UNDERSTANDING INSTRUCTOR ONBOARDING PRACTICES

AT CAREER COLLEGES

Dissertation

Submitted to

The School of Education and Health Sciences of the

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership

By

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Dayton, Ohio

December 2018

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ABSTRACT

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While scholarship on faculty orientation and development is prevalent in traditional four-year universities and community colleges, the same cannot be said for for-profit (proprietary) career colleges. Given the proprietary nature of most private, career colleges and the lack of required faculty research, little research exists on the practices and effectiveness of practices at these types of colleges, although much opinion exists about the negative outlook on such types of schools. A secondary goal of this study was to add to a limited conversation on the practices at these schools, with a focus on faculty orientation and onboarding.

Faculty orientation and onboarding, also referred to as organizational socialization, is a process by which a new employee acquires knowledge and skills necessary to assume a role in a new organization (Bauer, 2010; Feldman, 1981; Schein, 1968; Tierney, 1997; Van Maanen, 1978; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). This process is

important especially when an employee is a neophyte in a sector, which happens often in career colleges because many instructors teaching at these institutions have little to no preparation as instructors, having been formerly employed or being currently employed in their fields (Hentschke, Lechuga, & Tierney, 2010; Lechuga, 2006). The primary goal of this study was to help understand how career colleges approach this important process.

The findings revealed that more structured and formal onboarding programs are found at multiple-site institutions, while single-site career colleges often have informal and non-structured programs. These programs were then compared to a human resources framework provided by Bauer (2010); because the institutions are often run as businesses, an HR framework was more appropriate than other frameworks used in faculty development research. The comparison to the framework showed all participating institutions focused on helping instructors understand their role, policy, and procedure, but only the more formal programs included helping new instructors understand the culture and feel connected to those with whom they would be working. Bauer's suggestions of compliance, role clarification, culture, and connection offer a framework for career colleges to use in creating new programs or in improving current practice.

Overall, this study helps add to a conversation and provide a narrative about the onboarding practices currently occurring at career colleges and offers suggestions for a continued conversation about the effectiveness of these practices for student success—a stated goal of many career colleges.

I dedicate this study, first, to all the hard working, underappreciated, and often demonized employees of proprietary career colleges. This study adds to a limited conversation showing outsiders what our schools do, what our challenges are, and how we are not often so dissimilar to our "traditional" college counterparts, while still highlighting some of the particular challenges which do make us different.

Second, I dedicate this study to those with whom I have worked most closely at my own institutions, from my peers to those working within my department. They have dealt with my particularities and my never-ending goal to see us improve our practices, while also hearing about this grand plan for faculty onboarding. And a special recognition goes to Allan Brussolo for always being a knowledgeable and understanding mentor and friend.

I also dedicate this study to my cohort. What a group of individuals with whom to learn, share, and still check in on each other from time to time, especially at classy places like Tanks. Thanks for listening to my ideas on this study since 2012.

Finally, to my family and friends for their encouragement and support. To my Mom, Dad, Ed, and Karen for being the kind of parents who always believe in their children. Even when those children ramble on forever about their work and research, these parents keep on smiling and encouraging. To Hatter: I know.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to all those who helped make this dissertation possible. A special thanks to Dr. Steven Hinshaw, my Chair, for taking me and my research on late—and still helping me finish in a timely manner. My heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Barbara De Luca for advice and support, making sure I never gave up.

I would also like to thank the rest of my committee for guiding this study back to its original intention. Thank you to Dr. Donna Payne for agreeing to be my expert in the field, for reviewing my work, and for pushing me to get this darn dissertation done. A huge thank you to the unnamed participating institutions for giving my research a chance, even in an industry which seems not to like sharing our information with others.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The topic of this dissertation is instructor onboarding programs at career colleges. However, before understanding these practices at career colleges specifically, I begin by grounding the topic with community colleges, as literature is more prevalent on community colleges than career colleges. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, community colleges had renewed interest in preparing new instructors for the classroom because of the increasing numbers of new faculty teaching at their institutions (Graber & Kinser, 1999; Horton & Hintz, 2002; Keating, 1996; Triton College, 1999; Welch, 2002). All five of these cited studies acknowledged an aging professoriate and a concern about hiring many new instructors to fill the shoes of the more experienced workforce at these community colleges. Two of the studies (Graber & Kinser, 1999; Horton & Hintz, 2002) also described the need to prepare faculty for their role as instructors in culturally diverse classrooms. Because of the need to have adequately prepared faculty, the studies mentioned previously, and many others alike, turned to reviewing and revamping orientation programs in an attempt to improve both the institutional knowledge base and the success of the new instructors.

Valencia Community College (Graber & Kinser, 1999), Northern Virginia Community College (Horton & Hintz, 2002), Triton College, and St. Louis Community

College (Welch, 2002) revised or created new orientation programs centered around integrating new faculty and preparing them for the roles and responsibilities considered part of their jobs as faculty members. This was not a new phenomenon, though; instructor preparedness and effectiveness in community colleges have been studied for decades (Bianco-Mathis & Chalofsky, 1996; Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Cohen & Brawer, 1977; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Kezar, 2012; Kogan, Moses, & El-Khawas, 1994; Levin, Kater, & Wagoner, 2006; Menges and Associates, 1999; Neyens, 1977; Schuster, Wheeler, & Associates, 1990; and Wasley, 2007). The increased attention in the 1990s and early 2000s, however, was partially a result of the changes college administrators were experiencing in the preparedness of their students, as well as their realization of the need to help new instructors understand a student body requiring more attention and support than the instructors may have needed as students themselves (Graber & Kinser, 1999; Horton & Hintz, 2002; Triton College, 1999; Welch, 2002). Elliott (2014) acknowledged the lack of preparation of instructors teaching at community colleges and created a list of best practices that administrators could use in preparing faculty for the classroom. With community colleges concerned about the preparation their instructors have for the classroom, the importance of this preparation at career colleges is more pronounced because career college instructors come with yet other challenges in addition to those at community colleges.

Instructors at community colleges may be better prepared for teaching than instructors at career colleges; community college instructors are more likely to have master's degrees or higher, or they are likely to have had more experiences as students in various levels of schooling, experiences from which to draw upon as reference for their

own teaching (Leslie & Gappa, 2002; Lechuga, 2006). These instructors, those with many more years' experience as students themselves, have a higher likelihood of being able to translate their own experience as students into how to approach teaching, manage a classroom, and work with students. However, instructors at career colleges tend to have fewer years of formal higher education experience from which to build their teaching identity (Hentschke, Lechuga, & Tierney, 2010; Lechuga, 2006). This identity as an instructor helps build instructor confidence, and such confidence enhances the impact the teacher may have in the classroom with students; a formal education clearly gives these former students many instructors on which to model their teaching and build their own identity (Eley, 2006). Thus for career college instructors—those likely without as many experiences as students for modelling their behavior as instructors—onboarding must encompass both overall college culture as well as the technical aspects of being a member of the faculty.

Statement of the Problem

Many instructors teaching in career colleges have little to no preparation as instructors (Hentschke, Lechuga, & Tierney, 2010; Lechuga, 2006). Koos (1950) noted how instructors teaching in technical and professional fields in technical programs had limited student post-secondary education experience, let alone direct instruction on how to be a teacher. Further, Koos described institutional administrators' insistence on focusing on the vocational experiences these individuals had instead of on instructional experiences; and based on that focus, he acknowledged concern about the ability of these instructors to lead a classroom. While Koos described this lack of experience in a secondary setting, the instructors in career colleges are also recruited for their vocational

backgrounds more so than for their educational backgrounds. As such, understanding the needs of these instructors and helping them to develop instructional skills before they enter the classroom will likely improve the experiences of their students.

The concern surrounding these instructors' preparedness continues today as career college instructors are still hired as experts in their field and not for their teaching excellence (Anderson, 2009; Baker, 2010; Hand, 2008; Hewitt & Lewallen, 2010; Janzen, 2010; Lechuga, 2006; Wanat, Fleming, Fernandez, & Garey, 2014). Career college instructors continue to come to the task of teaching with fewer years of educational experience and little to no teaching experience, and it is thus up to the colleges to provide the training they need to be successful from the first day of teaching. An example of how important this type of training research is comes from the professionals in the field of nursing who have specifically been interested in ways to promote onboarding (orientation) programs in order to improve the preparation their instructors have for the task of teaching (Anderson, 2009; Hand, 2008; Hewitt & Lewallen, 2010; Janzen, 2010). Because nursing is just one of many specialty programs found at career colleges, understanding how to help onboard instructors for understanding their roles becomes important to administrators at these colleges.

Knowing the impact instructors have on the success of students in their classrooms (Anderson & Carta-Falsa, 2002; Gunersel, Barnett, & Etienne, 2013; Hainline, et al., 2010; Kember & Gow, 1994; Lankard, 1993; Lounder, Waugaman, Kenyon, Levine, Meekins, & O'Meara, 2011; Oprean, 2012; Samuel, 1989.; Tinto, 1990) and understanding the customer-service oriented approach of career colleges (Career College Central, 2016; Lechuga, 2006), leaders at these schools need to build effective

onboarding programs for their instructors. Unlike at community colleges and other traditional post-secondary institutions, most career colleges do not require scholarship of its instructors or administrators; further, given the proprietary nature of the career colleges, many of them don't share much by way of best practices. As such, administrators may benefit from research about instructor onboarding at other colleges and how they can better prepare their instructors to improve student success.

In order to inform future career colleges' onboarding programs, documented research about onboarding programs for instructors at career colleges will help establish best practices. Focusing more on developing instructors and helping them better understand their roles is likely to impact, and hopefully improve, student classroom experiences.

Significance of the Problem

Understanding the significance of the problem of preparing career college instructors begins with an understanding of the types of students these institutions serve. Students at career colleges tend to be over 25, are married or single parents, are financially independent, and work more than 35 hours a week; they are also educationally disadvantaged, ill-prepared for college, and marginalized. Because of these factors, these students tend to enroll either part-time or have a higher risk of dropping out and returning at a later date (Bailey, Badway, & Gumport, 2001; Deming, Goldin, & Katz, 2013; Hentschke, Lechuga, & Tierney, 2010; Lechuga, 2006; NEA, 2004; Levesque, Laird, Hensley, Choy, Cataldi, & Hudson, 2008; Tierney, 2011). When career college enrollments are compared to those of public and private not-for-profit institutions, career college populations are 65% female vs. 55% at public and 58% at not-for-profit

institutions (Imagine America, 2016). According to Imagine America, 80% of students are financially independent at career colleges vs. 49% at public and 37% at not-for profit institutions, and minorities make up 48% of career colleges vs. 37% at public and 29% at not-for-profit institutions. Further, 49% of students at career colleges are first-generation vs. 33% at public and 23% at not-for-profit; 32% of students are single parents at career colleges vs. 13% at public and 8% at private, not-for-profit institutions; and low-income students make up 51% of the population at career colleges vs. 32% at public and 22% at private, not-for-profit institutions (Imagine America, 2016).

Often, these students are at risk either academically or economically, and at-risk students are those most likely to stop attending class (NEA, 2004). Brookfield (2006) described how difficult it is for these students in enrolling or returning to college and how much these students need to believe that the instructors and campus leaders are well prepared and experienced. If students do not have confidence that they have an experienced instructor, they may be more likely to stop attending class and therefore fail or drop out (Brookfield, 2006). Based on this data, career colleges should realize the importance of well-prepared instructors to help students feel more confident in their classroom experiences.

Townsend and Twombly (2007) described vocational instructors' lack of knowledge in both their backgrounds and their teaching experiences as being part of the problem with preparing these instructors for teaching. Without their having specific licensure or educational backgrounds or without defined training surrounding teaching at the college level, it becomes all the more important to grasp just what these instructors do need to know prior to teaching in order to be successful in the classroom (Allen, 2014).

Lankard (1993) studied what is known about these instructors, reporting that what is known is not often positive. For example, vocational instructors have been hired for their content knowledge rather than their knowledge as teachers, and many of these instructors teach part-time and lack formal teaching education or previous experience with teaching skills required for a successful classroom experience (Lankard). And Oprean (2012) reported that much of what these instructors know about teaching, they learn through orientation or other campus-provided training. Clearly, the more educated the faculty become about how to teach, the better their ability to teach and manage a classroom (Oprean).

Taking such observations about at-risk factors of both instructors and students, I designed this study to understand how various career colleges are approaching the onboarding of instructors. How teachers view their role as instructors is important because it impacts whether they view teaching more as the transmission of knowledge or more as the facilitation of learning (Kember & Gow, 1994). A teaching orientation toward the facilitation of learning is important to demonstrate from the first day of class because the instructors' demeanor when they first enter their classrooms impacts how students will perceive that class for the rest of the term (Kember & Gow, 1994). And because career college students tend to be more mature and are already in the workplace, they tend to dismiss those instructors from whom they do not feel they will be able to learn.

Eley (2006) described how conceptions of teaching impact actual teaching practice. Instructors with little teaching background or education in teaching methods may view teaching as simply lecturing on the various topics on the syllabus rather than

facilitating student learning (Eley, 2006). Instructors with little concept of their role or with a non-student-centered orientation to teaching may find it difficult to build positive relationships with students fostering student success.

Anderson and Carta-Falsa (2002), Bettinger and Long (2007), Flaherty (2013; 2015), Hainline, et al. (2010), Kember and Gow (1994), Kezar, Maxey, and Holcombe (n.d.), and Tinto (1990) all described the importance of the relationship between instructor and student to the student's overall success. Anderson and Carta-Falsa (2002) described how instructors must know how to use multiple instructional processes or teaching methodologies in order to reach students. If career college instructors have educational experiences with only traditional, lecture-type classrooms, they may lack the skills to assist students with their learning. Bettinger and Long (2007) found, in contrast, that instructors who have professional experience can more effectively engage students, and their concurrent employment in the field of instruction helps provide real-world examples that keep students interested. Flaherty (2013) argued how supporting faculty and allocating money to the training of instructors help with students' success. Hainline, et al. (2010) described how different modes of teaching are required because of the changes in the student population, arguing that instructors must be prepared for those changes from when they may have been in school themselves. Kember and Gow (1994) specifically discussed instructors' orientation to their own teaching and how those orientations impact student perceptions of teaching quality and effectiveness. Kezar, Maxey, and Holcombe (n.d.) described evidence of how key the support of new instructors is to student learning outcomes. And Tinto (1990) showcased how important the instructor can be to students and that even with other positive factors, a good teaching

environment can keep a student in school. Since the focus of career colleges is on student success and student-centered service, their preparing of instructors for teaching is a significant factor.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 41.1% of the institutions offering career education at the postsecondary level are private, for-profit institutions, and of this percentage, most (35.5%) offer only diplomas and two-year degrees (NCES, 2008). Because such a large percentage of students who enroll in career education are at for-profit institutions and because these institutions are often seen as inferior in their for-profit status and their national accreditation when compared to their public counterparts (Lechuga, 2006), increasing national attention is being given to the effectiveness of these colleges. However, many critics of their effectiveness do not have insight into the actual practices at these same colleges. Helping instructors learn to be better facilitators and be successful within their classrooms becomes even more important given this increased pressure and scrutiny. Since 2016, the Federal Department of Education has been focusing on the effectiveness of not only career colleges, but also the accrediting bodies who give these institutions access to Title IV funding (Federal Financial Aid programs). As such, research that leads to better outcomes for career colleges is becoming more important than ever.

Expectations of Career College Instructors

The career colleges participating in this study have national accreditation and are those providing education for diplomas and degrees up to the associate's level. The rationale is that these colleges more accurately represent the original purpose of career colleges: job-focused training, not general education. Moreover, the accreditation

standards include specifics for instructor credentials; the administrators of career colleges must verify and document these credentials. Accreditors understand that many of the instructors do not have a teaching background and, therefore, require that the career colleges provide orientation and training of new faculty.

National Accrediting Organizations

The Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES), the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC), the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training (ACCET), the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS), and the Council on Occupational Education (COE) are recognized by the Department of Education as national accrediting agencies. These accreditors emphasize practical work experience in instructors over formal education, and as such, they also emphasize a need for orientation and continued training of instructors in educational methods. During accreditation visits, these accreditors review faculty files to ensure that continued faculty development occurs, and while they do not review or check on the content of orientation programs, they often do check to ensure a certificate is on file as proof that orientation occurred. In other words, these accreditors require orientation but do not evaluate the process or material presented.

Like each of the accrediting bodies, ABHES (2018) has general faculty qualifications required of all faculty and then more specific requirements of instructors the higher the credential level of their students. All instructors must have a credential in the program in which they are teaching, but the level of credential depends on the level of education being taught. All instructors must have a minimum of two years' practical work experience, but the experience required increases if the instructor has no

educational credential. And, when required, all instructors must have licensure or

certification in the field (ABHES, 2018). In addition to formal education and practical

work experience, ABHES states, "Faculty receive training in educational methods,

testing and evaluation and evidence strength in instructional methodology, delivery and

techniques as indicated by evaluation by supervisory personnel within 30 days of

beginning instruction, and annually thereafter" (p. 71). ABHES requires all instructors

receive some form of orientation to teaching methods and evaluation, and it checks to

ensure this has been completed within the time frame stated.

ACCSC (2016) has ten standards related to faculty qualifications. Of these

standards, the following four are notable because they show the preference of practical

experience and licensing/certification over teaching experience:

- Faculty members must be certified or licensed where required by law;

- Faculty members must have appropriate qualifications;

- Faculty teaching technical and occupationally related courses in either non-degree or occupational associate degree programs must have a minimum of three years of related practical work experience in the subject area(s) taught;

- Faculty teaching technical and occupationally related courses in an academic associate or baccalaureate degree program must have a minimum of four years of related practical work experience in the subject area(s) taught and possess a related degree at least at the same level of the course the faculty member is teaching. (p. 88-89)

The requirements emphasize professional experience of these vocational instructors rather than educational experience; therefore, ACCSC also requires that instructors who do not have a teaching background receive training in instructional methods prior to the first teaching assignment (ACCSC, 2016).

ACCET (2010) has one main statement for the qualifications of instructors: "Instructional personnel possess the appropriate combination of education credential(s), specialized training and/or certification, work experience, and demonstrated teaching and classroom management skills, which qualifies them for their teaching assignments" (p. 5). Like ACCSC, ACCET also requires an orientation and training for new instructors. This orientation is in addition to other ongoing professional development in areas such as continuing education and/or seminars in a related field.

ACICS (2017) addresses faculty qualifications differently for institutions with non-degree programs, occupational associate's degrees, and academic associate's degrees (and higher degrees, though those are not relevant to this discussion). For non-degree and occupational associate's degree programs, instructors teaching vocational courses must "demonstrate competency in the assigned teaching field, such as academic or vocational training and credentials, related work experience, licensure, or certification" (ACICS, 2017, p. 59). In an academic associate's degree program, ACICS requires these instructors to hold a bachelor's degree and have preparation in their field, or have "demonstrable current exceptional professional level experience in the assigned field, professional certification(s), letters of recommendation or attestations from previous employers" (p. 66). While not specific to faculty orientation, ACICS also requires instructors to have faculty and professional development training; faculty development

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covers teaching competencies, and professional development keeps the instructor current in her/his field of expertise.

COE (2016) requires the following of instructors: a high school diploma, expertise in the area assigned to teaching, and a good performance record. If teaching technical courses in an associate's degree program, instructors must also have an associate's degree in the field of instruction (COE, 2016). Like ACCSC and ACCET, COE requires all employees have appropriate orientation to their roles at the institution.

The accreditation standards as provided by ABHES, ACCSC, ACCET, ACICS, and COE all emphasize practical experience rather than formal higher education for instructors teaching in vocational and technical fields. However, each agency recognizes that because of the limited formal training in education, instructors must have an orientation to their role as an instructor. The accrediting bodies do not explicitly state what is required in such orientation or training programs, nor do they review these orientation programs during accreditation visits. Understanding the content of such programs is important to determine if the orientation adequately addresses educational theory and teaching strategies.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to provide insights into the onboarding practices used by the participating career colleges and into why those practices were chosen. With these institutions' focus on student-centered service, instructor preparation to understand the respective colleges and their students becomes paramount to success because of the impact these instructors have on students from the first day of instruction (Oprean, 2012). Currently, Career College Central (2016) and the Imagine America Foundation (2009),

key research and information resources for career college leaders, do not address onboarding programs. However, the research and resources focus heavily on improving students' classroom experience and improving instructor performance as a part of that goal (Career College Central, 2016; Imagine America Foundation, 2009). Identifying how a robust onboarding experience can improve student experience is critical to the success of career colleges.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided the study, questions asked in order to gain insight into these orientation programs. First, what are the various ways in which career colleges prepare their instructors for teaching? While the national accrediting bodies require colleges to onboard their instructors, the standards do not explicitly state what is included in these programs. I reviewed the onboarding programs at select career colleges to understand what is included in these onboarding programs. One goal was to understand how career colleges prepare instructors for their role in the classroom, since many of these instructors do not have experience as teachers.

Second, when onboarding programs exist at career colleges, what are their purpose(s)? While one of the obvious purposes of these programs is certainly to meet accrediting body requirements, understanding the other purposes the colleges have themselves may help better inform how these programs were developed.

Third, in what ways do these orientation practices align with organizational socialization theory on successful onboarding and with faculty development theory/practice on the preparation of new faculty? As will be discussed in Chapter 3, I

reviewed the practices at these colleges by using an onboarding framework provided by Bauer (2010).

Definition of Key Terms

The following are definitions of terms used throughout this study.

Onboarding – the process by which a new instructor is oriented to his or her role as an instructor and best practices to complete that role successfully (Bauer, 2010). I do not specify the length of these programs or where onboarding cuts off and general faculty or professional development begins, because I wanted to understand how each participating institution viewed the onboarding process.

Career College – privately-owned, for-profit, proprietary institutions focused on specialized training for technical and professional careers, such as healthcare and trade professions (Bailey, Badway, & Gumport, 2001; Lechuga, 2006; National Education Association, 2004; Oprean, 2012); specifically, for this study, the term refers to those colleges offering no higher than two-year credentials. These institutions typically can be nationally or regionally accredited (Hentschke, Lechuga, & Tierney, 2010); however, for the purposes of this study, nationally accredited institutions were studied.

Vocational Instructor – those hired at career colleges to teach who often have little or no prior teaching experience but are typically licensed or certified in a professional or technical field, such as Automotive Technology, Cosmetology, Medical Assisting, and other similar programs (Hentschke, Lechuga, & Tierney, 2010; Lechuga, 2006).

Defining these terms helps shape the context for this study. At career colleges, the impact these types of instructors have on their students is important to students'

success (Tinto, 1990); therefore, it is important to understand how helping prepare these instructors for the classroom may benefit the students.

Limitations and Delimitations

One limitation of this study was that the colleges were less forthcoming with participating because of their proprietary status as they often do not share practices with others (Hentschke, Lechuga, & Tierney, 2010). This limitation did end up impacting the study, because I had several colleges unable to participate because of policies regarding not sharing information. Another limitation of this study was the choice not to interview the instructors participating in or who have participated in the onboarding programs at the participating institutions. This limitation was a choice to understand the documents as given and the perspective of the administrators, but such interviews would be a helpful addition in future studies.

A delimitation of this study was my status as a Corporate Director of Academic Affairs at a career college group. This may have impacted the study in two ways. First, my role may have impacted my ability to get other colleges to participate, given they may not have wanted to share practices if they thought I would use their onboarding programs for professional means as a competitive advantage. In order to mitigate this concern, I ensured administrators at the participating institutions understood that my project was for research purposes only and that I would share my findings of practices so all can benefit from the review of the programs. Second, my background working in career colleges may have biased my point of view. However, the measures that I describe in Chapter 3 attempted to mitigate this concern and ensure that the data informed the results rather than my perspective.

Summary

Researchers such as Gunersel, Barnett, and Etienne (2013) and Weimer (2002) have made the case that faculty development programs improve faculty perceptions of their role and therefore lead to improved practices in the classroom. With traditional colleges paying more attention to faculty orientation as a means by which to help instructors succeed (Graber & Kinser, 1999; Horton & Hintz, 2002; Triton College, 1999; Welch, 2002), and with little research available on the faculty at career colleges (Hentschke, Lechuga, & Tierney, 2010), this study helps bridge the gap between what is known about the importance of preparing instructors for their role and the lack of insight into the practices used at career colleges. This information is important to career college administrators who are seeking to improve the experience students are having in the classroom by better preparing their instructors.

Through this dissertation research, I sought to understand the orientation and onboarding practices used in career colleges and the importance of such activities to prepare instructors for teaching.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the onboarding preparation of career college instructors. First is a discussion of onboarding in general and its history in organizational socialization in the fields of organizational development and faculty development. Next is a discussion about the work-role transition required of individuals going from business or professional to teaching positions. Following the description of onboarding programs is a discussion of the importance of those programs in helping new instructors transition from a non-academic to an academic role. Fourth includes a discussion of the vocational instructors at career colleges and the preparation they have coming into the role of instructor, showing the importance of onboarding to them, specifically. By addressing these areas, this review intended both to highlight gaps in the literature as well as to establish how this research adds to the knowledge base on instructor preparation, specifically at career colleges.

Onboarding as Organizational Socialization - Theory

Organizational socialization is a process by which a new employee acquires knowledge and skills necessary to assume a role in a new organization (Bauer, 2010; Feldman, 1981; Schein, 1968; Tierney, 1997; Van Maanen, 1978; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Some researchers described this as "learning the ropes" or being trained on

what is important to the organization (Schein, 1968). Many of these same experts saw this process as dynamic and ongoing, though many also agreed it starts from the beginning of employment (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979; Tierney, 1997). The following section examines organizational socialization as it has been presented in seminal pieces in this area of literature. While the content may seem dated, many of these authors are acknowledged as the experts in organizational socialization theory and are important in gaining an understanding of the process of training new employees.

Feldman (1981) described a conceptual model for organizational socialization from the field of management and organizational development that had three different components. First, socialization included learning a new set of role behaviors; second, socialization was the development of skills and abilities for that new role; and finally, socialization helped with the adjustment to new norms and values. Feldman (1981) identified both behavioral and attitudinal criteria that measure success of the organizational socialization process. The behavioral criteria included carrying out assigned roles, staying with the organization, and going above the role requirements. The attitudinal criteria included the employee's satisfaction, motivation, and commitment to the role. Feldman's article described the processes by which an organization could use the socialization framework described, supported his model with references to other research in management theory, and ended with the need to better understand how motivation can be utilized to improve organizational socialization.

Van Manaan and Schein's (1979) theoretical model of organizational socialization described six dimensions of the socialization process important to a new role for an employee. Their research, grounded in management theory, was conceptual,

and they noted that their research did not have enough empirical basis and thus should continue to be tested. Van Manaan and Schein described processes in socialization that were collective versus individual, formal versus informal, sequential versus random, and fixed versus variable. One of the goals of this theoretical framework was to help managers be more conscious of the choices and consequences of how they orient people to their roles; and another goal was to establish the success of individuals in those roles as a result of the orientation. These dimensions were built on research both Van Maanen (1978) and Schein (1968) had previously published.

Tierney (1997) described the background in organizational socialization using the theories espoused by Van Maanen. Tierney, an educator professor, focused on the socialization process of tenure-track faculty, interviewing 300 junior faculty to understand the areas in which they struggled. In this two-year study, Tierney found that faculty spent many hours trying to understand unclear responsibilities, that the tasks required of new faculty were also not defined nor evaluated well, and that many of the faculty did not feel a sense of purpose or identity. Tierney posited socialization must happen on both fronts: the instructor coming into the organization and the instructor then spending time within the organization itself.

Also coming from an educational perspective, Fink (1992) described how substantial orientation programs for new faculty could benefit faculty and institutions. Fink illustrated five different programs that had early success in orienting new faculty: The University of Texas at Austin starting in 1980, Southeast Missouri State University starting in 1986, the University of Illinois starting in 1979, the University of Oklahoma in 1988, and the University of Maryland University College (no date given). Fink found

that faculty who participated in substantial orientation programs more quickly learned how to approach their role as an instructor and basic responsibilities. Fink ended with suggestions for those thinking of creating orientation programs.

Scott, Lemus, Knotts, and Oh (2016) recommended ways for creating new faculty orientations that helped support faculty and socialized them to the organization. This conceptual piece described how orientations assimilated faculty to the culture of the institution and the faculty role. The authors discussed such objectives as focusing on critical information, meeting faculty at their level of understanding teaching, and providing networking opportunities for new faculty. Scott, Lemus, Knotts, and Oh called for more empirical data that could be used to improve orientation programs.

Practical Application of Organizational Socialization

Coming from a human resources management perspective, Bauer (2010) provided a conceptual description of the formal onboarding process. According to the author, the onboarding process had four levels, called the Four Cs: compliance, clarification, culture, and connection. Bauer described how successful onboarding/orientation had to help the new employee have self-efficacy, role clarity, social integration, and knowledge of the culture of the organization. Bauer used case studies from such industry leaders as Bank of America and Zappos to describe the importance of successful onboarding of employees and the impact orientation could have from day one of employment.

Kelly (1988) bridged the conversation between human resource management notions of organizational socialization and faculty development that focused on the training and improvement of teaching skills for instructors. Kelly's conceptual article described how employee training programs at corporations could be used as a model for

training college faculty, including in orientation practices. Kelly recommended a stronger commitment to faculty training and more innovative development programs.

This section focused on the theory of organizational socialization from both management and faculty development perspectives. The goal was to provide an understanding of what organizational socialization can do. The next section will discuss the transition that neophytes to an organization must go through in moving from old roles to new roles, a phase that is more successful with proper onboarding programs in place.

Work-Role Transition

Much of the literature about the work-role transition comes from community colleges and such allied health disciplines as nursing. The research presented identified problems that were found when helping clinical experts transition from a clinical role to one of an educator. Transitions from a practitioner role to that of an educator role can be challenging, and orientation programs may ease the difficulties.

Anderson's (2009) qualitative, naturalistic inquiry study included interviews with 18 clinical nursing faculty. Anderson recorded and transcribed the semi-structured interviews and used NVivo software to code themes, with a schema provided by Morse and Richards (2002). Each participant related information about being in two different worlds, and the results were described using a mermaid metaphor, with patterns emerging about the transition before, during, and after changing roles. Anderson concluded that more research was needed on how to help these instructors with the career change from nursing to faculty, but that orientation programs tailored to learning how to be a teacher were a start.

Also focusing on nursing educators, Hand (2008) conceptualized the need for formal faculty orientation programs to help new instructors understand teaching strategies and classroom management. Hand recommended these programs because nurse educators tended to come from diverse backgrounds and likely had little training as instructors other than observing their own past instructors, those observations coming through widely varying school experiences. Hand also acknowledged a gap in understanding how to structure these programs in areas like nursing. The discussion focused on four questions: 1) What educational purpose is there to the orientation? 2) What experiences are needed to meet those purposes? 3) How can the experiences be effectively organized? and 4) How can programs determine if the programs were effective? Hand argued that faculty orientation programs are needed and not optional.

As did Anderson (2009) and Hand (2008), Janzen (2010) provided a conceptual model reviewing relevant literature on the transition of clinical nurses to that of educators. Like Anderson, Janzen used a metaphor, but this time that of Alice in Wonderland. Janzen showed how a nurse comes to understand her role as an educator through reflecting on the new role, stepping into the new role, and then becoming that new role. While others advanced programs of orientation as a practical means to help with the transition, Janzen merely related the intricacies of the transition in roles, arguing that, in order to be effective, the clinical nurse must see herself as an educator.

Gunersel, Barnett, and Etienne (2013) described how the concept of self-authorship helped individuals transition from old roles to new. This qualitative study started with a grounded theory approach to find themes and then used a comparative method to compare what interviewees were saying in relation to those themes. The

researchers interviewed 16 faculty members who were participating in a training program for new instructors. The goal was to see how the training program impacted the faculty members' self-authorship of their role as teachers. The authors found that the program helped in three aspects of self-authorship: epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. Gunersel, Barnett, and Etienne (2013) concluded that how instructors conceptualized their role as instructors impacted their ability to focus on teaching and learner-centered practices.

Vaill and Testori (2012) described the faculty development program offered at Bay Path College. From a faculty development perspective, their descriptive article began with describing how faculty had to transition from their normal teaching role to the role of online instructor. The authors described how the quality of online students' experiences was tied to the instructors' understanding of the idiosyncrasies demanded by an online environment. The content of the orientation covered both about the theory of understanding online education and the practical application of using a learning management system. The conclusion was that success of students was dependent on faculty understanding their roles and being prepared to deliver education in ways for which they may not have been prepared (Vaill & Testori, 2012).

Allison-Jones and Hirt (2004) studied the teaching effectiveness of part-time and full-time clinical nursing faculty from students' perspectives. This quantitative study used the National Clinical Teacher Effectiveness Inventory (NCTEI) to have students assess the effectiveness of both part-time and full-time instructors. The NCTEI has five sections with 48 items for rating instructors. The researchers used means for each of the groups of instructors and used a one-way ANOVA to compare the means. The sample

included 539 students and 44 faculty from seven nursing programs in mid-Atlantic states. The findings revealed significant differences in student perceptions of part-time versus full-time faculty in terms of effectiveness. While acknowledging that the full-time faculty tended to be more educated than the part-time faculty, the researchers found that it was merely a perception of students that the full-time faculty were better as teachers. The researchers suggested that administrators encourage part-time faculty to gain more education or take seminars in teaching to help improve their own perceptions of their teaching ability, which in turn would impact student perceptions of their teaching.

Focusing specifically on the graduate student experience as preparation for faculty careers, Gardner (2005) reviewed the history of faculty preparation and described initiatives to reform preparation programs. Gardner described graduate student education as lacking in its preparation for faculty careers. One of the innovative approaches reviewed by Gardner was a Preparing Future Faculty program started in 1993 by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Council of Graduate Schools. Gardner acknowledged competencies faculty need to have: knowledge of their discipline, familiarity with the learning process, competence in technology, working in diverse groups, awareness of institutional culture, and recognition of the value of higher education. Gardner ended with a call to action to focus more on the preparation of future faculty members.

Osborn (1990) called for more research on testing orientation and development efforts for colleges. Osborn's conceptual article described part-time faculty and the concerns over their ineffectiveness, such as lack of information, marginal status, and lack of feedback for part-time faculty. Further, Osborn identified the two ways that part-time

faculty were generally informed: handbooks and orientation. The conclusion was that more applied knowledge was needed, not theoretical knowledge.

One common conclusion in this literature was that orientation programs helped individuals transition from one role to another. Some of the studies focused on the preparation that those coming from more traditional academic backgrounds had and how this preparation was not always adequate. Interestingly, these studies observed that even just formal education as a student was more preparation than that of a typical instructor teaching at career colleges.

Vocational Instructors at Career Colleges

As chapter one notes, not many studies exist discussing career colleges specifically. However, there has been some research into similar types of instructors, mostly at community colleges. So, while many of the following studies did not directly address career college instructors, the attributes discussed about the instructors were similar to those found at career colleges.

Conceptual articles about community college faculty who lack teaching experience are not a new phenomenon, but the following educators focused on the question about faculty preparation. In 1935, Eells surveyed 11 state departments of education to find out if junior college instructors needed to be certified given that they typically were experienced in their field. At the time, eight of the 11 required similar credentialing of high school teachers. In 1950, Koos surveyed teachers in fifty junior colleges to ask about preparation of these instructors outside their subjects of expertise. Koos raised a concern that "insistence on vocational experience for vocational teaching in high schools has sometimes resulted in recruiting teachers with general education so

limited as to raise the question of their acceptability as associates and leaders of students (p. 312). Koos posed several questions arising from the preparation of these instructors and recommended general training in education to prepare junior college instructors. Focusing on adjunct faculty, Samuel (1989) discussed the inequality between full-time and adjunct faculty and called attention to the growing numbers of adjunct faculty in the United States. Samuel's conceptual article discussed the idea of certification for adjunct faculty (akin to Eells in 1935) because of the adjunct instructors' career focus and lack of terminal degrees. One conclusion was that student support, especially with higher risk students, was dependent on mostly adjunct instructors who may not understand education in ways to assist students; another conclusion was that these instructors needed support themselves in order to be better teachers.

Another study addressing vocational-technical instructors at community colleges was the qualitative study of Fugate and Amey (2000), one that included interviews with early-stage faculty. The researchers' questions centered on the career paths the faculty came from, how faculty conceptualized their roles, the role of faculty development, and what stages the faculty members saw in their first six years of working at the college studied. This study followed an emergent design to examine the early stages of the careers of these faculty. The results gleaned from interviews and field notes noted that many faculty had not considered a career in academia, instead finding their way to a faculty role either by chance or through some smaller instruction opportunities. The authors discussed the reasons these faculty chose community colleges versus other colleges, and the responses ranged from not having to worry about tenure, to focusing more on teaching, to not needing a doctoral degree in order to teach. The results also

showed that the instructors focused mostly on teaching as their primary duty, with service to the community and institution their secondary duty. Another finding from this study was that faculty with no prior teaching experience expressed a need for development of teaching skills or educational preparation (Fugate & Amey, 2000). The faculty members interviewed discussed the value of faculty development programs and orientation to teaching, specifically those instructors with a vocational-technical background—like many of those at career colleges. The authors concluded, first, that more research was needed to understand the early stages of faculty career paths at other community colleges in order to get a better grasp on both preparation of faculty for their role as teachers and on meeting their needs once they become faculty to assist with their retention and satisfaction.

Brown's (2000) conceptual article focused on strategies for professional development of vocational instructors. Brown described the need for this development based on a shortage of certified vocational instructors, as well as on the need to hire instructors with technical skills but with no prior teaching background. This study called for workplace experiences, internships/externships, and other opportunities for learning from others to improve teaching skills. Brown also described the importance of workshops, conferences, and technology training for those with technical backgrounds but little to no teaching experience.

Because most of the articles and studies focused on community colleges or on vocational instructors not at career colleges, Lechuga's (2006) book specifically on career colleges is important to note. While the book's focus was on case studies of four for-profit career colleges, Lechuga built an overall description of the culture and faculty

work-life at career colleges; further, Lechuga described the for-profit sector in great detail, including the colleges, the students served, and the teaching faculty at these institutions. In the book's discussion and analysis portion, the author described many practices, such as academic freedom, curriculum decision-making, and faculty governance, and then compared constructs prevalent in traditional college settings. Largely because Lechuga (2006) acknowledged the very different roles and responsibilities of instructors at career colleges, I now seek to add to his work by describing in much more detail *how* these colleges prepare their instructors for teaching.

Similar Studies

Several recent dissertations also took on the topic of onboarding for new faculty: one specific to adjuncts (Oprean, 2012), one specific to West Point (West, 2011), and one regarding technical faculty in Louisiana (Thornton, 2010). A review of these dissertations here will identify research closest to the research in this study.

Oprean's (2012) dissertation focused on a descriptive, quantitative analysis of the hiring, orientation, professional development, and faculty evaluation practices at North Carolina community colleges. Noting that hiring and orientation are often administrative practices, Oprean also focused on the alignment of the community colleges' programs with Human Resource Management Theory to determine the level of support adjunct faculty were receiving at the colleges and the impact of that support on the perceptions administrators had of adjunct instructor quality. The purpose of the study was twofold: to describe the programs and, based on that support, to assess the perception administrators had of the quality of adjunct faculty. The research questions centered on the hiring, orientation, faculty development, and evaluation practices that had been

implemented at NC community colleges, as well as on the relationship between those practices and the administrators' perceptions of the quality of the adjuncts.

Oprean's (2012) sample included 208 administrators from 42 of the 58 colleges in the NC community college system. Each administrator filled out a survey of 52 questions pertaining to the practices used at the colleges. Oprean tested the survey with three South Carolina technical colleges for feedback and then, to check for reliability, conducted a pre- and post-test of the revised survey with four administrators outside the sample to check. The survey was sent out using a program called Qualtrics®. Oprean used frequency distribution and a histogram in SPSS to identify data errors and outliers, and then used crosstabulation analysis to examine the association between faculty quality and faculty support variables. In order to examine the distribution of those quality values, the researcher used a Kruskal-Wallis test and the Cramer's V analysis. The results included categorical data on the support adjunct faculty received in hiring, orientation, professional development, and evaluation. These results showed that professional development was the most frequently used type of training provided. In terms of quality of the adjuncts, the most significant finding from the Kruskal-Wallis test was that the relationship between the orientation and the perceived quality of the adjuncts was the strongest; the Cramer's V analysis showed the strongest association between professional development and quality. Several recommendations followed. One recommendation was that colleges should use screening and interviewing during the hiring process to find areas of opportunity for training in weaknesses prior to the adjunct faculty's classroom teaching. Another recommendation concerned the orientation programs; they should be mandatory, and they should focus not only on policy and

procedure, but also on instructional practice. A third recommendation was that colleges should make professional development mandatory and that they should run these programs at times more convenient for adjunct faculty to attend. In terms of evaluation, Oprean (2012) found that more evaluation methods should be used and that those conducting observations should receive training. And the final observation was that the perceptions of quality administrators did not always align, so the colleges should work on aligning all the support practices to items that will help improve the quality of adjunct faculty.

Similarly, West's (2011) study was a qualitative case study of the socialization practices at West Point. West described the research, first, as holistic because it looked at the entire socialization process at West Point; second, as empirical because the research was conducted on site; and third, as interpretive because it was looking at the meaning behind what was seen. The purpose was to explore how socialization of faculty occurred at West Point, and so the research questions focused on how socialization occurred, on the institutional effects of the process, and on what other institutions could learn from West Point. West's data collection included interviews, document analysis, surveys, and observations.

The observations included the activities that new faculty members attended both at the academy and the department levels. During these activities, West (2011) collected and analyzed documents given to the new faculty. Some of the documents included schedules of the programs, presentation slides, and handouts and memorandums from the departments. The surveys were sent to all 34 new faculty members, receiving responses from 33 of the faculty. These 33 responders were then interviewed. The new faculty were

from three of the 13 departments at West Point. West used NVivo, a computer-assisted software tool, to code the data. The data were coded into initial categories, and the process was repeated to group these categories into themes.

The results of West's (2011) study were broken up into different chapters by department: History, Social Sciences, and Civil and Mechanical Engineering. West found that the anticipatory stage of socialization was different for new faculty at West Point because instructors knew years in advance about their reassignment to teaching in the academy, giving them years to prepare for their transition. The organizational stage, though, was similar to that of other institutions in that there was an orientation and other socialization programs to help the new instructors acclimate to their role. However, West noted that the West Point faculty had to assimilate more quickly than did faculty at other colleges and universities because West Point typically had only three years in their teaching assignment, whereas faculty at other colleges had six to seven years in what is considered their pre-tenure period.

West (2011) concluded that new faculty to West Point confirmed the socialization program's process was both effective and successful in helping the transition to their instructor role. West recommended more research with more of the departments at West Point, as well as more research specifically on different ways to approach the initial orientation, because that was one weakness that the participants pointed out in particular. West recommended research on socialization at types of institutions different from West Point and with different types of faculty.

The third and final study in this category is a phenomenological, qualitative research study on the socialization of new vocational faculty in Louisiana. The purpose

behind the Thornton (2010) study was to provide insight on the vocational faculty's role transition from their previous work experience to their becoming instructors. The researcher's questions centered on what experiences vocational faculty saw as important in this transition, how these same instructors conceptualized their roles as instructors, and what experiences these instructors thought they needed in order to develop the skills to be competent. This dissertation was a continuation of a pilot study conducted by Thornton in 2006.

The participants of the study were 10 new vocational faculty in Louisiana technical colleges; five participants had a technical diploma or less, four had bachelor's degrees, and one had a master's degree. Thornton (2010) conducted an interview with each participant and coded the transcribed interviews for themes. The results were written up by each participant and gave rich description of the interview. As a result of these interviews, Thornton identified six major themes as being important to the new instructors' socialization: collegial relationships, role identity, teaching, communication, stress, and faculty socialization techniques. Within the responses to collegial relationships, Thornton found that in coming from industry, instructors were used to status meetings and felt lost without them. They compensated by setting up relationships with peers to "check in" and continue to adjust to their new position. The transition from industry to teaching was also difficult because the instructors saw themselves in their industry role and had trouble conceptualizing themselves as instructors. These two findings specifically led Thornton to conclude that technical colleges should focus both on orientation to explain all aspects of the role to the new instructors and on continued professional development to build an identity as an instructor.

While these studies are closest to this dissertation's current research, this study differs in several ways. Oprean's (2012) study focused on the entire socialization process of adjunct instructors in community college systems; this study will focus on only the orientation of new instructors and only at career colleges. The West (2011) and Thornton (2010) studies both focused on the perceptions of the new instructors themselves and discussed the socialization process in terms of general organizational socialization frameworks. This study analyzes the orientation programs themselves, not the instructors' perceptions of the programs, comparing the practices used to best practices in HR management surrounding orientation (Bauer, 2010).

Summary and Relevance

Onboarding employees helps set the tone from the beginning of their employment and gives them the best chances at success. And an instructor's confidence in the classroom helps give their students those chances. The literature reviewed here shows the importance of preparation for instructors in understanding their students, and given the background of many career college instructors, onboarding programs can help bridge the gap in their clarification of what students need. This study will add to the literature by providing more information on career colleges, a sector that has had less research attention than that conducted on other institutions of higher education. More specifically, this study highlights the practices of onboarding used by career colleges to prepare instructors for their much different faculty roles, thus adding on to the work completed by Lechuga (2006).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY/METHODS

This chapter addresses the overall design of the study. It provides a description and rationale of the methodology, a discussion of methods used for participant selection and data collection, and a description of the method of data analysis. Finally, this chapter identifies the strategies employed to ensure trustworthiness in the study.

Methodology of Study

A methodology provides the rationale behind specific research methods used in a study; for this study, my underlying assumptions were based in qualitative inquiry, because I sought to understand in detail the practices career colleges used to onboard instructors (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010; Creswell, 2015). I neither looked at participants' reactions to a phenomenon nor tried to construct the meaning behind an activity. Instead, I focused on what happened during the onboarding of career college instructors and the purposes of those activities as part of the process. According to Patton (2002), "Qualitative methods facilitate study of issues in depth and detail" (p. 14). Existing and emerging practices in career colleges' onboarding of instructors demand just this qualitative depth and detail before administrators can gain a clearer identification and understanding. Another plus of qualitative methodology is its attribute of being both inductive and deductive, an attribute described more fully in the data analysis section.

More specifically, a *narrative research* design best fit the purpose of this study: to provide insights on the onboarding practices used by career colleges and to examine why those practices were chosen. The *story* here is the experience of the onboarding programs as constructed by the colleges and described by their administrators (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010; Creswell, 2015). While narrative research often looks at the stories of those living an experience, the narrative can also be text-based; narratives help explain and communicate experience, and the experience here is the onboarding process (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010; Creswell, 2015). Further, the administrators at the career colleges helped build the narrative of these programs through providing context and perspective. To build this narrative, I reviewed documents from onboarding programs for practices used, attempting to understand why those same practices were chosen by interviewing administrators.

Methods

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the various ways in which career colleges prepare their instructors for teaching?

- When onboarding programs exist at career colleges, what are their purposes?

- In what ways do these orientation practices align with organizational socialization theory on successful onboarding and with faculty development theory/practice on the preparation of new faculty?

Just as the methodology must match the purpose, the methods must support the research questions and the qualitative methodology (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010; Patton,

2002). I therefore chose qualitative research methods to understand the onboarding

processes at career colleges. The first method used was document analysis. According to

Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010), document analysis can utilize a variety of types of

documents; in accordance, I used several physical materials, including handbooks,

standard operating procedures, memos, and any other documents pertaining to the

onboarding programs at the selected colleges (p. 442). These materials were paper

documents for some institutions and electronic documents at others, both providing

evidence for what occurs in the onboarding of instructors. These texts document the

story of the onboarding programs through the words of the career colleges themselves,

which is a key characteristic of narrative research (Creswell, 2015, p. 508)

I also used an interview protocol, asking for descriptions from and discussion

with administrators to better grasp their onboarding programs and the purposes they see

those onboarding programs having (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). Like the

documents, the interviews helped build the *story* of the programs using the words of the

administrators (Creswell, 2015). My data analysis methods started inductively as I

reviewed the documents and interview transcriptions to find themes in the research

(Charmaz, 2014). Using the documents in the first round of review gave me starting

points for analysis, which I then followed up with further data collection in the form of

interviews with the administrators, these interviews filling in questions that had come up

during the initial review (Charmaz, 2014). Coding in each of these areas "distills data,

sorts them, and gives us an analytic handle for making comparisons with other segments

of the data" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 4), while the other segments of the data were deductive in

nature in order to look at early themes in relation to Bauer's (2010) framework on successful onboarding programs.

Onboarding Best Practices to Frame This Study

Bauer (2010) provided the framework used in this study for the deductive aspect of building the narrative about onboarding for career college instructors; according to Bauer's publication for the Society of Human Resource Management, there are four key aspects of a successful onboarding program: compliance, clarification, culture, and connection. Bauer's article is a description of a theoretical framework, not a study itself. However, the onboarding programs at the career colleges in this study were analyzed using these four components of successful onboarding programs to see if the themes in human resources literature were prevalent as practices in career college programs.

Compliance is the first level of an onboarding program. At this stage, those administering the program are teaching new employees lower-level information, information that helps the employees understand what is accepted and what is not in the context of the organization (Bauer, 2010). For example, administrators describe the policies, rules, and regulations employees must follow, teaching employees how to function within those rules. The next level of established programs is *clarification*. On this level, administrators clarify the employees' role and introduce them to their job description and the metrics by which their performance will be measured and assessed. Clarification is so often included in onboarding programs because employers view this as the main way for employees to know how to be successful in their new roles.

The third level of onboarding is *culture*. Here, administrators provide employees with the formal and informal norms of the organization, identifying how their role fits

within the organization (Bauer, 2010). Administrators also teach the employee how to navigate the organization without upsetting norms, a concept that is typically much harder to teach and that takes the employee longer to understand than most other aspects of the onboarding process. The final level is *connection*, which presents the network of individuals and information that will help the new employees be successful (Bauer, 2010). Connecting with current employees can come in many forms, from informal to formal mentoring, work groups, and idea sessions. These and other such opportunities give the employees a sense of community and support.

While the data analysis began inductively by looking at themes from the documents and questionnaires alone, later analysis deductively compared those themes to the framework supplied by Bauer. This methodology helped in understanding onboarding programs and practices that career college administrators may use in the future.

Expert Review

The research questions were reviewed by three experts in proprietary education. Each expert was a Vice President of Education/Academics or similar position, each the head of academics for the college or group of colleges. Each expert was also working at a for-profit career college offering associate's degrees or diplomas, and the institutions all have national accreditation; these experts thus worked for institutions similar to those in the study. Experts were sent the original research questions and then provided feedback on the applicability of the questions and on what they themselves might want to learn about how onboarding programs are conducted at similar institutions. Overall, the research questions were clear to the reviewers, but most had suggestions for additional

interview questions. I considered these suggestions carefully before deciding whether to include them or not. One reviewer, for example, suggested making the research questions more leading, asking about culture and content of onboarding. I elected, however, to allow that information to come organically from the onboarding materials instead of posing leading questions to the administrators at the participating institutions.

The interview questions were structured to get information about the onboarding programs and to understand aspects of the onboarding that may not be apparent from the onboarding documentation itself. The questions were also structured to make sure they were not leading to particular aspects of the Bauer framework as described previously. Overall, the experts' review helped guide changes to the interview protocol and demonstrated that the answers to the questions would be of interest to those working in the field.

Role of the Researcher

I have been employed in the career college sector for a total of eight years: starting as an adjunct instructor for two years; for three years as Director of Education overseeing the onboarding processes at a single college; and for the past three years as a Vice President of Academics overseeing the onboarding processes for 35 colleges. As such, I am an insider to the sector and familiar with the specific roles of those who onboard and train instructors. I believe that being an insider had both positive impacts on this study. My positioning was important because it helped give me access to information, yet the research may have been impacted by biases I have as a career college administrator.

Because of the competitiveness of career colleges, the fact of my employment at a competing college could have had a negative impact on recruiting willing participants. The concern for others could have been that I may have wanted the information for a competitive advantage instead of for research purposes, or worse, that I may have wanted to compare their colleges negatively to my own. To mitigate this concern, I assured the participants that all colleges would be assigned a pseudonym and thus remain unidentifiable in the written reports and that the goal of the study was to understand practices all career colleges may use. Further, I offered to share my findings so all participants had the same access to the information to use in the improvement of their own programs. I personally contacted each director of education (or similar position) to explain the study and build a relationship with the academic administrator at the campus. Having worked in the sector for many years, I also relied on my relationships with administrators at other colleges to help put the participating administrators at ease.

Being an insider helped me have contacts within the sector of those who trusted me and our existing relationship enough to know that the request was for research purposes and that I would share practices to help others improve their programs as well. Having these contacts made it easier to secure other participants through recommendations or *snowball sampling*, discussed later in the chapter (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). Further, those participating may have felt more at ease knowing that, as a colleague-researcher, I would not use the work to demonize for-profit colleges—as much research seems to do in the eyes of those working in the sector.

I did not participate in onboarding programs or interview the participants in those programs, so I was neither an observer nor a participant. I chose not to participate in onboarding programs by observing orientation sessions in order to further distance myself from the other colleges. Further, I chose not to observe in order to ensure the college administrators would recognize this research as more about understanding what they are doing as it is written rather than an analysis of how they implement the programs.

Participant Selection

For this study, I employed a *purposive sampling* method. According to Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010), "in purposive sampling—also referred to as judgment sampling—sample elements judged to be typical, or representative, are chosen from the population" (p. 156). Patton (2002) described purposeful sampling as intentionally selecting participants who will provide "information-rich cases" (p. 172). This type of sampling helped ensure that the participants selected met the criteria of being career colleges with national accreditation and that the focus was on two-year degrees or below.

To collect onboarding materials, I got in touch with my contacts at as many career colleges as possible, beginning with those who already had entered into some form of agreement with my own schools through articulation or partnership agreements. The number of colleges participating depended on those willing to participate. Given the proprietary nature of the colleges, finding willing participants was difficult; as a result, the participant pool included only five institutions. And yet, this type of selection allowed me to focus on rich details in describing the onboarding practices of career

colleges, as well as to understand the aspects of the programs that were working and how they employed human resources recommended onboarding practices.

I focused on career colleges with national accreditation and two-year degree programs or less. These colleges more typically reflect the original purpose of career colleges, which is to provide career-relevant training, as described in Chapters One and Two. I also focused on career colleges with multiple locations, as those tend to have more formalized onboarding programs and are more likely to be standardized for all instructors, though my focus was on private institutions, not larger or publicly traded institutions. Single-sites or owner-operator institutions were too small to have documented onboarding practices, and larger, publicly traded institutions had far more resources to have access to already created onboarding programs. The types of participating institutions were those most likely having documented onboarding programs but not the resources to have fully-vetted, research-backed developed programs.

I also relied partially on *snowball sampling*, whereby representatives from colleges that participated suggested the names of others they knew who might be willing to participate (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). Because of the nature of the schools, my having an endorsement from another trusted colleague helped me recruit additional college administrators for the study.

Data Collection

I collected two types of data: documents and interviews. First, I made verbal contact with administrators and those who agreed to participate, and then I emailed an invitation to participate (See Appendix A). After receiving an email approving participation and acknowledging the invitation to participate, I requested that the

administrator from each institution send all documents pertaining to the onboarding

program. As mentioned previously, I did not specify the length of time for which

documentation of the program was needed in order to see what the administrator chose as

the right documentation used to support the respective onboarding program. I gave

participating administrators the choice of mailing, emailing, or giving electronic access to

the resources, whichever method worked best for the materials they had. The documents

requested included any of the following that were applicable to their onboarding

programs: faculty/instructor handbooks, help guides, manuals, brochures, policies or

processes, and any other documents that mentioned the requirements, contents, and

policies surrounding the onboarding programs. Reviewing the actual documents of the

onboarding program helped answer the research question of what happens in the

onboarding programs. Creswell (2015) discussed how documents can be about more

than just *content*—that they can help us understand what the documents *do*. One of the

benefits of document analysis is its unobtrusiveness. With the proprietary nature of

career colleges, it was likely that administrators would not be accepting of someone's

examining documentation and coming on site to observe or intrude on their

campuses. Thus, one of the difficulties of this approach was getting career college

administrators to allow access to the documents they use for their onboarding programs,

but this approach was still more likely to work than asking to watch or participate in the

onboarding as it took place on campus.

    After receiving the documentation and doing an initial round of review (see data

analysis section), I interviewed each administrator using an interview protocol (see

Appendix B). These interviews helped create the *story* of the onboarding programs and

helped answer questions the documentation was not able to answer (Creswell, 2015). The interview questions were as follows:

1. Please describe the onboarding program at your institution.

    a. How does onboarding take place?

    b. Where does onboarding take place?

2. How long is the onboarding program? Specify if hours, days, or weeks: _____

3. Are instructors paid or compensated for the onboarding? If so, how/how much?

4. Is the onboarding program the same for all instructors, or do those with prior teaching experience have a different onboarding program?

    a. If the programs differ, in what ways do they differ?

5. Who oversees the onboarding program, and what is his/her background related to running the program?

6. What would you describe is the primary goal of the onboarding program for instructors?

7. Describe the primary topics covered in the onboarding program, and for each, explain the purpose of each topic.

8. Describe aspects of the program you see as being effective.

9. Describe aspects of the program you don't feel are as effective.

I chose to keep the number of questions few and indefinite so as not to overwhelm the participants and improve the chances of more detailed responses.

The questions from the interview protocol helped give context to the research for the documented onboarding materials also requested, and each question related to either the practices of the onboarding programs or the purposes of those practices. The

interviews were conducted via phone, were recorded, and then were transcribed (Creswell, 2015). The first research question was What are the various ways in which career colleges prepare their instructors for teaching? This question was addressed with questions one, two, three, four, eight, and nine from the protocol. After having the administrator describe the program, its length, and its topics, I created a picture of how the colleges onboard their instructors. By asking about the aspects the administrators saw as both effective and not effective helped build in some context for possible changes to the programs in the future. The second research question, When onboarding programs exist at career colleges, what are their purpose?, was answered by questions five, six, and seven. Understanding who was in charge of the program and their credentials helped gain an understanding of the importance the colleges see in the programs, which in turn helped speak to the purpose of the programs. Then having the administrators describe the goals of the programs and the purpose of each topic included in them helped give more details and context to the purpose.

In the section on data collection, I address these first two research questions. The third research question was addressed during the data analysis phase in the deductive coding aspect, which is discussed in the next section.

Data Analysis

To analyze data and to understand the practices used, I *retold* the *story* of the onboarding programs by identifying themes and categorizing information (Creswell, 2015). I began with inductive methods to see what information emerged from the data (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010; Creswell, 2015).

In order to analyze the data, I started with what Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010) identify as *familiarization* and *organization*. I reviewed all of the documentation of the onboarding programs I collected, reading through them all one time. After I reviewed the materials once to make sure I knew what documents and information I had, I began coding the documents. I coded the documents several times to understand the practices used and to categorize them for analysis. I began with *open or initial coding* to find major categories of information (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). And I completed this round prior to completing interviews to ensure that any outstanding questions I had from the documents themselves got answered in the interviews. Here, instead of finding exact words or phrases, I started with *initial coding*, whereby I began analyzing what I was seeing by naming it and following up with a more "focused, selective phase that uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 113).

After my first pass at open coding and after interviews were conducted, I then went through the documents again, this time focusing on *in vivo codes*, or those using actual words from the documents, to find concepts important to each school (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010; Creswell, 2015). These two initial rounds of coding allowed me to get a thorough understanding of what information was located in the documents.

My third round of coding employed *selective coding* methods. According to Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010), selective coding "shows connections between discrete categories. Categories that have been developed to build the theoretical framework" (p. 465). Employing the framework previously described from Bauer (2010), I used the coding from previous rounds and compared them to the four onboarding categories of

compliance, clarification, culture, and connection. Conducting this type of coding helped

address research question three: In what ways do these orientation practices align with

organizational socialization theory on successful onboarding?

The document analysis employed a major aspect of the data analysis and was

described in detail by each college, thus retelling the *story* of the onboarding program at

each college (Creswell, 2015). Each college has its own section of the chapter describing

the respective onboarding programs in detail. After this description, I reviewed the

interviews to fill in any gaps from the onboarding materials and answer questions the

materials did not; specifically, I reviewed the structure of the onboarding programs to

provide context and detail and the goals of the programs and purposes of individual

topics as described by the academic administrators.

Trustworthiness

I employed several strategies in order to establish trustworthiness. First, I kept an

audit trail of what documentation came from which source. According to Patton (2002),

an audit trail helps "to verify the rigor of your fieldwork and confirmability of the data

collected" (p. 93), thus minimizing bias. This audit trail started with my giving each

college a unique identifying name, thereby keeping the college information confidential

but still accessible to me during the research process. These unique names were used on

each interview transcription and document submitted from the participating college.

Once the documents were labeled with the unique names, to further preserve

confidentiality, I redacted any other identifying information from the documentation.

Throughout the data review and analysis, I used only the unique names to identify the

colleges, and I kept the file with the pseudonyms separate to keep from me from biasing

the results by reading into the data from what I knew about that college or administrators.

I also utilized both *intrarater* and *interrater* agreement as strategies for ensuring

dependability (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). Intrarater agreement is the "degree to

which the ratings made by a single rater agree with each other" (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen,

2010, p. 644). For intrarater reliability, I made sure I had multiple copies made of each

document so I could cleanly code the documentation two different times, with at least a

week between reviews. This allowed me to make sure I was consistent in how I saw the

information in the documents line up against the Bauer (2010) framework of categories

for onboarding.

For additional dependability of my coding, I asked a trusted colleague with a

background in both career colleges and research to review the documents and openly

code for categories found in the onboarding materials. I compared my coding with this

colleague's coding to see if there were marked differences in the primary categories

found. This interrater agreement is "the degree to which the ratings of two independent

raters agree" (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010, p. 644), which allowed calibration of how I

approached the coding of materials.

Using these methods helped with *triangulation* of data: "confirming data by using

multiple data-gathering procedures, multiple sources of data or multiple observers: (Ary,

Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010, p. 652). According to Patton (2002), triangulation is

important to the credibility of the findings because it helps confirm data by using multiple

data sources. Having both documentation of the programs and the administrators'

descriptions helped build fuller narratives of the programs than only one source would have provided.

Limitations

One of the biggest limitations of this study is the participant selection method and participant pool. Because career colleges are typically closed off from outsiders—made more so perhaps because I worked in the sector—I relied on the schools willing to participate and on the recommendations from those participating to get others involved. Because few participated, I had to rely on purposefully reaching out to known contacts to get a pool of administrators responsible for onboarding programs, thus allowing for meaningful data collection and analysis. Such a participant selection method is not ideal, but given the lack of research currently available on the practices at career colleges, it still was a promising start for creating a literature base. Another limitation was not interviewing instructors currently participating in the onboarding programs at the institutions or instructors who had participated at them. The goal here was first to get the institutional perspective. A study that interviews instructors would clearly be a good follow-up study.

Summary

I situate this study in qualitative research methods fitting both the purpose and the research questions. By utilizing document analysis to review the career college onboarding programs and coding to develop inductive themes and deductive methods to compare the initial coding to a framework provided by Bauer (2010), I am able to tell the story of the onboarding practices at career colleges in a narrative research format (Creswell, 2015). Based on my past and current positions in the field, I used my contacts

in the sector and employed snowball participant selection to find college administrators willing to participate. Data collection included documents of the onboarding programs and interviews with the administrators. For data analysis, I coded data several times, beginning inductively then turning to deductive methods to compare against the Bauer framework. I ensured my biases were minimized by using pseudonyms for the documents, reviewing the documents first and conducting interviews after initial rounds of coding to gain more information, and relying on another coding partner to complete interrater analysis. The next chapter will describe the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Before reporting on and summarizing the results of the research study, this chapter presents a brief introduction of the research purpose, a review of the methodology used, and a general overview of the study's participants. The chapter also reports and summarizes the results of the research study.

Qualitative research methods were chosen to describe in detail the narrative or story of how onboarding takes place at career colleges in order to understand a practice of which not much is currently known or studied (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010; Creswell, 2015; Patton, 2002). The main purpose of this narrative study was to provide insights into the onboarding practices used by the career colleges included and into why those practices were chosen. Given the proprietary nature of these colleges, there is little research stemming from or about the institutions, and much less is widely shared about the actual practices at many of them. Thus, an additional purpose of this study was to add to the knowledge base and help those outside the proprietary career college sector to understand one practice found within these institutions: faculty onboarding. However, because of the proprietary nature of these institutions, I encountered difficulty in finding willing participants. Even institutions whose administrators I am well acquainted with were not always able to participate, even if they were personally willing to do so. More than a few administrators expressed a desire to learn from other institutions, but their

colleges had overriding policies in place prohibiting them from sharing their own practices. Often, as expected, the materials were considered proprietary, and even with assurances of confidentiality and anonymity, many institutions had to decline the request to participate. In the end, six institutions were willing to participate. Of these, one institution would not allow access to the materials nor a recording of the interview, but still was willing to walk me through its process and show me what its onboarding programs did in a live demonstration. Another institution was willing to share its materials but was unable to allow a recorded interview. In both of these cases, I kept copious notes of the conversations for review.

Institutions were selected purposefully to ensure a range of participating institutions across regions, a range of accrediting bodies, and a range in number of campuses within an overall institution; these institutions represent a sample of nationally accredited career colleges and thus were judged to be typical of the types of colleges studied, as appropriate for a qualitative study (Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen, 2010). I did have to rely on some snowball sampling when more institutions were unable to participate than those who were able. In these instances, I asked those unable to participate for contacts at other institutions in similar regions, of similar size, and of similar accrediting status. Based on this snowball sampling, two institutions came as a result of references from institutions unable to participate. The original sampling goal was to find five to seven institutions willing to participate: the six final participants met this goal.

The participating institutions are described here in general terms without referring to specific states or numbers of campuses in order to further protect their anonymity.

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Based on the tumultuous nature of the proprietary career college sector during the time in which this study was created, approved, and completed, the institutions are described from the point at which approval to participate was given, though many have since the outset of the study either had campuses close, took on acquisitions, or changed accreditation status or accrediting body.

Institution A is a multisite corporate entity with over two dozen campuses in approximately ten different states, its campuses ranging in population from as little as 100 students, to others with closer to 1,000 students, to others with online enrollments exceeding 10,000 students. All campuses within this institution utilize standardized content for their instructor onboarding programs. Institution B is a multisite corporate entity with approximately a half dozen campuses in a single southern state, these campuses ranging in population from 250-500 students to online enrollments fewer than 3,000. Like Institution A's, Institution B's campuses utilize standardized content for onboarding programs. Institutions C and D are owned by the same corporate entity but function as stand-alone campuses with their own respective onboarding programs. Institution C is located in the Midwest, has approximately 500 students, and is completely residential. Institution D is located in the northeast, has approximately 200 students, and has both residential and online programs. Institution E has approximately two dozen campuses in over a dozen states, its campuses ranging from 300 to 1,500 students, all with oversight from a corporate entity and all utilizing standardized programs and materials. Institution F includes approximately a dozen campuses in south and southwest states with enrollments ranging from 300 to 1,300. Like the other multisite institutions, Institution F utilizes standardized faculty onboarding.

Data collection occurred over a two-month period, March and April 2018, with April also focusing on recruiting the final two participating institutions through snowball sampling. After giving verbal approval to participate, institutions received by email a formal invitation to participate, their acceptance and approval also indicated via email (see Appendix A for template). The first four institutions sent their onboarding programs' documentation within a week of request, interviews then conducted within two weeks of receipt of the documentation. Over a dozen institutions were originally contacted at the beginning of the data collection, and once a month had passed and approval came from only four institutions, I began snowball sampling with the institutions who had already declined to participate. The first four institutions' interviews lasted between 15-20 minutes each and utilized the interview protocol (see Appendix B), while the second two institutions' interviews lasted closer to 30 minutes each but were the ones unable to allow recording and/or access to materials in advance. In these final two cases, I took notes to make up for not having a recorded interview for future review, but the interview protocol was utilized to ensure the same questions were asked even though the review of the materials also took place during a live demonstration. In the first four cases, I reviewed the documents sent to ensure no additional questions needed asked during the interview.

Recorded interviews were transcribed within a week. Notes from the unrecorded two were immediately typed and reviewed to ensure notes were not lost with time or with having to remember what was discussed. Once all interviews had taken place, I reviewed interview transcriptions, notes, and the onboarding programs again to ensure all identifying information was redacted, and then such identifiers were replaced by

alphabetically designating the institutions (Institution A through Institution F). After

redacting identifying information, I left the materials alone for a couple weeks to give

space between the times when items were received or interviews conducted so that my

remembering could wane about which programs belonged to which institution. This

interval of time also helped to remove or temper any bias I may have had in knowing

which programs belonged to which campus, allowing for a more objective review of the

data after weeks had passed.

As described in Chapter 3, I reviewed the documentation collected and interviews

transcribed several times. First, I familiarized myself with all documentation prior to

interviews, using what Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010) identify as *familiarization* and

organization. Also prior to interviews, I used *initial coding* to pull out phrases and

ensure I didn't need to ask the institution additional follow-up questions by not

understanding what I was seeing (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). After interviews, I

coded again, this time using *in vivo codes*—those using actual words from the

documents—to pinpoint concepts important to each of the schools (Ary, Jacobs, &

Sorensen, 2010; Creswell, 2015). The final round of coding compared what I was seeing

in the documents to Bauer's framework using *selective coding* methods, such codes

helping show connections to categories (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). Employing the

framework previously described from Bauer (2010), I used the coding from previous

rounds and compared them to the four onboarding categories of *compliance,*

clarification, culture, and connection. I also had a colleague in the career college sector

review the documentation against the framework to assist with intrarater analysis to

ensure I was correctly seeing the categories for each institution.

This chapter's next information comes in two parts. The first section tells the story of each institution's onboarding program for instructors by providing details from both the documentation and the interviews; this section is divided into subsections for each institution. The second section then focuses on analyzing the onboarding programs through the Bauer framework, discussing the institutions both individually and in collective. As another attempt at keeping the information for each institution anonymous and at preventing the repetitiveness of using the institutional representative's title too often, I use the pronoun *he* to describe each of the administrators, no matter their respective genders.

Participating Institutions

The results section describes each of the onboarding programs generally, both by discussing the documents sent and the descriptions given by the person interviewed. Each institution is listed separately and each section reviews the items as discussed from the interview protocol (see Appendix B).

Institution A

With multiple sites across multiple states, Institution A's instructor onboarding program is formal and standardized among its campuses. The program was created by and overseen at the corporate level by a Vice President of Academics, but individual Directors of Education on campuses are the ones who implement the program for new instructors. The materials provided prior to the interview include a structured, asynchronous online course that all new instructors are required to take. When printed, the online onboarding program is 193 pages in length.

The Vice President of Academics had me speak with a Director of Education at one of the institution's campuses to give the campus perspective on how the corporately structured onboarding program was being enacted on site. The Director of Education (DOE) explained how the onboarding process starts prior to an instructor's being hired to better ensure that the instructor has the right qualifications to meet accreditation standards. This qualifications review happens prior to an interview, since the qualifications guide who would be allowed in the classroom. The DOE described how the interview and a teaching presentation then help the campus audience get a feel for how well the instructor would present information to students, an important concept in the program. After the instructor is selected, the DOE then provides a personal orientation and gets the instructor started on the online orientation course.

The Director of Education mentioned that the ideal onboarding process would take place over the five weeks prior to the instructor's going into the classroom, but that the onboarding program was built so an instructor could get at least the most important concepts within a week prior to teaching and before stepping into the classroom. While the online orientation is prepared and structured, the DOE discussed how the personal, on-campus aspects of the orientation were much less structured and likely very different campus by campus. Instructors going through the orientation and onboarding are not compensated for the orientation but are required to complete it. While the online orientation is the same for all instructors, the DOE described how instructors with more teaching experience tended to get through the online portion more quickly than those who had no prior teaching experience.

The onboarding program was created by the Vice President of Academics, who had both formal education as an educator and teaching experience. The experience of the campus DOE was that of having taught at the campus prior to becoming the academic leader. He had twelve years of experience but noted that the experience differed campus by campus. The DOE's goal for onboarding instructors was to "assure that whoever I am putting in that classroom has the knowledge, the skills, the resources, and the confidence to just deliver the objectives" of the course.

The Director of Education described the online, asynchronous orientation as starting out with an overall understanding of teaching at the school, and then familiarizing the instructor with the school, history, mission, and the corporate entity. The onboarding program also discusses the regulatory body of the institution and, according to the DOE, what it means to be "highly regulated." He then described how he gives an instructor a copy of the catalog as well as the "bible" for instructors for following policy and procedure, both of which are also covered in the course. He described how the program next covers the student population and how to work with their "target population," as well as the resources available to both instructors and students. He explained that the majority of the program centered on the job description and on such aspects of teaching as the syllabi, training, and effective classroom instruction.

When asked about the program's effectiveness, the Director of Education stated that all aspects of the program were effective and that every piece in the online orientation was needed to prepare instructors for the industry and the classroom. He identified the most effective aspect was preparing the instructor for going into the classroom. When probed about areas that were not as effective, the DOE described how

doing online training is sometimes tough to gauge whether or not the instructor

understands the information, but that there were assessments to help bridge the gap. The

biggest concern was not knowing how effective the training was until the instructors were

in the classroom teaching.

In my reviewing of the onboarding program, I noted that the content appeared

robust compared to the amount of information received from other institutions. The first

module of the program covers items important for getting started in the classroom:

curriculum, planning for class, taking attendance, policies on attendance and grading, and

student code of conduct. The second lesson within module one covers faculty tools, such

as a portal geared toward instructors through which attendance, grading, and student

feedback take place. Module two includes an introduction to the corporate structure, the

mission of the institution, campus locations, programs offered, types of students, the

higher education industry, and how instructors make an impact with "at risk" students.

The next module focuses on policies, from such classroom policies as homework,

grading, and incompletes, to such instructor policies as academic freedom and

governance. The second half of this third module covers the regulatory oversight of the

institution and a description of accreditation and the accreditation process. Module four

includes the campus staffing model and a description of the structure of the

administration of campuses as well as the role of the instructor by going over such

required "instructor competencies" as communication, assessment, andragogical mastery,

expertise in subject matter, utilization of technology, embracing diversity, operational

excellence, and continuous improvement. The module further describes how instructors

are evaluated throughout their tenure against those competencies. The fifth module

focuses on classroom management, specifically on the first day of class and on instructor worries, while the second part of the module includes information on assessment and evaluation. The final module covers the onboarding requirements of instructors and an in-depth discussion of faculty file and compliance requirements, as well as a discussion on faculty development and growth. The online component of onboarding ends with a checklist of next steps and an assessment to gauge instructor understanding of the content within.

Overall, Institution A provides a structured onboarding for all instructors, although it appears that the more personal aspects of working at each campus might be different based on the respective Directors of Education. The onboarding materials covered a wide range of topics, from understanding the role of instructor to the compliance aspects of the career college sector. The majority of the time, however, was focused on what the instructor should do, almost like advice or best practices.

Institution B

Like Institution A, Institution B's instructor onboarding program is also formal and standardized among campuses, and as described by the Vice President of Education, is enacted differently on each campus, dependent on the background of the campus Director of Education. The materials provided prior to the interview include access to the entire online, asynchronous onboarding program, much like that of Institution A. When printed, the online program is 65 pages, but there is also a 77-page marketing booklet about the programs, students, and student outcomes.

The Vice President of Education (VP) described how the onboarding process starts with human resources, the payroll system, shared files, and other similar items.

After the human resources part is completed, the instructor starts the New Instructor Training, the online onboarding program. The VP stated that the instructors are brought on a week prior to teaching and are expected to complete the online portion of the training prior to teaching. After the online portion, the instructor then shadows another instructor and works with the Director of Education at the campus as a mentor to solidify understanding of his or her role. According to the VP, instructors at Institution B are paid for the onboarding and the onboarding is generally the same for all instructors, although seasoned instructors will get through the online portion faster than those who have no prior teaching experience. Those overseeing the program at the campus level tend to have very different backgrounds and some do not even have a degree themselves, though all have prior teaching experience at least within the institution itself.

The primary goal of the onboarding program was described as twofold. The first is to "get [instructors] up to speed on the idiosyncratic aspects of our processes" and such things as attendance, grading, and classroom policies. The second is to help instructors understand the types of students and classroom management techniques for what works in the type of classroom the instructor will be entering. The VP described how the mentor then reinforces these goals prior to the instructor's stepping into the classroom. Further, the administrator described the online program's having four major parts: a part on how to be a great instructor, a part on how to deliver content to adult learners, a part on understanding marketing materials and what has "been sold to the customer," and a part on engaging and effective teaching strategies.

The Vice President was very open about his feeling that the program was not very effective for instructors, specifically because of the short amount of time instructors have

to go through and understand the material. The VP described how the onboarding

process takes more time than the instructor is really allowed. He did acknowledge that

the pieces in the process about taking attendance and entering grades were likely the most

effective for instructors, and that the rest comes with practice in the classroom.

The onboarding program itself includes an introduction from the CEO of the

company, welcoming the instructor and giving a feel for the environment in which the

instructor was hired. The onboarding program then features lessons on the classroom,

including how to be a good instructor, students, course syllabi, instructor resources, and

classroom management expectations. The next module covers adult learning, learning

styles, and a "pitch book" that walked the instructor through all the programs offered and

the types of students found in each program, as well as information on what careers

students can expect to have as a result of their training. The third module focuses on

"soft skills," such as engaging and encouraging students, while the final module discusses

effective teaching strategies and first-day-of-class impressions. The course ends with a

feedback assignment.

Overall, Institution B has a more condensed online onboarding program than

Institution A, but it allows more time for shadowing and mentoring as a part of the

onboarding process, although not seen in the onboarding materials.

Institution C

The onboarding program for instructors at Institution C is informal, and it does

not include the amount of documentation as the programs at Institutions A and B. While

the program is specifically overseen by the Director of Education (DOE) of the campus,

an instructor for individual programs assists with the specific onboarding of their

respective faculty. The materials provided by the DOE prior to the interview include the following: a checklist of onboarding items and forms, Instructor Standards of Conduct, a curriculum checklist, and an Employee Handbook. The printed materials come to four total pages, and the handbook's length is112 pages, mostly focused on human resources.

As the Director of Education explained, the onboarding process begins after interviews finish and an offer letter is accepted. The new instructor starts with human resources and completes such forms as an application, an I-9, a W-4, direct deposit emergency contact, job description. A new hire also signs off on various policies, such as those on a drug-free workplace and telephone monitoring. After this initial stage of entry, the instructor is logged into the computer system, the payroll system, the student information system, and the learning management system if the instructor is teaching online. Once both paperwork and systems are completed with human resources, the Director of Education then begins the specific education onboarding. The DOE goes through the student information system, clarifying how to look up students, track students, and document contact with students. Next comes a review of how to enter attendance and grades, followed by a review of the syllabi and resources for the courses the instructor will be teaching. Once the DOE finishes with these general education items, the new instructor meets with another instructor teaching in the same program; at this point the veteran instructor can answer questions specific to the program, tour the lab and other resource centers, and describe processes the DOE may not know. As stated by the DOE, "After that, we really put their feet to the fire and have them get started."

This onboarding process is typically completed in one day for daytime instructors or over the course of a few evenings for nighttime instructors. While completing the

onboarding, the instructor is on the clock and is compensated for his/her time. All instructors technically complete the same onboarding; however, those with more experience may have fewer questions during the process. The onboarding is officially overseen by the Director of Education, whose experience is based on his own seven-year teaching experience in the classroom.

According to the Director of Education, the primary purpose of the onboarding is twofold. First, the DOE can ensure he made the right hiring decision by gauging the instructor through the onboarding process; second, the instructor can ensure he or she is comfortable enough with the materials to be successful. Specifically, the DOE stated, "We want to build their comfort level." When asked to discuss other primary topics of the onboarding, the DOE focused on such items as understanding compliance with holding class for the entire scheduled session, covering all required items on syllabi in classroom instruction, and entering in attendance and grades accurately and in a timely manner.

The DOE identified the most effective aspect of the onboarding as the review of syllabi to ensure that all required items are covered for the courses the instructor would be teaching. The biggest area needing improvement in his view is the time in which the onboarding takes place. He pointed out that it happened quickly and that the instructor usually does not have a lot of time to reflect on what he or she does or doesn't understand prior to going into the classroom.

In my review of the onboarding materials provided by the institution, I noted that the checklist indicates a focus on items related to human resources. Each of the items covered deals with paperwork required to get the instructor paid or in the systems, with

only a mention of education specific training. The Instructor Standards of Conduct

material focuses on policies the instructor must follow: being professional, respecting

others, maintaining confidentiality, and not entering into relationships with students or

staff other than in a professional manner. The checklists provided by the DOE appear to

be copied from a text on what should be in a syllabus and in a lesson plan. The majority

of the documentation provided by the DOE is an Employee Handbook; this handbook is

not specific to instructors alone, however, covering the human resources policies and

procedures applicable to all employees working at the institution.

Overall, Institution C's onboarding program is informal and loosely structured.

The program focuses mostly on human resource items and covers enough instructor tasks

to help instructors understand the systems they will use and the compliance items most

important to the institution.

Institution D

Like Institution C, Institution D's instructor onboarding program is informal and

doesn't include much documentation, though it is more instructor specific than Institution

C. Also, like Institution C, the program is officially overseen by the Dean of Education,

though Program Directors onboard the instructors for their specific programs. The

materials provided prior to the interview by the DOE include the following: Faculty

Orientation Checklist (1 page), Job Description (2 pages), New Instructor Orientation

presentation (3 pages), Administrative Staff list (4 pages), Academic Calendar (1 page),

and a handout for the Faculty Development program (1 page). Printed documentation is

thus 12 pages in length.

As explained by the Dean of Education, the Program Director conducts the actual onboarding, beginning with human resources paperwork and then setting up the instructor with systems and login information through the Director of Information Technology. The Program Director provides the instructor with needed electronic resources and goes over syllabi and instructional materials. Finally, the instructor is provided an employee handbook and catalog to understand policy and procedure. The Program Director then oversees the next stage of mentoring.

The initial meeting with the Program Director typically lasts two to three hours in one day, but the Program Director continues coaching for an additional three to four hours over the course of the first quarter. During this first quarter, the Program Director completes observations and coaches the instructor based on those observations. The onboarding process is also different for each instructor depending on his or her prior experience and the coaching completed throughout the first quarter. While the instructor is meeting with the Program Director, no compensation is specifically given for the onboarding process. Since each Program Director completes the actual onboarding, the qualifications for those overseeing differ based on their respective experience; each Program Director has a teaching experience ranging from two to ten years of classroom experience. The DOE overseeing the process has both classroom and faculty management experience.

According to the Dean of Education, the primary goal of the onboarding is to make sure the instructor is adequately prepared for teaching and has the resources and support needed to "provide a high-quality teaching experience." Outside of this primary goal, the DOE discussed how the Program Directors review not only the course(s) the

instructor will teach but also the fit of those courses within the rest of the program. The DOE also mentioned the review of regulatory and accreditation items, covered to ensure instructors are doing what is expected of them, such as holding every class for the entire scheduled session. The Program Directors also focus on any specific programmatic accreditation items because the respective programs at the institution also hold programmatic accreditation.

The Dean of Education described how the mentoring and coaching were the most effective aspects of the onboarding program, observing that instructors tend to feel more supported when they have a point of contact guiding them from within the program. On a more critical level, the DOE then mentioned how he did not feel instructors were "adequately oriented to the institution as a whole." He also worried that the onboarding was not consistent, given its informality, noting that the program was an area he was hoping to improve with the Program Directors.

In reviewing the onboarding materials provided by the institution, I the Faculty Orientation Checklist followed the outline of the New Instructor Orientation presentation. Both documents cover general items about the institution: the history of the institution, administrative staff (given as a handout to instructors), the organization and structure of the institution, the campus calendar (also a handout), as well as such policies as FERPA, instructor and departmental responsibilities, accreditation, student information system, syllabi, attendance, development, classroom expectations, active learning, and the instructor development program (another handout). The items provided are not covered in much depth, but they are the talking points run through by the Dean of Education with new instructors.

Overall, Institution D's onboarding program is also informal and unstructured. Unlike Institution C, Institution D focuses more on the instructor and his or her responsibilities than on human resources items, but much of the understanding and review of the role and of other items is left up to the instructor's own further studying of the Job Description, Handbook, and School Catalog alone.

Institution E

Along with Institutions A and B, Institution E conducts an instructor onboarding program that is formal and standardized among campuses. Institution E is one of the institutions that was unable to share resources for and materials on its onboarding program prior to the interview, and so it did not allow for a video recording of the demonstration of the program; here the onboarding program is considered proprietary to the institution, its content not allowed to be shared, even for research purposes. However, a three-page document was shown, a letter to the instructor delineating the requirements of the onboarding program. The program is overseen at the corporate level by the Vice President of Academics and by a committee dedicated to reviewing the onboarding program. These individuals have over ten years' experience in the classroom and in overseeing administration of programs at career colleges. At each campus, the Director of Education oversees the onboarding of the instructors. These individuals vary in their experience, though most have been instructors at the institution for which they now oversee the onboarding.

As described by the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) for Institution E, the onboarding program is composed of two parts. The first part occurs in the 30 days prior to the instructor's being assigned courses to teach. Within this period, the instructor

is assigned a mentor to help the instructor complete a checklist of items. Once the checklist is complete in this 30-day window, the instructor is assigned courses and then must participate in ongoing development and online learning through structured lessons provided asynchronously. These lessons combine with observations to help guide the instructor in specific development. The VPAA noted that the checklist and asynchronous courses are the same for all instructors, but that specific guidance will vary by instructor based on the mentor's observations about both abilities and deficiencies. The instructor is not compensated for the onboarding portion prior to the assignment of courses, the first 30 days, because this period does not include any proprietary content. After courses are assigned, however, the instructor becomes part of the payroll system and is then compensated for continued development through the first year.

The VPAA described the goal of the onboarding program as threefold. First, he described how the program was meant to make sure the instructor had a "successful acclimation to the organization, values, and goals" of the institution, and specifically to the people found at the campuses. Second, he explained that the program is meant to ensure the instructor has an introduction to curricula and such teaching-related materials as syllabi, textbooks, and other pertinent resources. Finally, he emphasized the program's goal to make sure instructors are prepared in instructional methods, recognizing that, while they are "experts in their field, some may be changing careers because of their passion for teaching, but may not have a keen knowledge of teaching methods."

The content of the onboarding program was delivered in a three-page packet that was shown to me in the demonstration part of the interview. This packet included an introductory letter to the instructor regarding expectations. The second page included the

checklist of items to cover in the first 30 days, and the final page included the prepared lessons instructors would take during their first-year development program. The VPAA described how the lessons were meant to be completed over time, one to two lessons a month, to ensure the instructor had a "good learning experience" and was "working to improve over time."

In the first 30 days, the mentor and instructor cover the checklist of items, including policies, procedures, and handbooks; instructor technology, systems, and resources; gradebooks, attendance, emergency information, learning and student management systems; and student technology. The instructor also has to demonstrate his or her technological skills to the mentor to ensure the instructor can complete needed items throughout the tenure period. The final formal item on the checklist includes introducing the instructor to key people at the campus and to the program as a whole in order to "build collegiality." Outside of these required items, there is an option by which other topics can be added as the mentor sees fit. All factors are meant to ensure the instructor is successful and ready to start teaching from the first day.

After the 30-day onboarding, the first-year development program starts. Now the instructor begins taking the pre-created lessons available to all instructors. The first of these topics is an introduction to education as a whole and an acclimation to the organization and its schools. The following additional topics are covered: student-centered learning, policy and procedure, audience, classroom management, lesson planning, gradebooks, grading, assessment, first day, motivating students, coaching, diversity, social emotional learning, faculty leadership, and technology. As mentioned, the VPAA described how these topics are spread out over time during the first-year

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development program, with the mentor designating other topics as needed based on the observations completed throughout the year.

The VPAA asserted that the mentoring is the most effective aspect of the onboarding program, but he maintained that the introduction to the materials prior to teaching also helps prepare instructors before going into the classroom. Overall, in a more critical assessment, the VPAA admitted there was always a need to improve and revamp as they received feedback from instructors, but did not have specific areas of improvement in mind, given the vetting process the onboarding program goes through prior to implementation and on an ongoing basis. Overall, the onboarding program at Institution E is the most formal, most structured, and most fully implemented program of all those within the study.

Institution F

Institution F's instructor onboarding program is also formal and standardized among campuses, much like Institutions A, B, and E. As occurred with Institution E, the interview was unable to be recorded. But unlike Institution E, Institution F shared the Instructor Onboarding and Training Manual prior to the interview; this manual was 43 pages in length.

According to the Associate Vice President of Academic Operations (AVP), the onboarding program officially uses the Instructor Onboarding and Training Manual, which is the same for all new instructors; however, the onboarding is much different depending on whether the new instructor is going to be teaching in a trades program or in an allied health program. In trades programs, a Regional Program Director, who is the subject-matter expert in the area of instruction, is the one onboarding the new instructor.

In other programs, the academic leader of the campus or Director of Education oversees the onboarding for instructors. In the absence of a campus DOE, the AVP oversees the onboarding for new instructors. The training manual was created by the corporate office managing the campuses within Institution F. The experience of those overseeing the onboarding of individual instructors varies widely, but all have prior teaching experience in their field of instruction.

The onboarding program takes place on campus in person. While the training manual states that the onboarding occurs over four days, the current iteration of the program takes place in a one-day session. The AVP mentioned that there are plans to reinstate the amount of time to smaller sessions over four days to allow instructors time to process information. Instructors are not paid for the onboarding, but they do complete the training prior to going into the classroom. As previously mentioned, the onboarding is different based on type of program; trades programs are vastly different because of their programmatic and state regulations. The program directors tailor the training to the particular program or state.

According to the AVP, the primary goal of the program is "to make sure that when the instructor is student-facing on day one, they feel comfortable, confident, and competent to oversee the classroom setting." Included in the onboarding is a review of the following: attendance and grading to ensure instructors are comfortable with the systems; expectations for teaching, including classroom engagement; expectations for students and maintaining realistic expectations given the types of students served. Specifically, the AVP described how the onboarding is more driven by process than policy because policy training occurs outside of the academic onboarding.

The onboarding materials received start out with a welcome letter from the CEO of the corporate institution to new instructors in which is presented the institution's mission as about "student success." The manual itself divides material into the four different days. On day one, the DOE discusses the history of the institution, the institution's "way," the schools within the institution, the campus organizational structure, and the regulatory bodies overseeing accreditation of the institution. Day two includes "what we do and how we do it," while day three describes the role of the instructor, adult learners, teaching expectations, and instructional strategies. The final day's material focuses on the ongoing mentoring program offered by the institution.

Overall, the AVP described the process as being wholly effective through the processes and understanding of them and setting proper expectations for the role and usage of systems. He described two aspects of not being quite as effective: the amount of time currently used for onboarding and the discussion of policy outside the context of the processes taught in the onboarding program.

Summary

Overall, Institution E had the most robust onboarding program, even if the printed material shown in the demonstration was small. Institution E also had the biggest campuses and included more individuals across the organization who played a part in the creation process of the instructor onboarding program. Given this institution's available resources, with more staff and more campuses involved in the process, it is not surprising Institution E had a well-established and continually reviewed program for its instructors.

I made no attempt in this chapter to discuss the effectiveness of these programs, except in offering the administrators' views on effectiveness, because the purpose was

not to understand how effective the programs were, but rather to tell the narrative for what career colleges are doing in their instructor onboarding programs currently. However, the next chapter organizes the categories of information included in the programs, using the Bauer framework of best practices in onboarding, and it discusses the implications of this study for both researchers and practitioners, making makes recommendations for both.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter includes an overview of the study, the findings discovered, and the conclusions drawn; additionally, it offers recommendations for researchers and practitioners.

Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to provide insights into the onboarding practices used by the six career colleges included in this study and into why those practices were chosen. A secondary purpose was to add to a needed conversation about a sector of education not as widely studied or understood by those outside career colleges. With these institutions' focus on student-centered service, the instructor preparation to understand each college and its students becomes paramount to success because of the vital impact these instructors have on students from the first day of instruction (Oprean, 2012). The problem is that many instructors teaching in these career colleges have little to no preparation as instructors (Hentschke, Lechuga, & Tierney, 2010; Lechuga, 2006). Described by such researchers as Tinto (1990), this lack of preparation is a problem particularly because of the at-risk population that these institutions often serve and because of the crucial impact instructors can have on the success of students. However, because little research exists on career colleges in general, and even more specifically on the faculty orientation and onboarding practices at these colleges, this

study adds to the conversation by offering a narrative of the practices used by a cross section of institutions, a cross section presenting a representative sample of career colleges. In addition to the narrative, this research helps in understanding the practices within the context of a human resources framework provided by Bauer (2010), chosen given business practices are often chosen at these types of institutions.

The narrative in Chapter 4 shows that the practices tended to be documented, formal, and structured at multi-site and larger institutions, but less so at single-site or smaller institutions. Each institution included at least one in-person orientation with an academic leader on campus, but only some institutions included more in-depth, online training programs to further orient the instructor to the organization and teaching at career colleges. Common documentation included checklists, job descriptions, and employee or faculty handbooks. Half the institutions studied also documented the process through asynchronous, online onboarding that instructors were required to take. Most of the participating academic leaders mentioned a need to improve the current practices in place, with only one—the largest and most structured institution— acknowledging satisfaction with the current program.

Bauer Framework

As could be expected, the institutions with more formal programs incorporated more of the Bauer framework than those with more informal programs. This section describes each of the four Cs found in the Bauer framework, their prevalence in each institutions' onboarding program, and specific examples from each program supporting the fit within the framework. The chart below shows a high-level overview of the results, with a short explanation following the chart before getting into the details of each of the

components of the framework. The institutions are listed as A-F in the left-hand column

and correspond to the same letters as indicated in Chapter 4. The four headings in the top

row designate each of the Four Cs. For each institution, a green "high" level means many

instances of a Bauer component are prevalent and detailed. A yellow or "medium" level

means some instances occurred and/or were less detailed. A red "low" means the item

may have been mentioned but without any detail. Note that in one instance, a red "none"

indicates that the institution had no mention of culture in the onboarding program. In

fact, in that instance the academic administrator mentioned the lack of discussing culture

as a deficiency in the program.

Table 1: Summary of Instances of Bauer Framework

Institution	Compliance	Clarification	Culture	Connection
A	High	High	Medium	Low
B	Low	High	Medium	Medium
C	Low	High	None	Medium
D	Medium	High	Low	Medium
E	High	High	High	High
F	Medium	High	High	High

One of the most interesting aspects of reviewing the onboarding programs in this

way was seeing that two of the institutions with a low level of compliance showed up

throughout their documentation. This is surprising because Bauer (2010) indicated that

most companies do very well with ensuring that compliance items are covered in detail.

Further, only two of the institutions included a high level of information in compliance.

Another reason this was surprising given the highly regulated nature in which these

schools are run and the general focus these institutions have overall in the compliance

arena. One final surprising aspect of reviewing the programs was noting that Institutions

E and F included both culture and connection, the two areas that Bauer found the most

difficult to incorporate. Overall, it was interesting to observe both ends of the spectrum on what some institutions did and did not include in their onboarding.

Not surprising was the institutions' focus on role clarification; all administrators mentioned that making sure instructors knew *what* to do was an important purpose to their onboarding program. All of them focused the interview portion on conveying their goal of making sure instructors knew what to expect and how to navigate their institution, even if the administrators did not talk about the "why" behind it through compliance.

Compliance

As described in Chapter 3, the compliance aspect of the framework centers on the lowest level of information with which employees must become familiar. Compliance includes the policies, rules, and regulations employees must follow to be complete and how the employee functions within those policies (Bauer, 2010). At a high level, all institutions consistently included compliance as a major aspect throughout their onboarding programs.

Institution A's onboarding program was heavily weighted in both *compliance* and *clarification*, discussed in the next section. The onboarding program often referred to *compliance* by titling specific sections on policy and regulation (accreditation), and in the interview, the Director of Education heavily stressed policy and regulation as a major focus point for the training because of the nature of the schools. He also talked about introducing instructors to the Academic Catalog, referring to it as their as "bible" on policy and procedure. Within the onboarding program itself, *compliance* aspects were introduced briefly in the first module (as described within the program, the first module is meant to prepare instructors with high-level information needed to get started on day one)

and later discussed in much more detail in the third module under subsections titled Academic Policies and Regulatory Oversight. Institution A's review of policies covered the catalog and such student-facing policies as attendance, grading, homework, and student code of conduct; faculty-facing policies, which includes faculty role in governance, academic freedom, and copyright guidelines; and the accreditation process, including descriptions of regulatory oversight and what to expect from accreditors. The Institution also included an entire module for running through all the accreditation requirements of an instructor's faculty file, the file in which credentials, experience, development, observations, and other items are housed. Overall, Institution A referred to *compliance* often throughout the onboarding program. Out of the six modules, module one briefly reviews *compliance,* while module three is completely dedicated to the topic. And the concept is heavily reinforced by the Director of Education at the campus.

While the Vice President of Education mentioned that the campus orientation covers policies and internal processes that would fall into the *compliance* category, Institution B's asynchronous, online training did not appear to focus much on policy and procedure. The VP mentioned how the most effective pieces of the program were showing instructors how to be compliant in taking attendance and completing grades; however, because these matters are not shown in the training materials provided., the coverage of these practices must occur in the mentoring phase. Institution B did not appear to cover *compliance* in nearly the same detail as Institution A.

Institution C also did not appear to cover much by way of *compliance* other than the mention in a document titled "Instructor Standards of Conduct." The interview with the Director of Education, however, did bring up topics important to accreditation, such

as holding class for the entire scheduled period, a responsibility that would also fall under *compliance,* but this information was not referred to often and was not supported in the written materials.

While Institution D also focused mostly on *clarification*, the submitted PowerPoint presentation and the interview with the Dean of Education showed that the institution also focused on *compliance*, but this was seen more behind the "how to" aspect of its position, explaining some compliance in the context of understanding the instructor's role. In addition to describing the role of the instructor, Institution D clarified the minimum expectations of the instructor, including tying in information to accreditation requirements. The submitted job description also included elements of *compliance* in its delineation of policies the instructors must follow. The DOE mentioned these rules and regulations a couple of times during the interview, stressing how important he felt it was for instructors to understand such requirements, particularly in light of the type of school in which they were going to teach.

Institution E's focus on *compliance* was the leading item on the checklist that was shared by the Vice President of Academics: "Policies and procedures, handbooks." And this focus right at the beginning continued with a module in the online training called "Policy and Procedure." In the interview, The Vice President talked of how important it was to make sure the "instructor understands compliance and the regulatory environment," emphasizing that "all policies and procedures" are primary topics in the onboarding program. Like the other institutions, *compliance* was not only prevalent, but also frequently restated as important to the institution's onboarding program.

The final institution, Institution F, was in transition at the time of the interview, and during our discussion the Associate Vice President previewed future changes. However, even in its current form, the standardized parts of the onboarding included *compliance* as the reason behind many of the expectations of instructors. Specifically, the supplied manual described how instructors "accept the obligation to demonstrate compliance with accreditor's stated expectations," going into detail about all the regulatory bodies associated with the schools and how their expectations impact the instructor. Part of the description in the manual of Day Two's training manual also discusses policies and procedures related to teaching at Institution F. The AVP described how the Regional Program Directors also discuss *compliance* in their particular training programs of new instructors. However, the AVP specifically mentioned how *compliance* was an area he felt the institution's onboarding needed improvement in, stating that it planned to do more in that area in the next iteration of its program.

Clarification

The next Bauer (2010) level of established programs is that of *clarification*. On this level, administrators strive to ensure the employee has role clarification, introducing the employee to his/her job description and to the metrics by which performance will be measured and evaluated. All of the programs included information on role clarification, and most of them acknowledged including this information in order to help the instructor be successful in a new role. These institutional administrators all understood that the instructors were coming from other industries.

Role Clarification was another aspect of the Bauer framework that Institution A covered extensively in the instructor onboarding program. The first module of the

program specifically discussed its purpose as the preparation of its instructors for the first day of class to help them understand their role; this module included information on curriculum and coursework, planning for class, and how to perform such required activities as taking attendance and entering grades. The second lesson of the first module of the onboarding program introduced instructors to the various tools that they need to use in order to be successful—one of them being the faculty portal on which instructors enter information and access course materials. The fourth module specifically called out "The Role of the Instructor" and included a review of the "Faculty Competencies" and how instructors are evaluated against those competencies. The fifth module also focused on the role of the instructor through topics like "Classroom Management," Creating an Engaged Learning Environment," and "Assessment and Evaluation." Finally, the sixth module of the onboarding program reviewed other onboarding requirements and miscellaneous items related to teaching at the institution. Overall, *clarification* appeared the most often in Institution A's onboarding materials. Instructors were then assessed on their overall understanding of their role, and they had to earn a minimum 80% on this final assessment.

Like Institution A, Institution B's online training for new instructors covered *role clarification* in much detail. In fact, the majority of the asynchronous course focused on understanding "Aspects of Being a Great Instructor." Unlike Institution A, though, Institution B also created mini-assignments throughout the training for the instructors to touch base on their understanding of their role. For *role clarification*, the online training covered the "Importance of a Course Syllabus," "Instructor Resource Center in Moodle," "Classroom Management & Expectations," and "Adult Learning and Learning Styles."

Instructors were taken through each topic, with PowerPoint bullets used to highlight key information. For example, the Institution identified three key aspects of being a great instructor: "deliver competency content, scaffold in soft skills, and perfect your ability to entertain & engage." The following slides then described each of the three in more detail, ending with an assignment to test understanding. The program did not describe how the assignments are graded or how instructors "pass." Overall, Institution B covered *role clarification* in much detail, with no focus, however, on how instructors will be evaluated against the requirements.

Role clarification was a matter than appeared heavily in the interview with the Director of Education at Institution C. While the Institution provides little onboarding materials to instructors outside an Employee Handbook, which is mostly focused on Human Resources, the DOE described how the majority of his onboarding with instructors focused on what they needed to know in the classroom. The in-person training thus covers how to take attendance and enter grades in the student information system. The DOE also covers the course syllabus in detail and, as covered in *compliance*, the importance of and the reasons behind sticking to the syllabus. *Clarification* is then further addressed by a content-area instructor in the *connection* part of the onboarding. There was not a checklist of items covered by the DOE, nor was there other supporting documentation to show the training was consistent from instructor to instructor. The process at Institution C is very informal, and covering the basic information on how to function with the systems but not supplying much detail on the how and why of being a good instructor other than grading and attendance. This contrasted with first two institutions' approaches.

Like Institution C, which had few printed materials for instructors and which relied mostly on informal one-on-one orientation, Institution D also focused most of the orientation topics around *role clarification* and making sure the instructor understood the job description and the associated tasks. Both the given PowerPoint presentation and job description focused on the role itself, conveying expectations and guidelines for effectiveness. The Dean of Education also discussed how this is a focus during the in-person onboarding, specifically making sure instructors know how to take attendance and enter grades. As did Institution C, Institution D used seasoned instructors to give the "how to" in the given departments, here through their Program Directors. Both these institutions focused heavily on the what to do and only a little on the why to do it.

Similar to all the other institutions, Institution E's formal program included many checklist items and online training modules covering *role clarification*. Instructors learn about the technology they need to use for teaching and how to perform such tasks as using the gradebook and taking attendance. They also learn about classroom management, student-centered learning, lesson planning, grading, assessment, what to do on the first day, and motivating students—all through the online modules during the first-year development program. When asked about the primary goal of the onboarding program, Institution E's representative described how introducing the instructor to their role was the second and third of the three most important goals. He discussed the priority of making sure new instructors know about curricula-related material and instructional methods key to their success, especially with those instructors "who may be changing careers because of their passion for teaching" but who, because of being "experts in their field," may not already know about teaching methods per se. The Vice President often

mentioned that the instructors' understanding of the teaching role and of methods for fulfilling that role was vital in helping them and their students achieve; as such, *role clarification* plays a large role in Institution E's onboarding program.

Institution F was no different than any of the other described programs in its focus on *role clarification* for its new instructors. The provided manual provided topics on "what [instructors] do and how [they] do it." In fact, of the four-day training described, two of the days focus on role clarification, with day three specifically focusing on the "role expectations and job description." *Role clarification* covers topics such as entering attendance and grades, communicating with students, and holding realistic expectations for students. Also included are topics such as adult learners, teaching expectations, and instructional strategies. *Role clarification* was thus the most standardized and focused aspect of Institution F's onboarding program, encompassing "Making sure that when the instructor is student facing on day one they feel comfortable, confident and competent to oversee the classroom setting."

Culture

The third level of onboarding deals with *culture*. In this area administrators provide an employee with the formal and informal norms of the organization and how his or her role fits within the organization (Bauer, 2010). Administrators also teach the employee how to navigate the organization without upsetting norms, something that is typically much harder to teach and something that takes the employee longer to understand than most other aspects of the onboarding process. Not all of the onboarding programs in this study included references to the culture of the organization; in fact, one

institution specifically mentioned needing to focus more in this area, and this mention came without my prompting on the categories being studied.

Of the six onboarding modules for Institution A, the entire second module was dedicated to describing the corporate, campus, and student culture. The module reviewed the corporate structure, including campus contacts and how they fit within that structure. The second half of the module included information about the student population, including demographics and techniques for assisting "at risk" students. In the interview, the Director of Education mentioned spending a lot of time in orientation on culture; he explained how the first topic covered is helping new instructors become "familiar with our school, with our school's history, with the mission and objectives of the campus." The DOE impressed on me how important understanding the culture was in order for an instructor to be a success at Institution A.

Institution B also introduced new instructors to the student *culture* they would encounter, first by describing general student demographics. In the online training, instructors completed a "Pitch Book" assignment in which they reviewed a lengthy document concerning the programs and types of careers students may expect to pursue; this information appeared largely driven by marketing and was over half of the program, when the materials are printed on paper. The Vice President of Education mentioned during the interview that one of the goals was to help instructors understand "the type of student they're going to encounter," thus adding to the discussion on *culture* in the mentoring phase of the onboarding program. Institution B emphasized understanding the culture even in the beginning video featuring the CEO and continued to touch on the topic throughout the online program.

Unlike the first two institutions, Institution C did not cover *culture* in any detail either in the materials provided or in the conversation with the Director of Education. The DOE focused much of the interview on the *role clarification* already described above and a little in the *connection* aspect to be described in the next section. Like Institution C, the Dean of Education at Institution D noted that *culture* was the least effective aspect of the institution's training, even with no prompting about the Bauer framework. The institution made a small attempt by describing the history of the campus and the corporate ownership, but even in the words of the one conducting the orientation, this was an area he would like to see improved at the institution.

Like the other two areas described with Institution E, *culture* is also a structured part of the onboarding process. The three-page packet that I was shown during the interview included a letter to the new hire describing how the institution's focus was on the student-centered culture and institutional culture. In addition to the packet, two of the modules included in the first-year development program were about the culture and diversity of teaching with the institution. The Vice President of Academics described how this was one of the primary goals of the onboarding: "first to ensure success acclimation to the organization, values, goals, specifically the people, and the institution." Later in the interview, he also referenced how important it was to "introduce [instructors] to the culture and expectations to be successful." *Culture* appeared evident throughout Institution E's onboarding experience for new instructors.

Day One of Institution F's four-day onboarding program focused on the culture of the overall organization and of the specific campus. In the training manual provided, the packet started off with a letter from the CEO discussing the culture Institution F has built

and the focus on the belief "that we live by our core values each and every day." Day One of the training highlighted the history of the organization, the "Institution F Way," and the culture's ability to get all the schools within the institution to work together. Outside of this brief review, *culture* didn't appear much throughout the training manual, however, and it wasn't heavily emphasized by the Associate Vice President because, as he mentioned, the focus was mostly on *role clarification* and what instructors had to do.

Connection

The final level is *connection*, which gives the employee the network of individuals and information that will help he or him be successful (Bauer, 2010). Connecting with current employees can come in many forms, from informal to formal mentoring, work groups, and idea sessions, all ways to give the employee a sense of community and support. While each institution had at least a reference to establishing a connection, not all onboarding programs formally or officially made the actual connection for the instructor; at times, only names or departments were given for reference, leaving to the instructor the responsibility of introductions when or if needed.

Institution A's asynchronous online onboarding program included *connection* but only through references to those on campus. One reason for this could have been that the program was created for multiple campuses across multiple states, so instead of introducing instructors to specific individuals, the materials often referenced position titles, either at the campus or corporate level. For example, the beginning of the program included a welcome message and a statement that "if you encounter any technical difficulties throughout the online training, please contact Tech Support whose phone number is available on your right-hand navigation bar under Tech Support." This

welcome message also introduced the instructor to the "Director of Education (DOE),"

who is referenced as the instructor's main point of contact during and after the online

orientation. Other references to *connection* included another main point of contact with

the "Program Director or Lead Instructor" who would help guide the new hire in his or

her role, as well as delivering a description of the matrix-type organization and how each

campus department rolls up to leaders at the corporate entity, and finally a description of

each campus department leader and how the instructor might interact with each. Such

leaders included Campus Director, Director of Education, Director of Admissions,

Director of Financial Services, Director of Career Services, Program Director/Lead

Instructor, Registrar, Librarian/Coordinator, and Online Learning Coordinator. While

Institution A referred to individuals on campus on a regular basis throughout the

onboarding program, the instructor was not specifically introduced to those individuals

on campus, and the implication was that the Director of Education would help guide the

instructor to individuals as needed. In the interview, the Director of Education mentioned

how he has instructors shadow other instructors to build *connection*, but the process was

not described in the onboarding program as one pertaining to all campuses across the

entire organization, and thus appeared to be inconsistent.

Institution B began its asynchronous online onboarding program with a welcome

video from the CEO of the parent company. The video gave a face to the company, and

in the video, with the CEO attempting to connect with the instructors. Another activity

the Institution used to build *connection* was highlighted in both the online training and in

the interview with the Vice President of Education: shadowing another instructor. Each

campus was expected to have each new instructor observe another instructor's classroom

and then complete an assignment within the online training. Further, the Director of

Education at the campus assigns the instructor a mentor to "solidify training" and assist

the instructor moving forward. Here, Institution B not only stressed *connection*, starting

with the CEO, but also introduced the instructor to on-campus staff for assistance. And

the practice was consistent among all campuses within the organization.

Like Institution B, the Directors of Education from Institutions C and D both

described how new instructors are "paired with an instructor that's in their program"

(Institution C) or "doing observations and coaching" with a Program Director (Institution

D) to complete time in the content-specific classroom and understand how to do such

things as place orders for laboratory supplies and review content-specific materials. The

"pairing" or mentoring was not structured and was not shown in the printed onboarding

materials for either institution to understand the topics or requirements of the seasoned

instructor assisting the new instructor. The processes at both Institutions C and D for

connection appeared loose and not consistent from instructor to instructor but was at least

a touch point for new instructors. The DOE at Institution D specifically noted that this

area of *connection* was one of the most effective aspects, even if not formalized, and

included a few slides in the instructor orientation on introducing new instructors to the

other department leaders.

Institution E's *connection* was among the most formalized and consistent, as was

the entire onboarding program. The Vice President of Academics described how each

new instructor is "assigned a mentor who then works with them for the [first year

development program]." The mentor helps the new instructor and further builds

connection by helping with "Introductions to the people and programs to build

collegiality" and by creating specific topics just for the new instructor based on their interactions. With Institution E, this mentoring lasts a full year and is meant to "help the instructor feel a part of the overall organization." Even with my getting only a glimpse at the three-page letter to the instructor and then seeing the outline of the courses the instructor takes, the *connection* the new instructor received from the beginning was among the strongest in the institutions studied.

Institution F's *connection* through mentoring was also highly structured, starting with the final day's description in the training manual of the ongoing mentoring program offered by the institution. Here the mentoring program came in two stages: three days of observation, then weekly touchpoints between the new instructor and the mentor for eight weeks. During the observation days, the new instructor watched the mentor teaching in the classroom in both didactic and lab environments, culminating in the mentor's answering any questions the new instructor had at the end of the observation days. The mentor then worked with the instructor for the next eight weeks to ensure the new instructor understands his or her role and has all questions answered in order to feel "comfortable, confident, and competent" in the classroom.

As described, each institution in some way touched the Bauer framework, but this varied widely depending on the formality of each program. All the institutions specifically mentioned *compliance* and *role clarification*, but not the other two other areas. *Culture* was the part of the framework specifically named least often among all six institutions, while *connection* was sometimes implied but not stated outright, although still apparent.

The Bauer framework, explained in Chapter 4, helps situate what the institutions are doing with best practices in onboarding as suggested by the Society for Human Resource Management. As institutions run with often very business-like practices, using the Bauer framework helps situate their academic practices on the same plane with business best practices. As shown, all institutions included both *compliance* or policy and rule training in their programs, often linked to the regulatory environment in which the institutions are run. All institutions also included lengthy discussions and/or documentation surrounding *role clarification* or making sure instructors understood what they had to do and how to do it. Yet often lacking here was a discussion on how instructors would be evaluated against those expectations and requirements. Similarly, all of the institutions covered the history and mission of their respective organizations, but only half appeared to discuss *culture* in any detail to help instructors situate how important what they do is within the institutional mission and goals. Finally, all the institutions in some way showed *connection* by introducing instructors to others, but only one didn't include some form of mentoring or coaching by another seasoned, instructor.

This study was limited by the amount of access I was able to get into the participating institutions, as well as by the lack of access by those who were unwilling to share their proprietary practices. I encourage institutions to be more willing to participate in further research in order to broaden the research in onboarding practices at these types of institutions.

Recommendations for Researchers

As Hentschke, Lechuga, and Tierney (2010) and Lechuga (2006) show, there is little research in general surrounding career colleges. And much of the research that has

been conducted has been by those outside the sector trying to understand the practices in institutions with subtle yet important differences than community colleges and other traditional university systems. The first recommendation for future researchers is to continue studying proprietary career colleges and adding to the narrative of what these institutions do. Without a better and fuller understanding, misconceptions about these institutions will continue to guide public opinion. More research can help build a more accurate narrative of what these schools do, why they do it, and how they do it.

The second recommendation for researchers is to go beyond giving a narrative about onboarding programs and start analyzing the effectiveness of these programs. Effectiveness could be measured by student outcomes, as required by the accrediting bodies with which these institutions work. Effectiveness could also be measured by interviewing new instructors prior to engaging in the onboarding programs and again at the conclusion of the training to get their perspective. Yet another way would be to help institutions complete more in-depth program evaluations using student data, faculty interviews, and other internal measurements to gauge effectiveness. Even further, students at these institutions could be interviewed to gauge their perspective on instructors' preparedness for the classroom.

A final recommendation for researchers linked to faculty onboarding and orientation is to begin building a theory for approaching faculty onboarding at these types of institutions given the types of instructors these institutions employ. While theories may be close to that suggested in Chapter 2, career colleges often lack scholarship requirements and tenure review, areas in which much of the research on faculty work and development is situated. Possible theories would combine both faculty-driven

organizational socialization theory and business practices to help provide information to institutions driven by business decisions and not run by academics and faculty governance.

Researchers may also want to begin both narrative and effectiveness research on faculty development programs moving beyond the initial orientation and onboarding of career college instructors. Enough research from and about community colleges, those specifically closest to the types of instructors at career colleges, suggests the importance of continued development. And career college accreditors require continued faculty and professional development, a concern meriting further research on how these colleges approach development through the faculty life cycles and the effectiveness of those programs. Overall, there are many directions future researchers can take from these recommendations; practitioners, however, may see more of an impetus for beginning their own institutional research into their own practices given the results of this study.

Recommendations for Practitioners

First, proprietary career colleges need to realize that changing the public perception of these schools and their practices starts by opening up and telling the story of what "we" really do, not just what people think we do. In many respects, career colleges are not so different from community colleges, but the public perception of community colleges is much more positive than the perception of career colleges. However, in other respects, what career colleges do is often under much stricter regulatory oversight, a matter that the public should also be more aware of. Because of the proprietary mindset and business mindset that rule these career colleges, their practitioners often do not share what they do because of a concern over others using the

same practices. However, when such topics as orientation and onboarding are the focus, rather than competition, the research isn't likely to impact the bottom line or lead to stealing trade secrets. Moreover, what it can do is gain a more positive perception of career colleges.

Institutions should also realize the importance of faculty orientation and onboarding as an organizational socialization process and an important factor in helping promote faculty confidence and, in turn, student success. Even smaller institutions with more limited research or more limited funds directed their way should see the benefit of putting both time and money into creating orientation programs that help their instructors be successful from day one. Clearly, their confidence and ability to assist students are paramount to students themselves being successful. Continued sharing of these practices, therefore, even at conferences geared toward career colleges, may also help smaller institutions benefit from the learnings at larger institutions.

One recommendation for all institutions, large and small, is to take a new look at their current onboarding and orientation programs, especially using the Bauer (2010) framework to see if the institution is meeting the Four Cs suggested for successful onboarding programs: compliance, clarification, culture, and connection. Institutions can then start improving on or adding to their programs by starting with the lowest level, compliance, and working toward the most difficult, connection.

Another recommendation is for institutions to document the process they do use, especially to ensure that the onboarding is consistent for all new instructors. Even beginning with a simple checklist of items can start a renewed focus on helping new instructors be prepared and confident for their first day in the classroom. Once a

checklist is in place, institutions may want to focus next on an initial in-person orientation session covering the highlights of the many topics needing coverage. As these items take shape one by one, even the smallest institution can start developing a longer onboarding program to cover either in-person meetings or some form of continued online development, all to help instructors further understand their institution, students, and their role in the organization. Finally, institutions can utilize programs already created by companies like the Center for Excellence in Education and its Max Knowledge platform to supplement institution-specific training with general best practices in teaching training.

Further, institutions should start looking more closely and with more interest at the instructors already in place as a source of vital information, creating mentoring programs to guide new instructors. This recommendation is likely the most expensive to implement, given the need to compensate the largely adjunct teaching population for their time and effort; however, having a good mentor is akin to having great instructors in the classroom. Student success depends on good instructors, and good instructors become just that by learning from those who have been in their shoes: practitioner to teacher. Even a short mentoring program has the prospect of gaining needed buy-in both from current faculty, who may feel they do not have a voice, and from new faculty joining their institution, who may feel excited and nervous.

Overall, the biggest recommendation I can make is for those at the decision-making level at career college to take the task of orientation and onboarding of new instructors professionally and seriously and then to invest in the experience wholeheartedly in order to help promote student success.

Conclusion and Summary

With student success being the primary goal of career colleges, these institutions should start taking a look at a critical component of instructor success, faculty orientation and onboarding, as a means to that primary goal. Enough research exists showing how important the instructor in the classroom is to student success, and enough research exists on how community colleges and other traditional colleges approach this task for career colleges to see how vital these programs are. From initial orientation to mentoring to continued development programs, career colleges should begin the process of reviewing their practices and building upon them to improve instructor preparedness and confidence. Instructors who have previously worked in careers such as cosmetology, nursing, healthcare, trades, and other similar professions, can attest to the need for orientation programs to help in the transition from practitioner to instructor. They will verify the truth behind the dictum that the more focus an institution can put into this process, the more successful the instructor may be. Institutions that can effectively create engaging and meaningful orientation will set the stage for what the instructors will do in the classroom with their students.

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APPENDIX A

Invitation to Participate in Research: Surveys and Interviews

Research Project Title: Understanding Instructor Onboarding Practices at Career Colleges

You have been asked to participate in a research project conducted by Elizabeth Fogle from the University of Dayton, in the Department of Educational Leadership,

The purpose of this study will be to provide insights into the onboarding practices used by the career colleges included in this study and why those practices were chosen. With these institutions' focus on student-centered service, the instructor preparation to understand the college and their students becomes paramount to success because of the impact these instructors have on students from the first day (Oprean, 2012). Currently, Career College Central (2016) and the Imagine America Foundation (2009), key research and information resources for career college leaders, often do not address onboarding programs. However, the research and resources focus heavily on improving students' classroom experience and improving instructor performance as a part of that goal (Career College Central, 2016; Imagine America Foundation, 2009). Identifying how a robust onboarding experience can improve student experience is critical to the success of career colleges.

You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

- Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right not to answer any question and to stop participating at any time for any reason. Collecting and sending the documentation requested will take about 30 minutes; and participating in an interview will take an additional 30 minutes.
- You will not be compensated for your participation.
- All of the information you tell us will be confidential.
- If this is a recorded interview, only the researcher and faculty advisor will have access to the recording and it will be kept in a secure place.
- If this is a written or online survey, only the researcher and faculty advisor will have access to your responses. If you are participating in an online survey: We will not collect identifying information, but we cannot guarantee the security of the computer you use or the security of data transfer between that computer and our data collection point. We urge you to consider this carefully when responding to these questions.

- I understand that I am ONLY eligible to participate if I am over the age of 18.

Please contact the following investigators with any questions or concerns:
Name of Student, University of Dayton E-mail Address, Phone Number:
Elizabeth Fogle, efogleyoung1@udayton.edu, 937-935-6441

Name of Faculty Supervisor, University of Dayton E-mail Address, Phone Number:
Dr. Steven Hinshaw, shinshaw1@udayton.edu

If you feel you have been treated unfairly, or you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact Candise Powell, J.D., Chair of the Institutional Review Board at the University of Dayton, IRB@udayton.edu; Phone: (937) 229-3515.

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol

1. Please describe the onboarding program at your institution.

    a. How does onboarding take place?

    b. Where does onboarding take place?

2. How long is the onboarding program? Specify if hours, days, or weeks:

    _____

3. Are instructors paid or compensated for the onboarding? If so, how/how much?

4. Is the onboarding program the same for all instructors or do those with prior teaching experience have a different onboarding program?

    a. If the programs differ, in what ways do they differ?

5. Who oversees the onboarding program and what is his/her background related to running the program?

6. What would you describe is the primary goal of the onboarding program for instructors?

7. Describe the primary topics covered in the onboarding program, and for each, explain the purpose of each topic.

8. Describe aspects of the program you see as being effective.

9. Describe aspects of the program you don't feel are as effective.

APPENDIX C

Code Book

Below is a sample of the types of codes used to designate the Bauer framework.

Institution	Compliance	Clarification	Culture	Connection
A	Accreditation standards

Standard syllabus

Not permitted…

Policies, rules

Regulatory authority | Faculty tools

Systems

Resources

Instructor role

Instructor competencies

Effective instruction

Evaluations | Relationship

Students first

Meet our students

Student demographics

Familiar with school

Mission, objectives | Contact tech support

Director of Education main contact |
| B | Internal processes

Policies, classroom policies | Classroom management

Classroom expectations

Competency content

Effective teaching strategies | Type of student

Student demographic | Shadow a teacher

Work with Director of Education |

Institution	Compliance	Clarification	Culture	Connection
C	Systems Policies	Attendance and grading Education specific training Standards of conduct	The way we work Mission Core values	Pair with instructor
D	Accreditation Policies Expectations Programmatic requirements	Classroom – getting started Active learning Make sure they understand	N/A	Program Director orientation Conducted by Program Director Coaching
E	Policies and procedures, handbooks Policy and Procedure	Instructor technology Demonstrating skills Classroom Management Lesson Planning Gradebooks Grading/ Assessment First Day	Introduction to Education, organization, schools Student Centered Learning Audience Feel a part of organization	Introductions to the people and programs to build collegiality Mentor

Institution	Compliance	Clarification	Culture	Connection
F	Compliance Accreditation Regulatory triad	Expectations of teaching Understanding processes What the role really is What we do and how we do it Role expectations	The institution F way System of schools	Instructor mentoring program Mentor