PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE BUSINESS TEACHERS:
A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this qualitative within-site case study was to better understand the perceived professional development needs of community college business faculty. The study was important, because few studies had described the professional development needs of community college business faculty, which annually serve more than 7.2 million students. Because the teachers provide timely and relevant instruction, they need professional development to stay abreast of changes within their professional disciplines (e.g., accounting, business communications, office administration technology). The findings in this study reveal that community college business faculty need professional development focused on meeting the needs of students from across the lifespan, from diverse family and socioeconomic backgrounds, technology, the selection and implementation of teaching methods, and understanding theory and its application to classroom settings. Further study is recommended to determine the extent to which findings in this study may be applicable to the larger population of community college teachers of business and recommendations for practice include designing and delivering professional development that coheres with the perceptions of target participants.
This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Kathy Dean, for her unwavering support and encouragement throughout my studies.
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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Education plays an important role in helping individuals meet social and economic goals (Alexander, Karvonen, Ulrich, Davis, & Wade, 2012). More than 7,200,000 students, about 34% of all students enrolled in college, were enrolled in community college programs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). The same report reveals that the number of community college participants is likely to continue to grow up to and perhaps beyond the year 2020. For many students, the community college offers a pathway to improve their social and economic conditions by preparing for careers and transition to opportunities at four-year degree granting institutions (Twombly, 2008).

The exponential increase in community college enrollment is attributed to significant growth in the availability of occupations requiring associates degrees (Milano, Reed & Weinstein, 2009). In fact, the same report reveals that occupations requiring associates degree will grow at nearly double the national average and even faster than those occupations requiring a bachelors degree. To support this growth and need for a skilled workforce, federal policymakers are supporting initiatives that equip community colleges with additional financial resources (Alexander, 2012; Brandon, 2009).

At the same time that community colleges are facing a long-term projection of growth in enrollment, many existing community college faculty members are considering retirement (American Association of Community Colleges, n. d.; Alexander et. al, 2012; Chappell, 2009; Fleck, 2001). The mass growth in retirement, according to the American Association of Community Colleges (n.d.), is attributable to slow faculty turnover and the impact of the recent economic recession, which caused many faculty members to delay their retirement (Alexander
et. al., 2012; Fleck, 2001). As a result of improvements in the American economy, a retirement boom among faculty members may cause “a significant knowledge drain as the collective wisdom of these people, gained through many years of experience, leaves with them” (AACC, n.d., para 1).

Further complicating the knowledge drain is evidence that suggests that community college faculty largely learn to effectively teach through trial and error and over the duration of their career (Grubb, 1999). Literature supports that community college faculty members are effective teachers; although, little evidence suggests what mechanisms and conceptual understanding are essential to effective instructional practices (Twombly, 2008). However, it appears that many community college faculty members earn at least a masters degree in their specific content area (e.g., accounting, business communications, business law, et. al); although they have limited formal academic preparation that focuses on the knowledge and skills for effective teaching (Grubb, 1999). The same author indicates that, historically community college faculty and administration have discounted “the study of pedagogy” in favor of “mastery of content” (p. 27).

Community college faculty members’ historic orientation to preparation mechanisms, advanced degree in specific content and classroom experience, appear to lead to effective practice (Alexander et. al., 2012). The same author indicates that many community college faculty members learn to teach through trial-and-error. However, this fact is becoming a growing concern, given that many community college faculty members are soon going to retire. This concern is fueled by a belief that a mass retirement of faculty may lead to less effective instructional practices (Alexander et. al., 2012). More concerning is that a severe paucity of research that describes alternative methods, as compared to trial-and-error, of preparing
community college faculty eludes scholars and practitioners. This results in a significant gap in knowledge and leaves an important question unanswered, “how do we best prepare effective community college faculty?”

Rationale for the Study

This study is important, because more than 7,200,000 students, about 34% of all students enrolled in college, are enrolled in community college programs and this number is expected to grow through the year 2020 and many community college faculty may lack the skills and knowledge to effectively teach these students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). In addition, Milano, Reed, and Weinstein (2009) reveal that occupations requiring associates degree will grow at nearly double the national average and even faster than those occupations requiring a bachelors degree, suggesting the community colleges will play an important role in securing the economic future of the United States. To support this growth and need for a skilled workforce, federal policymakers are supporting initiatives that provide community colleges with additional financial resources to improve instruction and meet the economic development needs of the country and local communities (Alexander, 2012; Brandon, 2009). However, Grubb (1999) suggests that isolated improvements are occurring in community college practices; although, community colleges and their faculty are systematically overlooked and understudied.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative focus group study was to examine perceptions of community college business faculty and administrators concerning effective instruction, specifically as they relate to contextual knowledge and instructional strategy. The qualitative data were collected from practicing community college business faculty and program
coordinators. The sources for data were selected among all business programs at a Midwestern community college; because the data were collected across the business program in lieu of from faculty and administrators within one sub-discipline of business (e.g., accounting, business communications, law, et. al) the decision were made to exclude data that was sub-discipline specific (e.g., subject-matter) and instead focus on the areas of commonality (e.g., instructional context and instructional strategy) among study participants.

Qualitative data were collected from semi-structured interviews (n = 10) and classroom observations (n = 9). Specifically, data were collected from three sources: (data source 1, n = 8) semi-structured interview of business faculty, (data source 2, n = 2) semi-structured interview of business program coordinators, and (data source 3, n = 9) classroom observations of business faculty. This three-prong approach to data collection allowed the researcher to assure a relatively high-level of reliability by concentrating the analysis and subsequent findings of this study on areas where data triangulation occurred.

Research Questions

1. What are the professional development topics, in the domain of instructional context, which community college business faculty members perceive could lead towards enhanced classroom practices?

2. What are the professional development topics, in the domain of instructional strategy, which community college business faculty members perceive could lead towards enhanced classroom practices?

Significance of the Study

The aim of this study is to highlight the growing importance of studying the community college as a whole, as well as the importance of studying the microenvironments within the
community college, such as professional development needs of community college business faculty. This research will help to develop a base for further qualitative and quantitative investigation into the professional development needs of community college business faculty.

Definitions of Terms

*Cognitive development* - The levels of development of conscious thought and problem solving skills and abilities. (e.g., The idea that a 5 year old learns differently than a 50 year old.)

*Social development* - The learning and understanding of what is and is not acceptable by a society in social, academic, and professional settings.

*Instructional environment* - All inputs that affect the learning environment (e.g., classroom, technology, socio-economic status, cognitive levels, social background, generational differences, educational experiences.)

*Unique instructional techniques* - Those techniques or teaching methods or skills, which are special or unique in helping students to learn. (e.g. Using an abacus to teach addition, using a projector to teach professional writing rules, group work.)

*Instructional strategy* – The unique teaching and learning conventions and tools that instructional faculty use to communicate information, concepts, and ideas to students (e.g., problem-based teaching and learning, lecture, et. al)

Delimitations and Limitations

The study is delimited by several important considerations, which include the following:

1. The study focused on the professional development needs of business faculty, thus findings may not be generalizable to other community college faculty from other disciplines.
2. Participation in the study was voluntary, as such data were not collected from a random sample and is therefore not representative of the total population of community college business faculty at the site under-investigation or globally.

3. All participants in this study were employed at the same Midwestern community college, thus the findings may not be generalizable beyond the site under-investigation.

Because the study was conducted with qualitative research methods, limitations in this study include:

1. Data codes were assigned and created by the researcher and are open to different interpretations among other individuals.

2. The researcher had a technology background, which may present a bias in his interpretation and analysis of the data.

3. This study was conducted in a limited scope and the findings are not widely generalizable.

4. Only one researcher was able to collect data.

Organization of the Remaining Chapters

The remaining chapters of this thesis are arranged as follows (chapter 2) literature review, (chapter 3) methodology, (chapter 4) findings, and (chapter 5) discussion and recommendations. Immediately following chapter 5, all references in this study are revealed and a complete appendix is provided.
CHAPTER I. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Eble (1988) suggested that, “the entire subject of how best to prepare college teachers [was] clouded over with unproved and perhaps unprovable hypothesis about knowledge and its impact” (p. 197). More than twenty years later, Twombly and Townsend (2008) echoed a similar concern in their report that indicated that a paucity of literature continued to plague the development of a conceptual framework for the preparation of community college instructors. Nonetheless, a trend had emerged at many community colleges – the development of centers that focused on the professional development of faculty (Major & Palmer, 2006).

The centers focused on improving the instructional practices of community college faculty members (Major & Palmer, 2006). While a conceptual framework failed to explicitly emerge in the literature, it was revealed that community college educators were similar to their instructional peers at middle and secondary schools. Educator preparation programs for middle and secondary school teachers were guided by a conceptual framework that supported the need for a strong understanding of, and skills in, content knowledge, contextual knowledge, and instructional strategy (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

Effective Teaching

The term effective teaching had been used in multiple studies to describe the desired classroom practices of educators; however, the defining characteristics of the term appeared to be inconsistent in the literature base. In addition to inconsistencies in the definition of effective teaching, other terms were also used interchangeable to describe similar phenomenon. These terms included, but were not limited to excellent teaching and quality teaching.
Students perceived that effective teaching was associated with both professional and personal characteristics (Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, Collins, Filer, Wiedmaier, & Moore, 2007). The findings were echoed in earlier reports by Okpala and Elis (2005) who revealed five professional characteristics of effective teachers, to include “caring for students and their learning”, “teaching skills”, “content knowledge”, “dedication to teaching”, and “verbal skills” (p. 378). Schaeffer, Eptig, Zinn, and Buskit (2003) added personal characteristics as paramount to effective teaching. These characteristics included “approachable”, “creative and interesting”, “encouraging and caring”, “enthusiastic”, “flexible and open-minded”, “knowledgeable”, “realistic expectations and fair”, and “respectful” (p. 133).

In addition to student perceptions, school administrators echoed a combination of personal and professional characteristics for effective educators (Kane, Sandretto, & Heath, 2004). In fact, the study indicated that effective educators demonstrated excellence in several areas, to include knowledge of subject, pedagogical skill, interpersonal relationships, linked research to teaching and had several positive personality traits (e.g., enthusiastic, passionate, sense of humor, and approachability).

A theoretical framework for the development of effective educators revealed several important requirements (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005). The framework consists of three domains: content knowledge, contextual knowledge, and instructional strategy (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Content knowledge was defined as the knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals and contextual knowledge was defined as the knowledge of learners and their development in social contexts (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Whereas, instructional strategy was defined as the knowledge of teaching and the methods selected,
implemented, and evaluated in classroom practices (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

Fink, Ambrose, & Wheeler (2005) echoed similar findings in their report that indicated
‘Expert teachers’ possess knowledge in three areas: content knowledge (i.e. their
disciplinary expertise), pedagogical knowledge (e.g., how students learn, what types of
pedagogy are most effective for certain learning goals), and pedagogical-content
knowledge (e.g. how to recognize and correct students’ misconceptions in the domain,
how to demonstrate procedures and methods used in the discipline, how to explain
particular concepts within the content area (p. 186).

The coherence evidenced by the work of Fink, Ambrose, & Wheeler (2005) and that of
Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) converge to form a framework that may well help to
improve the development of effective educators for the community college sector. In fact,
Roueche, Milliron, and Roueche (2003) synthesis of 70-years of literature resulted in the
discovery of two typologies of effective practices: good practice and learning principles.
Utilizing the synthesis of literature, Alexander, Karvonen, Ulrich, Davis, and Wade (2012)
developed a framework that identified core knowledge, skills, and attributes of effective
community college faculty. Their findings included the role of teaching, facilitation, diversity,
leadership, reflection, and selected other skills on effective community college teaching
practices.

Content Knowledge

Darling-Hammond & Bransfords (2005) defined content knowledge as the “conceptions
of curriculum content and goals: an understanding of the subject matter and skills to be taught in
light of the social purpose of education” (p. 10). In the context of teaching business in the
community college sector, content knowledge was defined as the courses associated with
subject-matter expertise in business disciplines. Business disciplines include but are not limited to topics in accounting, business law, business communications, management, management information systems and marketing.

Major and Palmer (2006) revealed that content knowledge was an important factor that influenced effective teaching skills. Schulman further outlines these areas of knowledge starting with subject or content knowledge that he defines as the theories, principles, and concepts of a particular discipline (Major & Palmer, 2006; Schulman, 1986). Schulman (1986) defined pedagogical content knowledge as:

the most regularly taught topics in one’s subject area, the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations-in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others…[it] also includes an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult (p.9).

Bucat (2005) described the same knowledge types as Schulman writing that, content knowledge was “one’s understanding of the subject matter” and wrote that pedagogical content knowledge was “knowledge about the teaching and learning of particular subject matter, taking into account the particular learning demands inherent in the subject matter ” (p. 2).

Understanding the differentiation between content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge was an important aspect of the framework for effective teaching (Geddis, 1993; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Geddis (2003) reported that some of the skills for effective teaching were generic and others were content area specific (Bucat, 2005; Geddis, 1993). Geddis (1993) revealed that educators needed to be good general and content specific educators.
Fernandez (2014) viewed content knowledge as central to effective teaching, although not mutually exclusive of other important domains. In fact, the same author revealed that there was no consensus among educators about the body of knowledge necessary to be effective educators. The framework provided by Darling- Hammond and Bransford (2005) sought to provide some consistency of the knowledge and learning required for effective educators.

For educators to learn both content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge it was important that they had opportunities for new learning experiences that differed from the ones they experienced as students (Major & Palmer, 2006). Educators learned in the same way as their students, by studying, doing, reflecting, collaborating, evaluating, and sharing their observations (Major & Palmer, 2006). As a result, many educators used their existing knowledge of education, and research-supported practices, to help their peers both develop and improve pedagogical content knowledge and skills (Major & Palmer, 2006).

**Contextual Knowledge**

Grossman (1990) indicated that contextual knowledge included understanding of the unique backgrounds of students, schools, district, and community. In fact, the author indicated that contextual knowledge included information about

- the districts in which teachers work, including the opportunities, expectations, and constraints posed by the districts;
- knowledge of the school setting, including the school ‘culture,’ departmental guidelines, and other contextual factors at the school level that affect instruction;
- and knowledge of specific students and communities, and the students’ backgrounds, families, particular strengths, weaknesses, and interests (p. 9).

Coherence within the definition of contextual knowledge was evidenced by the work of Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2005). In their definition, they emphasized learners’ cognitive
development in relationship to the way in which learning developed and occurred within “social contexts” (p. 10).

Carlsen (1999) defined contextual knowledge as the specific characteristics that described specific classrooms and students, states, communities, and schools (as cited in Fernandez, 2014). In the context of the community college, Townsend and Twomby (2007) described the social context for teaching and learning in the community college as one of the “most diverse student body in higher education” (p.35). The same authors attributed their finding to the “societal mission” of community colleges to serve students with considerable variability in academic ability, previous academic preparation, economic status, demographic characteristics of sex, race and ethnicity, and age (p.35).

Community colleges had a high percentage of diverse students (Townsend and Twomby, 2007). Aspects of student diversity in the community college included (a) minorities, (b) females (c) those over the age of 24, (d) part-time enrollment, (e) working adults, and (f) members of low-socioeconomic populations (Townsend, 2007). As the research indicated, the community college had a unique and varied context like that of no other institution (Levin, 2006).

Instructional Strategy

The methods used to communicate information between instructors and students are described as instructional strategies (Darling-Hammond & Bransfords, 2005). The same authors reported elements of instructional strategy, to include general content and content-specific pedagogy, teaching diverse learners, assessment, and classroom management. Speer, Smith, & Horvath (2010) described instructional strategies as activities that were “organized and regularly practiced routines for bringing together students and instructional material” (p.101). Examples
of these instructional strategies included: educator-led discussion, lecture, small group problem solving and student practice and exercise (Speer, Smith, & Horvath, 2010).

Effective instructional activities were developed based on studies of pre-college classroom practices, such as checking homework, educator presentation of new content, and in class practice (Speer, Smith, & Horvath, 2010). However, the same authors wrote “the most common instructional activity in college classrooms [was] lecture where the content [was] presented orally and on some form of display” (p.10). In that context, students were expected to listen and take notes.

Research had shown that classroom practices such as lecture, at the college level, were not based on theory or research (Grubb, 1999). In fact, the same author revealed that instructional strategies were often based on trial and error and had been learned during the duration of one’s teaching career. However, instructional strategy knowledge and skills were too important to be learned without an understanding of the theoretical assumptions that guided their selection, implementation, and evaluation (Speer, Smith, & Horvath, 2010).

The appropriate selection, implementation, and evaluation of instructional strategies were largely connected to specific pedagogical content knowledge (Darling-Hammond & Bransfords, 2012; Schulman, 1986). Schulman (1986) defined that instructional strategies were “the most useful ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others” (p.9). In fact, Niess (2005) revealed that educators selected instructional strategies that connected the “knowledge of the subject” with the best methods for “teaching and learning” (p.510). To accomplish the task, educators drew upon their “domain” of the “knowledge of the subject” to “combine subject matter knowledge and knowledge of pedagogy” (Lowery, 2002, p. 69).
Alexander et. al. (2012) identified instructional strategies that were tied to higher-level teaching in community colleges. The instructional strategies included collaborative groups, lectures, simulations, demonstrations, online assignments, peer review, role-playing, films/video, mass media, and entertainment. In addition, the authors addressed the importance of assessment in the process of the evaluation of effective teaching and student learning. Specifically, they discussed the importance of historical assessment and the observation of students’ facial expressions while delivering instruction.

Professional Development

Hardé described professional development as the “formal or informal efforts to improve [community college educators’ instructional] knowledge and skill” (p. 547). The same author identified several opportunities for professional development, to include workshops, continuing education courses, professional organizations, and informal gatherings with colleagues to share experiences. To maximize effectiveness, these activities were linked to the faculty member’s intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors and perception of need (Hardre, 2012).

VanDerLinden (2005) described faculty development as “furthering one’s education, participating in professional development activities, and cultivating mentoring relationships” (p. 729). The goals of these activities were to keep educators’ instructional methods and modes of delivery up-to-date (Wallin & Smith, 2005). The quality of professional development was linked to integrated components that were perceived as intentional, ongoing, and systematic (Guskey, 2000). Wallin and Smith (2005) advocated for professional development that was “woven into the fabric of every educator’s professional life” (p. 38).

Professional development at the community college had been an area of growing interest since the 1970’s. However, the research supporting effective professional development at the
community college lacked consistent features and an empirically validated framework (Murry, 2002). The same author revealed that much of the existing literature proved to be dated and the methods of investigation were questionable. Specifically, it was exposed that the professional development at the community college lacked goals, evaluation, and faculty participation (Murry, 2002).

In light of the historic nature of the cloudy, ineffective, and inconsistent nature of professional development at the community college level; some professional development models for community college faculty were successful (Murry, 2002; Pendleton, 2002, Rouseff-Baker, 2002, Watson & Grossman, 1994). Elements of the successful programs included support from administration, structured and goal-directed programs, reward programs, faculty-driven initiatives, and collegial support for participation (Murry, 2002). Sprouse (2008) indicated that progress had been made; however, additional research was needed to guide the organization, development, implementation, and evaluation of professional development for community college faculty.

The research-base to support the improvement of professional development of community college faculty continued to grow. However, significant work had been conducted in the arena of K-12 education. This data revealed that effective professional development was characterized by increasing educator accountability, quality-monitoring, induction and mentoring programs, professional learning communities, partnerships with professional organization, organizational networking, and constructive legislative mandates and reporting requirements (Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, 2010).

Additional research in K-12 education revealed effective standards based approach to professional development. The National Staff Development Council (2001) developed standards
for professional development in K-12 schools. The standards were divided into three categories (a) context, (b) process, and (c) content. Context included ideas such as delivery that capitalized on learning communities, leadership, and resources. Process included: data-driven approaches, evaluation, empirical-guidance, design, collaboration, and impact on student learning. Content included: focus on equity, quality teaching, and family or stakeholder involvement.

To improve the quality and impact of professional development, a framework to guide development would bring consistency to both practice and research. Desimones (2009) presented a framework for effective professional development that emphasized the role of “(a) content focus, (b) active learning, (c) coherence, (d) duration, and (e) collective participation” (p. 183). Her framework consisted of core features that were tied to increased educator knowledge and skills; change in attitudes and beliefs, change in instruction, and improved student learning.

Summary: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was guided by an extensive review of literature in two-overarching domains, effective teaching and effective professional development. These two areas formed the conceptual framework, as shown in figure 1, for the study. The framework emphasized the role of “(a) content focus, (b) active learning, (c) coherence, (d) duration, and (e) collective participation;” as well as the relationship of content, context, and instructional strategy to effective teaching (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Desimones, 2009, p. 183). While the literature base for effective professional development and teaching for community college business faculty grew, the application of empirical-practices remained inconsistent and largely un-investigated.
FIGURE 1. A framework for effective professional development for community college faculty.
CHAPTER II. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative focus group study was to examine perceptions of community college business faculty and administrators concerning effective instruction, specifically as they relate to contextual knowledge and instructional strategy. Because the phenomenon had been under-investigated, which led to a gap in the literature base, the qualitative research method was selected to guide the study. In addition, the intent of the study was to explore and generate a better understanding of the phenomena under investigation, thus a within-case design was deployed.

Qualitative Research Design

This study used a qualitative within-site case study consisting of semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The study was designed with three points of data collection for triangulation and to increase reliability of the data. The three points of data collection were full-time faculty interviews (n=8), full-time program coordinator interviews (n=2), and faculty classroom observations (n=9).

Study Instrumentation

Darling-Hammond and Bransford’s (2005) framework for effective teaching was used as a base for this study and also provided a framework for instrument development. The instruments were designed to measure participants’ perception of needed professional development in the domains of instructional strategy and instructional context. The instrumentation allowed the researcher to collect data, write findings, and offer suggestions that cohere with the perceptions of community college teachers of business (Desimone, 2009). The complete study was reviewed and approved by an institutional review board (see appendix A).
Semi-structured Interview Protocol

A semi-structured interview protocol was developed based on the findings from the review of literature, see Appendix B. The semi-structured format was selected; because, the format allowed the researcher to probe for clarity, which lead toward a stronger exploration of unexpected responses. The procedure allowed the researcher to generate a rich understanding of the participants’ experiences and beliefs (Creswell, 2013; Morgan, 1998, p. 11). The instrument initially contained two overarching questions and eleven probes, additional sub-probes were created (as needed) to explore for and provide an in-depth understanding of the perceived professional development needs of community college business faculty and administrators. This study used identical instrumentation for all full-time faculty members (n=8) and full-time program coordinators (n=2), see appendix B and appendix C.

Classroom Observation Protocol

The classroom observation instrument was a standard classroom observation instrument created by Bowling Green State University (March, 2009), see appendix D. The observation instrument allowed the researcher to collect data on the classroom environment and the instructional strategies in the classroom environment. Specifically, the observation instrument allowed the researcher to collect data that described the learning activities, including subject themes, purpose, and student learning outcomes or instructional goals. In addition, the instrument allowed the researcher to collect data on duration of activities, learning space, resources, and student demographic data.

Data Collection

This study employed a convenient sample. The participants were volunteers from a pool of Midwestern community college business faculty. The initial pool consisted of (Pool10), out of
that (P10) (10) faculty or administrators agreed to participate in the study. The participant size was appropriate for the descriptive study; because, the researcher sought to understand the professional development needs of the participants under investigation and no attempt is made to generalize study findings beyond the participants in the study (Creswell, 2013).

**Procedures**

In the initial stage of participant recruitment, an administrator at the research site was contacted to help identify potential participants (n = 10). Then, the participants were sent a scripted recruitment email to determine their level of interest in participating in the study. Based on the low response and participation rate of the initial recruitment email a second recruitment email was sent to non-responders, which resulted in the remaining faculty members indicating a willingness to participate in the study, see appendix E for the email recruitment script.

The participants were administered a semi-structured interview protocol and were allowed to respond to questions until they had no further comment. In total, participants provided about (330) minutes of data or about (35) minutes per interview. The data were captured on a digital audio recorder and transcribed. Specifically, the following procedures for data collection were followed:

Step 1:  Contacted participants via email, see appendix F

Step 2:  Met with participants and provided copy of informed consent, see appendix g, h, and I (students were required to sign a consent form; because, demographic data were collected

Step 3  Conducted audio-recorded interviews with Olympus digital voice recorder VN-721PC

Step 4:  Conducted classroom observations

Step 5:  Audi recorded data were sent for professional transcription
Step 6: Data were analyzed using the Nvivo v. 9 software

Data Analysis

The data analysis process was guided by the constant comparison method; in this method data is continually evaluated to determine the appropriate codes, categories, and themes to identify consistently occurring findings (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This method of analysis was chose because of a “desire to step beyond the known and enter into the world or participants, to see the world from their perspective” (Corbin, 2014, p.14). In addition, this method allowed the researcher to examine topics from many different perspectives and develop comprehensive explanations in each of the themed and coded categories, codes and themes are shown in Appendix I.

Themes

The data was first analyzed based on the a priori themes of instructional context and instructional strategy. Under the respective prior themes there were three questions that were used in the research instrument and in further analysis. These questions served as the top-level codes in analyzing the data. Data collected from faculty member themes. Once data were assigned to themes, the researcher analyzed the data to determine appropriate codes.

Codes

The researcher first coded the top-level codes based on the context of the question and the order in which the questions were administered within the prior theme and sub-probes. Once the data were divided into top-level codes and sub-codes the researcher further analyzed reference rate for top-level codes and sub-level codes, revealing consistent findings within the data. Once the emerging codes were identified, the researcher further analyzed data by conducting a word frequency analysis.
In analyzing word frequency, a stop word command was implemented to eliminate commonly occurring non-descriptive words from the frequency analysis. After the commonly occurring words were removed from the analysis, another query was run. The results of the query were reviewed in a percentage format with the most frequently used words appearing at the zenith of an ordered word list. A visual word map was also reviewed to analyze high frequency words. The word map was further analyzed using a word tree analysis implementing sentence structure analysis, which correlated with high frequency words. This method of analysis allowed for the researcher to contextualize the data and further enhance reliability.

Once the data was initially coded and themed the researcher further analyzed the commonly occurring codes across all domains and sub-domains. In further analysis the perceptions of the faculty members (n=8) and the perceptions of the program coordinators (n=2) were compared for significant variations. Upon further analysis, no significant variations were found. In fact, the faculty members (n=8) data supported the program coordinator (n=2) data. The two sets of data were further analyzed and compared to the data on classroom observations (n=9). The classroom observation data supported the findings from faculty members (n=8) and program coordinators (n=2). This resulted in a triangulation to support findings.

When the data had been thoroughly analyzed and triangulated, the researcher manually reviewed faculty members and program coordinators interview transcripts and identified quotes that accurately portrayed the emerging themes and codes.

Prior Themes, Sub-Themes, Codes and Sub-codes

The two prior themes were instructional context and instructional strategy. Under instructional strategy there were three codes consisting of career aspirations, cognitive and social
development, and instructional environment. These codes were further divided into sub-codes. The sub-codes for career aspirations were next level work bachelors and time students want to be in school. The sub-codes for cognitive and social development were cognitive and social stage of learner, how students best learn, and time constraints. The sub-codes for instructional environment were; classroom environment, family and social background, industry continuing ed, and technology.

Under the prior theme of instructional strategy were three codes consisting of aspects of selecting, implementing and evaluating instructional strategy, instructional strategies, and unique instructional techniques. These codes were further divided into sub-codes. The sub-codes for aspects of selecting, implementing and evaluating instructional strategies were; selection of teaching material or method and technology aspects. The sub-codes for instructional strategies were technology and understanding of theory and applying it. The sub-codes for unique instructional techniques were technology and theory or skills teaching perspective. A listing of the prior themes, sub-themes, codes and sub-codes can be found in Appendix I.

Reliability

Corbin (2014) suggested that qualitative research is “a form of research in which the researcher… collects and interprets data, making the researcher as much a part of the research process as the participants and the data they provide.” Because of the intimate involvement of the researcher in qualitative studies, steps should be taken to maintain reliability in the data. Reliability in the study was controlled through three data points. The data points were established as full-time faculty interviews (data point 1), full-time program coordinator interviews (data point 2) and classroom observations (data point 3). Data from these inputs were identified, analyzed, and reanalyzed to achieve reliability. In addition, reliability in the study was
controlled with the oversight of an experienced quantitative focus group researcher that had focused his research in the area of business education. Finally, reliability was strengthened via triangulation with data collection from: faculty, administrators, and classroom observations. Data were analyzed for similar responses, which are revealed in Chapter 4.

Summary

Chapter three outlines the methodology used in conducting this study. The purpose of this qualitative focus group study was to examine perceptions of community college business faculty and administrators concerning effective instruction. This study used a qualitative within-site case study that consisted of semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The study used triangulation of three data points to increase reliability of the data.

Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) framework for effective teaching was used as a foundation for this study and also provided a framework for instrument development. A semi-structured interview protocol was developed based on the findings from the review of literature. The instrument initially contained two overarching questions in the areas of instructional context and instructional strategy. The original instrument also contained eleven probes and further sub-probes were developed as needed to explore the perceived professional development needs of community college business faculty.

The classroom observation instrument was a standard observation form provided by Bowling Green State University (March, 2009). The observation instrument allowed the researcher to collect data on the instructional contexts and instructional strategies present in the community college business-teaching classroom.

When initially recruiting participants the researcher contacted an administrator at the research site to help identify potential participants. Further recruitment consisted of two scripted
emails being sent. The email recruitments were successful in recruiting (n=10) participants. The participants were administered a semi-structured interview protocol and were allowed to respond to questions until they had no further comment.

The data analysis process was guided by the constant comparison method; in this method data was continually evaluated to determine the appropriate codes, categories, and themes to identify consistently occurring findings (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The data were first analyzed based on the *priori* themes of instructional context and instructional strategy. In further analysis the researcher coded the top-level codes based on the context of the question and the order in which the questions were administered within the prior theme and sub-probes.

The procedures used in data analysis included a word frequency analysis, a visual map analysis, and multiple constant comparison analysis. Once the data was initially coded and themed the researcher further analyzed the commonly occurring codes across all domains and sub-domains. An analysis of the three data points (data point 1), full-time faculty interviews, (data point 2), full-time program coordinator interviews and, (data point 3) classroom observations was conducted to achieve reliability. The data from these inputs also resulted in triangulation, which supported the findings.
CHAPTER III. FINDINGS

Introduction

Following a description of the case, descriptive findings of the participants’ demographic and professional backgrounds will be revealed. Then, headed by the research questions, findings from the study will be shown. All direct participant quotes are shown in italics.

Description of the Case

Institution

The research was conducted at a large Midwestern public 2-year Associate degree and certificate granting institution with a Carnegie classification of Associate's--Public Suburban-serving multi-campus. The institution was situated in a suburban setting accessible by public transit. The student undergraduate population was approximately 11,000 undergraduate students with a student-to-faculty ratio of 21 to 1. The student demographics were 64% white, 21% African American, 5% two or more races, 5% race unknown, 4% Hispanic/Latino, and 1% Asian. The student age demographics were 58% twenty-four and under and 42% twenty-five and over (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.).

Participants

The participants in this study were full-time community college business educators and administrators. The majority of participants (8, 80%) had work experience in business and industry and had earned masters degrees in business (8, 80%). In addition, all participants (10, 100%) were Caucasian non-Hispanic race. These characteristics, among others are shown in Table 1.
TABLE 1.

*Participant Characteristics*

<table>
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not previously employed</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20+ years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>20.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>41 – 50 years</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings by Research Question

Findings are revealed by research question, references to participants are identified by Pseudonym (e.g., Participant1, Participant2, et. al.) Further, answers to the research questions were derived from multiple sources (e.g., faculty interviews, program coordinator interviews, and classroom observations). Data themes and codes, in addition to number and percent counts are shown in Table 2.
Finally, detailed findings are headed by the focus of the findings (e.g., instructional context or instructional strategy).

**Instructional Context**

Community college teachers of business revealed that they need professional development focused on understanding and teaching students with a wide range of educational and family and socioeconomic backgrounds. Detailed findings follow.

Educational backgrounds.

“I think [teaching to students from all different educational backgrounds is] a challenge and hard for every instructor in the community college.”

-Participant 4

All of the participants interviewed indicated that teaching students from the wide continuum of educational backgrounds is a challenge, the sentiment was summarized by Participant 4 as, “we have students coming from all different educational backgrounds and some
are fresh out of high school, but not yet at the college level. We have some students that have
gotten a Masters. I have a few that have gotten their Ph.Ds.” Beyond the education attainment
of community college students, Participant 3 revealed that, “you’re going to get people that are
4.0 students and you’re going to get people that…. Maybe just got out of remedial reading
classes” and that students educational abilities “run the entire gamut.”

In addition to the wide continuum of students’ education attainment, community college
students have many learning styles. Participant 2 indicated that, “there are many different
learning styles that most of us teaching today” must address; because, “lecture and the book” in
and of itself will not “adapt to the different learning styles.” The participant further bridged the
belief that meeting the needs of students from diverse learning styles could be addressed with
technology, which “can help … because you can use videos, you can use audio. You can use
technology to bring those different learning styles into the classroom.”

The “varying levels of knowledge and cognitive abilities that” community college
students bring to the classroom can be “a challenge.” While most community college faculty
work to meet instructional challenges, there are faculty members who “just roll-over from
semester-to-semester and they are basically teaching the same class in 2015 that they taught in
19-whatever.” Community college faculty members perceive the failure to meet student-needs as
“a disservice.” Nonetheless, it was acknowledged, “it is really hard to keep students’
motivated.” Participant 2 revealed, “There would be a lot more things that [community college
business faculty] could do to [become educated on] learning styles” and that “more resources
could be provided.” Without additional support community college faculty “get stressed in the
classroom because” they must address varying learning styles and feel underprepared to do so.
The classroom observation supported the findings of the faculty and administrator interviews. Students observed in the community college classroom ranged in age from eighteen to more than fifty. In addition, a range of diversity was observed in the classrooms, students were male, female, young, old, Caucasian, Latino, and African American.

The classroom observations also supported the findings of the faculty and administrator interviews. The classrooms observed were equipped with a range of technology including, SMART boards, video projectors, desk camera video projectors, audio systems, and instructor computers. Of the nine faculty observed, only one of them used multiple channels of technology to engage students. Participant 9 used an audio recording of a phone call, clickable features of the SMART board, a power point presentation to explain concepts, and Microsoft Word to review students learning.

Student behavior also supported the sentiment faculty expressed when talking about difficulty in keeping students engaged. In seven out of nine classrooms students were observed packing their bags and leaving the classroom environment while the instructor was still engaged in lecture or instruction.

Family and socioeconomic background.

“There are things that you just don’t understand unless you’ve grown up that way and so that can be difficult and I do mean difficult in the sense that I can’t put myself in their shoes.”

-Participant 6

It was clear that community college business faculty were working in, at times, challenging environments. Beyond the wide continuum of educational backgrounds,
community college students also face other barriers. Some of these barriers were addressed by Participant 6, “I don’t know what it’s like to have slept in my car for a week because I don’t have a place to live.” Beyond financial and housing barriers, other students are working through their “trouble with the state” and often “are missing [class] for court.” These experiences are “real eye-opening experiences” for members of the community college faculty.

In addition to the barriers already addressed, many community college students “have kids and they have a full-time job outside of school.” In fact, Participant 10 revealed, “One of the things that I see [at the community college] is there are not many students... that don’t...have kids... or families.” As a result, community college faculty members help students overcome challenges, such as “sick” children, calls from “daycare” and “cars” that “break down.” While it is clear that sometimes students provide “excuses” a lot of times what appears to be excuses are “very legitimate issues” for the community college student.

Beyond specific challenges, community college faculty members indicated that it is “not only diverse backgrounds as far as, socioeconomic and things like that...a lot of the students that I have. [sic] It’s just a different perspective.” The range of perspectives can make it a “huge challenge” to “just understand [community college] students.” In sum, it was clear that the “very large, the very wide range of social economic status [of community college students] is challenging” for community college faculty to overcome within the classroom.

The classroom observations showed evidence of student’s diverse backgrounds. A range of age and diversity was observed in the community college classroom with students being male, female, young, old, Caucasian, Latino, and African American.
Instructional Strategy

Community college faculty addressed their need for professional development focused on instructional strategy in two primary areas (1) theory and application of instructional strategies and (2) teaching with technology.

Theory and Application of Instructional Strategies

“You might know your subject material, but just because you know your subject material, it doesn’t mean you know how to teach subject material.”

-Participant 7

Community college business faculty revealed a need to better understand the theory and application of instructional strategies. Specifically, Participant 7 revealed, “it would be nice [to participate in a program] when your start teaching…. As part of [the onboarding] process” for new faculty. Because “there’s so many options out there… it’s overwhelming.” A structured process could help; because, community college faculty perceive that they need to be taught “how to” teach and “shown” how to provide effective instruction. The process may help community college faculty improve their “educational understanding of how students learn.” However, there was some disagreement among participants in relationship to their current level of teaching effectiveness.

“I think as a faculty, we don’t even talk about” the theory and application of instructional strategies. In opposition, participant 8 revealed that community college business faculty “do a wonderful job; because, [they] look at each other and say ‘we’ve got that,’ we’re on target.”
However, all participants agreed that they should continue to work on “mak[ing] the experiences with the students’ better.”

One participant stated, “the people who have been here for a while have probably figured out certain things…. They’ve been here enough to know that this works or this doesn’t work.” Thus, it were clear that experience was a driving force in building effective community college business faculty and that they are dedicated to enhancing their instructional skills. In fact, Participant 8 confirmed this finding with the statement, “that’s why you have to go to those workshops and the conferences and be on your ‘A’ game.”

Community college business faculty understand that it is important to select “a variety of strategies so that you keep things fresh and moving and interesting to the student.” However, they are concerned that they may be ineffectively using strategies in their classroom, although they are “certainly aware and understanding” of the importance of using a variety of strategies. Nonetheless, Participant 8 summed up the need for professional development in the area of instructional strategies, “I think we all have ... room for improvement” with their instructional strategy knowledge and skill.

Technology-enhanced Instructional Strategies

“I think there’s still too much of a focus on traditional lecture. When you talk about instructional techniques or instructional strategies, I think that you can’t just lecture to a group of students any longer.”

-Participant 9
Participant 5 indicated the perception that community college business faculty are “technology proficient” and that they are always “going to a conference and learning about something new.” This finding was important; because a perception exists that the rate of change within technology “is just mindboggling” and that if “business instructors are not prepared to keep up” then the quality of business instruction at the community college would decrease. However, there was some indication that there were some faculty that were unwilling to adopt new technologies in their teaching, instead failing to “branch out and to try to do [something] new.”

While community college business faculty are proficient with technology, such as the “SMART Board” and “YouTube;” however, they were not widely adopting “apps,” “e-books” or “e-clip videos.” Nonetheless, community college business faculty were using technology-enhanced instructional strategies, but were apprehensive of adopting additional technologies in their teaching. This apprehension was verbalized with the statement that faculty members were “not going to use technology just for the sake of using technology” and were specifically selecting technology that “benefit” student learning.

The classroom observations supported the participant’s perceptions of instructional strategies. In classroom observation seven out of nine participants used lecture as the main form of instructional strategy. The same participants that relied heavily on lecture were also the participants that avoided interacting with multiple channels of technology. While all participants used at least one form of technology, no participants were observed using “apps,” “e-books,” or “e-video clips” to support classroom-based instruction.
Classroom observations revealed no structural process to aid community college faculty in “how to” teach. In addition, the classroom observation revealed no evidence of participants being “shown” how to provide effective instruction. Classroom observations supported the notion that participants with “years” of experience had “figured things out.” In the classrooms observed where the participant had five or more years of teaching experience, it was observed that students in these classes asked questions and actively engaged in dialogues with the participant. Similarly, the participant with an earned PhD in education had also “figured things out.” This participant used multiple instructional strategies including playback of an audio recording, clickable features of the SMART board, a power point presentation to explain concepts, and Microsoft Word to review students learning. In addition, this participant referred to students by name and wrote words on the board that sparked a classroom discussion.

Summary

This chapter describes the studies findings as well as the context in which the research was conducted. The research was conducted at a large Midwestern public 2-year Associate degree and certificate granting institution with a Carnegie classification of Associate's--Public Suburban-serving multi-campus. The participants in this study were full-time community college business educators and administrators.

The findings of this study are revealed by two research questions in the frame of instructional context and instructional strategy. Findings regarding instructional context of community college teachers of business revealed that they need professional development focused on understanding and teaching students with a wide range of educational and family
socioeconomic backgrounds. The detailed instructional context findings are further delineated in this chapter with specific data gathered from participants.

Findings regarding instructional strategy of community college teachers of business revealed that they need professional development focused on (1) theory and application of instructional strategies and (2) teaching with technology. The detailed instructional strategy findings are further delineated in this chapter with specific data gathered from participants.
CHAPTER IV. DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

In this chapter, findings in the study are discussed in relationship to the literature review. Triangulated findings are revealed and inform the recommendations for practice and further research.

No large-scale study on community college business faculty was identified in the review of literature, post-publication of Grubb (1999). This discovery lead the researcher to question what efforts, if any, had been made in the last two decades in terms of improving community college teaching and learning. Upon further investigation the researchers found the literature supported the need for improvements in community college teaching and learning, however only isolated and fragmented instances of improvement had occurred (Major & Palmer, 2006).

Major and Palmer (2006) discussed the emergence of randomly occurring faculty development centers at community colleges. While these faculty development centers offered an improvement from the previously limited institutional support, they were often an experimental initiative lacking any imperially based structure or framework. This study revealed that almost a decade later faculty development centers had made minimal improvements and continued to lack empirical-structures and frameworks. As a result, it were clear that community colleges continued to be overlooked by educational researchers.

The main finding of this study indicated that community college business faculty want and need professional development in the area of teaching students from a vast range of generational, social, socioeconomic, and family backgrounds. As the diversity of Americans continues to change these changes will be evident in the community college classroom.
Understanding the multi-faceted diversity of today’s community college students proves to be a challenge for educators. The majority of business community college educators tend to come from American business and have limited experience in effective teaching. The emergence of community college business faculty from a singular and similar background is likely to serve as a barrier in understanding their student’s multi-faceted educational differences.

While the emergence of community college faculty from industry can provide students with an educational advantage it should be noted that the educational advantage gained from industry often diminishes in a matter of years. With the increased rate of technological advances, noted in this study, it is likely that future community college business faculty coming from an industry background will lose their subject matter teaching advantage in less than two years.

In light of community college instructors limited cultural and social backgrounds, as well as a lacking empirically based model for professional development, it is likely that community college teachers will continue to provide a sub-standard education to the already disadvantaged students they teach, at least until they learn effective teaching through “trial and error”. Although community college faculty have a desire to, “make the experiences with students better”, participants revealed that the institution provided limited systematic supports structures to aid faculty in effective instruction. Participants further highlighted the need for a process that would help faculty provide effective instruction. They indicate a desire for a process that would go beyond “trial and error.” Participant 7 indicated, “it would be nice [to participate in a program] when your start teaching.... As part of [the onboarding] process.” While the participants spoke of a desire for more institutional support, they also eluded to the idea that it (the US education system) was in “systematic” failure. One participant indicated she had seen the same issues for many years and they were “only getting worse.” Introducing an empirically based model for
professional development into the community college system would likely be a positive step in improving the system as a whole.

Recommendations

This study indicated the need for an empirically based framework for professional development of community college business faculty. Furthermore, this framework should be based on previously supported frameworks of effective teaching and learning. In addition, this study revealed key areas where community college business faculty want and need professional development.

These recommendations are being made based on a comprehensive review of the literature base on effective teaching and learning as well as a comprehensive review of the literature on effective professional development. Furthermore, the literature reviews were uniquely focused on the community college. These literature reviews were analyzed against the findings of this study and in consideration of the recommendations.

The data in this study were collected from three data points, faculty interviews, program coordinator interviews, and classroom observations. By collecting data from three data points it allowed the researcher to triangulate the data and increase reliability. In addition, the participants in the study were from a wide background (within a homogeneous group) and had varying educational, demographic and industry experiences. It is in the light of the existing literature and the data collected within this study that the recommendations have been made being made.

Under the prior themes of instructional context and instructional strategy this study revealed three main topics for professional development of community college business faculty. The following topics were revealed under the theme of instructional context (1) teaching students
with a wide range of, educational, family, and socioeconomic differences. The following topics were revealed under the theme of instructional strategy (1) Theory and application of instructional strategies, (2) effective teaching with technology.

Recommendations for Practice

For the purpose of this study practitioners can be defined as administrators or full-time faculty at the community college. The first recommendation for practitioners is that they take initiative to educate themselves outside of the their normal “job” responsibilities. Well the K-12 education system has flaws this system can be looked to for effective teaching and learning practice (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). It is recommend that community college practitioners align themselves with local primary school systems and draw on the educational backgrounds that their colleagues in the K-12 system have. It can reasonably be expected that an 18-year-old high school student will have many of the same challenges, and more, as a 19-year-old college freshmen. In addition, many of the educational practices used in the K-12 system can likely be applied to the community college (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, Major & Palmer, 2006).

The second recommendation for practice is that community college faculty attempt to demonstrate characteristics of effective teaching as indicated by Schaeffer, Eptig, Zinn, and Buskit (2003) the characteristics paramount to effective teaching included being “approachable”, “creative and interesting”, “encouraging and caring”, “enthusiastic”, “flexible and open-minded”, “knowledgeable”, having “realistic expectations and fair”, and being “respectful” (p. 133).
The third recommendation for practitioners is that practitioners use their knowledge of technology to advocate for systematic support of professional development that is “woven into the fabric of every professional educator’s life.” It is recommended that business educators use their industry background and experience to assist them in building a case for empirically based change. Well the difference between practitioners and researcher is clear, practitioners with an advanced knowledge of research will find advocating for systematic change less challenging.

Recommendations for Further Research

The first recommendation for researcher is a renewed effort to explore the community college. Eble, (1988) and Twombly and Townsend (2008) indicated a historical lack of literature on community college. This paucity of research continues to plague the subject. Broad based research on the community college is recommended as well as focused research on effective teaching, learning, and professional development for the community college business faculty.

The second recommendation is that further empirically based study be conducted, as the results of this study (like all qualitative study) are not generalizable beyond the population under investigation. Further study would allow for generalizable data and allow for more reliable data supporting systematic changes.

The final recommendation for researchers is that a framework to guide the preparation and professional development of community college business faculty continue to be developed and evaluated. In implementing this framework it should address the many educational, family, and socioeconomic “challenges” that community college faculty face. This framework should also address the “varying levels of knowledge and cognitive abilities” that exist within the community college classroom.
Summary

This chapter contains a discussion and recommendations based on the study findings. Triangulation and relevance is discussed with a brief section describing the measures taken to increase reliability. The findings revealed in the study had implications for community college business educators as well as community college business program coordinators. In addition, the findings may have an implication on the greater education system as a whole.

The findings in this study were particularly relevant in light of the shifting demographic and cultural landscape of America. Unavoidable shifts in the fabric of American life will have an impact in the community college classroom and beyond.

This chapter also conducts a brief review of the literature base indicating a need for improving community college teaching and learning. The literature review conducted in this section is extraordinarily small in comparison to the comprehensive review found earlier in this study.

This chapter also explores the main findings of this study which indicate community college business faculty want and need professional development in the area of teaching students from a vast range of generational, social, socioeconomic, and family backgrounds. A narrative discussion of the researchers perceptions of challenges facing the community college is also included.

This section concludes with five recommendations for practitioners and three recommendations for researchers. The reasoning for these recommendations is also reviewed, indicating a need for an empirically based framework for professional development of
community college business faculty that is based on previously supported frameworks of effective teaching and learning.
REFERENCES


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DATE: March 9, 2015

TO: Aaron Dean
FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board

PROJECT TITLE: [707151-4] Professional Development Needs of Community College Teachers of Business
SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: ACKNOWLEDGED

Thank you for submitting the Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has ACKNOWLEDGED your submission. No further action on submission 707151-4 is required at this time.

The following items are acknowledged in this submission:

- Application Form - Updated Application (UPDATED: 03/6/2015)
- Consent Form - Updated Student Consent (UPDATED: 03/6/2015)
- Other - Response to IRB (UPDATED: 03/6/2015)
- Other - Updated Teacher Recruitment Script (UPDATED: 03/6/2015)

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or hsrhb@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board's records.
DATE: March 9, 2015

TO: Aaron Dean
FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board

PROJECT TITLE: [707151-4] Professional Development Needs of Community College Teachers of Business

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: March 9, 2015

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 2

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has determined this project is exempt from IRB review according to federal regulations AND that the proposed research has met the principles outlined in the Belmont Report. You may now begin the research activities.

Note that an amendment may not be made to exempt research because of the possibility that proposed changes may change the research in such a way that it is no longer meets the criteria for exemption. A new application must be submitted and reviewed prior to modifying the research activity, unless the researcher believes that the change must be made to prevent harm to participants. In these cases, the Office of Research Compliance must be notified as soon as practicable.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Hagemeyer at 419-372-7716 or khagemy@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board’s records.
Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for study, “Professional development needs of community college teachers of business”

A. Instructional context: Tell me about the instructional environment of community college teachers and how that impacts instruction

a. What aspects of the instructional environmental could be better understood by beginning, middle-career, and/or veteran business faculty?

b. What aspects of the cognitive and social development of learners in community college teaching environments do you perceive could be better understood by beginning, middle-career, and/or veteran business faculty?

c. What aspects of the career aspirations of community college students do you perceive could be better understood by beginning, middle-career, and/or veteran business faculty?

Instructional strategy define as:(the unique instructional techniques that are used for teaching business)

B. Instructional strategy: Tell me about the instructional strategies that are most effective for teaching community college students?

a. What aspects of instructional strategies could be better understood by beginning, middle-career, and/or veteran business faculty?
b. What types of instructional strategies do you perceive are best for teaching for and about business at the community college-level? Why?

c. What aspects of selecting, implementing, and evaluating instructional strategies do you perceive could be better understood by beginning, middle-career, and/or veteran business faculty?
APPENDIX C. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
(PROGRAM COORDINATORS)

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for study, “Professional development needs of community college teachers of business”

A. Instructional context: Tell me about the instructional environment of community college teachers and how that impacts instruction

   a. What aspects of the instructional environmental could be better understood by beginning, middle-career, and/or veteran business faculty?

   b. What aspects of the cognitive and social development of learners in community college teaching environments do you perceive could be better understood by beginning, middle-career, and/or veteran business faculty?

   c. What aspects of the career aspirations of community college students do you perceive could be better understood by beginning, middle-career, and/or veteran business faculty?

Instructional strategy define as: (the unique instructional techniques that are used for teaching business)

B. Instructional strategy: Tell me about the instructional strategies that are most effective for teaching community college students?

   a. What aspects of instructional strategies could be better understood by beginning, middle-career, and/or veteran business faculty?
b. What types of instructional strategies do you perceive are best for teaching for and about business at the community college-level? Why?

c. What aspects of selecting, implementing, and evaluating instructional strategies do you perceive could be better understood by beginning, middle-career, and/or veteran business faculty?
Observation Protocol for Professional Development Needs of Community College Teachers of Business

**Instructional context**

Does the instructors/students interactions and behaviors show an understanding and application of instructional contexts (knowledge of learners and their development within social context) learning, human development, and language by the instructor?

**Instructional strategy**

Do the instructors/students interactions and behaviors show an understanding and application of instructional strategies as defined as the methods used to communicate information between instructors and students?

What instructional strategies are being used within the classroom?
Observation Form

Date of Observation: __________________________  Course: ________________

Observation # __________________

Instructor: ______________________________________________________________

Number of Students: ______________________________

Other Adults Present: ________________________________

Describe Learning Activity Observed. Include subject area(s)/theme, purpose, student learning outcomes or instructional goals:

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

Duration of Activity: ______________________________

Learning Space: _______________________________________

Resources: (computers, video, audio/voice, black/white boards, overhead, reference/other books, software, maps/globes, wall displays, pictures posters)

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

Observation Notes: ________________________________
APPENDIX E. EMAIL RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

EMAIL SCRIPT FOR RECRUITMENT for study, “Professional development needs of community college teachers of business”

Informed Consent for participation in the study, titled.

We are Aaron Dean (a masters degree student) and Dr. Frederick Polkinghorne (an assistant professor) with the School of Teaching and Learning in the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University in Ohio and Dr. Tina Dierkes (Professor and Coordinator of Office Administration Technology) with the Business Division of Southwestern Illinois College (Belleville Campus). We are investigating the professional development needs of community college teachers of business. You have been invited to participate in this study because you are currently a community college teacher or program coordinator of business.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the professional development needs of community college teachers of business. The benefit of this study is to more clearly describe the professional development needs of community college teachers of business. As result, the findings of this study will be disseminated to business educators, and researchers; this group may offer professional development activities aimed at the findings in this study, which may result in the improvement of community college teachers of business’ skills and knowledge. Unfortunately, we are unable to compensate you for your time; though, we do hope you will participate in this study.

In this study you will participate in an interview, led by a semi-structured interview protocol designed to elicit your perceptions, in relationship to the professional development needs of community college business teachers and your classroom will be observed to better understand your instructional environment. We estimate that it will take you less than one hour to participate in this study and you must be at least 18 years old to participate.

If you are interested in finding out more information about this study, please reply to this email message (deana@bgsu.edu).

Sincerely,

Aaron Dean
Masters degree student
Bowling Green State University

Dr. Frederick W. Polkinghorne
Assistant Professor
Bowling Green State University

Dr. Tina Dierkes
Professor and Coordinator
Southwestern Illinois College
APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT (FACULTY)

Informed Consent for participation in the study, titled: Professional development needs of community college teachers of business.

We are Aaron Dean (a masters degree student) and Dr. Frederick Polkinghorne (an assistant professor) with the School of Teaching and Learning in the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University in Ohio and Dr. Tina Dierkes (Professor and Coordinator of Office Administration Technology) with the Business Division of Southwestern Illinois College (Belleville Campus). We are investigating the professional development needs of community college teachers of business. You have been invited to participate in this study because you are currently a community college teacher of business.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the professional development needs of community college teachers of business. The benefit of this study is to more clearly describe the professional development needs of community college teachers of business. As result, the findings of this study will be disseminated to business educators, and researchers; this group may offer professional development activities aimed at the findings in this study, which may result in the improvement of community college teachers of business' skills and knowledge. Unfortunately, we are unable to compensate you for your time; though, we do hope you will participate in this study.

In this study you will participate in a semi-structured interview protocol that is designed to elicit your perceptions, in relationship to the professional development needs of community college business teachers. This interview will occur in a mutually agreed upon location and will last no longer than 45-minutes. Then, your classroom will also be observed. During this observation, data will be collected that details your students’ demographics and your instructional environment (e.g., such as available technology, instructional methods implemented, and general class. Thus, your total participation in this study will take about one-hour and 45-minutes. You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

Your participation is completely voluntary. We are able to protect your confidentiality through the following procedures: (a) the data, which you provide will be recorded on a digital audio tape and then transcribed. (b) these files will be stored in a password-protected file on a password protected computer, (c) all printed files will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked-office on the BGSU campus, (d) the researchers will be the only ones that have access to the collected data. While the above safeguards are in-place, the limited sample size in this study could make it possible for others to determine your identity. Thus, you should not reveal anything that you do not wish your peers to know. You are free to withdraw at any time. You may decide to skip questions or discontinue participation at any point.
any time without penalty. Deciding to participate or not will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University, your employer, or your job.

We believe the anticipated risks to you are no greater than those normally encountered in daily life. However, should a breach of confidentiality occur, you risk that your perceptions of the professional development needs of community college business teachers might become known.

If you have other questions or concerns, please contact the principle investigator (Aaron Dean) at 419-372-7320 or via email at deana@bgsu.edu. You may also contact his advisor Dr. Frederick W. Polkinghorne at 419-372-7334 or via email at fpolkin@bgsu.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board at 419-372-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research.

Sincerely,

Aaron Dean  
Masters degree student  
Bowling Green State University

Dr. Frederick W. Polkinghorne  
Assistant Professor  
Bowling Green State University

Dr. Tina Dierkes  
Professor and Coordinator  
Southwester Illinois College

I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits of this study. I have had the opportunity to have all my questions answered and I have been informed that my participation is completely voluntary.

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I reviewed this informed consent document and that you agree to participate in this study:

__________________________________________________ ______________________  
Signature       Date
Informed Consent for participation in the study, titled: Professional development needs of community college teachers of business.

We are Aaron Dean (a masters degree student) and Dr. Frederick Polkinghorne (an assistant professor) with the School of Teaching and Learning in the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University in Ohio and Dr. Tina Dierkes (Professor and Coordinator of Office Administration Technology) with the Business Division of Southwestern Illinois College (Belleville Campus). We are investigating the professional development needs of community college teachers of business. You have been invited to participate in this study because you are currently a community college teacher of business.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the professional development needs of community college teachers of business. The benefit of this study is to more clearly describe the professional development needs of community college teachers of business. As result, the findings of this study will be disseminated to business educators, and researchers; this group may offer professional development activities aimed at the findings in this study, which may result in the improvement of community college teachers of business’ skills and knowledge. Unfortunately, we are unable to compensate you for your time; though, we do hope you will participate in this study.

In this study you will participate in a semi-structured interview protocol that is designed to elicit your perceptions, in relationship to the professional development needs of community college business teachers. This interview will occur in a mutually agreed upon location and will last no longer than 45-minutes. Then, your classroom will also be observed. During this observation, data will be collected that details your students’ demographics and your instructional environment (e.g., such as available technology, instructional methods implemented, and general class. Thus, your total participation in this study will take about one-hour and 45-minutes. You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

Your participation is completely voluntary. We are able to protect your confidentiality through the following procedures: (a) the data, which you provide will be recorded on a digital audio tape and then transcribed. (b) these files will be stored in a password-protected file on a password protected computer, (c) all printed files will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked-office on the BGSU campus, (d) the researchers will be the only ones that have access to the collected data. While the above safeguards are in-place, the limited sample size in this study could make it possible for others to determine your identify. Thus, you should not reveal anything that you do not wish your peers to know. You are free to withdraw at any time. You may decide to skip questions or discontinue participation at your discretion. You may withdraw from participation at any time; however, you must verbally notify the researchers of your decision to discontinue participation.

BGSU HSRB - APPROVED FOR USE

IRBNet ID # _707151
EFFECTIVE __03/09/2015
any time without penalty. Deciding to participate or not will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University, your employer, or your job.

We believe the anticipated risks to you are no greater than those normally encountered in daily life. However, should a breach of confidentiality occur, you risk that your perceptions of the professional development needs of community college business teachers might become known.

If you have other questions or concerns, please contact the principle investigator (Aaron Dean) at 419-372-7320 or via email at deana@bgsu.edu. You may also contact his advisor Dr. Frederick W. Polkinghorne at 419-372-7334 or via email at fpolkin@bgsu.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board at 419-372-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research.

Sincerely, 

Aaron Dean Dr. Frederick W. Polkinghorne Dr. Tina Dierkes
Masters degree student Assistant Professor Professor and Coordinator
Bowling Green State University Bowling Green State University Southwester Illinois College

I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits of this study. I have had the opportunity to have all my questions answered and I have been informed that my participation is completely voluntary.

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I reviewed this informed consent document and that you agree to participate in this study:
APPENDIX H. INFORMED CONSENT (STUDENTS)

Informed Consent for participation in the study, titled: Professional development needs of community college teachers of business.

We are Aaron Dean (a masters degree student) and Dr. Frederick Polkinghorne (an assistant professor) with the School of Teaching and Learning in the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University in Ohio and Dr. Tina Dierkes (Professor and Coordinator of Office Administration Technology) with the Business Division of Southwestern Illinois College (Belleville Campus). We are investigating the professional development needs of community college teachers of business. You have been invited to participate in this study because you are currently enrolled in a community college business course.

The purpose of this research study is to better understand the professional development needs of community college teachers of business. The benefit of this study is to more clearly describe the professional development needs of community college teachers of business. As result, the findings of this study will be disseminated to business educators, and researchers; this group may offer professional development activities aimed at the findings in this study, which may result in the improvement of community college teachers of business’ skills and knowledge. Unfortunately, we are unable to compensate you for your time; though, we do hope you will participate in this study.

In this study your classroom will be observed to gain a better understanding of the instructional environment present in community college business courses. There is no additional time commitment to participate in this study; because, you will be doing normal classroom activities. Data will be collected that describes your classroom demographics. You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose not participate data that describes your demographics will not be collected. You are free to withdraw at any time and may do so without penalty. Deciding to participate or not will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University, Southwestern Illinois College, your instructor, or course grades.

The data collected about you and this consent form will be stored in a password-protected file on a password protected computer and all printed files will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked-office on the BGSU campus. The researchers will be the only ones that have access to the collected data.

We believe the anticipated risks to you are no greater than those normally encountered in daily life. All efforts and safeguards will be implemented to keep responses confidential. However, should a breach of confidentiality occur, you risk that the demographic data collected during the observation may become accessible.

BGSU HSRB - APPROVED FOR USE

IRBNet ID # 707151
EFFECTIVE 03/09/2015
known; although your name will never be connected to demographic data. By signing below, you indicate that you are providing your consent to participate in this study.

If you have other questions or concerns, please contact the principle investigator (Aaron Dean) at 419-372-7320 or via email at deana@bgsu.edu. You may also contact his advisor Dr. Frederick W. Polkinghorne at 419-372-7334 or via email at fpolkin@bgsu.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board at 419-372-7716 or hsr@bgsu.edu, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research.

Sincerely,

Aaron Dean
Masters degree student
Bowling Green State University

Dr. Frederick W. Polkinghorne
Assistant Professor
Bowling Green State University

Dr. Tina Dierkes
Professor and Coordinator
Southwester Illinois College

I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits of this study. I have had the opportunity to have all my questions answered and I have been informed that my participation is completely voluntary.

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I reviewed this informed consent document and that you agree to participate in this study:

__________________________________________________ ______________________
Signature       Date
**APPENDIX I. DATA CODES AND THEMES**

Table 2

*Qualitative Themes, Codes and Frequency*

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<th>Themes</th>
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<th>Percent</th>
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