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The Experience of Faculty Transitioning From Traditional to Non-traditional
Methods in the Community College Classroom

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A Dissertation Submitted to The Graduate School at the University of Missouri-St. Louis
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
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Studies

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Abstract

There is documented success with the use of active learning strategies in community college classrooms, yet instructors lack the necessary skills and incentives to develop these strategies. While faculty members may have an expertise in a particular discipline they often lack the necessary skills to recognize the specific academic needs of a student and respond and/or adapt to those needs. Many specialized degrees do not include pedagogical training as part of the required curriculum but community colleges are typified by diversity in student backgrounds and learning styles. This has led to increased attention to the implementation of a diverse array of teaching strategies.

The purpose of this study was to document the experiences of those who have made the transition from lecture-based teaching to using more non-traditional methods in the community college classroom and to identify the challenges experienced during that transformation. How did this transformation impact the faculty members' teaching strategies? This qualitative study utilized the method of thematic analysis in order to interpret the data obtained from interviews of faculty members who have changed their method of teaching from lecture to other non-traditional methods with focus on the factors that played a role in the decision to change their teaching methods.

It was found that faculty members who made the decision to transition from traditional methods of instruction to more non-traditional methods were motivated by an intrinsic desire to engage students. Additionally, comprehensive professional development as well as ongoing and frequent support for faculty members may contribute to a lasting and meaningful change in classroom instruction.

Keywords: engagement, non-traditional methods, professional development,

instructional strategies, teaching strategies, community college.

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Chrissy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Diversity in the Community College.....	1
Evolution of Teaching Methodology.....	4
Statement of the Problem.....	7
Purpose of Study.....	8
Primary Research Question.....	9
Significance of Study.....	12
Definition of Terms.....	13
Summary.....	15
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	16
Challenges for Students.....	16
Barriers for Faculty.....	19
The Benefits and Importance of Non-Traditional Teaching Methods.....	25
Faculty Responsibilities and the Barriers to Change.....	30
The Process of Changing Teaching Pedagogies.....	31
Summary.....	36
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	37
Introduction.....	37
Research Design.....	38
Sampling and Sample.....	39
Settings.....	43
Data Collection.....	43
Procedures.....	46
Data Analysis.....	47
Quality Standards and Trustworthiness.....	50
Researcher Perspective and Bias.....	52
Limitations.....	53
Delimitations.....	54
Summary.....	54
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	56
Participants.....	56
Summary of Case Descriptions.....	80
Thematic Findings.....	81

Summary.....	98
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION	99
Summary of Study.....	99
Primary Research Questions.....	100
Discussion of Findings.....	102
Additional Findings.....	106
Limitations.....	108
Conclusion.....	109
Recommendations for Future Research.....	110
Recommendations for Practice.....	111
REFERENCES.....	112
APPENDICES.....	121
APPENDIX A Participant Letter.....	122
APPENDIX B Department Head Letter.....	124
APPENDIX C Consent Form.....	126
APPENDIX D Consent Form.....	130
APPENDIX E Interview Questions.....	134

List of Figures

Figure 1 Transtheoretical Model or Stages of Change Model.....33

Figure 2 Thematic Map.....87

List of Tables

Table 1 Braun and Clarke's Six Phase Framework for Doing a Thematic Analysis.....	47
Table 2 Frequencies Table for Participants.....	56
Table 3 Development of Themes.....	82
Table 4 Theme and Subtheme 1.....	91
Table 5 Theme and Subtheme 2.....	94
Table 6 Theme and Subtheme 3.....	97

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, there are various types of post-secondary institutions from which students can select. One of those choices is the community college. According to the Department of Homeland Security, “Community colleges, sometimes called junior colleges, are two-year schools that provide affordable postsecondary education as a pathway to a four-year degree” (“What is,” 2012). The American Association of Community Colleges or AACC (2020) reports there are 1,050 community colleges located in the United States. For the fall 2018 semester, the total enrollment for credit at public, 2-year schools was 6.8 million students.

The AACC (2020) indicated that the mission of the community college is “Building a Nation of Learners by Advancing America’s Community Colleges.” The community college possesses a unique set of characteristics that distinguish it from other institutions of higher education. Characteristics of the community college include the open access and open admissions policies. Students of all abilities, aptitudes and educational background will often sit in classrooms together. This diversity at the community college demands that faculty are capable of working with, and, if necessary, adapting to the various needs of their students.

Diversity in the Community College

What does the community college classroom look like? According to data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics or NCES and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System or IPEDS for 2014, at two-year public institutions Hispanic students comprised of 22% of students enrolled, 5% were Asian, 14% were Black, 49%

were White and 10% of those students identified themselves as being in the “Other” category. Additionally, 28% of students were 30 or older, 16% between the ages of 25 and 29, 34% between the ages of 20 and 24 and only 21% of enrolled students were under the age of 20 (NCES, IPEDS fall enrollment data, 2014).

When examining socioeconomic status for the 2011- 2012 school year, 40% of students were dependents with 27% of students independent without dependents and 32% of students were considered independent and having dependents. Of those same students, 31% had a combined family income of less than \$30,000 per year and an additional 28% reporting between \$30,000 and \$64, 999 per year. Students earning between \$65,000 and \$99,999 comprised another 25% of students with only 17% of students earning \$100,000 or more per year.

For the same 2011-2012 school year students at public two-year schools reported that 36% of them had parents with no college experience and 38% of them were receiving Pell grants based on financial need. Additionally, full time students at two-year public institutions were twice as likely to work full time as those students attending four-year schools as almost a quarter of students attending public two-year schools carried full time employment (NCES, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study [NPSAS], 2012).

These incoming students face additional challenges as well. According to a special report by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and the Southern Regional Education Board, “Every year in the United States, nearly 60 percent of first year college students discover that, despite being fully eligible to attend college, they are not academically ready for postsecondary studies” (2010, p. 1). This report goes on to point out that at two-year colleges, only approximately 25% of students are fully prepared

for college level work. The remaining 75% of students require remedial work in English or Mathematics and sometimes both. A more recent report that collected data from 911 two and four-year colleges revealed high numbers of student still requiring remediation and for the 2014-15 academic year, they indicated that at least 209 schools placed more than half of incoming students in at least one remedial course (The Hechinger Report, 2017). This can create a challenge for all college faculty members, regardless of discipline, as they may find large numbers of unprepared students in their classroom.

Among the many challenges to community colleges is the graduation rate. As indicated earlier, community colleges typically provide open access and serve many students with a variety of educational goals. According to the NCES, in 2016 the overall retention rate is 62%. Since 2011, there has been a significant decline in community college enrollment. There had been a surge in enrollment for several years following the most recent recession but the decrease in enrollment of older, more non-traditional students has been the highest and most consistent over the 4 years prior to 2016. Additionally, there was a decrease of 1.7% in enrollment from fall 2018 to fall 2019 (AACC, 2020).

The most recent data from 2015 reveals that according to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), more than 38% of all community college students earn some type of credential, however the U.S. Department of Education (ED) posts an official graduation rate of 22% (AACC, 2016). This discrepancy is due to the fact that the NSC tracks students for twice as long as ED-6 years versus the 3 years that ED tracks community college students.

Koenig, Schen, and Bao (2012, p. 1) have suggested that poor instruction and lack of knowledge in the nature of Science is one of the several reasons students struggle, especially in STEM courses, and further suggest reform in science education. Many instructors only know the teaching method they experienced as a student, typically a lecture format, and they use only that teaching method (Cox, 2014).

If teaching strategies can impact student success and retention, then attention should be paid to the effectiveness of strategies utilized in the classroom. The diverse student body in the community college demands use of diverse teaching strategies. If faculty have a tendency to teach the way that they were taught, understanding how some faculty have made the transition to use of various, diverse non-traditional teaching methods could help other faculty make that transition.

Evolution of Teaching Methodology

For many years, lecture was the primary source of transferring knowledge from a teacher to a student. According to George Mason University, Cashin stated in 1990 that “Nearly 80% of all U.S. college classrooms in the late 1970s reported using some form of the lecture method to teach students” (George Mason University, 2010, p. 1). The authors go on to state that “Although the usefulness of other teaching strategies is being widely examined and embraced today, the lecture still remains an important way to communicate information” (George Mason University, 2010, p. 1).

According to Harris and Johnson, “In the late 1980’s national attention began to focus on the quality and outcomes of university classroom teaching. Paralleling this emphasis has been a growing body of research on Pedagogy centered on non-traditional teaching and learning techniques.” These include "Active Learning" (Ebert-May et al., 1997;

Tanenbaum et al., 1998), "Collaborative Learning" (Tanenbaum et al. 1998), "Cooperative Learning" (Johnson & Johnson; www.clcrc.com, Herried; 1998, Lancaster & Strand, 2001), "Problem-Based Learning" (Edens, 2000; Major & Palmer 2001,) and "Small Group Teaching" (Rubin & Herbert, 1998; Potthast, 1999) (Harris & Johnson, 2001, p. 1). These are defined later in this chapter.

Many different disciplines, for example those in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), continue to rely on lecture as their primary method of instruction. "Research supports the concept that most teachers teach the way they learn" (Stitt-Gohdes 2001, p. 136). Additionally, "Since a great many teachers have experienced academic success in learning environments that were instructor centered and relied heavily on lecture, it is understandable that their preferred style of teaching, at least initially, would be to repeat what worked for them" (Brown, 2003, p. 1).

Others believe that this is a limited perspective and there are multiple sources that influence teaching style. A study that analyzed 53 interviews with faculty who taught Math and Science in spring of 2010 at public universities found that there are in fact four different influences. They are as follows: experiences as a student, as a teacher, as a researcher, and from their personal lives (Oleson & Hora, 2013, p. 3). Of those faculty members that participated in this exploratory type study, utilizing qualitative analysis methods, 46 respondents reported that their experiences as instructors influenced teaching practices which included experience in the classroom, reflections on evaluations, professional development and interactions with other instructors.

Additionally, 42 respondents stated that experiences as a student helped guide teaching practices including how they learn as well as how they were taught. Ten of the

respondents indicated that experiences in non-academic roles informed teaching practices and nine of the respondents stated that experiences as a researcher were instrumental in guiding teaching practices (Oleson & Hora, 2013, p. 7).

Regardless of influences that guide teaching methods, recent studies continue to emphasize the case for considering alternative teaching strategies. According to Harris and Johnson (2002), who have developed faculty workshops at Montana State University at Bozeman, “The traditional teaching approaches are generally teacher-directed and follow cookbook steps of activities and demonstrations. This approach may not provide students with valuable skills or even with a body of knowledge that lasts much beyond the end of the term” (cited in Udovic, Morris, Dickman, Postlethwait & Wetherwax, 2002, p. 1).

In addition, there is research that targets the millennial generation and how to meet the needs of members of this generation. According to Nevid, “Reaching and teaching millennial students challenges us to adapt our methods to the learning needs of students today. By interacting more with our students and lecturing less, we can create a more dynamic learning environment to help our students become more effective learners” (Nevid, 2011, p. 2).

Although some faculty may consider shifting away from the primary utilization of lecture and towards the adoption of alternate teaching methods, can it be demonstrated that these alternate methods are better? A study published in 2014 claims that more active learning methods can yield higher test scores and lower failure rates. Freeman et al. (2014) examined 225 studies that evaluated courses in Science, Engineering and Mathematics. They compared the data on examination scores or failure rates in

undergraduate courses in which the mode of learning was either traditional lecture or active learning techniques. Students in sections which utilized traditional lecture were 1.5 more likely to fail than students in courses using active learning. Considering the current emphasis on the call to increase numbers of students to complete STEM degrees, studies like this should be considered in conversations contemplating interventions to raise student success rates.

Is there a place for lecture in higher education? A recent study that examined the literature on the effectiveness of lecture believes that there are occasions in which lecture is still appropriate for use in the classroom. Schmidt, et al. (2015) believes that lecture can help when students struggle with difficult topics. They believe that a teacher that is skilled at explaining concepts in an effective way can be beneficial to students. Additionally, lectures can be engaging and is a cost-effective way to instruct large numbers of students (Schmidt, et al., 2015, p. 13).

Statement of the Problem

Although there is documented success with active learning strategies, many instructors lack the necessary skills and incentives necessary to develop these strategies. Faculty members may have an expertise in a particular discipline but may lack the necessary skills to recognize the specific academic needs of a student and respond and/or adapt to those needs. Many specialized degrees do not include pedagogical training as part of the required curriculum. Due to the diversity in student backgrounds and learning styles that exists at the community college, there has been an increased focus on the research related to the implementation of a diverse array of teaching strategies. Many faculty members continue to lecture although it might not be the best method for all

students. This study explored the instructional pedagogical strategies in use in community college classrooms and most specifically examined the experience of faculty who has made the transition into non-traditional methods of instruction in the classroom.

Due to the number of unprepared students at the community college, effective practices should be examined and taught to other faculty to ensure the success of those students. Tom Drummond (1995) of North Seattle Community College compiled “A Brief Summary of the Best Practices in College Teaching.” This document was designed as a starting point for faculty as they begin their professional development. With the increase of literature on the importance of pedagogical development, many institutions are beginning to recognize the need for change. As mentioned earlier, this can be a difficult process to not only begin but to maintain. How can we encourage institutions, administration and faculty to dedicate the time and resources necessary to facilitate effective change? What does that process look like? Answers can be obtained by examining the experience of faculty members who have changed their philosophy of teaching and made the transition from traditional lecture to non-traditional teaching methods.

Purpose of this Study

Due to the emergence of adult student learning theories, a great deal of research indicating best practices for instructors includes the use of non-traditional teaching strategies in the classroom in order to best serve the needs of the students. Many institutions offer resources and professional development opportunities that target alternative teaching methods for faculty members who are interested in adopting these

teaching strategies in the classroom, but it is unclear as to how many are taking advantage of these opportunities or are actually implementing these strategies in the classroom.

The student diversity of the community college mandates that instructors be prepared to serve students who have a wide variety of aptitudes, ages, experiences, and come from different backgrounds and cultures and have various learning styles. In order to meet the needs of such diverse learners, non-traditional teaching methods should be common practice in the classroom in order to promote the success of all learners.

The purpose of this study was to document the experiences of those who have made the transition from lecture-based teaching to using more non-traditional methods in the classroom and identify the challenges experienced during that transformation. How did this transformation impact the faculty members teaching strategies currently in use?

Additional items to explored included the following:

- To determine how these faculty members learned the methods they practice in the classroom.
- To determine how these faculty members assess the effectiveness of the teaching strategies they employ.

After faculty members had been identified, they were interviewed to discover their lived experience.

Primary Research Questions

- 1) What were the experiences of faculty members who have changed their method of teaching from lecture to other non-traditional methods?
- 2) What factors played a role in the decision to change their teaching methods?

Faculty members were asked to identify the instructional methods they use in the classroom, where they learned those methods, and why they believed that those strategies are the most appropriate for student learning. Faculty who made the transition from traditional teaching methods to more non-traditional methods were asked to identify challenges they experienced throughout the process and how satisfied those faculty members are with the current strategies that are currently in place in the community college classroom. The following topics were covered to guide the interview with faculty members known to use diverse, non-traditional teaching methods, in order to elicit their lived experience.

1. What/who influenced these community college faculty members to decide to try a non-traditional teaching method?
2. How do community college faculty members decide what instructional strategies they will implement when preparing for instruction in the classroom?
3. What specific non-traditional instructional strategies do community college faculty use to address the range of needs of students in the classroom?
4. Where did faculty members learn how to implement each of the teaching strategies that they implement in the classroom? How were the faculty first introduced to those strategies?
5. Do community college faculty members judge that the strategies they currently utilize are executed properly? How do they know?
6. What resources were available during their transition to non-traditional teaching methods? What resources are still available and what resources are used now at the community college?

7. What were the greatest challenges experienced while undergoing the transformation from utilizing non-traditional to more traditional strategies in the classroom? How do they describe the process of change and how long did it take?
8. How do they feel that the college generally embraces alternative teaching strategies? Are they encouraged to share those methods with others in their department? Are other faculty members receptive? Are administrators supportive?
9. Do they feel that student learning outcomes have been enhanced as a result of the transition to new teaching strategies? Do they have any evidence?

An abundance of information and research exists that promotes the use of non-traditional teaching methods in the community college. It is believed that many instructors are not utilizing those strategies and adopting these teaching methods. Learning about how some faculty members made the transition to non-traditional teaching methods might help community college administrators foster the transition for other faculty members. The guiding theoretical framework for this study will be the reflective practice theory as first introduced by Donald Schön in 1983 in his book, *The Reflective Practitioner*. Experience when combined with reflection over teaching practices can translate into action and change as faculty members are developing as teaching professionals (Schön, 2016). Teaching is a skill that is learned over time and faculty members can become more adept at learning those necessary skills to be effective in the classroom.

Significance of Study

Although there is significant research available in the field of pedagogy and more specifically the importance of diverse teaching strategies, there is little data to support that faculty members at the community college are actually implementing instructional strategies that address the needs of diverse groups of learners. Since community colleges serve such a diverse group of learners, it is important to understand the instructional strategies and trends that are utilized in the classroom.

This researcher understands that while a large number of community college instructors recognize many different types of non-traditional teaching strategies exist, many of these instructors may not be aware of how to properly implement those strategies in their classrooms. Some faculty members may lack training or knowledge. Other faculty members may not feel properly motivated due to factors such as “burn-out” and do not want to make the attempt to alter their current strategies in the classroom. Others may even feel that the traditional, lecture teaching method is appropriate for the classroom setting and students should assume more responsibility for their own learning.

For those who have made the transition, it is important to document the experiences they had, the barriers they overcame, and who/what facilitated their transition. It is also important to know how they assess the effectiveness of their teaching methods and further adapt them, since a change merely for the sake of change still might not foster success. With this understanding of the lived experience of these faculty members, community college administrators can intentionally help other faculty make a successful transition.

Definition of Terms

Active Learning: Meyers and Jones (1993) describe active learning as “Providing opportunities for students to meaningfully *talk and listen, write, read, and reflect* on the content, ideas, issues and concerns of an academic subject.” (p. 6).

Case Study: “The case method is an instructional strategy that engages students in active discussion about issues and problems inherent in practical application. It can highlight fundamental dilemmas or critical issues and provide a format for role playing ambiguous or controversial scenarios” (George Mason University, 2016).

Collaborative Learning. The term 'Collaborative Learning' is often used as a synonym for cooperative learning when, in fact, it is a separate strategy that encompasses a broader range of group interactions such as developing learning communities, stimulating student/faculty discussions, and encouraging electronic exchanges (Bruffee, 1993). “Both approaches stress the importance of faculty and student involvement in the learning process” (George Mason University, 2016, p. 2).

Cooperative Learning. According to the Cooperative Learning Institute, students' learning goals may be structured to promote cooperative, competitive, or individualistic efforts. In every classroom, instructional activities are aimed at accomplishing goals and are conducted under a goal structure. A learning goal is a desired future state of demonstrating competence or mastery in the subject area being studied. The goal structure specifies the ways in which students will interact with each other and the teacher during the instructional session. Each goal structure has its place (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 1999).

Discussion: “There are a variety of ways to stimulate discussion. For example, some faculty begin a lesson with a whole group discussion to refresh students’ memories about the assigned reading(s). Other faculty find it helpful to have students list critical points or emerging issues or generate a set of questions stemming from the assigned reading(s). These strategies can also be used to help focus large and small group discussions” (George Mason University, 2016).

Flipped Classroom: “As its name suggests, flipping describes the inversion of expectations in the traditional college lecture. It takes many forms, including interactive engagement, just-in-time teaching (in which students respond to Web-based questions before class, and the professor uses this feedback to inform his or her teaching), and peer instruction. The immediacy of teaching in this way enables students' misconceptions to be corrected well before they emerge on a midterm or final exam.” (Berrett, 2012).

Millennial Generation: The generation of children born between 1982 and 2002, some 81 million children who have already entered college and the workforce. This generation will replace the Baby-boomers in the workplace as they retire. (Central Piedmont Community College, 2016).

Non-Traditional Teaching Strategies: Strategies other than the instructor lecturing to class, considered to be the traditional strategy. These non-traditional strategies can include "Active Learning" (Ebert-May et al. 1997, Tanenbaum et al. 1998), "Collaborative Learning" (Tanenbaum et al. 1998), "Cooperative Learning" (Johnson & Johnson www.clcrc.com, Herried 1998, Lancaster & Strand 2001), Problem-Based Learning" (Edens 2000, Major & Palmer 2001), and "Small Group Teaching" (Rubin & Herbert 1998, Potthast 1999). (Harris & Johnson, 2016).

Small Group Teaching: In “Approaches to Small Group Learning and Learning” by Vicky Gunn from the Learning and Teaching Centre, 2007, Small group teaching includes as follows: “Small groups teaching refers to any method of student-tutor interaction that involves a group of 3-25 students, which may meet only once or several times throughout a term, and which tends to be focused upon the discussion of pre-defined subject specific material. A wide continuum from non-intrusive facilitation (as in problem-based learning) to tutor-led seminars is assumed, depending on the discipline” (Gunn, 2007, p.3).

Summary

At the community college, not only do instructors need to be prepared to serve our current generation of learners, but they must also meet the needs of those with differing abilities and aptitudes in the same classroom.

This researcher sought to document the experience of those faculty members that have managed to overcome the barriers of transitioning away from utilizing more traditional methods in the classroom. Additionally, this researcher explored some of the challenges of this experience as well as determined what factors led to a successful transition.

With the student diversity at the community college it is imperative that our teachers are properly prepared to promote student success. It is essential that community college institutions are prepared to serve diverse groups of students that must learn in one classroom together so that students can be successful. The most effective way to achieve student success in the classroom is through properly trained faculty ready to serve the needs of their students.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study was designed to document the experience of faculty who decided to adopt more diverse methods of pedagogy. In order to achieve this, this researcher examined the experiences of these faculty members during the transition and the potential challenges they faced during the transition period.

The purposes of this literature review are threefold. First, the challenges that many community college students face when entering college and the high levels of academic unpreparedness are examined to establish the need for non-traditional teaching methods. Next, the research on the barriers that faculty face, which prevents them from adopting more non-traditional methods are explored. Finally, the research identifying the benefits of non-traditional instructional methods is reviewed.

Challenges for Students

The Issue of Unpreparedness

The issue of unpreparedness is not uncommon, and many educational professionals debate the most appropriate way to combat these readiness gaps that many students face when entering higher education institutions. Although there has been attention paid to the actions that state and local officials must take in order to better prepare students at the K-12 level, what is often ignored is the role that higher education can play when these students arrive unprepared at various institutions.

Concerns have been raised that point to the disconnection between K-12 curriculum and college curriculum. The two systems often do not communicate expectations and work together to ensure that students are adequately prepared. This disjointed system is

illustrated when comparing and contrasting the normal K-12 English curriculum with the typical entry level college level English course. While evaluating English curriculum, a study published in 2010 points to the fact that “the former stresses literature, while the latter stresses expository reading and writing, the keys skills needed to learn in most college courses” (National Center for Public Policy and Public Education, 2010, p. 5).

With the knowledge that regardless of what reform, or lack thereof, addressing the K-12 curriculum and the readiness gap, there are large numbers of students entering institutions of higher education who are not academically ready to enter entry level courses. The National Center for Public Policy and Public Education (NCPPE) says that nearly 60% of first year post-secondary students find that they are not academically prepared (NCPPE, 2010, p. 1). Is it possible for higher education faculty to help do their part to help fill the gap? There is a need for faculty members to spend more time meeting students where they are and being more responsive to that point, rather than assuming that all students enter with the same level of preparedness. Community college faculty could play an integral part in filling the unpreparedness gap.

Since so many students are arriving at institutions of higher education unprepared for college work, how do institutions adequately prepare to help bridge the gap for those students? According to Meredith Kolodner (2016), who spent time in 2016 with remedial Math teachers at Rutgers University Newark, “Most colleges still use separate classes that underprepared students must pass before enrolling in college-level classes, while recent research indicates that integrating remedial learning with regular college courses brings better results” (p. 2). Kolodner continues that when examining reforms for

addressing the numbers of underprepared students entering college, one of the factors that are often overlooked is teaching, or what is occurring in these remedial classrooms.

Kolodner (2016) claims that most teachers hired to teach remedial Math and English often have little experience and no training to teach these courses and oftentimes their students never progress to the regular, college level courses. An article published in 2010, with a most recent 2015 update, indicated that of those students enrolled in remedial courses “20 percent of students in the sample referred to developmental math and 37 percent of those referred to developmental reading completed a gatekeeper course within three years of initial enrollment after enrolling in a developmental course in that subject” (Bailey, Jeong & Woo-Cho, 2015, pp. 11 & 26). Faculty could do more to ensure that more students achieve success in remedial classrooms.

Perin (2013) conducted a review of studies published between the years of 2000 and 2012 examining the literacy skills of underprepared post-secondary students and to identify the instructional strategies utilized by faculty in order to bring students up to college level. Although many challenges were identified in this review, the most meaningful for the purposes of this study is the quality of the effectiveness studies. As a result of this review, Perin believes that many methodological flaws existed in the assessment studies including a lack of control (p. 122). This might contribute to an increase of out of classroom intervention strategies that might not have the intended positive impact on student success.

Although Perin did find some studies that reported a gain in skills by using strategies such as a learning community, other studies, for example the one that analyzed several community colleges in 2012 by Visher, Weiss, Weissman, Rudd and Wathington, found

that “three out of five learning-community studies found little or no impact on persistence in college, or grade point average.” (p. 122). Learning communities and additional outside of classroom interventions may not be enough support for those students who need it most. It was recommended that with other supports in place, for example in combination with mentoring and additional academic support, programs such as learning communities could prove to be more successful. This reinforces that further research on the effectiveness of nontraditional teaching methods for students entering college, prepared and underprepared must be explored.

Barriers for Faculty

As with other educational institutions, community college faculty members are required to have obtained a minimum amount of advanced education. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2012), 86% of all full-time faculty members possess a Master’s degree or higher and 53% of all part-time faculty possesses at least a Master’s degree. As is the case in many community colleges, for example in California, although faculty members in most disciplines are required to attain a specialized degree in a specific discipline, typically at least a Master’s degree; evidence of experience, internships, workshops, or courses in pedagogy is often preferred, but not required (Russell, 2012, p. 3).

Higher education and the faculty that support it have undergone dramatic changes in the past 40 years. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) in an examination of changing faculty and current trends points to the fact that in 1969 over 75% of college faculty was tenured or in tenure-track positions. This is in stark contrast to the current portrait of higher education in which the figures have completely flipped

and according to data collected by the AFT Higher Education Center, in 2009 only approximately 33.5% of faculty positions were still tenure or tenure track with the remaining 66% being over 18% full-time and almost 48% part-time faculty positions. This means that almost half of all faculty members in higher education are now part-time faculty members. Although part-time faculty members have always been an essential part of higher education, they now take on a much larger role and therefore have a much stronger impact on students.

Community colleges were among the first to implement the increased usage of part-time faculty. Data collected from the NCES, (2018) and IPEDS stated that as of 2011 almost 70% of faculty at the two-year, community college level is classified as part-time status. Additionally, they are responsible for teaching between one-half and two-thirds of all course sections (CCSSE, 2009). This means that those part-time faculty members have a much larger influence on students and the CHEA believes that there is a connection to be made between a large number of part-time faculty and student outcomes (CCSSE, 2009).

Working Conditions for Faculty

Although each institution is different the CHEA (2018) asserts that this increasing demand on part-time faculty yields poor working conditions for those faculty members that can impact students in a negative way. Some of the contributing circumstances that lead to poor working conditions include last-minute hiring practices which can limit time that the new faculty member has to engage in professional development or to prepare to facilitate the course. Additionally, CHEA (2018) states that these same faculty members have limited access to resources such as mentoring, professional development, seminars

and other resources and support offered to full-time faculty. These limiting circumstances could negatively impact students and their rates of success.

Another limitation that contributes to poor working conditions includes the lack of input in curriculum design and the selection of textbooks. Many part-time faculty members do not have opportunities to contribute to the development of courses that they are responsible for delivering to students. Any issues or concerns from those faculty members might not always get expressed or carry much influence with department heads. Finally, the CHEA (2018) point to the fact that many part-time faculty members do not have access to simple resources such as office space and supplies that can make it a challenge to carry out basic student support services, such as meeting with students, outside of the classroom. Part-time faculty members simply do not have access to the same resources, support and training those full-time faculty members would have the ability to attain and this can lead to a detrimental impact on student outcomes.

In addition to less access to resources and training, many part-time faculty members receive little to no benefits and low salaries. According to a survey published in 2012 from The Coalition on the Academic Workforce, “The median pay per course, standardized to a three-credit course, was \$2,700 in fall 2010 and ranged in the aggregate from a low of \$2,235 at two-year colleges to a high of \$3,400 at four-year doctoral or research universities” (p. 2). Considering the amount of responsibility that part-time faculty face, the compensation may be considered low by many.

Faculty and Professional Development

Even for full-time faculty, since participation in programs that support the development of pedagogical practices are often encouraged, but not mandated at many

institutions, it is imperative that institutions convince faculty of its importance. A study published in 2012 by Brownell and Tanner, highlights the fact that although there are some faculty that are beginning to evaluate current strategies in use, many are still resistant in spite of the fact that a large amount of literature in most fields, including the field of Biology, points to the need to move towards evidence-based teaching. Brownell and Tanner state that “In fact, it is somewhat perplexing that we as scientists are resistant to such change” (p. 339). In any case, as Galbraith (1991) points out when addressing strategies and resources for improving the instructional process, “Ongoing professional development is an important element of a person’s responsibility as a facilitator or adulating learning.” (p. 193). Adult education has changed over the years and faculty must be prepared to respond as well.

Although pedagogical development by faculty may not be widely mandated nor monitored, when institutions decide that effective teaching will become part of the culture, it is imperative that appropriate support and training are provided. With increased attention in the literature to effective teaching strategies, many faculty members are under increased pressure by their institutions to not only be content experts but pedagogical experts as well.

In a study published in 2014, researchers examined an institution in which faculty had changes in pedagogy imposed on them. These new mandates created challenges as faculty members were asked to make changes without a clear understanding of how to implement those new practices (Sinclair & Osborn, 2014, p. 87). In addition to addressing the “how” in changing pedagogical approaches, one of the other major

concerns in making changes to teaching strategies is the investment in time and resources.

Not only is there a significant investment of time as teachers are learners to execute a variety of strategies in the classroom, but there is a concern over loss of instructional time. As less time is devoted to lecture and the presentation of concepts and more time is spent in active learning and collaborative concepts, concerns could be raised that completing coursework by the end of the semester may prove more challenging and important concepts might be missed. As Sinclair and Osborn states, “As these changes require a shift of mindset for all involved, teachers feel they will lose control of the students in their classrooms and that students will react negatively to these changes” (p. 80). This fear impedes faculty from taking chances and trying out new teaching strategies in the classroom.

In order to become more comfortable and proficient in trying something new, not only do faculty members require some initial training, but ongoing support. One of the key results of the study is that faculty require continued support. Sinclair and Osborn states that “Faculty are willing to embrace change when they are well-informed about what is expected from them and when they have the resources to address all necessary aspects of the change” (p. 97). Even if institutions decide that they will make a commitment to excellence in teaching, it takes time and resources to make a long lasting, sustainable change in institutional culture.

Why Don't More Faculty Utilize a Variety of Methods?

Although faculty may be aware of the literature on teaching methods other than lecture, there are many barriers that prevent meaningful change in the classroom.

Brownell and Tanner (2012) focused on three barriers in their research: Lack of training, time and incentives. In regard to training, the authors cite that “many faculty have indicated they feel ill-equipped to change the way they teach and thus would like access to structured, formal training”(p. 340). The authors go on to say that even faculty members who have opportunities to attend workshops often are not given the appropriate levels of support and follow up after returning to the classroom. Additionally, they point out that change is a process that takes time and practice and oftentimes faculty revert back to their old routines and habits.

As mentioned previously, the time required to implement new methods is a barrier to change. Faculty often have a multitude of responsibilities both inside and outside the classroom which can create challenges for the faculty to put in the required time and effort to facilitate long lasting pedagogical change. Even at community colleges, faculty members often have additional responsibilities and heavy teaching loads. Brownell and Tanner (2012) state that “Research has shown that interactive teaching, as compared with traditional lecturing, typically takes more preparation time” (p. 340). Since the proposed changes will take faculty more time to implement, administration would have to find a way for faculty to lessen their commitments in other areas in order to address the calls for this type of change.

As is true in most fields, incentives can create a strong motivation to accomplish any task, including making changes to teaching strategies in the classroom. If faculty are provided the appropriate training and allotted the time to make the appropriate changes, the final piece missing is the motivation to make the change. According to Brownell and Tanner, “Research has shown that in many universities there are few to no rewards for

teaching in novel ways or introducing evidence-based strategies” (Brownell & Tanner, 2012, p. 340). Until faculty members are rewarded for their effectiveness in the classroom, the call for change in the classroom will continue as many barriers still exist for those faculty members.

The Benefits and Importance of Non-Traditional Teaching Methods

A large number of students are arriving at college campuses unprepared for the more rigorous and challenging college level curriculum. Although there has been a heightened awareness of the challenges these students face and that utilizing a wide variety of teaching methods in the classroom can contribute to an increase in student success, it is believe that lecture still dominate most Math and Science teaching. According to Berrett, “Lecturing remains the most common method for teaching undergraduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, known as the STEM disciplines” (Berrett 2012, p.1).

Berrett (2012) refers to a recent faculty survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles in which it was revealed that 63% of STEM professors still used “extensive lecturing” in all or most classes. Additionally, 37% of faculty in other fields said that they did so as well (Berrett 2012, p. 1). This article continues on to point out the fact that students continue to “wash out” in STEM programs at high rates and that “less than 40% of those who enter college intending to be STEM majors complete a degree in one of those fields, according to a report issued this year by the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology” (Berrett, 2012, p. 2). The reason that students leave has been a source of debate for many years. In Seymour and Hewitt’s 1997 book, *Talking About Leaving-Why*

Undergraduates Leave the Sciences, the authors, interviewed 335 students at 7 institutions and had revealed that “poor teaching” was amongst the complaints by students pointing specifically to the use of lecture as a method of teaching.

Seymour and Hewitt’s book has prompted many researchers to continue to examine teaching methods in the college classroom. Seymour (2012) was also cited stating that the UCLA data might actually be encouraging. She is further quoted as saying, “If 63 percent of STEM faculty are lecturing, it means that nearly 40 percent are not” (p. 2). For Seymour it indicates that it could be a marker of change (Berrett, 2012, p. 2).

Addressing the Needs of Students

Why should faculty change? According to Kass,

Educators have a responsibility to understand the mental processes that define intelligence, recognize the power of experiential influences in shaping cognition, and respond to these notions with the development and implementation of instructional practices that are conducive for all learners (Kass 2009, p 37).

Several theories such as constructivism supports differentiated instruction and the belief that each learner has a different learning style. Faculty could take an active role in addressing the needs of all of their students and help students who are unprepared meet those expectations with differentiated instruction and additional support.

Many others support the importance of addressing the needs of all students. According to Livingston (2006), “One of the primary objectives of differentiated instruction is that it acknowledges that not all students learn the same way” (p. 2). Livingston argues that if students are offered a variety of choices in the classroom, students can then use the style that works for them (p. 2). Although this could require

extra effort and could prove a challenge in some of the larger, lecture style courses, this idea of differentiated instruction should be much easier to achieve in the community college environment where the largest number of unprepared students reside.

Keller states, “To improve the success rates of students who are unprepared for college-level work, community colleges must develop richer forms of student-learning assessment, analyze the data to discover best teaching practices, and get faculty members more involved in the assessment process” (Keller, 2009, p. 1). Keller also states that “Traditional uses of institutional data, like grades and test scores, often fail to involve faculty members or do not encourage them to think about how they could improve their teaching” (p. 1).

Since it is evident that the literature supports the use of nontraditional teaching methods in the classroom, focus should be on training faculty to utilize a wide variety of pedagogical methods. Hart and Dunn (2009) indicated that “Extensive literature supports the premise that adults learn more, at a faster pace, and retain it to a greater degree with learning-style responsive, rather than traditional staff development sessions” (p. 1). Hart and Dunn’s research intended to expose faculty to learning style responsive teaching strategies to improve their attitudes towards non-traditional teaching strategies.

In a 2013 dissertation study conducted by Morgan, faculty who were considered “Master Teachers” at the community college level were asked to describe the process of becoming expert teachers. This qualitative study was guided by the “reflective practice theory.” The author identified five concepts that epitomized reflective practice theory and are as follows: “(a) Changing while doing—flexibility, (b) thinking while doing—adjustment, (c) thinking after doing—reflection, (d) looking at other ways of doing—

adaptability, and (e) doing based upon what was done in the past—retrospection” (p. 42). This framework suggests that faculty should be responsive to the needs of their students and flexible enough to adapt or make changes based on what is occurring in the classroom.

Additionally, the results reinforce that new faculty require ongoing mentoring and support as they are transitioning into their new positions. The study emphasizes that “Confidence and job satisfaction result when instructors possess the tools that will assist them in performing their job duties” (Morgan, 2013, p. 77). In addition to training, this study implies that faculty members can be successful with the proper amount of resources and support.

The literature also extensively addresses the needs of millennial learners and according to researchers such as Oblinger (2003) they prefer activities that emphasize teamwork. Since there is an emergence of the importance of cooperative learning in the classroom, faculty can design activities that give students the opportunity to complete tasks in groups. Additionally, Oblinger states that they prefer structured activities and the usage of technology in order to find answers to questions they have (p. 38). In order to address the emerging need to teach students to master technology in the classroom, while lesson planning, faculty can consider creating opportunities in the classroom that utilizes the use of technology.

Elam, Stratton and Gibson (2007) also believe that students prefer cooperative learning types of activities and stated that millennial generation students “are team oriented, socially networked, and able to organize and mobilize” (p. 22). Because of these traits, they also indicated that it can prove a challenge to teachers at both the high

school and college levels. Faculty can learn to design activities in the classroom to help students develop the skills required to work in groups and teams.

Additionally, the next generation of learners, or the Z generation are now entering higher education. In *Extra Credit*, which is a newsletter published specifically for educational professionals in the discipline of Accounting, Wotapka (2017) addressed how to teach Generation Z students. Generation Z, which has been defined in the article as those students who were born after 1995, reach for smart phones on average every seven minutes and are accustomed to instant feedback (p. 1). The author states that long lectures are not the best technique for Generation Z as they are used to multitasking and constant stimulation. Some of the suggestions provided included short videos, bullet points with straight to the point solutions, and alternate methods such as project driven instruction. With project driven instruction, students can be given a project, including a goal, time to work with some additional conversation and then another task to complete. These students want to engage in learning that seems relevant (p. 2).

Hart and Dunn (2008) examined the effects of learning-style responsive versus traditional teaching methods on the attitudes of community college professors regarding those alternative teaching strategies. Faculty members participated in workshops that demonstrated how to apply learning-style responsive teaching methods in the classroom. The faculty who participated in the study showed more positive attitudes toward the learning-style responsive treatments, even amongst those faculty members who were initially resistant.

Gregory and Jones (2008) utilized the Maintaining Competence Model which emphasizes what academics actually do in the classroom and not necessarily what they

should be doing. The results of their work state that instructors who are “flexible” will adapt the content in order to meet the needs of different students in their classes. These teachers take into account the diversity that exists, similar to that of the community college, and adapt to meet the needs of those students in lieu of the “one strategy fits all” approach.

This flexible approach is clearly demonstrated in the Maintaining Competence Model which is comprised of four different strategies: Distancing, Adapting, Clarifying, and Relating. “Maintaining Competence is a contingency model wherein the choice of strategies by individual lecturers is influenced by the moderating variable of Forces in the Environment and Forces in the Lecturer” (Gregory & Jones, 2008, p. 779). Faculty members at the community college can learn how to adjust their methods and strategies based on the feedback received in class. Each class is different, and instructors should be able to adapt and respond according to the specific needs of the members of each class.

Faculty Responsibilities and the Barriers to Change

The teaching behaviors of faculty are inspired by their beliefs, thoughts and feelings about the craft of teaching itself. If it is true that many faculty members teach the way that they have been taught, then how do faculty members make the change regarding their perspectives on appropriate teaching strategies in the classroom? It is important to know how faculty who initially taught with lecture made the change to non-traditional methods and the primary influences for changing their teaching strategies.

Even in spite of the evidence that points to the need to deliver highly effective teaching and evaluation strategies, making that transition can be difficult for many faculty members. “There is now a considerable amount of empirical research on teaching

and learning in higher education that should provide a guide to effective teaching practice” (Knapper, 2008, p.1). However, many faculty members prove to be resistant. Knapper goes on to say that most faculty members are actually ignorant of the body of research and states that “instructional practices and curriculum design are dominated by tradition rather than research evidence” (p. 2).

The Process of Changing Teaching Pedagogy

For faculty that become exposed to other methods of instruction and choose to make the change, it can be challenging. According to the Stages of Change Model, which was developed throughout the 1970’s and early 1980’s, many faculty members who are not considering any changes in teaching method are in the pre-contemplation stage which means that they are unaware and have no intention of change in the future (Horvath, Misra, Epner, Cooper & Zupanick, 2019). With an increase of awareness of alternative teaching strategies, faculty could begin the process of contemplating change in their classroom practices. Once faculty members make the conscious effort to facilitate change, it can be a challenging and overwhelming process for faculty, especially new faculty members.

The Stages of Change Model, also known as the Transtheoretical Model, was originally developed in the 1970’s by Prochaska and DiClemente. According to the Boston University of Public Health, this model focuses on the decision making of individuals and most specifically the intentionality of change. The first stage mentioned, pre-contemplation, is the initial stage in which there is no intention of any change to behavior in the near future. This stage would apply to faculty who are not currently contemplating any change to their current teaching methods. In the second stage, which is

contemplation, individuals are beginning to consider a change in the future, which is usually defined as approximately 6 months. This might apply to faculty who consider some type of training to learn about utilizing different methods in the classroom are might be earning unfavorable ratings in the classroom and are considering some type of change.

Once faculty members have decided that they are prepared to make a change, they would then start preparing and enter the “preparation” phase. Faculty might be planning to implement a change in their teaching strategies within the next 30 days, perhaps preparing before a new semester is beginning. Once a new semester may have begun and a change in teaching has started, faculty members would then be currently in the “action” phase. In this phase, new teaching strategies would be implemented. Once faculty members have maintained the use of new methods for at least 6 months, they would then enter the “maintenance” phase. In this phase, faculty might struggle with relapsing to an earlier stage.

Although change can be difficult and faculty might encounter pitfalls that would set them back, for example back to the preparation phase, if the changed behavior is maintained for more than 6 months, then the individual has a strong chance of maintaining the changed behavior long term. Those faculty that might have given up on changing teaching methods due to frustration, lack of results or lack of progress, might choose to relapse to a previous stage. By the time individuals reach the “termination” stage, which is the final stage of the model, they have completely given up on the previous behavior and will not relapse (Boston University School of Public Health, 2018).

Changing a previous behavior, such as teaching strategies, involves a great deal of time, effort and energy. Those who even have the strongest desire to change may give up and retreat back to an earlier stage in the model of change. Others may not even be aware that they should make any changes in the classroom and others still might not have any strong desire to change teaching methodology and may even be strongly resistant regardless of student success rates.

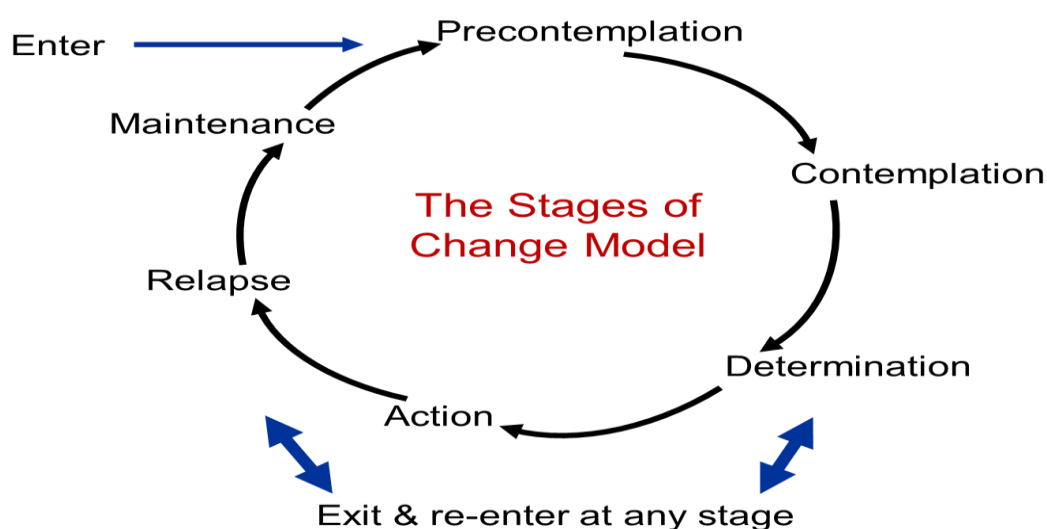


Figure 1: Transtheoretical Model or Stages of Change Model. Adapted from Transtheoretical Model or Stages of Change Model by Wayne W. LaMorte, MD, PhD, MPH., 2019 at sphweb.bumc.bu.edu. Reproduced with permission by owner.

In addition to the resistance to change faculty encounter additional barriers. Although the current research provided evidence of utilizing new strategies in the classroom as opposed to more traditional methods, such as lecture, many faculty members still use the methods that they are most comfortable with. Charles Henderson of Western Michigan University wanted to evaluate the new faculty workshop for the physics and astronomy department. He pointed out that nationwide “roughly 300 new faculty are hired each

year” in physics and astronomy departments across institutions in the United States.

“These new faculty often have little preparation for their teaching roles and frequently struggle with their teaching responsibilities” (Henderson, 2007, p. 179). In spite of the research done by physics and astronomy education research (PAER), which suggests the importance of more interactive instructional methods, and the progress made, Henderson believed that “there is little evidence that PAER strategies had been incorporated significantly into the typical introductory course” (p. 179). In response, a workshop was created for new physics and astronomy faculty members hired at Western Michigan University.

Why aren’t faculty members implementing these more interactive methods in the classroom? Henderson (2007) points out that “One important theme in research on educational change is that, although change in teaching practices occurs by individual faculty members, disciplinary cultures have a significant, if not dominant, impact on faculty behavior” (p. 179). In a step towards cultural change, the importance of this workshop is highly stressed as an important way to introduce PAER information and research to new faculty.

Henderson (2007) points out that new faculty struggle as they adapt to their new role as a “teacher.” Although many had served as graduate assistants or teaching assistants in the past, oftentimes new faculty members have never taught a course alone. Because of this, “the first few years of their first faculty position is a formative time in the development of an instructor’s teaching style and is likely an ideal time for interventions aimed at promoting non-traditional instructional practices” (p. 180).

Many are resistant who have been teaching for some time as it does require more time and effort especially in the beginning. For those who are introduced to varying teaching methods early in their careers, are workshops the appropriate method for encouraging professional development? Henderson argues that although workshops are very common, “There is insufficient evidence to claim the effectiveness of this method” (Henderson, 2007, p. 180). Additionally, just because faculty members are introduced to different methods of instruction does not ensure that they will actually be implemented. Are faculty members encouraged to continue to develop their teaching methods and supported by their departments and administration?

What does the impact of a department’s culture have on the teaching strategies adopted by faculty? Brownell and Tanner from Stanford University examined the challenges in convincing faculty to change teaching practices. This is in response to many calls for change in the Biology community to evaluate the approaches that have been in use for the past several years with the premise that those approaches are probably not the most effective (Brownell & Tanner, 2012).

What are some of these barriers that inhibit cultural change? Some of the barriers identified include a lack of ongoing professional development and few if any rewards, motivation or encouragement by the institution. Faculty members also require ongoing mentoring and support as individual and cultural change can be a lengthy process.

Brownell and Tanner (2012) believe that the tension between professional identity and pedagogical reform is a complicated issue in education. It is further stated that “Some faculty continue to perpetuate the myth that a researcher should not want to teach and broadcast that value judgement to new graduate students” (Brownell & Tanner, 2012, p.

344). They conclude by pointing out that professionals have the opportunity to take those important steps to address this “potentially critical barrier in achieving widespread biology education reform” (p. 344). This researcher believes that these specific challenges can be taken up by faculty in most academic disciplines.

Summary

There are students entering institutions of higher education lacking some of the academic skills necessary to be successful in the classroom. In addition to gaps in knowledge and skills, incoming freshman face many challenges as they are transitioning into the college experience. Although many institutions provide support services for students outside of the classroom, support inside of the classroom is just as important in determining student success.

Faculty members that strive to meet students where they are at and employ alternative teaching strategies in the classroom, face documented challenges. Some are able to overcome those challenges, however many lack the support and training required to develop as effective facilitators in the classroom. The purpose of this study is to document the experiences of those faculty members that were able to overcome the challenges of adopting alternate teaching methods in the classroom.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

Although research exists citing the importance of utilizing a wide variety of teaching methods, especially non-traditional teaching methods, there is evidence that those methods are not widely implemented. There are many challenges to faculty who wish to make the transition from traditional to nontraditional teaching methods. As a result, this researcher attempted to identify and interview those faculty members who have actually changed their teaching strategies and will attempt to identify those who have undergone this experience.

For the purposes of this study, it is believed that a basic type of qualitative study would be most appropriate. According to Merriam, “The overall purpose is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences” (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). Additionally, Merriam states that “all qualitative research is interested in how meaning is constructed, how people make sense of their lives and their worlds. The primary goal of a basic qualitative study is to uncover and interpret these meanings” (p. 24).

Other types of qualitative research have an additional dimension which is not necessary for this study. This study does not require the specialized features of other qualitative studies such as a phenomenological study, which seeks understanding about the essence of a phenomenon, or an ethnography, which examines relationships with others and society, or even with grounded theory which builds a theory about a phenomenon of interest, nor an narrative analysis, which uses stories to understand the meaning of an experience. For purposes of this study a basic qualitative study is most appropriate as the analysis will involve seeking recurring patterns within the data.

Merriam states that “Findings are these recurring patterns or themes supported by the data from which they were derived (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). This researcher interpreted the data to gain understanding of the participants’ experience. This method was selected because this researcher is interested in constructing meaning of the lived experiences of those who have made the transition from traditional to non-traditional teaching strategies and their personal perspectives of those experiences.

Research Design

This researcher is interested in understanding the experience of community college faculty that have transitioned from the use of more traditional teaching strategies, such as lecture, to more non-traditional methods in the classroom. From these experiences, this researcher hopes to understand the meaning of these experiences for participants and as is common with basic qualitative research, meaning will not merely be discovered, but constructed. When examining the purposes and construction of a qualitative study, researchers are interested in the following as recommended by Merriam: (1) How people interpret their experiences. (2) How they interpret their worlds. (3) What meaning they attribute to their experiences (p. 23).

Although basic qualitative studies are becoming more common in a variety of fields and disciplines, they are extremely common in the field of education. This researcher felt that a basic qualitative approach would also be most appropriate for this study. As is common for basic qualitative research, data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were scheduled in advance and questions are pre-determined in advance, but in lieu of structured interviews, there is the flexibility with semi-structured interviews allowing for additional questions that can emerge from

the dialogue. Semi-structured interviews allow for additional probing and follow-up with participants. After the completion of all interviews, data were analyzed via seeking patterns in the data. Patterns that are recurring were then organized into themes that are supported by the data. This study sought to interpret meanings for those who have undergone a transformation in teaching pedagogies.

Since this researcher's goal is to provide a comprehensive description of faculty experiences during transformation and to derive meaning from it, it was most appropriate to employ the use of semi-structured interviews in order to collect data. All preconceived notions must be identified as the researcher must be unbiased while conducting research. Since this researcher is primarily interested in a specific experience, it was most appropriate to engage in Thematic Analysis (TA) when analyzing the data collected.

According to Braun and Clarke, "TA is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set" (2012 p. 57). This allows the researcher to make sense out of shared experiences that the participants may have in common. These "patterns" that develop allowed the researcher here to focus on the specific research question to be answered throughout data analysis. Although numerous patterns developed, Thematic Analysis allowed the researcher to focus primarily on those patterns that were relevant to this particular study and the primary research questions.

Sampling and Sample

Participants were selected from the faculties of a rural community college located in the Midwest portion of the United States and from a rural community college in the Southwest portion of the United States. Using two institutions allowed the researcher to

note institutional differences in support for the use of non-traditional teaching strategies. Participants were selected utilizing a practice known as “purposeful sampling” which allows the researcher to work with individuals who are knowledgeable regarding a specific phenomenon and obtain rich amounts of information.

Purposeful sampling is typically consistent with qualitative research. Patton provided a description of purposeful sampling as follows, “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Information rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (2015, p. 264). Sampling in this manner, as opposed to other types of sampling, yields in-depth understandings of the phenomenon being examined. Criteria for inclusion in this study were that the faculty member was full-time, taught primarily face-to-face, and used non-traditional teaching strategies in their courses.

There are specific strategies in purposeful sampling that this researcher utilized as participants were selected. First of all, a snowball or chain sampling approach was employed to find participants that meet selection criterion. As this researcher reached out to division chairs/department heads at the selected institutions, it was the hope that candidates would be located who had experience adopting alternate teaching strategies and additionally will be able to refer others who have shared similar experiences. This researcher was hopeful that as referrals were sought out, that the same names would keep recurring. Patton states that by utilizing this strategy that “The chain of recommended informants will typically diverge initially as many possible sources are recommended, then converge as a few key names get mentioned over and over” (1990, p. 169).

During the five and a half months of recruiting at the first institution, four communications were sent out to the Interim Dean of Instruction as a reminder that participants were required for the study. After the first call for participants, 25 potential participants were referred; however, only two responded as interested and one declined immediately. One of the two that responded ended up a participant. After each interview, recommendations were requested of participants and after two additional mass emails, including new referrals, another participant responded as not interested and three additional participants were recruited. A final mass email was sent out and two individuals responded that they only utilize lecture and no other additional participants were recruited.

During the four months of recruiting at the second institution, three communications were sent out to staff by the Dean of Health Sciences on the researcher's behalf and two additional communications were sent out by a different administrator from the Center for Teaching and Learning. Five additional mass emails were sent out based on referrals from administrators. One of the participants referred a participant that did not respond after three follow up communications. One of the potential participants that responded did not qualify as she was an adjunct faculty member and one of the participants included in the study derived from a personal reference of the researcher. Only two participants resulted from referrals and mass email communications.

As names of potential participants were referred for this study, criterion sampling was also employed to ensure that participants met the pre-determined criterion. This was to ensure that participants would be able to provide rich amounts of information relevant to the purposes of the study. This type of sampling can help provide the in depth analysis

necessary for this type of basic qualitative design. Only one potential participant that was interested in participating did not qualify for the study. Once faculty members were deemed eligible and willing to participate, a consent form was sent via email to participants to sign and return. Potential participants had the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the study before interviews were scheduled and conducted.

This researcher felt it would be most appropriate to interview faculty who had a high probability of encountering a wide variety of students and therefore transitioned to non-traditional teaching methods to meet their needs. General education courses are most likely to enroll a wide range of students and provide the most diversity so it is preferable to capture as many of those faculty members as is possible. It was the hope of this researcher that at least a total of 16 full-time faculty members would participate; however with only 7 interviews completed it is difficult to determine if the point of saturation was reached. Saturation is the point at which the researcher feels that enough data have been collected to answer the research question and additional interviews are not generating substantial new data. After analyzing the first five interviews, it was clear that there were many shared experiences amongst participants that desired to make changes to their teaching strategies.

Additionally, after several months of recruiting, no additional referrals were generated. In fact, there were five faculty members that responded indicating that they do not qualify as they primarily only utilize lecture in the classroom.

Since this researcher has experience as an employee at both of these community colleges I was optimistic that I would be successful in finding participants willing to volunteer time for the sake of this study. Additionally, I was hoping that willing

participants would also have recommendations for other faculty that might be qualified and able to contribute to this study.

Faculty members of various disciplines were selected to participate in the study. It was the preference for this researcher to have participants with a variety of genders, ethnicities and years of experience from each institution and to include some faculty who teach in the STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). In fact the disciplines represented were Math, Chemistry, Teacher Education, Business Management, Communications, Nursing and English.

Settings

There were two institutions invited to participate in the study from two separate geographic locations in the United States. The first institution is located in the Midwest in a rural community and serves 4,882 students of which 52% are full-time. Minority enrollment comprises 6% of the student body. “In state” tuition is \$3,504 and “out of state” tuition is \$4,656. The second institution is located in the southwest portion of the United States, and for the 2016-2017 academic year had a head count of 10,644. Almost 26% of those students are minorities with the largest number of Hispanic origins.

Data Collection

This research study was conducted via telephone interviews. Interviews were conducted in a quiet, private room without interruptions. The first interview had to be stopped and resumed as the first participant received a private call during the interview. After interviews were transcribed, all participants were contacted to verify transcripts and to ensure that they had no additional contributions or clarifications in statements to make to the study. Participant number 4 was the only participant that wished for a follow-up

interview. A second interview for elaboration and clarification was conducted with that participant. There were a few clarifications made that were not clear after transcribing the first interview. None of the clarifications made during the follow up conversation impacted the results of the study.

This researcher attempted to get to the meaning of the experiences of faculty who have already transitioned to non-traditional teaching strategies. Although interviews were to be semi-structured, participants had the opportunity to openly express their experiences in detail. It was known by this researcher that it might be necessary to follow up with participants to verify information and ensure that participants have had the opportunity to provide any additional details. This also gave the researcher an opportunity to verify the data collected from participants.

Only data pertinent to the research questions were deemed relevant for this study. This researcher recorded the entire interview and began with the following questions:

- 1) How long have you been teaching at a community college?
- 2) What is your specific discipline?
- 3) When you first started teaching, did you employ a more traditional method of teaching, such as lecturing, in the classroom? How did you assess the effectiveness of the lecture method? How effective do you think it was? Was it equally effective or ineffective for all students in your course?
- 4) What types of teaching strategies do you utilize in the classroom now? When did you first start using these different teaching strategies?
- 5) How did you learn about non-traditional teaching methods? {professional development, observation of others, conference, readings}

- 6) Did you make the transition to non-traditional strategies on your own or did someone encourage you? If so, who? {colleague, chair, speaker, author}
- 7) Do you select teaching strategies based on the needs of learners in your course? Could you describe a time when you did this? What if different groups of students in your course have different needs?
- 8) Can you share any difficulties or identify some challenges in making the change to utilizing more non-traditional methods in the classroom? Did you feel that you had support from administration, your department and the institution? In what way? If not, why did you believe there was resistance or a lack of support?
- 9) How do you assess the effectiveness of your teaching strategies? How effective do you believe your nontraditional methods are in the classroom?
- 10) Has your institution ever provided incentives to encourage faculty to pursue professional development opportunities to improve teaching strategies? If so, what were they? Please describe. Did these incentives persuade you to change? What about colleagues?
- 11) Have you ever encouraged colleagues to switch from the lecture method to another teaching strategy? Did that colleague change? Do you know why or why not?
- 12) Is there anything else that you would like to state about your experience?

The use of open-ended questions in the interview ensured that participants could convey their true lived experience as they recalled it. Open-ended questions gave participants the ability to adequately express themselves when answering questions. Additionally, the researcher was able to ask follow-up questions when necessary for clarification.

Interview questions were pre-determined by the researcher. The researcher prodded participants to elaborate on their answers when it was necessary. This researcher sought commonalities in their stories.

Procedures

At institution number one, the Interim Dean was contacted to determine which faculty use non-traditional teaching methods. At the second institution, an Academic Dean was contacted to help determine which faculty might qualify for the study. Additionally, an administrator for the Center for Teaching and Learning was also contacted to find potential participants. Once identified as potential participants, not only did administrators send out communications on behalf of the researcher, but faculty members were also contacted via e-mail with an invitation. Faculty members that responded were initially screened to ensure that they met the inclusion criteria.

Faculty members that were selected to participate were sent an e-mail with materials in order to obtain their informed consent to participate. These materials included a description of the study and stated that participant's involvement in the study was voluntary and withdrawal at any time without prejudice was permitted. Participants were asked to consent to audio recording with the additional note-taking to occur during the interview. Audio was recorded on an iPad device and recordings were uploaded to a program called InqScribe in order to transcribe the recordings and generate transcripts.

It was also explained to participants that the researcher took every step possible to ensure confidentiality by storing media and transcripts in a locked cabinet and by making any computer used to analyze data password protected. Pseudonyms were also used to protect the privacy of the participants. Potential participants were then invited to sign the

informed consent form. A copy was then signed by the researcher and returned to them. Once consent had been obtained the researcher scheduled an interview session with the participant.

Data Analysis

Audio data from the interviews were first transcribed by the researcher. Data analysis began after approximately five interviews were completed. After the data had been collected, transcripts were then read and reread several times in order to provide this researcher an opportunity to become familiar with the data. As the researcher was reading transcripts, note-taking occurred to remind the researcher of items of interest. Ideas and thoughts about potential codes and themes were documented by the researcher. The researcher then began to contemplate what the data might mean during this initial stage of familiarizing oneself with the data. All data, records and field notes were maintained during this stage of pre-analysis and all data were provided with the same amount of attention and consideration.

Data analysis was employed utilizing thematic analysis and followed Braun & Clarke's six phase guide posted below.

Table 1

Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework for doing a thematic analysis

Phase 1: Become Familiar with the data	Phase 4: Review themes
Phase 2: Generate Initial Codes	Phase 5: Define themes
Phase 3: Search for themes	Phase 6: Write-up

Once this researcher was familiar with the data, initial codes were then generated. Braun and Clarke state that “Codes are the building blocks of analysis” (2012, p. 61). Items that were relevant to the research question were coded. As the researcher was analyzing transcripts and coding data, notes were initially done by hand and eventually an Excel spreadsheet was utilized in order to manage data. The process of open coding was used as codes were developed and changed as the coding process unfolded. During this phase of coding, researcher or analyst triangulation was simultaneously occurring, and a clear coding framework was established. After five transcripts were coded, another researcher reviewed the coding process, as well as initial ideas for potential themes. It was the hope of this researcher that data was being seen from multiple perspectives. An audit trail of the formation of codes as well as any debriefing conversations or meetings was documented.

As the codes were examined and established they were next organized into themes. Themes encompassed a portion of the codes established and helped to describe patterns specific to the research question. While searching for themes, this researcher began to draw thematic maps as potential themes as well as relationships between potential themes were explored. Braun and Clarke suggest drawing and then redrawing lots of thematic maps when searching for themes. (2012, p. 59). By the end of the third phase, which is searching for themes, this researcher created a table with all potential candidates for themes, as well as how each theme connects with the data.

This process continued through the revision stage, which is stage 4, as quality checking occurred. During phase 5, themes were named and defined. Thematic maps

were used as the themes were reviewed, revised and evaluated to determine if they make sense and are supported by the data.

Once distinctive themes had been established in stage 5, the researcher reached the final phase, or 6th phase, in which they were defined. This was an opportunity to determine what each theme meant and how themes were related to each other as well as to the main underlying theme specific to the established research question. Throughout the establishment of themes, analyst triangulation with another researcher occurred and all notes, illustrations and strategies to create meanings have been maintained and documented. At this point relationships were established and a write up of the results began.

The primary research questions were used as a guide when coding transcripts. It became clear after coding the first few sets of transcripts that participants were intrinsically motivated to make changes in instructional strategies that were driven by a desire to engage students and increase student success. When participants described what student success looked like in the classroom, they were not focused on the traditional method of assessment, such as grades, but rather looked at the development of skills, most of which would benefit students outside of the classroom, such as in their future careers or occupations.

This drive by participants to see student success inside as well as outside of the classroom led to the development of the primary themes, such as engagement with students and the intrinsic motivation to change teaching strategies in the classroom. Even when exposed to a professional development training or a mentor or colleague that is

willing to support the faculty member, it was the desire of the participants to see student success that led to a long lasting and meaningful change in classroom strategies.

When examining the amount of support that faculty members received from their respective institutions, although the level of support varied, all felt that at some point during the transition, they had some level of support from someone at their campuses. It was also important to note that there were limitations, mostly in the form of resources, such as time and financial incentives that did create some challenges for these faculty members. It was important to note that in spite of these challenges, these faculty members still persisted to make it through all stages of the Transtheoretical Model.

Quality Standards and Trustworthiness

During interviews, this researcher attempted to refrain from any personal comments including any and all types of feelings, thoughts or concerns. After interviews were completed, the researcher reviewed the transcripts to ensure that there were no comments or subtleties that might have influenced the responses of participants. All aspects of the data collection and analysis process as well as documents were transparent and auditable. All records were maintained to ensure that other research professionals could easily determine how this researcher came to her conclusions.

Tobin and Begley state that “Credibility is demonstrated through a number of strategies: member checks, peer debriefing, prolonged engagement, persistent observation and audit trails (Tobin & Begley 2004, p. 393). In order to ensure credibility in this study, member checking was employed as the researcher shared the transcripts with participants to ensure that they believed they were being accurately represented and that there were no misunderstandings or misinterpretations of the data. Peer debriefing

also occurred to ensure that preliminary findings throughout the data collection and organizational process as well as the analysis process were evaluated by another researcher. After the first five transcripts were completed and data analysis had occurred, the transcripts were shared with another researcher to check for accuracy. For purposes of this study, a great deal of prolonged engagement did not occur, however this researcher has made every attempt to allow the participants to make sure that their feelings, thoughts and ideas had been fully expressed.

Although every attempt was made to ensure that an adequate amount of depth is pursued for this study, persistent observations, in the traditional sense was not employed. This researcher attempted to create a study which is transferable by providing rich descriptions in order to allow other researchers to decide if the findings can then be applied to their own situations and circumstances. By providing rich details while conducting this research and making every effort to ensure rigor, it is the hopes of this researcher that transferability and application can be ensured and that this study can be applied to similar situations.

Additionally, as mentioned earlier, opportunities for additional follow up interviews were available to be employed, and all participants had the opportunity to review interview transcripts to ensure accuracy. This also provided participants an opportunity to supply any additional information or clarification. One participant wished to follow up in order to clarify a few comments made during the initial interview. This also helped to ensure that the results of this study are dependable.

In an additional attempt to address dependability of the data collection and analysis, there was an audit trail to ensure that the process is entirely traceable. In this audit trail, a

critical account of the process was constructed and another researcher was consulted to verify coding of the data on the first five transcripts. This ensures that the analysis is done properly and consistently. Additionally, it ensures Confirmability which according to Tobin and Begley is “Concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer’s imagination, but are clearly derived from the data” (Tobin and Begley, 2004, p. 392). Finally, allowing another investigator, another professional researcher, to check the establishment of data and interpretation of findings ensures investigator triangulation and verification that according to Merriam occurs when there are multiple investigators collecting and analyzing data (Merriam, 2009).

Researcher Perspective and Bias

Because the researcher is an experienced community college instructor, there was concern about being biased towards certain teaching strategies. In addition, this researcher was concerned about a certain level of familiarity with some of the instructors participating in the study and every effort was made towards objectivity during the study. Since there was a concern over familiarity with certain faculty members, it was decided that if a participant was chosen for the study that a researcher had a closer relationship with other than as a professional colleague, every effort would be made to ask another trained researcher to conduct the interview. None of the faculty members that participated had a personal relationship with the researcher.

During the interview process, due to the concern over personal feelings regarding specific teaching strategies, it was important to avoid asking questions that might seem “leading.” In addition, the researcher made every attempt to avoid the appearance of agreeing or disagreeing with any statements made by participants. This was to discourage

any desirability bias. This researcher simply allowed the participants to answer the questions and to share their perspectives on their experiences.

Additionally, it was mentioned earlier that the researcher would be identifying any prejudices or prior beliefs early on in the research process. These assumptions were then bracketed or set aside so that the researcher could be objective while collecting and analyzing data. This researcher did not come across any assumptions while analyzing data and attempted to look at the data as objectively as possible.

Limitations

As an instructor myself, I am concerned about being biased when interviewing faculty members. This researcher made every effort to not demonstrate any personal feelings or beliefs while interviewing participants. In addition, throughout the study this researcher engaged in respondent validation, to ensure that there is no misinterpretation of the participant's experiences. Some additional limitations include that there may be STEM as well as non-STEM faculty participating. With a study such as this, it is impossible to cover all variations of disciplines. However, faculty members from several disciplines including Business Management, Mathematics, Chemistry, English, Teacher Education, Nursing and Communications were represented in this study. Finally, this researcher believed that there would be more faculty members that would not only qualify, but be willing to participate.

After several communications on behalf of me, as well as by an administrator at each campus, on my behalf, only seven participants were interviewed for this study. Although there were a few faculty members that indicated that they only utilize lecture, one potential participant did not qualify and many other faculty members refused to

respond after a minimum of at least three attempted communications per potential participant. There were several occasions in which more than three attempts were made to contact a potential participant. It is unclear as to whether or not there are a small number of participants that qualify at both institutions, or that they simply do not wish to participate.

Additional limitations include demographics as it was only feasible to capture participants from two community colleges in which the researcher has personal and professional ties. It is also possible that participants may have forgotten details surrounding their transition in teaching strategies and the interview process does not help them recall those details. Finally, this researcher did not have the opportunity to observe faculty members in their classroom to observe any mismatches that could occur between self-description of teaching practices and actual behavior. This researcher was limited to relying on behaviors that are self-reported by the participants.

Delimitations

The major delimitation of this study is that only community college faculty from higher education participated. This study can be applied to higher education broadly, however more specifically to the community college faculty experiences. Additionally, only faculty members were recruited from two community colleges in the United States.

Summary

Since the literature stresses the importance of non-traditional teaching methods, it is important to identify what instructional strategies are being implemented in the community college classroom and the challenges that come with developing effective teaching strategies in the classroom. Many college professors are well educated in their

field, but not necessarily in pedagogy. The experience of faculty who has improved their pedagogy by changing practices in the classroom should be documented so that college administrators and instructors might use the information to support the transition of others.

The experience of that faculty that made the transition from traditional lecture to more non-traditional teaching strategies can possibly shed some light on the challenges that they face in an attempt to improve teaching practices. The nature of change in itself can be complex; however, faculty often struggle to get the appropriate support required to make long term and effective change that can benefit students.

This basic qualitative study gave faculty an opportunity to describe their experience and the readers an opportunity to understand what it would be like to experiences the transition from traditional to non-traditional teaching methods. It is my hope that readers will be able to understand how it feels to go through that type of experience due to the rich details provided from this type of study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of community college faculty members that transitioned from utilizing traditional to more non-traditional methods in the classroom. In this study, thematic analysis was used to analyze and interpret data. Codes were initially established and those codes were then organized into themes that emerged from the data.

In order to give readers an idea of the characteristics of the faculty that participated in this study as well as the institutions that they serve, the first part of this chapter will briefly provide a description of those faculty members that participated and details of their respective institutions. Next, I will present the findings of my research and finally provide a brief summary of those findings.

Participants

Participants were recruited from two separate institutions. Of the seven participants, four were male and three were female. Please see table below:

Table 2

Frequencies Table

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
Institution 1	4	2	2
Institution 2	3	1	2
Total	7	3	4

As mentioned in chapter 3, participants were selected from the faculties of a rural community college located in the Midwest portion of the United States and from a rural

community college in the southwestern portion of the United States. Of the seven participants, four are employed from the institution (institution 1) located in the Midwest and three are employed from the institution in the southwest (institution 2). Years of experience ranged from nine to thirty one years of experience teaching at a community college. The various disciplines that were represented in the study are Business Management, Math, Chemistry, English, Teacher Education, Nursing and Communications.

The next section of this chapter will provide details regarding each participant's experiences as they transitioned from utilizing more traditional to non-traditional teaching strategies in the community college classroom. A pseudonym was selected for each participant to be used throughout this study. It should also be noted that there may be grammatical errors in the direct quotes from participants.

Data were collected utilizing semi-structured interviews and data were analyzed in relation to the primary research questions considering the Transtheoretical Model. The data were analyzed keeping in mind the following research questions:

- 1) What were the experiences of faculty members who have changed their method of teaching from lecture to other non-traditional methods?
- 2) What factors played a role in the decision to change their teaching methods?

A major goal of conducting the interviews was to find out how the participants came to use non-traditional teaching methods and the challenges that they experienced as they went through the transitional process of implementing new strategies in the classroom. A description of the participants as it relates to the primary research questions are described

in this chapter. Participant case descriptions are reported in the order that the interviews were conducted.

Participant Case Descriptions

Janet (Institution 1)

Janet has been employed at a community college serving as both a faculty member of Mathematics and at times an administrator for 23 years. As is common for most faculty members, in the beginning of her career, she heavily relied on utilizing lecture as a means to transfer knowledge to her students. Janet stated that although she provided additional support by making herself available to answer questions for students, she found that those who she perceived to be motivated were able to perform well in class. However, there were students that she struggled to engage.

Approximately 13 years into her career, she started to look at opportunities to increase engagement with her students through more interactive Math software programs and eventually adopting a more “flipped classroom.” Janet was introduced to these strategies through a series of professional development opportunities both on as well as off campus. Motivating factors to improve engagement in the classroom were primarily intrinsic and she felt that she had adequate support from her institution to adopt new strategies in the classroom.

When asked to identify challenges that she faced as she was going through the experience of making changes in the classroom, she spoke of the difficulty of the change itself. She shared that

Just the amount of initially, trying, you know it is overwhelming sometimes to try to figure out how is this going to work and just changing something you have done for

so long and now trying to change to a different format (Janet, lines 81-83).

Another concern shared was the lack of support from other colleagues, not because they aren't supportive, but that they are not sharing the same experience.

Janet shared that when she had a problem in the classroom there really wasn't another colleague or faculty member to consult or ask for advice or support. She stated that "If you run into a problem you don't have a ready source to say, hey this isn't working" (Janet, 84-85). Additionally, she shared that her students have changed over the years and although not all faculty feel the need to change, she wanted to find some different ways to engage students. Since implementing more technologies and different strategies in the classroom, Janet believes that she had seen an increase in student engagement and success.

Nate (Institution 2).

Nate has been employed at a community college for approximately 14 years as a faculty member in the Teacher Education department. Prior to teaching in higher education, Nate taught at the secondary level and offered his high school students a wide variety of activities in the classroom as he wanted students to be genuinely interested in the content. When he first arrived at the community college, he conceded that he did rely on the lecture method in the classroom because "That's the way it had been done when I was in college" (Nate, line 13).

When asked about the effectiveness of the lecture method, he said, "Well, first of all, students were bored" (Nate, line 23). He then reflected on his experiences when he was teaching at the high school level and the emphasis he placed on teaching his students skills and began thinking "Why am I doing this lecturing at the college level?" and

“What’s most beneficial for the students?” (Nate, line 33). He started to consider what he had done while back at the high school and began attending workshops. Although he felt that there was an expectation of what he “was supposed to do” at the college level he wanted to be more “actively involved” and began to research how to engage with his students (Nate, line 44). As a result of the combination of research and attending workshops he decided to focus on integrating more class group work and discussion into the classroom.

Not only did he incorporate more active involvement in the classroom and small group activities, but in those classes where students must develop skills such as tutoring or creating lesson plans, students have opportunities to reflect on those experiences and create goals for improvement. Although Nate was intrinsically motivated to make these changes in the classroom, he also relied on collaborating with professionals within the same discipline from other community colleges while attending various conferences.

At his own community college, although others were encouraging of his work, there were no other faculty members that were going through the same experience. When asked about some of the challenges he encountered he stated, “I would say that you know at the college level there’s not a lot of examples, you know, to choose from” (Nate, 167-168). Additionally, he recognizes that college faculty members do not necessarily have a background in pedagogical practices and believes that although there are professional development opportunities at his institution, very few are focused on engaging students in the classroom.

Although he believes that training opportunities have been limited at his home institution, even when traveling to other conferences most of the content is more

theoretical in nature than applicable. He does believe that the current strategies he is implementing in the classroom are highly effective as he has cited feedback from alumni who stated that they felt much more prepared for the classroom than other students who did not go through the same program.

Kevin (Institution 1).

Kevin has been teaching Chemistry at a community college for approximately 12 years. Early in his career, he primarily utilized the lecture method in the classroom and believed that it was effective. His primary concern was that community college students are unique in that most of them have personal obligations such as jobs and families which result in low attendance for his classes. This prompted him around 4 years into his teaching career to evaluate how he could meet the unique needs of community college students.

He decided to begin researching online for ideas on specific strategies that might work with his students. According to the participant, “So, in 2011 I did a lot of searching on the internet for uh, I guess pedagogical, I guess I would say innovations” (Kevin, lines 44-45). Additionally, he began to check out books from his institution’s Center for Teaching and Learning. As a result of his research, he discovered POGIL’s, which stands for Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning. Kevin stated that he utilized them for approximately 3 or 4 years and although he has now abandoned using them in the classroom, it changed his approach with his students. He stated that, “That was a big game changer for me. I don’t do them anymore but it shaped everything that I have done since then” (Kevin, lines 51-52).

When Kevin decided to make changes in the classroom, he had opportunities to pursue professional development opportunities and felt that he had other faculty members in which he could share his ideas for different teaching strategies. For him, a lot of those changes revolved around new technologies and how they can be incorporated into the classroom. Since he noticed that attendance was an issue for some of his students, he decided to start creating videos that could be embedded in his presentations as well as posted on YouTube for students to view when they are unable to attend class. Additionally, he decided he wanted to try to incorporate more group oriented problem solving activities in his courses.

So, what I do now is little tiny group work where everyone is assigned a role and I create really hypothetical, bizarre problems that a Chemist could potentially solve whether you're an engineer or just a regular general Chemist, Organic or a Biochemist or Pharmaceutical Chemist. I try to make it really bizarre things and that's just to get more than just a textbook problem, solving capacity (Kevin, lines 71-74).

In the beginning of his career, he felt that he was encouraged as the president of the college had offered to pay for some of the POGIL workbooks for use in his classroom. He felt that the gesture was a show of support for the work that he was doing in his courses. At the time in which he was researching and seeking out resources to make changes in the classroom, there was a Center for Teaching and Learning, which he doesn't believe is any longer active, but served as support for him as well. There were also several colleagues that he believes were supportive of him as he embarked on his research for implementing new strategies.

Throughout his research, he began to think about how different his students are from each other as well and what the pedagogical research revealed regarding best practices.

That was a great shift for me was reading all of those books, those pedagogical books and talking to people and I remember just driving home a lot and just thinking, you know, every class is different and I know that human beings can be clumped as human beings but I kept seeing that every semester, every group was different (Kevin, lines 101-104).

Due to this realization, he no longer has a strict plan; instead he tries to find ways to meet the needs of all of his learners. Early in the semester, he attempts to try to get to know his students.

I memorize their names pretty easily and I just get to know them. Each person, I know it sounds impossible, it's really not. You just have to figure out everyone's strengths during that semester and so I don't really strategically plan anything anymore (Kevin, lines 109-111).

He even takes it a step further and tries to get students to identify what they would like to learn so he can help them reach their individual goals. In fact, he now approaches each semester as his own research project. In fact, he continues to see himself as a student.

I think that I am 100% a student. I think I'm more of a student than anything, so my experience overall just to kind of sum up a little bit would be the best way to teach effectively is just to remember that you're a student as well as them (Kevin, lines 245-247).

There are other changes he had noticed in his students over the years. In addition to differences in possible learning styles and groupings of students, he also observed that for

a short amount of time in the early 2010's his institution had an influx of students that had recently experienced job losses in the area. He stated that the students enrolling in his courses during that time appeared to him to be more motivated than students prior to that time. Kevin also observed that cell phone and internet usage were also dramatically on the rise. He believes that this increased access to information has presented a set of challenges that manifests itself in the classroom.

They say they learn all of this stuff on the internet and actually you can end up telling that they haven't, and actually do worse in the class. So, I would say that the internet and cell phones have really greatly damaged, from my experience, from my first five years of teaching, have really, have um changed the student mindset (Kevin, lines 144-147).

Although he acknowledges that access to technology has created opportunities for teachers and he creates videos that he posts to YouTube in order to share information and knowledge with his students, he also has concerns about some of the other content that students can access in order to learn information.

In addition to taking advantage of new technologies, he tries to be responsive to the needs of his students. Feedback from his students drives further instruction. For example, if students struggle on an exam or assignment, he attempts to review the information before the next assessment. During the beginning of his journey to change his strategies in the classroom, Kevin felt supported by many administrators and peer faculty members. Now with budgetary constraints and turnover in administration and staff, he states that it has become more of a challenge to forge those close collegial types of relationships.

In regards to offering incentives for faculty exploring the use of non-traditional teaching strategies, there have been small stipends offered over the years, however now Kevin shared that most opportunities for faculty to pursue professional development are primarily for those that want to learn about new online technologies. For him, he was never motivated by financial incentives and he doesn't believe that they motivate most other faculty members. He did state that it may motivate some to at least attend a professional development or conference, but believes that most are motivated by the prospects of promotion and tenure, which eventually will lead to professional and financial gains.

For those who attend conferences and professional development opportunities, it doesn't necessarily yield long lasting change in the classroom.

So, I think a lot that faculty out there appear to look like they are doing something but I think that a lot of people, in my opinion, a lot of people will do it to check off a list of what they have, they accomplish to get a promotion, or just, uh for the annual assessment review (Kevin, lines 231-234).

He believes that some faculty members are "going through the motions" in order to demonstrate that they are meeting the expectations set forth by the institution.

I do know from listening that most faculty, from the breakroom talk or whatever you call it, uh it seems to me that it's just like eh, you know, what I do is fine and a lot of times the assessment culture that has hit the campus previously has really not turned out well (Kevin, lines 235-237).

He went on to say that many faculty members feel that they are being asked to do more and that they perceive making changes to their current strategies as extra work that they are not ready to take on.

Katie (Institution 1).

Katie is an experienced community college professor with 31 years of experience in higher education with at least 21 as a full-time faculty member teaching Business Management courses. Early in her career, she relied primarily on the lecture method. At the time, in addition to classroom experiences, student did have internships and opportunities to create a business plan to present to the class. Additionally, in her Marketing class they would do a business analysis, write a paper and then present as well. In regards to assessment, students did have additional opportunities to demonstrate competency.

Katie believes that when she first began her teaching career, that the lecture method was effective. She states that,

I think it was effective at the time, because at that time they didn't have the internet to research and tap the knowledge. It was more coming from the faculty and my experiences and my expertise in addition to the textbook, so I think that as time has evolved, students have gotten a lot more information, they come to us with a lot more information (Katie, lines 28-32).

She also said that you have to change with the students, which means changing the methods we use in the classroom. Although she doesn't believe that the lecture method is "dead" she believes that faculty members should incorporate what students already know

and the information that they have researched and that the classroom should be more student centered.

For Katie, she began to consider making significant changes in the classroom while working on her dissertation for her Ph.D. Not only did her dissertation topic revolve around student centered learning, but she was also working on a project with other faculty from various states. The primary objective of this project was curriculum and learning objectives for marketing students, which opened the door for those participating to discuss what they were teaching in the classroom along with how they are teaching in the classroom. These experiences, approximately 10 years ago, led to significant changes to her institution's programs as well as to her own classroom.

At her institution, she currently has additional responsibilities in which she supports faculty in developing as professionals. As an instructional leader, she assists in facilitating professional development opportunities for faculty members. This has provided an opportunity to work closely with faculty members that may be considering implementing some changes in their own classroom strategies. Although for Katie, her motivation has always been intrinsic, when asked about incentives for other faculty members to pursue professional development opportunities, she believes that they are motivated by promotion and tenure.

So incentives. Okay, so it's really more about promotion and tenure. So you have a certain amount of professional development for years, you get promoted, so it's the financial incentives (Katie, lines 137-138).

So, faculty might initially be attracted to attaining promotion and tenure, but beyond that point in your career, motivation might be more intrinsic in nature. She also

mentioned that she believed that at her institution only full-time faculty have access to professional development, so adjunct faculty would not have the same opportunities as their full time counterparts.

In regards to her own classroom strategies, Katie has stated that she tries to be responsive to the needs of her students. She also states, “I don’t want to be boring in the classroom.” She works with her students, requests frequent feedback from them and takes that into consideration as she moves throughout the semester.

About halfway through the semester, I do this every year, I ask the students, How are you feeling about his class? The format, the layout, is there anything that I’m not doing that I could be doing to help you retain information? And if I have a batch of bad tests, I change it (Katie, lines 87-89).

She went on to explain that she considers their feedback, and if she needs to consider how she evaluates work in class, she will but sometimes she responds by providing additional support and guidance. In fact, she strives to provide one on one support when appropriate and a variety of modes of delivery as she recognizes that students have different learning styles.

I know that there are different types of learning styles, that’s why I have to have different types of deliveries. You know, not just one, verbal, we have written, we have group discussions, we have online (Katie, lines 104-106).

During the transition of adopting more non-traditional methods in the classroom, Katie stated that administration was supportive and even requested that she share what she was doing with others. The only barrier that she has experienced up to this juncture is with the recommendation to move to Open Source textbooks, which are online books, in

order to save students on the overall cost of their education. Administration has been less than enthusiastic at the prospect of moving to online textbooks at this time. Otherwise, she has felt supported in her endeavors.

When asked to contemplate the effectiveness of her teaching strategies she looks primarily at the student's ability to complete various projects in her courses. When students can demonstrate the mastery of valuable skills, such as managing a website, or utilizing marketing strategies or changing printing materials, then Katie knows that her strategies have been successful.

As Katie does have the opportunities to support faculty through her additional responsibilities at her institution, when asked if she has had the opportunity to encourage others to consider other teaching strategies, she indicated that she has made the attempt. In regards to the success of her intervention attempts, she was uncertain of any long lasting results for most of the faculty members that she has worked with, however was able to share one example from a professional development event that she organized with a focus on best practices.

A colleague went to that and she immediately implemented a quiz change in order to let the students take quizzes whenever they wanted to in order to be more successful and she said that her grades went up immediately. So, by me offering that workshop that's one example that I know for sure (Katie, lines 165-168).

Although an indirect influence, she has had the opportunity to see her colleagues see success by trying something new in the classroom, even examining the best strategies to assess students.

Jessica (Institution 2).

Jessica has been teaching at a community college for 9 years, with 7 years of that tenure as a full time faculty member. Her discipline is Communication Studies and like many other new faculty members, she primarily relied on lecture with some discussion questions. When asked how effective she believed the lecture method was, she felt that she utilized it because she enjoyed it, not because she believed it to be effective. However, a comment made by one of her students prompted her to reconsider her classroom strategies. Jessica shared the following,

In fact, I think I had one of my students tell me that they really didn't get the point of reading the book because they didn't want to go over what we already did in lecture so that was a bit of a disappointing moment for me, but they were right. So, I felt like the effectiveness of it, went down because I was essentially, kind of just regurgitating the material that they had already been reading. So, standing on it, but not really giving them an opportunity to think too much about the application of the material that I was teaching (Jessica, lines 17-22).

Jessica stated that she preferred the lecture method as a student so she believed that it would work for her students as well. She also now recognizes that some students actually don't prefer that method and believes that it was not equally effective for all of them. Approximately 2 years into her full time teaching career, she began to try some different strategies. Now, she only lectures about 10 minutes per week and spends most of her class time with activities that give students an opportunity to apply the skills that they are learning. She also implements videos into her instruction and has her students engage in projects. She also engages in discussion questions and reflection and provides

opportunities for creating speeches and public speaking. They have opportunities to work on skills that they are learning in class inside as well as outside of the classroom.

Jessica began her teaching career as a graduate assistant and all lectures and materials were provided to her, so there weren't opportunities to make changes or reflect on teaching strategies. During her career as a faculty member at her community college, she began to seek out professional development opportunities.

I would say whenever I first became a teacher I would say that I found myself seeking out a lot of professional developments that highlighted different learning strategies and different ways to try to interact with students in ways that just wasn't lecture, so I feel that I spent a lot of time in professional development that was about being a better teacher (Jessica, lines 48-51).

She has also taken it a step further and now shares what she has learned as she serves on a teaching and learning committee at her institution. She believes that there is value in learning how to become a better teacher and wants to help others be better teachers.

She was fortunate enough as a new faculty member, to be assigned a mentor that was passionate about best pedagogical practices and served on a teaching committee. This gave her an opportunity early in her career to consider her classroom practices and strategies. In her classroom, she tries to use a variety of strategies including mini-lectures, videos, group activities and class discussion. When observing her students, she shared that she tries to look for high levels of engagement with her students as well as with each other. Jessica also tries to be responsive to her students when observing them in their activities. For example, if she observes that they appear to be engaged and are meeting the objectives, she might allow that activity to occur longer than she planned, or if they

are not meeting the objectives, she might move on to something else. When lesson planning, she has back up activities ready just in case she might need to try a different strategy.

Although Jessica has had opportunities to grow as a teacher in the classroom, her transition was not without challenges. She didn't believe that she had many formal opportunities throughout her education to learn how to be a teacher, however once in the classroom she had a strong desire to develop as a teaching professional. She stated that at the community college, the discipline is of a stronger priority than the pedagogy. Although she was fortunate to have a faculty mentor who supported her in her teaching, she believes that most new faculty members are not as fortunate. She felt that she had support from her department as well as from administration as she was transitioning away from utilizing lecture in the classroom. She most especially felt supported within her department and could speak with other colleagues whenever she needed someone to listen to her during her experience.

One of the primary challenges that she experienced was in regards to access to specific types of professional development. Jessica stated that there are occasions in which pursuing professional development that is more discipline specific or targeted towards online education, might take priority over an opportunity to improve teaching in the classroom.

And so I don't think that there has been a lot of resistance towards learning about strategies or things like that but I think that sometimes other types of professional development might be prioritized, so for instance those that are more discipline specific, but even within those types of professional development I still get to have

applications to my course, so I don't think I have ever experienced any direct resistance towards learning active learning in the classroom (Jessica, lines 116-120).

When she reflects on how she assessed student success early in her career, she used exams and essays as a primary method of evaluation. At one of the professional development opportunities she attended earlier in her career, she learned how to use different types of measurements for demonstrating learning in the classroom. Now when she examines her learning objectives she tries to create a more wide variety of assessments and rubrics for her students. Her focus is now on students mastering skills in the classroom.

Her motivation has always been intrinsic in nature and believes that most faculty members who are attempting to pursue professional development are also not primarily motivated by financial incentives. She believes that the greatest challenge in making meaningful change for faculty members is the implementation of those changes in their courses.

I do know that I've had conversations with my faculty at my institution hoping that we would have more opportunities because it's hard to set aside time and energy to make dramatic changes to your course. And, if there is someone who is primarily lecturing and you try to go through learning the different teaching strategies, that's a pretty big jump and so I know that we have often reached out for more incentives to do it just because it's the right thing to do, you know what I mean? But, I feel like that if there were more incentives, more people would at least be inclined to consider it (Jessica, 154-160).

Now that she has been a faculty member for some time, she is now in a position where she can mentor new faculty members at her institution. In order to set them up for success, she strives to provide them with resources and believes that she has impacted others to try new strategies in the classroom. Her one regret is that she didn't learn earlier in her career some of the best practices that she now feels have contributed to an increase in success for her students and believes that if we can target new faculty early in their careers, then they can see better outcomes for their students.

Bill (Institution 2).

Bill has been teaching at a community college for 11 years and primarily teaching courses in a nursing program. During the beginning of his tenure at a faculty member, he relied primarily on the lecture method in the classroom and measured the effectiveness of them by the student exam scores. He recognizes that utilizing traditional lecture and assessing primarily through exams alone was not effective for all of his students. He began to consider learning beyond the classroom. He wanted to provide opportunities for students to ask questions and develop critical thinking skills.

Bill started to focus on assisting students in developing skills that they will need in order to be a successful nurse. For example, he stated that he asks questions in order to provoke compassion for patients as he believes that it is an important part of his profession. He began to consider alternative strategies after earning his Master's degree and a certificate in teaching which was approximately 5 years ago.

He began to research different teaching and learning strategies as he knew that he wanted to do things differently. As he stated, he was "trying to reach higher tiers of learning, application and critical thinking. And, I started thinking like, okay how do, how

do I achieve these higher levels?” (Bill, lines 146-147). When considering the needs of his learners, he shared that as students are developing patient care skills, students engage in frequent simulations. As students are using simulations, he observed that students learn patient care skills at varying rates.

Since these important critical thinking skills are essential, and he recognized that all students are different, he wanted to find strategies that would help students develop problem solving skills so they could be successful. He stated that “Everyone has different needs so everyone learns in different ways, some people are very visual, and right now we have students who English is not their first language” (Bill, lines 71-72). In fact, he shared that he has several students that are English language learners (ELL) and they must be successful with their patient care skills and on their required exams.

When students struggle on exams he strives to meet students individual needs by meeting with them some of them one on one as they are required to pass their exams to gain licensure.

If a student has failed, then or is close to failing, then we go over the exam and the questions and how they are reading the questions and that seems to be right now the only way, that I’m able to guess where their deficits are (Bill, lines 78-81).

Some of the greatest challenges he has faced as he has been trying to transition into utilizing more non-traditional methods has been identified as primarily administrative and technological issues. For example, he was encouraged to flip his classroom and utilize platforms such as Nearpod, however he has struggled to get his institution to pay for some of the online programs that he wanted to implement.

He believes that there is an overall message from administration that they are innovative and supportive; however there are additional limitations with technology. Bill shared that their program recently acquired iPads and are required to utilize them. Bill stated that

In fact, it's mandatory, we're supposed to be doing uh, everything online. So, in that sense we're doing everything online. So, in that sense we're doing everything a step forward and innovative. Yet, at the same time. It's old and we have problems with downloading apps (Bill, lines 112-114).

There are some challenges for faculty members with implementation of new technologies. In addition to faculty members creating new strategies for implementing technology into the classroom, there are technical difficulties associated with utilizing new technologies, one of which is the reliability of those tools.

With some of the non-traditional methods that he has attempted, he has found that although he must still rely on exams for assessment, he also tries to focus on critically examining the paperwork. He also examines measuring learning outcomes as students are developing the essential clinical skills necessary to being a successful nurse.

Traditionally, students have adhered to a pass or fail assessment, however Bill believes that faculty should look at how what is transpiring in the classroom impacts how students respond during their clinical experiences.

At Bill's institution, there is funding available for faculty members to pursue some professional development opportunities however he believes that the primary incentive for faculty members to pursue these opportunities is the increased opportunity for

promotion and tenure. Pursuing professional development opportunities and attending conferences increases the opportunities for advancement.

It is believed that these opportunities and incentives encourage others to make changes in the classroom, however he believes that there should be more follow up.

According to Bill,

There needs to be more follow through and there needs to be more accountability for it. So, once I employ this innovative new technique or method, or whatever, then I think we should all be accountable as to did it work, did it not work, and then how do you think it works? (Bill, lines 146-149).

So, even if faculty members are trying new strategies, there is concern about the evaluation of the effectiveness of those strategies. When asked if he has ever encouraged others to try some new strategies in the classroom, he said that he had, however it had proved difficult to encourage others to make a change in their current classroom techniques. Of the two that he had encouraged making a change, one of the faculty members was unwilling and the other said that she wanted to make changes to her instructional methods, but the only change that he was aware that she had made was changing the arrangement of her classroom furniture.

Overall, Bill believes that opportunities remain for a great amount of growth and he believes that it starts with a focus that goes beyond passing exams. “We need to get them to critically think for not only the patients, but for the future of nursing” (Bill, lines 172-173). He believes that the development of life and career skills is the key to student success inside as well as outside of the classroom.

Jim (Institution 2).

Jim has been a full time faculty member at a community college for approximately 15 years teaching English and Business Communication courses. Prior to that, he has several years of experience not only as a graduate/teaching assistant, but as an adjunct faculty member. In the beginning of his career, he relied primarily on utilizing the lecture method. For Jim, the introduction of new technologies is what prompted him to consider the effectiveness of the resources that were available to him in the classroom.

In hindsight, he realizes that the lecture method was not very effective and attempted to improve his teaching strategies through the use of technology. According to Jim, “I mean early on I tried to make my classes sort of flipped a little bit, a little bit of hybrid. So I made sure that students always had access to my PowerPoints” (Jim, lines 32-32). He also felt that he gave exams that heavily relied on memorization. He realized that today’s students have access to information but need to know how to analyze and interpret information. He said that “I don’t think that’s important as how to process that information. So, the focus of everything I do now is about critical thinking not just rehashing factual information” (Jim, lines 37-39).

He concedes that some students still prefer lecture so Jim records his lectures and posts them to his YouTube channel along with class notes. His primary focus has become preparing students for the workplace by engaging students in activities that promote critical thinking skills. He is currently reevaluating all of his classes to best meet the needs of his students in the classroom as well as beyond. Jim states that “They get into the workplace and they don’t know how to engage in the subject critically. And, so that’s going to continue to be my focus, redoing my classes” (Jim, lines 57-58).

Jim says that the big breakthrough for him was when Canvas was adopted as the LMS for his institution. He spent a great deal of time with technology staff rewriting his Business Writing course. He also began to incorporate new technologies such as Google Docs and Google Hangouts. Jim believes that giving students the opportunity to interact through means, other than face to face, that they are more likely to ask questions. He believes that this has actually improved communication between him and his students as well as each other. Jim stated that “There’s a much more open and immediate channel of communication now. Which is probably the best thing that I have done in the class” (Jim, lines 76-77).

In addition to utilizing online tools such as Canvas and Google, he has also integrated the use of TedTalks and Educational videos on YouTube and is moving away from the use of textbooks in his classes. As he was exploring new technologies for use in his class, he believes that the technology support staff was pivotal in providing the adequate amount of support to be successful in launching these new tools for student use in the classroom.

Faculty who wish to teach an online course must obtain certification from the institution through a course that they participated in. There are incentives for faculty to participate as a stipend was issued however Jim states that “The purpose of it was just to get us to rethink how to approach creating lessons and one of the big things they taught us was to move towards a more modular method of teaching” (Jim, lines 111-113).

Another reason that he believes in utilizing the online tools is that he can provide immediate feedback to students. However, there have been challenges. Students sometimes struggle with learning how to utilize the tools and resources necessary and

others are resistant to technology. He has been able to see that since he has adopted new strategies in the classroom, he has experienced a higher rate of retention in his classes. Previously, he would notice that about a quarter of his students would either drop out or stop attending class. Now he believes that it is down to approximately 10%.

As he was going through the process of incorporating more online tools into the classroom, he admits that he did have support from other colleagues throughout the process, but there have been challenges. At his institution, they have experienced a high rate of turnover so there have been times in which he felt that there was a high level of support, however there have been other periods of time in which he did not feel supported and indicated that morale has been low during those periods. He did state that there are funds available at his institution allocated to support full-time faculty as well as adjunct faculty to attend professional development in order to improve pedagogical strategies. When asked if he believes that incentives help faculty make a meaningful change, he does believe that the funds help faculty pursue those opportunities and he also believes that there is an expectation that faculty members share what they learn during professional development at his institution.

Summary of Case Descriptions

Although the experience of each faculty member was unique in many ways, there were several commonalities amongst the participants. For example, every faculty member stated that they wanted students to develop processing skills, such as problem solving or critical thinking skills. These are skills that are important for students to develop that can be applied to many situations outside of the classroom. Student achievement data, like grades, were not brought up in conversations that addressed student success. These

faculty members appeared to be focused on the development of skills, rather than grades and traditional student data.

Throughout the experience, all faculty members had access to some professional development opportunities, even if they were not specific to instruction. Even when faculty members may have experienced limited opportunities to attend professional development, due to financial or administrative constraints, they all received some level of support. Most support reported from faculty members was largely informal and was reported as encouragement from administration and peers.

In spite of support or encouragement felt by administrators and peers, many felt that they were alone in the process as there were no other faculty members, that they were aware of, going through a similar experience. These faculty members were still motivated to engage students in the classroom, which was a major finding in this study. Participants were intrinsically motivated to engage with their students, in most cases by a desire to engage students and support them in building various skills that could serve them inside as well as outside of the classroom. This inspired faculty members to seek out professional development opportunities and research ways to improve their instructional strategies.

Thematic Findings

Data were collected utilizing semi-structured interviews and data were analyzed in relation to the primary research questions considering the Transtheoretical Model. The data were analyzed keeping in mind the following research questions:

- 1) What were the experiences of faculty members who have changed their method of teaching from lecture to other non-traditional methods?

2) What factors played a role in the decision to change their teaching methods?

After coding the data and organizing the codes into themes, there were three themes that demonstrated significance to the research questions. The three themes are as follows and are organized below:

- 1) Student Engagement
- 2) Institutional Support
- 3) Intrinsic motivation to change teaching strategies

Additionally, there were three sub-themes as it was difficult to address the individual themes without elaborating on some of the specifics associated with each theme. For example, when discussing the theme of Student Engagement, it seemed necessary to address some of the specific non-traditional strategies that faculty members employed when attempting to increase engagement. When addressing the theme, Support from the institution, it became clear that institutional culture drove the support provided to faculty members from other colleagues and from administration. Finally, when evaluating each faculty member's motivation to change, all stated that it was intrinsic in nature. This researcher felt the need to address the perceptions of the motivation of other faculty members at their respective institutions.

Table 3

Themes

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Sub Theme</u>
Student Engagement	Engagement Strategies
Institutional Support	Limitations of Support
Intrinsic motivation to change	Perceptions of Others

Description of Themes

Of the three primary themes that emerged, there were three sub themes that emerged as well. The primary theme is engagement with students. This primary theme also has a strong relationship with the other themes. For example, it is difficult to ignore the intrinsic desire for a faculty member to adopt alternative teaching strategies, without examining the reason why they would want to make a change in the classroom. The desire to engage with students drives many faculty members to consider alternative strategies in order to engage students in their courses. Janet stated that when she reflected on the period that she utilized more traditional methods, she was unable to reach unmotivated students. “I lost them. I couldn’t keep them engaged as well” (Janet, lines 20-21). This desire to reach all students is what encouraged her to consider alternative strategies.

Additionally, when considering engagement, in order for faculty members to learn new strategies in the classroom, they must have support in the form of time and resources from their respective institutions. Although most faculty members reported that they took the initiative to make changes in their pedagogical strategies, there were varying amounts of support. As administration or funding changes, the amount of resources available to support faculty members wishing to pursue professional development varies. Kevin indicated that he took the initiative to begin researching ways to improve instruction in the classroom. “That was a great shift for me was reading all of those books, those pedagogical books and talking to people. I remember just driving home a lot and thinking you know, every class is different” (Kevin, lines 101-103).

There was no clear pathway or comprehensive professional development plan for Kevin to follow. In order for him to develop professionally, it was up to him to decide the best

strategies for making improvements in classroom instruction. Not only was he motivated on his own, but he had to pursue opportunities to access resources by advocating for himself and his students. He was able to get the president of the college to pay for some instructional materials for his students. When evaluating the themes and subthemes of the study, there is a strong connection between motivation and resources available. Faculty members require various resources before they can consider a permanent change to classroom strategies. For example, faculty members must have opportunities to attend professional development and require time for planning before they can begin to practice new classroom strategies.

The availability of resources is strongly connected to institutional support. Jim indicated that as administration changes, initiatives can change which changes financial priorities for the institution. When asked about support from the institution, Jim believes that there has been support from other staff and departments as he was pursuing ways to improve instruction, especially in some of his online courses. However, he also stated that “As far as administrator support, uh it’s been up and down. We’ve had a lot of turnover in administrative areas” (Jim, lines 169-170). He gave examples of occasions in which there was little support and low morale. Even with some of his previous negative experiences, he tries to remain positive. “I’m cautiously optimistic that we have that support right now from our new president, but even at the main campus we have issues” (Jim, lines 178-180).

New initiatives from administration, financial constraints and institutional culture can all greatly impact the support that faculty receive to improve classroom instruction. When Nate recalled the beginning of his community college teaching career, he said that he utilized more traditional methods because he believed that was the expectation. He realized

that his students were not engaged and he began to consider the strategies that he relied on while teaching at the K-12 level. “I started thinking, why am I doing this lecturing at the college level? What’s most beneficial for the students?” (Nate, lines 32-33). At the time he was teaching his courses according to “What I am supposed to do, supposed to quotation marks” (Nate, line 44). In addition to the belief by some that some teaching strategies might be only K-12 appropriate, the cultural expectations of what the college classroom should look like may impede some faculty members from shifting away from the traditional lecture style strategy in their courses.

Nate struggled to find professional development opportunities at his institution designed to address best pedagogical practices. He recalled a conversation with the person at the time that was in charge of the institution’s Center for Teaching and Learning and he asked

Why are you not having sessions with faculty on engaging students and constructivist practices and student centered teaching and things like that? And she’s like you’re talking about, and these other people would say that’s K-12, that’s K-12. You know, that’s not higher ed. So, okay, I have nothing here, there’s nothing new for me. You know going through this (Nate, lines 225-229).

Finally, although there are faculty members such as Nate, that are motivated by a desire to engage students, when asked about their perceptions of other faculty members several believed that the primary incentive for pursuing professional development is the hope for promotion and tenure. When Katie was asked to consider if incentives encouraged faculty to consider a change she said “I don’t want to answer for anybody else. I think that the tenure and promotion is probably the biggest portion of it, the financial. I think that as faculty we ought to be better” (Katie, lines 156-158).

Kevin agrees but also believes that faculty members do not make a meaningful change in the classroom for any incentives.

So, I think a lot that faculty out there a lot appear to look like they are doing something but I think that a lot of people, in my opinion, a lot of people will do it to check off a list of what they have, they accomplish to get a promotion or just, uh for the annual assessment review” (Kevin, lines 231-234).

Even when faculty members attend professional development, their primary motivation might be to make advances in their careers but not necessarily to implement lasting changes in the classroom. Nate, one of the participants believes that there is an expectation of what the college classroom should look like. If that is the case, many faculty members might believe that the expectation is to attend professional development for promotion and tenure but that there is no expectation of improving classroom instruction.

There are strong relationships that connect the themes with one another. When considering the three primary themes of Intrinsic Motivation, Student Engagement, and Institutional Support, in order for faculty members to learn new strategies in the classroom, they must have support in the form of time and resources from their respective institutions. Faculty members also require support from administration and their peers. Many of the participants expressed that they felt that they were going through the experience alone. Although they felt supported and encouraged by administration and oftentimes their peers were also encouraging of their endeavors, there wasn't another colleague going through the experience with them. This type of peer support might be another layer of support that faculty members could benefit from as they are learning new instructional strategies. Without the appropriate amount of support, faculty members may lose the motivation to

make changes to instruction and revert back to what they had previously done in the classroom. Even if the desire to engage student still persists, if faculty members find it too difficult and time consuming to make the change on their own, they will struggle to make a meaningful change.

The relationships between themes are illustrated in Figure 2.

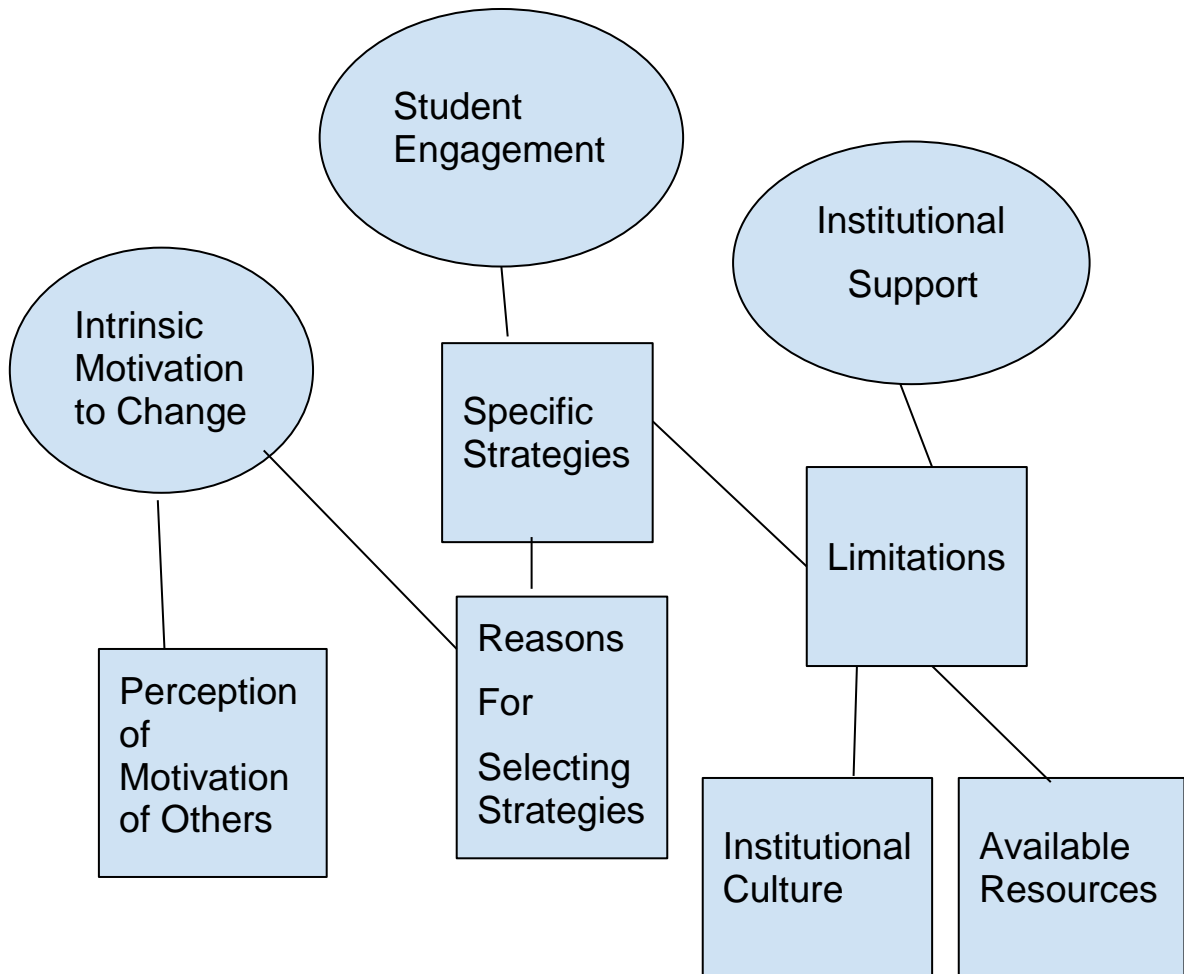


Figure 2. Thematic Map

Student Engagement

One of the major themes that emerged was student engagement (see Table 4). During interviews, when considering what prompted participants to change their method of instruction, some members stated that lack of engagement from students prompted them to consider trying another teaching strategy. Nate, one of the participants stated that “Students were bored.” That same faculty member stated that he “wanted students to be interested.” Faculty wanted students to be engaged but also wanted to feel engaged with their students.

When faculty members were asked about the effectiveness of the traditional method of teaching, Katie stated that she believes that the method may have been effective in the past, but is no longer effective in today’s community college classroom. As today’s students have changed, all of the participants have attempted to change with their students. Participants believe that students today are different and require more interaction. Kevin had stated that not only are today’s students different, but that community college students themselves are unique compared to other traditional college students. Kevin stated that “At the community college a lot of people have jobs and families” and went on to say that they miss a lot of class due to outside commitments.

Today’s community college students have specific needs and engaging students requires faculty members that are willing to being responsive to their needs. Several participants felt that they needed to be more responsive to the needs of their students and that they check for understanding with students. One faculty member mentioned that she “reads faces.” She also asks students for verbal feedback. Participants felt the need to evaluate the strategies utilized in the classroom as they believe that the traditional, lecture

based method was not yielding high levels of engagement in the classroom. Additionally, faculty members believe that by adopting more non-traditional strategies, students would respond with higher performance on assessments.

Faculty members strive to engage students with non-traditional teaching methods in order for students to learn course content as well as to develop life and career skills. Various strategies were selected by faculty members to foster advanced critical thinking skills and problems solving skills in order for students to achieve success beyond the course. As Jim reflected on the mission of the community college and the abundance of information that students now have access to outside of the classroom, he stated the following,

With, you know, every bit of knowledge at our fingertips all of the time. I don't think that's important as how to process that information. So, the focus of everything I do now is about critical thinking not just rehashing factual information (Jim, lines 37-39).

Sub theme: Engagement Strategies

When examining engagement, it is important to address the strategies in which faculty members attempt to engage students in the classroom. The types of strategies that participants employed in their courses varied. Most indicated that they facilitated activities that created opportunities for students to work in groups or with partners. One faculty member stated that he likes to create opportunities to engage in reflection activities. Several faculty members, provide opportunities to engage in critical thinking problems, for example the Chemistry professor who provides opportunities for students

to engage in problem solving activities to apply principles in his Chemistry course and provides case study type of problems for students.

Other strategies include the use of a flipped classroom and the use of case studies and discussion questions in the classroom. Participants dramatically decreased the use of lecture and relied on activities in which they could interact with students as well as create opportunities in which students could interact with each other. Faculty members also utilized videos as well as other technologies in the classroom. In fact, technology was an additional driving force for considering a change in classroom strategies as most institutions highly encourage the use of new technologies.

With the increase of reliance on technology in the classroom, participants were seeking ways to engage students with the new technological resources that are not only now available, but are also becoming expected or required to implement. This has created additional challenges as many institutions are investing in new technologies and faculty members not only have to learn how to integrate it into their classes, but there are technological “growing pains” that occur throughout the transition. For example, Bill indicated that students in his program are required to use iPads, however they have difficulty loading content and certain apps are not available for download due to infrastructure limitations with the institutions Wi-Fi.

In the tables describing themes below, the individual codes are also shared with numbers that correspond with a participant in the study. That legend is as follows:

Janet (1), Nate (2), Kevin (3), Katie (4), Jessica (5), Bill (6), and Jim (7).

Table 4

Student Engagement

<u>Student Engagement</u>	<u>Student Engagement Strategies</u>
Codes -Experienced a lack of motivation from students (1) -Boredom (from both teachers and students) (2,4) -Desire for students to learn beyond assessments (2,3,6,7) -Teachers want to engage students (also used the terms interact and communicate with). (1,2,5,7) -Desire for students to develop skills applicable to real life and career (2,3,4,6,7) -Critical thinking skills (2,6,7) -Problem solving skills (1,2,3,6) -Addressing language barriers (6) -Meeting the needs of learners (the individual) (1,3,4,5,6) -Students have changed over time (3,4)	Codes -Being responsive (1,3,4) -Evaluate student's faces and reactions in class. (1) -Flipped classroom (1,7) -Technology (1,3,4) -Active teaching strategies (2,4,5) -Discussion Questions (2,5) -Peer tutoring (2) -Cooperative Learning or Group (1,2,5) -Case studies (3,6) -Student centered (2,4) -POGIL's (3) -Videos (1,3,5,7) -Problem solving activities (1,3,6) -Rubrics (5) -Simulations (6) -Reflections (2,5) -Projects (4,5)

Institutional Support

All participants believed that there was support for the changes that they were making in their various courses however support appeared to vary as they continued throughout their careers (see Table 5). Some of the variance in support is attributed to turnover within the institution, such as changes in staffing, more specifically in upper level administration. All faculty members had at least one colleague or mentor in which they could discuss challenges that they were experiencing or simply provide support during the transition even if they were not sharing in the same experience.

Opportunities for professional development, which could provide training for faculty members seeking to explore alternative strategies, appeared to vary via institution. All of the participants had opportunities as full time faculty members to pursue professional development and training however with changes in budgetary constraints those opportunities have varied throughout their careers. Additionally, some participants stated that there is a greater focus on integrating technology in the classroom or to pursue professional development that is more discipline specific rather than implementing best practices for teaching.

Many faculty members who participate in professional development and training have received compensation for their participation and in fact Jim stated that at his institution faculty members who wish to teach online must first take a course and obtain certification. In addition to learning the online tools in the platform, he stated that the course actually challenges faculty members to consider how to approach online lessons and utilizing multiple modes and methods of teaching. Not only did Jim learn how to utilize new technology, but he had the opportunity to learn which strategies might be most appropriate when teaching an online course.

Many institutions are encouraging faculty members to utilize new technologies in their courses and in some cases are actually mandatory. Bill stated that at his institution they are required to use online tools in his program. Although there are technical challenges in implementing those online tools, such as reliability, there are incentives for faculty to pursue professional development. Bill does believe however that the primary motivation for full time faculty to attend conferences and pursue professional development is the prospect of advancement, most specifically promotion and tenure.

Although there may be institutional support in the form of access to some professional development, ongoing support that can lead to meaningful changes appears to come from other colleagues and faculty, typically within the same department. This type of support is largely informal however one of the participants was fortunate enough to be assigned a mentor that was passionate about student success. Jessica was assigned a faculty mentor upon hire as a full time faculty member that served on a committee to support faculty in their instructional practices. When Jessica was ready to make changes in her courses, she had someone who was not only assigned to assist her, but also had the skills and experience to support her in a meaningful way. Jessica believes that this ongoing support was instrumental in the success of her transition.

Subtheme: Limitations of Institutional Support

Faculty members at both institutions reported support for the attendance of professional development opportunities, even though at times those opportunities might vary based on resources available. Additionally, it was recommended by one of the participants that if faculty members were offered additional paid time and resources for classroom planning, others might consider making changes to their teaching strategies, especially early on in their careers.

Since the faculty members interviewed have transitioned to utilizing more non-traditional strategies in the classroom, when asked if they had the opportunity to mentor others and if it had led to a lasting change, most had reported that they had attempted to encourage others to adopt new strategies, but were either uncertain of any lasting changes or felt that they were not very successful in inspiring others. There were a few exceptions reported by participants, for example Katie shared that she was had facilitated a

conference that resulted in inspiring another faculty member to make a change to how she implemented her quizzes and then later followed up with Katie who said that she saw an immediate improvement in student scores.

Expectations of what the college classroom should look like were reported by one of the participants as a deterrent to make classroom experiences more active and student led. Nate shared that at his institution there were very few opportunities to pursue professional development that helped faculty members develop non-traditional strategies as that was viewed by some as K-12 type of strategies. He believes that there is an expectation that the college classroom should look academic which promotes a teacher led experience, in lieu of one that might be student led.

In addition to the expectations of what a scholarly college environment should look like, it was proposed that community college students are unique and have challenges that many university students may not experience. Kevin stated that his students appeared to have several obligations outside of the classroom that oftentimes made it difficult for his students to attend class. This prompted him to provide additional resources for students outside of class and flexibility with viewing lectures and videos outside of normally scheduled classroom periods. The table for Institutional Support is below.

Table 5

Institutional Support

<u>Institutional Support</u>	<u>Limitations with Support</u>
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<p>Codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -At least passive support from administration (encouragement) (1,2,3,4,5,6) -Figuring it out on your own (1) -Had peers to share experiences (not necessarily going through the same experience) (3,5,7) -Technology constraints (6) -Push to advance in technology without infrastructure (6) -Not offering enough PD or relevant PD (not about teaching strategies) (1,2,5) -Only instructed to meet accommodations to students (4) -Exposure to theory, but not practice (7) -No ongoing support or follow up (1,2) -Not able to go through experience with other faculty (little to no peer support) (1,2,6) -Teachers who try new strategies in the classroom are not always promoting what they are doing (to help others) (1) -Funds for both part-time and full-time faculty. (1) -Administrative support changes with turnover (3,7) -Ability to attend some type of conference or PD (1,2,3,4,5,6,7) -Serves as an instructional leader at institution (4,5,7) -Had an assigned mentor (5) 	<p>Codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Institutional Culture (2,5,6) -Uniqueness of CC student (3,4,7) -Lack of funds and time to implement (Limits on time, money and resources when trying new strategies) (1,3,5) -Lack of follow up after attending a training or conference (6) -Money and technology designated for online training in lieu of pedagogical best practices (3,5) -No PD for Adjunct faculty (4)
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Intrinsic Motivation to Change Teaching Strategies

When examining the process of change, it appears that none of the faculty members were required to change their teaching methods or were motivated by any type of incentives however was all intrinsically motivated with a desire to help students succeed in their respective courses (see Table 6). All had some opportunities to engage in professional development; however many felt that those opportunities were limited.

All felt that incentives, such as financial incentives, did not encourage faculty to make meaningful and long lasting changes in the classroom. All felt supported by administration, even if it was merely encouragement. Most felt that other faculty members at their institutions were supportive; however, three of the faculty members felt that there was a lack of support from others because they were going through the experience alone. One stated that she felt a lack of support since no-one else was going through the experience with her.

Several faculty members stated that they had observed some faculty motivated by the possibility of advancement or tenure to attend professional development, but that did not necessarily translate into changes in their teaching strategies. All participants believe that financial incentives do not prompt meaningful change in the classroom and all of the participants moved themselves from a pre-contemplative to a contemplative phase in the Transtheoretical Model.

For participants, stipends and compensation to attend conferences and professional development is not the driving force to make meaningful change. Incentives might encourage faculty to attend a conference or a professional development opportunity, but does not necessarily lead to a long term change. The opportunity to put in the time and energy to making those long lasting changes, possibly through additional time with compensation, might encourage more faculty members to permanently adopt non-traditional teaching strategies. Exposure to a conference or a professional development is just the beginning of the journey; support, time and compensation are required for long term meaningful change.

Sub theme: Perceptions of others

When asked if it was believed that incentives prompted others to pursue professional development, many felt that it did, even if indirectly, for example the hope of future promotion or tenure. In regards to a long lasting change, participants largely believed that the motivation to adopt more student centered strategies in the classroom were primarily intrinsic in nature driven by a desire to increase student success inside, as well as sometimes outside of, the classroom.

Table 6

Intrinsic Motivation to Change

<u>Intrinsic Motivation to Change</u>	<u>Perceptions of Others</u>
<p>Codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Had been exposed to some pedagogical training or formal education (i.e. Masters or PhD work) (2,4,6) -Desire to see students succeed (2,3,4,5) -Observing skill deficits and wanting to see students succeed (desire to connect and engage) (1,2) -Some faculty wanted to enhance personal experience for self (2) -Motivation to research and study pedagogical strategies (2,3,6) -Wants to apply critical thinking and problem solving skills (2,5) -Excitement to learn new technologies (1,7) -Connecting with faculty from other institutions (2) 	<p>Codes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Promotion and tenure (3,4,6) -Expected to participate in PD in order to “check the boxes” (3,4,7) -Financial gain (3,7) -Not expected to follow through (6) -Advancement in careers (3) -Resume building (3) -Inspired by seeing the success of other teachers (1) -Belief that others who actually change are intrinsically motivated (2)

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the approach used in order to analyze and interpret data. A brief description of the participants and the institutions that they represent was provided in order to give readers an idea of the background and

experiences of those who were interviewed. Next, the participant data collected from the interviews were coded and organized into themes taking the primary research questions into consideration. The three major themes were grouped into the following sections: Engagement, Support from the Institution and the Intrinsic Motivation to Change.

When evaluating the theme Engagement, it was difficult to ignore the strategies that faculty members are developing as they are striving to develop strategies that increase levels of engagement in the classroom. Under the theme of Support from the Institution, faculty who were seeking to make lasting changes to their teaching strategies required opportunities to access support, whether formal or informal in order to be successful. Access to professional development and support from a mentor, department head or administrator helped ease the transition. Finally, when examining Intrinsic Motivation to Change, all faculty members had a strong desire to improve teaching strategies regardless of incentives, or lack of, during their transitional period.

As students and technology change, faculty members interviewed were not afraid to learn and develop new strategies and technologies to facilitate student success. In fact, some of the participants seemed to be driven to change as a result of interest in learning new technologies and how they can be incorporated into both the online and face to face classroom experiences. With the increase availability in and cultural shift towards using technology in the classroom, effective teaching strategies utilizing the most appropriate technological resources will continue to be a challenge for new faculty members as well as for those who are experienced, but are under increasing pressure to consider changing current practices.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter reviews the problem and provides a brief summary of the study. The methodology and theoretical framework are revisited as well as the major findings that resulted from analysis. Finally, the findings are discussed as well as the implications for the field of study. The chapter ends with the final conclusion and recommendations for practice.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the instructional pedagogical strategies in use in community college classrooms and most specifically examine the experience of faculty who has made the transition into non-traditional methods of instruction in the classroom. Although faculty members possess advanced degrees and are often considered experts in their respective fields, most do not arrive at the community with pedagogical training. Additionally, most institutions lack a comprehensive professional development program to assist faculty members with learning effective teaching strategies in classrooms of higher education.

When combining the lack of pedagogical training and classrooms with diversity in student backgrounds and learning styles that exists at the community college, it is imperative that there is an increased focus on the research related to the implementation of a diverse array of teaching strategies. Many faculty members continue to lecture although it might not be the best method for all students. This study explored the instructional pedagogical strategies in use in community college classrooms and most

specifically examined the experiences of faculty members that made the transition into non-traditional methods of instruction in the classroom.

This study was guided by the following primary research questions:

Primary Research Questions

- 1) What were the experiences of faculty members who have changed their method of teaching from lecture to other non-traditional methods?
- 2) What factors played a role in the decision to change their teaching methods?

Several communications were sent out by the researcher, but also by individuals that served in administrative roles at each institution. Participants that responded and met the qualifications for the study had a one on one interview with the researcher. In addition to reaching out to potential participants by the researcher as well as by administrators on behalf of the researcher, the snowball sampling technique was employed. Referrals were requested of each participant as an attempt to recruit additional participants. None of the referrals from participants yielded additional participants for the study. One of the participants was referred to the researcher by a previous professional acquaintance.

As indicated in Chapter 3, open-ended questions were used in the interview to ensure that participants could convey their true lived experiences as they recalled it. Although questions were pre-determined there were occasions in which the researcher asked follow up questions for clarification purposes. After transcripts were generated, the researcher sent copies to each of the participants to evaluate for accuracy. One of the participants had questions that resulted in a second follow up interview. No other participants had any questions or concerns regarding the transcripts. Transcripts were evaluated several times

and note-taking occurred during the reading of transcripts. This researcher contemplated what the data might mean during this initial stage of familiarizing oneself with the data. All data, records and field notes were maintained during this stage of pre-analysis and all data were given the same amount of attention and consideration.

After five interviews were complete, this researcher began coding transcripts. Codes were generated considering the primary research questions. Open coding was used as codes were developed and evaluated as the coding process unfolds. Another researcher had the opportunity to review the coding process as well as the generation of potential themes after five interviews were transcribed and analyzed. Themes were evaluated for meaning and how they are related or connected to each other. This framework allowed this researcher the opportunity to examine the lived experiences of community college faculty as they recount their experiences transitioning into the use of non-traditional teaching methods in the classroom.

The three themes are as follows and are organized below:

- 1) Engagement with students
- 2) Support within the institution
- 3) Intrinsic motivation to change teaching strategies

The three sub-themes connected with the primary themes are as follows:

- 1) Strategies for Engagement
- 2) Limitations with Support
- 3) Perceptions of motivation of others

Discussion of Findings Related to the Literature

One of the participants, Kevin shared that community college students have unique characteristics and challenges. He recognized that many students have obligations outside of school, such as families and jobs. As indicated in Chapter 1, community colleges see high rates of non-traditional students with many considered independent and/or with dependents. Additionally, large numbers of community college students are Pell grant eligible and arrive with up to 75% of students requiring remedial work in English or Mathematics (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and the Southern Regional Education Board, 2010). Participants, such as Bill, are implementing non-traditional strategies in order to help students develop non-academic skills that can translate into life and career success. Since many community college students may be attending college to complete a certificate or to become career ready, developing life skills in the classroom may contribute to higher rates of student success.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the guiding theoretical framework for this study is the reflective practice theory as first introduced by Donald Schön in 1983 in his book, *The Reflective Practitioner*. Experience when combined with reflection over teaching practices can translate into action and change as faculty members are developing as teaching professionals (Schön, 2016). Faculty members should have opportunities to reflect on their current practices and take advantage of opportunities to develop effective strategies in the classroom. This is why ongoing professional development in the form of a comprehensive plan should be available to all faculty members.

One of the concerns mentioned by one of the participants, Jim, is that when attending conferences oftentimes they seem more theoretical or research based as opposed to

application based. Are faculty walking away from professional development trainings with new skills or strategies that they feel comfortable attempting in the classroom right away? When Jim shared his experiences with attending conferences, he stated that they are more formal in nature and that there usually isn't something meaningful that he can immediately take back to the classroom to improve his practice.

When speaking from the point of view from the model of Technical Rationality, Schön states the following:

Real knowledge lies in the theories and techniques of basic and applied Science. Hence, these disciplines should come first. "Skills" in the use of theory and technique to solve concrete problems should come later on, when the student has learned the relevant science first, because he cannot learn skills of application until he has learned applicable knowledge; and secondly, because skills are an ambiguous, secondary kind of knowledge (Schön, 1983, p 27).

Faculty members must first learn about effective teaching strategies, but then be allowed the opportunity to practice what they have learned in order to develop the confidence and ability to apply those skills. In the Sinclair and Osborne study (2014), it was indicated that although faculty require initial training, they also need continued support. Commitment by institutions in the form of time and resources are necessary to see long lasting changes in institutional culture, especially a culture that makes excellence in teaching a priority.

Brownell and Tanner (2012) also indicated that some of the barriers to cultural changes include the lack of rewards, motivation or encouragement. They propose that faculty require ongoing mentoring and support as change is a lengthy and ongoing process.

This was reiterated in the results as participants state that even though there may be some professional development for faculty members, ongoing follow up and support is the key to long lasting results. This is proving to be a barrier for participants as at their respective institutions they believe that they are not always receiving this type of support. Support is often described as more encouragement and praise rather than time and incentives.

Ongoing support is essential in order to move faculty members through the Transtheoretical Model. Without feedback and ongoing support, faculty members may resort to their old habits and strategies and “Relapse” as is indicated in the model. It appears that those faculty members that are making lasting changes in their teaching practices have moved themselves through the stages of Stages of Change or the Transtheoretical Model. Faculty members in the study are moving themselves into the second stage, which is contemplation, where individuals are beginning to consider a change in the future, which is usually defined as approximately 6 months.

Once faculty members have successfully moved themselves through all stage, without relapse and they are in the “Maintenance” stage, this can give them to confidence to take on new strategies and practices. It is worth noting that these faculty members were able to move through the stages of change with the same level of support and resources as other faculty members that choose to continue to utilize more traditional teaching strategies in the classroom.

As indicated earlier in the literature review, Keller states that “Traditional used of institutional data, like grades and test scores, often fail to involve faculty members or do not encourage them to think about how they could improve their teaching” (2009, p.1). Faculty members that participated in the study believed that the use of non-traditional teaching

strategies was beneficial to their student's success, however did not have any student achievement data to support their claims. They measured success through anecdotal means, but also relied on feedback from students as well as increased levels of engagement. One participant did state that he believed at least 10% fewer students drop his classes compared to when he utilized more non-traditional methods.

The faculty members that participated in this study believed that integrating non-traditional strategies in the classroom would be beneficial to their students. One of the limitations when using a traditional method, such as lecture, is the lack of engagement with students. This lack of engagement may encourage faculty to decrease the use of lecture in the classroom and increase the usage of technology to reach students.

A study published by Cilliers in 2017, examined characteristics of the Z generation and their technological preferences as part of teaching-learning strategies. This study conducted surveys between 2011 and 2016 to see how their preferences changed over time. The results revealed that by 2016, there was a growing trend that students are opting for more electronic study materials and exams. At the same time, students also stated that they prefer more contact sessions and lectures (Cilliers, 2017, p. 193).

Although students may prefer technology in certain circumstances and the usage of non-traditional strategies is becoming more common in college classrooms, there is still a time and place for lecture. As there are an abundance of teaching and learning strategies, faculty members require opportunities to learn how to select strategies that are effective and meaningful for the content or skills taught in various courses.

Learning how to select the most appropriate strategy to use in different classrooms situations takes time and practice to learn. Brookfield states that "The most obvious

response to encountering educational diversity is to employ the widest mix of pedagogic approaches and learning modalities within the classroom” (Brookfield, 2015, p. 104). He also points out that most of us have different instructional choices available to us. This can include lecture which is teacher led, as well as activities, such as group projects, which are more student led (Brookfield, p. 104).

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Generation Z students may not benefit from long lectures since they are used to multitasking and constant stimulation, but shorter lectures followed with an activity might be most appropriate for students (Wotapka, 2017). As faculty members have opportunities to develop their practice, they should become more skilled at selecting the most appropriate strategy not only for each lesson, but to meet the needs of their specific group of students. Brookfield also stated that “If your purpose is to help people learn, then you must be open to constantly varying your activities in response to what we find out about the range of students we work with” (p. 107).

As mentioned in Chapter 2, almost 70% of faculty members at the two year college are classified as part-time. Additionally, they are responsible for teaching between one-half and two-thirds of all course sections (CCSSE, 2009). If part time or adjunct faculty members have the largest influence on students, why do they have the least amount of access to professional development? According to participants most professional development is reserved for full-time faculty members and one participant stated that they believed that there were no opportunities at all for adjunct faculty members.

Additional Findings

As indicated previously, evaluation of success in the classroom by faculty members was anecdotal, that is, no hard data was available (one felt that his retention rates in his class has

improved and had some feedback from alumni). Assessment of effectiveness-switching to non-traditional methods of assessment derived from participant's perceptions or thoughts and feelings about student success. Many participants were motivated by increasing levels of engagement and believed that the change in instructional strategies increased levels of engagement in the classroom.

Several faculty members also stated that they were not only concerned with student success in terms of evaluation, but believed that their strategies helped support students in developing skills and used terminology such as life skills, critical thinking skills and the application of skills. Additionally, it appeared that the integration of technology in the classroom drove a change in instructional practices as faculty members are now expected to use more advanced technology in their courses. Many participants were actually motivated by new technologies to evaluate their practices in instruction.

Technology is changing what the community college classroom looks like and can increase the necessity for evaluating learning objectives and how technology in the classroom can improve engagement with students. In addition to offering technologies, it was the recommendation of the Office of Educational Technology, which published a report in 2017 *Reimagining the Role of Technology in Higher Education*, recommended that

Institutions should encourage instructors and department leaders to review courses with large failure and withdrawal rates, especially large first-year required courses, and employ technology-based applications, tools, and resources to redesign these courses to support student success (p. 22).

It is believed that technological advances, when used properly and strategically can actually increase student success, especially those students who are considered high priority.

It was further recommended that

Just as rapidly changing technology has created new and constantly evolving job types and competencies requiring new skills, it has facilitated significant progress in accommodating the needs of a broader range of students. It can also revolutionize the delivery of education, allowing access to higher education for greater numbers of students at lower cost and with more flexibility (p. 9).

When evaluating the effectiveness of various teaching strategies, the integration of new technologies and the appropriate use of them to increase student success must also be taken into consideration.

Finally, it was noticed that the perception of instructional support from administration and the institution varied amongst faculty members, even those that were employed from the same institution. This could derive from the fact that faculty members have access to different administrators and instructional staff as well as assigned mentors that may or may not be instructionally driven or focused.

Limitations

One of the limitations of the study was the smaller than expected sample size. After several months of requesting referrals, contacting potential participants and pursuing leads, there were a smaller number of participants willing to participate than expected. It would have been preferable to interview a larger number of participants from both institutions,

although saturation was reached in this study with seven participants and as such the number of participants was adequate.

An additional limitation is that there is no way to be certain that the faculty perceptions of what is occurring in the classroom align with what is actually occurring in the classroom. For example, when a faculty member states that they have their students work in groups, what does their “group work” look like? Is it truly cooperative in nature? There is no way to be certain that their perceptions align with the perceptions of an instructional specialist or professional educator.

Conclusion

The implications of this study are that it confirms that not only do faculty members require access to professional development but require ongoing support and additional instructional support that can be provided in the form of more observations and frequent feedback from an evaluator or mentor. Ongoing feedback, support and a comprehensive professional development coupled with time for planning and available resources are required for a long lasting and meaningful change in classroom instructional strategies.

One faculty member reported during the study that they can attend conferences and learn what to do, but not how to do it. Do faculty members have opportunities to practice what they have learned, if given the opportunity to attend professional development or learning. Discipline specific pedagogical training throughout the academic year including before and at the conclusion of the semesters must become priority in order for the institutional culture to change. It must become a priority for the institution before long lasting change can occur.

Recommendations for Future Research

In addition to faculty interviews, classroom observations in classrooms with faculty that self report a change in teaching strategies would yield more meaningful data as this study relied on the self-reporting of faculty members and their perceptions of their own teaching strategies. Additionally, since adjunct faculty come in contact with such a large number of students, a similar study could be conducted on adjunct faculty members that employ non-traditional teaching strategies in community college classrooms, especially developmental and remedial courses.

Since it was highlighted earlier in this study that students are arriving at institutions of higher education with academic gaps, replicating this study at the secondary level might shed some insight on the experiences of students before arriving at community colleges. There might also be the need to shed light on the challenges that teachers at the secondary level face when preparing students for the academic rigors of college.

Additionally, it was unclear from this study how skilled faculty members are at addressing the needs of varying learners. One of the participants kept referring to student accommodations; however she could not articulate how to meet the needs of diverse learners. Is simply trying a bunch of different strategies enough? Is it being responsive enough? Since the community college classroom serves learners of all abilities and aptitudes more research should evaluate developing strategies that meet the needs of diverse learners.

Finally, this researcher thought that it would be meaningful to follow up with faculty that were not interested in participating in the study or have no desire to move away from utilizing a primary lecture based teaching strategy. Their lack of desire to make any changes

to their approaches may provide additional insight as to the resistance behind adopting non-traditional strategies in higher education.

Recommendations for Professional Practice

Since adjunct faculty comprises a large number of community college faculty members and serve a large number of underprepared students, administration should consider comprehensive professional development for part-time faculty as well as full-time faculty members. This training should be individualized based on years of experience and ongoing throughout the career of a faculty member based on current needs of the faculty member, current trends in technology and instructional practices and student achievement data. Faculty members could be assigned to a cohort with similar years of experience to ensure that they have support from other faculty at similar points in their careers.

Additionally, multiple layers of vertical support, such as a more experienced mentor, could ensure that faculty members have other experienced faculty actively providing feedback as faculty members are developing in their practice. For institutions that have a Center for Teaching and Learning, or are considering implementing a similar program, the effectiveness of those programs as well as measures for effectiveness, should be established. If faculty members are working toward goals to improve their professional practice, the implementation of new strategies in the classroom should be evaluated for effectiveness.

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APPENDIX A
Participant Letter

Dear Potential Participant,

My name is Christina Calentine and I am a PhD candidate at University of Missouri, St. Louis. I am contacting you as you have been identified as someone who might be eligible to participate in my dissertation study which documents the experiences of community college faculty who made the transition from utilizing primarily traditional (lecture based) methods to the use of more non-traditional methods in the classroom. If you are interested in participating, please respond to this email within the next five business days so we can schedule a meeting either face to face, via phone or other video conference means at your earliest convenience.

Participation in this study involves:

- A time commitment of approximately 1 hour for an initial interview
- A possibility of follow-up for any clarification which would not be expected to exceed 30 minutes

For more information about this study, please contact the principal investigator, Christina Calentine at (636) 212-1834 or at clcfzd@mail.umsl.edu.

Thank you,

Christina Calentine
Principal Investigator

Study Title: THE EXPERIENCE OF FACULTY TRANSITIONING FROM
TRADITIONAL TO NON-TRADITIONAL METHODS IN THE COMMUNITY
COLLEGE CLASSROOM

APPENDIX B
Department Chair Letter

Dear Department Chair,

My name is Christina Calentine and I am a PhD candidate at University of Missouri, St. Louis. I am contacting you as I am seeking referrals for faculty that might be eligible to participate in my dissertation study which documents the experiences of community college faculty who made the transition from utilizing primarily traditional (lecture based) methods to the use of more non-traditional methods in the classroom. If you have any full time faculty members that you believe are eligible and may be interested in participating, please respond to this email with the names of potential participants and their email addresses within the next ten business days so I can contact them and schedule a meeting either face to face, via phone or other video conference means.

Participation in this study involves:

- A time commitment of approximately 1 hour for an initial interview
- A possibility of follow-up for any clarification which would not be expected to exceed 30 minutes

For more information about this study, please contact the principal investigator, Christina Calentine at (636) 212-1834 or at clcfzd@mail.umsl.edu.

Thank you for any assistance you can provide with this endeavor,

Christina Calentine
Principal Investigator

Study Title: THE EXPERIENCE OF FACULTY TRANSITIONING FROM
TRADITIONAL TO NON-TRADITIONAL METHODS IN THE COMMUNITY
COLLEGE CLASSROOM

APPENDIX C
Informed Consent Institution 1

Department

One University Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499
Telephone: 314-516-xxxx
Fax: 314-516-xxxx
E-mail: xxxxx@umsl.edu

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

THE EXPERIENCE OF FACULTY TRANSITIONING FROM TRADITIONAL TO
NON-TRADITIONAL METHODS IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASSROOM

Participant _____ HSC Approval Number 1446819-
2 _____

Principal Investigator *Christina Calentine* PI's Phone Number 636-212-1834

Summary of the Study

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Christina Calentine under the supervision of Dr.

Kathleen Haywood. The purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of those faculty members who have transitioned from using more traditional, lecture-based methods in the classroom to more non-traditional methods. Challenges as well as factors that led to a long-term change in teaching strategies will be explored and discussed.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Semi-structured interviews that last approximately one hour will be conducted with the possibility of follow-up for the purpose of clarifying specific details. Interviews will either be conducted face-to-face, over the phone or through digital means such as Skype. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research except that discussing this topic could lead to recall an unexpected conversation with a colleague or student. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to our knowledge about the challenges faculty may face when modifying instructional practices and that may help bring attention to the needs of faculty who wish to improve those instructional practices.

2. a) Your participation will involve

- Your participation will involve an interview with the principal investigator and answering approximately 12 questions with opportunities for elaboration if needed. Follow-up for clarification may be necessary, however would not be expected to exceed a half hour of additional time. Faculty who choose to participate will be scheduled to an interview at their convenience. Interviews are expected to last less than one hour. No compensation can be promised to participants at this time.

Approximately 20 participants may be involved in this research at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Participants will consist of faculty from up to two different community colleges.

b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be approximately one hour for the initial interview with the possibility of follow-up for clarification purposes. Follow-ups for clarification purposes are not expected to exceed one half hour and are expected to be conducted via phone call or email.

3. There are no known risks associated with this research other than except that discussing this topic could lead to recall an unexpected conversation with a colleague or student
4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to our knowledge about the challenges faculty may face when modifying instructional practices and that may help bring attention to the needs of faculty who wish to improve those instructional practices.
5. Results of the study can be requested from participants at the conclusion of the study via digital document upon request.
6. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or withdraw your consent at any time. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or withdraw.
7. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this study. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection) that would lead to disclosure of your data as well as any other information collected by the researcher. Initial interviews and any potential follow-up contacts will be audio recorded. Only the principal investigator will have access to recordings which will be password protected. Pseudonyms will be used to protect participants and recordings will be transcribed by the principal investigator. Only the primary investigator and advisor will have access to transcripts during data analysis. At the end of the study, any and all identifiable information will be destroyed.
8. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator,
Christina Calentine, 636-212-1834 or Kathleen Haywood, Kathleen_Haywood@umsl.edu.
You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your rights as a research participant to the
Office of Research, at 516-5897. For participants at NMSU, they can also contact the NMSU
Office
of Research Integrity and Compliance at ovpr@nmsu.edu or 575-646-7177

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I hereby consent to my participation in the research described above.

Participant's Signature

Date

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Date

APPENDIX D
Participant Letter Institution 2

Department

One University Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499
Telephone: 314-516-xxxx
Fax: 314-516-xxxx
E-mail: xxxxx@umsl.edu

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

THE EXPERIENCE OF FACULTY TRANSITIONING FROM TRADITIONAL TO
NON-TRADITIONAL METHODS IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASSROOM

Participant _____ HSC Approval Number 1446819-
2_____

Principal Investigator *Christina Calentine* PI's Phone Number 636-212-1834

Summary of the Study

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Christina Calentine under the supervision of Dr. Kathleen Haywood. The purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of those faculty members who have transitioned from using more traditional, lecture-based methods in the classroom to more non-traditional methods. Challenges as well as factors that led to a long-term change in teaching strategies will be explored and discussed. Participation in this study is voluntary. Semi-structured interviews that last approximately one hour will be conducted with the possibility of follow-up for the purpose of clarifying specific details. Interviews will either be conducted face-to-face, over the phone or through digital means such as Skype. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research except that discussing this topic could lead to recall an unexpected conversation with a colleague or student. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to our knowledge about the challenges faculty may face when modifying instructional practices and that may help bring attention to the needs of faculty who wish to improve those instructional practices.

2. a) Your participation will involve

- Your participation will involve an interview with the principal investigator and answering approximately 12 questions with opportunities for elaboration if needed. Follow-up for clarification may be necessary, however would not be expected to exceed a half hour of additional time. Faculty who choose to participate will be scheduled to an interview at their convenience. Interviews are

expected to last less than one hour. No compensation can be promised to participants at this time.

Approximately 20 participants may be involved in this research at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Participants will consist of faculty from up to two different community colleges.

- b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be approximately one hour for the initial interview with the possibility of follow-up for clarification purposes. Follow-ups for clarification purposes are not expected to exceed one half hour and are expected to be conducted via phone call or email.
4. There are no known risks associated with this research other than except that discussing this topic could lead to recall an unexpected conversation with a colleague or student
 4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to our knowledge about the challenges faculty may face when modifying instructional practices and that may help bring attention to the needs of faculty who wish to improve those instructional practices.
 5. Results of the study can be requested from participants at the conclusion of the study via digital document upon request.
 6. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or withdraw your consent at any time. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or withdraw.
 7. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this study. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection) that would lead to disclosure of your data as well as any other information collected by the researcher. Initial interviews and any potential follow-up contacts will be audio recorded. Only the principal investigator will have access to recordings which will be password protected. Pseudonyms will be used to protect participants and recordings will be transcribed by the principal investigator. Only the primary investigator and advisor will have access to transcripts during data analysis. At the end of the study, any and all identifiable information will be destroyed.
 8. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Christina Calentine, 636-212-1834 or Kathleen Haywood, Kathleen_Haywood@umsl.edu. You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your rights as a research participant to the Office of Research, at 516-5897.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I hereby consent to my participation in the research described above.

Participant's Signature

Date

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Date

APPENDIX E
Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Only data pertinent to the research questions will be deemed relevant for this study.

This researcher will record the entire interview and begin with the following questions:

- 1) How long have you been teaching at a community college?
- 2) What is your specific discipline?
- 3) When you first started teaching, did you employ a more traditional method of teaching, such as lecturing, in the classroom? How did you assess the effectiveness of the lecture method? How effective do you think it was? Was it equally effective or ineffective for all students in your course?
- 4) What types of teaching strategies do you utilize in the classroom now? When did you first start using these different teaching strategies?
- 5) How did you learn about non-traditional teaching methods? {professional development, observation of others, conference, readings}
- 6) Did you make the transition to non-traditional strategies on your own or did someone encourage you? If so, who? {colleague, chair, speaker, author}
- 7) Do you select teaching strategies based on the needs of learners in your course? Could you describe a time when you did this? What if different groups of students in your course have different needs?
- 8) Can you share any difficulties or identify some challenges in making the change to utilizing more non-traditional methods in the classroom? Did you feel that you had support from administration, your department and the institution? In what way? If not, why did you believe there was resistance or a lack of support?

- 9) How do you assess the effectiveness of your teaching strategies? How effective do you believe your nontraditional methods are in the classroom?
- 10) Has your institution ever provided incentives to encourage faculty to pursue professional development opportunities to improve teaching strategies? If so, what were they? Please describe. Did these incentives persuade you to change? What about colleagues?
- 11) Have you ever encouraged colleagues to switch from the lecture method to another teaching strategy? Did that colleague change? Do you know why or why not?
- 12) Is there anything else that you would like to state about your experience?

