workforce development on a national scale. Even more so, the 21st century phenomenon of globalization has positioned the community college to respond in development of skill-specific workforce members that can compete for positions that are mostly outsourced overseas.

The 20th century iteration of the community college has been made to evolve within the past decade, specifically and most prominently through the development of the community college baccalaureate model. This study is an approach to asking the question, from the faculty point-of-view, what have we gained and lost through this change? Does the story of this latest evolutionary step provide a useful road map to the successful transformation of community colleges in the future? Does the current trajectory of community college change serve as an appropriate cultural context in
which to explore the possible impacts to collective faculty identity; that is, what it means to be community college faculty? These are the larger questions intended to be explored toward the end of this inquiry path. However, the practical inquiry guiding this study begins with a more focused assessment of the change drivers that have impacted the evolving institution of the community college over the last decade.

Historically, mission mandates articulated by the American Association of Community Colleges have established a broad swath of indicators for college growth and performance, not the least of which include access to the baccalaureate, accreditation concerns, and the need for community engagement. Though the community college has always shouldered the weight of multiple mission contexts, the increasing burden of federal mandates has steadily increased leadership concerns over mission creep to an unprecedented degree.

The State of Florida was one of the first to take an aggressive stance toward diversifying its postsecondary offerings through the state college system. In so doing, the Florida College System contains institutions that maintain varied programs that provide baccalaureate degree offerings. Several Florida colleges have, to date, matriculated multiple cohorts of baccalaureate graduates, while other institutions are in varying stages of program deployment and planning. It is this context that provides an ideal study setting toward determining the state level and within-institution policy impacts of this new and growing strand of higher education on college faculty.

This study was designed to focus on the cultural experience within one Florida institution that transitioned form the traditional two-year community college model to the baccalaureate model. The decision for this single-institution case study design evolved
from a multi-institution case study design. Whereas the study was initially intended to focus on three Florida community college baccalaureate (CCB) granting institutions—one each in the planning, implementation and evaluation stages of the program cycle—the single institution selected for this study presented the opportunity for a more comprehensive case-based approach in that this institution maintained diverse CCB programs in each of the three phases of the program cycle. It became clear that an in-depth assessment of program effects on a single institution’s culture would be more telling than a three-institution case study, as the cultural disparities between institutions would mitigate the impact of within-institution findings.

The single Florida College System institution chosen for this study is a Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accredited college and also recognized by the Aspen Institute (2014) as one of the nation’s leading community colleges. More importantly, it is the historical and cultural context of this college that made it an ideal setting for this study. While many colleges undergo similar structural shifts, as transitioning to CCB programming and demonstrate notable success, it was the culture of faculty collegiality and community at this college that provided the foundation for examining how individuals came together as a collective to process the impacts of organizational change. Consequently, it can be said that the transferability of the findings of this study to other college change contexts may have to be predicated on similar college infrastructure of faculty collaboration, communication and collegiality.

In this context and with regard to its baccalaureate program offerings, in varying phases of deployment, the college presented an ideal data collection environment. However, it was also by virtue of the gatekeeper access that the college presented itself
as an ideal choice, as the researcher, through his involvement with the Community College Leadership Consortium and the Community College Futures Assembly, as well as the University of Florida’s Institute of Higher Education, maintained ongoing relationships with the selected college’s leadership and faculty.

Gatekeeper access, in qualitative methods, involves the approval and sanctioning of the study or just the identification of appropriate stakeholders to approach for the study by the person who controls research access at the organization. In this case, the researcher approached the Chief Academic Officer at the college to explain the scope and intent of the study. Once this conversation and exchange occurred, the gatekeeper identified the college’s baccalaureate programs, either in development or those having completed at least one matriculation cycle. The gatekeeper also became one of the interview subjects for the study. Gaining organizational or group access to conduct this type of research can be problematic; however, the researcher’s pre-existing work with various individuals that are stakeholders within this college worked as a validation framework for the researcher and the value of this study.

As it was necessary to identify individuals within the college that had been through (or are somewhere along the continuum of going through) the process of development and transition to baccalaureate programming, the relationship with the college’s campus community was instrumental in helping the researcher to identify key individuals and assess their perceptions through this change path.

As to another important consideration regarding study design, there are likely salient implications for theory and practice that can result from examining this level of institutional change that may also shed light on the behaviors, competencies,
communication strategies, and investments in human capital development necessary to achieve successful change at similar institutions. However, it is important to consider that while qualitative methodologies, as utilized to conduct this study, are exploratory in nature and can yield the identification of important considerations for organizational restructuring, such findings are not necessarily explanatory, nor are the directly generalizable to all community colleges undergoing such transition.

What one might consider “validity” in the quantitative methodological sense does not readily apply to qualitative study designs. The best approach, within a qualitative methodological context, for validating a particular study resides with the concept of confirmability. Through this process, the researcher can document the procedures and protocols utilized to arrive at the conclusions the study has yielded. Furthermore, as was the case for this study, the researcher can work with study participants to review and confirm findings or emergent themes regarding the organizational processes that have been examined. Given the institutional framework, culture and composition used for collecting data for this study and the confirmability of outcomes, it is possible for future researchers to utilize a similar approach to examine organizational change effects within similarly structured educational environments.

**Study Framework**

As the workforce in the state of Florida continues to shift and the original legislative intent toward the CCB that has driven college change may have to be reconsidered, this study is intended to assess:

1. The drivers for change that initiated the transition of the study institution to a community college baccalaureate (CCB) model.
2. The implications of this transition for institutional culture, teaching and learning and faculty development.

3. The study institution’s capacity for further adaptability for its CCB programs.

General assumptions about community colleges are that more and more institutions are changing their mission contexts and transitioning from community to baccalaureate-granting state colleges. Within the context of the study institution it is important to consider:

1. Organizational changes in programmatic agendas and policy have occurred that may have assisted in this transition.
2. Resulting changes in staffing, tenure and promotion, development, hiring, evaluation, and accreditation.
3. Methods by which the college may have institutionalized these changes in practice.

This study was initially designed to utilize grounded theory method to organize and analyze data collected via participant interviews. A grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss and Corbin, 1997) provides a pathway toward building a theory of organizational adaptability utilizing the context of the study institution’s adoption of the community college baccalaureate model in response to the state’s growing economic and workforce concerns. This method was initially favored because the researcher wanted to explore the potential for developing a theory of organizational responsiveness and adaptability centered on the transition from one type of postsecondary institution to another. Such a shift in institutional characteristics would necessitate a descriptive model for defining response parameters for changes in core
processes. This was an organization-level view on change and more apropos to the three-institution case-based approach originally identified for the study.

However, as themes began to emerge through initial passes at the organized interview data, it began to become clear that there were deeper meanings to be found within the faculty narratives than could be gleaned through any approach toward a unifying theory of organizational responsiveness to change. The emerging faculty discourse seemed to be grounded in Neotribal perspectives and began to position this study as more of a commentary on one group’s self-identification and cultural response to changing defining contexts. This new light on the process of understanding this data necessitated a deeper understanding of the faculty narrative and hence the utilization of some aspect of narrative examination as an analytical framework.

The researcher then decided to explore discourse analysis (Gee, 2010) as a methodological framework. The occurrence of discourse in any particular context is the phenomenon by which individuals who exist within that context make meaning of their reality. Discourse is essentially the practice of meaning-making. In the context of this study, the discourse is representative of verbal communication that exists among college faculty and between faculty and college leadership. The content of such discourse is what is revealed through the participant interviewing process. Examining faculty and administrator discourses within the cultural context of the study institution is a means by which to understand the social realities of these organizational stakeholders. In turn, such examination can yield the subjective perspectives of individuals within their social contexts—and more meaningfully, the intersubjectivity that occurs between the meaning-making processes of various individuals, which can reveal
the consistent core themes that arise from this collective social interaction. (Ruiz Ruiz, 2009) Discourse analysis as a method is grounded in two basic premises: 1) the knowledge of social intersubjectivity provides us with indirect knowledge about the social order because intersubjectivity is a product of it and because the social order is formed and functions through this social intersubjectivity; 2) discourse analysis allows us to understand social intersubjectivity because discourses contain it and because social intersubjectivity is produced through discursive practices. (Ruiz Ruiz, 2009)

In addition, a narrative inquiry approach (Clandinin, 2013; Webster and Mertova, 2007) to understanding the data provides a more adaptive pathway toward building a framework for understanding faculty meaning-making within the context of the study institution’s transition to the CCB model. The consideration of faculty adaptive pathways, the implications of policy changes along those pathways, and the sustainability of outcomes for faculty practice represent the structure of the intended narrative development.

This inquiry structure grew out of the original study framework that was more focused on an organization-level approach. However, with a renewed consideration of organizational discourse and faculty narratives in particular, this line of inquiry became most appropriate. So, the data organization and analysis methods finally settled on a hybrid of discourse analysis and narrative inquiry methods.

**Working with Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative inquiry is predicated on the idea that human beings understand their life contexts and give meaning to those contexts through story. Grounded in interpretive hermeneutics and phenomenology, the narrative inquiry method is a form of qualitative
research that involves the gathering of narratives—written, oral, visual—focusing on the meanings that people ascribe to their experiences. The method is utilized to glean insight from those experiences that can reflect the complexity of the human beings that have lived them. However, narrative inquiry is more than just a collecting of stories that may reflect similar experiences or understandings. The narrative researcher is focused on the ways in which a story may be constructed, the main and supporting characters within that story and the social discourses that the narrative reveals and/or stems from.

This is why narrative inquiry became the primary methodological framework for this study, drilling down from the higher order of magnitude represented by discourses to focus in on the story of community college faculty as they experienced organizational change impacting their identities.

Narrative inquiry is essential to accessing and appreciating a subjects’ varying and distinct social constructions of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). More so than when a researcher examines discourses, the narrative researcher examines the themes revealed through stories via exploratory, open-ended conversations that are predicated on a holistic understanding of the storyteller’s situational experience. Narrative inquiry finds its base in social constructionism. Individual constructions are based on and informed by the various social forces people experience; whether structural regarding the social constructs they occupy or interactional regarding the relationship dynamics they negotiate.

This manner of observational research describes and classifies various cultural, racial and/or sociological groups by employing interpretive and naturalistic approaches. It is both observational and narrative in nature and relies less on the experimental
elements normally associated with scientific research (reliability, validity and generalizability). Connelly and Clandinin (2004) suggest that qualitative inquiry relies more on apparency, verisimilitude and transferability. On the other hand, Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasize the importance of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability in qualitative studies. Because the field of qualitative research is still evolving, the criteria for its validity continue to be considered and refined.

What is presently confirmed, however, is that narrative research is a systematic inquiry into the nature of observed behavior deconstructed to the level of individual member dynamics. The method is applied toward learning what it means to be a member of a particular group. The narrative researcher’s work is not simply to describe a static image or a snapshot in time of what it means to be community college faculty; rather, it is applied to frame the lived experience of faculty along a continuum, in this case, the transition of colleges to the baccalaureate degree-granting model.

Narrative research was utilized, in this case to identify and explain a complex organizational structure in which community college faculty attempted to create relational dynamics to ease the process of transition to a new model for their practice. The dense narrative description their stories enabled the researcher to engage the intense emotional and reactionary content they experienced when faced with the dissonance of substantive changes to their social realities and cultural contexts. The dialogic exchange that compromised the data collection occurred in specific and natural faculty spaces. For the researcher, an important guiding principle for engaging faculty involved being decidedly non-manipulative and non-persuasive of their behavior or
perspective. Objectivity was the chief aim and the method of narrative inquiry was intended to preserve the views of the participants.

As the narrative inquiry method generates data in the form of stories, the researcher most values the personal reflections on the events that have transpired in the subjects’ lives within a certain time frame, told from the unique perspectives of those various subjects that experienced the events first-hand. This method preserved the complex structures, meanings and nuances of the lived faculty experience within the context of their origination. Plot structure was utilized to negotiate the complexity of meaning; therefore, narrative inquiry was not so much utilized to tell the faculty story per se, but to organize and communicate the meaning that the subjects made through their experience of the stories they have lived.

Narrative inquiry, as a method, is most appropriate among the variations of qualitative observational methods to capture the meaning-making that community college faculty engaged in while experiencing organizational change and responding to or adapting as a result of those change contexts. As distinct from other qualitative analysis methods, this method involves the organization of narratives according to themes that emerged through the coding of interview content. In this respect, narrative inquiry is compatible with other observational methods for data collection and analysis—in that it lends itself to multi-modal approaches to data organization. The use of themes to organize narrative content helped the researcher to better tell stories within a larger taxonomic framework.

For the researcher, narrative inquiry has emerged as the most appropriate methodological approach to this study, above and beyond methods like grounded
theory and discourse analysis. In investigating the meaning-making themes that emerged for a specific group, community college faculty, through a shared, lived experience—what was ultimately revealed was the story of a collective journey that members of this social group have shared. It was in the context of this journey that the researcher found the greatest expression of the phenomenon of human response to adversity—that, in this case, created such dissonance as to redefine personal identity and place within a particular social construct.

It was not clear, throughout much of the data organization process, which stories would emerge as being meaningful as the research subjects shared their lived experiences—so rather than ask a static series of questions based on the question pools that were developed for data collection, the researcher encouraged the study subjects to simply tell their stories as they were meaningful in the context of organizational transition. The researcher’s role was limited, throughout the dialogue, to simple guidance through the main inquiry themes. The larger aim of this study had evolved toward an exploration of faculty experiences through organizational change relative to the culture of a particular institution. However, if the study focus had remained solely on these parameters throughout the life-cycle of this project, it became clear that the researcher would have missed out on the hidden narrative that emerged to describe what it means to be community college faculty in a consistently fluid educational and organizational space.

**Research Methods**

For the purposes of this study the term “community college faculty” represents postsecondary academic faculty, full-time and part-time, that practice at public, not-for-
profit; private, not-for-profit; and private, for-profit 2- and 4-year degree granting institutions (a term that the literature maintains as synonymous with “community colleges”) classified by the Carnegie Foundation (2015) as:

1. Assoc: Associate’s. According to the degree data, these institutions awarded associate’s degrees but no bachelor’s degrees.

2. Assoc-Dom: Associate’s Dominant. These institutions awarded both associate’s and bachelor’s degrees, but the majority of degrees awarded were at the associate’s level.

As stated previously, the larger three-institution case-based framework was modified to focus on one case college as the study institution in order to examine the aforementioned conditions of organizational adaptation at one (1) community college within the Florida State College system that represents CCB model adoption, implementation, and evaluation. This was the foundational context for the study; however, as mentioned, it was the effects on faculty social realities through this change process that became the more interesting and revealing outcome measure.

In examining the relationship between the ways community college faculty think about and engage in meaning-making through their practice as compared to the need to adapt to changing circumstances imposed on them by their institutions, it became clear that it is the college’s culture that redefined what it is faculty are meant to do. Utilizing community college faculty perceptions, research literature, and the model of an institution that has recently undergone a major transition to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution, the concept of meaning-making and its role in preparing educational practitioners for organizational and cultural change was examined. The study addresses
issues central to understanding how community college faculty responded to changing contexts of practice through organizational and cultural shifts; namely:

- How faculty utilized reflexivity and problematized their practice.
- How pedagogies utilized by faculty met the need of an institution that had drastically expanded its mission contexts.
- The competencies necessary for faculty to successfully adapt and implement new approaches to practice brought about by organizational and cultural change.

The researcher conducted, recorded via digital audio and/or video, and later transcribed interviews approximately forty-five to sixty minutes each in length with faculty from selected departments within the study institution that have implemented baccalaureate degree programs and that were identified by gatekeepers as data sites for this study. The researcher developed a set of guiding questions based on nascent themes drawn from research literature on organizational change and higher education institutional restructuring. All of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, on-location at the college’s selected departments that served as data collection settings for this study.

Though the progress of individual baccalaureate programs may not have been commensurate with the duration any one program had been in place during the time of the data collection, the researcher proceeded with the knowledge that the study institution was chosen because it had completed at least one full four-year baccalaureate degree cycle at the time of the data collection.
Study Participant Sample

Prior to commencing data collection, the researcher employed purposeful sampling in order to explore the study’s central phenomenon of stakeholder response to organizational change. Purposeful, or purposive, sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that the researcher utilized with the intent of working with college faculty and leadership purely based on the direction of the gatekeepers. This is what purposeful sampling is intended to do. Within the larger context of purposeful sampling, the subcategories of this method the researcher utilized are: (1) maximum-variation (heterogeneous) sampling, used to capture the broadest range of perspectives related to the study phenomenon; and (2) critical case sampling, through which a small number of decisive cases can be selected to explain the phenomenon of interest. While maximum-variation sampling was utilized to ensure access to and coverage of each relevant baccalaureate program in process at the study institution, critical case sampling was utilized to build toward the capacity for future reviewers of this study’s findings to make logical generalizations based on those findings. Though statistical generalizations, as explained above, are not derivative of exploratory/qualitative research designs, the utilization of a decisive sampling technique like critical case sampling, which, in this study, examined the most likely cases of baccalaureate programming, provides reviewers with a phenomenological context for considering examinations of other institutions experiencing similar changes toward the CCB model.

The data sites for this study included each department within the study institution that either maintained or was in development of baccalaureate programming. These included Clinical Laboratory Science, Early Childhood Education, Health Services
Administration, Industrial Biotechnology, Nursing and Organizational Management. However, at the time of data collection, the key individuals responsible for baccalaureate programming in Multimedia and Video Production Technology were unavailable and this program and its organizational context were not included as a data source for this study.

Once initial interviews with key stakeholders from each of these baccalaureate program areas were underway, a holdover from the grounded theory method, constant comparative analysis (an analysis process that requires ongoing and continuous review and consideration of the data to inform next steps) was employed and the researcher then utilized the technique of theoretical sampling to identify other study participants whose perspectives could complement those of the key CCB faculty. The process of theoretical sampling allows the researcher to commence the development of a more refined theoretical framework relative to the central phenomenon being examined. Based on considerations mad around this initial theory, the researcher then decides how to sample further for appropriate study participants.

While the study sample focused initially on college faculty that had input during the process of organizational transition to baccalaureate degree-granting status, theoretical sampling identified individuals, both faculty and administrators, involved in the planning phases at the college level when the mandate for transitioning to the CCB model was first being discussed. This sampling process also led to the identification of other faculty within the departments that had already been approached that provided unique perspective on change contexts and outcomes.
Data Collection

This study focused on the perceptions of a general group of college faculty engaged in an institutional change process within a postsecondary learning institution uniquely positioned in an education landscape in which it must be equally responsive to members of the community as well as the workforce needs of local industry.

In order to explore the process of institutional change and its impacts at a particular college the researcher engaged in three rounds of data collection that represented varied sampling approaches, as described above.

Nineteen subjects in total were interviewed at the study institution. This group of individuals included the faculty primarily responsible for policy regarding department-level restructuring, human resources, and instructional practices, the faculty who were tasked to a workgroup to consider the change process toward the CCB model, administrators involved throughout this change process and other faculty that have perspective on change impacts on their individual and collective practice.

Participant interviews were conducted according to stipulations within University of Florida IRB documentation and all subjects were apprised of informed consent materials. The interview format was primarily semi-structured. After introductions are made, the researcher commenced the formal interview with the statement and acceptance of terms of the informed consent. As mentioned previously, all of the interviews were recorded via digital audio in order to enable the researcher to engage fully in the interview dynamic and mitigate the need for taking detailed interview notes.

The researcher followed a uniform question guide; however, the researcher also maintained the freedom to explore related secondary topical areas with participants, as
these topics emerged throughout the interview process. The anticipated tangential 
nature of some of the interviews resulted from the dynamic established between 
participants and the researcher, given their shared experiences and perspectives within 
the study institution’s cultural context.

The researcher transcribed interviews as they were completed, with an eye for 
the constant comparative analysis method, which enabled the aforementioned process 
of theoretical sampling. As the interviews for this study maintained an average duration 
of sixty to ninety minutes, the data collection resulted in numerous pages of typed 
protocols. Although some respondents were more articulate or expressive in their 
responses than others, the collective data was rich in themes and detail, given the high-
capacity orientation of the interviewees. The following description of interview phases 
represents the chronology of the participant interviews in three distinct phases:

- Phase 1: initial gatekeeper interviews with faculty and leadership responsible for 
recruitment and curriculum decisions. Interview criteria included perspectives on 
faculty recruitment and development trends; trends in curricular and pedagogical 
criteria; within-college development initiatives; departmental planning.
  - Associate Vice President Academic Affairs
  - Assistant Vice President Academic Affairs
  - Director, Business Technology
  - Director, Education Programs

- Phase 2: secondary interviews with faculty and administrators identified via 
snowball sampling regarding perspectives on faculty responsive to changes in 
organizational culture and curricular practice. Interview criteria included
perspectives on faculty development trends; trends in curricular and pedagogical criteria; departmental planning.

- Provost and Vice President Academic Affairs
- Director, Biotechnology Programs and Emerging Technologies
- Director, Nursing
- Faculty, Biotechnology Programs and Emerging Technologies
- Faculty, English
- Faculty, Business Administration
- Faculty, Organizational Management
- Faculty, Health Services Administration

- **Phase 3**: Tertiary Interviews with faculty to gain broader perspectives on organizational change impacts within departments not directly affected by programmatic shifts toward the CCB. Interview criteria included perspectives on professional identity, institutional culture and trends in faculty development.
  - Faculty, English – (6)
  - Faculty, Mathematics

**Data Organization and Analysis**

Interview data was transcribed and imported into QDA Miner, a qualitative data analysis program that specializes in easy importation of interview data from various documents, “intuitive” coding of data and organization of that data via a variety of visual representations and efficient searching and retrieval of coded data. With this suite of tools, the interview data was coded via open (focusing on the textual content) and axial
(focusing on the thematic organization of the data) coding to reveal emergent themes; redundant codes were mitigated using the constant comparative method.

The researcher compared initial findings in order to brainstorm a working list of thematic domains that further organized the coded data. This process yielded a working taxonomy based on the nature of the questions (which were guided by this study’s line of inquiry defined by the unifying theme) and the variety of responses from the respondents up to that point.

This process enabled the researcher to examine emerging data with an eye for developing additional domains and facilitated the identification of unexpected patterns in the data or emerging categorizations. The working taxonomy was modified as the process of coding data protocols progressed. This approach was adopted because of the dynamic time frame for the analysis throughout the progressive phases of data collection.

The researcher coded interview protocols with an awareness of contextual elements that were not readily evident from the transcripts (for example, the nuances of facial expressions, variations in tone, or the subtleties of body language). Any such nuances were noted within the interview protocols as the interviews were transcribed (or following each interview) and subsequently within the domain sheets. The codes were continuously compiled with duplicate codes eliminated via a constant comparative dynamic. The emergent themes underwent a process of expanding and collapsing as it became clear to the researcher whether or not certain themes required more or less nuance.
The analytical framework that was essential to the researcher when seeking to understand the process of understanding, the interpretive process, was hermeneutics. Porter and Robinson (2011) write that “hermeneutics does not and cannot guarantee the fixed meaning of a text.” (6) This is an important statement as it reinforces not only the methodological approach to data analysis for this study, but also the object of this study, which is to identify meaning-making as a fluid, adaptive and core aspect of the human experience.

Furthermore, Porter and Robinson state that hermeneutics is “an art of coming to understand another person.” (30) This statement further situates the human process of making meaning of one’s experience as an amalgam of method and creative expression—as grounded in step-wise progression as it is in abstract interpretation. This line of thinking was meaningful to the researcher in shaping the approach to the study data—there was multi-layered meaning to the consideration of hermeneutics as method for this study. Not only did hermeneutics provide a lens for understanding the human narrative that emerged throughout this inquiry, it also provided the groundwork for the development of the meaning-making model this research has yielded.

Porter and Robinson describe their perspective on interpreting meaning through experience in the context of human understanding:

Understanding is not something we stumble upon or something injected into the gap of our lack of awareness of things to understand the potential range of meaning in a word we must discover the rules governing the presuppositions behind it only through the medium of language may we understand one another; however, linguistic interpretation is not enough. (30-31)

This is a beautiful statement on meaning-making. In the case of the researcher's use of hermeneutics, it is especially relevant to note that deep meaning cannot be
derived simply from the initial reading of a text or a cursory pass at the surface-level content of what is expressed. Rather, meaning-making whether through organizational change or when analyzing the content of narrative, requires an understanding of situational context, personal value, collective culture and emotional content. It is the diligent application of this multi-layered approach to understanding that informed the data analysis conducted for this study—as well as the development of the meaning-making model that emerged through the study findings.

Design Limitations

Given the specific nature of this method of inquiry, the issue of reliability became contingent on the culture of the study institution, as the setting for any subsequent research would necessitate the examination of a similarly culturally situated institution. The distinction in the respective levels of urbanicity (urban, rural, or suburban in location and culture) and the institutional structure (single-institution campus or multiple campuses that are part of a larger institutional or district-level system) will have significant bearing on the tenor of subject response. However, the variation in the subjects interviewed, specific to duration of tenure, background contexts, and personal philosophy on practice, may yield a fairly representative sample of the larger community of college faculty nationwide.

Indeed, not only does this study have the potential to be accurately replicated, but the theme of the inquiry is universal and, thus, necessitates further development. In this case, the most significant limitation of this study was researcher subjectivity and the unintended bias that may have been infused within the interview process. Specifically, the researcher’s familiarity with the world of higher education faculty practice and with
the social structure of the institutional setting may have resulted in subtle deviations from the established inquiry format. However, the researcher’s understanding of the nuances of the academy and practice within a community college context with diverse and shifting mission contexts actually benefitted the implementation of probing/follow-up questions that may not have been readily indicated within the original interview protocol. Though such deviation may have yielded engaging and relevant themes, subsequent application of this study model by another researcher may not result in similar inquiry pathways.

**Researcher Role, Subjectivity & Sensitivity**

Throughout the course of this project, the researcher’s consideration often resulted in the referencing of the personal experiences and perceptions of faculty in the context of their profession. The researcher, a doctoral candidate preparing for a career in research on diverse educational contexts, was determined not to lead interview subjects in their expression of opinions regarding the faculty experience, nor was the researcher consciously seeking to influence the direction of the discussion other than the directionality prescribed by the guiding questions.

At the time of this study, the researcher is involved in research in higher education administration and health services administration, primarily focused on organizational evolution, systems change and the impacts on practitioners, as well as the impacts on institutional culture and the implications for professional practice.

Methodologically, the researcher is most familiar with qualitative data collection and analysis methods, in general, and narrative theory in particular. Maintaining detachment from the preferences of interviewees helped the researcher mitigate bias.
However, researcher subjectivity did actually help facilitate deeper questioning through a layered understanding of the issues being examined.

Summary of Findings

This study has maintained a focus on faculty meaning-making through the type of organizational-level change that impacts institutional culture and individual identity alike. That is, the methods, processes and even capacities exhibited by college faculty for making meaning out of their environmental contexts has been the primary, driving inquiry agenda. As previously discussed, while the study commenced as an approach toward describing and mapping organizational change and its effects through college change toward the community college baccalaureate model, it was the story of faculty in transition that emerged as the defining narrative of the evolving community college.

The faculty interviewed for this study collectively expressed general ambivalence toward the potential outcomes resulting from the study institution’s transition to the CCB model and, more specifically, a degree of skepticism about the sustainability of certain baccalaureate programs. The leadership interviewed for this study tended to focus more on the institution’s responsiveness to externally imposed mandates for change and meeting external assessment criteria than the potential outcomes for their CCB student population or the cultural impacts of the transition on their institution.

This chapter is organized into four sections based on the dominant themes or domains that prevailed through the process of constant comparative analysis—based on concepts derived from Weick (2007), Quinn (2000) and Shulman (2004). As these domains and sub-domains emerged, the picture of faculty meaning-making through community college transition took shape. Relative to the experience of community
college faculty, the major themes that came into focus trended toward an ontological
description of college faculty rather than epistemological; that is, the data revealed an
examination of faculty being or existence more so than faculty knowledge. The study
became more about faculty responsiveness in making meaning of their experience
within the college than faculty creating their social realities within the college. This
underlying theme of responsiveness, bordering on being reactionary, rather than
proactive determinism is a significant narrative outcome.

In attaining a thematic understanding of faculty and leadership perceptions, the
distinction between what each group values at its core becomes relevant at a number of
levels. These sets of values are the most indicative of the impacts, both cultural and
psychosocial, on each group through the paradigm shift toward baccalaureate
programming.

The themes and domains that have emerged from this study point toward a need
for ongoing dialectic within college frameworks regarding organizational and individual
adaptability to change effects—rather than dichotomy, which is representative of the
ongoing imbalance between the perspectives of various tribal factions within the
college. Dialectic is the co-constructed dialogue between two or more parties that aims
toward a deterministic, social construction of reality. This requires harnessing multiple
perspectives within the dialogue and maintaining a core context in which to organize
and integrate diverse perspectives, which can enable developmental research in ways
that inform holistic growth.

Arguing for such a developmental context and holistic approach, does not
necessarily mean arguing for a grand unified narrative or theory on community college
paradigm shift. Rather, the outcomes of this study advocate for localized explorations of the intersections among diverse stakeholders across institutions that can inform college development from multiple perspectives. It is also essential to be able to openly identify and examine the tensions among these perspectives that can negate holistic growth. As was the case through this study, in initially utilizing a grounded theory approach to data analysis, it became clear that creating one grand theory of holistic development was not possible given the varied cultural contexts of colleges, even within one state-level system. However, as Baxter Magolda (2009) suggested, considering themes and domains through the dialectic process that can inform a holistic view of development is a very workable means through which stakeholders within individual colleges can consider their own organizational dynamics relative to change.

Baxter Magolda (2009) further suggests there is a need for holistic perspective on college change as there are not many theoretical frameworks that exist to examine and understand this type of organizational change. Although research on particular aspects of change effects, like leadership development or faculty retention, may be important, grounding such examination in a more holistic inquiry that incorporates social context and epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal developmental dimensions would contribute to creating more holistic theories of college change.

Research on particular dimensions, or on particular aspects of the intersection of person and context, within a larger holistic perspective would help to organize college change theories into a coherent whole rather than the numerous “families” or separate silos into which they are currently organized. Hopefully, the integrative approach taken via this study may help to move theoretical research in that direction.
Intentional exploration of the intersections among developmental dimensions (Baxter Magolda, 2009) is also crucial to understanding the activity of meaning making among college faculty. This study traced multiple relationships of the various dimensions in participants’ professional practice and relationships within the college dynamic. Some tended to rely on their epistemological dimension when sorting through challenges in various dimensions. Other individuals who were naturally self-reflective often began with their intrapersonal dimension. Some participants who were intensely concerned about how they were perceived by colleagues placed their interpersonal dimension in the forefront. Collectively, they often described holding their convictions initially in an intellectual context rather than an emotional one, suggesting the possibility that convictions were constructed cognitively before they were implemented intrapersonally or interpersonally. Further understanding of the nuances of these intersections, as Baxter Magolda suggests, can inform the individual and societal characteristics that mediate college change and development.

The findings resulting from this study indicate that the professional practice of community college faculty is comprised of many varied force factors that bend and shape the parameters of faculty existence within the college. As previously stated, this often-tenuous relational dynamic between community college faculty and administration can contribute to a common goal of improved student learning outcomes.
Figure F-2. Study progression.
Academic Collegiality, Scholarship, and the Learning Community

Developing more effective methods to engage students at the postsecondary level is a process that involves a number of considerations, not the least of which include the role that teaching and learning play in comprising the overall campus environment of any college or university.

Wright (2005) states that as many new faculty commence their careers at universities, they often express frustration regarding the administration’s unstated expectations for their involvement with the teaching role. Many junior faculty state that the hiring institution maintains an attitude that they should already know how to teach as a function of their graduate experience, but the paradigm in which they have developed is more akin to academic collegiality, rather than traditional pedagogy:

Yeah, I was a teaching assistant at the University of ________, I did a lot of private tutoring, and also when I was an undergraduate I worked at the tutoring center, but that’s not teaching—but I did do student teaching as well.

Moreover, the process of joining the ranks of academic faculty does not promote teaching as a primary function. Wright suggests that faculty interaction oriented around communities of professional development and practice can benefit the university, as whole departments achieve consensus on the operationalization of formal standards of teaching toward accessible guidelines for practice. This model directly reflects the traditional academic paradigm of mentoring and collegiality toward professional development. Faculty often lament the lack of a formalized structure for orientation to
the expectations of the institution. One faculty member suggested a very defined model for mentorship at the host institution:

I would like to see a master teacher at every school in the college. Someone who gets it and embodies the concepts and someone who gets some course relief, for mentoring. There are lots of mentoring schemes for faculty and faculty are fiercely independent; and all of those fail, they really do. You can match Joe up with Bill and they’ll do the paperwork, but there’s no actual mentoring going on there. What you need is a kind of social and intellectual leadership that someone can provide to motivate people to do better in their classes.

As noted previously, Johnson and Ryan (2000) pointed toward a revision of faculty roles that could define a revised understanding of the context in which faculty deliver instruction. This renewed understanding could inform a more nuanced assessment of pedagogy and resultant student learning outcomes at the postsecondary level.

The authors believe that faculty roles should be defined through a lens of collaboration with engaged learners, as well as with their peers in cooperative learning communities. Such a basis for learning-centered organizational development can best precipitate the facilitation of learning through a community-based model in which faculty best explore the scholarship of teaching and learning with their students. This can also be the model in which students can best navigate the cognitive complexities with which they are presented through interdependent inquiry:

I sit down in class and drink my latte and I ask students questions. Now, a lot of faculty ask students questions, but what I intend to do is to cultivate in the student the expectation that he or she is not only responsible for answering the questions, but also to understand why I’m asking the questions. But the goal in the class is not to answer the questions, but to ask one’s own questions. The goal is not to answer, but to ask.
The balance between research and teaching at higher education institutions that place emphasis on faculty research toward institutional progress has always been tenuous. Though Bjornsen (2000) suggests that students feel underserved by faculty who focus primarily on research that seems mostly to benefit their own professional endeavors, it is possible that undergraduates have been perennially misdirected into postsecondary experiences that focus too much on general education and basic skills development that resembles what is addressed at the secondary education level. However, at the community college, the mission emphasis is primarily on teaching and faculty practice is oriented toward the classroom. This leaves some faculty facing gaps in their practice, in that they feel that they lack the opportunity to improve practice through inquiry-based approaches:

I don’t think you ever get to the point where you say, “Okay, I’m done and I don’t need to learn anything else from here.” But I think it would be a good thing to see different teaching styles. And I think I would eventually do some research on things like that.

This tenor and theme to the undergraduate experience, especially during the first year, lends itself to the establishing of a patently reactive dynamic between student and teacher in a didactic paradigm. Undergraduates are prepped for decidedly non-proactive roles according to the established learning contract. Bjornsen’s (2000) findings indicate a common student perception that research activities do not benefit a student’s education. This disconnect between the student’s educational experience and his or her lack of acknowledgement of how the body of knowledge has been formed that he or she draws from is indicative of why undergraduates feel disconnected from the learning experience and have a perception that many faculty are lacking in regard to their mission of teaching:
Learning is, well I would use another analogy, and this is riding on the bus. You can be content with being driven around to one’s education on the bus, but real learning is when one realizes one can make the bus go wherever one wants. Right? Metaphors capture it much more succinctly, more holistically than a specific definition does. It works well for students too, because they get those concepts. Once they realize that they have, for their entire career, been driven toward specific goals, then they lose their desire to set their own goals, let alone the wherewithal to go get them.

Berling (1998) suggests the de-centering of faculty and the empowerment of students toward the development of the collaborative learning experience. An essential aspect of this process is the inculcation in the minds of students that they have something unique and of value to bring to the class and contribute to the body of knowledge they are addressing. This encouragement of original and critical thinking in the minds of undergraduates, a concept traditionally reserved for graduate level education, is one function of the development of learning communities at the postsecondary education level that attempts harmony between the two seemingly polar aspects of higher education practice: research and teaching. This is a conceptual framework especially relevant to the learning success of adult students.

Dotterer (2002) wrote that the quality attributes of outstanding undergraduate education, identified by the Education Commission for the States as their description of what is fundamental in quality undergraduate education, should apply directly to a new blossoming of community-based and collaborative learning experiences comprised of: (1) high expectations, (2) respect for diverse talents and learning styles, (3) the synthesizing of experiences, (4) the ongoing practice of learned skills, (5) the integration of education and experience, (6) active learning, (7) assessment and prompt feedback, (8) collaboration, (9) adequate time on task, and (10) out-of-class contact with faculty members. This model, originally published in 1995, is indicative of the ideal
environment for engaging adult learners at the postsecondary level. Though frequent contact and collaboration between faculty and students may be easier said than done at larger research universities, the movement and trend toward self-directed learning among adult students at community colleges is readily achievable via a shift in focus of their education toward inquiry-based learning and an increase in the quality of faculty-student interactions by improving the levels of communication and the content of their dialogue: “But I need to know if there are more students like the student that I called earlier, all the stuff I heard in the background, I need to know how many of my students have that life.” Another faculty member suggests informal contact with students as a means to better engage learners:

> It’s more communal now. In fact I joke with them, I say we’re sitting down family style, ‘cause we do, we sit in a circle and we gotta face each other. That’s important. That, to me, is important. Good human connection. I think if you make that connection and you tell a joke and this is better than like “you have to remember this…”

Student learning communities, specifically active and collaborative student cohorts led by select faculty, can serve to increase levels of student motivation toward improved critical thinking and cognitive processes, as well as increased levels of student persistence relative to students taking ownership of their learning experiences.

Though the League for Innovation in the Community College (O’Banion and Wilson, 2011) emphasized the development of the learner-centered environment for the sake of optimizing the meeting of adult students’ learning needs, colleges should further refocus their educational mission to address a learning process distinctive from that found at institutions focusing primarily on workforce development.
The learning community should make the adult student an active stakeholder regarding the development of knowledge, a collaborator in faculty efforts at curriculum development. This concept of student involvement as active learners should serve to address administrative and public concerns regarding teaching accountability and learning outcomes, while also reforming the misinformed expectations of undergraduates that their initial postsecondary experience should maintain the tradition and pedagogy of their secondary educational institutions:

The mission is to develop the highest quality education and deliver that to the students. You can see students don’t accept that, because they seek out less rigorous professors and curricula. They don’t feel this is an institution whose primary responsibility is to raise the level of expectations and prepare them for a professional career or future university education. Both of which will challenge the student far more than they are capable of conceptualizing right now. I think, for students, they think this is the 13th grade; they feel they have failed at something—this is backwater education, frankly.

Developing diverse community interactions, comprised of varying points of view and methods for producing meaning, which flow from that diversity, should be the focus of the underlying mission of an institution, in training graduates who can create and collaborate within diverse communities. Diverse peer interaction helps to develop future leaders with the values and competencies that enable them to work with diverse groups to address issues critical to a pluralistic dynamic; most individuals have not been prepared to function within a pluralistic society, but rather have lived, worked, and studied in homogeneous communities.

Diversity competencies include the ability to understand the perspectives, responses and assumptions of others from different societal and cultural contexts; abilities that are produced as a result of gaining knowledge about diverse histories and legacies that have contributed to productive interchange. The curriculum is a natural
resource for developing peer interactions that promote diversity. The interpolation of
diversity competencies within the curriculum creates a community in which a
commitment is made to encounter and engage course objectives, texts, and peers with
openness, integrity, and mutual respect.

Student learning communities possess the great potential to connect the diversity
of student experiences and ways of knowing with curricular objectives. A student’s
involvement in a learning community can affirm his or her diverse student voice:

What I really want is for them to go out into their lived experience and to write me
a small report on what their experience is, in situ, in that context. So, then what
happens is, they’re performing in the context of their own life, because that’s
where it’s supposed to happen.

Levine and Cureton (1998) wrote that racial and other diversity barriers are
broken down most easily where students are able to acknowledge the universality of
experience gleaned from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. When students
participate in activities based in a collaborative context, they feel more aligned toward
discussing personal perspectives with others in the campus community. They are
subsequently more likely to have positive interactions with peers. Such a community will
foster positive student perceptions about the on-campus experience and that
institutional policies are applied with equanimity across the student spectrum.

In contrast, when members of the campus community do not participate in
collaborative activities, they do not experience collective improvement in their levels of
engagement. A high institutional commitment to building community can serve to
produce greater satisfaction with the learning environment as fewer interpersonal
barriers exist between students and there is an increased propensity toward learning
beyond individual comfort zones:
The skill component is not, can I take a test on this subject? The skill component is, can I do it at home, in my neighborhood? Can I do it at Wal-Mart? That is real learning, that’s my goal, and that’s the real curricula. It’s the skills.

Strange (2004) describes adult learners as having an affinity for multi-tasking and having control over the learning process relative to what they learn, when they learn it, and how they learn it. The academy has to rethink the higher education model that serves traditional students well, in order to encompass the distinct needs of adult learners. Non-traditional undergraduates require a different learning paradigm, one that focuses on community and allows them to meet virtually in order to fit varying schedules through asynchronous, decentralized learning experiences; to learn from one another via co-productive peer interaction communities; and to utilize curricular resources that are visual and interactive.

Instructional leaders, with a baseline understanding of student-peer environment interaction paradigms, have to help academic faculty capitalize on these trends toward the development of structured learning communities. The cultural context from which adult learners transition into higher education is a great resource for the development of learning experiences that function toward continuous student improvement. The foundation of students’ diverse knowledge bases and their propensity toward peer interaction requires only structure and discipline to translate into a functional higher education learning paradigm; a perspective often lacking among college leadership:

I think they [administrators] are so focused on retention numbers that they are more intent on [recruiting] students who are on the fence about college [rather] than [serving] the ones who are already here.

Adult students’ cultural orientation toward freedom of choice and customization of processes to best suit personal needs can be seen as a platform for learning innovation.
if academic faculty can collaborate to channel this energy in the right direction. Rather than perceiving students’ learning processes as disjointed and unfocused, faculty should perceive students’ natural methods for attaining information as commensurate with the way scholars have traditionally researched subjects, that is, in a multi-modal, multi-sourced manner. Addressing this curricular disconnect involves injecting a diversity of opinions and viewpoints on subjects into the curriculum and doing so via multiple modalities.

The Changing Work of Community College Faculty

Leading colleges and universities are now positioning themselves to function as learning agents, not just for individuals, but for entire communities. Community colleges, in particular, are well positioned to be the learning agents for various industry partners, community organizations, and other community-based ventures.

Community colleges may work with organizations to assess learning needs, deploy customized learning solutions to meet the needs of individuals within those organizations and assess learning outcomes and developed competencies. These types of community-based solutions do not often fit within the traditional higher education paradigm of sixteen-week course blocks and three-credit hour courses. As a result, many community colleges are providing customized learning solutions to meet the needs of many post-secondary and graduate learners without taking on the paradigmatic constraints of traditional four-year institutions.

As one faculty member suggests,

I think the college itself tends to be pulled toward the utilitarian model more than the traditional model, but if you look at the commercials [marketing for the college], one of the things this college does for its size, is it advertises well. If you look at the local [television] affiliate, they are advertising local nursing
programs, basically it is trying to get citizens, appealing to the community that wants to do something [training] quickly and concrete and can get a job when they are done.

As open educational institutions, community colleges must find appropriate ways to increase access to education in order to better serve the citizens of the community and provide opportunity to all those who wish to improve their social capital and mobility. The community college must offer students a wide array of services from assessment, advising, and tutoring to the development of new and innovative support services to maximize learning and help students achieve their educational goals.

Community college faculty tend to reflect these sentiments and, more often than not, subscribe to the mission contexts of the institution:

I think faculty think they are sort of pseudo-professors, that faculty teach at real universities, and wear patches on their coat sleeves. They teach and publish. So they are torn because they feel they should be university professors doing research. If we truly want to be research driven faculty, then we should be at a university. There are lecturer positions, go fill one. If you want to actually teach, and you accept the mission of the community college, and that means teaching the community—we’ll take anyone. And that means you have to embrace those students and recognize that those environments have not been supportive and that’s the source of their failure. So do you see how we’re torn between those two things?

A true learning institution values innovation and the free exchange of ideas and engages in continuous improvement activities to enhance student, faculty, and staff learning. It may be an obvious conclusion, but it is nevertheless important to restate: ongoing learning is key to maintaining the efficacy of the learner-centered environment.

**Faculty Pathways to Community College Work**

The educational and professional paths leading to faculty practice at the study institution varied greatly among the individuals interviewed. Variations exist in the amount of education faculty obtained prior to commencing their professional practice; as
well as the education obtained during their faculty tenure and the highest level of
education attained. Professional jobs and career paths vary greatly as well, from
teaching at various levels before coming to the institution on a full-time basis, to jobs in
business and industry. However, regardless of the path that led to the faculty position,
not one of the interview subjects expressed regret or remorse at making the decision to
practice at the community college level.

The educational paths of the faculty varied in scope and depth. Several interview
subjects had contemplated, but not completed their doctoral studies. One stated, “I
decided that I originally wanted to go into a Ph.D. program after my masters, but to take
a break and look into community college positions.” All of the interview subjects have a
minimum level of educational attainment of a master’s degree, per the accreditation
requirements of the college.

Several full-time faculty began their teaching careers as adjunct faculty:

I started teaching at a community college in New Mexico; I taught there for about
a year and a half and then noticed how at the college there wasn’t going to be a
long-term position….So, I started taking those proactive steps to be on the
market.

Another “taught for two years as a visiting instructor at the University of
Pittsburgh” and taught part-time while working on his doctorate at several institutions.
Still another “spent about three years as an adjunct, sending out resumes, until I finally
got this position.”

Many of the faculty interviewed did not originally consider practice at the
community college. One faculty member decided to teach at the community college
level because,
When I was getting my masters degree I took a class on community college instruction so that sort of introduced the arena of community college teaching to me, but once I completed that course I had pretty much decided that that was where I wanted to teach and then after I graduated.

While each of the interviewees cited unique educational and professional paths leading to their faculty tenure, several cited similar reasons for making the choice to practice at the community college level. One decided to practice at the community college after “I took a class on community college instruction so that sort of introduced the arena of community college teaching to me.” Another stated, “I was looking for that small college experience. I was offered this job here, and I liked the very small size of the department, the small size of the campus, and the close interaction with the students.” Regardless of the paths they took, each of the interview subjects has found a way to combine their academic and professional passions in a way that is satisfying and rewarding.

**Faculty Philosophies on Professional Practice**

Students, faculty, and administrators have very different perceptions about learning outcomes at the community college level. According to those interviewed, students of community colleges view their education as a means to obtaining a better job. Some of those interviewed felt students were in school to genuinely learn. Others felt students are just interested in their studies. One respondent had this to say about student expectations,

Students come with the expectation that education is something...hoisted upon them, something that disempowers them and alienates them. They have to trade off their time and their lives and their own interests to give that time, simply to exchange time for a degree, which will allow them to get a job that will allow them to get money and they can buy back that time, right?
Perhaps these perspectives are sourced with a group of disgruntled faculty. Indeed, one individual interviewed felt,

There are those that have probably been here too long. They view it much the same way; they’ve given up on those students, they’ve come in and served their time and served their office hours…it’s very common for them to say very denigrating things about students.

Perhaps, in much the same way as some of the students they criticize, faculty perceptions are negative due to an acute sense of apathy or lethargy.

The collective concept of administrators’ expectations, based on institutional culture, were quite different from those of individual faculty. More than one faculty respondent felt that administrators were primarily concerned with numbers, with regard to retention and enrollment, and money. Some faculty feel that administrators are too concerned with the economics of educational attainment, rather than the learning outcomes that should mark student success. Still others feel that administrators are “rebels,” as one interview subject called them,

They [administrators] see themselves as rebels in that sense. They fight every day to get something changed every day and they make a lot of compromises and so that sort of administrator will tell me one thing, but I’m going to tell the administration another thing, but I’m going to try to get this thing that we’ve talked about done.

In the end, administrators face many of the same challenges as faculty, in that they are responsible to the community that comprises the service area of the college for which they work. Community college faculty serve a largely undefined student population that is very dynamic, fluid and increasingly comprised of non-traditional, adult learners that are pursuing ongoing education with the intent of redefining themselves professionally in order to embark on a new phase of their professional careers—often out of necessity, but sometimes out of a sense of reflexive repurposing. These learners
seek to reflect on and define the reasoning behind the education they attain and why it is relevant to them—to attain a palpable understanding of their own investment.

**Faculty Perspectives on Teaching and Learning in Practice**

Given the importance and wide acceptance of teaching as the central mission of community colleges and other 2-year institutions, developing and evaluating student learning outcomes held an important place for most of the faculty interviewed for this study—especially relative to concerns about losing focus on teaching and learning when moving toward a CCB model for programming. Student learning outcomes were established in a variety of ways.

For many faculty student expectations are a source of debate and conflict with administration. One faculty member noted that “it is hard to figure out what students want out of the learning process” and that writing an essay is just like passing the FCAT. This same instructor added, “I don’t think the administration’s ideas about student learning are very accurate. I don’t think that they’re effective, and I think that they’re very generalized and very surface oriented.”

Faculty interviewed for this study agreed, across the board, that the most rewarding part of their job was interacting with students, observing as students became actively engaged in learning. Their least rewarding activities were committee work and interacting with administration. Administrators work in offices in separate buildings, adding to their isolation from instructional faculty. However, some faculty uniquely suggested that administrators do sometimes listen to college faculty and even launch changes supporting faculty. However, in a few cases some faculty members are conversely highly critical of their administration:
Our administration is reactive, they don’t have a concept of being proactive. They’ll do a measurement every semester or every year, about our numbers overall, and, uh, if the numbers drop, they start to freak out. And they implement a half-assed program at the last minute, whereby we have to call students or they hand out little sheets or bits of information that faculty will just ignore, because they are behind the ball on this, they are addressing the symptoms not the causes of the problem.

In another part of the interview, this respondent chided the administration of the college for permitting unqualified, non-Spanish speaking instructors, to teach Spanish. This respondent cited a number of structural and cultural deficiencies at the college: the faculty senate has no power, faculty members who have “checked out” of the teaching process, a tendency for the college to hire and promote local candidates (who are often unqualified) and to rarely seek external candidates for administrative and faculty positions. As the result, senior administrators, such as the Dean and Provost, lack doctorates and higher degree attainment is devalued as a functional requirement for faculty practice.

This faculty member noted, with some derision, that the primary measure of faculty outcomes at the college is retention:

They will keep an eye on, a look at your numbers. This only encourages grade inflation, especially for the faculty in science and math courses. We have math instructors who give the same test to the student twelve times until she or he passes. That student then goes on to the next course in the sequence and the student fails because they have not learned the material, they have simply learned that test. There’s no accountability in terms of student progress through a curriculum.

What is apparent within the response of this instructor is that he is highly motivated and deeply concerned about the success of both his students and the institution’s responsibility and need to change.
This level of criticism regarding an aloof and removed administration seemed somewhat isolated and restricted to the administration of one of the community colleges that were accessed for this study. There were examples of deep involvement by administration in the academic and social life at several other colleges. The processes used in developing and evaluating faculty outcomes varied somewhat across the college departments accessed for this study. Tenured faculty at the study institution were generally evaluated by the Dean. Adjunct faculty received their reviews from department chairs or program managers.

At the study institution, the Dean visits the classrooms of full-time faculty to observe the instructor in a classroom setting. These visits are pre-planned and scheduled by the Dean. Admittedly, instructors prepare for the visit. Even students are aware of the upcoming observation.

Professional development activities, taking additional graduate courses, attending in-service meetings, conferences and conventions were requirements for, and necessary to maintain, tenure according to interviewees working at community colleges. The development and evaluation of pedagogical techniques at colleges was somewhat varied. One instructor, with two doctorates, stated that he perceived that many faculty members at this college “avoid real contact with or discussion of pedagogy” and often stoop to making denigrating remarks about students. The same instructor admits that he “was deeply affected by and trained in radical pedagogies”, adding, “I never once in my eight years as a doctoral student, discussed pedagogy in a high school classroom, not once.”
Another interviewee from the same department described discord between the administration and the faculty in this way: “Where do you think the administration gather their perspectives or beliefs regarding this ‘here’s this great new pedagogical thing, let’s put it into play,’ irrespective of whether or not it has been validated for this college?” This instructor continues to remark on this subject later in the interview, “If somebody brings me cutting edge pedagogical, theoretical ideas that I can work with and I think that there are things that can help expand my teaching and bring new things to me, then that’s great. But I don’t know if they really have that type of administration here now.”

Planning, implementing, and evaluating both local research and research from the literature is a mixed venture for most of the faculty represented within this series of interviews. The need for research and the implementation of appropriate best practices within one’s pedagogical foundation was one universal theme that was emergent throughout all the faculty interviews. Each community college practitioner, regardless of institutional type, recognized the need for personal improvement through professional development activities that expanded their base of knowledge of teaching and learning principles.

**Faculty Reflexivity in Practice**

The findings resulting from this study indicate that the professional practice of community college faculty is comprised of many varied force factors that bend and shape the parameters of faculty existence within the college. The fact that community college faculty and administrators do not often share perceptions regarding educational outcomes for the students at 2-year institutions is indicative of a systemic problem with regard to internal and external expectations for community college outcomes:
But from the administrative point of view it is more about image than the day-to-day functions. They [administrators] are conscious and sensitive about things here [at the college] with stuff like retention rates and the community affects how that goes.

Faculty are keenly aware of the disparity in perceptions between themselves and administrators with regard to the college and how it serves its student-consumers:

“Administrators are looking for completers; they want to train them and get them out.”

Though continuous evaluation of community college faculty and the need for programs that develop contemporary leadership may be in place, such evaluation is not necessarily systematic, nor research-based:

We send people to conferences, but we have no requirements for them to report to the faculty; we have no expectation that they will bring back information that informs our practice. Very passive, very laissez-faire. But, very informally, here, it just doesn’t happen.

The development of community college faculty toward operating out of a holistic vision for institutional effectiveness toward improved student learning outcomes is articulated by many faculty as key to the aligning of institutional missions with student outcomes:

I have already designed a teaching seminar for teaching and writing across the curriculum, which we will start in Spring of next year. Based on the success/failure of that, I’ll modify and change that and try to deliver a speaking across the curriculum seminar, as well. I think it’s absolutely essential. It’s a great way to help faculty teach better in their own areas and also areas that are not their area of expertise. It gives us a better picture of the interrelatedness of the educational project. I do depend on other faculty in psychology to follow up on and evaluate my students, based on what I teach them in my English class. If they write, the psychology teacher has to hold them to the same standards as I do.

Needs assessments are critical to the identification of gaps in faculty structures relative to the obligations the college has to its specific set of stakeholders. Such a needs assessment, in anticipation of adapting faculty to emergent stakeholder needs, is
commensurate with the institutional paradigm of the community college as a service provider responsive to the specific needs of its constituency. On a smaller scale, the responsiveness of faculty to the specific and changing needs of diverse student populations can also benefit from localized inquiry into best practices for meeting the needs of these stakeholders; however, this is not an easily achieved goal:

No, we've worked on a couple of initiatives; one professor and I have tried to start learning communities here on campus, several times, but no one bites. We have a culture of passivity here and it's funny, because I can motivate my students to be self-reflective and self-motivating—but to do it with the faculty; it's more difficult because I have no institutional power.

Whereas the previous construct from which community college faculty were made to operate was that any expert in a particular discipline could deliver instruction to students, it is now the consensus that teaching is an activity that develops cognitive complexity and requires considerable training in pedagogy and student development theory:

Every now and then I'll show them some critical thinking, you know, showing them the process behind things. So many times people say "do we have to know this?" so it's kind of like this tricky thing. And that addresses, what is my goal? Do I want them to understand the basics or do I want them to go beyond this? And I kind of want to do both. If I went to higher-order thinking in the classes, they would not master the basics, but usually I would try to introduce them on a level that was okay to introduce.

This is a vision that the faculty interviewed for this study have consistently stated administrators lack:

One of the first things I wanted to do, I called the Vice President about 3 weeks after I got here and I said, okay, what do you guys do with the local schools? And he said, nothing. So I said, okay, so can you give me some contacts, because I'd love to sit down with them [the local school board] and just talk and find out what they're doing, start something with them. And he said, well, that's all on you, we don't do anything like that. And now that I've been here a lot longer, I realize that there is a lot of tension between the faculty and the administration.
The convergence of disparate dialogues regarding student outcomes and what methods can best promote these outcomes continue to be hindered by two major factors: (1) faculty at community colleges have a difficult time overcoming their teaching loads in order to pursue scarce opportunities to expand their knowledge base regarding student learning; and (2) administrators are too far removed from the core process of student learning that drives their institutional momentum to realize that institutional effectiveness is entirely contingent on improved practice toward student outcomes.

Whereas many of the faculty interviewed for this study shared common perceptions regarding the best articulation of professional development opportunities, many of their peers and colleagues discussed during the course of these interviews demonstrated a trend toward maintenance of an increasingly ineffective educational defined by students interacting with faculty in a deficit-based, authority dependence model. These are the faculty that perpetuate a systemic problem that originates within a broken model; these faculty can best benefit from professional development opportunities that can expand their perceptions toward new horizons. However, without adequate support from college leadership, such efforts, especially within the college, often serve to create fragmentation among faculty groups resulting in opposing factions with regard to which pedagogical approach is best.

Community college faculty perceptions about the freedom to take initiative regarding participation in professional associations and developmental opportunities potentially reflect a corollary issue regarding taking ownership over student learning outcomes, the assessment of those outcomes, and the responsiveness necessary to improve said outcomes:
A lot of the structure is defined by the state; like, *this* course will cover *these* subjects. As far as us designing curriculum, it comes from that, but there are some places we can change small things; you know, we know what students need to go on to the next level.

The faculty interviewed during this study support this claim of a gap between researchers on community colleges and the practitioners that can utilize said research:

I think that a lot of the administrators here, they don’t even have a background in teaching and a lot of them not even in administration, so I’m wondering what lens they are looking through to draw some of these conclusions.

For some faculty the concept of research to inform practice is muddled by the popular practitioner-oriented concept of “best practices” that often actually masks a lack of true evidence-based perspective:

Um, I think the research we do is sort of best practices and I think that most of us are very cognizant about very local sort of surveys, what are students feeling, what’s happening, how do I make this better, so I hope that answers the research.

**Faculty Development in Changing College Contexts**

There are many reasons community college faculty engage in their practice, just as there are many reasons they feel their practice is prohibitive regarding their growth and development. Ultimately, the reward of knowing that students achieve true developmental outcomes as a function of their education and student-faculty interaction becomes the most prominent articulation of the benefits of the faculty experience.

Based on this expression of rewarding experiences, it becomes clear that the freedom to engage in a pedagogical dynamic and student-faculty interchange exists as the chief means by which community college faculty derive benefit from their practice. The community college becomes a true source for teaching and learning that is not hindered or obfuscated by competing paradigms for academic practice. However,
several detractors were also revealed through this line of inquiry as a part of faculty practice at the community college.

The community college, as an institution, does not necessarily support the pedagogical efforts of certain faculty in anticipation of positive student outcomes. Rather, the focus of community college administration and other stakeholders becomes likened more to a means-to-an-end relational dynamic; that is to say, education is only as valuable as its ability to prepare students as entrants to the workforce and to be a catalyst to bolster economic development locally or regionally. Just as much as community college administrators are said to promote the mission of the college as an institution producing a labor force, faculty view the institutional mission differently with regard to student outcomes, though both perspectives are, in fact, outcome-based. Nevertheless, this dichotomy produces adversarial relationships between faculty and administrators, which especially confound efforts to redefine college culture and mission.

Some faculty suggest that the reason for the negative experience they have as higher education practitioners at the community college has to do with the disconnect they have with college administration, due largely in part to the lack of practical perspective most administrators have with regard to the educational experience. This discrepancy between the background characteristics of faculty and administrators reveals a major detractor in the experience of faculty in practice; the development of their practice is hindered by competing driving forces in the form of educator-favored pedagogical motivations and the economic development motivators favored by administration.
Some faculty find their practice rewarding due to a number of different factors that help to assuage the tensions between competing philosophical motivations between faculty and administration. One faculty interviewee suggests that the greatest source of reward is in the metacognitive self-evaluation of one’s pedagogy and the betterment of that pedagogy toward continually improved student outcomes:

I think anytime instructors are distracted from the bigger purpose of teaching, and that sort of pay-off is connecting with students, so anytime we have to be focusing on committees and paperwork and that kind of stuff, I think that that is seen as getting in the way of our daily ability to focus on and be self-reflective in our teaching.

Though faculty seem to understand the benefits of institutional decision making that occurs within the bounds of administrative structures, such as committees and boards, there is also a devaluation of some of this time spent in-service that is seen as not being of direct benefit toward positive student outcomes:

I enjoy the committee work, the ones that I’m on, uh but I know some people, I mean there are specific committees that I wouldn’t want to be on because they are just ridiculous time-voids that you walk in and come out a year later it seems.

One faculty interviewee, in consideration of moving vertically and laterally into an administrative position, suggested that though there are benefits to promotion to some extent, there are also freedoms that one would have to give up when ceasing to serve in a faculty capacity: “And that, this discipline specifically offers a lot of flexibility, a lot of autonomy and a lot of freedom to make certain decisions, so, um, which is why I struggle with possibly giving up a faculty position.” This is the greatest detractor for some faculty in considering professional development activities and opportunities that will eventually lead them out of the faculty track into administration, which is often the
natural progression for community college faculty: “Um, possibly going into administration full time, yeah.”

Though professional development activities are available, to a certain degree, to faculty members, there are many considerations, with regard to the outcomes of taking such opportunities or with regard to the expectations administration places upon faculty who avail themselves of such opportunities, that result in an uncertain faculty approach to professional development: “we do like an informational review of what we learned in our big arena, unfortunately there is not a lot of double-checking, not a lot of encouragement for a big meaningful event.”

However, professional development opportunities also provide faculty with the freedom to engage in communities of practice at the local and national levels, which, in turn, help faculty feel connected to the body of ongoing work that defines their practice. Such development activities can occur within the internal structure of the college:

Now this year we are doing an internal professional development focus, so we’re trying to find things that we can do internally that we can coach up and teach up our faculty.

There are also national outlets for professional development that are supported by administration:

And I’ve used my travel budget to its, you know, to the penny each year, so, um, the president, um the vice president also takes a group to NISOD [National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development] every year, um, usually new faculty; I’ve been twice.

Some faculty express concern in that though there are opportunities available for professional development, the quality of what is gained from pursuing such opportunities is not always contributive to improved practice:
I think it’s very common in community colleges even when you go to our conferences, that what people are presenting is, ‘this is what worked in my classroom, see; wanna try it?’; so that is sort of the anti-intellectual effect of this discipline, that people don’t really know why things are working or what’s going on, but it does and that allows them to go to a conference and make them feel important, and I was like that in the beginning.

Developing communities of practice surrounding an articulation of best practices without research-driven validation is a concern for many community college faculty. However, faculty do also recognize that peer support is a necessary component of the process of self-reflexivity that helps faculty grow toward professional and personal achievement. One faculty interviewee suggests an active showing of expansion of practice is necessary in the field for advancement; this expansion of practice occurs primarily in the classroom:

And I would say those people that get tenure, what differentiates them is the willingness to adapt and grow and self-reflect and be able to critique themselves in the classroom, um those people who are not able to adapt and grow are not asked to stay, so I think that’s the major factor in terms of being offered tenure, if you can, in those 3 years demonstrate that you are sort of pushing your craft, that’s what they’re looking for.

Faculty suggest that administrative support for their growth process is an outcome of their investment in procedural efficiency in the classroom and among peers within the college community. Resulting from such commitment, faculty gain footing within the administrative fold regarding institutional decision processes, as well as the opportunity for support in collegial and peer-based activity at national and regional conferences, which, in turn, ultimately support faculty growth.

However, faculty express frustration when in-college offerings, with regard to faculty development, are not based on any real needs assessment of the faculty population at that college. With regard to in-college development activities, another
interviewee suggests that a more integrated approach is necessary to develop faculty across disciplines:

Well, um, if they are encouraging people in this way, going to faculty development meetings to learn about different aspects of the college, then they should make sure each section of the college is holding professional development seminars of some kind and not just the technology section doing almost every single one.

Some faculty have availed themselves of professional development opportunities that, while benefiting them personally with regard to individual career advancement, do not necessarily factor in to the advancement of their practice resulting in improved student learning gains at their college.

While some faculty respondents demonstrated frustration with regard to inconsistencies with professional development opportunities within and outside of their respective colleges, others indicated that the freedom to make decisions regarding one’s path of practitioner development is contributive to their feeling reciprocity between the academic and administrative silos:

Well, the administration is very hands off in those decisions, and I like that actually, I don’t think they should be deciding what conferences you go to, I mean especially for me I would have various conferences to go to, I’m in English, I’m also in administration I’m also in developmental education you know there are so many things to choose from that would be valid, I like that I can freely choose those.

Still other interview respondents indicated that an approach of mutual avoidance is the best prescription for faculty-administration harmony toward improved faculty practice and student outcomes:

If you can stay under the radar and not draw the attention of the administration in terms of them trying to curb or manipulate what you’re doing, then there is a lot of freedom to create a department that we believe is right where it should be, in terms of all the community colleges in the country, and the way writing should be taught.
Another interviewee suggests that faculty responsiveness to administrative oversight should be approached from a situational perspective and that this individualized method for negotiating interactions with administration is the best approach to ensure academic freedom:

I work directly with my dean, I am very proactive with my communication. Since he doesn't come to me, I go to him. About every two weeks, I sit down and have a conversation with him. I know how to manage that relationship. With my VP, there is no managing that. What I do is practice a strategy of avoidance. He is very sensitive to those issues, he's very uncomfortable around me. He doesn't know how to act around me, to assert himself to get his footing, I don't want him to, um, act inappropriately and arbitrarily assign power.

One faculty respondent suggests that a basic foundational disparity between faculty culture and administrative culture is the root cause for problems that arise between these two institutional power bases when it comes to identifying and addressing student problems:

The faculty value the students, our discipline, and then the college and then for administration it's almost completely different; the college comes first, then the students, and then sort of those other issues of discipline and standards so it's a shift of values that separates the two communities.

The two groups that comprise the power brokerage of a 2-year institution maintain fundamentally different value systems; faculty tend to value student outcomes and administrators tend to value institutional outcomes.

Though these two value systems often converge to demonstrate common goals, institutional effectiveness often occurs at the expense of student learning outcomes, as counterintuitive as that may be:

Well right now, our administration is reactive, they don't have a concept of being proactive. They'll do a measurement every semester or every year, about our numbers overall, and, uh, if the numbers drop, they start to freak out. And they implement a half-assed program at the last minute, whereby we have to call
students or they hand out little sheets or bits of information that faculty will just ignore, because they are behind the ball on this, they are addressing the symptoms not the causes, of the problem.

One suggestion to address the problems that arise from the disparities existent between faculty and administrators is to create bridge positions that can serve to advocate the interest of both power structures, while mitigating the biases between each institutional sub-group:

There is no one then who is a bridge between the faculty and the administration. The dean is an administrative position, the vice president is an administrative position, the president, I don’t even know what to call that position. But there is no one who has feet in both areas, we egregiously need department chairs, who are empowered, who teach in the classroom.

Another faculty suggests that the lack of such bridge initiatives can result in further fragmentation among groups within the institution and a progression of factions that operate at cross-purposes.

**Meaning-making within the Learning-Centered Institution**

Learner-centered institutions must strive to establish a common lexicon for the universal understanding of methodologies for the implementation of learner-centered solutions. Evaluation is also a key factor in the success of learner-centered institutions, as it is important to know just what works and what does not regarding the expansion and improvement of student learning:

Well I did that [conduct a student feedback survey] simply because I wanted to know who I was dealing with; because, even though I’ve been here some twenty odd years, I’m still slow to adapt and I’m still trying to understand the differences between my own college experience and their [the students’] college experiences. In many ways I just think they are profoundly different.

Learning creates change and learner-centered institutions should be able to assess profound change in their learners as an indicator of institutional success in any
given learning enterprise. Learning is learner-driven. The learner is the source referent for the establishing of a learner-centered protocol and must be accessed and surveyed in order to develop a proper curriculum tailored to the actual, not assumed, needs of the individual.

Community college faculty have become accustomed to serving diverse learners and providing continuously modified and customized instruction that is based on shifting learner needs:

Well, I never teach two classes in the same way; I ask questions and then based on how they answer those questions, the inquiries of the class, I modify my script. What I try to do is, with my experience in teaching, I’ve been teaching now for 15 years in a variety of contexts, my life experience in communicating with lots of different types of people, and my expectations of my students interacting with a subject; I can, both by listening and anticipating the directions we might go in and the obstacles that we’re encountering, cultivate a mutual discussion of self-discovery about what students know with respect to subject matter. So, I don’t take a step without asking them. And I also go far out of my way to explain the process to students, explicitly.

**Four Ways of Meaning-making Through Critical Change**

What began to emerge early in the process of working with the data was a distinct sense of progression or procedure that signified the meaning-making in which the faculty were engaging. There was a pattern to the way in which each individual (1) experienced a critical change event; (2) examined the dissonance that emerged through the change event; (3) communicated need relative to navigating the change event; (4) developed communities of practice; and (5) built structures of allies around that practice.

With each pass through the data, clarity around this progression helped shape a framework that describes the various vectors at which this progression occurs. This framework emerged as a four-part progression that extends from the individual to the
community—describing the ways in which individuals and groups make meaning through critical change events.

In the community college environment, *the way things are* is presented as a very firmly rooted foundation. The individuals that comprise the community of educators within the college had roots that reached particularly deep down into the foundational philosophies that describe the mission and vision of the college. These were the individuals that felt the most dissonance relative to such a defining change as the community college baccalaureate—sometimes those that had been there since the formative years of the two-year college, firmly committed to those initial ideals. It redefined what it is these educators do—how they prepare learners and practitioners based on a very student-centered way of doing. This change would require a shift toward a more college-centered practice. The possibility of this shift created deep conflict for several faculty. This was not just a challenge to professional practice; this represented a deeper test of personal belief.

Sifting through the data, the individual voices of community college faculty speaking to the fears, the hopes, the challenges and the opportunities that these individuals experienced as their college transformed from the inside out, it began to become increasingly clear that this change event within *this* college was not, for the faculty, simply about adapting to shifting environmental conditions, but about responding to the larger shift from one identity to another—that is, transitioning from one way of making meaning to another. The change the college was undergoing was actually a catalyst for the creation of a new type of college faculty—a new group of professionals that had to define new purpose within a new philosophical context.
However, such paradigm shifts rarely occur in such a well-defined and intended manner. This is why the method of meaning-making is essential to change processes—it is what helps individuals to methodologize after-the-fact—to understand what has happened in order to define how it happens.

This study has been an attempt at such understanding. It is the specific examination of community college faculty meaning-making in response to critical, organizational-level change events that impact institutional culture and individual identity alike. That is, the methods, processes and even capacities exhibited by community college faculty for making meaning within their shifting environmental contexts is the primary reason for engaging in this inquiry—to understand what it is about the change process that informs a creative shift in personal identity and enables individuals to be more intentional and utilization-focused as they navigate the change process.

As previously discussed, while the study commenced as an approach toward describing and mapping organizational change and its effects on colleges transitioning toward the community college baccalaureate (CCB) model, it was the story of faculty-in-transition that emerged as the defining narrative of the evolving community college.

One administrator within the college, when asked about the greatest challenges that emerged as a result of the shift to the CCB model, responded that the faculty, in general, were supportive of the transition, but found it difficult to maintain their “core culture” through the process:

The biggest change is the idea that these programs are all online as opposed to being potentially all in the classroom. But for the most part, the faculty that are now teaching in the bachelors programs were already teaching classes online. I think as far as pedagogy is concerned, I think those challenges have more to do with the interaction between faculty and students. Business programs has always had a large percentage of non-traditional students. Even though
college has way more traditional age college students than it should have, business programs has disproportionately more, because people have always come to business programs for retraining. So my faculty were already teaching adult learners and nontraditional age students online. I think a bigger challenge for faculty has been learning to teach within a non-online environment, rather than any kind of change in teaching style or methods. These folks that are in these programs are, for the most part, working adults. At one point I ran the demographic data on _______'s programs and the average age was 36. She's got 300-350 people in that program. So it is not like there is one 90 year old that is moving the means. The challenge is that these students are going to school part time, they have other things going on in their lives. The bulk of the students in _______ are traditional age college students that are going to college, for the most part, full time. The bulk of the business programs students are working adults that may or may not be single parents that also have other obligations. We were already sensitive to that, I think, but I think we are more sensitive to it now. If anything, we've struggled with the fact that these people have been away from college for a long time and so there are some deficits there that we are trying to make up for.

This administrator’s perspective provides a general sense of the way the data depicts faculty responsiveness to the CCB transition. In this case, the faculty are responsive to change in a positive way because the organizational culture has established this sensibility toward change at the institutional level. However, the faculty are concerned most about their practice and the impacts such changes will have on their students. There are concerns about pedagogy and development, but the faculty perspectives tend to center on the students and how they can maintain a learner-centered approach to their practice, thereby preserving the college culture that has not only defined their tenure at the institution, but also drew them to this college in the first place.

Initial Understanding

The faculty practitioners interviewed for this study collectively expressed general ambivalence toward any potential outcomes resulting from the study institution’s transition to the CCB model and, more specifically, expressed a degree of skepticism
about the sustainability of certain baccalaureate programs. The faculty leadership interviewed for this study primarily focused on the institution’s responsiveness to externally imposed change. They also focused on meeting external assessment criteria imposed by external authority structures. There was little practical consideration of potential outcomes for their CCB student population or the cultural impacts of the transition on their institution. That is to say, a core understanding of the philosophy informing this change was not as apparent to faculty practitioners as the immediate, change mandates that were communicated by faculty leadership. It required collective reflection among varied faculty groups to arrive at an understanding that this change event was, in effect, redefining the spaces in which individual identity forms, perhaps even changing the way faculty identify themselves professionally within the college.

The story of community college faculty meaning-making through the shifting dynamic of institutional change is one that only came together once an amalgam of voices emerged to represent a pattern of expression—a signal—layered deep within the noise that comprises college culture. What began as concerns about immediate job duties or departmental hierarchy soon became a deeper consideration of self and identity that represents a core considering of what it means to be community college faculty. This process became about whether or not an individual’s experience could any longer apply toward the professional expression of faculty practice. In turn, the study became more about faculty processes for making meaning of their experience within the college, rather than faculty creating their social realities within the college.

This chapter is organized around four dominant themes that prevailed through the process of constant comparative analysis—based on concepts derived from Weick
(2007), Quinn (2000) and Shulman (2004). As these themes and sub-themes emerged, the picture of faculty meaning-making through community college transition took shape. Relative to the experience of community college faculty, the major themes that came into focus trended toward an ontological description of college faculty rather than epistemological; that is, the data revealed a picture of faculty “ways of being” more so than faculty knowledge of practice. The underlying theme of faculty response to change, bordering on being reactionary rather than proactive, is a significant narrative outcome.

In attaining a thematic understanding of faculty practitioner and leadership perceptions, the distinction between each group’s core values becomes relevant at a number of levels. These values are most indicative of the impacts, both cultural and psychosocial, on each group resulting from the paradigm shift toward baccalaureate programming.

Figure F-3 describes the primary theme of Faculty Meaning-making as it is subdivided into four 1st order sub-themes: the four ways of meaning-making, comprised of Seeing, Being, Doing and Building. These four 1st order sub-themes are further differentiated into 2nd and 3rd order sub-themes that provide a practical description of the mechanics of faculty meaning-making within particular circumstances.

The first sub-theme of Ways of Seeing represents the conceptual framework that defines the more practical expression of the sub-theme Modes of Reasoning. Modes of Reasoning are the more readily operationalized methods for gaining a deeper understanding of one’s personal experience through a larger change dynamic. These Modes are: Knowing, Reflexivity, Perception and Pedagogy. Knowing represents an
initial state of growing awareness about one’s situational reality within a particular change event. Reflexivity represents a deepening and more intentional application of Knowing that then enables a more clarified Perception of the way things are. Pedagogy represents, for these educators the beginning practice emerging from this new Perception.

The second sub-theme of Ways of Being is expressed in practical form as Modes of Transition. This is the point in the continuum in which the individual whose perception has shifted through a critical change event and who is creating new practice from this new awareness begins to Transition to more varied and defined Ways of Being in this evolving space of change. The Modes of Transition are: Identification, Relating, Problematizing, Adapting and Causation. This continuum of experience begins with the individual creating Identifications with new Ways of Being that she is steadily exploring. These connections mark the process of Relating to new circumstances, environments and processes. Another emergent Mode is Problematizing as the individual, already in a reflexive space, begins to question, assess and evaluate each new experience. This Relating of the Self to the experience provides the individual with a means reliably improve her circumstances on an ongoing basis. This, in turn, creates the means for Adapting to each new circumstance the process of change creates. The individual’s deepening understanding of the change process is further consolidated as she begins to understand Causation and develops the ability to anticipate micro-change events.

The third sub-theme of Ways of Doing represents the transition of the meaning-making process from the individual space to the community space. The practical application of this transition process occurs in the space of Tribal Culture. This is the
space in which individuals who have developed analogous Perceptions of the ongoing change process begin to form Connections that mark the consolidation of Perception into a collective expression. As this expression becomes more defined, the collective takes shape and begins to reflect on changing Tribal Culture from the vantage point of the group. Defining group practice then becomes about creating Rituals that illustrate the ways things are within this growing Tribal space. Considerations of Authority then emerge as the developing Cultural space requires its own order and decision-making practice.

This is the point in the continuum at which Tribal Culture begins to define new Tribal Structures. Tribal Structures mark the conceptual space of the fourth sub-theme, Ways of Building. Tribal Structures inform the ways in which Engagement occurs within the tribe, based on the Rituals used to create varied experiences. At this juncture a collective, deepening understanding of the new ways of the tribe the critical change event has precipitated generates Constructs. These institutionalize new tribal ways in order to further consolidate Tribal Culture. In the same way as the individual learns to Problematize, the tribe in ongoing evaluation of its Culture and Structures in order to collectively reflect on whether or not new and intentional change is needed.

This conceptual space is seen as a continuum because the process of change, as an intentional process, is ongoing. A closer examination of how this meaning-making process unfolded through the critical change event experienced at the study college provides deeper understanding of the opportunities and barriers that helped define the parameters of this model for meaning-making through critical change events.
A senior faculty member in the business administration program area reflected on the transition process for the baccalaureate program in health services administration:

The baccalaureate program in health services administration really started down in health sciences at the other end of campus and there was a committee. We did have representatives, because we had health information management. We had representatives on that committee. At the time the program was created, conceptually all the ideas from various stakeholders were considered and the program development was all committee based and there was a lot of influence from health sciences. All of that work then went to the VP and it was only after that part of the process that the health sciences administration program was moved to business administration as opposed to health sciences. I think that the VP had a view of the program as being much more management oriented than a health sciences program and so that is why it got moved. I will also say that, at that point in time, these program applications being forwarded to the state received a great deal of scrutiny. It was a huge application process and it involved a lot of stuff that had to happen to get one of these programs in place. Obviously each year that goes by in the program, the requirements are softened and tapered, I think. The state realizes they need more of these programs in community colleges. Instead of making the hurdles higher they are trying to get them down there so that colleges can develop quality programs, but are discouraged from being introduced. Once the program proposal went to the VP, she then wrote the entire application out of necessity. She had the contacts with Tallahassee and there was a lot of back and forth about what needed to be in the application and what needed to be taken out in order to get this thing approved. So, a lot of that work went on there. Once the program was approved, again, this is in the early stages, with the State there was some grant money available. State grants available to help in the development of these programs. We got a grant and the grant allowed us to hire _______. She was hired in January and the program started the next August. Between January and August, she developed the entire curriculum. The course numbers, the kinds of courses we needed in thinking, ‘we need to offer an introduction to US health care class.’ All the work, as far as syllabi and text books all that fell on her and so one person developed that entire curriculum. Now, my thought on that was that really what we are trying to do here is trying to get initial approval so that we can refine the program after the fact. So that is what has kind of happened. She did all of that work, got all the stuff accepted, got all the course numbers, all of the catalog requirements and started to register people and put them in classes. Then we began hiring adjuncts. Starting close to home, a lot of the first people were already teaching at ________ college, which meant they were close by; we could have conversations with them. We kind of knew where we were headed and what we wanted. We had some confidence in the quality in the education experience that they would provide. Then those people had the opportunity to
take that syllabus, to take that rough view of what was in the courses and then make that fit with what they wanted to put into the course and that's how those courses were developed. It is obviously six months later and the program was approved by SACS and we continue to refine courses. We had two different management courses in there, an intro course and health care management. We got some feedback from students saying there was a lot of duplication and we took out that redundancy and put the writing course in. We continue to change and modify the curriculum in the courses and what is offered in the overall program, as we evolve our way through it.

This narrative demonstrates that, along a continuum of organizational change that involves both organizational and individual factors within a complex adaptive system, it is not yet clear within the literature on community college change how faculty actually make sense of the process and their roles within it.

Ways of Seeing

The first emergent theme was Modes of Reasoning, comprised of four subthemes that were used to organize concepts that described ways in which faculty and leadership at the study institution “see”. In the context of this study, the “ways of seeing” demonstrated by study participants describe four distinct states of interrelation with their environmental contexts. The first of these states is Knowing, which is the processing, organization and utilization of knowledge as it occurs within the organizational framework. The second state is Reflexivity, which is the consideration of various organizational dynamics and the causal relationships associated with those dynamics. The third state, Perception, exemplifies mental processing that goes beyond the depth of relationship causality. This state is the beginning of meaning-making for the individuals within the study institution. The final state in this domain is Pedagogy. This subdomain represents the modes of transmission not only of knowledge, but also cultural practices among stakeholders within the study institution, as these stakeholder
groups represent students, faculty and administrators alike. Knowing, Reflexivity, Perception and Pedagogy represent the various “ways of seeing” that individuals within the study institution employed, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to negotiate the ongoing change their organization is experiencing.

The state of Knowing is multifaceted in that an individual can represent multiple levels of awareness that define his or her place relative to the organizational culture or context. One faculty member in Clinical Laboratory Sciences stated,

I came to _______ College with a master's degree in environmental toxicology, though it's basically fifteen-plus years of practice on the bench and experiences working in biotechnology and different types of fields. As this program has grown another head or two, it seems to be ever growing; I have gone back for a professional science masters degree with a focus in pharmacology because I knew that industrial biotech was coming on with a pharmacy twist to it.

This is an excellent representation of Knowing as several states of awareness are represented by the information this individual volunteered. To begin, there is an initial statement of base knowledge that the individual has acquired via a previous degree credential. However, the individual quickly qualifies this credentialism with a long history of diverse application-in-practice and on-the-job learning. This is a demonstration of shared value between practical and academic experience.

Furthermore, there is an awareness of change relative to the institution and the professional workspace demographic—the individual acknowledges a need to match personal experience with workplace growth; not only relative to increased numbers, but also the experience bases that these numbers bring to the organization. Lastly, the individual reports the return to the academic space for further credentialing, but acknowledges an awareness of the need to customize the credential given the changing parameters of the field-of-practice and the organization in which that knowledge will be
applied. This is Knowing at its most versatile, representative of an individual who has made self-awareness and contextual awareness actionable. This is the path towards meaning-making.

The state of Reflexivity increases the relational complexity from the state of Knowing. Whereas Knowing may represent a more intrapersonal awareness, Reflexivity is, among the individuals examined through this study, more of an interpersonal awareness. One faculty member in English stated,

During the monthly meeting, things are presented as this is what administration wants us to do; there is no communication of larger goals or theoretical constructs that would help us, I think, to move us from where we are to where we want to be and really should be.

This faculty member was referencing a recurring meeting intended to bring faculty and administrators together around the strategic curricular vision for the developing CCB programs across the college. In this context, the faculty member reflects initially on the discrepancy between stated objectives for the meeting—that is, intended outcomes—and the actual results of the time spent between faculty and administrators. In this case, certain faculty were approached to partake in this curriculum planning workgroup based on their previously expressed interests and/or their unique abilities to contribute to the development process, whether by virtue of curriculum and instruction background knowledge or pedagogical prowess. However, once faculty attended the initial few meetings, this individual reported that he and his colleagues began to feel that their presence was more a function of meeting externally imposed criteria for forming a workgroup with “first line” stakeholders involved than an opportunity to really express the faculty perspective.
Even more interesting, however, is this faculty member’s perspective on the lack of capitalizing on a potentially generative context to move forward with true innovative agendas. He acknowledges the missed opportunity that collaboration across disciplinary and hierarchical silos can bring, while also recognizing the potential for transcending discussions about possibly redundant or ineffective programs toward discussion of organizational vision. This is Reflexivity in its purest form—to “see” through to the core of a matter in order to reframe it conceptually, which requires visionary consideration. This faculty member is exhibiting what, in the context of situational leadership, would be considered strong followership behavior. He is willing and equipped to embrace the change that is underway and to help guide it even further in effective ways, but his inputs are neither well-received nor cultivated.

When speaking of Perception it is important to remember that this “way of seeing” is not limited to causation; rather, it is a state in which an individual is actually deriving the deeper meaning undergirding causal relationships. One administrator, holding a director-level position in academic affairs, reported,

There were a few of the faculty who didn’t want to hear that, and they would have rather had a brief little introduction. I presented the great attributes of the [Study College] instructors. I asked, is lecture a good way for delivering instruction? I sent out invite emails to everybody to come discuss a question like this and then they would come, break up into small groups and have discussions about the topic and then meet back together afterward and present what each group thought about it. That's what they liked.

The context for this narrative was faculty development toward improved instructional delivery—to match the increased standards externally imposed relative to increasing baccalaureate programming.
This director indicated a great deal of inertia among faculty when it came to accommodating their practice to new instructional criteria that accompanied the CCB program model. Faculty were initially skeptical, occasionally hesitant and made frequent expressions of discomfort relative to the cognitive dissonance stemming from the organizational change process. The director, however, took a unique approach to faculty dissonance—rather than assuaging fears and uncertainties, he indirectly challenged faculty to embrace ambiguity and find their own paths forward through disguised brainstorming sessions. He perceived that the deeper causality, the root issue precipitating faculty dissonance was their own perceived lack of agency with organizational processes and their loss of connection with their college. Though there were initial misgivings regarding development meetings that he proposed, the director found a way to engage his colleagues and help them to be self-deterministic regarding their own meaning-making.

To understand the role Pedagogy plays in this study context, it is best to approach the definition of the theme not from a traditional perspective, but one that is relative to “ways of seeing”; that is, Pedagogy is not only a means to transfer or communicate information, but is also indicative of the underlying awareness of the contexts from which that knowledge is derived. A faculty member that works in business administration and organizational management stated that,

All of our course work in the bachelor of science degree at the university was geared around major corporations, their environment and their decision-making processes and analysis. You felt like when you were finished you were supposed to go out and find a management training job with Sun Trust Banks or something like that and gradually grow up in the organization. That is a minority of business employment in America. Most of it is small businesses. This degree, I think, is aimed at, ‘Yeah you can go that route, but since most people really don't, we are
preparing you for this route instead'; that is, an entry-level management job for a small business, with you making your entrepreneurial approach on your own.

In this narrative, the faculty member is drawing a distinction between pedagogical approaches on a number of levels. There is the distinction between how a traditional university-level approach to knowledge transfer varies in focus on content and outcome from the approach that the study institution is taking as a CCB college. On the one hand, there a macro-socially defined curricular approach that is not realistic, not is it representative of the needs of the majority of industry stakeholders. On the other hand, there is a description of a more locally defined curriculum that maintains a learner-centered focus, rather than a focus on the large social institution, in effect preparing individuals in one institution to transition into the framework of another. The CCB pedagogical approach helps the individual to retain personal agency and determinism. This theme of Pedagogy is able to provide perspective on the dynamics of knowledge exchange at not only the organizational and individual levels, but also on a larger social scale.

**Ways of Being**

This primary theme is about Tribal Culture; that is, the “ways of being” that are representative of the individuals that comprise the study institution. “Ways of being” describe Tribal Culture, the components of which effectively constitute the core foundation of an effective organization or even an effective individual. “Ways of being”, as cultural indicators, also describe the values of the tribal entity, the organization, and essentially the driving forces behind that tribal entity. The following three sub-themes, Authority, Rituals and Collaboration, define the pathways through which Tribal Culture is
determined, as well as the underlying discourses it represents. For example the study institution’s current provost reflected:

When the college first envisioned the first baccalaureate program, the provost at the time put together a task force comprised of faculty, not only from the department that would be primarily responsible for the instruction, but also from departments that would have some hand in it, like the library or advising or the CTE curriculum committee, even from the career resource center, so that there was a pretty good interdisciplinary opportunity for faculty to voice any concerns that arose or to help shape the expectation for the baccalaureate degree program. It was out of that process that faculty confirmed that at that time there were no regulations that said there must be a foreign language requirement and our faculty confirmed they wanted that on the books and also to be able to form all the Gen Ed requirements. So I think the way we went about providing for opportunities to hear those voices at the time was really good—it really helped.

In this narrative, the provost is describing an ontological perspective on the way the study institution functions relative to the changes that occur within the organization and the responsiveness various organizational members have toward that change. This brief narrative actually contains an incredibly thorough and telling ontological account of the intentionality of the tribe toward adaptation to new organizational contexts. The approach to preparing for the development of a baccalaureate program at the study institution was initiated by leadership that first and foremost considered the organization through a holistic lens—a perspective that was inclusive in considering all members of the tribe to have essential functions within the college. In so thinking, the provost at the time brought together multiple members of the organizational tribe to lend voice to the conceptualization of the baccalaureate program. This was a uniquely cross-functional approach that (1) acknowledged the componential aspects of successful program development and implementation; and (2) modeled a team-based approach that would derived value from plurality of culture rather than unilateral decision-making.
This less than common approach to institutional-level decision-making from the leadership level is an example of the first pathway to Tribal Culture: Authority. The pathway of Authority as a “way of being” has to do with the connections made between individuals across organizational hierarchies and with the organizational culture itself. One faculty member in the humanities reflects this about the interrelation of faculty and administrators:

Valuing professional development could more successfully occur if it was communicated both from the administration and from faculty themselves, sort of a coming up the ranks. There is synergy that occurs when faculty can perceive the administration's embrace of those values and that principle as being integral, instead of there being an exigency towards meeting an external requirement. The faculty can then see that this is an integral part of who we are as an institution. I also think faculty involvement needs to be both encouraged and accepted.

In this case, the faculty member is able to draw a correlation of interdependency between the two distinct factions within the tribe. Whereas many institutions may find an adversarial culture between faculty and administrators, marked by lack of trust for one another's motivations, at the study institution, this faculty member has a clear vision for the benefits of validation of certain stances by leadership. Authority is the pathway by which the Tribal Culture will be more clearly defined and advocated. Though this is articulated as an aspiration for faculty and administrator, the faculty member goes on to later indicate progress in this regard:

Hopefully those sorts of individuals will be rewarded. __________ has done an incredible job articulating those types of goals and energizing them. People see that she brings that passion and if we see that we don't have to maintain these agendas on our own because they are more of an institutional commitment. It is then that faculty will think, ‘maybe I will become more involved.’

Here the faculty member is referring to an AVP with academic affairs that was positioned to harness the human capital of the faculty ranks in order to build toward a
strong foundation for baccalaureate program offerings. It is this AVP that many faculty respond well to because she is a bridge between faculty and upper-level leadership who is able to use the Authority pathway in both directions—to validate perspectives from both tribal factions toward co-ownership of organizational change processes. Yet, another faculty member in education speaks to even closer involvement by leadership via the Authority pathway—to the extent that their inputs extend to co-assessment of student outcomes:

For instance we had some feedback a while back where some community partners, employers, contacted us about some recent graduates they had hired saying, ‘they are not good at managing the classroom very well when they first come’. And in return we ask the employers, ‘well what does that mean, what are the expectations?’ First of all, are their expectations realistic? A lot of teachers struggle with classroom management their first year. What can we do to make sure the student is as reasonably competent as they can be at this point? The advisory board is very active and it is not like we only meet twice a year and then sign off on students. The board members actually offer meaningful input and feedback that we, in turn, use because they are able to call students by name; they are able to be very specific and we know those students and can make that connection. I find that the approach to graduate readiness tends to be different in a university setting or other traditional four-year setting; it tends to be more impersonal. I think we are personal and we are still able to maintain that level of being student-centered.

This level of mutuality between faculty and administrators is a strong indication of the strength of Tribal Culture in the area of co-construction of organizational realities—especially in response to change dynamics. Another pathway that can be a good predictor of organizational responsiveness is the pathway of Rituals. Rituals inform “ways of being” even more so than Tribal Culture defined by Authority. They indicate the unspoken, often unconsidered, processes that occur in the college’s background or the individual’s subconscious, but nevertheless comprise the key elements of the way in which the organization works.
On changing it, I guess in my area, everyone really embraces professional development. It is really limited by the funding available, so faculty enjoy going. I mean, probably about ten years ago the state had ‘succeed’ grants. We could send eight faculty to California and they learned great stuff. Other than that, we have a culture that professional development is important, so I don't know that adding the bachelor's program is what I see changing faculty opinion so that they see a new reason to go on and get their doctorate.

In this narrative, a faculty member from the nursing department is responding to the question of whether or not existing college faculty may feel inclined to pursue doctoral level education in their field given that the accreditation requirements for baccalaureate programming stipulate at least 25% faculty representation with an earned doctorate actively teaching within a program. However, this individual, knowing the cultural and identity shifts that have occurred within her department (as the nursing BSN was one of the first CCB programs to go live at the study institution), reported that the organizational change effects of CCB programming would not alter or strengthen existing Rituals around professional development. This is a significant statement in that it positions study institution faculty as more identified with their own “ways of being” than being reactive to externally imposed change. A faculty member in organizational management reflected on the strength of Rituals in the college:

You look at your own practice and ask, “How can I improve, what can I do differently?” You can even be home defining best practices for yourself and then sharing with your colleagues and then they can think on their own best practices; but, can we teach that? I think we can. But once again, you can present a way, but then you have got to also be at very good at getting people engaged, accepting and practicing that way.

This is an affirmation of the self-awareness that defines individual identity and organizational culture at the study institution. However, in reflecting on Rituals specifically, the faculty member indicates that there is a need to institutionalize what is described here as a practitioner inquiry stance—that is, though individual faculty value
Rituals centering on self-reflection, self-assessment and defining best practices, these Rituals have not yet become codified as Tribal Culture.

The final pathway toward effective “ways of being” at the study institution is Collaboration, which is defined as the co-construction of mutually beneficial spaces for practice, collegiality, even development that either validate a strong Tribal Culture or expose the failings of an unhealthy Tribal Culture. In the following narrative, a faculty member within clinical laboratory sciences describes her early development within the department and the collaborative resources that sponsored that development:

What was cool too, was that because of _______'s insightfulness when the program first started, she pushed a lot to get resources accessible online and also had developed this concept called an ‘open lab’. It wasn't a traditional classroom setup; you could just come in and develop your bench work. The students, 4 of us, all worked and had families and you could just drop into the lab at any time and it wasn't formal. So that prompted me to actually go back and get my master's degree and I did mine online at ______, in pharmacy but with a concentration on forensics, which was all online. If I didn't have resources and flexibility of the open lab, I probably wouldn’t have gone back to get a master’s degree, so I can thank ________ for that.

This is a multifaceted report of the varying instances of Collaboration that this individual experienced; not only within interpersonal contexts, but also relative to the existing Tribal Culture that promotes collaborative spaces. The faculty member describes instances of mentorship, experiential learning, communities of practice, flexible scheduling and support for professional development. All of these facets of Collaboration occurred simultaneously through Authority pathways or the development of new pathways for Rituals. In all case, Tribal Culture was codified and the “ways of being” became institutionalized with growing faculty awareness of the opportunities available to them through organizational change contexts.
Ways of Doing

The next primary theme has to do with Modes of Transition. This theme is comprised of four sub-themes that were used to organize themes that described ways in which faculty and leadership at the study institution “do” their work; that is, engage their practice, especially relative to organizational change. In the context of this study, the “ways of doing” demonstrated by study participants describe five distinct states of interrelation with their environmental contexts.

The first of these states is Identification, which is defined as the way in which an individual identify is formed relative to the larger cultural facets of an organization. In the context of this study, Identification describes a key aspect of how individuals within the study institution relate to the defining characteristics of the organizations, industry or communities in which they practice. This is an important theme to consider as a prerequisite of meaning-making within change contexts, as it is the process by which individuals become self-aware relative to their environments. In one instance, an administrator at the study institution reflects on the discrepancy between external drivers for college practice and his own awareness of the needs of the communities the college serves and, in turn, his own approach to practice:

The other thing that bears on this is, given that the way the state articulates expectations for community colleges relating to employment, it is a little bit overly simplistic. The state says that _________ should be seeking to put people to work in Alachua and Bradford counties. The reality is that students are much more mobile than that and they may choose to go from _________ to _________ or _________ and back to work in _________. So one of the difficulties for us in thinking about the employment picture is that the state requires us to look at the local economic and employment picture, but it understands that this is, in and of itself, not always sufficient for capturing the complete picture of how a college serves students.
In this case the administrator demonstrates a keen awareness of within-institution cultural contexts as opposed to externally defined parameters for institutional practice. Identification is a precursor to the next emergent state of interrelation, which is Relating. Relating is the process by which individuals take a more active approach to connecting with various contexts in which they or others in the college environment are experiencing change. It is through this process, in effect, how an individual relates to change. One faculty member in early childhood education reflected on how her students are coping with the changing expectations of the baccalaureate programing in the department:

I can see that some students are being nudged along and they feel the increase in the expectation. I haven’t gotten many complaints, but there have been some growing pains.

Here the individual displays a dual awareness stemming from the process of her relating to two distinct dynamics: organizational change and student identity development. The deeper context for this relational process for the faculty member is her growing awareness that baccalaureate programming presents a source of dissonance for faculty and students alike; that is, both populations involved with CCB programs are being made to operate outside their respective comfort zones. CCB programming necessitates faculty stretch beyond their traditional pedagogical imperatives to deliver instruction that, in turn, necessitates students endeavor to learn in a framework with mitigated authority dependence. Essential to this process of Relating is the acknowledgement of where the observer (the individual that is engaged in the process) is situated to relative to others within a larger change context. This awareness
provides the individual with the ability to engage the next state of “doing”: Problematizing.

Problematizing within the study institution involves faculty and leadership maintaining a solution-focused approach to the contexts in which barriers or obstacles present themselves. This process builds on Identification and Relating to establish a baseline for organizational culture, so that the faculty or administrator who is inquiring into a particular phenomenon can do so with an acknowledgment of all the inputs various stakeholders make that can impact that phenomenon. One administrator within academic affairs described the initial approach to CCB program development at the study institution:

In formalizing the process, there is an official committee meeting and informal conversations that take place around that meeting. When the advisory committee meets, they ask whether you are interested in it [developing a CCB program], what your development needs would be and what outcomes you would see in your graduates. Then faculty start putting a curriculum together and develop a set of classes and present it to the committee and ask, ‘We are thinking about this, what do you think?’ That is how it has evolved, so usually this transpires over not just one advisory board meeting, but at least two with a lot of other informal conversations in between.

This case example illustrates the process of Problematizing, in that stakeholders involved in the initiation of a CCB program at the college proceed with an awareness of the development framework and the gatekeepers involved—especially with regard to the criteria they have to meet with various gatekeepers in order to progress. The Problematizing, in this case, does not so much occur during formal meetings with the advisory board, but rather during all the informal connections that faculty and administrators make throughout the process in order to anticipate obstacles and strategize ways through. In similar vein, this administrator also commented on the
process of justifying CCB program development at the state level, even though it is the
state-level administration that has tasked the study institution with expanding its
program offerings into the CCB arena:

When we send proposals to the state, we have to send raw data. We have to
consider, according to the state labor statistics, is there demand for
baccalaureates in the areas we want to develop within, whether it be nursing or
education. We establish whether there is a demand and then we look at the raw
numbers and we may find that the numbers are not enough to justify the
program. Then you may have to speak to members of the community and get
them to write letters of support for the program. So the first and best place to
start this whole process is the advisory board and ask if they would be interested
in the program development and why.

This case exemplifies multi-level Problematizing and indicates refined awareness
of allies and resources throughout the process of program development. The
administrator acknowledges the possibility that one aspect of their development efforts
may not meet the criteria established by the state, but also maintains an awareness that
community partner validation is a valued means for establishing program need. In
essence, the administrator recognizes that both evidence-based assessments of need
and anecdotally reported community opinion regarding workforce needs can hold equal
weight when it comes to green-lighting a CCB program. This is a key point of
understanding for this administrator and defines her “way of doing” in a unique way.

The next state within the “ways of doing” dynamic is Adapting, defined by a
uniquely actionable progression from Problematizing toward a progressive
responsiveness toward organizational change. In this state individuals actively
implement strategy that they had developed during the Problematizing state. One
faculty member reflected on the Adapting he and colleagues perceived among college
leadership:
With our provost, ________ is the first new hire that enabled him to take his function with the bacc program and given it to her as part of her three areas of focus. And part of what we had all been arguing for was that by establishing a set of strategically chosen AVPs that it would allow him to achieve those larger institutional goals that he couldn't previously because he was managing the bacc program and the day-to-day faculty stuff. To provide that level of separation allows us to bring faculty up to a certain functional level, with direct contact to AVPs, and allows us to assess and reflect back on to the system, in terms of faculty to AVP communication, and the institution then realizes this is the goal.

In this case the faculty member, a long-time part of the English department, was also instrumental in working to develop reports for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation body, especially with regard to the initial state of baccalaureate programming. He found that the Provost’s Relating to change dynamics that created certain communication gaps across the organizational hierarchy, then Problematizing the situation and finally Adapting by meeting those needs through the hiring of leadership-level officers who could work directly with faculty members was an encouraging result that signified that the college was evolving in the right way; namely, that any growth based on sound communication is a step in the right direction.

Another faculty member working in organizational management reflected on the way in which the previous culture of the college, which actively developed faculty, albeit at a grass roots level, has given way to a distinct lack of development opportunities. However, this individual acknowledges a clear need through Problematizing and then strategizes the mode of Adapting:

But having someone in place that is always there and always training up the next crop, as it were—I think that is a function of the previous community college system. But the general lack of a formal organizational and managerial perspective that is gained through a formal educational program or through actual or even educational business management approaches—which is not to say that we get MBAs to do everything, but simply realizing that is what you do, not to wait until someone retires and try to scramble to find someone, you constantly bring people into the process and into those sorts of parallel
positions—it enables everyone with developing in terms of those particular skill sets.

The results of Adapting among faculty in this situation has yielded another grass roots approach through which individuals have come together in communities of practice to tap one another and other localized resources to provide development opportunities that have been collectively identified as lacking. Whether these opportunities have covered areas such as instructional delivery in baccalaureate programs or becoming a better consumer of discipline-based research, this Adapting effort has yielded innovative approaches to professional development at relatively zero cost to the college. However, the same faculty member that reported on Adapting above, provides a different perspective on Adapting that does not necessarily yield similarly positive outcomes:

Yes, then we thought, “can we find the faculty to staff the courses?”; it has been a close call, I have taught 21 courses this last academic year. My contracted load is 10. I am teaching that way because I want to see this program go. That being said, you spoke to motivation; out of the goodness of my heart I want to see this program grow for the students. I think it would be good for the reputation for __________ College, but I do not personally gain any compensation of any kind when this program grows and I think that is unfortunate. But the world doesn’t really work that way when there are no incentives.

In this case, the individual is Relating to the lack of preparation that preceded the implementation of the baccalaureate programming in organizational management. Problematizing yielded acknowledgement that there was a shortfall in human resources to deliver the increased instruction the programming demanded and so this individual’s Adapting approach resulted in his taking on increased workload to meet the need. However, this level of awareness and operationalized resolution did not yield a
sustainable outcome—something the faculty member recognizes and is seeking to further problematize.

The last state within “ways of doing” is Causation; this is a state that really occurs on a meta-level relative to the other states within this domain. That is to say, Causation frames an individual’s state of mind in such a way that a level of awareness is sustained throughout the various states of “ways of doing”. For example, a faculty member in nursing reflected on the initial negotiations with a partner area University that led to the study college’s first BSN program:

So, we sat down, I remember, in the president's offices and talked about having a collaborative RN to BSN program and for a while they were talking about this—I forget if it was 2009 or 2010, I would have to look at the dates. They were, at that point, that is, the University was saying, they couldn’t support any more 1st or 2nd year undergraduates in their track. So then they were trying to think whether they could have a mixed cohort of our generic pre-BSN students do their initial work here and then transition into their program and so we went back and forth about this. But with the limited resources on both campuses, it finally came down to the fact that they didn’t have additional faculty and we didn’t have additional faculty and so neither institution could support a completely new cohort. But what we still needed was an avenue for our ASN students to get their bachelor’s degree, because that’s what made them more marketable, if you want to say that; well it might have been in the literature, it’s what we were hearing from other states when we went to conferences.

This narrative demonstrates how an individual can engage the state of Causation while occupying other states such as Relating and Adapting. Though stakeholders form both the study institution and its partner University gained awareness of an issue of supporting the need for more qualified BSN graduates, their efforts through Problematizing resulted in the Identification of deeper issues, such as lack of human capital to support this increased programming. Furthermore, faculty from the study institution acknowledged that their professional development efforts had also yielded a larger confirmation of the need to engage in baccalaureate programming to develop
more BSN opportunities for students. So, three levels of Causation emerged from the engaging of the other states in this domain. In another case, the study institution’s provost reflected on one dynamic of increased program mandates juxtaposed with static funding:

The state funding is about the same as 2003, 6 years before any bacc program was offered here and tuition has increased considerably since then. Now tuition is being held and the governor has been very political with the presidents that he doesn’t want anyone to raise tuition and that college should not cost more than $10,000. So from the standpoint of faculty and recruitment and development we have a couple issues. Funding—and again, to provide development opportunities that would lead faculty to increase their knowledge base, free them up to take additional courses, requires some funding. The college has done some things to support those efforts, but I think that the state is asking the colleges to support these development initiatives with one hand tied behind our back and that is of course frustrating.

This narrative describes two levels of Causation identified that inhibit successful CCB programming: lack of funding commensurate with program growth and the subsequent inability to support faculty development toward successful delivery of baccalaureate-level instruction. This is complex awareness that enables the individual to make connections either in support of proposals for assistance or that validate the need to address issues that may not have been previously justifiable. In any event, the codification of the domain of “ways of doing” empowers individuals within the study institution to better negotiate the change dynamics resulting from organizational transition.

Ways of Building

The final primary theme defined through this study is Tribal Structures, which is comprised of three sub-themes: Constructs, Engagement and Evaluation, which describe the various institutionalized organizational structures that define the operations
of tribal life; in effect, the tribe’s “ways of building” its social reality. A faculty member in English reflects this relative to Tribal Structures for individual development:

Given the existing faculty culture here, my generalized perspective on faculty regarding how they want to grow in their careers; that is how they look to progress in their field, career or discipline—I would say that it is far more individualistic and part of that has to do with that lack of perspective that we bring here—the lack of institutional focus on a more communal identity and set of goals and the experiences that individual faculty have had with pursuing professional development goals that have curtailed that desire.

Here the faculty member is describing the lack of Tribal Structures that enable or even encourage faculty to pursue professional development goals. This is in stark contrast to what is reflected on by the faculty member from clinical laboratory sciences, which indicates some fragmentation of Tribal Structures across the study institution.

The first sub-domain within the college’s “ways of building” is Constructs, which describes intended and unintended structures in place that constrain social interaction and individual expectation within tribal contexts. The provost at the study institution discussed the increasing discrepancies in expectations for faculty workload with the advent of CCB programming:

Our faculty, many in the arts and sciences divisions, teach five sections of the same three credit course; or they may teach one or two preps of a five course load. Well, if we now look at something like clinical lab science or nursing, these include courses in areas where the research that informs upper division, JAR and SR level instruction continues to change. New text books in these areas are written every year and faculty have to refresh their knowledge about genetics, public health, reduction of medical errors, etc. This knowledge is constantly changing, so it is one thing to have a faculty member teaching five sections of public speaking or college algebra or five sections of composition or psychology; but I can't ask the same thing of an instructor who has to teach five sections in molecular biology or genetics, because there are lab set ups and significant prep time involved with those courses. When these programs were starting out, we could see these issues coming and we are still wrestling with them.
The provost is acknowledging through this narrative that the organizational shift toward CCB programming generated significant impacts on existing Tribal Structures. The Constructs that previously defined faculty pedagogy and the logistics of instructional delivery at the study institution now experience fragmentation with the onset of baccalaureate programming that exists with varying levels of structural complexity. This type of discrepancy with regard to how varying baccalaureate programs are approached logistically has engendered a sense of divisiveness among faculty from different departments, but the chief reflection on organizational Constructs among faculty remains professional development:

The top thing that came up was professional development. This was very, very important to them, not only in terms of their particular discipline, but also in terms of teaching and learning. There are a lot of them that are subject matter experts and teach the way they were taught through their graduate programs; but this approach doesn’t necessarily work with students in the bacc programs—they need a different way to learn and the faculty need to develop this.

This narrative was made by an AVP in academic affairs who held open Q & A sessions for faculty regarding what kind of support they needed to build toward working in the CCB model. Of all the “ways of building” that were discussed, it was professional development that resonated the most among faculty, as has been indicated throughout this study. However, what was uniquely significant about the narrative above is that the AVP acknowledged an awareness that the approach to instructional delivery, especially relative to the more complex knowledge bases for specialized CCB programs, had to be reconsidered because faculty are teaching from the perspective of university-level graduate programs rather than the Tribal Structures of this community-state college. This indicates a need to reconnect the Tribal Culture with the “ways of building” toward increased CCB programming.
The next sub-theme within Tribal Structures is Engagement, which is defined by the approaches members of the tribe take to engage one another in the process of development or building in response to change drivers impacting existing structures. This faculty member from business administration describes the process of Engagement with student members of the tribe:

We are having better conversations now; but I in the first management course we offer in our bacc program track, they are definitely developing expectations regarding what we are expecting from them relative to the rigors of the program and the professional standards we hold to in preparing future industry partners. They are learning to get what they are supposed to get from this degree. The degree is not going to do anyone any good if all they do is wait for the phone to ring. I spend a lot of our time together talking to students about job searching, networking and involvement with professional associations.

In this case, the faculty member is explicit in the expectations he sets for student success—expectations that are co-constructed with the students and achieved through a partnership toward the end goal of intentional employment, which benefits both the individual and the tribe. This is a strong example of the Engagement of developing members of the tribe in the “ways of building” that are known to established members of the tribe, who know how to negotiate Tribal Structures well. Another faculty member from clinical laboratory science goes even further in defining “ways of building” for students by anticipating impacts to Tribal Structures that are very subtle and necessitate a strong awareness of the way students relate to these structures:

We have to have certain set ways of doing things, but we also value working with those students that we can find ways of helping them be successful within their personal life and work life and in school. I think as is the case with a lot of the RN to BSN programs and other baccalaureate programs, as these programs become full-time commitments, school-work-life balance will still be the most important, because I can still see the students working full-time while going to school full-time. So I would say the most important thing is our really learning or being aware of students’ changing needs and continuing to find new ways to teach...
online—but no matter how you teach, always being sensitive to students’ needs and help them to be successful through communication and flexibility.

This is a beautiful narrative that demonstrates one of the strongest values to emerge from all the narratives collected across the study institution: learner-centered practice. This individual displays a nuanced understanding of her students’ perspectives on educational attainment and knows the likely patterns this growing population will follow relative to moving through their CCB program. The anticipatory nature of this individual’s approach to Engagement also shows that there are members of the tribe that are very proactive in their responsiveness to organizational change and its impacts on Tribal Structures.

The final sub-theme that defines the study institution’s “ways of building” is Evaluation which describes the way in which members of the tribe self-reflect; not on individual practice, but on Tribal Structures—reflections that can inform structural changes necessitated by externally imposed change dynamics:

________ requires every faculty member go through and do the same kind of analysis for whatever the Gen Ed outcomes measures are in that course. So every semester that faculty teach it, they have to go in and submit their own review of whether those outcomes have been met. There are several rubrics for this kind of self-assessment that faculty use. For literacy, a Gen Ed learning outcome measure, I'm not sure what faculty have for this, but that would be an easy assessment to do with a one-page rubric. _______ is very good at doing that kind of assessment, but at an institutional level we don't have that kind of holistic approach to curriculum assessment for faculty; that tends to occur at the departmental and individual levels.

This narrative, provided by an AVP with academic affairs, not only describes aspects of Evaluation that occur within existing Tribal Structures, but also the levels at which they occur and their limitations. This administrator exhibits a multi-level understanding of faculty Evaluation procedures and concedes the need to
institutionalize these procedures for the benefit of the whole college, especially relative to a growing need to centralize accreditation-reporting procedures for CCB programming. In this case, the consideration of Evaluation has revealed a breakdown in the Authority pathway toward more efficient “ways of doing”. Another faculty member in education reflects on Evaluation with regard to student learning and the need for experiential modes for self-assessing gained knowledge:

They have to go out and put into practice what they have learned. There is only so much you can do in a two-year program, but when you go to the level of upper division programs, there is then the increased expectation that students have to go out and practice what they have learned and bring back evidence of its success in the field.

This individual is expressing both a direct awareness of need relative to student learning outcomes, as well as a meta-awareness of the impacts on curriculum and faculty pedagogy that the transition to baccalaureate-level programming is having on Tribal Structures. In this case, there is a growing acknowledgement among faculty of not only the need to increase academic rigor, but to task students with evaluating the efficacy of their learning in-practice. This is a departure for many students accustomed to traditional two-year program structures who are finding it difficult to take on this level of personal agency in their own learning process. Nevertheless, the process of Evaluation to identify and approach new “ways of building” is an essential pathway toward Tribal Structures that can adapt well to further programmatic changes.

Summary

In commenting on the nexus of human reasoning through instances of critical change—change that requires human beings not only to come to terms with what is
happening on an individual level, but also find the means to co-create ways through the struggle of change, as a group, Greene (2013) writes:

> When cooperation is easy or impossible...there’s no social problem to be solved. Cooperation becomes a challenging but solvable problem when...individual interest and collective interest are neither perfectly aligned nor opposed. (20)

This is an interesting summation of the primary outcome of this study—the process of meaning-making at the individual level that yields collective meaning-making at the group level—or, as Greene puts it, a state of cooperation applied to an existing social problem. However, a nuanced truth that Greene reveals is that the dissonance created by critical change that precipitates meaning-making processes is the necessary grist for the mill of collective problem solving. That is to say, the discomfort associated with being displaced...disrupted...through a critical change event is precisely what is necessary to drive successful change—if we define change as individuals within organizational systems becoming better situated to respond to changing environments, thus enabling the organization to be most adaptive to external change pressures.

However, though the process of individual and collective meaning-making work in concert to help the organization be optimally responsive to critical change, it is important to note that the essential aspect of the meaning-making process is esoteric in nature, involving a deep understanding of self, in the case of the individual, and the internal dynamic of the collective, the group, in the case of the organizational-level meaning-making. Baxter Magolda (2009), in her seminal work on self-authorship, writes:

> There is nothing wrong with operating from external formulas in and of itself. Problems arise, however, when the demands of your environment require the exercise of personal authority that you have had no opportunity or preparation to develop. (15)
This is an ideal summation of the core takeaway of this research into meaning-making—that it requires a developmental approach to learn to be responsive rather than reactive—to come to an understanding of one’s place within a change context and to respond out of that understanding, rather than to react to external stimuli simply because that is the most rational course of action to take based on available external data. The external data represents only one dimension of decision-making—it may inform what constitutes reciprocity to an evolving change context, but it does not inform why this particular change event requires response and the nature of that response, whether limited to an individual or necessitating a collective effort. That manner of understanding comes through the process of meaning-making. The Four Ways model represents the structural representation of the meaning-making narratives that emerged through the change process underway at the study college.
Figure F-3. The Four Ways of Meaning-making through critical change.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study identifies and frames the meaning-making methods faculty at the study institution employed as they experienced the effects of organizational change from a traditional community college framework to a state college, baccalaureate degree-granting model. The initial research questions that guided this study were:

1. How does community college organizational change impact faculty roles through the transition to the community college baccalaureate model?
2. How do community college faculty change their practice to meet evolving college needs?
3. How does community college change affect faculty recruitment and development?
4. How do the perceptions faculty develop toward community college change impact their professional identity?

As is evident through the narratives explored in this study, community college faculty have had to reflect on what it means to be a professional in service of both community and discipline. That is, faculty perspectives were divided between what is best for their community of students and what is best relative to their own interests in professional development and stability. Exploring this dynamic revealed not only the tensions that faculty-in-transition faced, but also, and perhaps more importantly, the identity crises that faculty experienced when considering professional pathways that had deviated from their initial professional expectations.
This examination into organizational change effects revealed impacts on faculty behaviors, competencies, communication strategies, and investments in professional development that can determine whether this manner of community college change can be sustainable. Faculty narratives spoke to the reconstruction of professional identities, the creation of new professional roles and practice within new professional spaces. Competencies for faculty practice within the CCB model can be more clearly defined through this examination of how faculty developed new identities that are as adaptable as the evolving working conditions they occupy.

Collective faculty narratives also prompted other strands of inquiry, such as whether or not the ways of meaning-making these faculty engaged in could be replicable at other institutions undergoing similar transition. There were also emerging considerations regarding this transition being a reflection of a core re-thinking of the original structures that drive faculty recruitment and development. There was also the identification of a groundwork for a model for successful faculty adaptability through college change precipitated by shifts in curricular and pedagogical approaches that mark evolving approaches to teaching and learning at the state college.

A Lens for Examining Faculty Response to College Change

In order to utilize this single-institution study site as a valid target of opportunity, it was important to ask how the culture of a single community college fits within the larger landscape of community colleges in transition—that is, what insights can this localized perspective provide regarding potential driving and restraining forces relative to such transition? Also salient to this inquiry was the question of whether or not, in this context and along this continuum, the evolution of the community college as a whole is having
lasting impacts on the component areas of educational practice within the organization. In this sense, this study is an exploration of the value of educational practice, from the perspective of faculty and administrators alike, within the culture of change of the subject college.

This exploration began as an attempt to capture the change dynamics of the community college’s transition to the four year, baccalaureate-granting state college model. The complexities of developing community college baccalaureate (CCB) programs (and Remington, 2013) then emerged as a relevant theme, which pointed to the possible challenges faced by college faculty through this transition. Faculty meaning-making then became the groundwork for this study and the dynamics of this process became more relevant and defined through the emergent themes derived from the data.

Kezar (2014) suggests that “deep” or transformational change within colleges is a challenge many administrators have faced with little success. It is usually what Kezar refers to as “first-order changes” that are commonly pursued and successfully achieved—changes defined by attempts to influence or persuade stakeholders around a desired value set. It is the “second-order changes” that Kezar suggests are often avoided by college leadership: “Higher education institutions, as social institutions, are supposed to be long-standing and support an enduring mission. They are not expected or accustomed to undergo significant changes to their core purpose or values.” (p.62) In the case of community colleges responding to external market pressures that necessitate a shift in core mission, college leadership find themselves ill-equipped even to perceive the driving forces of change, much less to coalesce the college community.
around that change. Kezar suggests that dramatic changes to teaching and learning that are emerging in pockets throughout the higher education landscape may need to be institutionalized in order to keep apace of shifting educational paradigms. This study was initiated to respond to such a call—it was initially an attempt to better understand college change dynamics in order to improve stakeholder “fit” within change contexts. The study commenced as an approach to understand the driving and restraining forces of organizational change in the case of a drastic mission shift, such as the transition to the CCB model. The data collection approach involved faculty and administrator perceptions that could help to better depict the nuanced processes comprising college change.

However, the organization and review or narrative data subsequently shifted the thematic focus of the study—with less emphasis on change processes and more of a concentration on the faculty stories themselves—narratives that began to tell a story of human adaptability, reflexivity and self-discovery through an increasingly common human phenomenon of cultural paradigm shift. It is important to note that while the initial approach to this inquiry was situated in systems change, faculty narratives caused the inquiry to center on the process of meaning-making—decidedly shifting the unit of analysis from the organization to the individual. So too, then, did the focus of the study shift from informing the knowledge base of change theory to seeking a deeper understand of how individuals respond to change—namely, how do faculty process individual identity shifts relative to larger external change stimuli.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Levin et al (2011) suggested that faculty response to college mission creep necessitates that researchers consider the pathways through
which faculty might reconstruct their profession in order to not only move forward in what the authors termed the New Economy, but also create new professional roles in this space. Specifically, faculty may need to develop new identities that are as adaptable as the working conditions they occupy—which then defines those new identities. It is this context of identity shift and redevelopment that connects emerging questions around organizational change impacts on faculty development—and it is the meaning-making process that faculty engage in through organizational change that provides the map with which we can track identity development.

This study has itself now evolved into a story about what happens to individual identity when organizational identity shifts—set against the backdrop of an institution trying to validate its relevance relative to a changing culture. This is ultimately a story of change occurring simultaneously and interchangeably at multiple levels. It is a story through which the human element within this change context can inform the validity of the change process itself.

The CCB pathway is seen by some faculty who participated in this study as a move toward the small liberal arts college model. They ask, if this is becoming the dominant model for colleges, does this make it the right evolutionary pathway for the community college? Borrowing from the lexicon of biological evolution, derived from scholarship of the philosophy of human evolution (Ruse, 2012), if the community college is undergoing an “evolutionary” step, then such a transition necessitates the question of whether or not this “species” of social institution will be successful in this new iteration, considering the current cultural climate and socioeconomic context. If it fails, why would it fail? More so, community college faculty present another consideration: will this
“species” of professional educator be able to adapt to its new conditions? If faculty fail or succeed within this new paradigm, for what reason would either scenario occur? Finally, echoing the sentiment of some faculty study participants, are community college faculty, in their current iteration, on the decline?

What is the “critical event” discourse (Gee, 2010) being generated through this organizational transition that establishes community college faculty as marginalized or at-risk stakeholders—thereby necessitating an alternate and competing narrative? What is the state college monoculture (Michaels, 2011) that is created through the dynamics established between postsecondary education and the marketplace—especially in the context of these specialized and dedicated workforce development mechanisms?

Conceptually, working to perpetuate the system versus the desired human condition, the needs of the system can masquerade as the human condition. If Quinn (1997) is correct and new programs are not needed, but rather a new vision, then what is the fate of the community college baccalaureate and perhaps the state college itself in this context? If community college faculty can be thought of as a “species”, part of the larger postsecondary faculty “genus”, then whatever preceded this particular evolutionary step can be examined to determine how this “species” emerged. In the same way, given the external or evolutionary pressures presented by the paradigm shift to the community college baccalaureate model and furthermore, the state college model, there can perhaps be some predictive measure with which to project to the next evolution of this faculty “species”. (Ruse, 2012)
If community college faculty have indeed evolved from other forms of postsecondary faculty, then it can be postulated that prior to the introduction of the community college model, higher education faculty sought professional contexts in which their research and teaching could thrive. However, most higher education contexts did not value the teaching branch of their practice as much as the research—that is, knowledge development was more valued than knowledge transmission (Cohen and Brawer, 2008). However, the branching of the organizational structure of higher education from traditional college and university to the land-grant college and university and furthermore to the community college, precipitated the branching of the faculty “species” as well. The faculty that were more suited to teaching and knowledge transmission found their homes at newly established community colleges.

It can be said that another “species” found within the higher education context, the college student, also began to differentiate according to evolutionary pressures. The students that valued access to new knowledge and perspectives on the professions they pursued found themselves following the pathways to the organizational contexts that benefited them most—often, these contexts transformed these students into the future knowledge producers that would sustain those same organizational contexts. In like manner, the students that sought to develop distinct capacities, ways of being, that they could then return to their varied origination contexts, sought out the newly developed community college model. These contexts allowed the students to maintain their affiliation with the communities in which they lived, rather than transfer that affiliation to the organizational context of the college or university. Likewise, community
college faculty were able to maintain a symbiotic balance between community and college, thereby achieving a keen environmental balance.

Note the distinction: one organizational paradigm required faculty and students to connect their identities more with that organization than their contexts of origination. The community college organizational paradigm promoted environmental balance between community development and knowledge transmission. Thinking of these paradigms in a tribal context, it becomes necessary to define lineage in each higher education context. There is a cultural discrepancy here between the two contexts of traditional versus community-based: one is defined as exclusivity and the other as access. This important cultural distinction informs many decisions throughout both organizational constructs, whether political, social or foundational. The procedures, guidelines and ways of doing that can be found within each organizational construct were not arbitrarily defined; rather, they were refined over generations of sorting through what does and does not work with regard to the core vision that defines each educational construct. In a sense, the policies and procedures—the ways of doing—that comprise each higher education framework actually represent the will of the stakeholders within each organization, the tribe, which in turn represents the defining vision at the core of its culture.

The organization is the tribe and the tribe is the organization. As goes one, so goes the other. In this manner, if community colleges move toward the small college CCB model, a direction that can perhaps be seen as a return, even a regression or devolution to a point prior to the evolutionary split that led it to its present context, what, then, will become of the faculty and student “tribes” that comprise its organizational
framework and define its organizational culture? The community college baccalaureate has come into existence and has necessitated a more specialized faculty that can, in turn, develop a more specialized student. Such is the function of its evolutionary predecessor, the traditional university, but not of its immediate predecessor, the community college.

Did the community college paradigm shift, seen through a cultural evolution lens, occur as a result of internal drivers or external pressures? Did members of the “tribe” feel that their ways of doing necessitated a change, perhaps a return to the traditions of their “ancestors”? Did the balance between community and institution falter, resulting in the organizational construct self-correcting toward a more proven and longstanding paradigm? Where does this leave the members of the tribe—those for whom this paradigm shift is a critical blow to their sense-of-self and identity?

The prototypical community college of the 1960s and early 1970s was a community resource intended to keep pace with community needs and work with community organizations and leadership to build a strong, localized base for life, business and growth (Cohen and Brawer, 2008). This was happening at a time when there was a growing awareness of the plight of underserved populations. The leitmotif of the community college movement was access and the extension of opportunity. The community college was the child of a culture that underwent a profound sea change—one that heralded a renewed consciousness of reform and Reconstructionist ideologies. Society-at-large sought institutional representation for underrepresented voices a number of ways—and the community college educational access that was intended to empower underrepresented populations to operate in social spaces in which they...
previously could not. However contemporary social contexts now represent a return to a cultural theme that again positions institutions of higher education as factories that must produce socioeconomic capital at higher and higher rates in order to keep pace with the social machines of other nations.

The institution of higher education is now poised at the precipice of an important decision—a decision about identity. Should the concept of identity be relinquished by human hands—toward created entities such as the “free market” or the “global economy”? Is human development moving into the mid-21st century as a Neotribal cultural revival or as a concession to an authoritarian monoculture?

With the onset of the CCB model, credentialism finds its way into a space that was originally intended to be a great social equalizer by way of open access academic pathways. While the community college baccalaureate may be an appropriate response to a U. S. workforce needing specifically skilled participants in order to maintain global competitiveness, the CCB model may also represent a threat to the community-based, community strengthening ideals on which these colleges were first founded. Is the CCB model apropos to addressing growing economic gaps between the very rich and the very poor? Does the model place emphasis on producing graduates that will strengthen the faltering middle class? Ultimately, is the CCB model serving to devalue the existing degrees offered via two-year models? These questions become increasingly salient when considering the symbiotic relationship between the workforce and colleges and the impact credentialism plays on what is ultimately valued by industry.
Another consideration associated with this paradigm shift is the perspective of the student: are student expectations for what a community college baccalaureate is and may provide in line with what it actually is and does provide? In terms of identity, the CCB model provides both faculty and students within the college framework a cultural anchor that enables both groups to maintain perspectives that themselves perpetuate the CCB ideology: that there is intrinsic social value in the model that responds directly to industry needs. In this regard, faculty who are driven to teach within the CCB model and students who are driven to learn within it find validation and purpose in a cultural context that is positioned to gain validation from the very industry it is supplying with workforce participants. This extends to the validation of the model by faculty and students who seek participation within it and then employment and articulation agreements with industry, forming a self-perpetuating feedback loop.

**Significance of Findings**

*Finding 1: Negotiation and Navigation*

The beginning of the awareness of change for college faculty was marked by a number of reactions. Some faculty responded with apprehension, thinking the change in college mission immediately outmoded traditional community college faculty roles. Other faculty responded with an intentional resistance, communicating disapproval of a philosophical shift in what the community college is meant to represent and lamenting a perceived resulting disservice to their students. Still other faculty, tending to be younger in age and earlier in their tenure, responded with an eagerness to embrace the transition to the CCB as an opportunity for possible professional development and further credentialing.
Whatever their response, the faculty collectively began to enter into a process of *negotiating* the parameters of this change, exploring its boundaries and measuring its potential impacts on their individual and departmental identities. This process of negotiation was defined by inter-faculty commiseration around their dissatisfaction with what many perceived to be an arbitrarily imposed decision by college leadership. Others came together in loosely formed working groups to examine CCB change impacts in a measured way. Still others volunteered to participate in or lead task forces initiated by college administration to most easily transition specific departments to the CCB model.

Regardless of initial intent, these processes of negotiating the structural aspects of this college change dynamic yielded essential perceptions data that informed the underlying faculty narrative through college change. These faculty perceptions data can be found in Appendix D. What was remarkable as an outcome of this faculty collaboration was the focus on what it means to be faculty in this transitioning college context. Faculty explored the attributes that comprise an educator that is well-situated in a teaching and learning framework and aligns professional development goals with pedagogical development.

The aspect of faculty *navigation* of their changing circumstances marked the beginning of a transition from individual self-examination to a collective examination of faculty roles. The changing college context, requiring reconsideration of faculty credentialing, development and tenure, necessitated a deeper dive into what constitutes *systems change* within the college. This navigation of possibility required the
involvement of faculty across disciplines toward an integrated understanding of a new kind of instructional delivery.

It is important to understand systems change (the process in which in which systems interventions occur) in general, in the context of college change, and, more specifically, in the context of instructional delivery within a state college—in order to understand why it became such a critical component of faculty professional development and sustainability.

A system is defined as an organization structured at a community, regional, state, national, or global level that engages many individuals in a collection of interrelated activities. Change is defined as a permanent and holistic modification of a policy or operational approach at one or more of these organizational levels that sustains the institution's efforts.

**Finding 2: Discovery and Reflexivity**

The role and image of college faculty are essential in promoting institutional culture, especially as that culture is in a process of redefining. Through their professional activities faculty help one another through change contexts by giving advice, guidance and answers to questions related to intrapersonal reflexivity and the discovery of new professional identity. Faculty also serve as a reference for educating the public and policy-makers about what the state college represents relative to personal opportunity and workforce development. They have an impact at state and national levels through their professional associations in influencing policy change for improved student development, retention and success. There was a broad consensus
among these faculty that unless there is a multi-professional involvement in adapting to college change, the transition to the CCB will not be effective.

In community settings, college faculty are the most knowledgeable in matters of relating the value of what the college offers to the public and they are expected to act on the basis of this knowledge. In their society and their communities they are expected to be role models for the rest of the population. This includes, in general, their behavior in essential matters such as the college being a resource for sustainable communities.

Faculty across disciplines feel that they need to address college change impacts as part of their standard of instructional practice. Their belief is that interventions based in solidarity, that utilize the narratives of multi-disciplinary faculty are very effective, and that all college professionals can have an impact in assisting with transition: essentially, the more a person hears a consistent message professional spaces, the more likely that person will be able to successfully situate within the evolving college culture.

**Finding 3: Self-assessment and Identifying Opportunities**

Incumbent college faculty feel that play an important role in preparing new generations of faculty—not only relative to adapting to changing college culture, but also to sustain the principles on which the college developed its initial successes, something that faculty with longer periods of tenure feel very strongly about. They are involved in the training process of new faculty, including pre- and post-graduate training, functional education that reflects departmental culture, continued education and training in discipline or in research and evaluation around discipline-specific faculty practice. According to faculty, ongoing training is effective in changing and adapting faculty practice. However, they feel that this approach has to be based on consensus and
consistent, often lamenting that in both theoretical and practical spaces, the preparation of college faculty as adaptable pedagogues through professional schools is inadequate.

Many college faculty have leadership positions at different departmental and institutional levels and several enjoy considerable public trust within and without the college. Effective change and professional development are very much perceived as leadership responsibility, from the departmental level to upper levels of administration. Among the many activities faculty in positions of leadership have taken on is getting involved in the policy-making process—supporting comprehensive change measures that go beyond the reporting of general faculty perceptions toward advocacy campaigns to help faculty feel more stable through this transition process. This leadership position can be exerted at the individual, interpersonal, departmental or institutional level, depending on where one is best able to promote changes.

**Finding 4: Identity Development**

Faculty feel that professional development opportunities often lack, in general, appropriate content and practice on the habits, competencies and identity of college faculty, from motivations and pathways to college faculty work to ways of adapting to college mission creep. Although some general aspects of coping with changing professional environments may be addressed at association meetings and conferences, the breadth and depth of the problem might be overlooked.

In many respects, faculty feel that professional organizations have not yet joined and lent their voice to helping faculty through increasingly apparent college change contexts. Many faculty remain unaware of the core drivers for college change and its impact on institutional culture and, more significantly, on students’ perspectives. Faculty
feel that this is slowly changing, with some professional organizations taking action, and becoming more involved in all aspects of college transition, especially as it relates to evolving faculty roles and responsibilities. But much remains to be done for faculty to be able to accept that changing college culture is part of faculty experience across disciplines and periods of tenure.

**Finding 5: Meaning-making**

As a member of their community, faculty utilize their role to build opinion in support of community engagement with college programs and services, which has great potential to help further situate the changing college in continuing to respond to community needs. But faculty feel this role has been generally neglected through the change process—specifically to involve community perspectives as an active vector for defining college change.

While not all faculty have the opportunity to make college change issues the center of their professional activities, they can and should engage the magnitude of the change in terms of how they individually create meaning for themselves through the process and also convey their support for colleagues. Becoming politically active within the institution or lending support to a group that is championing issues around faculty advocacy through transition are some of the ways faculty value to get involved. As an opinion-builder, faculty feel they should be knowledgeable of existing information resources around the issue of college change, especially with regard to changing accreditation requirements that affect both departments and individual faculty development.
Implications for Organizational Change and Faculty Development Theory

As literature on organizational development, college change and faculty development defined the scope and aim of this study, it is appropriate to say, at this point, that the study findings provide the groundwork to begin the discussion on developing potentially predictive models that can describe faculty meaning-making through college change contexts.

The study institution was representative of a complex adaptive system in which the phenomena of organizational change and professional development coincided to co-produce a need for increased and targeted workforce development. This need centered on faculty development, as change impacts on faculty identity and attitudes toward practice represented the greatest effects of the programmatic transition. In considering how organizational restructuring has traditionally occurred throughout higher education, it became clear that community college change is a uniquely complex dynamic, given the diverse consumer base colleges serve and the diverse pathways faculty take to arrive at their positions within the college. This was especially relevant at the study institution, which is representative of several key community college traits that impact organizational change dynamics.

The literature on the need for teaching-centered faculty development in higher education that is more practice-focused and yields doctoral-level education professionals reflected this study as a consideration of faculty perspectives on college change. The resultant impacts on student outcomes and faculty responsiveness to traditional undergraduate education models helped individuals co-create meaning-
making dynamics that helped faculty at the study college negotiate the transition to the community college baccalaureate.

The study findings offer a framework for faculty meaning-making as it occurred within this particular study institution. The narrative themes that comprise the framework include modalities specific to both individuals and groups within the college. Group action, in particular, was representative of the type of dynamics described in Neotribal literature that addresses the ways in which existing tribal hierarchies adapt and collectively respond to change inputs that are external to the tribe.

This meaning-making framework, the “ways” of faculty meaning-making, at least in the context of this study and the subject college, bridges the gap in understanding the path between organizational change and faculty outcomes. However, this study only serves to identify a need. It is the statement the faculty above made, “We continue to change and modify the curriculum in the courses and what is offered in the overall program, as we evolve our way through it” that most resonates as an expression of an unexamined concept—the way faculty evolve through change contexts. Such processes of evolution through change are not exclusive to higher education faculty, especially at the state college, but also to other types of professional practitioners that are concerned not only with focus on the needs of the self, but also on those of the organization and the populations it serves.

Whether in the area of education, public health or community development, the evolving roles and identities of practitioners requires special consideration, as these are individuals whose core sense of self is defined by multiple vectors of meaning-making. That is to say, this describes multi-modal identity development through potentially
competing areas of personal commitment. An increasing understanding of the way these faculty create intrapersonal and interpersonal understanding of purpose may help researchers to develop study designs that can better inform faculty development approaches, as well as methods for increasing individual satisfaction with roles and work.

Given this study grew out of CPED principles, as noted in Chapter 3, it is important to maintain a practice-focused application for the implications of this study. These findings inform theory around teaching-focused faculty development that keeps abreast of the evolving place and purpose of teaching faculty in higher education. Faculty meaning-making reveals a growing collective voice indicating certain individuals are interested in maintaining their niche as teaching professionals and want to be credentialed to do so—or at the very least to grow their departments with new hires that are well versed in how to teach effectively form their knowledge base—to develop students that are adaptable to changing workplace needs. Put simply, there is growing need for faculty that are well taught how to teach students that know how to learn.

The implications for theory also point to a practical application for college leadership. In order to bring faculty through critical change contexts in ways that are individually empowering, leaders can consider the benefits of collective meaning-making. That is to say, study findings indicate that effective response to change empowers individuals through shared expressions of value—connecting lived experience in group contexts that can produce powerful actionable responses and mobilize individuals through decentralized pathways, as opposed to more traditional top-down leadership approaches.
Implications for Organizational Change and Faculty Development Research

As mentioned earlier, there are potential considerations in studying community college change, especially relative to baccalaureate program development, that this study’s findings have precipitated which can inform research on consolidating individual change dynamics toward easier organizational transitions. Researchers can explore single and multi-institution studies via qualitative, case-based methods to examine change effects in the areas of faculty change competencies, administration perspectives on faculty identity and practice and within-college change initiatives that actively guide faculty meaning-making:

1. If faculty meaning-making results in their successfully adapting to change contexts that can be empirically observed and defined, can it also be successfully replicated given similar organizational change contexts?

2. Does the transition to the CCB model reflect a core re-thinking of the original principles that informed faculty recruitment and development?

3. As colleges face increasing issues resulting from changes to organizational mission that necessitate reconsidering of curricular and pedagogical approaches, can a valid and reliable model for successful faculty adaptability be developed?

These strands represent pathways toward the development of a change management model for community colleges that can be utilized in both anticipatory and prescriptive ways. However, the testing of models or methods centered on increasing faculty capacity to adapt to changing college contexts requires an understanding of how faculty make meaning through challenging circumstances, which is a precursor to adapting to those circumstances.
Faculty meaning-making informs individual understanding of the mechanisms at work that are impacting individual roles, responsibilities, acceptable risk factors and shifting reward structures. The process of meaning-making further informs the development of strategies to cope with initial anxieties related to the change process and a differentiation of actual stressors versus apprehensions produced through unmanaged anxiety. Without this baseline understanding of how faculty make meaning through critical change events, study designs lack the variable that situates causal factors that initiate the process of response and adapting to changing institutional culture and environments.

As an extension of the exploratory approach this study has initiated into the experience of faculty through college change, the method of appreciative inquiry can serve as a natural extension of study design toward harnessing faculty perspectives to better inform organizational change. Appreciative Inquiry, described as the coevolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them, involves systematic discovery of what gives “life” to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2000)

This method, utilizing the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential, can help build a constructive union between a faculty group and the zeitgeist that represents their past and present capacities: achievements, assets, unexplored potentials, innovations, strengths, elevated thoughts, opportunities, benchmarks, high point moments, lived values, traditions, strategic competencies, stories, expressions of wisdom, insights into
the deeper organizational spirit or soul—and visions of valued and possible futures. Taking all of these considerations together, the method of Appreciative Inquiry can work from accounts of a “positive change core” (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2000)—and help leadership tap the rich and inspiring accounts of the positive narrative through critical change. “Link the energy of this core directly to any change agenda and changes never thought possible are suddenly and democratically mobilized.” (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2000, 3)

An applied approach to these implications for research around faculty meaning-making is predicated on three main strands: (1) is there a defined method for meaning-making in practice that can replicate the results of faculty adaptability produced at the study college; (2) can meaning-making serve as a coping mechanism for faculty experiencing dissonance through organizational change; and (3) is there a point along the meaning-making continuum at which collective awareness is produced that can mobilize faculty groups to engage in responsiveness to change.

The study findings speak practically to each of these research areas—indicating pathways for engaging in deeper inquiry around each. First, the Four Ways for Making Meaning through Critical Change represents the beginnings of a model that describes the ways in which the faculty at the study college approached meaning-making individually and as a collective. Given the pre-existing infrastructure for community and collegiality at this college, it is fair to say that another college with a similar collegial culture could be a study site to see if the Four Ways model can be applied to produce similar meaning-making outcomes.
Second, the Ways of Seeing and the Ways of Doing describe individual meaning-making practice that, when considered at the sub-theme levels of Modes of Reasoning and Modes of Transition, defines specific coping mechanisms that faculty used intrapersonally to manage their anxiety around perceived threats to individual identity. The specific modes that individuals engaged in, organized through this study into third order themes like Knowing, Reflexivity, Relating and Adapting, can be utilized as applied methods for helping faculty at other institutions experiencing critical change.

Lastly, the Four Ways model also indicates that there is a transition point along the meaning-making continuum at which individuals transition from relating to the change experience intrapersonally, as individuals, to an interpersonal approach, as a collective. This point of transition is defined by the Tribal Culture and Tribal Structures that organically formed at the study college as faculty moved into negotiating Ways of Being and Ways of Building. These spaces yielded very effective, action-oriented outcomes produced by collective faculty efforts based on collective faculty meaning-making. The Tribal Structures granted faculty group agency to respond to change dynamics within the college. This transition along the meaning-making continuum is essential to the success of college change—and it is the transition from Ways of Doing into the tribal spaces that defines this opportunity.

**Implications for Organizational Change and Faculty Development Practice**

Just as there are salient implications for theory development and research resulting from the findings of this examination of faculty response to organizational and cultural change, the framework for faculty meaning-making depicted through this study also has implications for faculty practice. Specifically, this study can inform methods for
identifying and consolidating the behaviors, competencies, communication strategies, and investments in professional development necessary to achieve successful and sustainable college change.

The most salient areas of college administration that can benefit from a deeper consideration of the framework for faculty meaning-making derived from this study all center on the development of human capital. More than a human resources consideration, this is a consideration of the sustainability of the organization. Though the outcomes of this study bear implications for the further study of organizational change across institutional silos, this study's findings are particularly well positioned to gain broader visibly for faculty development at the community college, as well as call for a more focused examination of community college faculty as having unique agency within the higher education landscape.

State college faculty are specially situated within an organizational context that continues to change, responsive to multiple socioeconomic inputs that threaten not only organizational identity, but the identity of the individuals that comprise the college culture. It is this implication centered on faculty identity that ultimately expresses the need for this study and subsequent studies that may deepen this examination.

The “ways” of meaning-making described in this narrative point toward an evolved perspective on the way decision-making occurs among college leadership. The data points utilized to make evidence-based decisions should not be limited to traditional criteria measuring self-reported aspects of faculty job satisfaction or concerns about shifting opportunities for professional development—rather, a deeper understanding on the part of leadership of faculty culture is necessary. For community
college faculty transitioning to a new higher education environment, many of the values that defined individual pathways to the work that faculty do are still relevant and many intend on perpetuating these values through their tenure. This is an important consideration—much of the pushback that leadership received from faculty relative to the CCB transition did not originate in hesitation to expand educational offerings, but rather in the idea that this shift would impact valued pedagogical approaches and diminish the value of the community college-specific educational experience. The faculty at the study institution, some of whom have been at the college since its inception, express value around the strong faculty-student relationships and their ability to deliver education in a classical, Socratic dynamic—something they fear will be marginalized as they adjust capacity to serve larger numbers of students in programs that necessitate a more nimble approach in order to meet demand. The consideration becomes one of quality versus quantity.

The most practical application of this study’s findings is naturally toward higher education practice. For college leadership, it is very important to understand how faculty individually and collectively make meaning through change so that the behaviors, competencies and strategies that they develop, utilize and display can be consolidated into faculty development methods. The implications for faculty development, in this regard, exist in both in-service and pre-service spaces. That is to say, though colleges and professional associations can continue to develop faculty practitioners that are teaching-focused and have adequate support to maintain this identity through college change that may require re-training, it is also necessary to approach this from the space of academic credentialing. CPED leadership have long
advocated for the Ed.D. to be valued and broadly applied to train community college leadership to deploy a necessarily different kind of educational experience than what is available through traditional four-year institutions. This study’s findings suggest that as accreditation requirements for CCB programs necessitate a defined ratio of doctoral-level educated faculty be in place to deliver instruction, it is the teaching and practice-focused training an Ed.D. provides that is essential to the kind of identity faculty want to sustain individually and departmentally. In the case of discipline-specific hires in spaces such as biotechnology, nursing or math, it may become essential that doctoral cognates in community college teaching become a regular part of the community college faculty development pathway via curriculum infusion.

Leadership decision-making must evolve with a growing awareness of faculty culture—just as faculty identity evolves with increasing meaning-making approaches through college change. Leadership investment in human capital can produce considerable returns if those investments provide faculty the space to make meaning and develop identity. This is the way colleges can be sustainable at the institutional level—by developing a culture of change response on the individual level that is based on the idea that how faculty make meaning out of a change experience defines how they will respond to that change experience.

Limitations of the Study

This study initially examined the change contexts of one community college transitioning to the baccalaureate program model in the following ways: (1) the organizational factors in place within a state college framework that drive/restrain faculty responsiveness to externally imposed needs; (2) the stance toward organizational
change that enables college faculty to sustain their responsiveness to evolving curricular needs; (3) the impacts of organizational change on the delivery of education specific to curriculum, pedagogy, and faculty development; (4) the methods by which administrators evaluate their faculty’s changing practice in response to organizational change and shifting market needs; (5) the contingency plans, given ongoing market and industry changes, in place within the organizational framework to allow for further faculty responsiveness and adaptability; and (6) faculty perceptions toward the impacts organizational change dynamics have on their practice.

However, given the nature of the research method of narrative inquiry, the data yielded findings much more focused on faculty perceptions relative to their changing workplace contexts and professional identities.

The primary limitation of this study was the evolving focus on faculty meaning-making through critical college change—which really provided insight into only one of four major pillars of perception that impact college culture. A broader study design that harnessed the perceptions of college leadership, current students and the community of employers and industry that exist in a symbiotic relationship with the college would have provided a much fuller view on what this shift in the college culture means on a larger scale. Such a study design would have also provided the opportunity to triangulate faculty perceptions and scaffold the meaning-making processes faculty engaged in relative to others’ perceptions on what this change meant within their respective spaces.

While the provision of CCB options through the study college would, at first blush, be of significant benefit to employers/industry partners as well as students, narrative inquiry approaches to both these populations may reveal concern about
potential dips in the quality of teaching and learning or whole-student development that produces an adaptable workforce. It also may be that college leadership, as was the case with one academic officer at the study institution, may harbor concerns about a departure from the traditionally student-centered stance this college takes toward educational delivery—especially as it pertains to the relationships faculty are empowered to build with students via traditional community college culture.

While these are intriguing points of inquiry that would most certainly have made this narrative richer, it is important to note that the focus on the faculty experience is initially what established the relevance of this inquiry pathway.

**Summary and Conclusion**

The Progress Trap is a term coined by Ronald Wright, author of *A Short History of Progress*, in which he examined the pattern of civilizations’ rise and fall throughout history. Wright (2005) asserts that many civilizations that thrived and achieved a significant measure of success, eventually became victims of that very success—essentially subverting the growth of the social system given out-of-control rates of consumption. Wright asserts that the Progress Trap occurs when innovations create conditions or problems that society is unable to foresee or unwilling to solve. He goes on to suggest:

> Where I see the similarity today with these ancient civilizations is in the behavior and denial of the elites—the political leaders—people who should be the decision-makers just hoping the problem will go away. The ancients tended to respond by saying ‘the gods are angry so we need to build bigger temples.’ In other words, this is magical thinking. Our version of this is the widespread belief that the problems caused by rampant growth and technology will be solved by more of the same. (11)
In reflecting on this concept of the risks of progress, Wright (2005) indicated, “The best defense against progress traps is better accounting—accounting which evaluates the costs of our bright ideas as well as the benefits.” (14) It is in this vein that the faculty and administrators at the study institution, accessed for the purpose of examining their abilities and methods for meaning-making through organizational change dynamics, exhibited a complex understanding of the change impacts they experience and the meta-awareness necessary to reflect on the outcomes of those impacts. The process of meaning-making is both an individual and corporate process of reflecting on environmental dynamics from intrapersonal, interpersonal and macro-level stances—in order to not only negotiate the best way forward, but also to assess the sustainability of such a course of action.

This study is essentially an attempt at considering ways of avoiding the “progress trap” a college can fall into when innovating toward increased programmatic agendas, such as the CCB. As Wright stated, accountability is the best defense against succumbing to the Progress Trap—and in the context of this study, the best accountability stems from a complex consideration of the faculty voices that exhibit a broad spectrum of reaction and response to college change contexts. Faculty voices throughout this study advocated for improved leadership through change, both structural and interpersonal.

The outcomes of this study indicate that the best model for leadership through change is one through which organizational leadership can bring diverse stakeholders together to consider the continuum along which organizational effectiveness occurs—in order to propel successful change initiatives that result in a transformed organizational
culture. Kotter (2012) delineated eight common errors that cause organizational change initiatives to fail. Citing pitfalls such as complacency, weak guiding coalitions, unclear statements of vision, and failure to capitalize upon initial victories, Kotter stated that change initiatives cannot be considered successful until the culture of the organization itself is altered on a foundational level by the effects of the change. New behaviors must be rooted in social norms and shared values or they will be subject to immediate degradation when the momentum of the change initiative comes to a halt.

What this study revealed is that successful change agents are those individuals that have mastered the transitional contexts in which they have found themselves. That is to say, such individuals have not entered a situation in which they have attempted to strive against the organizational change momentum, but, rather, they have understood the nature of their environment and adapted to the changing needs of the organization, while also adapting their practice to the newly forming culture of that organization.

When it comes to adapting to change, individuals must start with the core competency of self-knowledge. Without this initial point of reference, it will be hard to achieve stability in meaning-making or to maintain a strong stand in a changing environment. In order to begin to know one’s self, the individual has to start to unlearn everything that her social context has taught her about herself throughout the course of her formative years in that position and organization. Each individual in this study has been examined, sorted and assigned roles and responsibilities numerous times through their careers, whether in school, in the workplace or even in their personal environments, based on what others perceived their strengths in contribution might be. However, a salient theme that emerged relative to this line of inquiry is that it is when
these individuals learned to trust themselves and welcomed trust from their peers that they began to form the basis for effective responsiveness to change.

Blase and Blase (2004) outlined three primary elements necessary for effective change response as prescriptive measures for success in learning organizations: (1) teacher conferencing, (2) professional development, and (3) teacher reflectivity. The authors suggested these prescriptive measures for instructional leaders to employ in order to be proactive regarding efficacy in responding to change contexts within their schools.

The first element, teacher conferencing, involves a regularized and defined dynamic between leadership and faculty that functions to progressively ascertain need, solicit feedback and perspective, identify critical issues, and assess pre-established outcomes. The teacher conference is particularly useful in employing situational leadership principles that allow leaders to modify approaches toward each faculty member based on individual teaching styles and follower attributes. This is an approach that was established in pockets of professional practice across the departments of the study institution, but had not been institutionalized as a method for active change management by leadership. This is something that multiple faculty established as an ongoing need, especially those that themselves led the informal and impromptu conferencing sessions regarding response to programmatic changes.

Professional development, the second element, is of paramount importance to the organization seeking continuous improvement through change contexts. The concept of professional development does not solely revolve around the principle of training, but also encourages a culture of inquiry among faculty that perceive their
practice as an opportunity for ongoing learning and refinement of pedagogy. This element also encourages the development of communities of practice that can promote intellectual interchange, cognitive complexity, and the development of practitioner goals and objectives centered around a common vision for effective practice.

The third element, teacher reflectivity, is a concept toward promoting faculty leadership at the practice level that ultimately translates toward systemic institutional effectiveness. In fact, this element is a natural progression that follows conferencing and professional development experiences that have prepared the faculty mind for critical assessment of his or her own practice and inculcated within his or her mind an inquiry-based perspective. A critical eye toward one’s own practice is essential for an appropriate assessment of student learning outcomes at the level of practice that can also translate into telling indicators at the institutional level.

The predominant potential reason for organizational failure through change at the study institution emerged as the lack of acknowledgement of change needs at the functional level, rather than in theoretical abstractions. Change initiatives should be built on the foundation of an understanding of individualized needs. Leaders should understand the nature of change in order to know how to successfully implement working reform. Real change occurs on a personal level for the leader initiating the change. The change leader should employ an understanding of the collective experience of the stakeholders involved. Change leaders should embrace uncertainty in the change process; a factor that can help the leader grasp the concept of subjective meaning in change—the outcome of faculty meaning-making through change.
A culture of collaborative interchange among faculty, as well as between leadership and faculty, is indicative of a learning environment that promotes self-inquiry and practitioner development that is of ultimate benefit to students. Faculty that are supported to conduct research on their own practice also develop students who can gain the most from their learning experiences, as these experiences involve differentiated curricula and instructional design. Faculty that exist within a culture of support and cultivation for their craft also feel emotionally invested in the holistic success of their institution and thus promote institutional effectiveness through the aggressive pursuit of their craft. Conversely, the institution that rarely invests in its teaching faculty is marked by disengaged educators that pass their apathy on to students, resulting in achievement gaps that are often misconstrued as lack of curricular rigor rather than being sourced to institutional disengagement as their true originator.

This study revealed that a college culture that promotes faculty development and collegiality is a culture that can also promote renewed instructional vigor that will benefit students that may previously have never been exposed to instruction that is tailored to their specific learning needs. Leaders that are accessible to their teaching faculty encourage a culture of collegiality that thwarts the negative aspects of a vertical governance structure. Such leaders are not perceived by faculty as adversaries, but rather as co-producers of institutional vision. Faculty can know these leaders well and perceive them within their spheres of influence, their classrooms. Often, this interaction promotes collaborative compacts that can result in a college culture of ongoing learning and continuous improvement—especially through changing program frameworks that impact faculty identity relative to a history of a specific type of instructional practice.
Organizational culture ultimately determines the tenor of the relationship established between leaders and faculty. Though a centralized organizational hierarchy can promote greater control on the part of leaders, it is the decentralization of authority that promotes a more easily coordinated workforce, employing positional leaders who may establish leadership plans specific to their microcosm of experience. This was the case at the study institution, as change champions began to be increasingly identified down to the departmental level—ultimately spreading the ownership of the transition to baccalaureate programming across institutional silos.

An organizational system effective at surviving through change does not, in effect, survive the change in the same form in which it began. In fact, the system abandons one form for another, reorganizing itself into a structure most responsive to new environmental conditions. Rather than viewing their changing environment as a hindrance or an obstruction to their ongoing practice, the effective faculty at the study institution recognized environmental paradigm shifts as signals that their college was trying to increase its effectiveness by realigning its priorities to that of the consumer base it serves. Through consistent responsiveness to change, the faculty helped to define the college as a self-restructuring organization and collectively gained a deeper clarity as to the college’s core driving values and guiding vision.

As all individuals within an organization interact in one way or another with the dynamics of the system as a whole, the collective stakeholders within the study institution could not effectively change the component behaviors of any one subset of individuals without taking into consideration the manner in which that subset serves to comprise the organization as a whole. Diagnosing and resolving organizational
problems was approached by faculty and leaders alike with a sensibility toward the organization as an organic system.

In commenting on the little understood process of how definition forms around our abstract human concepts, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) write:

Most of our evidence has come from language—from the meanings of words and phrases and from the way humans make sense of their experiences. Yet students of meaning and dictionary makers have not found it important to try to give a general account of how people understand normal concepts in terms of systematic metaphors...what this suggests is that dictionary makers and other students of meaning have different concerns than we do. We are concerned primarily with how people understand their experiences. We view language as providing data that can lead to general principles of understanding [which] involve whole systems of concepts rather than individual words or individual concepts. (115-116)

It is singularly this passage from Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* that most appropriately captures the whole spirit of the outcomes of this study. A systems level understanding of organizational change begins with an individual’s understanding of self through that change dynamic. Understanding is derived from meaning-making—processing the relative meaning of a changing context to one’s place in that context. When these individual understandings find their way into the cultural exchange that defines the collective dialogue around a change event, it is then that the essential themes of understanding emerge as signals through the noise. It is these emerging themes that begin to define a process for collective meaning-making—the initial step toward a systematic understanding of what it means for the change event to be taking place.

Once meaning has been ascribed to the change event by individuals and the collective alike, it is only then that the pathway to shared decision-making based on
shared understanding of community value begins to define the meaningful evolution of the organization.
APPENDIX A
PRIMARY INQUIRY PROTOCOL

Defining Outcomes

A primary task for the researcher is to identify outcomes in key focal areas that can result in a potential assessment system for community college faculty practicing within the CCB model. One aim of this study is to identify what CCB faculty should know, believe, and be able to do in an eventual attempt to describe levels of proficiency. Beyond the structural representation of the CCB, it is important to gather information representative of a more conceptual framework regarding the development of CCB faculty practice. The following questions are intended as a guiding rubric/question item pool to address areas of interest in this regard:

Assessing Student Learning

1. How do faculty know their students are learning?
2. How do faculty know whether defined program outcomes are matching up with current students' learning outcomes?
3. How did faculty define student learning outcomes?
   a. Who determines student learning outcomes?
4. How do faculty know whether learning outcomes are being met?
   a. What measures of student learning are most valued in program assessment and review?
   b. How do faculty use student learning data to improve students' learning experiences?

Identifying Signature Pedagogies

1. The CPED initiative (2007) defines signature pedagogy as: "Characteristic forms of teaching and learning that organize ways to prepare future practitioners for their professional work."
   a. Signature pedagogy can help faculty organize what is already known in a particular field. It can also help identify new relationships, such as ways to present valued scholarship toward the strengthening of programmatic content that is systematically linked with the knowledge base used in-field.
   b. Signature pedagogy encourages ongoing collaborative inquiry between researchers and practitioners so the co-production of knowledge maintains relevance to the field.
2. What approach do faculty believe is most effective in preparing successful students through their CCB program?

Describing Core Practice

1. Given experience within the CCB program, do faculty demonstrate a specific set of competencies that correlate directly with the transition to the CCB model?
   a. Should there be clearly articulated core guidelines for effective practice? If so, what elements would make up this core?
b. What proficiencies should CCB faculty possess regarding practitioner inquiry?

Central Research Question
What are the perceptions of community college faculty on the impacts of the transition to the CCB model on their practice and opportunities for professional development initiatives that can help prepare practitioners to continue to improve student learning outcomes?

Research Sub-Questions
The following categories of sub-questions have been compiled in order to further refine the central question into sub-topics, enabling the researcher to build context for the inquiry. These sub-questions are classified for the purposes of this study as Issue Sub-questions that divide the central question into topical areas; however, given the emerging design process utilized for this study, these questions are subject to change as the process unfolds.

Demographic
1. What is your present position at the college?
2. How long have you been with the college?
3. What was your professional path leading to this position?
4. What is your educational background?

Foundations
1. Do you believe that students, faculty and administration have different expectations regarding the learning process within the context of the transition to the CCB model? What are they?
2. In what ways do you believe that this transition has affected teaching and learning at the college?

Faculty Rewards
1. What do you find most rewarding about your present position?
2. What do you find least rewarding?

Faculty Development
1. Does your college offer opportunities for faculty development that can help through this transition experience? If so, what?
2. Do you take advantage of these opportunities? Why?
3. Would/do such activities increase your job satisfaction? Why?
4. Is participation at professional association conferences and events within your discipline supported and/or funded by college leadership?
5. Would/do such activities increase your job satisfaction? Why?

Faculty Input in Institutional Decision-making
1. What role, if any, do faculty play in informing decision-making processes through the CCB transition experience?
2. Are you satisfied with the role faculty play or do you think it needs changing?
3. Would such changes impact your degree of job satisfaction?

**Faculty Evaluation**
1. Who evaluates faculty outcomes at your college?
2. Are you satisfied with that role or do you think it needs changing?
3. Would such changes impact your degree of job satisfaction?

**Faculty Research**
1. Some faculty conduct research on their own teaching; do you?
2. How does such research inform your practice?
3. How does such research influence your pedagogical approach in the context of the CCB program with which you are involved?
4. How does research on the community college baccalaureate conducted outside the college inform your practice?
APPENDIX B
SECONDARY INQUIRY PROTOCOL

Data Collection Protocol 1: Perceptions on Organizational Habitus
1. Describe the change drivers, the external influences that prompted consideration of the baccalaureate model.
   a. Through what channels did you become aware of the various change drivers?
2. How did you plan toward the incorporation of baccalaureate program offerings?
   a. How did you assess constituent need in order to offer the programs that you planned to offer?
   b. How did you assess community response to the proposed changes?
3. In preparing to implement the transition toward the baccalaureate granting model, describe the issues that arose in considering existing policies.
   a. Describe the impacts to faculty recruitment and development.
   b. Describe the impacts to curriculum planning.
4. Describe the process for evaluating the baccalaureate offerings currently in place.
   a. How did your organizational changes respond to the various change drivers that initiated this process?
   b. How did your decisions meet the original needs identified during the planning phase?
   c. What new change drivers have you become aware of?
      i. How do you think the new baccalaureate model can adapt to changing economic conditions and workplace needs?

Data Collection Protocol 2: Perceptions on Teaching and Learning
1. How did the proposal to offer baccalaureate options impact your perspectives on existing faculty workforce and curricular structures?
   a. Did existing faculty resources meet the need in transitioning to the baccalaureate model?
   b. How did the curriculum planning process have to change in consideration of baccalaureate program offerings?
2. How did you address the need to recruit and develop faculty for the new baccalaureate model?
   a. Salary and compensation issues; tenure and promotion issues.
   b. How did you address the need to adapt curricula and policy to build programs within the new baccalaureate model?
3. How adaptable are the current baccalaureate program offerings in the event that market needs necessitate making new program offerings and bringing closure to existing programs?
   a. How will the existing faculty and curricular structures be impacted?
   b. Does current policy allow for easy program implementation and closure?
APPENDIX C
TAXONOMY OF NARRATIVE THEMES

Ways of Seeing
- Modes of Reasoning
  - Knowing
  - Reflexivity
  - Perception
  - Pedagogy

Ways of Doing
- Tribal Culture
  - Modes of Transition
    - Identification
    - Relating
    - Adapting
    - Causation

Ways of Being
- Authority
- Rituals
- Collaboration

Ways of Building
- Tribal Structures
  - Constructs
  - Engagement
  - Evaluation
APPENDIX D
INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE DOCUMENTATION

This content represents faculty and leadership perceptions on pedagogy and instructional practice relative to changing curricular needs through baccalaureate program changes. This information was collected by Office of Academic Affairs staff via faculty forums.

Crucial considerations that a subject matter expert (SME) bear in mind when approaching classroom practice:

Everyone learns differently:
“Gardner proposes multiple intelligences, some people learn material rapidly, others slowly, and we all have a preferred style of learning (visual, auditory or kinesthetic, for example). Faculty should allow students to work to their strengths when submitting assignments. A long paper is only one way a student can demonstrate mastery of the material (e.g. a video, podcast, concept map, and so on).”

Classroom time is too valuable for giving information:
“There are SO many resources on the web that information is no longer a scarce commodity. Class time should be spent working through problems, discussing case studies, et cetera. In fact, the new literacy is not how well you take notes but how well you can find information, judge the credibility of its source and so on.”

Connect with the student’s motivation for learning the material:
“The current generation of learners needs to know the reason for learning material and how it applies to their goals. Once a student is motivated (whether it be external or internal), learning occurs naturally. Referring for a move from external to internal motivations, John Adams said: ‘I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history, naval architecture, navigation, commerce, and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain.’”

An understanding of cognitive load theory helps guide the way material is presented:
“Familiarity with theory of cognitive load and its breakdown into intrinsic, extraneous and germane loads will help an instructor in the sequencing and delivery of instruction.”

Set clear expectations:
“For the course, for how each assignment will be assessed, and for proper student behavior.”
Faculty-defined, Sorted and Grouped Qualities of a [Study College] Educator

Possesses a Strong Knowledge of Discipline
Delivery of information
Engage Student
Stay current in your discipline
Discipline knowledge
Knowledgeable of subject matter
Subject matter expertise
Continuing education in your field
Current in field

Possesses Effective Communication Skills
Listening
Inference/Perception
Responsive verbal/email
Communicate high standards/expectations for students
- Expectations communicated clearly
- Set routine/tone for class on the first day
Good communication skills
- Contact
- Effective delivery
- Availability
Empathy
Concise, clear speaker
Understandable with use of language
Put in in writing – clear expectations
Benchmarks for success
Able to make difficulty concepts clear and as simple as possible

Aware of Students’ Need for Continuing Support
Helping students (course level)
Outside support (in school/outside school)
Having resources available
Dial 211 for assistance with life problems
Be available to students
Have empathy
Helpful
Empathy for students
Caring for student success
Be kind
Mentoring students and faculty
Love the students – fostering positive student-teacher relationships
Personal interactions between students and teachers – Student centered
Invested in your students
Be available
Be approachable

Remains Flexible/Respects Diversity/and Adjusts to Student Needs
Ask students about their problems when they miss work/assignment etcetera
Make students feel comfortable
Need to know when to break own rules
Students with disabilities
Strategies/resources to deal with students with disabilities
Diverse groups of students
Embrace diversity in all forms
Be flexible
Flexible learning
Be agile in teaching
Be able to relate to diverse populations
Open-minded/flexible/adaptable
Appreciation for students as individuals
Adapt to learning styles
Patient
Open to various teaching methods
Receptive to different learning styles
Varied teaching materials to accommodate different learning styles
Open to giving students second chances
Compassionate
Flexible
Anticipate everything
Let students play to own interests
Foster an interest in students and their own interests
Show enthusiasm and support for student interest
Adaptable and flexible – collegial
Mental health issues with your students – classroom management of a disruptive individual
Help students reach their highest developmental level of maturity
Flexibility
Willing to change and take risks
Listen to students
Gives discipline or structure – not corrective but interventional
Be patient and persevere
Understand students/empathetic
Logical/non emotional, but with compassion
Informing ourselves of our students

Embraces the Appropriate Use of Technology
Need help with available technology
Embrace technology and support to use and learn how to use new tools
Need to be adaptable and keep up-to-date with technology
Relax about rules in class/texting
Students may actually be using tools for coursework
Use PowerPoint
eBooks/iPads/online
Social media – using in teaching – technology
Training on technology advances – information literacy and IT literate
Up-to-date on technology

**Motivates Students/Helps Them Develop Life Skills**
Get students to interact with each other, to help and support each other
Motivation of students
Be able to engage students
Engagement of students
Love for lifetime learning and share it

**Engages Students in Academic Discourse**
Sustain intellectual vigor throughout career
Love to teach – enthusiasm
Sense of humor – be able to not sweat the small stuff
Passionate
Innovative
Enthusiasm, passion for subject and teaching
Humor
Be interested and interesting
Creativity
Getting to know the names of your students
Love the craft of teaching – positive attitude
Enthusiasm/passion
Humility
Interest in keeping classes fresh
Motivational
Shares self and shows humanness

**Demonstrates a Knowledge of Educational Theory and Best Practices**
Understand and use different learning modalities
Understand how to scaffold curriculum
Be able to translate/deliver your subject matter to novices
Adventurous
Create a positive learning environment
Good evaluator/discerning
Teaching strategies
Relate classroom experience to real life
Be willing to make mistakes
Creation of toolbox
Good teachers steal
Keep up with teaching and learning research
Encourage students to be teachers
Find ways to empower students by giving them choices
Task switching?
Don’t waste students’ time with busy work
Learn from K-12 teachers/styles
Begging-bartering
Effective classroom management
Aware of metacognition of students entering our disciplines
Gets feedback and uses it to improve (valuable student evaluations needed)
Perceives gaps in student knowledge and fills in
Teach how to study
Teach students how to think in our disciplines
Make material relevant and useful

Displays the Qualities of a Professional
 Ability to network
 Objective, fair and consistent
 Integrity
 Desire to grow – able to recognize when needed
 Clear boundaries
 Collaborate with other faculty
 Good work ethic
 Committed
 Firm and fair
 Maintain standards
 Create an atmosphere of respect and professionalism
 Observe each other teach in a non-evaluative capacity
 Be honest with students about your own shortcomings
 Accountability – correct mistakes
 Know when what you say or do can be used against you
 Resourceful – we need to be able to identify resources (material and people)
 Interdisciplinary exchange
 Rigorous – not enabling – high academic standards
 Professional conduct
 Have integrity
 Fairness
 Fair-minded
 Demands and expects highest from students
 Be a good example

Employs a Multicultural/Community Perspective in Class
 Global multicultural conscience
 Community focus – local
 Aware of current events and cultural literacy
Miscellaneous

- How do we deliver online classes (not the same as face-to-face)/Online teaching v. F2F classes
- College has to provide infrastructure to support us
## Essential Qualities of an Educator Mapped to Types of Professional Development Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Meetings</th>
<th>Within-College Professional Development</th>
<th>Internationalization Efforts</th>
<th>HR-Based Funds and Perkins Grant</th>
<th>In-House Focus on the Art of Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates a knowledge of educational theory and best practices</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Displays the qualities of a professional</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Embraces the appropriate use of technology</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employs a multicultural/community perspective in class</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engages students in academic discourse</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has effective communication skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possesses a strong knowledge of discipline</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is aware of students’ need for continuing support (Quality Enhancement Plan)</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivates students/helps them develop life skills (Quality Enhancement Plan)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remains flexible/respects diversity/and adjusts to student needs (Quality Enhancement Plan)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes from 1st Faculty Focus Group on Attributes of [Study College] Educator

Group 1

Knowledgeable of subject matter.
Concise, clear speaker
Understandable with use of language
Open to various teaching methods
Innovative Teaching strategies
Enthusiasm, passion for subject and teaching
Receptive to different learning styles
Varied teaching materials to accommodate different learning styles
Empathy for students
Caring for student success
Be kind
Open to second chances
Humor
Relate classroom experience to real life
Compassionate
Firm and fair
Flexible
Maintain standards
Put in in writing – clear expectations
Benchmarks for success
Anticipate everything
Create an atmosphere of respect and professionalism
Observe each other teach in a non-evaluative capacity
Mentoring students and faculty
Be willing to make mistakes
Creation of toolbox
Be honest with students about your own shortcomings
Accountability – correct mistakes
Good teachers steal
Social media – using in teaching – technology
Know when what you say or do can be used against you
Keep up with teaching and learning research
Encourage students to be teachers
Find ways to empower students by giving them choices
Let students play to own interests
Foster an interest in students and their own interests
Show enthusiasm and support for student interest
Task switching
Be interested and interesting
Don’t waste students’ time with busy work
Creativity
Learn from K-12 teachers/styles
*College has to provide infrastructure to support us*

**Group 2**

Love the students = fostering positive student-teacher relationships
Getting to know the names of your students
Love the craft of teaching – positive attitude
Subject matter expertise
Continuing education in your field
Training on technology advances – information literacy and IT literate
Online teaching v. F2F classes
Begging-bartering
Resourceful – we need to be able to identify resources (material and people)
Adaptable and flexible – collegial
Interdisciplinary exchange
Global multicultural conscience
Community focus – local
Mental health issues with your students – classroom management of a disruptive individual
Engagement of students
Effective classroom management
Rigorous – not enabling – high academic standards
Personal interactions between students and teachers – Student centered
Help students reach their highest developmental level of maturity
Invested in your students
Professional conduct
Profession

**Group 3**

Make material relevant and useful
Aware of current events and cultural literacy
Enthusiasm/passion
Understand students/empathetic
Be approachable
Motivational
Gives discipline or structure – not corrective but interventional
Fairness
Current in field, love for lifetime learning and share it
Listen to students
Flexibility
Aware of metacognition of students entering our disciplines
Fair-minded
Logical/non emotional, but not without compassion
Able to make difficulty concepts clear and as simple as possible
Gets feedback and uses it to improve (valuable student evaluations needed)
Humility
Willing to change and take risks
Teach students how to think in our disciplines
Informing ourselves of our students
Be available
Be patient and persevere
Interest in keeping classes fresh
Demands and expects highest from students
Perceives gaps in student knowledge and fills in
Shares self and shows humanness
Teach how to study
Up-to-date on technology
Be a good example
Have integrity

Notes from 2nd Faculty Focus Group on Attributes of [Study College] Educator

Group 1

Knowledge of discipline
Delivery of information
  • Use PowerPoint
  • Engage Student
Communication
Listening
  • Inference/Perception
  • Responsive verbal/email
Support
  • Helping students (course level)
  • Outside support (in school/outside school)
    o Having resources available
    o Dial 211 for assistance with life problems
Flexibility: Willingness to adjust to student needs
  • Ask students about their problems when they miss work/assignment etcetera
  • Make students feel comfortable
How do we deliver online classes (not the same as face-to-face)
Need help with available technology
  • Embrace technology and support to use and learn how to use new tools
  • Need to be adaptable and keep up-to-date with technology
  • Relax about rules in class/texting
  • Students may actually be using tools for coursework
  • eBooks/iPads/online
Flexibility
  • Need to know when to break own rules
  • Students with disabilities
• Strategies/resources to deal with students with disabilities
• Diverse groups of students
• Embrace diversity in all forms

Get students to interact with each other, to help and support each other
Motivation of students

**Group 2**

Be able to engage students
Be flexible
Stay current in your discipline
Sustain intellectual vigor throughout career
Be available to students
Ability to network
Understand and use different learning modalities
Understand how to scaffold curriculum
Love to teach – enthusiasm
Sense of humor – be able to not sweat the small stuff
Have empathy
Flexible learning
Set high standards/expectations for students
  • Expectations communicated clearly
  • Set routine/tone for class on the first day
Be agile in teaching
Objective, fair and consistent
Be able to translate/deliver your subject matter to novices
Be able to relate to diverse populations

**Group 3**

Integrity; Empathy
Good communication skills
  • Contact
  • Effective delivery
  • Availability
Discipline knowledge
Open-minded/flexible/adaptable
Adventurous
Desire to grow – able to recognize when needed
Clear boundaries
Passionate; Helpful; Create a positive learning environment
Good evaluator/discerning
Collaboration
Appreciation for students as individuals; Adapt to learning styles
Good work ethic; Committed; Patient
APPENDIX E
RESEARCHER JOURNAL REFLECTIONS

I’ve come to see our duty as educational leaders through an increasingly complex lens that address the increasingly complex set of needs of current and future adult learners. In order to function as multi-dimensional professionals capable of negotiating their way through professions requiring sensitivities toward racial and ethnic diversity, cultural disparities, and specialized knowledge bases, learners need the opportunity to operate out of a teaching and learning space that capitalizes on their specific and individualized skill-sets—pedagogy from a whole-person perspective.

With regard to such an operational knowledge base, higher education has to be able to provide adult students not only with a strong core of knowledge, but has to be able to train those students to integrate knowledge across disciplines, while also being able to specialize within one field. That is to say, graduates have to be able to connect their area of specialization with a broader array of interrelating fields, while also being able to react to market-driven shifts by expanding their knowledge base and adapting their area of expertise to changing needs. This is also true of the faculty that work to create these learning spaces.

The Student Success courses I have taught at community colleges are one component of a larger developmental education track that serves traditional and non-traditional students alike. However, the majority of students that comprise the population moving through such course sequences are adult learners. Though such Student Success courses are intended as an opportunity, especially for non-
traditional students, to reacclimatize to college level work and output, I saw such course offerings as an occasion to redefine an appropriate vehicle for adult learners to approach the prospect of higher education, while building a relevance structure for that education through which they would take full ownership over their educational attainment. This is a perspective that was shared among most, if not all, the faculty interviewed for this study.

Community colleges are primarily burdened with the task of preparing diverse students to enter the workplace as professionals able to address cultural disparities between themselves and colleagues or employees that are much older, from a different socio-cultural context, or from a different ethnic background altogether. These growing professionals have to operate within a global context and be open to foreign rationalization and understand that the virtual corporation does not function within the same parameters as the physical institution. For example, the operationalization of the concept of virtual teaming requires technological skill, sensibilities toward cultural pluralism, competencies in global interdependence, adaptable communication skills and openness to continual change in the workforce paradigm. Though this may be a lot to require of adult learners coming through higher education programs, this is why all of these necessary requirements should be infused within the general curriculum, which is situated as the cultural base for the college learning environment. It enables students to anchor themselves into a learning track that is personally relevant—anchors the faculty are instrumental in creating.
A diverse community is comprised of varying points of view and methods for producing meaning that flow from that diversity. It should be the underlying mission of the college to train graduates who can create and collaborate within diverse communities. Diverse peer interaction helps to develop future leaders with the values and competencies that enable them to work with diverse groups to address issues critical to changing dynamics. Most individuals have not been prepared to function within a pluralistic society, but have instead lived, worked and studied in homogeneous communities.

Diversity competencies include the ability to understand the perspectives, responses and assumptions of others from different social and cultural contexts; abilities that are produced as a result of gaining knowledge about diverse histories and legacies that have contributed to broader worldviews. The curriculum is a natural resource for developing peer interactions that promote diversity. The interpolation of diversity competencies within the curriculum creates a forum in which a commitment is made to encounter and engage course objectives, texts, and peers with openness, integrity, and mutual respect. This is pedagogical value-added that stands to be lost as faculty focus on content over qualitative relevance—a quality that has set teaching and learning at the community college apart from the rest of the higher education landscape.

This basis for community college education: to help each adult learner to rise beyond their desensitized cognitive utilities to become critical thinkers who can utilize a college education, not simply for the vocational skills it provides, but as a platform for adaptation and change in life and the professions. The assessment of
learning styles initiates the diversity forum in the classroom and provides students the ability to interrelate toward a more customized curricular experience.

Student stories possess the great potential to connect the diversity of student experiences and ways of knowing with curricular objectives. A student’s story affirms his or her diverse student voice. Racial and other diversity barriers are broken down most easily when students are able to acknowledge the universality of experience gleaned from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. When students participate in activities based in an intercultural context, they feel more aligned toward discussing diversity issues with others in the campus community. They are subsequently more likely to have positive interactions with people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Such a community climate, based on the foundation of critical inquiry and thought, serves to foster beliefs that cultural relations are good on campus and that institutional policies are applied with equanimity across the cultural spectrum. This is another risk factor through college transition toward a cultural climate that favors performance-based outcomes of technical knowledge gain over customized learning that helps students to become adaptable to changing workforce conditions.

In contrast, when members of the campus community do not participate in intercultural activities, they do not experience collective improvement in intercultural skills that also result in improved student learning gains. A high institutional commitment to interculturalism can serve to produce greater satisfaction with the learning environment as fewer interpersonal barriers exist between adult learners especially—and there is an increased propensity toward learning beyond individual comfort zones into which adult students are most likely to grow complacent. This approach constitutes
a pedagogical stance that is strong within the community college culture, by virtue of the
way colleges have evolved. The primary concern of faculty participating in this study
focused on the potential to lose the ability to operate within this kind of teaching and
learning culture.

Faculty, especially at larger research institutions, are bound by a tenure and
promotion system that marginalizes their involvement with students. Faculty are
pushed to focus their best efforts outside the classroom and, as a result, students who
are anything short of being completely self-directed in their learning suffer for the lack of
faculty interaction. At the community college, the opposite is true, in that faculty do not
pursue focused research agendas, but are instead burdened by curricular obligations
that provide the freedom to individualize or customize the learning experience; which is
especially relevant to the adult learner. Beyond this, of course, the academy, across
two-year and four-year institutional silos, tends to promote learning in a traditional
didactic manner and the dissemination of knowledge is a more unidirectional and
impersonal process that does not necessarily account for the student’s learning style,
social context, intrapersonal and interpersonal perspectives, nor his or her intentions for
educational attainment. The traditional formula for knowledge transfer is comprised of
an ineffective top-down approach.

The creation of cognitive dissonance to challenge students’ perceptions toward
reflective thinking and developmental outcomes involves a considerable commitment on
the part of faculty to engage students in a dialectical learning process. Though
students’ investigation and subsequent resolution of perceived problems can lead to
deeper learning experiences, the academy does not often promote this manner of
inquiry, but rather promotes the development of subject matter competency that creates a false sense of student expectations for educational attainment that is primarily focused on vocational outcomes.

I believe that faculty approaches to designing curricula in support of adult students' cognitive/non-cognitive development should mimic the process of research inquiry. The encouragement of adult learners' diverse interests and the raising of their awareness of complexity in learning through the acknowledgement of problems, issues, and questions critical to the disciplines they are pursuing can make students feel like they are part of a co-productive environment for knowledge development. It is important for adult students to take part in a constructivist paradigm for higher education, thus engaging their minds toward a pattern of inquiry that will open new possibilities for thought that promote development through learning.

Adult learners tend to be self-directed and engage learning with an expectation to take responsibility for their own education. Programs designed for adult learners need to accommodate this concept. Educators should assume the following about the experience of adult learners when designing programs, interventions, and curricula: (1) adults need to know the reasoning behind the education they attain and why it is immediately necessary to them (2) adults need to learn experientially, and (3) adults perceive the process of learning as a process of problem-solving.

Because adults are autonomous learners, I perceive the learning process of these non-traditional students through a different lens than that used for traditional learners. Adult learners should be actively involved in the development and progress of curricula that reflects their specific interests within the general scope of the discipline.
Assuming responsibility for content delivery and leading the direction for study relative to their areas of interest are key pedagogical techniques specific to adult learners.

The scope of educational content is also affected by adult learner’s educational needs. Relevance is a key aspect of adult learning, in that the immediacy of application of adults’ educational attainment has to be apparent to adult learners in order for them to feel satisfaction with their learning experience. The practicality of the learning experience can best be suited to adult learners through the utilization of experiential learning interventions in the curricula. Ultimately, I certainly think it is necessary to rethink the partnerships between faculty and non-traditional adult and community college learners, especially given the transition community colleges are undergoing toward education that is increasingly focused on workforce development, which only reinforces adult learners’ needs for relevant knowledge. While student-centered pedagogy is not presently widely perceived as a universal utility for the inculcation of cognitive complexity within adult learners by faculty at the study institution, especially as college and departmental missions shift toward a more traditional college structure, I am confident that maintaining a developmentally sound, individualized approach to teaching and learning can continue to produce improved learning gains achieved by learners that have grown holistically through their process of educational attainment. Most importantly, it is college faculty that need to feel free to be able to engage their students in this manner.
LIST OF REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Syraj Syed earned his Doctor of Philosophy in educational leadership, policy and social foundations from the University of Florida in August 2017 with areas of focus in learner development, practitioner inquiry and narrative methods. His doctoral research consisted of an exploration of faculty meaning-making through community college organizational transition. Mr. Syed works in narrative inquiry/consulting utilizing developmental meaning-making via the *Your Authentic Self Work* initiative, based on the *Four Ways of Meaning-Making through Critical Change* model developed through this research. By empowering individuals to approach their own narratives with stances of inquiry and reflexivity, they are equipped to rewrite their own narratives toward improved life attainment. Similarly, a narrative methods approach is apropos to working to enable deterministic and vision-focused responsiveness to various change dynamics. The meaning-making journey is the point of commencement for holistic individual health.

He has served as the education specialist with the Area Health Education Centers Program, College of Medicine, University of Florida, helping bridge the divide between academic research and public health practice within communities across the state of Florida. Mr. Syed maintains research agendas and practice focused on: interprofessional development of education professionals as well as health services practitioners; organizational development and efficiency; quality in education; educational program evaluation; student development along the education continuum, including STEM fields and students in the health professions; and the alignment of
expectations/criteria between pre-service and in-service areas in education and health services.

Mr. Syed has served as the coordinator for the national educational efforts of the VIVO: Enabling National Networking of Scientists project to structure an interdisciplinary community of research and practice. He has facilitated professional development institutes on school leadership with the Lastinger Center for Learning and has delivered instruction to education and health professionals in evidence-based decision-making. Mr. Syed has worked with the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate to develop a competencies base and assessment criteria for educational leaders. He has conducted evaluation for the University of Florida Office of the Vice President and Chief Financial Officer on institutional effort reporting and responsibility center management.

Having been long involved in the development of traditional and non-traditional postsecondary students, health sciences professionals, institutional researchers, educational administrators and faculty leadership throughout the P-20 system, and business officers and grants management personnel across departments at a research one institution, Mr. Syed is particularly interested in student, professional and organizational development agendas focusing on: (1) the development of health services students/practitioners who engage their practice from a preventive health stance as well as educational students/practitioners who engage their practice from an inquiry stance; (2) the sustainability of organizational units via social entrepreneurship that encourages distributed leadership and decentralized modes of management; and (3) the interdisciplinary collaboration of researchers across intellectual silos toward the development of new collaborative pathways.