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Faculty and Administrators Working Together in a Community College: A Retrospective Case Study

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FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATORS WORKING TOGETHER IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE: A RETROSPECTIVE CASE STUDY

By

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DEDICATION

To my family

and all who endeavor to work together

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By Paul J. Charpentier

Thesis Advisors: Dr. Suzanne Estler and Dr. Constance Perry

An Abstract of the Thesis Presented
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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Community colleges are facing many large-scale problems, such as increased accountability, in a time of shrinking budgets and students who are often unprepared for college level work. The implications of these problems to institutions that are striving to maintain access to higher education for vulnerable populations are grave. These problems, and others, require creative solutions that involve numerous individuals and groups across the institution.

The purpose of this retrospective case study was to learn how faculty and administrators experienced collaboration in the context of a community college. The study was carried out at Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) in South Portland, Maine by studying a two-year long attempt at collaboration between faculty and administrators. Data were collected through a combination of interviews with six participants, followed by a focus group of five of these participants, document collection, and participant observation. Through an iterative process (Miles & Huberman, 1994), data were subjected to open coding and then focused coding with codes drawn from the literature using the program HyperResearch. Analysis was undertaken utilizing matrices and concept maps to uncover patterns and significant instances.

Collaboration and its relationship to cooperation played an important role in the study. Clearly defining collaboration and cooperation lead to identification of two distinct groups within the participants. The implications for future practice in this study were found in three specific areas: (1) collaborative capacity in a community college setting; (2) topics appropriate for collaborative methods; and (3) viewing collaboration as a dance between collaborators and cooperators. To build collaborative capacity requires a foundation of trust that is, in part, built and maintained through successive collaborative endeavors. Every attempt at collaboration is an opportunity to build trust and create connections between groups and individuals that can be used to aid future collaborations. The topic of the attempted collaboration should be one that promotes interaction among participants -- preferably a topic with which many in the community are already concerned. Envisioning intra-organizational collaboration as a dance between collaborators and cooperators helps to make the needs of both groups explicit.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"The future of public education, if that education is to be effective, will demand change in the form of more coordination and collaboration among all participants"

Fishbaugh, 1997, p. 151

Collaboration is increasingly common as a tool in business, healthcare (D'Amour, Ferranda-Videla, Rodriguez, & Beaulieu, 2005), public policy work, and higher education (Austin & Baldwin, 1991). The choice to use collaborative techniques is due in part to an increasing number of challenges needing solutions that require broad comprehensive analysis, specialized technical knowledge, solutions that protect the interests of numerous parties (Coughlin, Hoben, Manskopf, Quesada, & Wondolleck, 1999; Fishbaugh, 1997; Gray, 1989a) and buy-in by numerous stakeholders (Birnbaum, 2002).

Studies have documented the advantage of collaborative techniques to include the management and the effectiveness of day-to-day operations (Kezar & Lester, 2009; Kuh, 2005) with an increase in innovation and a decrease in the time needed to innovate (Googins & Rochlin, 2000; Senge et al., 2000). Collaboration brings together different perspectives and knowledge bases within the institution (Mohrman, Cohen, & Mohrman, 1995) thereby increasing the cognitive complexity of analysis and resulting in greater reliability of decisions (Googins & Rochlin, 2000; Thagard, 1997). Scholars note that collaboration is associated with greater buy-in by stakeholders (Birnbaum, 1998) and increased employee motivation and morale (Birnbaum, 2002; Googins & Rochlin, 2000),

better services (Wohlstetter, Malloy, Hentschke, & Smith, 2004), and cost effectiveness and efficiency (Birnbaum, 1998; Googins & Rochlin, 2000; Hagedoorn, 1993).

The use of collaborative techniques in higher education has been linked to improvement in teaching and learning (Boyer, 1990) and an increase in innovation, as well as positive effects on management and governance (Googins & Rochlin, 2000). In the increasingly turbulent environment of higher education, collaboration may also help to decrease environmental uncertainty -- a situation where factors outside the institution are changing and uncertain (Connolly, Jones, & Jones, 2007).

Although it is fashionable to champion collaboration in higher education (Magolda, 2001), collaboration is not always the best way to approach every problem or the best solution in every context. The organization's capacity to collaborate is an important consideration (Fitzgerald, 2004; Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, & Allen, 2001; Huxham, 1993; Munkvold, Weiseth, & Larsen, 2009). Institutions of higher education are especially challenging in this regard because the work of faculty is very independent and administrative structures don't often support collaboration, especially across disciplines (Beyerlein, Beyerlein, & Kennedy, 2005; Bohen & Stiles, 1998). When faculty and administrators do attempt to collaborate, they often negotiate compromise rather than creating the most effective solution (McMillin, 2002).

Add to these challenges the group dynamic problems that can arise when team members feel they are representing their professions and spend time defending how things are done rather than thinking in new ways (Kvarnstrom, 2008). Also, as groups become larger, the process of collaboration becomes increasingly difficult (Johnson &

Johnson, 2000). Switching to a process of using representative stakeholders from universal direct involvement may trade gains in small group process with difficulties implementing the decisions of the representative stakeholders with the groups they represent (Gray, 1989a).

Problem Statement

Community colleges are facing many large-scale problems such as increased accountability in a time of shrinking budgets and students who are often unprepared for college level work. The implications of these problems to institutions that are striving to maintain access to higher education for vulnerable populations are grave. Many of the students who enter college never earn a degree, and are then burdened by the debt they took on in the process. Increasing tuition is difficult due to its direct effect on access for the economically disadvantaged. Increased use of adjunct faculty, who earn a fraction of what full-time faculty earn, provides less access to advising and other critical services for students, thereby affecting student success. These problems require creative solutions that involve numerous individuals and groups across the institution.

Yet, as Chapter 2 will show, much of the research on collaboration, even when centered on higher education, does not address the unique context of the community college. We need to know more about how faculty and administrators experience collaboration in community colleges as a foundation for enhanced effectiveness in collaborative problem solving. We need to know how their experiences relate to the broader literature on collaboration. Knowing this would provide clues on how to involve more community members in the process, develop better solutions, and broaden the implementation of collaborative decisions.

The goal of this study was to learn how faculty and administrators experienced an intended collaborative process in the context of a community college. The study is a systematic examination and analysis of one attempt at collaboration in a community college with the hope of informing the research and practice at other institutions/organizations. The following case of attempted intra-organizational collaboration (collaboration between groups and individuals internal to a single organization), used a small group of stakeholders to serve as a catalyst for action, provided an opportunity to study the phenomenon of collaboration in a community college.

The Context for this Study

I was involved in this attempt at collaboration from the early planning stages, although I did not know at the time that I would later use this endeavor as a retrospective case study. My involvement as grant director provided me with in-depth knowledge about the process of this particular attempt. My knowledge of the events as a participant, coupled with document analysis, interviews, and a focus group of other participants provides an excellent opportunity to critically study how faculty and administrators experienced an attempt at collaboration in a community college. The following narrative relates essential background about this case.

This study took place at Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) starting in the summer of 2005 and ending in January of 2007. Located in South Portland Maine, the college occupies a former military installation built to protect Portland Harbor. Historic brick buildings that once were used as officers' quarters, a hospital, and other military uses are now converted to more peaceful, educational uses. The campus enjoys

scenic views of Casco Bay and its islands, a sandy beach, and even has a campus lighthouse – Maine's landmark Spring Point Light. The college currently has more than 7,000 students attending both daytime and evening classes in over 44 different associate degree and certificate programs ranging from the liberal arts to nursing and traditional technical programs like automotive and culinary arts.

Maine Governor John Baldacci signed the legislation transforming the state's technical colleges into community colleges in July 2003. By the fall of 2005, enrollment at Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) had grown by 44%. This growth came with challenges as the following paragraph, taken from an SMCC grant application written to address the various challenges, attests.

The proportion of SMCC students with one or more significant barriers to success in higher education grew as the curriculum and student body became more diverse. The majority of students entering in the fall of 2003 began their college careers in developmental courses to address deficiencies in mathematics and/or English. Two thirds (68%) had one or more characteristics that contribute to a high risk of failure: 33% were first-generation college students, 11% were low income, and an additional 14% were both. Those with disabilities constituted 11% of the entering students. Nearly half of those who applied for financial aid were eligible for federal Pell Grants, and 40% of all students did not apply for financial aid: a characteristic that lead many to wonder how well students understood the complexities of applying for and receiving financial aid. The percentage of students enrolling in the community college directly out of high school increased 36% in the first year (2003-2004). Many are students who, in the past, did not consider attending college to be a viable option, were uncertain about career direction;

hence, there was enormous growth in the general studies program. Students arrived on campus lacking an understanding of college culture and academic expectations, which may translate into poor academic performance. This was not necessarily a reflection of academic ability, but rather a symptom of social and psychological barriers to success (Vickery, 2005). While SMCC's retention and transfer rates were still above the national averages for two-year colleges, they were dropping (Vickery, 2005). SMCC faced a problem shared by much of undergraduate higher education in the United States - retention and a lack of student success. This problem is especially acute in community colleges due to their higher percentages of first generation and low socio-economic status students (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

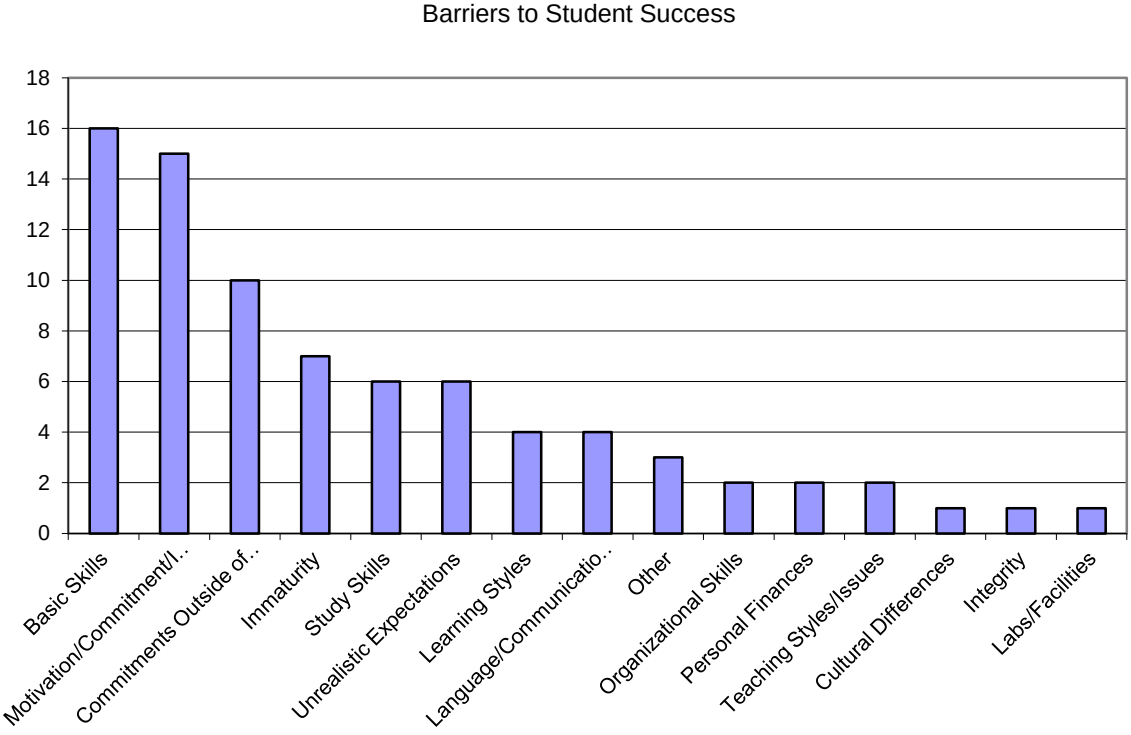
Faculty expressed concerns to the administration that these new students were not ready for college. At the request of the President these concerns were addressed at a faculty development day in January of 2005 (which all full-time faculty were required to attend). A presentation entitled "What's the Matter with Kids Today," focused on the nature of the student population, differences between high school and college, and how learner-centered teaching practices could help address the challenges faculty were facing. As part of this presentation, faculty were asked about the problems they faced in the classroom and how they thought these problems could be addressed. Working in small groups of six to ten people – predominantly full-time faculty with some adjunct faculty and staff present – they brainstormed possible solutions to the problems they faced.

Figure 1 shows the barriers to success that faculty and staff identified during this workshop and the frequency with which each category was mentioned. The most frequently mentioned barrier to student success was a lack of basic skills, closely

followed by a lack of motivation. These were followed by outside commitments and, finally, a lack of maturity. In all, 15 barriers to success were identified during the workshop. Appendix A is a compilation of the barriers and their possible solutions collected on that January professional development day.

The MetLife Foundation grant. The first time most community members heard about a new initiative on student engagement was April of 2005 in an e-mail from Diane Vickery, the Dean of Students at Southern Maine Community College (SMCC). She was looking for people to work on the problem of student engagement and retention at SMCC. I expressed interest, not knowing that I would eventually be asked to direct the grant, or that I would eventually decide to do a retrospective study of its collaborative aspects for this dissertation. At that time I was an Assistant Professor in Culinary Arts and Faculty Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence at SMCC.

Figure 1. Results of January 2005 Workshop



The MetLife Foundation invited SMCC to apply for a grant on student engagement and retention. The Dean of Students, along with the Academic Dean, assembled a team to write the grant. That team included the Assistant Dean of Curriculum, another administrator who worked with local high schools, and myself. SMCC's application addressed faculty and administrators' concerns about the "quality" of today's students by seeking faculty and administration's collaboration in sharing practical knowledge and investigating the existing scholarship to help shape classroom practices to benefit these students (Appendix B).

Two sources of knowledge about teaching: the research literature and embedded practical knowledge, were seen by the grant writers to be of critical importance. Embedded practical knowledge is the tacit knowledge about teaching that already exists on campus in the individual practitioners, but that is all too often left hidden behind closed classroom doors (Wheelan, 2005). The grant writers reasoned that to draw solely from the literature would ignore the wealth of experience that exists about what works in the context of the institution. Relying only on the literature could also undermine the intrinsic motivation of potential collaborators by denying the competence of the very people we wished to collaborate with. Yet if they relied solely on embedded knowledge, they insulated themselves from a rich source of research knowledge that would not only introduce new ideas but could validate and thereby help spread best practices that were currently isolated in their use.

The MetLife Foundation awarded funding to SMCC in the summer of 2005. During that summer, senior administrators met with me to strategize who would be on the

task force. Looking at retention data and grade distributions by department helped to identify departments and specific courses in which students struggled the most. The data also highlighted departments with the best retention rates. Departments were chosen by us to represent the successes and challenges in terms of retention, as well as the liberal arts and the technologies. Recruitment of the faculty was planned for the fall convocation.

Introducing the project. The MetLife grant was introduced to the general community during the faculty development day at the 2005 fall convocation. The Associate Dean of Curriculum Development and I presented the goals of the grant to the audience of primarily full-time faculty members, with a few administrators and staff present. Forming small groups of approximately eight per table, the audience of about 120 was asked the following questions: "What specific steps can the SMCC community take to improve student success" and "what should we incorporate in all first year general education courses that you may be doing now in your classes?"

We collected a wide range of answers (n=88) to these questions (Appendix C). The answers ranged from class management techniques, such as learning students names early, to establishing study groups. Personal interaction with students was emphasized in several answers that would help create connections for each student to their teachers, advisors, and fellow students. Some answers centered on various learning theories and how these theories could be put to practical use. I e-mailed the list of answers to the entire community and gave it to the newly formed task force. While attendance at convocation was mandatory for full-time faculty it was not mandatory for staff members and administrators who, although encouraged to attend, often did not due to other

obligations as offices remain open for students. Attendance was optional for adjunct faculty with approximately 20% of adjuncts attending that event. A similar, slightly abbreviated, presentation was given at the convocation held for adjunct faculty in the evening and their answers were incorporated with those of the larger group.

The task force. As grant director, I recruited the eight task force members at the start of the fall 2005 semester. Senior administrators and I had identified potential members during the summer to include full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and administration. In addition, all of the potential members were to be currently teaching at least one class and represent either the liberal arts (e.g., math, English, social science) or the trades/occupational programs (e.g., nursing, building construction, culinary arts).

During convocation, I spoke with department chairs and suggested possible task force members from their departments. Several chairs suggested alternative representatives. With the department chair's approval, I approached each faculty member and solicited his or her participation. Membership eventually included five full-time faculty members, one adjunct faculty member, and two administrators. Participation was voluntary but the provision of a stipend was used to encourage participation of faculty. Administrators are contractually forbidden to accept extra payments for participation during regular work hours so they received no stipend.

The eight task force members met weekly for the fall semester to read and discuss current practices at the college related to student engagement (gathered at convocation as well as from their personal experience) and review some of the literature on college teaching, learning, and retention. During meeting time, the group made use of a jigsaw (E. Aronson, 1978). This is a cooperative learning technique that involves making each

member of the group responsible for reading some material and reporting back, or teaching that material, to the rest of the group. Use of the jigsaw technique allowed the task force members to cover a large amount of material and encouraged promotive interaction through resource interdependence (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998). Resource interdependence is when resources, in this case journal articles and books, are divided among group members so that group members must rely on each other for information/resources and therefore promotes interaction.

Each week I assigned task force members a series of articles or book chapters to read and to report on at the following week's meeting (see Appendix D for a selective bibliography). During the first few weeks, one of the task force members developed a format that was helpful in organizing these reports. This format was quickly adopted by the other members. Task force members also brought in books and articles they found during the semester.

Average attendance at the meetings was over 94%, and due to the structure of the jigsaw technique every member of the group presented weekly. Even members who were absent could, and regularly did, contribute by sending their feedback on the reading to me which I then presented at the meeting.

Themes began to emerge from the meetings as early as week two. Those themes led to the formation of subgroups to further investigate classroom practice, how the institution could support classroom practice, and changes to student orientation. Each task force member joined a subgroup that most interested them. These subgroups also met weekly and brought back their ideas to the main group. This created even more opportunities for task force members to interact.

Over the course of the fall semester the task force developed three different initiatives: changes to student orientation, changes to early alert, and suggested changes to classroom practice. Student orientation was changed to be shorter, more interactive, and to focus on the students' role in their own education. As for the early alert (a change to the college's existing mid-semester grade warning) instead of a student being told around week nine of the semester that they were at risk of failing, warning letters would be generated during week three with suggestions to the student on where to get assistance. The student's advisor would also be notified at this point and the student encouraged to meet with him or her.

The task force's five changes to classroom practice involved a collection of suggestions on how to do the following: get students to do assigned reading; understand the role of effort, create more community connections for students, identify problems early, and encourage/model academic skills (Appendix E). A fourth initiative, the development of a student day planner, containing quotes from individuals about how they became successful students, was completed for the fall 2005 semester.

Involving the larger community. The task force provided some opportunities throughout the fall 2005 and spring 2006 semesters for interested members of the community to keep up to date on what the task force was doing and to provide input. These events included two open forums, two focus groups, e-mail surveys to students and faculty, and e-mail updates. Table 1 presents a chronological listing of these events; the events themselves are detailed in the subsequent paragraphs.

The task force convened a focus group of faculty in November 2005. There were six attendees – three task force members and three faculty. The purpose of this meeting

was to see how faculty would respond to the idea of "five changes to classroom practice" identified by the task force and offered a list of ways in which an instructor could accomplish the changes. After the task force presented their work, the faculty present greeted the proposal positively. At this time, the task force also sent the proposal to the vice president who gave her approval.

A student focus group was also formed to provide information about student satisfaction that the college was not able to obtain from the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction survey conducted the previous March. This focus group centered on how students are engaged with the campus and their studies. At the monthly meeting of the academic department chairs, I gave a presentation on the progress of the task force. Chairs were introduced to the five proposed changes to classroom practice and the concept of providing several ways each change could be realized.

In January 2006 the college held another faculty development day which all full-time faculty were required to attend. In addition to updating the faculty on the progress of the grant, a speaker was brought to campus – Maryellen Weimer, PhD – to focus on learner-centered teaching, which was the basis of many of the changes the task force was proposing. January also was the beginning of the spring semester and time to test the proposals of the task force.

The piloting of three initiatives included changes to student orientation, the early alert, and suggested changes to classroom practice. Changes to student orientation were piloted by student services staff on January 12. After breakfast and a welcome speech the students were given resource packets with a campus map and the student handbook. This was followed by break-out sessions on the difference between high school and

Table 1. Events Including Community Members External to Task Force

Date	Event
November 21, 2005	Faculty focus group
December 2005	Student focus Group
December 1, 2005	Presentation to department chairs on proposed changes to classroom practice
December 2, 2005	Survey to faculty
January 13, 2006	Faculty professional development day included: Weimer presentation on learner-centered teaching and workshop "MetLife: Engagement Strategies that Work"
Spring Semester 2006	Piloting of early alert
	Piloting of changes to orientation
	Piloting of "Changes in Classroom Practice"
	Piloting of student mentor program
January 27, 2006	Meeting to support faculty piloting classroom changes
August 2006	Convocation – presentation by panel composed of faculty who piloted classroom changes
January 12, 2007	Professional development day - final survey

college, financial aid, and being a non-traditional student. Then students participated in a scavenger hunt for prizes ($50 bookstore gift certificates). Students were required to find the learning assistance center, library, technology center (where they had to print off their schedule and e-mail their advisor) and student services office. Students reported finding

the difference between high school and college helpful, and the interactive format was preferred over just listening to people talk.

Early alert was piloted in week four of the Spring semester. Faculty were asked to identify students that showed any behaviors associated with failure in their courses. These behaviors were not limited to poor grades or attendance issues. Faculty were asked to look for students not paying attention, talking in class, coming late to class, not doing the assigned reading, or any other behavior the faculty member saw as possibly linked to poor performance in their class. The student thus identified received a letter from the Associate Dean of Students telling students that they should speak to their instructor and faculty advisor. The letter also listed contact information for programs that the college had to help them, such as the Academic Achievement Center.

Volunteer full-time and adjunct faculty piloted changes to classroom practice in 21 sections of 15 different courses. These faculty members were supported through three weekly meetings at the start of the semester where they could share their experiences and seek answers to their implementation problems. Four of these volunteers then served as a panel at the August 2006 convocation to inform the community about their experiences piloting the initiatives.

Institutionalization of the initiatives. Workshops during the faculty development day at the 2006 fall convocation were used to familiarize all faculty members with the suggested changes to classroom practice, involving faculty advisors in the early alert system, and general updates on the grant. A worksheet was used as a planning tool for faculty (Appendix F). This worksheet presented "five proposed changes to classroom practice" and included ways to get students to do the required

reading, identify students having problems earlier in the semester, help students understand the role of effort, create more community connections, and how to encourage and model academic skills.

Students received a day planner, “the Campus Compass,” which included college policies and testimonials by current students on how to succeed at SMCC. Faculty were given instruction on how the “Compass” could be used to help engage students. An on-line student orientation was created that mirrored the changes made to the face-to-face orientation. When the on-line student orientation was completed, it became mandatory as of the fall 2008 semester.

The final day. I administered a survey on January 12, 2007, during the faculty development day prior to the start of the spring semester. There was an audience of approximately 100 people, primarily full-time faculty. They were asked to rate changes in their teaching practices over the past two years in five specific areas (all of which were targeted by the grant): identifying at risk students early in the semester, encouraging students to do the reading, getting students to understand the role of effort, increasing sense of community and encouraging/modeling academic skills. The survey also had a space for respondents to specify other changes they may have made. It concluded with an open ended question: “What prompted you to make these changes?" Responses were anonymous. The survey was then distributed at the very end of the morning session and yielded a response rate of approximately 60%. Every respondent (n = 62) reported change to their practice. Table 2 shows the mean of each response. The scale ranged from 1 (no change) to 5 (significant change).

Care must be taken in the interpretation of these findings because the survey (Appendix G) was created only in part to gather information on implementation. Its primary purpose was to serve as an additional reminder of the changes that administration hoped faculty were making in their classrooms. For this reason, it listed the specific changes that had been encouraged over the previous year and asked participants to rate their degree of change. The questions were leading and this self-report did not measure whether those changes were in any way significant.

The questions dealing with *Identifying at-risk students* and the *modeling of academic skills* showed the most reported change. I*dentifying at-risk students* showed the fewest number (n = 5) of respondents reporting no change to their teaching practice and one of the highest mean scores of the survey. This was expected, due to the institutionalization of this particular practice. By the time this survey was administered, e-mail notices were being regularly sent to all faculty before the end of the fourth week of the semester to report students who were at-risk. The previous system of mid-semester grade reporting was no longer available.

Answers to the question of what prompted the changes were provided by over half of the respondents (n = 35). Of those 35, over a third of the respondents, (14) attributed their change to observing poor student performance in their classrooms. Five respondents cited a general desire for students to be more successful and one respondent cited their desire to improve as an educator. Six of the respondents reported being new to teaching and, as one of them stated, “So everything is a learning experience.” The final quarter of the respondents to this question (9) cited specific workshops, discussions, or presentations of the task force (or its members) and the Center for Teaching Excellence

as an impetus for their change in teaching practice. This survey was the culminating activity of the collaborative attempt.

Table 2. Results of January 12, 2007 Faculty Survey

	Identify at-risk students	*Read*	Role of Effort	Sense of community	Model academic skills
1-no change	5	12	9	14	7
2	6	17	7	16	6
3	24	18	25	15	20
4	9	11	15	12	18
5-significant change	18	4	6	5	11
Mean	3.27	2.5	3.02	2.65	3.32

Summary

This chapter provided a problem statement and context for this study. This was followed by a description of an attempted collaboration that began in the summer of 2003 with the transformation of Maine's technical colleges into a community college system followed by a time of rapid enrollment growth for Southern Maine Community College. Along with this growth came students with an increasing number of risk factors that led to falling retention. After being awarded a grant from the MetLife Foundation, the college embarked on a two-year long attempt at a collaborative process-involving faculty and administrators with a goal to engage students.

The college formed a task force was and met regularly for the fall 2005 semester. During that semester, the task force actively attempted to involve others in the community with the project through workshops, presentations, focus groups, and surveys. The task force ultimately produced several initiatives: changes to student orientation

making it more interactive and centered on the students' role in their education; creation of a student day-planner as a tool for students; a student mentor program; an early alert system replacing the mid-semester grade warning; and five proposed changes to classroom practice. Many of these changes were then piloted and some, like the early alert system, were institutionalized.

Overview of the Chapters

The chapters that follow detail the design and methods of this retrospective case study and relate the experience of this attempt at collaboration from the perspectives of two adjunct faculty, two full-time faculty, and two administrators. Chapter 2 presents a literature review that includes the definition, context, and process of collaboration. Chapter 3 introduces the four research questions and details the design and methods of the retrospective case study through the use of interviews, a focus group, document analysis, and participant observation. Chapter 4 presents the participants' perception of the process and answers the four research questions. Chapter 5 introduces three major themes that combine findings from the four research questions and became visible from further analysis. The final chapter, 6, is a discussion of the implications of the findings, limitations of the study, and opportunities for future research.

CHAPTER 2

RELEVANT LITERATURE

"The mystery surrounding successful collaborative arrangements must be solved"

Austin & Baldwin, 1992

This chapter provides a review of the literature pertinent to this study. The first section brings together elements common to a variety of definitions of collaboration and settles upon an operational definition for the purpose of this study. Wood & Gray (1991) pointed out that defining collaboration is an important step in recognizing the phenomenon when it occurs. Next, the research on what type of problems are appropriately addressed by collaborative methods is introduced followed by factors within higher education related to the context of collaboration. The next section introduces the literature on community colleges, their position within higher education in the United States, and how they are different from other institutions of higher education. Perspectives follow this on the process of collaboration, including group process and the role of various forms of conversation - including dialogue and storytelling. The final section of this chapter introduces collaborative capacity and how factors related to collaborative entities affect collaborative endeavors. Each of these areas of research in the literature review gives insight into what may have affected how the participants in this study experienced the attempted collaboration. The first step is to define collaboration.

Defining Collaboration

Definitions for collaboration differ, in part, due to the array of contexts in which collaboration takes place (Gray, 1991). Even within the literature of higher education,

collaboration carries multiple meanings and the term is often used interchangeably with cooperation (Austin & Baldwin, 1991). Some definitions are as simple as that of Barkly, Cross, and Major (2005), who define collaboration as simply to "work with another or others" (p. 4). Definitions become increasingly complex as components are added: such as, to work together more closely than merely cooperating, with the addition of an intellectual focus, as St. Edwards University defines collaboration (Leonhardt, 2003) or "the process in which individuals work with others to find some solution that fully satisfies everyone's concerns" (Gladding, 2003, p. 491).

Whether it is two individuals sitting across a table from one another working on writing a book, or representatives of a group of multi-national companies meeting over the internet, many definitions include some underlying concepts: shared responsibility, common goals, and working together to achieve those goals (Austin & Baldwin, 1991; Bruner, 1991; D'Amour, et al., 2005; Raspa & Ward, 1992; Wood & Gray, 1991). These concepts were captured in Wood & Gray's (1991) definition of collaboration as occurring "when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain" (p. 139). This definition includes all observable forms of collaboration and does not include the number of participants, duration, outcome, or level of social organization at which collaboration occurs and therefore fits many possible contexts (Wood & Gray, 1991).

In higher education, forms of collaboration include collaborative learning (Barkley, et al., 2005), collaboration in research and scholarship, team teaching (Austin & Baldwin, 1991), and, of direct application to this case study, educational reform

(American Association of Schools and Collages, 2002). A report from the American Association of Schools and Colleges titled *Greater Expectations* (2002) challenges, "all stakeholders to unite for collective action, creating a coherent educational system designed to help all students achieve the greater expectations that are the hallmark of our time" (p. iv). This report goes on to suggest that, within individual institutions of higher education, there should be greater collaboration among disciplines and also greater collaboration among institutions of higher education, and greater collaboration between higher education institutions and K-12 education.

Closely related to collaboration is the concept of cooperation. Cooperation involves working in groups or otherwise dividing up tasks (Dillenbourg, Baker, Blaye, & O'Malley, 1995; Misanchuk & Anderson, 2001; Wendling-Kirschner, Dickensin, & Blosser, 1996). Dillenbourg et al (1995) further define cooperation as "...accomplished by the division of labor among participants, as an activity where each person is responsible for a portion of the problem solving." Misanchuk & Anderson (2001) add that the goal of cooperation is knowledge transmission, where individuals are only partially interdependent, and individually accountable.

Therefore, collaboration differs from cooperation in an important way, for although cooperation is necessary for collaboration to take place it is insufficient in itself (Hord, 1986). Collaboration requires participants to share in the responsibility of working toward a common goal. By the above definitions, people can cooperate, however, unless they begin to work toward a common goal and share that with others, they are not truly collaborating (Austin & Baldwin, 1991; Bruner, 1991; D'Amour, et al., 2005; Raspa & Ward, 1992; Wood & Gray, 1991). For the purpose of this study,

cooperation is defined as participating in groups, or individually, in a task or tasks related to the attempted collaboration. Clearly defining collaboration and cooperation are important to determining where, and if, they occur in this study. However, the next question to be answered is when collaborative methods should be employed.

When Is Collaboration Appropriate?

Is the problem being addressed appropriate for collaborative techniques? In the classroom, when using cooperative or collaborative groups, the type of questions teachers ask students can greatly affect the type of interaction that ensues (Chizhik, 2002; Cohen, 1994). The same holds true for other collaborative endeavors, and research indicates six common characteristics of problems that are best addressed in a collaborative way. These characteristics can be grouped into two broad categories -- unstructured and cross-cutting (Weber & Kahademian, 2008).

The unstructured characteristic of problems include that they are ill-defined, or there is disagreement about how they should be defined (Gray, 1989a; Weber & Kahademian, 2008). Ill-defined problems have multiple potential solutions, not just one best answer. They are characterized by technical complexity and scientific uncertainty (Gray, 1989a; Walker, Senecah, & Daniels, 2006; Weber & Kahademian, 2008).
For example, solving a series of simple math problems is inappropriate for collaborative problem solving because the answers are well defined - there is a scientific certainty to the answers. Solving social problems like a world health crisis is another matter. This type of problem has numerous potential solutions and much disagreement about how it should be solved.

The cross-cutting characteristics of problems are that multiple stakeholders have a vested interest in the problems and those stakeholders are highly interdependent (Gray, 1989a; Weber & Kahademian, 2008). There is often a high conflict potential between stakeholders (Gray, 1989a; Weber & Kahademian, 2008) due to deeply held values, cultural differences and significant symbolic or personal issues (Walker, et al., 2006). There may be differences in the power and/or resources for dealing with the problem, with stakeholders having different levels of expertise and different access to information about the problems (Gray, 1989a). The previous example of a world health crisis or simple math problem applies here also. There are virtually no conflict potential or serious cultural differences in solving math problems. However, a world health crisis, like the spread of HIV, involves high conflict, cultural differences, significant personal issues, and great power/resource differences among groups.

A final characteristic of these problems that are appropriate for being addressed by collaborative methods is that they are relentless (Weber & Kahademian, 2008) -- they are perennial problems that we hope to improve but will never totally alleviate. When incremental or unilateral efforts cannot address the problem, and past efforts using existing processes have proved insufficient, collaboration is an alternative because it offers an approach that relieves competition, hierarchy, and incremental planning (Gray, 1989a).

Yet, even when a problem is suitable for being addressed with collaborative techniques, there is the issue of whether the context is conducive to collaboration. The following studies highlight many of the contextual components that have been found to

have an influence, and/or are correlated, with highly collaborative institutions and their collaborative capability.

The Context of Collaboration

The context in which collaborative processes operate has been shown to have a strong effect on the nature of collaborative endeavors (Gray, 1985). Studies drawn from the literature on organizational behavior, collaboration, and higher education highlight how many individual elements of organizational structure and culture influence the processes and outcomes of collaborative endeavors. These highly interdependent elements (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001) include trust and respect (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001; Getha-Taylor, 2008; Huxham, 1993; Inkpen & Currall, 2004; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Munkvold, et al., 2009), the use of existing networks (Connolly, et al., 2007; Gray, 1989a; Kezar, 2005a), strong institutional commitment for collaboration (Bohen & Stiles, 1998), institutional structures that cross disciplinary divides (Ashburn, 2006; Bohen & Stiles, 1998), the need for rewards and incentives (Bohen & Stiles, 1998; Gray, 1985, 1989a; Kezar & Lester, 2009), the importance of faculty and administrators learning the value of collaboration (Connolly, et al., 2007; Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001; Gray, 1989a), a sense of priority from people in senior positions (Bohen & Stiles, 1998; Kezar, 2006), and the role of values (Glotzbach, 2001; Kezar, 2006; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Philpott & Strange, 2003). After reviewing these individual components, many from sources outside of higher education, I will introduce a study by Kezar & Lester (2009) that brings these elements together in a model for collaboration in higher education.

In a collaborative setting, trust is the decision to rely on other stakeholders in a condition of risk (Inkpen & Currall, 2004). In a study of interorganizational

collaboration, Inkpen and Currall (2004) found that initial levels of trust were a key determinant in the strictness of control measures that evolved in joint ventures. The stricter the control mechanisms used to protect stakeholders, the slower the growth of trust. In situations where initial trust levels were high, fewer control mechanisms were needed, and trust grew at a faster pace. The growth of trust plays an important role as an aspect of binding people together in social networks (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001; Getha-Taylor, 2008; Huxham, 1993; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Munkvold, et al., 2009) through the development of shared norms and values (Inkpen & Currall, 2004). Trust manifests in the relationship between workers and supervisors by the degree of individual autonomy that supervisors allow workers (Huxham, 1993) and in workers, acceptance of leadership (Getha-Taylor, 2008).

The use of existing social networks, and the creation of new ones through collaborative endeavors, facilitates collaboration. Successful collaborations ease subsequent collaborations (Austin & Baldwin, 1991; Connolly, et al., 2007; Gray, 1989a; Kezar, 2005a) in part by taking advantage of existing networks. Using existing networks allows collaborative groups to quickly become productive due to existing group, norms, values, trust, and connections.

A study of cross-disciplinary university faculty collaboration (Bohen & Stiles, 1998) showed the need for a strong institutional commitment to collaboration. This commitment requires defining how current structures hinder collaborative efforts and then removing institutional impediments to collaboration -- a process Bohen and Stiles (1998) refer to as “clearing the administrative underbrush”. However, supporting

collaboration may also require the creation of new structures (Gray, 1989a; Kezar & Lester, 2009).

The creation of structures that cross disciplinary divides may serve to help create new campus networks and is found in studies dealing with higher education (Ashburn, 2006; Austin & Baldwin, 1991; Bohen & Stiles, 1998)). At one college, faculty were assigned offices randomly and not according to discipline (Ashburn, 2006). This encouraged faculty to collaborate across disciplines by placing their offices in close proximity to faculty from other disciplines and increasing their opportunity for interaction.

The need for rewards and incentives is commonly reported in the literature on collaboeration, as is the importance of eliminating disincentives. These rewards include stipends, release time, credit toward tenure, and public acknowledgement (Bohen & Stiles, 1998; Gray, 1985; Kezar, 2005a). The importance of faculty and administrators learning the value of collaboration is also supported whether taught implicitly or explicitly (Connolly, et al., 2007; Gray, 1989a; Kezar, 2005a). There is evidence concerning the need for a sense of priority from people in senior positions (Bohen & Stiles, 1998; Kezar, 2005a) and the role of values (Glotzbach, 2001; Kezar, 2005a). The misalignment of values among group members can also jeopardize the collaboration (Philpott & Strange, 2003).

In formulating recommendations for policy and practice in faculty collaboration, Austin and Baldwin (1991) bring many of the above contextual elements together when they note the need for the following: rewards and incentives for participation in collaborative endeavors; strong administrative support and encouragement; the creation

of new structures that cross disciplinary lines; and the need for faculty and administrators to be made aware of the benefits of collaboration. Kezar (2005a, 2005b, 2006; Kezar & Lester, 2009) brings all of these elements together in a model that is concerned with enabling a campus culture that supports collaborative work both internal and external to the campus. This model is firmly grounded in the organizational behavior model developed by Mohrman, Cohen and Mohrman (1995) which centers on how corporations/industry can reorganize to enable cooperative work (Kezar, 2005b). Kezar tested this model to establish its relevance to a higher education setting by selecting four highly collaborative university campuses after analyzing survey data from 30 institutions nominated by the American Association of Higher Education as being highly collaborative. Kezar sought to study institutions that were "typical" in that they were not elite institutions and did not have special funding sources for collaboration. No community colleges were included in this study. In Kezar's case study of these exemplary higher education organizations, eight core elements were identified as required in order to create a context that enables collaboration (Kezar, 2005a). The following elements were identified:

- Mission – collaboration was included as part of the institution's mission statement.
- Integrating structures –three structures were found to have been redesigned or created for sustained collaboration: a unit to foster collaboration; cross-campus institutes and centers; and new accounting, computer, and budgetary systems.
- Campus Networks –existing campus networks are used to speed the process of collaboration.

- Rewards and incentives –changes to tenure and promotion dominated discussion of this element, along with rewards such as grants and release time.
- A sense of priority from people in senior positions.
- External pressure – from business, disciplinary groups, accrediting bodies, or a variety of individuals or institutions was effectively communicated to members of the organization.
- Values – espoused values that help foster collaboration were found to include being student-centered, innovative, and egalitarian.
- Learning the benefits of collaboration.

While much of the research just reviewed deals with the context of higher education, this study is concerned with the experience of collaboration in a community college. The following section introduces this segment of higher education in the United States.

The Context of the Community College

Community colleges have a distinct mission, faculty, and student population (Baker, 1994; Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Levinson, 2005). The following review commences with the changing definition of community colleges and then covers their mission, faculty, and student populations as well as how they differ from the rest of higher education in the United States. In order to understand the context of this study, it is important to understand the broader context of community colleges. Since much of the research on collaboration in higher education does not specifically include, nor is limited to community colleges, it is important to understand how community colleges are differentiated from the rest of higher education (Boggs in Cedja & Hensel, 2009).

Contextual factors within the institution affect how individuals experience day-to-day life within the institution and therefore affect their interactions with others within the institution. For example, an adjunct faculty member who teaches one class a week, at night, at a satellite site in his or her local high school may have little opportunity to engage in collaborative endeavors.

Cohen and Brawer (1996) defined community colleges as “any institution accredited to award the Associate in Arts or Associate in Science as their highest degree” (p. 5). Yet this definition is changing as community colleges, traditionally commuter campuses that offer only as high as an associate’s degree, build dormitories and offer bachelor’s degrees. Norma Kent, of the American Association of Community Colleges, reported, "We do think it's a trend for more community colleges to provide residential housing for students" (Holland, 2009). *Community College Times* reported that about 300 of the 1,200 community colleges in the United States now offer on-campus housing compared with only 60 a decade ago (Chappell, 2009). In 2008, 95 community colleges in 11 states offered bachelor’s degrees (American Association of Community Colleges, 2009). Ten of the 28 Florida community colleges now offer bachelor’s degrees (NcNally, 2009) and some of these colleges are dropping “community” from their names as Daytona Community College recently did when they changed their name to Daytona State College (Daytona State College, 2008). The Carnegie classification still defines these institutions as associate’s colleges when bachelor’s degrees account for less than 10% of all undergraduate degrees (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2009). There are 14 subcategories within Carnegie's associate's college classification. These subcategories further differentiate institutions as to their: size;

whether they are public or private institutions; rural, suburban or urban; and if they are part of a university or a four-year institution.

Community colleges have a rather short history in U.S. higher education. The roots of this history lie in their rise from junior colleges and technical institutes with community colleges only becoming a national network in the 1960s (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). In the century since the first "community college" was founded in 1901 (Levinson, 2005), community colleges have grown to number almost 1,200 (American Association of Community Colleges, 2009).

The historical mission of community colleges includes access to higher education, remediation, academic transfer, vocational-technical education, and community service (Baker, 1994; Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Levinson, 2005). These predominantly public institutions serve almost half, 46% of the undergraduate students in the United States. (American Association of Community Colleges, 2009) The above curricular functions coupled with community college's low cost of attendance, $2,361 per year versus $6,185 for public 4-year colleges (AACC, 2009), and open access, attract a population of "students with academic, economic, and personal characteristics that can make college completion a challenge" (Bailey, Jenkins, & Leinbach, 2005).

The students at community colleges generally have lower academic ability, lower aspirations, and come from a lower socio-economic circumstance than other students in four year institutions (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). They are also much more likely to be first generation college students and to have had negative previous educational experiences (Levinson, 2005). The Education Commission of the States reports that between 30 and 90% of community college students need some type of remediation

(Spann, 2000). Ninety percent of community college students have some risk factor(s) for failure.

The faculty at community colleges are also distinct from their peers in other segments of higher education, having larger teaching loads, and being more likely to work in an institution that does not offer tenure (Levinson, 2005). They commonly hold a master's degree or have the equivalent experience and training in a trade (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). Full-time faculty teach an average of 13 to 15 lecture hours a week (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). However, full-time faculty are not the only faculty teaching at community colleges.

Due to squeezed budgets, the use of adjunct faculty is on the rise across all of higher education. In community colleges, 57.5% of courses are taught by adjunct faculty compared to 38.4% at 4-year schools (JBL Associates, 2008). Currently, the adjunct faculty in the Maine Community College System teach 60% of the course sections (Smith, 2010). This increase in the use of adjuncts is negatively correlated with retention and transfer rates in community colleges (Jaeger & Eagan, 2009). A major reason for the use of so many adjunct faculty is cost. On a per course basis, full-time faculty are paid three and a half times the pay of an adjunct (Christensen, 2008; Cohen & Brawer, 1996). The use of adjunct faculty allows the college to offer courses that the full-time faculty may not be prepared to teach and allows the college to meet the demand for other courses (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

The use of adjuncts may be problematic as they have lower levels of involvement in curriculum, instruction, and scholarship, as well as having significantly less autonomy than their full-time counterparts and less sense of responsibility (Freeland, 1998). With

less involvement and investment in the college, this sizable population of adjuncts presents challenges when attempting to involve them in collaborative college activities.

Given a topic that is conducive to collaborative methods, and an understanding of the contextual elements that affect collaborative endeavors, the next step is the process of collaboration. In the following section, process is viewed from two perspectives -- through stages of the group process and by looking at how various forms of conversation advance the process. In seeking to find how the participants in this study experience collaboration, the literature on group process helps to frame the interactions between individuals in a collaborative group.

Group Process

Many theories that have dealt with group formation and group problem solving are sequential stage theories. They usually have between four and five steps, with the most famous among them being those by Tuckman (1965) known for the stages of forming, storming, norming, performing, and a later addition, adjourning (1977). The forming stage is a period of uncertainty when groups members must determine how they fit in the group. During the storming stage members confront their differences and attempt to resolve the conflict. The norming stage involves the development of norms of behavior. In the performing stage the group members are productive at working toward the group goals and in the final stage, adjourning, the group disbands.

Many of the studies upon which stage theories are based were in self-analytic groups (Gladding, 2003) and not in organizational contexts. Seegar (1983) found that "most management teams, task forces, and committees do not follow sequential phases in problem solving" (p. 683) and that phased movement was limited to groups of

individuals who are not previously acquainted. Gersick (1988) hypothesized and later tested (1989) that the process of group problem solving was, rather than sequential steps, more concerned with members' “awareness of time and deadlines (1989, p. 9). These studies resulted in sequential stage theories being largely rejected in the organizational behavior literature since the late 1980s although they are still used in self-analytic groups (Gladding, 2003).

Whether groups proceed through sequential stages of development is not in as much conflict as it may first appear. A two stage model by Bushe and Coetzer (2007) helps to explain these "opposing" viewpoints by pointing out that these earlier stage models were prescriptive rather than descriptive. In a study of 49 student project teams, Bushe and Coetzer showed that developmental dynamics do help to predict overall group effectiveness by measuring these dynamics at three stages of the projects. Student groups who had developed further by the mid-point of the project were more effective. They offer a "conception more applicable to the goal-directed, contextually embedded nature of the work group (p.185).

The first phase of Bushe and Coetzer's model (2007) deals with membership. In order for a team to develop, the individual members must want to be a part of it. Group development is not inevitable, and many groups fail to develop. Yet groups that do develop increase the possibility of team effectiveness when other variables such as task type, team composition, and group context are held constant (Bushe & Coetzer, 2007). In traditional sequential stage theories of development this would include such stages as “storming and norming” (B. W. Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) or "dependency and inclusion, counter-dependency and fight” (Wheelan, 2005). An individual’s decision to join a

collaboration depends on his/her beliefs about what the group should be like, as well as their role within it, and how the group meets this ideal image (Bushe & Coetzer, 2007).

If most of the group members resolve to be part of the group, they enter the second phase of Bushe and Coetzer's model – Competence. The task at this phase turns to working together effectively. This phase can be seen as akin to Tuckman's "norming and performing" (1977) or Wheelan's (2005) "work and productivity." Halfway through the life of the group, Bushe and Coetzer's theory (2007) predicts the group will be within this phase as "looming deadlines and personal needs combine to push members to want to go to competence needs" (p.193). Time, as discussed earlier (Gersick, 1988, 1989), is thereby incorporated into this model. Short-term teams, lasting only a few months, may not have to deal with interpersonal relations in the same way as those that complicate collaborations of longer duration (Bushe & Coetzer, 2007).

In addition, Gray's research in the area of interorganizational collaboration to solve business and social problems (Gray, 1985, 1989b; McCann & Gray, 1986; Wood & Gray, 1991) pointed out that representative stakeholders must be identified and chosen carefully for the legitimacy that they hold with their external constituencies. The convener of the collaboration must be chosen carefully as to his or her relationship to the problem and relationships with stakeholders because agreements reached through a collaborative process must be brought by members to the constituencies that they represent and they must build support for the agreement. Sometimes a neutral party must be sought out for this purpose. Members need enough power to exercise influence or authorize action within their organizations to support the agreement. For this reason Gray

(1989) suggests that “collaboration is especially susceptible to collapse during implementation” (p. 97).

While Gray's work (1989) reveals how the power an individual has with the constituency he/she represents in inter-organizational collaboration, the work of Wheelan (2005) centers on an intra-organizational model in a school setting. According to Wheelan’s research (2005) starting with effective small groups, shared assumptions are developed and shared with other groups and individuals that produce positive change and a collaborative climate among all those who have a stake in the school. Collaborative faculty study groups have been used in this way and identified as “key elements to organizational change in that study groups are grassroots movements that interact over time to promote transformation through risk-taking, experimentation, reflection, and collaboration” (Wildman, Hable, Preston, & Magilaro, 2000, p. 250). Once this collaborative climate becomes established future collaborations become easier.

Several studies revealed characteristics that align with a successful process of collaboration in education. Gitilin (1999) found that collaborations involving teachers were most successful when they involved three things: the intensification of teacher’s work is limited; teachers play a significant role in setting the agenda, and; issues raised emerge from the contextual realities of a particular school. A study at Harvard University of two exemplary programs at that university - The David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies and The Memory Working Group - found five factors that promoted successful faculty collaboration (Bohen & Stiles, 1998): a clear vision of a compelling problem; strong senior faculty leadership; institutional commitment; financial resources; and incentives and rewards provided for individual faculty participation. This

study precedes Kezar (Kezar, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Kezar & Lester, 2009) by almost a decade, yet adds an element found in the literature on problems appropriate for collaborative methods - a clear vision of a compelling problem. The next section illuminates how this vision is formed and shared by community members. The functioning of successful collaboration happens, in large part, through a series of conversations.

The Role of Conversation

"Conversation is the gossamer thread of collaboration and teamwork" (Pilette, 2006) and the key is shifting, from simple conversations, to conversations that make a valuable contribution (Nussbaumer, Freudenstein, & Gaedke, 2006). A conversation is a contribution to the collaborative process when it occurs between people as a cooperative venture, there is a direction to the conversation, and new understanding arises (Feldman, 1999). When structured accordingly, conversations have the power to aid decision making, and facilitate both the exchange of knowledge and a growth of understanding (Feldman, 1999). But conversations can also threaten to undermine collaborations when negative themes are introduced (McDonald, Vickers, Mohan, Wilkes, & Jackson, 2010) and failure to allow sufficient time for conversation can be a contributing factor to implementation failure (Nelson, Slavit, Perkins, & Hathorn, 2008).

Conversations, dialogue, and storytelling are all broad terms linked to the process of collaboration. These following terms reflect the unique ways that researchers have structured them i.e.: learningful conversations (Senge, 1990), extraordinary conversations (Hargrove, 1998), crucial conversations (McDonald, et al., 2010), long and serious conversations (Feldman, 1999), dialogical reflection (Fazio, 2009), and storytelling as

dialogue (Savvidou, 2010). Conversations defined in these examples, show how formal conversations can be structured.

Learningful conversations. Dialogue is a form of conversation that the noted physicist David Bohm thought had the potential for changing the world view (Bohm, 1996). Dialogue is not a discussion or negotiation that is directed at convincing the other participants about one's position -- dialogue is an exchange of understanding (Bohm, 1996). Senge (1990) used Bohm's conception of dialogue when he introduced *learningful conversations* as a way to foster organizational learning. Senge (1990) found that deep trust and a rich understanding develops over time when participants met regularly under the conditions for effective dialogue noted by Bohm (1996): (1) participants suspend their assumptions, (2) participants regard each other as colleagues, and (3) a facilitator creates an environment where participants can speak freely. Being open to change is an important aspect of these learningful conversations. Senge referred to this as holding one's views lightly. To Senge, dialogue that is "grounded in reflection and inquiry skills is likely to be more reliable and less dependent on particulars of circumstance, such as the chemistry among team members (Senge, p. 249).

Extraordinary conversation. Hargrove (1998) then built upon the work of Bohm and Senge when he drew a distinction between collaboration and dialogue -- he sees collaboration as a more goal oriented activity than dialogue. In order to ensure that creative thinking and teamwork occur by design, Hargrove (1998) introduced five phases of a collaborative conversation which he called extraordinary conversation. The first phase is to clarify the purpose by which the conversation gains an important focus. Hargrove visualized purpose as the container which holds whatever happens in the

conversation. The second phase is to gather divergent views and perspectives. This phase is the development of a shared pool of information which recognizes the perspective of and empowers all of the stakeholders. The third phase involves creating shared understanding by learning about other's thinking, expressing emotions constructively, and dealing with defensive routines. Phase four is creating new options by connecting different views and perspectives. This is a creative exercise in connecting different perspectives in new solutions. The final phase is to generate a conversation for action. The options created in phase four must be communicated. The possibilities must be boldly declared as President Kennedy did when he declared that the United States would put a man on the moon. This declaration must be followed with a call to action.

Crucial conversations. Through thematic analysis of 10 in-depth interviews a study of nurses and midwives (McDonald, et al., 2010) found that informal conversation between colleagues was important in building collaborative capital -- the qualities and connections that facilitative members of the group working together collaboratively. This highlights how factors such as job satisfaction, support, and conflict resolution can be important in building the foundation for workplace collaborations.

Long and serious conversations. In a study of the Physics Teachers Action Research Group, Feldman (1999) found how anecdote telling, in the context of a long ongoing conversation centered around teaching methodology, helped teachers change their practices. Brief stories of practice would be shared with the group of approximately eight participants. The participants would listen as each member related anecdotes related to their teaching practice and then ask questions. After going back to their classroom and trying new ideas, they would return to the group to tell new anecdotes about their trials of

new practices. In this way they would build their knowledge and understanding.

Dialogical reflection. In a qualitative and interpretive case study of science teachers, Fazio (2009) made use of a-priori and grounded coding followed by extensive analysis using various data displays. This study found the integration of educational theory and practice was facilitated through group discussion and reflection during a collaborative action research project. The group held meetings every other week for two hours and lasted for 12 meetings. Discussion prompts and agendas helped to structure the early meetings. Later meetings were more loosely structured but still focused on the topic of science education. Collaborative problem solving through dialogue was important to supporting individual attempts at change in the classroom.

Storytelling as dialogue. The successful use of stories as a tool to exchange and consolidate knowledge has been shown to be dependent on appropriate story-moments and clear goals (Sole & Gray-Wilson, 2002). Savvidou (2010) found that dialogue, triggered by storytelling, was a significant form of professional development. In this study, 12 professors created digital stories and shared them with colleagues. Professors responded to stories that resonated with their individual experience, which in turn prompted more stories. Savvidou created a narrative framework for analysis. Participants may not remember practical details of a story. However, interesting snippets, from which hearers make sense of the story, are more likely to be remembered highlighting the use of stories to stimulate imagination and inspire (Sims, Huxham, & Beech, 2009).

These six examples bring to light various ways that facilitators structure conversation to support collaboration. Depending on the specific goal, different structures

can be used.The following section connects much of the literature just reviewed in a model that looks at the capacity and readiness of an organization to collaborate.

Collaborative Capability

Huxman (1993) introduced the term collaborative capability to describe the capacity and readiness of an organization to collaborate. Collaborative capability (alternately referred to as collaborative capacity) is "the practices, values, and processes that foster working with others at all levels within an organization" (Nemiro, Hanifah, & Wang, 2005, p.116). It drives organizational performance by increasing individual productivity, team productivity, and innovative capacity (Munkvold, et al., 2009). The following three models show how various aspects of collaboration, such as those reviewed in this chapter, can be brought together in a single model.

Foster-Fishman's model. In a study of community coalitions a qualitative analysis of 80 articles, chapters, and practitioner's guides identified four critical levels of collaborative capacity (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001). The levels were member capacity, relational capacity, organizational capacity, and programmatic capacity. Member capacity is the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of participants and the efforts made to enhance and use that capacity. Relational capacity involves creating and/or strengthening internal and external social connections. Organizational capacity requires a strong leadership base, formalized processes that clarify member's roles and responsibilities, a well-developed internal communication system, the human and financial resources for collaborative work, and a continuous learning orientation. Programmatic capacity is the capacity to design and implement programs, or serve as a catalyst to implementation of programs that have a significant impact. The four capacities (member capacity, relational

capacity, organizational capacity, and programmatic capacity) were highly interrelated and changes in one capacity had effects on the others.

Fitzgerald's model. Fitzgerald (2004) proposed ten broad constructs that capture the fundamental aspects of collaborative entities (CE) that foster collaborative capability. CE is a broad classification of collaborative groups including teams, associations, organizations, alliances, or other networks of individuals or groups that share activities and resources for mutual benefit and a common purpose (Fitzgerald, 2004). In short, a CE is any group involved in a collaborative effort. Collaborative capacity is the extent to which factors that comprise CEs foster collaboration. Fitzgerald derived 10 constructs from the existing literature to include context, composition, scope, core, competence, complementarity, character, consequences, catalyst, and course.

CEs operate within a *context*. This context includes not only organizational elements like those in the model by Kezar and Lester (2009), but a realization that the theoretical framework from which we choose to view collaboration will necessarily exclude more aspects of collaboration than it includes. For instance, viewing collaboration solely through the theoretical framework of group process may fail to include elements such as external pressures to solve the problem or other organizational pressures.

The *composition* of the CE includes its membership and how both the formal and informal ways that the group is governed. These may include written bylaws and norms that govern their actions. The *scope* of the CE refers to their extent or range. A work team within an organization may have a fairly simple task to complete while a CE comprised of representatives of multi-national companies may be faced with a much

more complex task. The *core* of a CE is the "strategic rationales, missions, visions, and/or "raisons d'être" that are explicitly, and/or implicitly expressed by the CE, its members, and/or key external stakeholders and environments" (Fitzgerald, 2005, p. 165). The degree to which members of a CE fit together and the degree to which a CE fits its environment and external stakeholders is referred to as *complementarity*. The behavior of the group and its individual members that enhances their ability to behave collaboratively is their *competence*. The *character* of a CE includes " the nature, strength, clarity, and unity of a CEs identity and image among all levels of CE membership and key external stakeholders" (Fitzgerald, 2005, p. 165). The results of a collaborative endeavor, whether limited to the CE, its stakeholders, or other environment are referred to as the *consequences*. A *catalyst* is a person, event, or thing that precipitates change within the CE. A catalyst may be endogenous (coming from within the CE itself) or exogenous (originating from outside of the CE). Finally, the *course* are aspects of change that affect the collaborative process.

Munkvold's model. A different framework is offered by Munkvold et al (2009). In this model, collaborative potential can be increased by paying attention to three critical areas: collaborative infrastructure, collaborative practice, and networking capabilities. Collaborative infrastructure includes technology, support and organization. Technology needs to be reliable, simple, and flexible. Support needs to include training in collaborative practices and tool usage, advisory services for effective use of the tools and dedicated management and facilitation of collaboration. Organizational infrastructure needs to include rewards for effective collaboration, forums for learning and reflecting on

practice, stimulating champions with time and resources, and measures of collaborative practice (Munkvold, et al., 2009).

Collaborative practice capabilities are the capabilities of group members to work in teams. Group members need to use communication skills, interpersonal skills, an appreciation for other's perspectives, and the ability to use collaborative tools. Networking capabilities require openness, peering, sharing, and acting globally (Munkvold, et al., 2009).

Viewing collaborative capacity through models of collaborative capability provides a way to unify much of the previous literature review within a single construct. These models all combine contextual elements with the process and therefore provide a more holistic view of collaboration.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the existing literature that defines collaboration, when collaborative methods are appropriate, the context of collaboration, the process of collaboration, and collaborative capacity. However, numerous questions remain in relation to collaboration within the context of community colleges.

The literature draws a clear distinction between collaboration and cooperation. Collaboration was defined as occurring "when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain" (p. 139). Cooperation was defined as "...accomplished by the division of labor among participants, as an activity where each person is responsible for a portion of the problem solving" (Dillenbourg, et al., 1995).

The definitions will be important in determining whether the attempted collaboration at SMCC was collaborative and/or cooperative -- and if so, for whom.

Problems may be appropriately addressed by collaborative means when they are ill-defined (Gray, 1989a; Weber & Kahademian, 2008), technically complex and scientifically uncertain (Gray, 1989a; Walker, et al., 2006; Weber & Kahademian, 2008). Multiple stakeholders have a vested interest in the problems and those stakeholders are highly interdependent (Gray, 1989a; Weber & Kahademian, 2008). There is often a high conflict potential between them (Gray, 1989a; Weber & Kahademian, 2008) due to deeply held values, cultural differences, and significant symbolic or personal issues (Walker, et al., 2006). Stakeholders having different levels of expertise and different access to information about the problems are also a part of these problems (Gray, 1989a).

The literature also reveals the important role context plays in collaboration and the unique context of community colleges within higher education. Much of this literature comes together in a model (Kezar & Lester, 2009) that combines contextual elements found in highly collaborative institutions (universities) in higher education. These elements include mission, integrating structures, campus networks, rewards and incentives, a sense of priority from people in senior positions, external pressure to collaborate, values that include being include being student-centered, innovative, and egalitarian and learning the benefits of collaboration. The context of community colleges is then reviewed in terms of their distinct mission, faculty, and student population. Kezar & Lester (2009) studied universities. Do the elements that support collaborative endeavors in the context of universities also apply to community colleges? If they do, do

they manifest themselves in a way that is different from universities and are there elements unique to supporting collaboration in a community college?

Review of theories of group process was introduced as the first step to looking at the literature on the process of collaboration. The sequential stage theories based in the organizational development literature were shown to be more appropriate in an intraorganizational context than traditional theories derived from self-analytic groups. Elements seen as crucial include individual member's relation to the group goal and temporal deadlines.

According to the literature, much of the process of collaboration occurs in conversations of various forms. Examples of different structures include learningful conversations (Senge, 1990), extraordinary conversations (Hargrove, 1998), crucial conversations (McDonald, et al., 2010), long and serious conversations (Feldman, 1999), dialogical reflection (Fazio, 2009), and storytelling as dialogue (Savvidou, 2010). The various ways that conversations are structured will have an effect on how the participants perceive the process of attempted collaboration. Their perceptions will influence their level of participation.

Lastly, the organizational development literature brings together many of the topics just reviewed to form the collaborative capacity/capability of the organization. Collaborative capability is "the practices, values, and processes that foster working with others at all levels within an organization" (Nemiro, et al., 2005, p.116). Foster-Fishman et al (2001) identified four critical levels of collaborative capability: member capacity, relational capacity, organizational capacity, and programmatic capacity. Fitzgerald (2004) proposed ten broad constructs that capture the fundamental aspects of

collaborative entities (CE) that foster collaborative capability: context, composition, scope, core, competence, complementarity, character, consequences, catalyst, and course. Munkvold et al (2009) showed collaborative potential can be increased by paying attention to three critical areas: collaborative infrastructure, collaborative practice, and networking capabilities.

The next chapter, Design and Methods, will introduce the research questions and outline how evidence was gathered and analyzed. This process will help to fill the gaps in the literature in relation to intra-organizational collaboration in community colleges by answering the question of how faculty and administrators experience an attempted collaborative process in the context of community colleges.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN AND METHODS

Research Questions

The goal of this study was to learn how faculty and administrators experienced an intended collaborative process in the context of a community college. The following research questions framed the investigation:

1. To what extent was the process collaborative according to the definition by Wood and Gray (1991, p.139) that states “Collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain.”
2. How did the participants perceive the process?
3. In the perception of the participants, what facilitated or hindered the process?
4. How did the institutional context appear to influence the process?

A qualitative methodology for this study was used to provide a deeper understanding of how this prolonged attempt at collaboration was experienced from a variety of perspectives, taking into consideration their feelings and motivations. This required a design that has a holistic perspective (Patton, 2002). "The object that appears in perception varies in terms of when it is perceived, from what angle, from what background of experience, with what orientation of wishing, willing, or judging, always from the vantage point of the individual" (p. 484).

A retrospective case study was used to provide a connection to the time, the place, and the meanings that the participants made of the attempted collaboration. The study of

contemporary phenomena within the context of real lives is what makes case studies compelling (Seidman, 1998; Yin, 2003).

Data Sources and Collection

In seeking to understand how faculty and administrators experienced collaboration in a community college, several data collection strategies were used including: 1) individual interviews 2) a focus group, 3) document collection, and 4) participant observation. Each of these techniques are described in detail in the following sections.

Interviews. The interviews of six representative participants were conducted on the SMCC campus with an average duration of one hour. They covered several areas of questioning: life at SMCC, the participant's role in the attempted collaboration, and how the experience affected them. Appendix H contains the interview guide detailing initial questions and rationale for each question. The interviews started by asking the participant to tell a story about themselves and SMCC. This was not only to make the participant comfortable and start them talking, but was an attempt to learn about how the participant experienced life at SMCC in order to uncover informal networks within the college. They were then asked to talk about daily life at SMCC, community customs, and about whom they trust and respect. The next set of questions dealt with the role that each individual played in the attempted collaborative process. The last part of the interview dealt with reflecting on the meaning that people made of the experience – how their teaching and attitudes may have changed over the last two years and to what they attributed any changes.

Participants. A purposeful selection of faculty and administrators was used to capture the variety of participants and provide readers more possibilities with which to connect their situations to that of the case study (Seidman, 1998). I chose the participants from among three major groups that were involved in the project and needed to be represented: administrators, full-time faculty, and adjunct faculty -- two participants from each of these groups were included. All participants taught at least one class per semester during the study period so that the effect on their classroom practice, a major goal of the grant, could be investigated. Within this group of six participants, the following criteria were used in the selection process so that the participants were drawn from several sub-groups that included the following:

- two levels of involvement in the attempted collaboration
- administrative divisions

The use of six participants balanced representation between high involvement and low involvement participants (3 each) as well as providing two representatives each from administrators (n = 2, administrators who also teach), full-time faculty (n = 106), and adjunct faculty (n = $\pm$250). This allowed some comparison among groups. Having 6 participants also provided an optimal size for a focus group with small numbers allowing the participants to go into greater depth (Hatch, 2002). Table 3 lists the participants, their positions at the college, their academic or organizational affiliation, and whether they were members of the task force.

The organizational affiliation differences among the participants included major academic departments within the college, and the two major areas of administration -- academic and student affairs. These differences are apparent from organizational charts.

Differences between liberal arts and technology/occupational faculty are a historical divide within the faculty and were also included. Together the six participants represented four of the five academic divisions of the college, which are: Applied Technology; Arts and Sciences; Health Sciences; Information Technology; Business and Mathematics; and Public Safety. Individual academic departments and divisions are not identified to protect the participant's confidentiality.

Table 3. Interview Participants

Participant	Position	Organizational affiliation	Task force member
Adjunct One	Adjunct faculty	Liberal Arts	no
Adjunct Two	Adjunct faculty	Technical/occupational	no
Faculty One	Full-time faculty	Liberal arts	no
Faculty Two	Full-time faculty	Technical/occupational	yes
Administrator One	Administration	Student Services	yes
Administrator Two	Administration	Academic Affairs	yes

Three participants were chosen from among the eight members of the task force. Two administrators were chosen from this group because they were the only two administrators that were also teaching at least one class a semester during the period of the attempted collaboration. The task force was formed in the fall of 2005 and played a major role in the endeavor. Details of their involvement are included in the next chapter.

Three participants were chosen from community members not on the task force and who did not pilot any of the task force initiatives. Chapter 4 details how these participants and the rest of the college community were involved in the attempted collaboration. Having participants with varying levels of participation in the process was important for two reasons: 1) to identify for whom, if anyone, this attempt at collaboration was indeed collaborative, and 2) to represent the different ways community members experienced the attempt at collaboration.

The six participants all readily accepted my invitation to be interviewed (Appendix I). The interviews took place in the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) at SMCC during the summer of 2005. The building that houses the CTE provided a private place to talk. The names of the participants have been replaced with titles to help obscure their identities and to assist readers in remembering the role each participants played at the college. Titles were used because the distinction among full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and administrator is a division that I often used in the analysis. It is a distinction that has a profound effect on how they experienced the context of Southern Maine Community College and context plays a critical role in this study. Not only is the issue of context explicit in the fourth research question but it is also implicit in the two research questions dealing with perception.

Focus group. The purpose of the focus group was to obtain additional retrospective data on how the interview participants experienced the process of intended collaboration and to respond to the analysis and interpretation. The focus group was comprised of five of the original six interview participants (The sixth participant had a scheduling problem and could not attend). The focus group took place one year after the

interviews, which allowed for initial data analysis and reflection by the participants. In keeping with research protocols suggested by Patton (2002), the focus group meeting was approximately one-and-a-half hours in length. Patton further suggested that truly open-ended questions would allow those being interviewed to go in any direction they want. For that reason, some of my questions -- even those dealing with specific findings -- were phrased to allow the subjects as much latitude as possible.

At the beginning of the focus group, I outlined the time frame and events that the group was to consider (Appendix J). This was followed by a series of 10 initial questions asking participants to look back on their experiences and how they make sense of it. Appendix K shows the initial questions and the research questions they were meant to inform. The first three questions were designed to have the participants reflect on how they experienced the attempted collaboration and what they gained from the experience. The next question dealt with their role in the attempt. Subsequent questions related to elements that facilitated or hindered the process. Finally, participants were asked to reflect on some of the initial findings from the document and interview sources in order to gain a deeper understanding of the initial themes emerging from the analysis.

Documents. Numerous documents were used to detail the formal policies and structures of the college as well as events that occurred during the study period. These documents include my notes, two surveys conducted as part of the attempted collaboration, worksheets produced by the task force, parts of the college website, SMCC faculty handbook, the original grant application, and a self-reflective essay.

I served as director of the grant and kept notes. These process notes are brief,

approximately 20 pages, and start with the writing of the grant in the summer of 2005. They deal predominantly with the events of the fall of 2005, which was the start of the grant and cover the work of the faculty task force. Coupled with the task force meeting minutes, they detail much of what I and others on the task force did to involve people in the collaborative effort. In addition, they serve as a means of triangulating data from the interviews. Names contained in these notes were changed and identities obscured. In any case where I felt the obscuring of a person's identity was questionable, a member check gave that individual an opportunity to have the reference omitted from the study.

Two surveys were conducted during the period of the attempted collaboration. These included a survey of students in November 2005 to help determine what they perceived as barriers to engagement, and a survey of faculty in January 2007 to help determine how many faculty made changes in their practice and what changes they made. These are important to this study for the insight they give into the process of collaboration. The results of the January 2007 faculty survey (Appendix G) are used because they pertain to the implementation of the results of the attempted collaboration. Further details are described in Chapter Four. The data were used by the college to show the impact of the collaboration on classroom practice and are used here to triangulate information on change gained from the interviews.

Some documents provided contextual information while others provide information about processes. Parts of the college website and faculty handbook dealing with the school's formal policies provided a view of the formal communication and shared governance structure within the college. The original grant application (Appendix B) reveals the perceived problems that motivated the enterprise and planned process.

Worksheets produced by the grant task force were used by faculty to aid in the implementation of changes to classroom practice proposed by the task force. When compared to interview data on what changes were reportedly made, they shed light on implementation – comparing actual and proposed changes.

Finally, a self-reflective essay (Appendix L), detailing my thoughts and the interactions of researcher as participant, was used and included in the analysis. This essay, coupled with my thoughts recorded in analytic memos throughout the analysis, makes explicit to the reader my role in data collection and who I am, my personal biases, and my personal investment in this research.

Participant observation. As revealed at the beginning of this chapter, I have played multiple roles in relation to this project. Patton (2002) states that "full participant observation over an extended period of time is the qualitative ideal" (p. 253). He further argues that there is a limited amount to be learned from what people say. Observation is necessary. My intense involvement in the project provided me with in-depth knowledge of the context and of the participants.

In addition to process notes, I kept a journal of my thoughts during the project. Although this journal is less detailed than it would have been if I had purposely kept it as a research tool, it does provide a window into how I was thinking at the time -- a connection to me as a participant. In addition to serving as a means of triangulating with the other data, the process notes and journal helped document group processes and structures, as well as formal and informal connections among group members and various groups.

Researcher Positionality

I occupy a variety of positions in relation to this study. I am not only the researcher but also have been a faculty member for the past 14 years at Southern Maine Community College (SMCC). I was director of the grant that funded the attempted collaboration, and have been director of the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) at SMCC for the past five years. These positions have given me great access to data, but also have challenged me to separate my role as researcher and former participant.

The use of self-reflective essays, analytic memos, and a peer review of findings helped to insure that evidence supports the findings that emerged from the data. Self-reflections (Appendix L) and analytic memos produced throughout the analysis were compared to the findings. As part of this analytical process, two peer debriefers were tasked with reviewing the findings in light of my self-reflection and analytical memos to provide an independent opinion as to whether the evidence was sufficient to support the findings, whether the findings were biased by expectations, and where more explanation was needed for the reader. This was an ongoing process during the analysis which provided input for subsequent drafts before they were submitted to the doctoral committee for review.

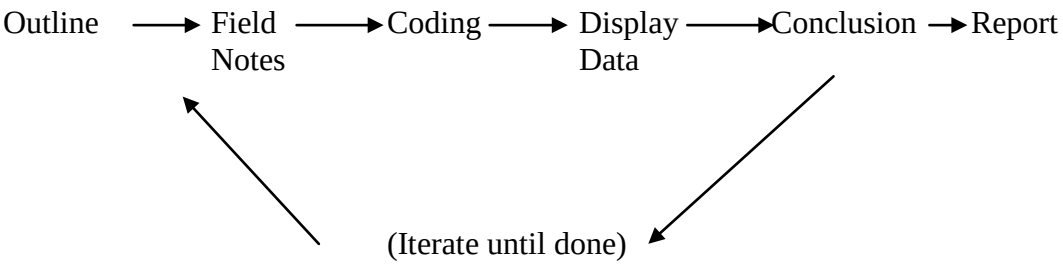
Data Analysis

Data analysis followed a *pre-structured case analysis sequence* (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Miles and Huberman this sequence is appropriate when the researcher is well acquainted with the setting, and an explicit conceptual framework is present along with explicit research questions and a clearly defined sampling plan. The

literature review provided the conceptual framework by clearly defining collaboration, contextual factors, and process variables.

The pre-structured case analysis sequence in Figure 2 (Miles & Huberman, 1994) started with an outline of the research report. Field notes were then collected and coding began. This process was followed by displaying the data in various ways to detect patterns and underlying themes. Conclusions reached through this method resulted in a reiteration of the process to further strengthen findings.

Figure 2. Pre-Structured Case Analysis Sequence (Miles & Huberman, 1994)



I performed the analysis using two iterations of the pre-structured case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I did the initial analysis after the interviews and included document data and my information as a participant observer. I then used this primary analysis in planning the focus group questions. The second stage involved the addition of the focus group data as well as a reanalysis of the combined data set incorporating interviews, documents, and focus group data.

I used HyperRESEARCH ("HyperRESEARCH," 2006) in the coding and analysis of all the data. This computer program allows the user to assign a code or multiple codes to portions of text. This entails highlighting a segment of text and assigning to it a word or phrase that describes it. The program also allows for the creation of analytical memos

as thoughts occur to the researcher during the coding process and to link these thoughts to specific portions of the text for later analysis. Stake (1995) observed “there is no particular moment when data analysis begins. Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as compilations” (p. 71). Therefore, the ability to record the researcher’s thoughts during the coding process is an important first element to the subsequent analysis of the data.

Initial coding. I transcribed the information from the interviews and submitted it to the participants for a member check. Participants were sent an electronic copy of the transcript and instructed to read it for accuracy. They were also asked to highlight words or phrases they felt were especially important (Seidman, 1998). This is not coding by the participants but a chance for them, upon reflection, to add emphasis to the transcript.

The first coding step was open coding -- a process whereby codes are derived directly from the data and not from an outside theoretical framework. The researcher reads through the transcript "line by line, identifying themes and categories that seem of interest. In this early stage, you should remain open to whatever you see in the data" (Esterberg, 2002, pg 158). During open coding, interview transcripts and document data

Table 4. Codes Created During Open Coding

Code	Definition
Change	Broad category including all references with change.
Change cause	Attribution for change from a participant.
Change to teaching	Example of a planned or implemented change to classroom practice
Culture	Evidence of the college or a sub-group of the college’s culture
Culture change	Instance of a change in the culture of the college or a sub-group within the college

Table 4. Continued

Code	Definition
Enactive Mastery Experience	An instance when use and/or mastery of a technique is attributed to change
Link	A formal or informal link between individuals or groups
Link – lack of	The lack of any apparent formal or informal link between individuals or groups
Link to student	A formal or informal link between an Participant and a student
Obstacles	Anything that creates an obstacle to collaboration. This may be physical, organizational, social
Positive feelings	An instance of positive feelings towards a person, group, or process
Prefers alone	The stated preference of a participant for working alone and not in groups.
Prefers groups	The stated preference of a participant for working in groups and not alone.
Role of collaboration	Attribution of collaboration as a factor in change
Story	Story related by a participant about them and SMCC
Success	Feelings by participants about the relative success or failure of the collaborative attempt
Task force	Incident related to the task force formed in the fall of 2005.
Trust	Mention or example of trust
Trust – lack of	Mention or example of a lack of trust
Verbal persuasion	An instance when use of verbal persuasion is attributed to change
Link to co-worker	Instances of a link or pattern of links between co-workers
Link to friend	Instances of a link or pattern of links among friends
Link to powerful	Instances of a link or pattern of links between an individual and powerful others
Friendship	Statements or instances related to friendship
Respect	Statements or instances related to respect

were imported into the HyperRESEARCH program and assigned codes derived directly from the data. Table 4 displays the codes created during this step and their definitions. The twenty-three codes developed in this open coding stage deal broadly with change, culture, connections between people and groups, and collaboration.

Focused coding. The second stage in coding was focused coding (Esterberg, 2002). In focused coding, codes derived from the literature review on collaboration as well as codes developed in open coding, were applied to all of the data. This involved searching for examples of each concept and systematically reading through the transcripts looking for examples. For example, several codes deal with change: change, change cause, change to teaching, and what participants think of the changes. I searched for examples of change, line by line through the text, and assigned them one or more of the codes dealt with change. This was repeated until all of the codes had been exhausted. This process produced several new codes that were then added to the code list and incorporated in a systematic search.

Tables 5 through 8 display the codes used during focused coding. These codes were derived from the literature and deal with the areas of defining collaboration, collaborative context, the process of collaboration, the outcomes of collaboration. Table 5 (codes that define collaboration) displays codes related to the key elements of Wood and Gray's (1991) definition of collaboration including: shared responsibility, common goal, working together, interactive process, shared rules and structures, and act/decide on issues. Codes for instances of direct or implied meanings of collaboration from participants, and instances of cooperation are also included.

Table 5. Codes that define collaboration

Code	Definition
Shared responsibility	Instances of a group of individuals sharing or planning to share responsibility
Common goal	Instances of individuals working towards or creating a common goal
Interactive process	Instances of promotive interaction between group members
Shared rules and structures	Shared rules and structures that govern the process of collaboration
Act/decide on issues	Shared decisions or action
Cooperation	Instances of cooperation that are distinct from collaboration by their lack of shared responsibility.
Collaboration defined	Direct or implied definitions of collaboration by Participants

The next table (6) includes codes related to each of Kezar's eight core elements (Kezar, 2005b) involved in a collaborative context.

Table 6. Codes related to collaborative capacity and Kezar's (2006a) core elements

Code	Definition
Collaborative mission	Reference to the collaborative mission of the institution
Integrating structure	A structure that crosses normal organizational divisions
Campus network	Social connections between individuals and groups that may or may not follow formal organizational structures
Reward/incentive	A reward or incentive given to collaborators for their involvement in the collaboration
Sense of priority	Evidence of a sense of priority from senior administrators for the attempted

collaboration

Table 6. Continued

Code	Definition
Values	Evidence that the college exhibits or articulates values that according to Kezar (2006a) help foster collaboration. These include being student-centered, innovative, and egalitarian.
Learning benefits	Instances/statements related to the benefits of a collaborative process

Table 7 displays codes related to the process of collaboration including a broad code for any reference to the process of collaboration as well as codes for the phases in Bushe and Coetzer's model (Bushe & Coetzer, 2007). References to time/deadlines that are theorized to affect that process of collaboration were also coded.

Table 7, Codes Related to the Process of Collaboration

Code	Definition
Process	Any event related to the process of collaboration
Phase 1 - commitment	Instances that show commitment of individuals to the group (Bushe and Coetzer, 2007)
Phase 2 - productivity	Instances of productivity within/by a group -- the competence stage (Bushe and Coetzer, 2007)
Time/deadlines	Evidence of a sense of time/deadlines influencing group process

Table 8 displays codes drawn from several areas of research related to the outcomes of collaboration. This includes the research by Gitlan (1999), Gray (1989),

Wheelan (2005), and Wildman et al (2000) with the role of representatives and other factors in the successful outcome of collaboration such as recognizing the value of information and assimilating it into use.

Table 8. Codes Related to the Outcomes of Collaboration

Code	Definition
Contributes to climate	Instances when a collaboration influences other collaborative endeavors
Opportunity	Instance of an opportunity to collaborate. May not lead to actual collaboration.
Physical barrier	Physical barrier to collaboration
Organizational barrier	Organizational barrier to collaboration
Worthwhile	An individual's statement related to the process or outcomes as worthwhile.
Motivation to change	An individual's stated reasons as to why they wish to change their/others practices
Recognize value	An individual's recognition of the value of information presented
Assimilate in use	An instance where an individual reports a change in practice related to the information exchange
Power with constituencies	An individual power to influence the behavior of those in other groups which they belong that are outside of the collaborative group.
Organizational change	A reference to the amount of organizational change that is required to implement the agreements/products of the collaborative group.
Long-term monitoring	An agreement/product of a collaborative group that is not self-executing and requires monitoring and advocacy

Analysis. Coding reports were produced using the HyperRESEARCH software. These reports were completed for every code and included excerpted material from the interviews, their source, and any analytic memos linked with those codes. Several strategies were used to make sense of these coded data including direct interpretation of individual instances and the aggregation of instances or identification of patterns that developed (Stake, 1995). The report for each code was first examined for overall patterns. The data were then examined for evidence of patterns within groups and sub-groups by building matrices for codes and groups of related codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The groupings in these matrices allowed for comparison to be made between full-time faculty, adjuncts, administrators, and different areas of involvement within the attempted collaboration. To further aid in the development and understanding of patterns, concept maps and/or diagrams were then created for major themes. (Esterberg, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994). For example, matrices were built to compare how each participant's actions fulfilled the criteria for collaboration. This created a clear distinction between two groups and lead to a major theme. Similar matrices built for the participants in relation to their views of success revealed little until numerous versions of concept maps were created. This resulted in another finding reported in Chapter 5.

I compared the coded material to the theoretical constructs from which the codes were derived in an attempt to determine the idiosyncratic ways the theory manifests itself in this context and to help uncover ways that the data may be unexplained by the theories. I searched for negative cases by checking through coded material, as well as a line by line search through the transcripts looking for examples that were not coded. The search for

evidence that contradicts these apparent patterns is important to the validity of the analysis (Glesne, 1999).

Limitations

This study deals with a single institution at a unique period in its history – a period of transformation and rapid growth. In my multiple roles, I bring my biases and sometimes conflicting roles with me. I was director of the grant, which was the impetus for this case study, therefore I am susceptible to biases stemming from the effects of the site on the researcher (Miles & Huberman, 1994). During the term of the grant I was motivated to see the grant, and my stewardship of the process as grant director, be termed successful. A benefit of the retrospective nature of this study is that the time has long passed for the institution to judge my success or failure. I also did not measure or judge the success of my stewardship or measure the outcomes of the grant. I sought to learn about the experiences of the participants. Thinking conceptually, keeping my research questions in mind, and the triangulation of data sources helped to mitigate for this effect (Miles & Huberman, 1994). There is also the chance that my connection with those I interviewed would create a halo effect biasing them into telling me what they think I want to hear. This was mitigated though the triangulation of data and making my research intentions clear to the participants. Although I knew the members of the task force well, the participants chosen from outside the task force I was less well acquainted with. Although I was familiar with names of the two adjunct faculty participants, I had never spoken with them directly.

The retrospective nature of the interview process, while beneficial for aiding reflection, is also a limiting factor. The interviews took place at the end of a process that

spanned two and a half years and the focus group took place a year later. Individuals' recollection of events, and the meaning they made of these events at the time, was influenced by the passage of time. The triangulation of data from these interviews and the focus group, with the data that were collected at the time of the events, as well as the process of interviewing multiple individuals, helps limit negative temporal effects.

Soundness/Credibility

I used several strategies, including triangulation of data sources and collection methods, maximum variation sampling, member checks, peer review, researcher reflexivity, intense long-term data collection, a detailed audit trail, and a final report that includes rich description of the context to promote the soundness and credibility of the findings (Merriam, 2002). The combination of interviews, a focus group, documents, and my involvement as a participant observer, provided a variety of collection methods as well as multiple sources of data by which to triangulate findings. Member checks were performed on the interview transcripts not only to insure accuracy of wording but to give members a chance to highlight comments they felt were especially important. All of the participants reported the transcripts to be accurate and no comments were highlighted.

A peer review of my findings by two individuals, both involved in community colleges, one from inside Southern Maine Community College and one from outside of the institution helped to ensure the soundness of the findings. The reviewer inside of SMCC has over two decades of experience in university and community college administration and was familiar with the grant. The reviewer outside of SMCC is currently the vice-president of an out-of-state community college and has read and commented on multiple drafts of this study.

The various positions I held in relation to the process have been made explicit. I wrote a critical self-reflective essay that is bolstered with analytic memos created during the entire process. The data collection was exhaustive due in part to the collection required for grant reporting. My direct involvement made this data readily available.

Summary

This chapter detailed the design of a retrospective case study to answer the research questions introduced earlier in this chapter. I collected data through interviews, a focus group, relevant documents, and participant observation. Data analysis was a multi-stage process that started with the open coding of interviews and documents followed by a focused coding. Analysis continued with the creation of matrices for the coded material and the creation of maps and diagrams for the major themes. I then held a focus group to gain additional information and a second iteration of the analysis was performed. The comparison of coded material to theoretical constructs, a search for negative cases, and the review of all analytical memos was also completed.

Findings throughout the analysis where compared to my researcher self-reflections and peer debriefers were used to help uncover researcher bias in interpretation and sufficiency of evidence to support the findings. The following chapter presents the participants' perceptions of the intended collaboration.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS: THE PERCEPTION OF THE PROCESS

This chapter focuses on the participant perceptions that emerged from analysis of the six interviews, the focus group, document data, and my role as participant observer. The themes introduced here reflect the goal of this study to learn how faculty and administrators experience attempted collaboration in the context of a community college by answering the following research questions:

1. To what extent was the process collaborative according to the definition by Wood and Gray (1991) that states, "Collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain?" (p. 139).
2. How did the participants perceive the process?
3. In the perception of the participants, what facilitated or hindered the process?
4. How did the institutional context appear to influence the process?

Presentation of evidence and analysis related to each research question is followed in the next chapter by the introduction of three major themes: collaboration is supported by conversation; collaboration is intimately tied to the context in which it occurs; and collaboration is an intricate dance between collaborators and cooperators.

Research Question 1

To what extent was the process collaborative according to the definition by Wood and Gray (1991) that states "Collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain?" (p. 139)

This question was designed to determine if collaboration occurred and what the limits of that collaboration were if it did occur. Five criteria were used to determine if the attempted collaboration met the definition of being collaborative: (1) interactive process, (2) common goal, (3) shared rules and structures, (4) shared responsibility, and (5) act/decide on issues (Wood & Gray, 1991). The following sections explain the findings related to each of these criteria.

Criterion #1: Interactive process. To elicit information about possible interactive processes, I asked participants in the interviews if they had participated in the MetLife Grant[1], how they had participated, what role collaboration played in any change to their teaching, and what input they may have had in the process and outcomes of the attempted process of collaboration. At the focus group we discussed some initial findings about the day-to-day experiences of faculty being tied to their department and more distant from the rest of the campus, strong feelings about convocation and professional days and how feelings about these events may have impacted the processes of collaboration, cooperation, and decisions to adopt the suggestions of the task force.

[1] The "MetLife Grant" was the common vernacular for the processes that were initiated due to the funding provided by the grant.

Using the HyperResearch program for coding, I first searched all of the document and interview data for mentions of any interactive process (as part of the focused coding process). I found 115 references. I later repeated this process to include the focus group data.

The references were then analyzed for instances of interactive processes that were related to the attempted process. Thirteen events were identified and a matrix of planned interactive events associated with the process of collaboration was built (Table 9). The table is arranged in chronological order and lists each event, the study participants who were involved in the event, and others from the campus community who participated.

Table 9. Interactive Events Identified

Date	Event	Study Participants Involved	Other Participants
January 2005	Professional development day	Faculty One and Two Administrator One and Two	Full-time faculty, some adjuncts, administrators and staff (N = approx 125)
Spring 2005	Grant writing	Administrator Two	Administrators (N=4)
Summer 2005	Planning sessions	Administrator Two	Administrators (N=6)
August 2005	Convocation and professional development day	Adjunct One Faculty One and Two Administrator One and Two	Full-time faculty, some adjuncts, administrators and staff (N = approx 125)
August 2005	Formation of task force	Administrator One and Two	Administrators
Fall 2005	Task force meetings (approximately 15 meetings)	Faculty Two Administrator One and Two	Five full-time faculty, one adjunct faculty, and two administrators (N=8)

Table 9. continued

Date	Event	Study Participants Involved	Other Participants
Spring 2006	Piloting of classroom practice initiative	Faculty One and Two Administrator One and Two	Full-time and adjunct faculty
Spring 2006	Piloting of early alert	Faculty Two Administrator Two	Full-time and adjunct faculty
August 2006	Convocation and professional development day	Adjunct One Faculty One and Two Administrator One and Two	Full-time faculty, some adjuncts, administrators and staff (N = approx 125)
Fall 2006	Piloting of peer advisors	Administrator One	Faculty and Students

A second matrix (Table 11) was built that identified the interactive events each participant was involved in from a list of all the events they had an opportunity to be involved. In this Table, an X represents involvement by the participant while a colored background in the cell indicates an opportunity for involvement. This second Table allows ready comparison among adjuncts faculty, full-time faculty, and administrators as well as comparison of task force members to non-task force members. The table shows that among the participants, adjunct faculty had the least opportunity to participate in interactive events while administrators had the most opportunity. For the general population, being a task force member provided more opportunity for interaction than non-task force members -- especially when you consider that the task force and task force sub-committee meetings were not one time events but a series of multiple meetings.

Table 10. Interactive Event Participation.
X=participation in the event, shaded areas indicate opportunities for involvement

Date	**Event**	**Non-task force**			**Task force**			
		Adjunct 1	**Adjunct 2**	**Faculty 1**	**Faculty 2**	**Admin 1**	**Admin 2**	**Myself**
January 2005	Professional development day			X	X	X	X	X
Spring 2005	Grant writing						X	X
Summer 2005	Planning sessions					X	X	X
August 2005	Convocation and professional development day	X		X	X	X	X	X
August 2005	Formation of task force					X	X	X
Fall 2005	Task force meetings				X	X	X	X
Fall 2005	Task force sub-committees				X	X	X	X
November 2005	Forum						X	X
January 2006	Professional development day	X		X	X	X	X	X
Spring 2006	Piloting of classroom practice initiative			X	X	X	X	X

Table 10. Continued.

Date	Event	Non-task force			Task force			
		Adjunct 1	**Adjunct 2**	**Faculty 1**	**Faculty 2**	**Admin 1**	**Admin 2**	**Myself**
Spring 2006	Piloting of early alert			X	X	X	X	X
August 2006	Convocation and professional development day	X		X	X	X	X	X
Fall 2006	Piloting of peer advisors					X		

Two of the above events -- professional development days and task force meetings - stand out due to their frequency and the frequency with which they were mentioned by the participants. Professional development days are distinct because they were repeat events with by far the largest numbers of participants. Task force meetings and sub-committee meetings are notable for being the longest duration of all formal interactive events and account for well over half of the structured group interaction time. These two events not only stand out as occupying more time and involving more people but the events were predominant in the minds of the participants.

Convocation and professional development day presentations were often mentioned by the participants who were full-time faculty and administrators. As detailed in the last chapter, at these events, the assembled group of 100 to 125 participants were typically divided into small groups of up to eight participants to discuss an issue and report out to the larger group. Each small group would also turn in their written answers

at the end of the session and the information would be shared with the entire SMCC community via e-mail.

Task force members mentioned the series of weekly meetings they had in the fall of 2005. The following narrative is typical of their response and is drawn from the interview with Administrator Two:

> Well, a lot of the reading that we did, the great articles you had. Some of them were so persuasive that you would be crazy to not try this stuff. And that's one of the benefits of the committee itself was having you screen all those articles and bring us great nuggets of wisdom and practice, and putting it in context, addressing all these different issues across campus, and then having the conversation here. Doing the jigsaw that we did, people didn't feel terribly overwhelmed, and you sort of got to be, not an expert, but kind of proficient in one area, and for faculty who don't necessarily feel proficient, and might feel somewhat at odds with their role could say I like this one or I didn't like this one and don't have any use for it, and it went back and forth so there was a very collegial exchange and that sort of thing.

The other task force members who were interviewed echoed the sentiments expressed above. Reading, conversation, sharing successes and failures, and figuring out what strategy to try next were all part of their interactive process. Attendance at the meetings was very high – over 94% - and due to the structure of the jigsaw technique (E. Aronson, 1978) every member of the group presented weekly. Even members who were absent could, and regularly did, contribute by sending their feedback on the reading to me, the grant director, who then presented it at the meeting for them.

Interaction was not limited to formal interactions. The participants, both inside and outside of the task force, stressed the importance of informal conversation as well. I will discuss this in depth later in this chapter when dealing with the process of collaboration. The thirteen events chronicled in this section show the opportunities that members of the college had to engage in an interactive processe related to the goals of the task force. Four of these events - grant writing, planning, task force meetings, and sub-committee meetings - were restricted to smaller groups. The remaining nine events were open to a majority of the community. The next part of the definition to be considered is participation in a common goal.

Criterion #2: Common goal. The goal of the attempted collaboration is explicit in the grant application:

> Project Goal
>
> To increase the success of entering students at Southern Maine Community College by embedding best practices for college transition and student engagement in first semester courses
>
> Objective 1.1
> Enhance student engagement by piloting redesigned first-semester courses in one general education discipline by Spring 2006 and developing a supplementary on-line first-year orientation by Summer 2006
>
> Objective 1.2
> Increase faculty awareness of best orientation practices and redesign courses by providing professional development by July 31, 2006
>
> Objective 1.3
> Increase student success by embedding best orientation practices in all first-semester general education courses by fall 2006

In order to determine which of the participants shared in these goals, they were asked in the interviews how they had participated in the MetLife grant. They were also

asked how their teaching may have changed in the past two years so that changes they made that they did not immediately connect to the attempted collaboration could be explored. The resulting data were coded and placed in a matrix showing how each individual met the three objectives of the grant. This was not to measure implementation goals but to uncover the effect on participants perceptions. Table 11 illustrates how these objectives were met by the participants. The first two objectives were met only by the participants who were members of the task force. Objective three was partially met by all of the participants interviewed. No individual made every change suggested by the task force, nor is there any evidence to suggest that they were expected to make every change.

Table 11. Common Goal Participation.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="2">Objective 1</th><th>Objective 2</th><th>Objective 3</th></tr>
<tr><td>Adjunct One</td><td colspan="2"></td><td></td><td rowspan="3">Participated in "early alert"

Made changes to their Syllabus</td></tr>
<tr><td>Adjunct Two</td><td colspan="2"></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Faculty One</td><td colspan="2"></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Faculty Two</td><td>Piloted redesign</td><td rowspan="3">Helped to create "5 changes" and changes to orientation</td><td rowspan="3">Designed and helped deliver faculty development</td><td rowspan="3">Worked to create and encourage faculty to adopt best practices</td></tr>
<tr><td>Administrator One</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Administrator Two</td><td>Piloted redesign</td></tr>
</table>

In the focus group the participants were again asked to look back on their experience with the MetLife grant and the process it engendered. They were asked what stood out for them in relation to the goals of the project. At that point the participants talked of bigger goals of engagement, student centered teaching, and of a culture that promoted it. It started with the following comment by Administrator Two:

> I think some people who might not have seen themselves as actively engaging students turned around and really got excited about it and changed syllabi and techniques and that sort of thing. So I think it's had that sort of long-term effect in places where we didn't necessarily predict it would happen too.

Adjunct Two added how it changed him:

> It helped me, it spurred me on to do a few things that I had not been doing in terms of engaging them, and also my syllabus is much different now. So, yeah, that was a really good comment. It made me think of things I had done that I wasn't doing before.

Faculty One agreed:

> When you mention changing the syllabi that was when I did. I forget her name but… (Maryellen Weimer). Yes, I think it was her. Her presentation really got me moving more in that direction. I'm still doing it, trying to implement things that are student centered in the classroom... So for me it was just the continuing commitment of the campus to be proactive, to find ways to make student engagement a focus and priority. And that's something that struck me when I first got here in 2004 that this was a place that was really interested in trying to get students involved and trying to get students to achieve as much as they can.

So it's just a continuation of that for me. That kind of philosophy that is at the center.

All of the participants at the focus group shared a common goal of promoting student engagement and together painted a picture of a community that is purposeful in promoting the importance of students engagement not only through this one attempt at collaboration but as part of the culture as was shown in the previous section. So even though the participants did not share in fulfilling all of the objectives in the grant, they did share the larger goal of student engagement.

Criterion #3: Shared rules, norms and structures. In order to identify shared rules, norms, and structures associated with the process of attempted collaboration I asked the following interview questions: Did you participate in the MetLife grant, and if you participated what did you do? The answers to these questions and the document data were first searched for organizational structures associated with the process. All references to identified structures were then organized and a second search was made to identify the rules and norms associated with them. Later, during the focus group, additional data were collected by delving deeper into the process and probing how participants felt about the working of identified structures. First I will identify the structures that were found.

Structures. Many organizational structures were related to this attempt at collaboration. The non-task force participants had difficulty remembering what events were associated with this particular grant. It was only after listing the different events that they could remember anything other than the large campus-wide events like

convocation. Conversely, members of the task force were well acquainted with the structures involved and needed no prompting.

The first step in identifying structures was by listing the events identified in the interview and document data. This attempted collaboration included only stakeholders internal to SMCC and sought to make changes within the institution. Therefore it can be termed an intra-organizational collaboration. Since this was intra-organizational I looked at parts of the organizational structure of SMCC as the units of organization. These parts include academic and administrative departments and divisions. The organizational structure of SMCC is included in the faculty handbook.

Table 12. Structures.

Temporary Structures	Existing Structures
Grant writing committee	Convocation
Task Force	Professional development day
Task Force sub Groups	The Center for Teaching Excellence
Forums	Shared Governance
Surveys	Academic divisions/departments
Workshops	Academic and Student affairs
Piloting of initiatives program	Senior Administration

In this manner, I identified 14 organizational structures within the college that were utilized to aid the process of collaboration. I then used Wood and Gray's (1991) classification of structures by duration to organize the structures (Table 13) into temporary structures (created specifically for this collaboration) and existing long term structures.

Rules and norms. Within a collaborative process, rules and norms that govern structures may be implicit or, as was the case with the task force, the participants must negotiate and agree on explicit rules and norms (Wood & Gray, 1991). The rules and

norms governing the existing structures existed before the start of this study. However, the rules and norms that governed the temporary structures were created within the bounds of this study.

I searched the data for references to the temporary structures identified above starting with the primary organizational structure for the collaboration -- the task force. This was a temporary structure whose members shared the structure of 14 weekly meetings and, as the semester progressed, all of the members served on one of the three subgroups that grew out of the main group.

The meeting of the task force grew to have a relaxed yet structured organization. The use of the jigsaw (explained in Chapter 1), served to organize the weekly assignments given members. The proposal by a task force member of a format that was adopted for reporting information from assigned readings served to organize the process of reporting by each member at the weekly meetings.

Task force members were also the driving force in the creation of new structures. They created the task force sub-groups (on classroom practice, how the institution could support classroom practice, and changes to student orientation), the surveys, focus groups, and workshops. The rules and norms that governed these structures were their creations.

Criterion #4: Shared responsibility. In the previous section on goals, I showed who participated in the goals as written in the grant "to increase the success of entering students at Southern Maine Community College by embedding best practices for college transition and student engagement in first semester courses" (Vickery, 2005).

The following quote by Faculty 1 caused me to consider responsibility in terms of the giving of responsibility and the accepting of responsibility:

> Well, collaboration is two ways. The people initiating the collaboration, but in order to collaborate you need people you want to collaborate to do it right back. But when people don't, this isn't a dictatorship, you can't force people.

The task force was asked to create best practices for college transition and student engagement in first semester courses. The entire teaching community was asked to embed the task force's ideas in their courses.

There is evidence to demonstrate that the task force members took this responsibility seriously. They devoted many hours to completing the readings, their attendance at the weekly discussion was over 94%, and they created the sub-groups to further investigate possible solutions. The task force also created many structures to get input from the greater college community as shown in the previous section.

The responsibility to implement the plan that the task force devised was broadly dispersed among everyone who teaches at SMCC. Evidence revealed that this responsibility was not as universally embraced as it was with the task force members. Looking at the results of the survey administered in January 2007 that was presented in Chapter 1, and the very low attendance at workshops and forums it is clear that the project was not a high priority to many community members.

Criterion #5:Act/Decide on Issues. In both the interviews and the focus group I asked the participants how much input they had in acting and deciding on these issues. This, like many of the other issues, shows a distinct difference between the task force members and others community members. The difference lies not only in what they had

the opportunity to decide on but whether they took the opportunity to do so. Table 13 shows a brief synopsis of participants' feelings about how much input they had.

Table 13. Answers to how much input participants had in acting and deciding on these issues.

Adjunct 1	Adjunct 2	Faculty 1	Faculty 2	Admin 1	Admin 2
Yeah, and if I did have a chance I'm not sure I noticed it or took advantage	Well, I was at that workshop so, I think so.	I feel I had the chance to offer input. Well I wasn't directly involved but I did feel broadly involved because of the online surveys and because I felt like I made some changes in response	I said my two cents worth. I was probably like the anchor and chain. I mean I always was, through the whole process, if anyone was going to throw cold water on an idea it probably was me. It was like mister reality speaking up at times. Whoa, this is nice and warm and fuzzy but, whoa, hold it, this is not going to fly. No one treated me without, not that I could ever write some great document.	Oh yeah, and I like the fact that as someone who's primary role isn't teaching that I had some input on teaching. Yeah, I think that's important. And I think from the faculty that I work with, some of the club advisors and like that, I'm always looking for feedback from people who are outside of what I do to have some say. Because different perspectives are so valuable.	(laughter) Enough. I think I had plenty. I was lucky I did have a lot. Maybe some people who didn't participate feel they didn't have input. I don't know. But I think I feel they had plenty of opportunity.

The first three columns are the non-task force members. While they may have had the opportunity to decide how to implement the dictates of the task force they did not participate in creating them - even if they were given the opportunity

In most cases, the changes made by the task force were up to individual instructors to implement if they chose to do so. The task force suggested “five changes to classroom practice.” More precisely, these “changes” could have been called ideas to enhance five areas of classroom practice. Many of these “changes” were already taking place in many of the classrooms at SMCC as they were drawn, in part, from current practices uncovered at convocation, forums, and surveys. Individual instructors had the opportunity to implement these changes if they chose to act on them. The task force provided a variety of ways that these changes could be accomplished.

The following quote from Faculty One captures the thoughts of all of the non-task force participants about being given choices in regard to changes suggested by the task force:

> I obviously feel positive about being able to make these on my own and to make the choice that best fits my teaching style and course material. It’s a bummer when you have to meet some protocol that you don’t think is applicable. And that didn’t happen so that is good. I’m trying to think of other interventions. The only thing I can think of that you have to follow is I guess early alert.

The task force members view of their input in the last three columns of Table 13 show how they viewed their roles. They used words like "plenty", "enough", and "had their two cents worth". In my observations, I saw them actively engaged in debate about the issues. I saw how they crafted the final documents of the task force. When it came time for them to implement changes in their classrooms they had the same decisions to make as the non-task force members had. However, a key difference is they were deciding whether to implement a plan they had crafted versus a plan others had created.

Summary. Five criteria were used to define collaboration in this study - interactive process, common goal, shared rules, norms, and structures, shared responsibility, and the ability to act/decide on issues. I found that while participants outside of the task force can be viewed as cooperating with the task force by taking part in some of the activities and implementing some of the requested changes to practice in their classroom, their participation does not satisfy all five of the criteria introduced here. These non task force participants had less opportunity to share in an interactive process: rules and structures were less available, they did not share in the responsibility to create change, and their ability to act/decide on issues was limited. I will refer to these participants as cooperators. Task force members were the only participants who could be said to meet the criteria for having engaged in a collaborative process. I will refer to them as collaborators. Upcoming themes in this chapter will reveal the important interplay between the collaborators and cooperators that makes for a successful collaboration.

Research Question 2

How did the participants perceive the process?

The participants perceived events from different vantage points. The interviews and focus group data were crucial in helping to describe how the participants perceived the process of attempted collaboration. The following outlines of the participants show how each was touched by the attempted collaboration and gives the reader information so that they can put the six participants in the context of their role at the college. There are substantive differences in how the participants experience daily life at SMCC and how

they experienced the attempted collaboration. These very differences make some of the similarities in their experiences all the more poignant.

The Participants. Following is a description of the six participants outlined in Table 14 -- five of whom were also involved in the focus group. The goal of these descriptions is to place the individual participants within the context of SMCC and the narrative relayed in Chapter one. This "background" information on the participants was gathered during the interviews by asking about their typical days, what groups they feel part of, and how they may have participated in the attempted collaboration. These questions explore the degree to which their daily experience affected their experience of collaboration.

Table 14. Participant Description Synopsis.

Participant	Career stage	Division	Identifies with	Task force member
Adjunct One	Early	Liberal Studies	department, other adjuncts	No
Adjunct Two	Mid	Technology/ occupational	department	No
Faculty One	Mid	Technology/ occupational	technology faculty	No
Faculty Two	Early	Liberal studies	department, liberal studies, those who started at SMCC when she did	Yes
Administrator One	Early to mid	Student affairs	faculty, campus center staff	Yes
Administrator Two	Mid	Academic affairs	faculty, staff	Yes

Each description starts with basic demographic information about the participant. This includes their position, the general area of study in which they teach, and how long they have been at the college. Following this is a brief description, in their own words, about their typical day at the college and the groups they feel "part of" or affiliated with. Lastly, an outline of the role they played in the attempted collaboration is presented.

Adjunct One. Adjunct One had less than five years teaching experience when the grant was awarded in the fall of 2005. She was teaching introductory liberal arts classes part-time at SMCC and at three other higher education institutions in the area, which limited her time on campus and the time she could devote to some of the opportunities to be involved with the grant process. As she said in her interview:

> I love this school and I really try to keep this one sort of at the forefront of the places I go. But I teach at four other places a semester...Well I'm at Central Maine Community College, York County Community College, SMCC, and sometimes USM [University of Southern Maine], I've taught at Andover College before, Thomas College in Waterville. You know, you do that adjunct thing and you go where the work is.

With the limited time she spends on campus it is not surprising the groups she feels affiliated with.

> Well, the [academic] department and more specifically the adjuncts in the department. Of course I could say my classes, while I'm going through those, those are definitely a close-knit group.

However, even within these groups she points to some tension.

> I've learned as an adjunct to be careful who I trust as other adjuncts and I think the reason for that is it is really competitive, not just in this school, but if you get classes at another college, and who's not saying what about what job is open and that sort of thing. I trust the majority of the adjuncts here and a lot of them are friends and have been really helpful but over the course of the few years I have been here, three or four whatever it is, there have been a few people that I just

didn't get that vibe from, who saw me not as a colleague but someone who was competition.

With her limited time on campus she found it difficult to participate. Although she was affected, if only minimally, by the attempted collaboration.

So I guess that may be something where I made the choice not to go [to the MetLife workshop]. I didn't see it as something pressing at that time... I think most of what affected me was the early alert. Within the first mid-semester or few weeks everybody who was below a certain... and that's something I look for now. Maybe more so than mid-semester, Okay when it is was due, here's someone not doing well. So now I'm a little bit more attentive to it. Sometimes I find after the fact, someone I haven't assigned early alert starts to nose dive and I do my own things at that point. You know I really try to make sure, I don't want to coddle a student, spoon feed them, but at the same time they have a right to know they're not performing well.

Adjunct Two. Adjunct Two had been teaching at SMCC for more than five years by the fall of 2005. He taught courses in the technology/occupational area. He also taught at two other institutions. His time on campus, when not teaching, was generally limited to the office that his department set up for adjunct faculty, which gave him some access to full-time faculty in his department but little contact with the rest of campus. His typical day on campus goes like this:

It depends on the semester. But this semester my typical days in -- Monday, Wednesday, Friday. I have a Monday class at 10 and a Monday Lab at 6, so I stay here all day. Then Wednesdays I have an 8 o'clock lab and then a 6 o'clock

> lecture so I stay here all day and on Friday I have a 10 o'clock lecture and that's it. [and in between] I work on Blackboard. Everything I do now is web enhanced. I'll never do another class that is not web enhanced. The resource is just great for students. Even the ones that are computer phobic and not technology minded are into it, into technology. I prep for class and stay busy, walk around campus some time, when it is nice out.

As he explained in his interview, like Adjunct One he felt affiliated with his department:

> The department I guess, since that's where I teach. So that would be the first. That's my whole main association. That's where I have to go when I'm working and it's in that separate building. It's where I'm assigned to.

He felt separate, but not alienated from other departments:

> I feel separate from many because I've never been there and don't know anybody there, you know.

His connection to the process of attempted collaboration was similar to that of Adjunct One. He did participate in the early alert. He also attended one of the workshops on the five changes to teaching practice.

Faculty One. Faculty One was new to SMCC and new to teaching when the grant was awarded in the fall of 2005. She taught in the liberal arts. As a full-time faculty member she spent more time on campus than the adjunct faculty. Her day was typically divided between time spent in her office and in the classroom.

> I'm very much into routine. So my typical day begins early. I'm usually here 7 or 7:15 and I'm usually gone fairly early, I'm gone by 3 or 4. My typical day in the first 3 years here has revolved around teaching and preparation for teaching.

> So what I use the mornings for often, my classes start at 10 or 11. I use the mornings to get in, get ready for classes, so my routine is usually get into my office, make copies for my classes if I need to, but also reading course literature, reading some supplementary stuff, getting a discussion outline together, preparing for the questions that I've already proposed, that sort of stuff. And then I teach. I usually teach in chunks of time, 10 to noon, 1 to 3, and then I'm just in the classroom, and then I drive home. So it's really orientated, the anchor of my day is I really have to have that morning...[Most of my contact is with people in] this building, or Preble, or sometimes the Campus Center. It's where I teach.

She feels most associated with people teaching in the liberal arts, people hired when she was, and people teaching in her department.

> I would say I identify with people who are teaching in the liberal art type curriculum. When we have a big school gathering that's who I tend to mingle with. I think I identify with the people who were hired at the same time I was. Because when we entered the school we all got put in the same building and we did things together for the first semester or so. I definitely identify with the people in my own department, who I meet regularly and have a social relationship with in the working environment. So liberal arts, people who are my generation entering into SMCC, and the department. Those are the three communities I feel attached to the most.

While initially she described her connection to the process of attempted collaboration as tenuous, she later identified key events that led her to participate in the requested changes.

To be frank, my connection was tenuous... So what I can say is I was really inspired by some of the college wide things you did ... I was really inspired by Mary Ellen Weimer. When she came in January 06, that Spring convocation, they weren't new ideas or anything, but I was really struck by how you could reconsider your classroom and you could really kind of change your classes. And I applied for a mini-grant that summer to switch from kind of a lecture format in my classes, I didn't always lecture but it was based on talking a lot, to something that was more discussion oriented, less formal more collaborative environment in the classroom. I was really inspired by what she said and what I had been reading at the same time in... journals, about how other scholars have been doing it and I came up with my own way of doing it that meets my comfort level in the classroom but also meets the big goal ..., to help students develop interpretive skills, and our ability to do this is by looking at primary sources. So I still talk but there is a different focus, there are assignments and the way I structure the class.

Faculty Two. Faculty Two was a veteran instructor in the technology/occupational area. He was a member of the task force and served on the classroom practice subcommittee of the task force. As a full-time faculty member, he, like Faculty One, spends considerable time on campus. Most of his time being spent in his department as he related in his interviews.

Ninety-nine percent of my time is down there, except when you have a committee obligation or whatever. But pretty much yeah. I intermingle with the first year students as much as I, in the afternoon, I get pretty active with them, cause Joe

and I co-teach parts of the curriculum towards the end of the year, so I tend to stick my nose in and be part of the first year students. It helps out, I think for me, for them to get a feeling of who I am, my bark is not as worse as my bite and so it softens them up with a better understanding of who I am coming.

As a member of the technology/occupational area he saw himself as separate from those teaching in the liberal arts.

Yes, and as a group, the people in the technologies, tend to hang out together. It doesn't matter whether we're building buildings or cooking, baking cakes, or putting the plumbing in, or getting it heated, or getting all the apparatus from integrated machine. We are techno people. We work with our hands. Just down to earth dirt and just don't like to fool around, and white is white and black is black, and boy you go try to blend the two colors together and you get mediocre results at best. You either do the job and do it well or, half done is half assed and it doesn't make any difference what it is... We tend to look at ourselves as the techno side of the campus tends to shy away from the academic side of the college. In other words the technical people and the liberal art people forever and for every place we go they don't tend to. They look at the world they have a slightly different shade of glasses then we do... I think it's just, we'll look, we think our demands are the center of the earth...and their demands are the center of the earth. In all college campuses we tend to cluster things. We'll put all our academic pods in one place and all our technical pods in another, and we have a little invisible domains and valleys. You know, we're much the same way. ...we always talk about the guys over the hill. Let's see what they want to do.

His initial participation in task force meeting was minimal – he came late to the first three meetings and said little. However after the first three weeks he became a vigorous participant. Administrator One made the following comment:

> Yeah, and there was some people. Like Faculty Two, I had such a good time being here with him, because here is this crotchety old technology professor, kind of the stereotype of these guys who've been here a long time and " Oh these students today" and he had some great ideas and some great insights on students.

Faculty Two had positive views about the task force as he states in his interview:

> I think we had a really good group overall. I don't think anyone felt they couldn't put their two cents in. You kept the format wide open. Let's throw it all out there and let's put it together. And we met on a really efficient basis. I think we had 85% or better turnout at the scheduled meetings, it was great. And I think all of the electronic stuff that you sent out was all accepted most messages sent back. No, I don't think you could do it again and do it any better. All you'd have was a different personality, that's all you'd change.

As a task force member he participated in the weekly meetings of the task force and also served on the sub-committee that devised the five changes to classroom practice.

Administrator One. Administrator One is in his early to mid-career in the student service side of administration. Being an administrator, his interaction with the rest of campus was very different from that of adjunct and faculty.

> My typical day here at the college is usually divided between a couple of different approaches to working with people I guess. I meet individually with students for career counseling, for transfer counseling, for students who want to start student

> groups, for students who want to return from suspension, or students who are on probation and want to take 13 instead of 12 credits – just a lot of 1 on 1 meetings. Then there's committee work, I chair the (blank) committee, just a lot of meeting of student groups, the faculty senate, Phi Theta Kappa... and also I tend to be pulled into a variety of things. Whenever there is a special project of some sort or another – like MetLife - I tend to be involved in some way. That's sort of the ideal with my position is I have some set stuff I do and that would be plenty but my take on the position is that I'm kind of the flex person in student services that if we need someone to be on the MetLife grant, or we need someone to pick up a special project like when we did the CCSEE (the Community College Survey of Student Engagement), I took that on coordinating that, so there is a lot of project work as well.

He is typically involved with a more diverse population than adjuncts or faculty members. Yet, like adjuncts and faculty members, he identifies most with people who work in the building he works in. However he also speaks of his ties to those who teach.

> I think the people who work in the campus center, I think we're all pretty tight... But I've been lucky enough to get to know a lot of faculty through, probably more so than a lot of people who work in the campus center, through stuff like the MetLife grant, and coordinating orientation, and teaching as an adjunct too. It's nice to be on a campus where there isn't such a strong division between academics and student services.

He was a member of the task force and served on the orientation sub-committee. He was involved in the piloting of student peer mentors and was the driving force in writing the

student day-planner -- the Compass. To the question of what he did on the task force he answered:

> Well, I was on the task force and we read a lot of great literature, and had a lot of great discussions, and hacked out a plan for what we thought would be. We looked at what we do for orientation and really revamped what we do for orientation with the on-line piece. We totally revamped the in-person version and now finally have our online version. It's a way we can make orientation mandatory for everybody and communicate some of those real basic ideas about the college and how to be successful and who to turn to when you have questions and issues. It's so simple. We did the mentoring piece where we had five students who attended classes they had taken for a whole semester and served as a mentor for that class.

Administrator Two. Administrator Two is a mid-career administrator in academic affairs. She served on the task force and on the sub-committee that looked at how the institution could support the student engagement effort. Like Administrator One, her time was spent working with a variety of people from many departments.

> My typical day is a lot of drop-ins and calls or e-mails from faculty, especially once the curriculum committee gets rolling, "gee, I'm thinking about creating this course, would you help me" or "our department is going to start discussions on a concentration, would you like to come or would you do some research for us". Or they're struggling with how to start examining their course offerings or change the course offerings and I'll offer to do work with them so it's probably the whole

> gamut of one on one, departmental stuff, as well as the student piece and the student piece is just the labor of love for me.

Who does she identify with?

> I have to go back to that skitzy life I lead. I feel very strongly that I identify with the faculty in a large part because I serve them, I work with them, and I teach. And I understand the nature of what they do in the classroom. I also know that I'm not faculty. Although it's not such as caste system here as elsewhere and I've also worked very consciously to make connections with staff in other areas, like the students life people, definitely enrollment services.

Her participation in the process was, in her words "broad" -- from " the writing of the grant, to the structure of how we would do it. Soup to nuts as you would say,"

These brief glimpses into the daily life and perceptions of the participants present additional context in which to make sense of their perceptions. Three major themes related to the question of how the participants perceived the process of attempted collaboration were uncovered: how the public process of collaboration stimulates a private process; differing views of success; and how those absent from the collaboration could have changed it. In the following section I will detail how these themes were uncovered and what they reveal about how participants perceived the process.

The Public Process and the Personal Process it Stimulates. To elicit information about how the participants perceived the process of collaboration they were asked the following questions in the interviews:

- Did you participate in the MetLife grant? What did you do?
- How do you feel about the changes made or attempted under the grant?

- How difficult/easy did you perceive the changes to assimilate?
- How much input do you feel you had in creating the changes?

Data coded from the interviews and documents was entered into matrices and concept maps seeking patterns. Earlier in this chapter what each participant did in relation to the process of attempted collaboration was presented. Was that involvement a catalyst for change -- change to teaching practice, change to how they view students, change in their social connections within the college and if they changed, what caused them to change? If they thought the attempted collaboration was successful, what role do they feel they had in it? Matrices were created for each of these questions. After the initial analysis of this data the focus group was asked the following questions in order to gain additional insight into how they perceived the process.

- Looking back on your experience with the MetLife grant and the process that it engendered, what stood out for you in relation to the goals, process, and outcomes?
- What would you say you got out of the experience?
- What do you think facilitated or hindered processes of collaboration, cooperation, and decisions to adopt the suggestions of the task force? Follow-up prompts to this question included reference to the jigsaw, stipends, professional days/convocation, task force composition, deadlines, choice of implementation strategies, and talking.

- There are obvious differences in what those on the task force experienced and what those outside of the task force experienced. How would you describe the process that you experienced?

All of the participants reported changes to their teaching in the previous two years (not surprising, due to the broad scope of the attempted changes) and many of the changes that they reported were in keeping with changes endorsed by the task force. Table 15 shows excerpts from the cooperators (participants who were not members of the task force) about how they feel their teaching changed in the two years previous to the interviews. Table 16 shows similar excerpts from the collaborators. Both tables display changes that show movement to a more learning-centered versus a teaching-centered approach. Using more of the students' own experiences, multiple ways of assessing student work, and moving away from a formal lecture format to a more informal lecture and discussion format were all ways that the cooperators made this shift. The collaborators were more philosophical in their answers about how their teaching changed. They talked about their recognition of what they were doing, being more conscious and more in tune with student needs.

It is when the participants were asked to what they attributed these changes that a greater difference was apparent between cooperators and collaborators. For collaborators (Table 16), participation in the task force was their leading attribution for why they changed their teaching. With the exception of the common element of having an opportunity to talk, I did not see any pattern of attribution in the preliminary analysis of the matrix. It was during the focus group that Faculty One articulated the connection

that all of the participants, but especially the non-task force participants had - he referred to the personal process:

> For me I guess the process was much more personal, you have the convocations and you have these reminders, signposts, saying here is the issue of student engagement and here is what you should be thinking about in the classroom. But while it was personal -- the process was figuring out semester by semester what was working out.

The idea of a private process that was stimulated by the public process of collaboration led to consideration of the interplay between collaboration and cooperation. Cooperators, more so than collaborators, were talking about some event that occurred in the process of attempted collaboration that intersected with events outside of the attempted collaboration. The idea of a personal process also resonated with the two other cooperators in the focus group. Adjunct Two added that the process gave him connections he did not have before:

Table 15. Change to Teaching for Cooperators (Bold indicates a change in keeping with the attempted collaboration).

Adjunct One	Adjunct Two	Faculty One
... **I immediately went back and worked that into my syllabus and my first day routine. (Workshop materials)** Well I know it's changed. I think one of the things I've put emphasis on, ... is teaching for transfer. (transfer to other academic disciplines) But once I started to really get down and look closely at the research and think about my own teaching practices I started to shift some of the ways I worked assignments, using more of their own experiences, trying to pull in different classes, I hate that term real world, but stuff they would encounter when they went into the job market. **Smaller changes have taken place I guess as far as holding students accountable.** **Sometimes I find after the fact, someone I haven't assigned early alert starts to nose dive and I do my own things at that point. You know I really try to make sure, I don't want to coddle a student, spoon feed them, but at the same time they have a right to know they're not performing well**	I think I've gotten more… efficient. ... more ways of evaluating them because not everybody is successful in being evaluated the same way I've done things like that and enhanced it on the web and made a lot of resources available to them on Blackboard. **Just hearing what everybody else is doing and maybe some of the problems they are having. Just makes me think about what I would do in those situations.**	...but my approach was a lecture approach.. have attempted to meet the learning needs of their students, and we've got some real good ways to do that because of what we do as historians tackling primary sources. So anyway, **I was inspired by her (Weimer) and it corresponded to what I was reading and thinking.** And I applied for a mini-grant that summer to switch from kind of a lecture format I didn't always lecture but it was based on talking a lot, to something that was more discussion oriented, less formal more collaborative environment in the classroom. I've deliberately shifted from kind of a formal lecture approach to something that's, I guess not informal, but its more discussion oriented, it's more trying to elicit responses from students. It's not really Socratic, but it's more involved **One of those things, maybe it was in one of your talk, give students a choice of assignments. And that is a thing I do all the time now. Rather than everyone has the same assignment.**

Table 16. Change to Teaching for Collaborators (Bold indicates a change in keeping with the attempted collaboration).

Faculty Two	Admin One	Admin Two
I think what has changed is my recognition of what I was doing. The more I got involved in what we would like to do, Now to keep people involved, for example, this morning we were talking about the fish philosophy. OK. Have you ever heard tell of that, well no, so then a quick story of what the fishmongers in Seattle do, and I have the textbook, I've read that thing, and we're doing it and you don't really know it I have this big piece of paper, half-done, and I get in the middle of this group and we start filling it in. pretty soon I've got them where I want them. This person's making a contribution, this person's making a contribution. Well that's maybe not quite right. Is there anything better than that. Well the next person is, well Yeah. Now in 45 minutes we got them going. Now the trick is to keep them going and I tell them. Now I say, this exercise, you're probably wondering what is this wacky son of a B doing here. The whole focus of this, I wanted to see, this was your first class, first piece of work to do. For one, read the directions, what kind of effort did you put into it. All nine people turned their work in. I'm missing one or two, but all nine people turned their work in. I've had a chance to evaluate it before I came here, most of it is pretty good.	**I'm much more conscious of trying to have more regular and meaningful assignments** Yeah and as someone who just happened into teaching, rather than it being somewhat intentional, I just said OK what did my instructors that I liked do, and I was kind of like that in college, I was a big fan of chalk and talk classes. I would figure out who were the good lecturers and I would just go and hang out in the middle of the classroom, not the front and not the back. **Just sit there and soak it all in, and loved every minute of it. The big part of MetLife made me think, that's not going to work for everybody, probably not going to work for most of our students, so what can you do to kind of make some of the learning more intentional, and make it so there's a little bit more incentive to come to class, having read their textbook and things like that.**	Well certainly more in tune to the whole idea of getting a better handle on the population. Especially this larger young population that's coming here who have in some cases little or no exposure to college and the expectations of college. And always looking, I drive Joyce and the others crazy, because I never teach the same syllabus twice. I make myself nuts. Because you can always tweak it and make it better because and people come up with better ideas. I think the largest thing is generating the awareness and the engagement piece, how do we get them hooked those first few weeks. I think based on what's happened in the last year and a half they've had more, both returning students and brand new students were exposed to that. I think they notice, especially if they're younger students used to the real traditional pedagogy, and **to have some of these new twists and some emphasis on engagement, especially early on, I think the important underlying message there is you matter, you need to be here, and you need to be doing something when you're here. Just sitting in the back with your baseball hat on backwards is not going to cut it.**

Table 17. Cooperators Attributions for Change Cause (Bold indicates an attribution to the attempted collaboration).

Adjunct 1	Adjunct 2	Faculty 1
Cause I had no choice but to adapt. I think Molly and Kevin really have kind of helped me a lot being a new teacher. Most of what changes my teaching style is going in and having conversations about basic things with other teachers I would probably say that I would have not made any of those changes, or it would have gone a lot slower, had I not gone into these **collaborative settings** with people who were extremely experiences, who where in different stages of their own teaching careers, than I	Just **workshops**, our staff meetings, talking with other instructors, talking to students, mainly talking to students because that is really the whole impetus for changing... **Just hearing what everybody else is doing and maybe some of the problems they are having. Just makes me think about what I would do in those situations**	Well something that's recognized and has a place of privilege on this campus is your ability as a professor you ability as a teacher. Look, you want a classroom experience to be enjoyable at a kind of fundamental level I don't want to be known for the guy who just makes you take notes in class. Look I'm reading about it, we have these course-wide initiatives, but it's also coming out of the student experience in the classroom, my response to that. I don't want you to just sit there and take notes, I don't think it's the best way to learn, I don't think it's the best way to really engage in what I really think is exciting, it's also a response to what's going on in the classroom. **I was inspired by her (Weimer) and it corresponded to what I was reading and thinking.**

Table 18. Collaborators Attributions for Change Cause.

Faculty 2	Admin 1	Admin 2
We really are working to do a lot of things, and some of the things that bring us together are some of the things we've done here. Like try an early warning system that we think is going to work.	**I think that being part of the task force and hearing other strategies these people were using and that you really can do this, or do that, and it will work, and it does work.** I'm a big believer in don't reinvent the wheel. Because if there's other people doing things that work find out what that is. You may have to retread that tire but it's still the same tire. So find out. Its not from the top down, "OK, now we're going to do advising differently and this is how you're going to advise." And I get the sense that this discussion of advising and retention is going to be an ongoing one, and well not as formalized as what we did with met life it's going to be…	I think convocation is a wonderful custom and that's definitely fostering a culture that a lot of institutions probably don't take the opportunity to do. To set aside two days in the fall and 1 day in the winter, a day and a half whatever we do, to close out the world and just focus on these issues is really conducive to building community and sharing ideas. In my perspective it's a luxury and here it is not perceived as a luxury which I think is a really powerful message coming from administration. **Well a lot of the reading that we did. The great articles you had. Some of them were so persuasive that you would be crazy to not try this stuff. And that's one of the benefits of the committee itself was having you screen all those articles and bring us great nuggets of wisdom and practice, and putting it in context, addressing all these different issues across campus, and then having the conversation here. Because it was such a representative group. An also people were very willing to try. People tried stuff in math that was really kind of out there. People shared their successes and their failures and that's what I said the other day. Success breeds success, whether its me trying something and having it work or stealing something from somebody else, sharing.** **The hard core strategies are incredibly useful. That's a benefit. I'm probably more aware in general, or more open to thinking about how to do things too, or more open to how to do things too, trying different, or more than one strategy, offering more than one way of doing things, especially since I'm teaching learning styles and how to play to your academic strengths. So, I would say in that respect I'm more conscious, and maybe conscientious about trying to do it.**

> I would agree with that (Faculty One's statement above). It was sort of a slow unfolding, knowing people from other disciplines who we not normally have had the chance (to meet). That for me is important, because there are people now who are resources and you can go to them and ask for their advice, or ideas and suggestions, and that's been very helpful to me.

Adjunct One added that in addition to resources, she gained a language and a realization she was doing some of the practices already:

> I sort of have that kind of deal too. It being very fruitful but also realizing that I'm doing a lot of this kind of stuff already. In some areas of my classes but looking at others and making these kind of tweaks. I always did that after I taught a course and before I taught a new one but, again it gave me the language and having the information and resources there it gave me some place to look for ideas and how to look at things a different way.

The cooperators talked about how events from the attempted collaboration coincided with events in their professional lives outside of the attempted collaboration. The following narrative, drawn from the interview with Faculty One, includes a wide range of reasons for change in his teaching practice. Starting with how good teaching is valued at SMCC he also includes what he is seeing happen in his classroom, a presentation related to the attempted collaboration, and his own reading in disciplinary journals. Faculty One's story

exemplifies the strong roles that the interplay of context and process have in the outcomes of attempted collaboration.

> Well, I can elaborate. Reasons that I've changed. Well, something that's recognized and has a place of privilege on this campus is your ability as a professor - your ability as a teacher. But let's not forget the blank stares you get if all that you do is ask who the thirteenth president of the United States was. Look, you want a classroom experience to be enjoyable at a kind of fundamental level and I don't think I did a bad job, I don't think the students had a terrible time, but for me looking down the road, how many years do I want to like, the first Tuesday of every October I'm preparing my lecture. Like, do I want to do that? And how much do students want to come in? And I remember one student in particular who would always come in, this was my second year or the second spring, and he would say "are we taking notes today?" Oh my God, I don't want to be known for the guy who just makes you take notes in class. Look I'm reading about it, we have these course-wide initiatives, but it's also coming out of the student experience in the classroom, my response to that. I don't want you to just sit there and take notes, I don't think it's the best way to learn, I don't think it's the best way to really engage in what I really think is exciting. When [MaryEllen Weimer] came in January 06, that Spring convocation, they weren't new ideas or anything, but I was really struck by how you could reconsider your classroom and you could really kind of change your classes… I was really inspired by what she said and what I had been reading at the same time in journals, about how other

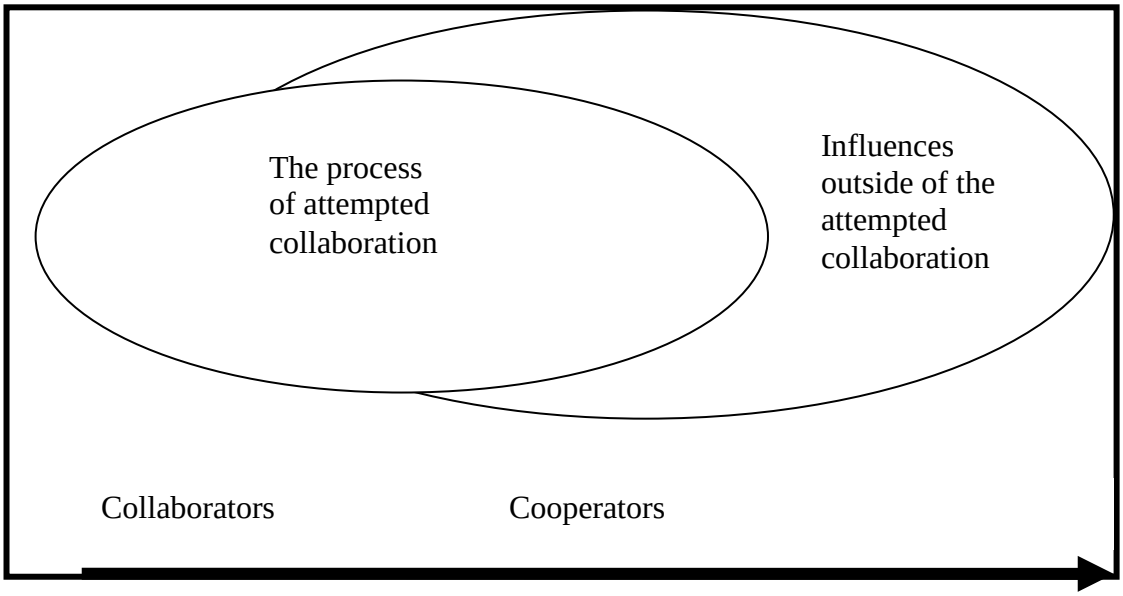
> scholars have been doing it and I came up with my own way of doing it that meets my comfort level in the classroom but also meets the big goal for (my discipline), to help students develop interpretive skills, and our ability to do this is by looking at primary sources. So I still talk but there is a different focus, there are assignments and the way I structure the class.

Conversely, the collaborators answer to what they attributed change to was their involvement in the task force. They did not mention outside influences the way the cooperators did. Administrator One put it this way:

> I think that being part of the task force and hearing other strategies these people were using and that you really can do this, or do that, and it will work, and it does work... I'm a big believer in don't reinvent the wheel. Because if there's other people doing things that work find out what that is. You may have to retread that tire but it's still the same tire. So find out.

The following diagram (Figure 3) illustrates the relative influence of the attempted collaboration on the causal attributions of different groups along a continuum. At the far left of the diagram are the collaborators (task force members). They largely attribute the process of collaboration as the cause of change. Influences outside of the collaboration play only a small role in their causal attributions. Further along the continuum are the cooperators (general community members who participated in some way – major or minor – with the efforts of the task force). While they may attribute some event associated with the attempted collaboration as part of the cause of their change in teaching practice they mention many more outside influences than the collaborators do.

Figure 3. The Relationship of Collaborator and Cooperator Attributions for Their Change in Teaching in Relation to the Process of Attempted Collaboration.



Differing Views of Success. In the interviews, I asked participants if they felt that the MetLife Grant was a successful collaboration. While all of the participants in this study, both collaborators and cooperators, saw the attempted collaboration as somehow successful, how they defined that success varied widely. The different views of success were entered into a matrix (Table 19). This table shows how each participant defined success in relation to the attempted collaboration. By this method I did not discern any substantial differences between collaborators and cooperators or among adjuncts, full-time faculty, and administrators.

Grouping the data into concept maps and starting to group the individual definitions of success in various ways led to four sub-themes: success as personal change, success as observed change in others, success as institutional change, and

success as part of a long term change process. This is illustrated in Figure 4. The theme of long-term versus short-term change also became apparent and is illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 4 shows how the four definitions of success that came to light in the interviews are interrelated. The first definition is that of success as personal change. The diagram shows that this is an idea held by both collaborators (green cells) and cooperators (yellow cells). Success as change in others, and its sub-theme of success as institutional change, is also held by both groups. This definition of success is by far the most prevalent. Finally, success as part of a long-term change process is a view held only by members of the task force.

The first three sub-themes to define success (success as personal change, success as observed change in others, success as institutional change) are distributed between cooperators and collaborators. The theme of long-term process is only found with collaborators. They tended to view success as a step, as part of a more long-term endeavor while cooperators define success in terms of more concrete short-term accomplishments – the creation of the day planner, early alert, and changes to orientation to name a few. The following sections go into the findings for each of these four themes in greater detail.

Table 19. Views of Success.

Low Involvement			High Involvement		
Adjunct 1	Adjunct 2	Faculty 1	Faculty 2	Admin 1	Admin 2
I don't know. That's hard to answer. When did it start to be? (Interviewer- It ended in May and covered 2 years.) So that puts it at the beginning of '04. I don't know. I definitely feel, you're talking about student community and using the compass. I see a lot of students using the compass	Well, if people came up with goals in the workshops, and you could see those carried out then I'd say those were successful. But it's implemented. So that was successful. That in itself was a good goal to have achieved. So I would say it is a success based on those results you can see.	I think I'm enough of an outsider to not be able to answer that. When you have a big institution I think your definition of success has to be flexible. There also seems to be evidence that that collaboration lead to something. It wasn't just a series of meetings that died out. and that's why I, from the outside, would say there is evidence for success. Because some of these changes have been institutionalized. I've already said I feel positive about it, the adoption about those techniques and ideas. Well, so for me personally, now that I think about it, it's been a big success. A lot of those things have been embedded in how I teach, and my syllabi, and everything.	I think we're going to have to wait and see just a little more. I'd like to think, to see what some of our suggestions and ideas, when we get more people on board with our ideas, keep reinforcing what we started, maybe then will be really able to say we got this ball rolling or we have to jump start this thing again. We can satisfy ourselves and say it was wonderful.	I do, I do. Well personally I just saw some results in the changes I made. And I think when we had the convocation , when we presented, there was a lot of people who seemed interested in the idea, and there were a lot of people who "hey, I already do some of this stuff:" and I think having someone say they already do some of that stuff is just as important as having someone I think it also has created a little bit of a culture of "well, gee we did this with the MetLife grant, maybe we can do it with some other stuff." have been?	Yes…Because it spurred people to do things. I think we've already phased it into the next level as we're moving on these other things in engagement and retention and all that. But that was, I guess I see MetLife as the official kickoff of let's pull the rug out from under everybody and talk about what are you doing in the classroom that works and doesn't work, and would you like some other strategies and what kind of things can we do. So it was a good kind of comprehensive strategy to get it going.

Figure 4. Four Definitions of Success.

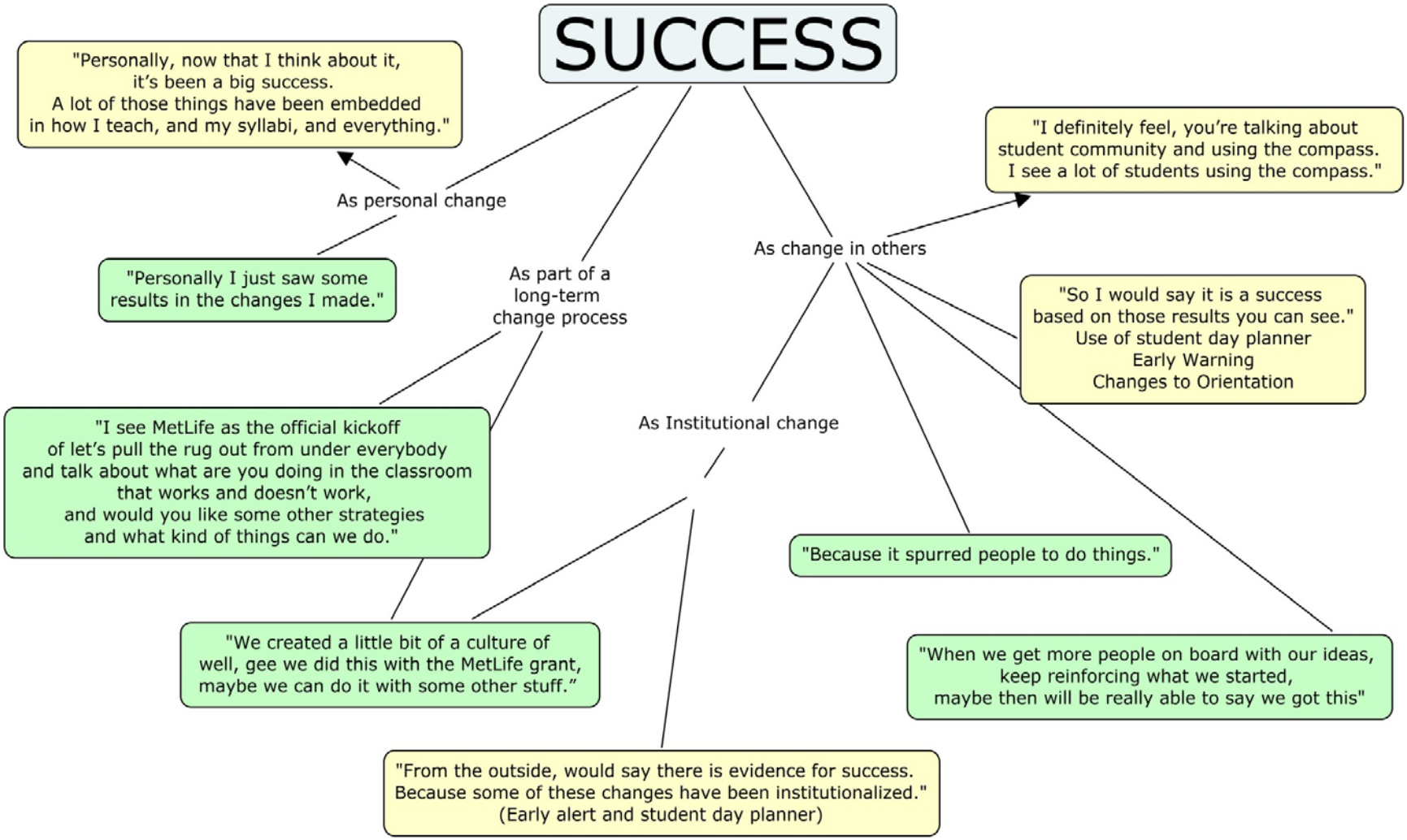
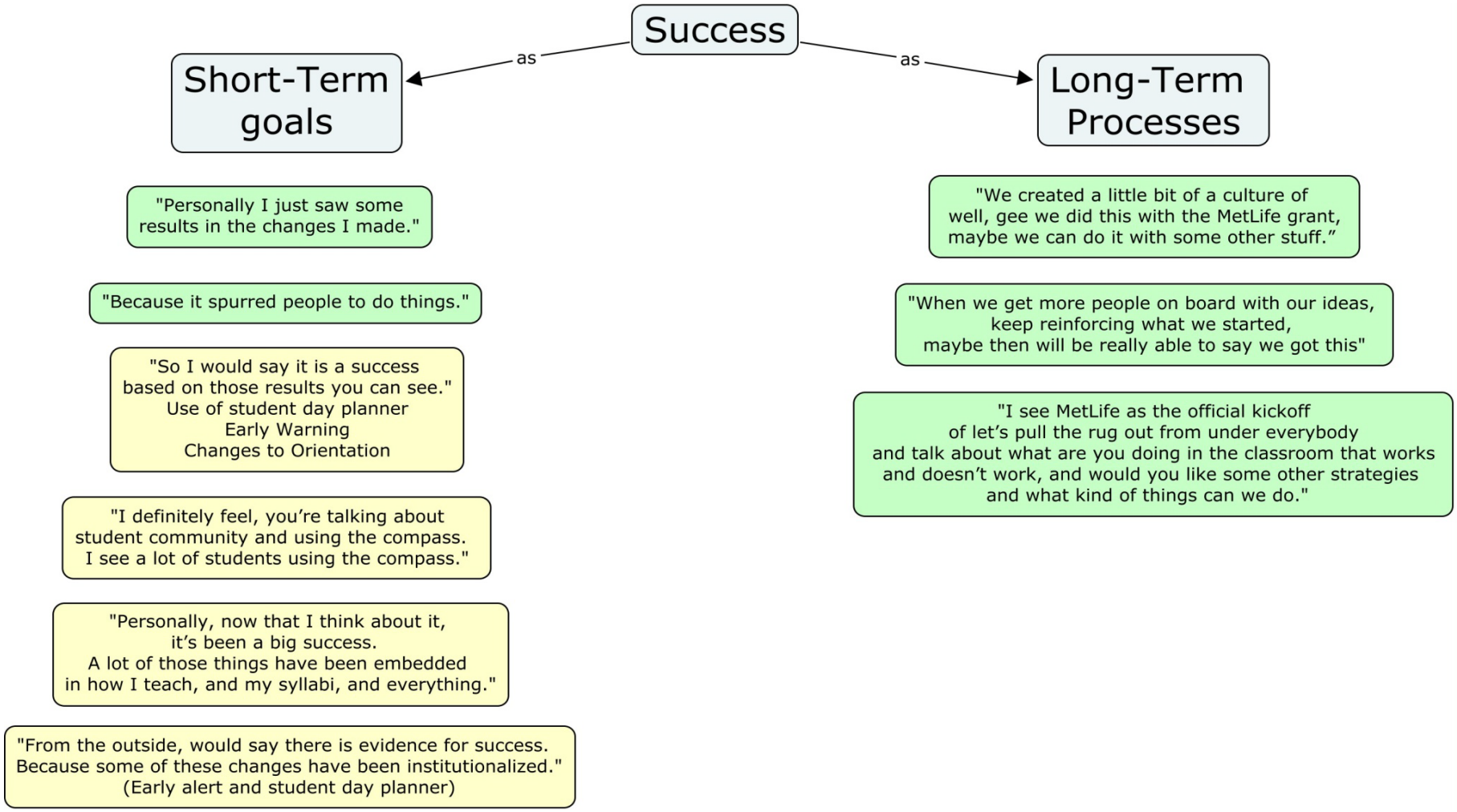


Figure 5. Short and Long-term Views of Success.



Success as personal change. Chapter Four reported that 100% of the respondents taking the survey about changes in their teaching practices reported at least some change in areas associated with this case. All of the participants also reported some change to their practice. Two participants (Faculty One and Administrator One) viewed this change in practice as evidence of a successful collaboration.

Yet it was difficult for the participants not on the task force to even recall what changes were attempted. During the interviews they often asked what events were associated with the attempted collaboration and often confused it with other change initiatives on campus such as "writing across the curriculum" (WAC) and other professional development workshops offered by the Center for Teaching Excellence. Adjunct One, when asked if she thought it was a successful collaboration replied "I don't know, that's hard to answer, when did it start...?" Faculty One, after much prompting about what was attempted, said, "Now I'm kind of remembering." These comments are in keeping with findings introduced in previous sections showing how the attempt at collaboration did not reach an awareness level with many individuals outside of the task force. This may be exacerbated by the span of time between some of the events and the interviews.

After review of the elements of the attempted collaboration, Faculty One defined success in term of the personal changes he had made to his teaching practice. "Well, so for me personally, now that I think about it, it's been a big

success. A lot of those things have been embedded in how I teach, and my syllabi, and everything."

Success as change in others. The most prevalent definition of success among the participants was that of success as a change that they observed in others. The others were students, faculty, administrators, and even the institution. Adjunct Two put it in the following words: “I would say it is a success based on those results you can see.” Administrator One observed "because it spurred people to do things." Although one task force member, Faculty Two, is reserving judgment and would like to see more observable change in others before he declares it a success, he still defines success as change in others:

> I think we’re going to have to wait and see just a little more. I’d like to think, to see what some of our suggestions and ideas, when we get more people on board with our ideas, keep reinforcing what we started, maybe then will be really able to say we got this ball rolling or we have to jump start this thing again. We can satisfy ourselves and say it was wonderful…We’d just be impressing ourselves rather than anyone else.

Success as institutional change. Defining success as institutional change is part of defining it as change in others. Yet unlike the previous theme it differs in the amount of institutional pressure that is exerted and therefore how widespread the change is. When some institutional systems change, there is little chance for instructors to not accept the change – such as the change to early alert from the former mid-semester grade warning. During the focus group Faculty

One talked about success: "That's why I, from the outside, would say there is evidence for success - because some of these changes have been institutionalized".

Adjunct two talked of how early warning had become part of the culture: "I have to do the early warning; it's become a part of everyone's expectations". And Adjunct One was more attentive to it:

> That's something I look for now. Maybe more so than mid-semester, OK when it is was due, here's someone not doing well. So now I'm a little bit more attentive to it. Sometimes I find after the fact, someone I haven't assigned early alert starts to nose dive and I do my own things at that point.

Even Faculty Two, who advocated a wait and see approach before claiming success saw early alert as working: "I think it's working. The early warning thing, I think it's going to work". While individuals may have little say in changes to institutional policy their representatives do have a say. This change did go through the college's governance system. It was presented to the Academics Committee, the College Council, and ultimately to the Academic Dean for approval. Other examples of institutional change include the day planner for students "The Campus Compass" and changes to student orientation.

Success as part of a long term change process. While the previous three sub-themes defining success were held by collaborators and cooperators alike, the definition of success as part of a long-term change process was only found among the collaborators. Participants who were members of the task force needed no

prompting as to what was attempted. Previous chapters have shown that these participants were all deeply involved in the process of collaboration. Their inclusion of how this attempt at collaboration may have affected the culture of the college and may affect future collaborations creates a definition of success that is broader and more nuanced than that of the cooperators. Indeed, they are more optimistic about what can be accomplished in the future due to the attempted collaboration than any short term accomplishment. Administrator One talked about personal change and how it affects the future:

> Well, personally, I just saw some results in the changes I made. And I think when we had the convocation , when we presented, there was a lot of people who seemed interested in the idea, and there were a lot of people who "hey, I already do some of this stuff" and I think having someone say they already do some of that stuff is just as important as having someone say I never thought of that because I think that when you really start to process what you're doing, and or you're not doing, its intentionally thinking about your approach. … I think it also has created a little bit of a culture of "well, gee we did this with the MetLife grant, maybe we can do it with some other stuff." I've been in on some conversations this summer about advising, and Joe and I are going to do something at convocation, and it's very much kind of this same kind of feel to it. So what's some of our best practices out there, and we can start to get people to think about what they're doing.

Administrator Two sees it as the "kick off" to something more:

> Because it spurred people to do things. We could probably name names of people who would say Met who? What did they do? But they are always going to be there. That's just that institutional change formula that doesn't always work. I think we've already phased it into the next level as we're moving on these other things in engagement and retention and all that. But that was, I guess I see MetLife as the official kickoff of let's pull the rug out from under everybody and talk about what are you doing in the classroom that works and doesn't work, and would you like some other strategies and what kind of things can we do. So it was a good kind of comprehensive strategy to get it going. The people who were engaged in the conversation just the other day were some of the people engaged in MetLife, and doing it, not just talking, and that's a big piece too. These people talked, but then they did, and I think that was significant.

Summary. This section addressed the question of how the participants perceived this attempted collaboration. Although generally seen as a successful collaboration, the definitions of success were varied among the participants. The most prevalent definition was that of success as observed change in others. Success was also viewed as institutional change, personal change, and as part of a long term change process. Only one of the participants defined success in terms of student outcomes. Change, and not whether those changes affected student engagement, is therefore seen as an important factor in defining success even

when that change is not shown to be effective in producing the desired result. The last theme related to the question of how stakeholders perceived the process is about who was missing and how the process could have been improved.

Who was Missing? During the interviews, participants discussed the composition of the task force. I wanted to know who they thought was missing from the process to uncover the participants' perceptions of how the task force could have been more effective in reaching groups that may have influenced outcomes. I returned to this question in the focus group and related findings from the interviews about who they had reported as missing from the collaboration, especially in terms of the task force. Participants mentioned IT, the library and enrollment services. I then asked what they thought could have added to the process and what they thought would be the optimal group to focus on student engagement in the teaching and learning process.

Faculty One immediately added students to the list. The conversation then turned to how technology and the inclusion of staff from IT was important in dealing with the large influx of students. Administrator One pointed out:

> As we grow I've seen an attitude around here that you have to use technology to engage students because you can't see all those students standing in line. So I think once we had some technology for those very basic services... if we had a simple computerized degree audit system how much more time could we spend with students not saying this is the class you need to graduate but more of what's your goal, what do you want to

> do with your degree? And I still think there's a need for the technology to take care of that.

Faculty One added how important that was to learning and teaching: "Well, having student in class rather than in line is important for education (laughter) -- the first week when you've got to be there." The conversation then turned to how to optimize the task force. The participants saw two possibilities: multiple small groups working on separate pieces or a group like the original task force inviting specific people to meetings when their input was needed.

Adjunct One advocated for multiple groups: "I think the meeting in two different groups may be a way to include more people but keep the groups small. If you focus on different things and then bring everything (the two groups) together at some point". This idea met with agreement and a single caution from Administrator One:

> But also I think when you start to separate that out again you get those silos. You get the people in the campus center who have no idea what is going on in the classroom, which is so insane because that's why people are here.

Summary. The answer to the question of how participants perceived the process of attempted collaboration began by showing how participants experienced daily life at SMCC and with what groups they felt affiliated. Adjunct faculty have less of a connection to the campus and spend much less time on campus than full-time faculty and administrators. Full-time faculty spend more time on campus but spend most of that time in the building they teach with little

daily contact outside their departments. Administrators have the most connections to various parts of campus. These varying experiences of daily life and varying affiliations on campus had an effect on the perception of the experience of collaboration. This effect was due to the different opportunities for collaboration that the participants had.

Three themes emerged related to the question of how participants perceived the process of attempted collaboration: the public process and the private process it stimulates, differing views of success and who was missing from the collaboration. The public process and the private process it stimulates showed how those participants with the weakest link to the collaborative effort connected with some event, that coupled with events outside of the collaborative effort, served as a catalyst for action. Those on the task force attributed work on the task force as their primary motivation for change.

Participants differed in how they viewed success. While all the participants saw success as observed change in others only, the task force members saw the collaborative effort as part of a long-term change process that went beyond any single collaborative attempt. According to the participants, groups not included in the task force who could have provided important information include: students, Information technology (IT), the library, and enrollment services. These groups could have been represented if there were multiple groups or if specific individuals were invited to join the task force for short times to provide input. A blanket call for participation was not enough. Specific individuals should be targeted for their input.

Research Question 3

In the perception of the participants, what facilitated or hindered the process?

The question of what facilitated or hindered the processes of collaboration, cooperation, and decisions to adopt the directives of the task force prompted much conversation within the focus group. They talked about how SMCC was different from other places they had worked. The culture of improvement that exists at SMCC, and the importance of convocation and professional development days were also noted, as was the composition of the task force. However, weaving throughout the conversation was a single pronounced theme - the importance of conversation.

The Power of Conversation. After the focus group, earlier themes from the interviews and document data about talking, listening, reading, and patterns of interaction came together with the focus group data as components in an overarching theme of conversation. All of the participants had talked in their interviews about the importance of conversation and its contribution to the process of collaboration. Matrices and then concept maps revealed patterns in this new grouping of data. This revealed three main patterns about the power of conversation:

1. How processes used by the task force promoted conversation. Key among these processes were a comfortable climate, the use of a jigsaw technique (E. Aronson, 1978) and the mix of members.

2. How the conversation of the task force joined and stimulated conversation outside of the task force. Key to this process was the use of convocation and professional development days to not only present information but to engage in conversation.
3. How the culture of the college is seen as one that values teaching and encourages conversation and experimentation.

Processes that promoted conversation within the task force. The following quote from Administrator Two helps to explain how engaging in a conversation about the research literature was not only a way to broaden the conversation to include scholarly work from outside of SMCC but a way to ensure that every member of the group had something to contribute each and every week – guaranteeing that they were part of the conversation. The jigsaw technique (E. Aronson, 1978) used by the task force required members to read a series of articles or book sections, each week, and report back to the group anything that they thought would be useful.

> Doing the jigsaw that we did, people didn't feel terribly overwhelmed, and you sort of got to be, not an expert, but kind of proficient in one area, and for faculty who don't necessarily feel proficient, and might feel somewhat at odds with their role could say I like this one or I didn't like this one and don't have any use for it, and it went back and forth so there was a very collegial exchange and that sort of thing. You did a real good job at setting a tone so people were comfortable with trust and that. We shared stories, we laughed a lot. We shared some disasters and some duds, and

there were people around the table who would say I've done something like that.

It was not only the process of the jigsaw but the climate of the meetings that contributed to a robust conversation.

> I credit you for setting the tone, because it could have gone in a lot of different directions if you didn't set the welcoming atmosphere. You did a real good job at setting tones so people would be comfortable with trust and that. We shared stories, we laughed a lot. We shared some disasters and some duds, and there were people around the table who would say I've done something like that.

The mix of people engaged in this conversation was also important. The task force members were from a variety of disciplines representing adjunct faculty, full-time faculty, and administrators; trade faculty as well as liberal arts faculty; student services and academic affairs administrators. However they also had things in common. They all taught, including the administrators. They all had at least three years of experience teaching at SMCC and they all cared deeply about the problem of student engagement and retention. Administrator One may have articulated it the best:

> I think about John (a task force member) and the turning point he had with his article. And I think it is a byproduct, working with faculty from different disciplines – Florence talking to John about math issues and construction and how they actually have some connections and looking at techniques. So there was a great sharing of information, and we tried to

> stay on track and do those pieces but now and then we would go off on something else but it was still really good stuff and I think it also created some relationships that people would not otherwise have had. And anytime you can cross those disciplines and put people in that kind of mix it's great. I just think in general those kind of conversations are important, and as Faculty One mentioned we can get in our silos of our department and our offices. I knew who some of the faculty were on that task force through other interactions. But there were some like Faculty Two, I didn't know him at all, and I think that no matter what the goal is those type of interdisciplinary, inter-function conversations are valuable because it opens their eyes to what the student experience is. Students don't experience the college in silos, like we work in, they experience it as a whole body and if we think of our work in those silos than we are missing what the student experience is.

The conversations that the task force engaged in at those weekly meeting did not end when the meeting ended. The conversations would continue in the hallway and sometimes last long after the meeting had ended as Administrator Two pointed out "And there were these spin-off conversations that happened on the way out of here, you probably didn't know this." I did know. Someone would generally stay after meetings to continue the conversation with me. I can't think of any task force member with which I didn't have some of these, almost chance conversations.

The previous quotes have shown how the participants perceived the jigsaw technique, the climate, and the mix of people coming together to promote conversation within the task force. Outside of the confines of the task force a conversation was taking place too.

Conversation outside of the task force. Conversation outside of the task force included formal conversation as well as informal ones. It ranged from small groups to large. This conversation even included such large scale conversations as that which happens in scholarly journals – an asynchronous conversation that spans miles and mirrored on a personal level what the task force was doing with the jigsaw – reading the research and joining in the conversation. Faculty One explained how he sees reading as part of collaboration through a larger discussion. "You can see reading other scholars' discussion of how they've made changes as collaboration… It's print culture; it's what you're involved in." This conversation happens in many ways according to Adjunct One:

> It's that very kind of small group collaboration, just talking very informally to other adjuncts that caused me to seek out those bigger collaborations. I would probably say that I would have not made any of those changes (to how I teach), or it would have gone a lot slower, had I not gone into these collaborative settings with people who were extremely experienced, who where in different stages of their own teaching careers than I. And working with those people in small groups, and larger groups, and then reporting back, and going through that whole process really fostered that change. I guess I don't know any other way to say it –

that's what did it. It's not like you can go into a room with a book and leave an hour later feeling completely prepared. It's the application you get talking to others, seeing how they did, and that's the stuff for me that really makes you change, makes me change.

Proximity plays a role according to Faculty One:

Yeah, across the hall for me last semester were Mike and Amy Havel and I'm actually going to work with Amy in the fall with her English course. People are trained as English tutors I have them come into my class and I don't think I would have done that if Amy was not across the hall.

Professional days played a role in carrying on the conversation and the message of the task force to the general community. However it wasn't just a reporting of information to the community, Administrator Two tells how it was also a way to continue the conversation:

I think that was the goal of professional days too, since you and I were so involved in it. It's not just training, but it's the conversation, it's the idea of here is some new stuff, people have tried it, and without fail we always got people to give permission, kind of give permission for people to try stuff and if necessary we had tools for them, or we've been to many classes and department meeting to talk about this stuff. It's really a conversation, I'm not an expert on this stuff. I'm always changing my syllabus – driving Joyce Leslie crazy. (laughter) Changing my book many times. But I have to practice what I preach, I think that's an important piece. There are always great ideas, we get an e-mail from Linda Misner

> after a professional day and she says, "hey that was great, and I thought about this. I think, oh yeah, I can do that too." So there is a lot of conversation and stealing ideas from people.

A wider view reveals that this conversation happened within a culture that was seen by the participants to encourage conversation and promote experimentation.

A culture that encourages conversation. This conversation was occurring at a college where conversations about pedagogy were more prevalent than at the other higher education institutions with which the participants were familiar. During the focus group, Faculty One talked about a general willingness to talk pedagogy at SMCC:

> I just think, in my experience, there is a general willingness to talk pedagogy and so that conversation abstractly happens when I read stuff in the *Chronicle* or wherever, but it happens literally in the hallway, with my office mate, with people in my department. I can't really think of a week that goes by that something, for me, doesn't get discussed.

This was not a feeling limited to full-time faculty. Both adjuncts interviewed commented similarly. Adjunct One talked about how it was different at SMCC:

> That's one of the things I remember from being part-time. There were some places I taught that I didn't feel comfortable at all talking to administration or in other roles, but here it didn't exist. Maybe it's my experience or maybe it's universal but as an adjunct I always felt really comfortable, talking to other people and using them as resources… I

> always did it here (rather) than other places. I don't really know why that is though, why I didn't engage in those conversations (at other institutions he taught at). I think as a part-timer your schedules don't match and it's hard to get in touch with people. But here it's like I felt comfortable talking with people from other departments and other members of my department faculty, and so it was very comfortable. While at these other places, I don't know, maybe it just comes down to me not feeling as comfortable as I always did here.

The participants also commented about a feeling that it was okay to try new things, to experiment and that there was an expectation to be proactive. This willingness to talk pedagogy also extended to the freedom to do more than talk in the words of Administrator One: "I think that's part of the institutional culture that it's okay to try new things and it's okay to collaborate among disciplines, and it's okay to try something that no one's tried before. I think that's overarching." Faculty One points to it not only being "okay" but expected:

> So understanding that the expectation here is excellence in the classroom and there is really an expectation to find ways to really enliven students' interest. It just gives you a base to go from there. People have used the word confidence. I guess that is a good word - confidence to dedicate yourself to gaining those skills.

Hindrances. Even within a culture that values conversation, and strives to create opportunities for it, there are barriers to conversation. This is especially true for adjunct faculty members. The limited time that adjuncts spend on campus

lessens the opportunities they have for the informal conversations - the conversations, just mentioned, that have more to do with proximity than with any structured attempt. Adjuncts, many of whom teach for more than one institution, also are much less likely to attend formal conversation.

Issues of time and proximity (and the opportunities that they create) are not limited to adjunct faculty. On a main campus with 44 buildings, and several satellite campuses, many faculty have little daily interaction with people outside of their departments. Full-time faculty also contend with the time, although not to the degree that adjuncts do.

Summary about the power of conversation. This section has presented evidence for the prevalence of the theme of conversation. Conversation was linked with institutional culture. While the composition of the task force and the processes that they engaged in were factors in facilitating conversations, they did this in the context of an institution that encouraged conversation and experimentation.

Research Question 4

How did the institutional context appear to influence the process?

Kezar (2005a) identified eight core elements found in highly collaborative institutions of higher education. The elements are: integrating structures, the mission statement, campus networks, rewards and incentives, a sense of priority from people in senior positions, values that support collaboration, external pressure to collaborate, and learning the benefits of collaboration. These elements served as the framework for my investigation into the institutional context. Other

elements are also apparent. The answer to question 3 above identified an institution that encouraged conversation and experimentation. Related to this is a high degree of general trust and respect for leadership.

To elicit information about the institutional context, I collected information specific to each of these elements. I will detail what I collected when I introduce each element. I also used the following question with the focus group to see if the participants could identify other contextual elements not mentioned in Kezar's (2005a) model:

> Institutional context has been shown to influence collaboration. An example of this is when people in senior positions (This is the term used by Kezar) show collaboration to be a priority. Another example is the inclusion of collaboration in the mission statement of the institution. These elements help create a context in which attempts at collaboration can be more successful. How do you think the institutional context of SMCC influenced the process of collaboration that was attempted here?

I searched the document, interview and focus group data for additional elements and information on Kezar's (2005a) eight core elements. The only one of these elements that I did not identify was learning the benefits of collaboration – no explicit argument for the benefits of collaboration were uncovered. I suspect that evidence for this element would be found outside of the temporal boundaries of this study. The remaining seven elements were apparent and I will show how they were manifested in this study.

Integrating Structures. Unlike the organizational structures discussed in the beginning of this chapter (Wood & Gray, 1991) the integrating structures discussed here are permanent or long-term organizational structures that serve to bridge organizational boundaries and therefore aid collaborative efforts. I first examined the organizational structure identified earlier to identify which structures bridge traditional departmental boundaries. The focus group was asked about which structures served as integrating structures at SMCC. They identified three key structures that they saw as influential in promoting collaboration. Faculty One said it this way:

> I guess three institutions come to mind: one being the professional days and convocation; the Center for Teaching Excellence, the first year I was here the program you ran emphasized this; I think Dean Sortor is an institution in this regard too because she seems to be someone who is trying to prod people into the collaborative engagement/collaborative endeavors. So those are the three forces that I think in my experience have been influential.

This resulted in a list of four integrating structures: Professional days and Convocation, The Center for Teaching Excellence, Shared Governance, and the Office of the Vice President/Academic Dean. Having identified these organizational structures as possible integrating structures, I went back to the data to compile all of the information contained about these structures to see how they may serve to enhance collaboration.

Professional Day and Convocation. Several participants exhibited strong feelings about convocation and professional days. Although these days are distinct entities, because they take place on concurrent days and share similar formats, they are viewed by the participants as being one structure. Administrator Two talked about the culture that this helps to build:

> I think convocation is a wonderful custom and that's definitely fostering a culture that a lot of institutions probably don't take the opportunity to do. To set aside two days in the fall and one day in the winter, a day and a half whatever we do, to close out the world and just focus on these issues is really conducive to building community and sharing ideas. In my perspective it's a luxury and here it is not perceived as a luxury which I think is a really powerful message coming from administration.

Faculty One commented on how different it was than in the previous institutions she had attended:

> The first convocation I attended. I had attended convocation at previous universities and it was so boring, such a waste of time, and I just expected that when I got here as well. But I was struck by, they start in the morning with breakfast, they have Bob's famous slide show and I was struck by how not corny it was and how involved people were, and how interested people were, and how nice and collegial people were. This was the first thing I had done besides an interview; the first thing I had done to be introduced to the college community, I guess what struck me

was just how enthusiastic people were to be there, even though it was the end of August and a beautiful day.

The Center for Teaching Excellence. In addition to convocation and professional development days, the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) was seen as an integrating structure on campus. In relation to this attempt at collaboration, I, as director of the CTE, was chosen to direct this grant. Task force and other meetings were held in the office of the CTE and support for faculty who piloted the various initiatives was provided by the CTE. However these services were temporary adaptations of the existing structure that the CTE provided. What makes it a permanent integrating structure is the effect it has through its ongoing programs, workshops, and luncheon discussions. These offerings not only advocate for a collaborative/cooperative environment but provide a venue for the discussions that cross traditional departmental boundaries.

Shared governance. Chapter Four related how some of the initiatives of the task force were brought by the task force to the shared governance system for approval. What makes the governance structure an integrating structure is how it brings various constituencies within the college together to help formulate policy. Administrator Two said the following about the governance structure in his interview:

> The most impressive (thing) for me was really striking. (It) was the first college forum, and because I come from an institution where you have a senate for each organization, faculty, professional staff, and what we call classified staff which would be administrative assistants et cetera. They

> do not work together, they probably don't even communicate, it's much more of a caste system. So I was genuinely impressed with the democratic perspective here to have to sit down and listen to all of the respective committees update and anybody can sit there and anybody can ask a question or raise an issue. This was, it's still very curious to me. I mention it to the folks at USM and they're kind of amazed.

The Office of the Vice President/Academic Dean. It may seem odd to speak of a person as an integrating structure within an institution. However it is more the structure of the position and how the individual in that position uses the position that makes it an integrating structure or to repeat the words of Faculty One in the focus group where it met with wide agreement "I think (the Academic Dean) is an institution in this regard too because she seems to be someone who is trying to prod people into the collaborative engagement/collaborative endeavors." The Vice-President/Academic Dean would certainly be an influential position on the executive team of most community colleges. Through their hiring practices and other actions they help shape the culture of the institution. The following quote from Administrator One reveals the Vice-President's supportive but hands off style.

> I have worked for a host of deans in my professional life. Some of whom have been wonderful examples, some of whom I could have done without. Some of whom I could have taught how to be (laughter) better in their role, but didn't want to learn and it has been just a great learning experience for me again in terms of professional development to watch her

and kind of sit at her knee. She is a mentor, if I have an idea she lets me run with it. If I mess it up, she comes and helps (laughter) or if I have a lot of freedom and I know that she is there if I'm in a bind or am thinking you know, (I) am of two minds in thinking of how to proceed with something, especially again that's this role of being in two places, she's really savvy about sometimes I'll think about doing it one way and she'll suggest some others. She is incredibly skilled and just delightful to work with anyway because she knows how to laugh at some of the insanity. She would be the first person to come to mind. She's one of the best examples of a leader in every sense of the word.

This style was evident in her handling of the organization of this collaborative effort. Over the several brainstorming session held to choose potential task force members, she provided direction and information but placed the decisions in the hands of others. As director of the grant I was given early support from the Dean of Students and the Assistant Dean of Curriculum. It is my experience that the President, and Vice-President of SMCC often encourage initiatives to come from the "bottom up" rather than a top down decision.

The Mission Statement. Kezar's (2005a) research showed that highly collaborative campus environments included collaboration in their mission statements. Along with its mission and vision statements, SMCC lists four core beliefs on the college web site: access, responsiveness, collaboration, and personal connections. In regard to collaboration, "Southern Maine Community College believes that collaboration within the College and with the broader

community is essential in order to achieve the College's mission and goals" (SMCC, 2008) (see Appendix M for the complete mission statement).

Evidence that SMCC lives this stated value for collaboration can be found in the results of the 2006 survey of the college environment, the Personnel Assessment of the College Environment (PACE). This survey is administered every other year to the employees at SMCC. The 2006 survey indicated that SMCC has "a healthy campus climate, yielding an overall 3.73 mean score or high Consultative system" (SMCC, 2006). This score is based on a 5 point Likert scale that rates the environment from coercive, through competitive, and consultative, to collaborative.

Campus Networks. Formal campus networks are relatively simple to identify. Organizational charts in the faculty handbook readily identify the hierarchy of the institution. Informal campus networks are much more difficult. In order to help identify these I asked questions in the interviews about community customs, patterns of trust and respect, groups participants identified with and groups they may feel alienated from. I also asked how they preferred to work: alone, dyads, or small groups.

This collaboration made use of several existing networks within the college. Representatives were chosen who could represent what was perceived as important groups on campus. Several criteria were discussed in those early meetings. Included were large departments in the liberal studies where retention was not only a factor but because practices embedded in common first year course would reach the most students. The grant application (Appendix B) stipulates

that "the project will reach out at the same time to a broad range of students through entry-level general education classes." To include these general education classes, a representative was chosen from each the English department and the Math department. Task force members encompassed five of the six academic divisions, academic as well as technical/trades faculty, full-time and adjunct faculty, and two administrators, one from academic affairs and one from student services.

Task force members talked about the mix of people and how they interacted as exemplified by the words of Administrator Two:

> Yeah, and there was (sic) some people. Like Phil, I had such a good time being here with him, because here is this crotchety old technology professor, kind of the stereotype of these guys who've been here a long time and " oh, these students today" and he had some great ideas and some great insights on students... And I just liked seeing him and like Graham (Learning Assistance Center) being here and kind of, Graham is so… It's interesting, It was nice to have the dynamic. And Bill (English), and Matt (Math), and the whole group was really great. It was nice having Andre (Social Sciences) here as another adjunct.

Or the words of Faculty Two:

> We had the art side of it, the administrative side of it, three of us who represented the technologies, we had good learned scholars, we had a tremendous amount of educational experience on that committee. We had hundreds of years of experience.

The participants also talked about who was missing from the collaboration. Adjunct Two mentioned students, "If you're trying to sort of make decisions and think about things that impact students, why not bring one of them in." The other three groups mentioned as being not represented have something in common - they are all staff position. They include enrollment services, information technology (IT), and the library. As Administrator Two stated:

> I think it was pretty diverse (the task force), but in thinking as I do… this retention piece, I realize that we only had one person who wasn't an academic, he was from student affairs, and I think, backing up I would have thought more strategically about maybe also having someone from enrollment services since they are the advising first contact and again that seems to be where that gap is created when they're first admitted, they don't see faculty, they see advising, and I think it would be an opportune moment, and this is my fabulous twenty-twenty hindsight. I think it would have been an opportune moment to start bridging that gap by having Kathleen or one of the advisors and hear what it is to live on the other side of the institution and likewise, I think Shane did a great job of representing the interests and spelling things out when people really didn't know.

Information Technology (IT) was mentioned and also the Library:

> I think it would have been nice to have somebody from the library. I think those folks have a unique perspective on teaching, especially Susan and Brian, as the reference librarians...They see the students that get it, the

> students that don't get it, outside of the classroom. There's a difference there. A lot of students who think they understand in the classroom end up in the learning assistance center, but also the library, going "wait a minute I thought I got this, but" and this could be someone acing all there tests and paying attention in the classroom but you might never realize that the day before they're going "So, can I just copy out of this encyclopedia?"

So while many networks were connected to the attempt there appears to be a sizable network that was not connected.

A Sense of Priority from Senior Administrators. Another of Kezar's (2005a) core elements is a sense of priority from people in senior positions. A sense of priority from senior administrators for this collaboration is evidenced not only in their seeking out the grant that funded the attempt at collaboration studied here but the considerable time and resources that they then committed to it. Two administrators were assigned to the project and were extensively involved for the two year duration of the grant. Substantial time at three faculty development days was devoted to the project. Evidence quoted earlier showing how participants saw the position of Academic Dean/Vice-president as an integrating structure applies here as well.

Rewards and Incentives. Kezar (2005a) found that rewards and incentives were needed to sustain collaboration. Rewards were provided to adjunct and full-time faculty engaged in the task force. They received the equivalent of a three credit course teaching overload. No financial incentives

were provided to the administrators, the director of the learning center, or myself the grant director.

Faculty mini-grants are incentives for individual and collaborative endeavors. Each summer the Academic Dean offers grants for up to $1,500 dollars for faculty members to work on projects that will advance the curriculum and other academic structures. Often these grants are given to groups of individuals to complete a project.

Values that Support Collaboration. According to Kezar (2005a) the most often described values that help foster collaboration are being student-centered, innovative, and egalitarian. I searched all of the data for evidence of these values. There is ample evidence that the college holds these values as exhibited in several documents available on the college web site involving SMCC's mission and vision statements, the strategic planning report, and the following quote from the college's self-study for accreditation:

> In the spring of 2006, The Maine Community College System created a process entitled "Envision the Future" for the purpose of establishing a vision for each community college and the System as a whole for the next five to eight years. As part of this process, Southern Maine Community College engaged in an inclusive process with a rich dialogue within the college community and among external partners to achieve broad consensus on the key components of an operational plan to achieve our college's vision. (SMCC, 2008)

This process resulted in a reaffirmation of the college's mission and vision.

> After much discussion, the College community agreed that while Southern Maine Community College must continue to work towards achieving its mission and vision, and fulfilling its core values, these statements still support the direction and beliefs of the College and will remain unchanged in the Envision the Future report (SMCC, 2008b).

This includes a belief "that access to higher education is a fundamental value of democracy" and that SMCC offer "innovative and high-quality technical, transferable, cultural and community-based education." (SMCC, 2008b). Evidence for how the college strives to be a learner-centered environment can be found in their accreditation self-study:

> Formation of the CTE (Center for Teaching Excellence) by the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs in fall 2003, establishment of the position of Assistant Dean for Curriculum Design, the MetLife Grant on Student Engagement, writing-across-the-curriculum, and the current Learning Outcomes initiative all play a role in creating an atmosphere of innovative collaborative engagement and a learning-centered approach to education (SMCC, 2008c).

A value that is not explicit in Kezar's studies but which may be important to this case is how the college values teaching. Unlike university faculty studied by Kezar who have the tripartite mission of research, teaching, and service, the primary mission of the faculty at a community college is teaching as Faculty One said: "Well, something that's recognized and has a place of privilege on this campus is your ability as a professor - your ability as a teacher."

Every year SMCC sends up to one full-time faculty member from each of the five academic divisions and one adjunct faculty member to a conference in Austin, Texas that is sponsored by the Community College Leadership program at the University of Texas, Austin. At the conference they are given "Teaching Excellence Awards." To qualify for one of these awards they must have been nominated by someone at SMCC and then voted on by past excellence award winners. These award winners are also honored at the college's convocation every year. This illustrates the importance that the administration places on quality teaching.

External Pressure to Collaborate. The external pressure to collaborate comes from the same source as that found in Kezar's (2005a) study of universities. This is because community colleges share the same accreditation standards as that of universities. SMCC is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

Several of the standards make explicit the need for groups to work together. In the standard for Organization and Governance, section 3.1 states, that "The institution's system of governance involves the participation of all appropriate constituencies and includes regular communication among them" (New England Association of Schools and Colleges, 2005). This is reiterated in the standard for faculty, section 5.3, which states that their duties include responsibility for participation on "policy making…and institutional governance" (New England Association of Schools and Colleges, 2005)

Learning about Collaboration. The task force members also learned about the value of collaboration. Learning this and skills associated with collaboration, are important components of collaborative capacity (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001; Getha-Taylor, 2008; Huxham, 1993; Munkvold, et al., 2009). Yet there was no evidence of explicitly teaching the values or skills of collaboration such as found in Kezar and Lester (2009). This was an experiential learning process that made the participants aware of who was missing from the task force and how the process of collaboration could have been used to build connections that would span existing gaps in the network , i.e.: Administrator two's suggestion that including staff from enrollment services would have helped to strengthen their connection with academic staff.

Trust. Through the process of collaboration, trust is built which in turn aids subsequent collaborations (Burt, 2007; Coleman, 1988; Halpern, 2005). SMCC exhibited a high degree of trust across campus. This is evidenced in numerous ways – by the answers to the world values question, and by looking at patterns of trust and respect.

The following quote from Faculty 1 eloquently sums up the feelings of the participants "Am I Hobbs, people are nasty, or am I Confucius, people are inherently good. I guess my philosophy is to give people the benefit of the doubt, at first, but I do believe there are untrustworthy people out there." Certainly the most eloquent, it captures the feelings of the other participants. It was prompted by an interview question drawn from the World Values Survey Questionnaire (WVS, 2005) (The World Values Survey is an international

association of social scientists). The Participants, like Confucius, say that people are generally trustworthy.

Matrices for the code *trust* and the code *trust, lack of* were created. Analysis of the matrix for *trust* revealed that all six of the participants, each in their own way, say that in general people should be trusted. For example, Adjunct 1 said "I tend to really believe that most people can be trusted." Adjunct 2 remarked "I tend to think that most people try to put their best foot forward" while Faculty 2 said "The glass is always half full with me and ready to run over. I trust everybody, pretty much."
These statements were in answer to the World Values Survey question "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" (World Values Survey 1995-7, in (Halpern, 2005).

Some Participants had difficulty answering if there were people on campus they really trust and why do they trust them. It was easier for them to answer who they did not trust on campus. Analysis of the matrix for *lack of trust* (Table 20) reveals no over-arching pattern but does reveal several themes. Some participants report not yet finding people to not trust but still maintaining an air of caution. One participant, an adjunct faculty member, remarked on the effect of competition. Two of the participants said they have not yet found people to distrust at the college. Both of these participants are relative newcomers to the college (under 5 years). They may have had less of a chance to have experiences that cause mistrust. The most unexpected answer to whom the participant doesn't trust was given by Adjunct 1 and shows the effect of competition for jobs on trust.

> I've learned as an adjunct to be careful who I trust as other adjuncts and I think the reason for that is it is really competitive, not just in this school, but if you get classes at another college, and who's not saying what about what job is open and that sort of thing. I trust the majority of the adjuncts here and a lot of them are friends and have been really helpful but over the course of the few years I have been here, three or four whatever it is, there have been a few people that I just didn't get that vibe from, who saw me not as a colleague but someone who was competition. They kept their distance…

Three of the Participants displayed a wariness based on past experience. They also have the most experience of all the participants with long careers at the college and in higher education. Therefore they have had more opportunity to have had experiences that create a lack of trust. Administrator 2 sums it up:

> It wouldn't be a campus if there weren't (people who can't be trusted). That's one of the things that makes being in a community interesting. You have to figure out who's who and whether its staff, or faculty, or administrators, there's a name in the phone book or on the list that says this person will help you and then you learn who you really call - to get something done or get a straight answer, or get backup…

Respect for Leadership. Analysis of the matrix (Table 21) for the code *respect* shows a distinct pattern. When asked who they respect five of the six participants mentioned people within their departments who have served as their mentors. It was a department chair, a senior faculty member, or senior administrator who helped guide

them, especially when they were new to the college. This held true for adjunct faculty, full-time faculty, and one of the administrators. The one deviation from this pattern was Administrator 1 who mentioned a faculty member as someone they respected.

> "I think Manuel is someone I have a real lot of respect for. I've really worked closely with him since I got here. He and I came around the same time... At that time when he came on his program was kind of on the way out and he was brought in to rescue it. He certainly has done that and then I got the chance to work with him... He's just someone I think really gets the whole engagement piece. I think he is someone who understands that you have to kind of see the student in the big picture. It's not just teaching, and advising, you have to get students connected to the campus. I think he's built a real sense of community with his program and it's a small program but I think he's really invested in making sure his adjuncts are connected with the students and the college, I've been really impressed with all my interactions with Manuel, he's very enthusiastic, he's high energy, but he just cares a lot and he really buys into the whole idea of student engagement and seeing the whole student."

This choice of a faculty member as someone the administrator respects is different from the other participants in two respects: 1) he is not a mentor 2) he is outside the administrator's department.

When the other participants talk of the people they respect they not only mention the things these mentors have done to help them but they display a real sense that these

people are people to look up to – people who are skilled, humble, caring, and that there is "just a real sense of humanity that those guys have" as Adjunct 1 tells us:

> "There are lots of people - a lot of people in the department that I work for. The people I know the best in the … department … (they) really have kind of helped me a lot being a new teacher. They were always the people willing to take the time with someone who didn't necessarily know what he was doing and walk me through some of the ins and outs of teaching - stuff that they don't put in the books. Here's how to deal with problem students, here's what I did, and they did it in a way that was really comfortable. I haven't had that kind of experience in any other school that I've taught at. I've been in a whole bunch of other places and there's just a real sense of humanity that those guys have that I just didn't get with the faculty at other places. And that's something that I respect – looking at the new guys like someone who was equal. I think that just speaks volumes about character –and their character in particular. I don't know if there are other people on campus. I don't really know anybody as well as I know people in my own department. Those would be my go to people."

Faculty 1 speaks of the respect he has for his department chair:

> "I have a hard time kind of picking. I think I'll pick … the department chair…. the first person I really had contact with in the interview process, who was heading up the interview and obviously as my department chair I have contact very week, if not every day, and he, I guess I'll bring up

these words again, I think he embodies the first impressions I had of the school, that kind of narrative that I tell, embodies the characteristics of that SMCC custom. I think he's just a good, collegial, smart, effective person. He just represents a lot of what's great about this school. He's in a position of authority but he's not someone who wields that authority unwisely. He's someone that's really interested in you, me as a faculty member. He's really interested in the students. He just strikes me as the embodiment of what makes SMCC good. There are other people I could mention as well but he jumps right to the forefront."

And Administrator 2 speaks of the Vice President:

"The first person that would come to mind is Janet (the Vice-President). I have worked for a host of deans in my professional life. Some of whom have been wonderful examples, some of whom I could have done without. Some of whom I could have taught how to be (laughter) be better in their role, but didn't want to learn and it has been just a great learning experience for me again in terms of professional development to watch her and kind of sit at her knee. She is a mentor, if I have an idea she lets me run with it. If I mess it up, she comes and helps (laughter) or if I have alot of freedom and I know that she is there if I'm in a bind or am thinking you know, (I) am of two minds in thinking of how to proceed with something, especially again that's this role of being in two places, she's really savvy about sometimes I'll think about doing it one way and she'll suggest some others. She is incredibly skilled and just delightful to work

with anyway because she knows how to laugh at some of the insanity. She would be the first person to come to mind. She's one of the best examples of a leader in every sense of the word.'

Question 4 Summary. The eight elements that Kezar identified as present in highly collaborative higher education institutions were present in this case study. These elements are: integrating structures, the mission statement, campus networks, rewards and incentives, a sense of priority from people in senior positions, values that support collaboration, external pressure to collaborate, and learning the benefits of collaboration. A high degree of trust, acceptance of leadership, the ability of SMCC to organize its members, and the ability of the task force to implement as well as serve as a catalyst for change are all major components of the collaborative capacity of this organization.

Table 20. Matrix for Lack of Trust.

Low Involvement	Low Involvement	Low Involvement	High Involvement	High Involvement	High Involvement
Adjunct 1 I've learned as an adjunct to be careful who I trust as other adjuncts and I think the reason for that is it is really competitive	Adjunct 2 Not that I've found. No. Not that I've found so far.	Faculty 1 I've run into snafus, but that's really about… To me the people I wouldn't trust are like backstabbers or people who are talking about me negatively. I just don't have that experience here.	Faculty 2 The hard part there is that you don't know their personality. If it's a stranger, If you know something you have a little more depth in, you can tell them that this is what is acceptable here, and this is what's acceptable there. I might be reserved in what I say. There might not be a trust issue, possibly a gossip issue	Admin 1 Because I've seen some inconsistencies in what they say and what they do. Also from one time to another how they interact with me and what they tell me when I ask them one question one day and come back 2 weeks later and get a totally different answer. So there are some folks on campus that I'm very careful about, how I communicate with them, and how much I communicate with them. Well, I'm the rep for the administrators unit so anyone in Cates I'm a little leery of… worker/management, kind of like OK	Admin 2 It wouldn't be a campus if there weren't. That's one of the things that makes being in a community interesting. You have to figure out who's who and whether its staff, or faculty, or administrators, there's a name in the phone book or on the list that says this person will help you and then you learn who you really call - to get something done or get a strait answer, or get backup…

Table 21. Matrix for Respect.

Low Involvement	Low Involvement	Low Involvement	High Involvement	High Involvement	High Involvement
Adjunct 1 There are lots of people - a lot of people in the department that I work for. The people I know the best in the … department I think ___ and ___ really have kind of helped me a lot being a new teacher. They were always the people willing to take the time with someone who didn't necessarily know what he was doing and walk me through some off the ins and outs of teaching.	Adjunct 2 While, I would probably have to say Maurice (distance Education Director), he's worked so hard behind the scenes He helped me tremendously to put my courses on-line.	Faculty 1 I have a hard time kind of picking. I think I'll pick ____, the department chair… the first person I really had contact with in the interview process, who was heading up the interview and obviously as my department chair I have contact very week, if not every day, I think he's just a good, collegial, smart, effective person. He just represents a lot of what's great about this school.	Faculty 2 While, I think the person who would have been at the top of the list we just discussed, and that would have been Mr. --- (former department chair). From the day I came here he was the first person I met and he met me with what can I do to help. I was coming into his space, … and he was what can we do to help?	Admin 1 (A faculty member) is just someone I think really gets the whole engagement piece. I think he is someone who understands that you have to kind of see the student in the big picture. It's not just teaching, and advising, you have to get students connected the campus. I think he's built a real sense of community with his program	Admin 2 The first person that would come to mind is Janet. (Vice-president) …it has been just a great learning experience for me again in terms of professional development to watch her … She's one of the best examples of a leader in every sense of the word.

Summary

This chapter presented perceptions of the attempted collaborative process in relation to the four research questions. In the first question, about defining collaboration, a distinction was drawn between collaborators and cooperators. Task force members were identified as collaborators and other community members, who participated at various levels and did not satisfy the criteria for collaboration, were identified as cooperators.

The second question addressed how the participants perceived the process of attempted collaboration. Participants saw the public process of collaboration as enhancing a private process. They cited how numerous events in their classrooms, in their reading, the culture of SMCC, and specific events associated with this attempted collaboration came together to incite them to act. They had differing views of success. The most prevalent definition was that of success as observed change in others. Success was also viewed as institutional change, personal change, and as part of a long term change process. Only one of the participants defined success in terms of student outcomes. They saw four groups as missing from the collaboration: student and staff from enrollment services, the library and IT.

The next question centered on what facilitated or hindered the process in the perception of the participants. Processes used by the task force promoted conversation. Key among these processes were a comfortable climate, the use of a jigsaw technique (E. Aronson, 1978) and the mix of members. The conversation

of the task force joined and stimulated conversation outside of the task force. Key to this process was the use of convocation and professional development days to present information and engage community members in conversation.
The participants saw the culture of the college as one that values teaching and encourages conversation and experimentation.

The final question asked how the institutional context appeared to influence the process. The elements that Kezar (2005a) identified as present in highly collaborative higher education institutions were present in this case study. In addition, this study identified other elements that appear to influence collaboration -- general trust, respect for leadership, and the encouragement of conversation and experimentation. The addition of the concept of collaborative capacity builds upon Kezar's elements (Kezar, 2006) and highlights the role that trust and respect played in the attempted collaboration. The next chapter introduces three major themes that cross the boundaries of individual research questions.

CHAPTER 5

MAJOR THEMES

Further analysis uncovered three major themes that cross the boundaries of the individual research questions presented in the last chapter. These themes are that collaboration is supported by conversation, collaboration is intimately tied to the context in which it occurs; and collaboration is an intricate dance between collaborators and cooperators.

Collaboration is supported by conversation.

In the previous chapter, findings about the power of conversation were presented in answer to the third research question -- In the perception of the stakeholders, what facilitated or hindered the process? The answer included: (1) How processes used by the task force promoted conversation; (2) How the conversation of the task force joined and stimulated conversation outside of the task force; and (3) How the culture of the college is seen as one that values teaching and encourages conversation and experimentation. However, the role of conversation is not limited to that one research question -- it is an overarching theme. Further analysis revealed multiple ways that collaboration is supported by conversation and the important elements that make those conversations possible. Adding to the findings just reviewed, is the introduction of literature that refines the terminology associated with "conversation," the role of the topic of conversation, and how access to the conversation was structured.

There is a growing body of literature in faculty development that attests to the power of conversation and storytelling to build trust, cultivate norms, transfer tacit knowledge, and generate emotional connections (Sole & Gray-Wilson, 2002).

Storytelling can be especially powerful as the stories not only relate knowledge but pass on, through a surrogate experience, how that knowledge is implemented (Sole & Gray-Wilson, 2002).

The organizational development literature also attests to the power of conversation -- "Conversation is the single greatest learning tool in an organization" (Senge, et al., 2000). Senge (2000) presents a continuum of conversation types that range from *raw debate* through *dialogue.* Related to this study are his two highest forms of conversation -- dialogue and skillful discussion. Dialogue is a sustained collective enquiry into everyday experience and what we take for granted (Senge, et al., 2000) with the intent of exploration, discovery, and insight. Dialogue seeks to produce a shared environment of collective assumptions, shared intentions, and beliefs of the group. Skillful discussion differs from dialogue primarily by the intent to reach closure. Skillful discussion is more task oriented (Senge, et al., 2000). This study can be viewed as the chronicle of a two-year conversation, which when examined as a collection of stories, dialogue, and skillful discussion, lends insight into how a collection of "conversations" carries forward the goals of the attempted collaboration.

Storytelling. Stories are a powerful means of conveying knowledge, experience, and helping to shape the cultural norms. Storytelling appears throughout the process of the attempted collaboration, starting with the professional day in January, 2005. A memorable part of the presentation was noted in the interviews on that day, were stories about students. The focus of these stories was to show the disconnect that existed between the minds of

students and a faculty far removed from the experience of high school. The day included a chance for faculty to tell their stories -- stories of how they approached the problem of student engagement in their classrooms. Professional day the following year, 2006, included a presentation by Maryellen Weimer. She told the story of her husband wanting to build a boat in order to illustrate the role of coverage of content in the classroom. He lacked the skills needed to build a boat but would go on to learn the skills (content) he needed as he progressed. In this way, the content held meaning and was not isolated from its use -- something we often do in the classroom. As shown earlier, this presentation was very powerful to some of the participants.

The storytelling continued in the task force meetings. Task force members shared stories from their classroom experience in order to relate how the various literature might apply to the context of SMCC. Stories were used to convey the experiences of faculty who piloted the various initiatives. A panel of these early adopters "told their story" to the gathered faculty at professional day and then took questions. Their stories allowed the larger group a surrogate experience that provided insight into how the planned initiatives actually worked in the classroom.

Dialogue. Dialogue within small groups at convocation, professional days, forums, and numerous informal conversations helped to shape a shared environment of collective assumptions, shared intentions, and beliefs of the group. Evidence was presented in Chapter 4 showing how the participants wanted to talk about the changes they were about to make before they implemented them.

Skillful Discussion. Skillful discussion is an apt lens through which to view the conversations within the task force. These conversations, as discussed in Chapter 4, were very task oriented with the goal of creating a plan for change to classroom and institutional practices that would affect student engagement in the classroom. As stated in the literature, skillful discussion shares elements with dialogue in relation to the sustained collective enquiry into everyday experience. Yet the focus on creation of a plan of action, as opposed to the shaping of collective beliefs, sets this type of conversation apart.

The Role of the Topic. We joined the conversation about student engagement and retention at the very beginning of this study as the president of SMCC requested the focus for the professional development day in January 2005 to be "What is the matter with kids today?" There were those at the college who believed that student success could be achieved by being more selective about the students who were allowed to enter the college. Others believed that with a goal of access to higher education there was an obligation to accept students with lower skills and to then support them in overcoming deficits in their skill level upon entering SMCC. It was a topic that many community members (including the college president) cared deeply about - which was why the president requested the topic. Multiple stakeholders had a vested interest in the problem and those stakeholders were highly interdependent. There was conflict potential among stakeholders due to beliefs about which students should be admitted to the college. There were also differences in the power and resources for dealing with the problem, with stakeholders having different levels of expertise and different

access to information about the problems. The January 2005 Professional Day was an organized attempt at sharing this expertise and information.

Another characteristic to consider is that many of the problems suitable for collaboration are relentless (Weber & Kahademian, 2008) -- they are perennial problems that we hope to improve but will never totally alleviate. Past efforts to deal with the problem at SMCC had produced less than satisfactory results, in part because past efforts were confined to small numbers of students. The nature of the problem of student engagement goes well beyond any single classroom. Incremental or unilateral efforts cannot address the problem, and past efforts using existing processes had proved insufficient.

This study also illustrated the role of outside pressure in solving the problem. There is an increasing push for accountability in higher education from accreditors, federal and state governments, and the public. Thus, philanthropic foundations, like the MetLife Foundation, are funding projects such as this one. Accepting the grant from MetLife provided impetus to the ensuing conversation by providing the time, resources, and pressure to find solutions to the problem.

Access to the Conversation. Much of the attempted collaboration involved creating opportunities in which community members could participate. Participants wanted to hear new ideas, talk about changes they were thinking of making (before they made them) and they wanted to share their successes. However, the creation of some opportunities limited access to some conversations -- as was done with the makeup of the task force. This happened in different ways for task force members than for the other participants.

Involvement in the task force was the major attribution for change by its members. And for those not on the task force, it was the relation of some event within the collaboration to events outside the task force that caused them to be involved. Inside of the task force, the use of the jigsaw (E. Aronson, 1978) helped all of the members join in the weekly conversations. The mix of representatives on the task force had a strong influence on the direction and breadth of those conversations. The conversations within the task force promoted other conversations outside of the task force -- some formal and many informal too.

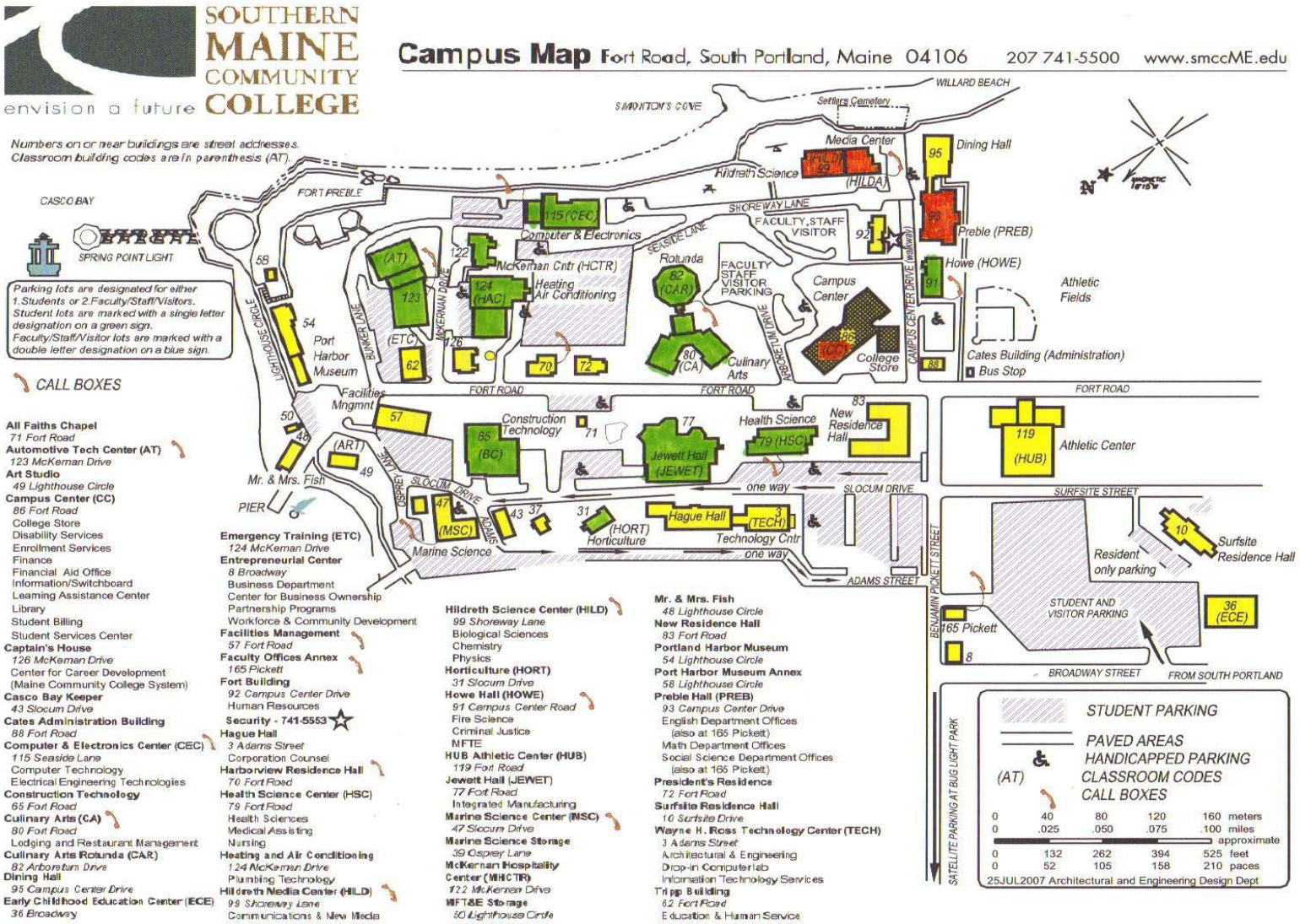
Outside of the task force, the integrating structures at the college played a role in promoting conversations, but in a different way from the integrating structure in Kezar and Lester (2009). In Kezar's study integrating structures were about the mechanics of budgets, departmental affiliation, and technological infrastructure. In this study the integrating structures created opportunities for conversation. Professional days included organized conversations and feedback in addition to time for informal conversation. Center for Teaching Excellence workshops included the luncheon discussion groups. Faculty 1 noted her talk with the vice-president when hired - a talk that encouraged collaboration. And the shared governance process is one that encourages debate and in which any community member can bring a concern to a standing committee. More detail about integrating structures is found in the section on context.

The culture that made it easy for the community members to voice their opinion was important even when they didn't do it. Faculty 1 said " I feel like I had every opportunity to take part" and later said "What I think is really important about SMCC is this is a nice place if you want to make a suggestion you are allowed to, so if someone

felt they weren't a part of that I don't see why they couldn't get involved if they had wanted to". This may be related to the participant's need for competence and relatedness found in self-determination theory (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001). Having the opportunity to voice your opinion is an acknowledgement that your opinion matters.

While organizational structure played an important role in participation, physical structures also figured in. The physical layout of the campus limits some of the opportunity for informal conversations and created a physical separation between the trades and academics. The main campus, occupying a former military base, is spread over 80 acres and is comprised of 46 separate buildings (SMCC, 2008c). Figure 6 depicts a map of the SMCC's South Portland campus. The map shows the technical and trade programs clustered on the north and northwestern sides of campus (colored green). In the geographic center of the campus is the Culinary Arts building which is next to the campus center and parking. Liberal art programs (colored red) are clustered on the Southern edge of campus next to the athletic fields. An exception to the technical/trade and liberal arts separation is the public safety departments of criminal justice and fire science which are on the southern end of campus. Many of the buildings house separate trade programs or groups of related programs so it is not only possible, but on many days typical, for faculty to interact only with students and faculty from their discipline or related disciplines.

Figure 6. Map of Campus.



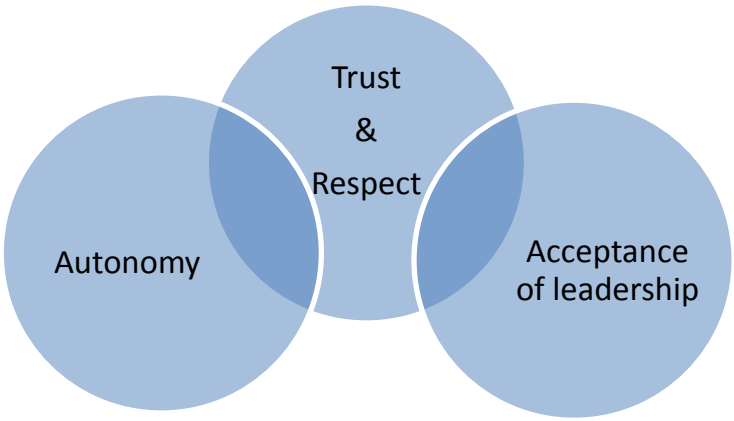
Collaboration is Intimately Tied to Context

This study revealed how intimately the process of collaboration is tied to the context in which it occurs. Although the question as to how the context influenced the collaboration was listed last among the research questions, in retrospect, it is the most important, for this is where the data reveals that collaboration begins. Underlying many contextual elements is a sense of trust.

Trust and Respect. The participants' relations were rooted in a high degree of trust within the SMCC community and in respect for senior faculty and administrators who served as mentors to new community members. Trust is an important aspect of binding people together in social networks (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001; Getha-Taylor, 2008; Munkvold, et al., 2009) and the respect that senior faculty and administrators earned through the mentoring relationships only added to the sense of trust reported in the last chapter. Trust and respect were foundational to the relationship between faculty and administrators in this study and were bolstered by the workings of the task force.

In the literature, trust is an important component in building social networks (Kezar & Lester, 2009) and collaborative capacity (Getha-Taylor, 2008; Huxham, 1993). Trust and respect are a link between Huxman's (1993) degree of individual autonomy with Gertha-Taylor's (2008) acceptance of leadership. The degree of personal autonomy that was given to the task force and the autonomy that the task force then included in their instructions to the faculty are indicative of one side of this relationship the trust that leadership has for faculty. The other side is the acceptance of leadership shown by community members in the way they cooperated with the task force (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Relationship of Trust, Respect, Autonomy, and Acceptance of Leadership.



This foundation of trust and respect between faculty and administration was why SMCC was seen by the participants as a place where they could approach administration. Adjunct 1 attested to this in his interview:

> There were some places I taught that I didn't feel comfortable at all talking to administration or in other roles, but here it didn't exist. Maybe it's my experience or maybe it's universal but as an adjunct I always felt really comfortable, talking to other people and using them as resources… I always did it here (rather) than other places.

It was in this environment of existing trust and respect that social network connections were created. The connections created within the task force were especially powerful. It was there that the relationships between task force members exhibited how collaboration created connections across traditional divides between faculty and administration, full-time and part-time faculty, and technical and liberal arts faculty. Task force members talked positively about working with people they would not

normally have had in-depth conversations with. Administrator 1 talked about how good it was to be accepted even though teaching was not his primary duty.

The Dance Between Collaboration and Cooperation

It was the attempt to define collaboration that prompted the decision to name the members of the task force collaborators and the other participants in this study as cooperators. Foster-Fishman et al (2001) would refer to the role that the collaborators played in this study as catalysts. Their job was to institute the changes they created through others. The process in this way differs from intraorganizational models such as Wheelan's (2005) that create change over time with the use of multiple consecutive groups, instead of one group, like the task force.

It is within the context just described that the processes of collaboration and cooperation occurred. These processes do not present a dichotomy, nor a best versus lesser alternative to one another, but come together in an intricate dance that helps to involve numerous individuals and groups, create a campus-wide effect of positive change to practice, and a culture that values collaboration.

The divergence of collaborators and cooperators started with choosing who would be on the task force. From that point on the groups followed parallel and highly related courses until they came together again with the disbanding of the task force and the implementation phase. In the meantime, the two groups had some shared, but many different, needs and mechanisms through which to satisfy them.

For collaborators, the conversation was structured into weekly, and sometimes twice weekly, formal meetings and numerous informal conversations. They were productive very quickly -- which can be attributed to several factors. First, to the intraorganizational nature of the collaboration in an organization the size of SMCC. And

secondly, many of the task force members were already acquainted, even though they would get to know each other much better over the course of the collaboration. Productivity was aided by the use of the jigsaw technique (1978). This not only gave each member something to report each week, but it made them the instant experts in the group on what they had read, which supported their need for competence. There was also a clear goal and a looming deadline.

Task force members had the opportunity to have conversations with individuals that crossed numerous boundaries, especially the liberal arts/trade technologies divide, the student services and academics divide, and the administration/faculty divide. The CTE office (where they met) was a safe, comfortable environment located in a quiet place on the edge of campus. They often had candy and cookies on the table and tea was available. The meetings were relaxed and collegial. The makeup of the task force was critical not only as an attempt to represent as many stakeholder groups as possible, but as a way to make connections that would increase the collaborative capacity of the organization. But membership in the task force was limited which restricted access to those conversations.

Cooperators had other opportunities to engage. These opportunities were created by the task force and used not only to gather and disseminate information but to encourage participation during implementation and contribute to the legitimacy of the task force members and the process. In this way the task force members served as catalysts for action.

Cooperators participated in convocation, professional development days, presentations, workshops, forums, surveys, and by piloting initiatives. However, the

opportunity to connect situations in a participant's professional life outside the parameters of the attempted collaboration was most important to their participation.

A key difference between inter and intra-organizational collaboration is the relationship of community members/groups with their representatives. In an intra-organizational collaboration, the stakeholders share a formal organizational structure and are much more likely to share informal ties as well. While representation of various constituencies within the college were seen as important to the participants, they did not rely on their representatives either as conduits to bring their message to the task force or as conduits for information from the task force as would be expected in inter-organizational collaborations. Rather, the flow of information was primarily through integrating structures such as professional development days. This allowed for an effective communication to the larger audience and a more uniform message.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented three major themes. These themes are that collaboration is supported by conversation, collaboration is intimately tied to the context in which it occurs; and collaboration is an intricate dance between collaborators and cooperators.

Conversation about pedagogy was a strong component of the culture and facilitated the process of collaboration. Evidence showed numerous conceptions of conversation, ranging from the formal to the informal, and including scholarly conversations of the research literature. The participants saw engaging in these conversations to be an important catalyst for personal change to their teaching practices. The conversations associated with the attempted collaboration made use of storytelling, dialogue, and structured discussions (Senge, et al., 2000).

These techniques helped to build trust, cultivate norms, transfer knowledge, and generate emotional connections.

Collaboration is intimately tied to the context in which it occurs. Trust and respect were foundational to the relationship between faculty and administrators in this study and were bolstered by the workings of the task force. It was this environment of existing trust and respect that aided the creation of social network connections that then aided this collaboration and could be used for future collaborative attempts.

Lastly, the dance between collaboration and cooperation was introduced. Framing the process of collaboration, such as the one studied here, as a pair of highly interrelated parallel processes allowed for the identification of the needs of both collaborators and cooperators. The final chapter, Discussion and Implications, follows with a discussion of how these findings inform the existing literature and implications for practice.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this retrospective case study was to learn how faculty and administrators experienced collaboration in the context of a community college. The conclusions presented in this chapter follow the four research questions and the findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5. In this chapter, I attempt to construct a holistic understanding of the process based upon the perceptions of the participants in relation to the existing literature. The elements that frame this analysis are: (a) the role of context on those experiences, (b) the effect of the problem SMCC was trying to address, (c) the different experiences of collaborators and cooperators, and, (d) the relationship of the findings to the literature. Together these elements provide a foundation for a model of intra-organizational collaboration in a community college utilizing a small group of stakeholders to serve as a catalyst for action. Following a discussion of the findings and conclusions from this study are my recommendations for future research, the limitations of the study, and my final reflections.

This retrospective case study was carried out at Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) in South Portland, Maine by studying an attempt at collaboration between faculty and administrators. This two-year long attempt to affect student engagement and retention started in the summer of 2005. Data were collected through a combination of interviews with six participants followed by a focus group of five of these participants, document collection, and participant observation. Through an iterative process (Miles & Huberman, 1994), data were subjected to open coding and then focused coding with codes drawn from the literature using the program HyperResearch. Analysis was undertaken utilizing matrices and concept maps to uncover patterns and significant

instances. The original review of the literature included the definition, process, and context of collaboration. Collaboration and its relationship to cooperation plays an important role in the study. Clearly defining collaboration and cooperation lead to identification of two distinct groups within the participants. The changing views of the process of collaboration found in the literature, especially in regard to intra-organizational collaborations, was helpful in viewing how the members of the task force interacted. A peer review of findings completed the process.

Discussion

Analysis of the findings related in the previous two chapters comes together in three overarching themes related to the participants' experience of collaboration:

1. Collaboration is supported by conversation.
2. Collaboration is intimately tied to the context in which it occurs.
3. Collaboration is an intricate dance between collaborators and cooperators.

In the pages that follow, I discuss these themes and how the findings relate to the existing literature.

Collaboration depends on conversation. It was through conversations in interviews and a focus group that I gathered much of the data for this study. And it is in those conversations that I learned of the importance the participants placed on it. Helping to drive the conversation was the topic. Several elements were important including the topic and how conversations were structured.

The topic. The topic of student engagement and the ensuing collaboration supports the literature regarding problems suitable for collaborative methods. This case had multiple stakeholders with a vested interest in the problems and those stakeholders were highly interdependent (Gray, 1989a; Weber & Kahademian, 2008). There was

conflict potential between stakeholders (Gray, 1989a; Weber & Kahademian, 2008) due to deeply held values about how to correct the issue of student engagement and retention and significant symbolic or personal issues (Walker, et al., 2006). There were differences in the power and resources for dealing with the problem, with stakeholders having different levels of expertise and different access to information about student engagement (Gray, 1989a).

Another characteristic to consider is that many of the problems suitable for collaboration are relentless, persisting through multiple attempts to solve them (Weber & Kahademian, 2008) as is the problem of student engagement -- it is a perennial problem that we hope to improve but will never totally alleviate. Incremental or unilateral efforts cannot address the problem, and past efforts using existing processes had proved insufficient. Collaboration was an alternative because it offered an approach that alleviates competition, hierarchy, and incremental planning (Gray, 1989a).

The question of how to improve student success by integrating student engagement strategies into the classroom (Vickery, 2005) fits with a major characteristic found in the literature in that problems suitable for collaboration are ill-defined (Gray, 1989a; Weber & Kahademian, 2008) and ill defined problems have multiple potential solutions, not just one best answer. They are characterized by technical complexity and scientific uncertainty (Gray, 1989a; Walker, et al., 2006; Weber & Kahademian, 2008).

The literature on the suitability of problems for collaborative methods did not address the role of outside pressure in solving the problem. There is an increasing push for accountability in higher education from accreditors, federal and state governments, and the public. Thus philanthropic foundations, like the MetLife Foundation, are funding projects such as this one. Accepting the grant from MetLife provided impetus to the

ensuing conversation by providing the time, resources, and pressure to find solutions to the problem. Support for how outside pressure may influence collaboration can be found in the organizational behavior literature. Strategic contingency theory posits that power in an organization accrues to elements in the organization that are able to cope with uncertainties. Outside pressure would therefore exert internal influences (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1996).

How the conversation was structured. Much of the interaction of collaboration is engagement in various forms of conversation. This is clearly a major theme in the study and is supported by numerous studies that show the benefits in terms of promotive interaction (Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2000), storytelling (Sole & Gray-Wilson, 2002), dialogue, and structured discussions (Senge, et al., 2000). The combination of storytelling, dialogue, and structured discussions carried the goals of the collaboration forward. Stories allowed abstract concepts to take on lived meaning. Stories of students' struggles and accomplishments gave real meaning to why student engagement was important. Stories also allowed people to vicariously experience what it was like to implement strategies in the classroom -- to give concrete examples of how strategies might work in their classroom. Dialogue, along with the stories, helped to create a shared environment of collective assumptions, shared intentions, and beliefs that students who were unprepared for college could be helped and that it was the job of SMCC, as a community college, to do all it could to do so. Finally, the structured discussions were used to come to terms with exactly what changes would be made and how those changes would be implemented. While the participants saw this broadly as conversation, the literature shows an interconnection of three distinct types of conversation that are all critical to the desired outcome. Without a shared environment of collective assumptions,

shared intentions, and beliefs it would not have mattered what changes were proposed by the task force. They would have been ignored as is often done with the latest educational innovation that will "fix everything!" Without stories of success from the early adopters there would have been far less late adopters.

Collaboration is intimately tied to the context in which it occurs. The literature dealing with contextual factors highlights how the environment can affect various aspects of the collaborative process, starting with the formation of collaborative groups all the way through to the ultimate implementation of collaborative agreements. And context did play a significant role in this study. Fundamental to this context was trust. As pointed out earlier, the growth of trust plays an important role as an aspect of binding people together in social networks (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001; Getha-Taylor, 2008; Huxham, 1993; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Munkvold, et al., 2009) through the development of shared norms and values (Inkpen & Currall, 2004). This study showed evidence of a high degree of trust in the relationship between faculty and administrators, through how they worked together on the task force and in the latitude senior administration gave the task force in formulating and implementing their plans. Trust was also central to the adoption of the task force's initiatives by cooperators. So it is upon a foundation of trust that the elements found in this study are built.

Some elements presented themselves very differently at SMCC than found in the literature, especially when compared to the eight elements of highly collaborative institutions (Kezar & Lester, 2009). I attribute these differences to the organizational differentiation between community colleges and universities as well as the intense focus SMCC placed on creating opportunities for conversation. Differences in rewards and incentives for collaboration are organizational in nature. The lack of tenure and research

requirements for faculty removes some of the barriers to collaboration. The differences in integrative structures, the most significant difference found here, are due not only to organization differences, but to the focus on creating opportunities for conversation.

The integrative structures perceived by the participants, show how SMCC works to build the collaborative environment needed to support collaborative endeavors. This starts with the Vice President's stress on collaborative work during the hiring process and how other structures (shared governance, convocation, professional days, and the Center for Teaching Excellence) were used to create opportunities for conversation and the bridging of organizational boundaries. These conversations were critical in the development of trust through the creation of shared norms and values (Inkpen & Currall, 2004).

However, looking at some of the other elements of highly collaborative institutions raises issue as to their causal significance. Many elements, such as the mission statement and strategic plan, are artifacts of past collaborative endeavors. I would argue that the success of those past collaborative endeavors, the trust they built, and the network ties created, are just as important to future collaborative endeavors as is the explicit articulation of the value of collaboration. For this reason, I believe looking at the elements of highly collaborative institutions, in isolation, is not enough.

A more holistic picture of the context and process of collaboration is provided through theories of collaborative capability. Fitzgerald's model (2004) of collaborative capability includes ten broad constructs that capture the fundamental aspects of collaborative entities (CE) that foster collaborative capability. This model could be useful for looking at the task force as a collaborative entity, but not when it comes to viewing the cooperators in this study. They were not collaborative and therefore could

not be a collaborative entity. In addition it is difficult to apply the ten constructs to the broader group of potential cooperators. Foster-Fishman's model (2001) includes four components - member, relational, organizational, and programmatic capabilities and is similar in many respects to Munkvold's model (2009) which showed collaborative potential can be increased by paying attention to three critical areas: collaborative infrastructure, collaborative practice, and networking capabilities. These three areas could be applied to individual cooperators as well as collaborators

The collaborative infrastructure exhibited here was built upon a foundation of trust, and a culture that values teaching, conversation, and experimentation. The integrative structures previously mentioned (the office of the Vice-President, shared governance, convocation, professional days, and the Center for Teaching Excellence) created opportunities for dialogue that are critical to the building and maintenance of this trust and collaborative infrastructure. Other elements included a sense of priority for collaboration from senior administrators, rewards and incentives to collaborate, external pressure to collaborate, and a community that has learned the value of collaboration.

The collaborative practices employed in this attempted collaboration started with the formation of the task force through collaboration with department chairs. Next came the creation of a safe, comfortable environment for dialogue among task force members and the purposeful structuring of that dialogue through the use of the jigsaw (E. Aronson, 1978) in order to promote interaction. The task force then employed practices that promoted cooperation. These practices included steps to ensure that the existing knowledge of community members was collected and shared. It also included creating multiple venues for community members to learn what the task force was doing, and to contribute to that work.

Networking capabilities were evidenced by the use of existing networks, such as the use of the Center for Teaching Excellence, and building a task force that included representation from faculty (both adjunct and full-time), administrators (student services and academics), liberal studies and technology trade faculty. However, it was the ability of the task force to reach out to potential cooperators that showed the extent of the institutions' internal networking capability.

These three capabilities (collaborative infrastructure, practices, and networking) are highly interdependent. For instance, the networking capabilities were dependent upon the collaborative infrastructure and would have struggled in the absence of good collaborative practice. The interworking of these three capabilities places the context in relation to the process and therefore affords a more holistic view of the endeavor.

The Dance Between Collaboration and Cooperation. This collaboration utilized a small group to serve as a catalyst for action. Members of this small group, the task force, were coined collaborators. Other community members who participated in any way were coined cooperators. This process differs from intraorganizational models such as Wheelan's (2005) that create change over time with the use of multiple consecutive groups, instead of one group, like the task force serving as a catalyst for change in the organization.

The individual pieces that comprise the roles of collaborators working within a task force are well documented in the literature. Starting with being representative of their constituencies, (Gray, 1985, 1989b; McCann & Gray, 1986; Wood & Gray, 1991) they quickly formed as a group and became productive, as found in the literature (Gersick, 1989; Gray, 1989a; Seegar, 1983). However, envisioning cooperation and collaboration as side-by-side processes demonstrates where the differences from the

traditional literature begin to emerge. The role of a collaborator (task force member) becomes broader.

Much of the literature on representative stakeholders in collaboration deals with inter-organizational contexts. Unlike inter-organizational collaborations, where representatives must return to their organization to implement agreements, the implementation process in intra-organizational collaboration is a long drawn-out dance between collaborators and cooperators. The collaborators must represent their constituents (for instance other members of the English department) while working at gaining the cooperation of members of the larger organization - not just members of their departments. They gained this cooperation by being explicit about valuing the knowledge and expertise that existed at the college and creating many opportunities for the campus community to contribute. This connection of the collaborators, as a group, to the larger community also affected how the community received information.

The flow of information to the community was not primarily from representatives to their constituencies, but directly from the task force. The use of integrating structures, convocation, and professional days, were critical to this process. I attribute this to two things: First, faculty at SMCC are contractually obligated to attend these three days each year which has the effect of bolstering attendance. However, more importantly, the executive staff created a climate at the events by encouraging activities that are interactive and informative. They used these days productively to address current issues and to include opportunity for discussion about those issues. Rather than dealing primarily with accounting and technical issues (Kezar & Lester, 2009; Munkvold, et al., 2009), the integrating structures in this study deal with opportunities for conversation and

building connections among departments, more in keeping with the work of Huxman (1993).

Implications for Future Practice

The implications for future practice in this study were found in three specific areas: (1) collaborative capacity in a community college setting; (2) topics appropriate for collaborative methods; and (3) viewing an intra-organizational collaboration utilizing a small catalyst group as a dance between collaborators and cooperators -- each group with different needs and responsibilities.

Collaborative Capacity. To build collaborative capacity requires a foundation of trust that is, in part, built and maintained through successive collaborative endeavors. Every attempt at collaboration is an opportunity to build trust and create connections between groups and individuals that can be used to aid future collaborations. Elements found in highly collaborative institutions (Kezar & Lester, 2009) are related to the collaborative capacity of the institution. These elements include: collaboration being included as part of the mission statement; integrating structures that allow and sustain collaborative endeavors; using existing campus networks to speed the process of collaboration; offering rewards and incentives to support collaboration such as grants and release time; communicating a sense of priority from people in senior positions; communicating external pressure to collaborate to community members from business, disciplinary groups, accrediting bodies, or a variety of individuals or institutions; and espoused values that help foster collaboration include being student-centered, innovative and egalitarian. Other elements that were components of SMCC's collaborative capacity included valuing teaching, conversation, and experimentation; as well as teaching the benefits of collaboration.

The Topic. The topic of the attempted collaboration should be one that promotes interaction among participants -- preferably a topic with which many in the community are already concerned. The topic should be ill-structured. That is, the problem is multi-faceted, the outcome is uncertain, and there does not exist one clear answer to the problem. Problems most appropriate for collaborative means are relentless issues and past efforts to fix them have been ineffective (Weber & Kahademian, 2008). Multiple stakeholders have a vested interest in the problem and those stakeholders are highly interdependent (Gray, 1989a; Weber & Kahademian, 2008). There is conflict potential between stakeholders due to their beliefs. There are differences in the power and resources for dealing with the problem, with stakeholders having different levels of expertise and different access to information about the problem.

The Dance Between Collaborators and Cooperators. Envisioning this type of collaboration as a dance between collaborators and cooperators helps to make the needs of both groups explicit. Although they share a few needs, they have multiple differences.

The needs of collaborators. In order for collaborators to serve as catalysts they must be representative of the various constituencies involved in the ensuing collaboration. Membership in this group can also be used to create and strengthen connections that may aid future collaborations and/or build connections among previously unconnected groups.

The members of this group need ample meeting time in order to interact. This may mean release time from other duties. Weekly meetings were used in this case with sub-groups also meeting weekly for part of the semester. Clear goals and a deadline can hasten the process. Use of techniques that structure the conversation, like the jigsaw (E. Aronson, 1978), help to give every member a substantial role to play at every meeting

and therefore stimulate promotive interaction. It is important that everyone participates so that all viewpoints are considered and represented.

The climate of the meetings needs to be friendly, relaxed, and safe. The use of structured discussions (Senge, et al., 2000) may help reach these goals. The task force developed a single page feedback form in the first few weeks of its meetings. The use of this structured form allowed someone else to present for members who had to be late or absent from a meeting. This friendly, relaxed, and safe environment must be extended to the cooperators.

The needs of cooperators. Cooperators need numerous ways in which to connect to the collaboration. While the interaction of the collaborators may be enough to promote change in their practice, the cooperators need to connect a part of the collaboration with other parts of their professional lives in order to promote change in practice. Participants in this study connected with various events: a speaker, a workshop, a forum, or a conversation. But all of the cooperators linked those events to other events in their professional lives that were not related to the collaboration. Even events with little participation can be important in giving the cooperators an opportunity for feedback. The opportunity is sufficient for some of the participants -- they felt that they were well represented and were given the opportunity to contribute if they had wanted to.

Large community gatherings can communicate what is happening and elicit existing knowledge from the organization. This not only provides rich, context specific, knowledge but honors the work of cooperators, creating better buy-in during the implementation phase. Large gatherings are also good venues for communicating outside pressures -- pressures to solve the problem and pressures to do so collaboratively. Being given time at these gatherings also communicates the importance that senior

administration places on the endeavor. Lastly, making frequent use of storytelling, dialogue, and structured conversations is key to getting cooperators to move from potential cooperators to fully cooperating.

Recommendations for Future Study

Applying the research associated with collaboration from myriad settings to the unique characteristics of a community college presents a host of opportunities for more research. This study highlights that need in regard to the context, process, and motivation associated with collaboration and cooperation.

This study shows that the contextual elements of a collaborative community college are generally similar to those of the universities studied by Kezar. Yet this case also shows how community colleges may be unique. The reward structure, especially in regard to the lack of incentive that can be related to the granting of tenure, is different. This case also showed integrating structures that were quite different from those found in Kezar's work. The integrating structures in this study centered more on creating a culture of conversation and experimentation than removing institutional budgetary and administrative structures. Further study of these, and other possible differences/similarities from a cross section of community colleges would further highlight the context that could support collaboration in community colleges. It might also uncover possible elements unique to community college that were not found in Kezar's work.

The collaborative process is one of the most studied processes in business, organizational development, counseling, and educational literatures. Yet the connection between collaboration and cooperation in a community college as revealed in this study, and the complex relationship among these processes, existing social networks, and paths

of knowledge transfer and adoption prompt many questions. For example, does the opportunity for involvement, even when not taken, influence the adoption practices of cooperators? How does representation on the task force affect adoption, considering that the path of knowledge transfer seems not to be through those representatives but through integrating structures such as professional days? It could also reveal how additional stress on results by the task force may have changed the definition participants used for judging success and possibly reinforced long-term adoption of practices.

Motivational theories could be helpful for gaining a greater understanding of whether, and to what extent, community members choose to participate as cooperators. The research reviewed in Chapter Two shows that people choose to collaborate based on their beliefs about what the group would be like as well as their role within it and how the group meets their ideal image (Bushe & Coetzer, 2007). In the inter-organizational literature the focus for stakeholders is on the power of the collaborators with their constituencies -- whether they have the power to influence or authorize action within their organizations (Gray, 1989a).

When conceptualizing the parallel roles of collaborators and cooperators, the decisions of cooperators are quite distinct from those of the collaborators. Cooperators' involvement in an ongoing interpersonal group process is much less intense. They need not attend regular meetings as collaborators did in this case. Their decision seems to be centered more on how the ideas/issues of the collaborators intersect with their own and offer solutions to issues they are struggling with. Potential cooperators are also concerned that their ideas/perspectives are incorporated in the solutions offered by the collaborators -- ideas which, though prescriptive, allow the cooperator to maintain a level of professional autonomy. In this intra-organizational study the attributions made by the

cooperators were less about the power of individuals who represented them (as is the case in inter-organizational collaboration) but involved being represented and having the opportunity to voice an opinion and be heard. This complex relationship involving feeling represented, having a real opportunity to provide input, and the relevancy of the topic relate to motivational theories that deal with self-concepts and the attributions that the potential cooperators make about their own and others' actions.

Theories of motivation have shifted in the last two decades away from a more cognitive view of behavior that was popular in the 1980's towards a return of interest in the self (J. Aronson, 2002). This shift is dominated by interest in two concepts -- that of self-efficacy and self-concept (Graham & Weiner, 1990). Major motivational constructs in these areas are self-worth, self-efficacy, learned helplessness, task versus ego involvement, intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation, and cooperative versus competitive goals (Graham & Weiner, 1990). Of these six constructs the two most promising avenues of inquiry involve self-efficacy and intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation.

The prominent theorist regarding self-efficacy is Bandura (J. Aronson, 2002). His concern is with an individual's ability to perform well: given that 1) the stronger an individual believes in this ability --which in this case was the ability to positively affect student engagement and therefore effect student success -- the more they will persist at the task and 2) that teachers' view of their instructional efficacy is a determinant of how they are willing to structure academic activities (Bandura, 1997). An individual's view of his/her efficacy may be a determinant to the extent in which they cooperate and are willing to implement the suggestions of the collaborators. For instance, if a teacher has a belief that he or she can make changes that positively affect student engagement and therefore have an effect on student success, they are more likely to attempt new strategies

to engage students. If they believe students' engagement has no effect on student success and the problem lies with the "quality" of today's students, then it makes more sense to them to just fail students who are not "smart" enough.

Self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000) deals with the issue of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation and may be useful for looking at the motivational aspects of both collaborators and cooperators. Underlying SDT are three basic human needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The need for autonomy is met by collaborators in the freedom of action they were given and by cooperators in the way they were afforded multiple ways to implement the decision of the task force. Competence was addressed in the task force through the use of the jigsaw which gave each task force member relevant information to relate each week. Both collaborators and cooperators were approached to uncover best practices that exist at SMCC. Finally, the need for relatedness was met in the camaraderie that developed among collaborators. Relatedness may have been developed in the cooperators through representation and the multiple means for providing input. SDT was popular with the task force when they designed the classroom initiatives -- providing students with the opportunity to connect to faculty and other students (relatedness), and the provision of choice in assignments (autonomy). It can also be seen in the way that the task force worked with the potential cooperators. The "suggested changes to classroom practice" were drawn, in part, from the suggestions of community members (competence and relatedness) as well as not dictating classroom practice (autonomy and competence).

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. The first is the nature of qualitative inquiry, which does not produce statistically generalizable findings. Qualitative inquiry

is an approach that is useful in gaining an in-depth understanding of a case or phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). It is the study of contemporary phenomena within the context of real lives that makes case studies so compelling (Seidman, 1998; Yin, 2003).

Secondly, the findings reflect the limitation of the participants' perception about the process and are influenced by the passage of time. The use of a focus group helped people to recall parts of the process. But the fact remains that from the start of the process in the Summer of 2005, to the last of the data collection with the focus group in the Summer of 2009, is a span of four years. Changes in perception can be blurred by time but time can also provide an opportunity for reflection. This study reports their perceptions.

Southern Maine Community College is arguably unique and this study was done at a unique time in its history -- a time of unprecedented enrollment growth. In the two years before the start of the attempted collaboration, Southern Maine Community College had experienced a 44% growth rate in enrollment (Vickery, 2005). It is an institution over 60 years old but when this attempted collaboration started, it had been a community college for only two years. However, in many ways SMCC also shares much with other community colleges. The challenges that SMCC faces are challenges that are faced by much of higher education in the United States. It is only with an in-depth understanding of the context that people can judge how it relates to their situation (Stake, 1995). My position at SMCC also introduces a potential bias stemming from my role as participant and researcher which could influence my perspective.

Lastly, the process studied was one of intra-organizational collaboration that uses a small group of participants to serve as catalysts for action in the organization. There

are other ways that this process could have been designed -- for instance multiple small groups or larger groups.

Conclusion

Collaboration, like much of human interaction, is complex. The more people involved, the more complex it gets. So it should be no surprise that any attempt at broad-scale collaboration, that is, collaboration that involves as many members of a large community as possible, is complex and difficult to successfully achieve. It requires careful planning to provide an effective process and is highly dependent on context. Yet, for some problems, especially problems that require various pools of specialized knowledge and implementation by a wide audience, collaboration can be a powerful process.

The literature on collaboration is rich, but relatively little attention has been paid to how the context of community colleges impacts collaboration. This study adds to this literature by showing how careful attention to creating a collaborative context and process in a community college, with attention to the needs of collaborators and cooperators alike, can create successful outcomes -- outcomes that go beyond the direct goals of an individual attempt to collaborate and include significant benefits for the building of collaborative capacity and the success of future collaborations. It is at the intersection of collaboration and cooperation that these faculty members and administrators worked together.

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APPENDIX A

Table A1. Barriers to Student Success

Barriers	Strategies
Students are immature/emotionally unprepared for the college environment	
Students lack organizational skills	Freshman seminar
Students lack good study skills and habits	Teach students how to take notes
Students lack motivation and/or interest in their education	Give students individual attention
Students work too much and do not make education a priority	Group work within the classroom
Students lack basic skills/are not prepared to meet program standards	
Students have too many time commitments outside of class	
Students lack commitment to college	Get to know students better
Special needs of students	Try to accommodate student within total classroom resources (try to successfully integrate them within the classroom setting by encouraging individual responsibility, seeking advice from other students, and then individual attention from the instructor)
Students lack knowledge of basic math concepts	
Language and cultural barriers	
Students lack interest in subject	
Students are too focused on major/tech courses, less on gen. ed. (want training, not education)	
Excessive absence and tardiness	Signed contract at start of semester
Students lack English skills to write acceptable papers	Look at pre-requisites of English and Math for more classes
Students do not seek help from LAC	Instructors could provide information on LAC when going over syllabus
Students lack basic organization and study skills. Without parents prodding, they procrastinate and do not complete assignments.	More frequent exams or evaluations so students know where they stand. Implement a student seminar on study skills.
Students' work schedules and personal choices come before school	
Students do not come prepared with the tools needed to do the job (machine tool)	

Barriers	Strategies
Students are immature -- surfing the Internet when they should be taking notes	Have students (freshmen) determine goals and put them in writing. Review periodically to ensure goals are being met and determine if goals need to change.
Differences in male and female students in their ability to focus, apply themselves, and learn	Mandatory freshman seminar to teach study skills and note taking
Students don't know how to take notes	
Students are working full time and taking classes - frequently absent	Make college work for you. If it takes longer to finish program by taking courses part time, it is okay.
Students' belief that they deserve an "A" but do not have to work for it	
Different learning styles of students	"Net" testing to determine individual learning styles. Use of LAC. Variety of presentation methods.
Students lack awareness of personal responsibility as it relates to college requirements	Clear expectations in syllabus. Go over in class. Strengthen orientation to college life.
Lack of basic competency regarding English composition and math skills (including students who placed into college-level courses)	Strengthen competency placement testing. Determine math competency testing [level] within program.
Over commitment to work, school and personal schedules	Explain time commitment required to be successful
Students lack integrity (plagiarism, etc.)	More in-class evaluations
Students are too passive	PROVOKE
"Do we have to?"	YES
Students don't want to meet policy and deadlines - rules do not apply	Don’t let students get away with it. Be consistent. Put it in writing.
Students don't follow the format (for assignments, etc.)	Tell students what you expect (APA, MLA) and tell them they need to go to the library
Equipment in labs/facilities needs updating	Work with dept./division to request new equipment; work to improve processes and procedures
Students lack motivation	Work to engage and motivate students
Students lack basic math and writing skills	Do not accept poor quality written assignments
Cost of materials [for courses] over and above what is originally stated	
Some teachers' lack of compassion for underprepared students. Are we going to help, or say, "See I told you"?	
Students are "stretched too thin"	Have clear expectations. Provide study skills/time management instruction.

Barriers	Strategies
Culture clash for some of our foreign students	Encourage student mentor
Students' sense of entitlement	“You are also entitled to be responsible”
Costs, financial burden, unexpected expenses	Be up-front about costs and also cost-sensitive when ordering textbooks
Not teaching to the student's learning style	Realize that not all pegs fit into the same hole
Students who fail a course often don't know how to prevent another failure	
Students are not engaged in class (passive)	
Students having difficulty balancing work and school	
Students don't value information that is not in the textbook. They don't take notes; only highlight what is in the textbook.	
Students are underprepared. Can't apply basic math and writing concepts.	
Students are unprepared for college courses	Raise bar of AccuPlacer – exam should be more diagnostic. For example, what are the students’ strengths and weaknesses? Mandatory 1-2 credit course for all incoming freshmen dealing with skills needed to be successful in college (time management, study skills, etc.)
Students lack maturity	
Students' low math and communication skills	Refer to LAC; enforce pre-requisites
Students' low motivation, not wanting to do homework	Be clear about expectations in syllabus. Institute a “write-up” policy to provide record of counseling/advising. Be clear about consequences.
Students lack work ethic and have poor attendance	Institute meaningful attendance policy
"Spoon-fed" approach in high school; lack of study skills	Clear and complete college orientation
Disparity of skills in classroom	Develop and ensure that pre-requisites are in place
Lack of basic skills. Is AccuPlacer a valid measurement? Are students placed in proper developmental courses?	
Students have an inflated view of their abilities and capabilities	Hold students accountable from day one. Be clear about standards. Eliminate extra credit assignments that only serve to “get the student through.”
Students don't take advantage of extra help	

Barriers	Strategies
Adjuncts teaching lower level courses: not connecting with standards of the college, not paid for extra time required	Make sure adjuncts are well-oriented to college standards.
Students' unrealistic expectations (work 40 hours and take 12 credits at the same time)	Program-wide attendance policy. Access to advisors
Life-job-family support issues (non-classroom commitments - "baggage")	Orientation program: emphasize time management
Students are not committed	Time expectations in syllabus. Be as specific as possible.
Time management - students used to "5-second" sound bites	"Mini-orientation": first 10-15 of course to review instructor/student expectations
Lack of abstract learning skills	Linked classes. Also stress relevance of abstract learning to technologies (math-building construction).
Students were given poor career/college counseling. Not ready for college-level work.	Pre-admissions introductory sessions for programs or majors.
Students' outside lives (single parents/living expenses) interfering with attendance, assignment completion, etc.	Clearly defined attendance policies and open communication between students and the instructor
Students are underprepared, yet high school transcripts say otherwise	
Students have anxiety about their involvement/presentations/participation	Create atmosphere of trust/comfort among group members
Students' poor math and reading comprehension skills	Strengthen admission policy. Strengthen advising. Look into more full-time and adjuncts to be more accessible to students.
Students' poor study skills	
Students are underprepared for college-level work	Have high expectations. Incorporate basic skills into courses (such as writing).
Students lack commitment to do work	
Some students have language barriers	
Time outside of class/time management	Talk about time management issues. Have clear policies in syllabus.
Conflicted expectations	
Students' don't come to class	Orientation for freshmen. Department introductions.
There are too many students - can't get to know them	Freshman seminar: take in summer prior to starting school so skills have the potential to be in place. Linked courses (intro courses and freshman seminar).
The advising track is unclear	Develop mechanism for student feedback. Chair meets with classes without faculty.

APPENDIX B

METLIFE FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL

Need for Proposed Activity

The transformation of Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) from a technical college to a community college became official in July 2003 when the Maine State Legislature approved this fundamental change as an important step toward increasing the number of individuals with bachelor's degrees in Maine. Evolving to a community college meant opening the institutional doors to provide greater access and academic support, which has changed the characteristics of the student body and College in short order. The phenomenal growth of the College (44% since 2003) has increased the demand for academic support at the same time that state appropriations as a proportion of the operating budget have declined, providing fewer resources for a student body with greater needs. The learning communities that existed when there was a more homogenous student body enrolled in rigidly scheduled programs have changed as the curriculum has broadened and scheduling has become more flexible. The student retention rate has begun its decline to a level more consistent with the national average. (The retention rate from fall 2003 to fall 2004 was 58% for first-time full-time students and 38% for first-time part-time students.) SMCC is having great success in recruiting students but increasingly less success in keeping them.

The proportion of SMCC students with one or more significant barriers to success in higher education has grown as the student body has become more diverse. The majority of students entering in the fall of 2003 began their college careers in developmental courses to address deficiencies in mathematics and/or English. Two thirds (68%) had one or more characteristics that contribute to a high risk of failure: 33% are first generation college students, 11% are low income, and an additional 14% are both. Those with disabilities constitute 11% of the entering students. Nearly half of those who apply for financial aid are eligible for Federal Pell Grants, and an alarming 40% of all students do not even apply: a characteristic that leads many to wonder how well students understand the complexities of applying for and receiving financial aid. The percentage of students enrolling in the new community college directly out of high school increased 36% in the first year. Many are students who, in the past, did not consider attending college to be a viable option. They are uncertain about career direction; hence, there has been enormous growth in the general studies program. Students arrive on campus lacking an understanding of college culture and academic expectations which may translate into poor academic performance. This is not necessarily a reflection of academic ability, but rather a symptom of social and psychological barriers to success.

All of these factors have contributed to a challenge in engaging and retaining students that this proposal intends to address. Attendance at orientation sessions has fallen off to the point where, last year, only half of matriculated students attended one. Many students have prior college experience, which may lead them to see orientation as unnecessary. However, in many cases that prior experience was not successful, and failure to attend

orientation may be a further step in the wrong direction. Recognizing that 33% of SMCC students work full time and the majority of students are commuters (fewer than 2% live in College housing) and busy with responsibilities to jobs, family and community necessitates a different approach to helping them adjust to this new college environment.

One of the key components of student engagement, which results in greater student persistence, is the interaction between faculty and students, and by extension, staff and students. For example, one of the findings regarding support for learners is the statistic that one-third to one-half of students rarely or never takes advantage of academic advising or career counseling despite the high importance students attribute to these activities when asked.[2] These findings were replicated at SMCC in student responses to the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory conducted in March 2004 where significant gaps existed between the importance students placed on a service and their satisfaction with said service. Priorities for action include the following:

#	Item	IMP*	SAT**	GAP***
25	My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.	5.95	4.86	1.08
63	I seldom get the "run-around" when seeking information on this campus.	5.93	4.85	1.08
40	My academic advisor is knowledgeable about transfer requirements to other schools.	5.88	4.84	1.04
52	This school does whatever it can to help me reach my educational goals.	5.98	4.94	1.04
16	The college shows concern for students as individuals.	5.86	4.84	1.01

*** Importance** scores above the median 5.85 AND**** Satisfaction** scores in the lowest quartile: 4.84 OR*******Performance **gap** scores in the top quartile: 0.90.

Project Goal

Although much has been done to improve access to higher education, unless barriers to student success are removed, the College will continue to see students who are granted access to higher education in name only. In addition to academic barriers, there are invisible social and psychological ones that prevent students from fully engaging in the learning process. Academic barriers include the lack of skills needed to participate effectively—everything from a lack of note taking skills to a lack of metacognitive skills like being able to question what you don't know. Social barriers include students' not knowing the role they play in their own education. They may be a first generation college student; they may not realize the difference between college and high school; they may be going to school despite social pressures not to. Psychological barriers include procrastination and the avoidance of challenging material.

[2] *Engagement by Design: 2004 Findings*, Community College Survey of Student Engagement, p. 7.

The goal of this project is to address social and psychological transition issues and reinforce academic skills in first-semester courses. With this project we hope to take advantage of the "teachable moment": that is to say, the project intends to answer the student's need proactively by providing orientation to the services, supports, and structures of college in the context of classroom practices, assignments, and assessments that utilize those very tools. In short, these embedded orientation practices will serve to include, model, and teach the behaviors that lead to student success: active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners. This proposal recognizes that the classroom is the most likely place to engage students in examining their own progress toward meeting their expressed educational goals. Student engagement, both within and outside the classroom, is an important component of SMCC's Strategic Plan.

Improve student success by integrating student engagement strategies, including service learning and civic engagement, into classroom instruction, programs of study, and extracurricular activities.[3]

It is a given that every action the College takes can and should have student learning at its core. From personnel, to policies, to classroom activities, student learning is the basis for influencing the outcome of actions. This spring, a task force comprised of key campus leaders took part in reviewing Dimensions of Learning targeted at students in the first year of college, as part of an initial effort at establishing Foundations of Excellence® put forth by the Policy Center on the First Year of College. These ambitious dimensions cut across all realms of the college community to influence, again by design, the experiences of first-year students. Many of the actions intended through this proposal are outgrowths of the needs identified in that process.

The plan is to engage students where they constitute a captive audience—in the classroom. The only intentional strategy of this sort employed to date is the requirement that students enrolled in at least three developmental academic courses must also enroll in Freshman Seminar: a course designed to build study skills, help students understand their learning styles, and examine career choices. There is a need to reinforce those same concepts in the context of general education courses, as the students actually experience the need to apply study skills or make adjustments for individual learning styles. The proposed embedding of orientation activities, engagement strategies, and focused instruction in self-help techniques in first-semester courses, supported by an on-line orientation component, would serve multiple purposes. Making engagement inescapable by promoting it through every syllabus, each assignment, and every interaction can help assure that a commuter population connects with the College as a whole. Participating faculty will identify, recruit, and train students who have successfully completed first-year courses to serve as mentors in subsequent semesters, thus modeling the desired behaviors of successful college students. In addition to increased student academic success and retention, this project will result in increased faculty awareness of the importance of student-centered learning, personal teaching styles, and students' learning styles, as well as increased confidence on the part of the mentors.

[3] *Strategic Plan 2004-2009*, Southern Maine Community College, p. 10.

Simply marketing learning support services and financial aid resources is a first step toward addressing student needs. Students may need help in these areas, but many are reluctant to ask for help. Connecting students to the services that provide help, by the suggestion of a familiar faculty member, is also an effective tool. A more intrusive step is the actual inclusion of services as an extension of classroom participation. Embedding these concepts in developmental classes is essential, especially because data suggests that students in these classes appear to be more engaged in their community than their academically-prepared peers.[4] The project will reach out at the same time to a broad range of students through entry-level general education classes. Creating a culture of student engagement is fundamental to helping students connect both intellectually and emotionally to their experience at the College.

Detailed Plan for Implementation and Project Timeline

Student retention and classroom engagement, using campus data illustrating grade distributions, academic actions, and degree completion rates, will be the focus of a project Task Force beginning in September 2005. The composition of the Task Force includes five faculty members, the Project Director (who is the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence), the Curriculum Designer, and the Director of Student Development and Engagement. The Task Force will select first-semester courses from one general education discipline to redesign and pilot in spring 2006. These courses will be infused with student engagement strategies such as collaborative learning, classroom assessment techniques, classroom action research, and service learning. They will be created with ample opportunity for assessment and student feedback. For example, faculty may decide to use the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) which is a measure of skills that factor into college success. The ten scales are: Anxiety, Attitude, Concentration, Information Processing, Motivation, Selecting Main Ideas, Self Testing, Study Aids, Test Strategies, and Time Management—all potential barriers to success. The LASSI can be taken electronically as both a pre-test and post-test, giving some indication of student progress in mastering these vital skills.

During the spring 2006 semester, the Project Director will hold meetings periodically with faculty who are teaching these courses to discuss issues, share techniques, and collaborate on the development of an on-line orientation component. On-line orientation is intended to introduce new students to the culture and expectations of college and may also be used in courses to augment or reinforce academic success skills. By the end of the spring semester, participating faculty will nominate current students to serve as mentors and role models in general education classes the following semester. The Director of Student Development and Engagement will play a crucial role in providing leadership training for these student mentors.

Since one of the major objectives of this grant is to generate faculty awareness about current engagement research and best practices, Task Force members will lead a professional development day in January of 2006 to inform the campus community of their activities and share information on these topics. Through active learning and hands-on workshops, the program will model engagement strategies and coach faculty in their

[4] *Engagement by Design: 2004 Findings*, Community College Survey of Student Engagement, p. 8.

use. Faculty will assess their personal learning styles to better understand learner-centered teaching strategies.

To help prepare for full implementation and institutionalization of embedded transition strategies and engagement practices in all general education courses by the fall of 2006, more substantial professional development will be offered through a Summer Institute. With a focus on instructional design and learning/teaching modalities, this institute will provide the support, leadership, and instruction to realize this goal. This program will rely heavily on those who have just competed teaching the newly-designed courses. There is also the expectation that student feedback gathered during the spring 2006 pilot process will be incorporated into the program, and there is potential to involve the selected student mentors in some type of activity such as a panel discussion about their experiences.

The chart on the next page illustrates the project goal and objectives, the plan for implementation with a list of activities and timeline by activity, and evaluation measures related to each objective.

PROJECT GOAL, OBJECTIVES, PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION, TIMELINE, AND EVALUATION

Goal: To increase the success of entering students at Southern Maine Community College by embedding best practices for college transition and student engagement in first-semester courses.

Objective 1.1: Enhance student engagement by piloting redesigned first-semester courses in one general education discipline by spring 2006 and developing a supplementary on-line first-year orientation by summer 2006.			
Activities	**Timeline**	**Staff Responsible**	**Tangible Results**
Select Task Force members and hold first meeting	Sept. 2005	Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs and Project Director	Attendance at first meeting of Task Force
Select general education discipline and redesign syllabi of first-semester courses	Dec. 2005	Task Force	Course syllabi
Enroll students in redesigned courses and assess impact of curricular changes	Spring 2006	Selected faculty and Task Force	Enrollment data including student grades; Task Force Report
Select and train student mentors	Aug. 2006	Selected faculty and Project Director	Names of student mentors
Develop on-line orientation and make it available to first-year students	Aug. 2006	Task Force	Number of first-year students participating in on-line orientation
Evaluation: Compare retention, grades, and satisfaction of students in redesigned courses with the spring 2005 baseline, and use LASSI to measure academic skill progress of students in redesigned courses through pre- and post-testing.			
Objective 1.2: Increase faculty awareness of best orientation practices and redesigned courses by providing professional development by July 31, 2006.			
Activities	**Timeline**	**Staff Responsible**	**Tangible Results**
Hold initial professional development day for faculty	Jan. 2006	Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs and Task Force	Faculty attendance and participation
Hold weeklong Summer Institute for faculty	Jul. 2006	Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs and Task Force	Faculty attendance and participation
Evaluation: Measure degree of faculty awareness of best practices by comparing results of faculty surveys conducted before and after the Summer Institute.			

Objective 1.3: Increase student success by embedding best orientation practices in all first-semester general education courses by fall 2006.			
Activities	**Timeline**	**Staff Responsible**	**Tangible Results**
Redesign all first-semester general education courses	Spring 2006	Task Force	Course syllabi
Enroll students in redesigned courses and assess impact	Fall 2006	Selected faculty and Task Force	Enrollment data including student grades; Task Force Report
Evaluation: Compare retention, grades, and satisfaction of students in redesigned courses with the spring 2005 baseline and measure level of student engagement by conducting CCSSE.			

Outcomes and Deliverables that Demonstrate How the Project Will Advance the College's Work and Meet the Needs of the Community

As SMCC answers the community's need for accessible higher education by accommodating the burgeoning and academically unprepared student body, the College faces many new challenges. This project will address some of these challenges—for the good of the College and its students, and for the good of the larger community. Meeting the goal of access necessitates a shift in the college culture to one that recognizes SMCC's role as a community college, where students are likely to possess multiple barriers, both clear and unseen, to their success. This project intends to place student engagement, adjustment, and success at the foundation of all learning activities and relies heavily on an interactive process between student and teacher. Therefore, the focus is on both the teacher and the learner. Changes in faculty training and classroom curriculum will become institutionalized to fulfill SMCC's vision of a learning college.

The activities of this eighteen-month project will result in a full menu of first-semester courses that have been redesigned to enhance student success through explicit techniques and strategies. Course syllabi will reflect these changes, and first-year students will have a clear understanding of the difference between high school and college expectations as well as the tools necessary to be successful. They will be confident learners, capable of accessing campus services and resources when needed. Likewise, faculty will demonstrate an increased understanding of the college transition process and the importance of embedding strategies for success into their courses. Faculty will examine personal learning and teaching styles with an enhanced perspective on the interaction between the two. A very concrete outcome of the faculty training will be an on-line activity for all new faculty that demonstrates the importance of student engagement in the classroom. In addition, the orientation and transition activities embedded in first-semester courses will also be available in an on-line format to enhance student learning. Both of these tangible products will have the potential to serve as models for replication at other institutions of higher education.

SMCC is committed to providing its students with the skills, aptitudes, and attitudes to succeed right from the start. All students will benefit from these tools for lifelong learning embedded in first-semester courses. These transferable skills will serve students well when they transition to the workplace or further their education. Learning to learn, and most importantly, learning to succeed will benefit the individual and the larger community immeasurably. Indeed, the promise of the community college will be fulfilled by supporting increased student retention and helping students continue their paths in higher education.

APPENDIX C

FACULTY IDEAS FROM CONVOCATION

1. What specific steps can the SMCC community take to improve student success?
2. Especially, what should we incorporate in all first year general education courses that you may be doing now in your classes!

- For incoming (first semester) students, assign them a faculty advisor before the first day of classes. That advisor should be one of their instructors.
- Attendance policy emphasized to students
- Computerized feedback of grades during entire course. ? Math classes could teach students to calculate grades.
- Students library search on a topic and teach it in class
- Give term to students at the end of each class to research for next class
- Universal application of service learning
- Care about your students. Know them, engage them outside of the classroom by reading their body language and taking initiative
- Group work in classrooms – maintain the same groups
- Define assignments in very specific terms. This causes students to have to structure the response and "pushes" them beyond simple, non critical responses.
- Develop an interdisciplinary course – or one which has one course from one field and one course from another (example criminal justice and English comp) and deliberately build in shared assignments – first year
- Term project check-ins
  - Spend time in class having students give updates on how they are doing on their term projects
  - Spend class time addressing difficulties students encounter with projects
- Review sheet and class time to review for final exam
- Post exam review – connecting student's grades with study methods, time, etc.
- Model kind of teachers we want them to be – understand what its like to be a kid (early childhood)
- Classes in a circle
- Journal in clinical settings
- "Schema Theory" Students need to develop a "framework" or "schema" to tie to new knowledge. How to build this framework through reading, note taking etc. – student responsibility outside class and attendance.
- Group work –
- Icebreakers – getting to know each other and interact with each other – find out backgrounds, interests, majors
- Learning style survey – then use as groups for learning exercises
- Reading and study skills
- Reading system / active learning
- Unannounced quizzes
- After exam – divide into groups to redo exam = with points earned

- Test questions created from students from patient situation in clinical post-conference
- Question from class asked in next class – choose person to answer and give points
- Ask questions at onset of class RT class content/reading, then cover material
- Create a visual care plan
- Time line
- Family – connect to events
- There are different ways to define "success" – students bring different goals – focus. Need to have them explore success as broader "education"
- Show a picture of a patient (in my case a pedi) and give the diagnosis – seeing a face gives it a more personal touch – and helps the student relate (and remember)
- Internet search of definition given too students - bring back for discussion.
- Using lots of current events
- Tour learning center and other resources on campus
- Study skills incorporated in tour
- Fire science uses a writing guide
- Personalize – give more ownership
- Use small group, team concept
- Required courses on study – learning how – set expectations of incorporating study skills in courses
- Regular written summaries, quizzes, oral testing of reading assignments (Feedback!)
- Allow them to construct an exam for "Me" to take as a way for them to review and analyze material
- Kinder, gentler and more engagement into becoming an adult learner in the orientation process and first classes
- Encouragement that they can be successful if they manage their time and push a a little harder to become in control of their lives
- Please create classrooms with seminar seating
- Re-package the image of the learning center – remove the stigma – it is a service for all students
- Introduce topic with example
- Students do example
- Have students report back
- First homework assignment have students email their homework
- Department post pictures
- Points instead of percents – total points are 500 – students know how they are doing
- If tested into at least 2 developmental classes should be enrolled in (required) study skills course first semester. This does not seem to happen
- Getting students engaged in library resources – many students rely on "google" or chat rooms for sources of information. Students need to develop information skills so that they learn to use credible sources when doing research.
- Assign office visit for points during first 2 weeks
- Introductory survey
- Explicitly teach study skills for your discipline
- Group exercise "Why should nursing students write well?" posted on wall (on flip chart type paper)

- Give students post-its and ask them (5 minutes before end of class what 1 or 2 most important ideas of the lecture/class (assessment feedback for me)
- Ask students to write down and hand-in questions they didn't ask in class (but wanted to know) to be answered in next class section – anonymous process
- Help students form study groups
- Encourage "study-buddy" and commuting together
- Be cautious – some students do not do well in groups (i.e. study groups
- Ask students at end of semester what helped them – what to share with an incoming class
- Read in preparation as if reading a magazine – don't worry about highlighting/note taking right now
- Within department help students form links with students more advanced in program – quasi mentoring
- Emphasize deadlines!!!!
- Emphasize time commitment!!!
- Emphasize class time schedules!
- SMCC does not rubber stamp grades
- Commitment to life-long-learning
- Make assignments that teach/encourage study skills – assign flashcards – assign chapter reading notes
- Tips for success in this class as part of the syllabus
- Incorporate current events into the classroom
- Informally link information between classes – helps the "light to come through"
- Group work for both socialization and picking out the quiet student, loner etc.
- Learn names asap – shows you care
- Second week have students name all others in class
- Incorporate social events into class and as outside activity
- Establish study groups – hand pick groups – mix groups half way thru semester
- Learning objectives – develop written learning objectives and rubrics based on individual chapters or topics to be covered in class. Students need to understand specifics on what needs to learned and retained. Multiple objectives should be developed: reading, lab, lecture, assignments/projects
- More personal interaction and more accessibility to an advisor and nurture a successful beginning
- We need better communication with students about the importance of meeting with advisors
- We need to strengthen our advising system
- Take attendance – occasionally change make-up of peer editing groups
- At the end of every class ask several students what was the major point that they learned. What needs more clarification? Sometimes have another student respond to the points that need clarification.

APPENDIX D

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF TASK FORCE READINGS

Selected Bibliography – from the Jigsaw readings of the MetLife Grant Taskforce

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APPENDIX E

FIVE SUGGESTED CHANGES TO CLASSROOM PRACTICE

1- Get students to do the reading
a. Weekly/daily quizzes
b. Pop quizzes
c. Journals on the assigned reading
d. Minute paper at the start of class – "the most important themes from today's assignment are…"
e. Study questions to help guide the student's reading (use higher level questions or it just becomes a search of the readings for specific answers)

2- Identify Problems early
a. Campus wide or class wide survey of risk factors?
b. CATS – early and often
c. Weekly quizzes (at a minimum)
d. Once identified – then WHAT? Required study group (with a student mentor)?

3- Understand role of effort
a. Make the link between effort and results explicit with a quiz debrief
b. Share your struggles

4- Community connections
a. Study groups
b. Group tests
c. High performance teams
d. Cooperative learning
e. Collaborative learning
f. Make students contact the instructor by
    i. Email in order to receive something
    ii. Coming to their office for ?
g. Share your struggles

5- Encourage/model academic skills
a. Larry's quote – "It's … adult"
b. Share your struggles
c. Pick a student who is taking good notes and ask them to take their notes on an overhead sheet – show the results at the end of class and discuss
d. Show students your book, highlights, notes
e. Explain to students why you are asking them to do certain things

APPENDIX F

WORKSHEET PLANNING TOOL

The purpose of this worksheet is to help you organize how you can use the procedures being developed under the MetLife grant to further engage your students.

1- By the end of the fifth week of classes you will have to identify students that are at risk of failing, based on poor attendance, performance, or both. These students will get a letter from the Registrar and be told to contact their advisor.
a. What criteria will you use to identify these students?

b. What other actions will you take to intervene?

2- Many students do not do the assigned reading. How will you encourage students to do the reading in your class?

3- When students truly understand the role that effort plays in their education they become more persistent, accept greater challenges, and are generally more engaged. How will you teach/model to your students about the role of effort?

4- Connections to you, the teacher, and to their fellow students help to instill a sense of community and belonging. What types of activities will you use to encourage this in your classroom.

5- How will you encourage/model academic skills?

The following should be added to your syllabus

The average number of hours of study time required per hour of class time in this course.

Places to go for help:
* I (Instructor) have office hours to meet with you and assist you (list you hours)
* The Learning Assistance Center at Southern Maine Community College provides professional tutoring by faculty and teaching assistants with a personal approach to academic success through individual tutoring and other resources

Early Warning Statement
This course is part of an early academic warning system. Attendance will be taken and you will be assessed early in the course to determine how you are progressing. By week five of the semester, you will be notified by if you attendance and/or performance is below satisfactory level. You will be expected to meet with your advisor and instructor(s) to determine what type of support you need to succeed in this course. SMCC is committed to helping students make the transition to the demands of college. We offer a number of support services to help you reach your goal.

What else will you include on your syllabus in support of number 1 through 5 above?

MetLife Grant Faculty Worksheet.

APPENDIX G

JANUARY 12, 2007 SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Faculty Development Survey
January 12, 2007

Rate the following on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being no change and 5 being significant change to your teaching practice.

During the last 2 years how much has your teaching practice changed in the following areas

1. Identifying at risk students early in the semester _____
2. Getting students to do the reading _____
3. Getting students to understand the role of effort _____
4. Increase sense of community _____
5. Encourage/Model academic skills _____
6. Other changes (please specify)

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

What prompted you to make these changes?

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Question	Rationale
Tell me a story about you and SMCC.	The first two questions are in part to get the subject comfortable talking. This question also tells us about the culture of the institution and where they feel they fit in it. It helps answer the fourth research question about the influence of institutional context on the collaborative process.
Walk me through a typical day for you at SMCC	Their daily routine helps to show the network of formal and informal connections they have within the college. Kezar (2006) shows that existing networks are important to the context of collaboration.
If you were introducing someone new to SMCC what community customs would you tell them about?	This question's aim is to uncover more about community customs, as well as formal and informal networks at the college.
Can you tell me about someone you respect on campus and why you respect them? Are there people on campus you really trust? Why do you trust them?	Issues of trust and respect are aspects of social capital and speak to the quality of network connections that influence collaboration.
Without mentioning specific names, are there people on campus that you do not trust? Why do you not trust them?	"Arduous relationships" between participants have been shown to be a major barrier to collaboration (Szulanski, 1996).
Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or	This question is a general measure of Social Capital taken from the World Values Survey 1995-7 (in (Halpern, 2005).

that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?	
Are there any groups that you identify with or feel a part of?	This question's aim is to uncover more about formal and informal networks at the college.
Are there any groups you feel alienated from?	"Arduous relationships" between participants have been shown to be a major barrier to collaboration (Szulanski, 1996).
Did you participate in the MetLife grant? What did you do?	What was their role in the process? This helps with the first two research questions - definition and perception of process.
Has your teaching changed in the last 2 years? How so?	The following questions deal with the various goals of the task force. The aim of the questions is to uncover what changes the subject may have made and if they attribute those changes to the attempted collaboration (question 2). For task force members these questions also show how the process helped to shape the decisions of that group.
Why did you change/not change?	
What was the impact of these changes?	
What role did collaboration play?	
What do you think of today's students?	
Has your opinion changed of them in last 2 years?	
How do your feelings about today's students affect you and your job?	
If your opinion has changed, to what do you attribute these changes?	

What was the impact of these changes?	
How do you feel about the changes made or attempted under the grant?	
How difficult/easy did you perceive the changes to assimilate?	
How much input do you feel you had in creating the changes?	How do they perceive their part in the process of collaboration? (question 2)
What do you think about the makeup of the task force?	This question relates both to context and process. How were existing networks used (or excluded).
Do you think the MetLife grant was a successful collaboration? Why?	Perception of process and outcome.

APPENDIX I

E-MAIL TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Dear <name>,

I am writing today to ask you to participate in a research study I am doing concerning collaboration. A lot is known about small group collaboration but there is very little research on the type of collaboration that was attempted here at SMCC with the MetLife grant. I hope to interview people from across campus and from diverse roles and see how they were affected (or not affected) and how they feel about various aspects of the project.

I would like to conduct a series of 2 interviews with you and would schedule them at a time convenient to you. The purpose of the first interview will be to uncover the network of social relations and the community norms that support them as well as the role that you may have played in the implementation of the MetLife grant. The second interview deals with reflecting on the meaning that you make of the experience – how your teaching and attitudes may have changed over the last 2 years and to what you attribute those changes. Individual names will not be used in reporting of the data. I will make every attempt to keep your participation confidential and ask that you do the same.

I think you can add a unique perspective to my research and hope that you would be willing to participate. You are under no obligation to do so and even if you agree to participate you can stop at any time. I am attaching an informed consent form detailing the risks and benefits of participation.

I will be following up this message by calling you next week to answer any questions you may have, ask if you would participate, and schedule a time for the interviews if you agree. I hope you will consider participating, but if you do not want to participate feel free to e-mail me your decision.

Thank you,

APPENDIX J

INTRODUCTION TO FOCUS GROUP

Thank you for coming. The process we are talking about today started at the professional day in January of 2005 with a presentation on student engagement entitled 'What's the matter with kids today'. The MetLife Foundation awarded SMCC a grant that summer and part of that fall's convocation was devoted to the goals of the grant. The task force was assembled and met weekly for that fall semester. They, the task force, used various devices to involve the larger campus community: surveys, e-mails, community meetings etc. Pilot programs were then conducted in the spring 2006 semester and results and suggestions were announced to the community at the fall 2006 convocation and a series of workshops were conducted to aid implementation. The process officially ended in January of 2007. This focus group is to collect some more data on how you feel about the two-year process of the MetLife grant on student engagement and to help validate some of my findings from the interviews. It is my hope that hearing the opinions of the others in the room convey their experiences might aid your memory so you can talk about your experience

APPENDIX K

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Question	Rationale
Looking back on your experience with the MetLife grant and the process that it engendered, what stood out for you in relation to the goals, process, and outcomes? What would you say you got out of the experience?	The first three questions relate to the participants perception of the process.
There are obvious differences in what those on the task force experienced and what those outside of the task force experienced. How would you describe the process that you experienced?	In addition to perception of the process this question delves deeper into a theme that emerged from the interviews as to the different experiences within and outside of the task force.
Two major issues were (1) the creation of an intervention(s) that would hopefully affect student retention and then (2) an individual's decision of if, and how, they would implement that intervention in their classroom. How do you feel about your role in acting and deciding on these issues?	This question relates to the first research question and helps in determining if the process was collaborative.
What do you think facilitated or hindered processes of collaboration, cooperation, and decisions to adopt the suggestions of the task force? Possible follow-up prompts to this question could include reference to the jigsaw, stipends, professional days/convocation, task force composition, deadlines, choice of implementation strategies, and talking.	This question relates to the third research question on what facilitated or hindered the process and incorporates findings from the interviews about specific parts of the process and

distinctions arising about collaboration versus cooperation.

Institutional context has been shown to influence collaboration. An example of this is when people in senior positions (This is the term used by Kezar) show collaboration to be a priority. Another example is the inclusion of collaboration in the mission statement of the institution. These elements help create a context in which attempts at collaboration can be more successful. How do you think the institutional context of SMCC influenced the process of collaboration that was attempted here?

This question relates to the final research question which deals with institutional context.

When I asked in the interviews who was missing from the collaboration, some referred to staff: IT, Library, Enrollment services. What do you think they could have added to the process and what do you think would be the optimal group to focus on student engagement in the teaching and learning process?

The remaining questions ask the participants about the meaning and consequences that they perceive from initial findings of interview and document sources.

The interviews also showed that the day-to-day experiences of faculty are very tied to their department and more distant from the rest of the campus. What effect do you think that may have on how faculty experience collaboration?

The interviews showed very strong feelings about convocation and professional days. How do you feel these events may have impacted the processes of collaboration, cooperation, and decisions to adopt the suggestions of the task force?

What role do you feel your connections to other people on campus played in the processes of collaboration, cooperation, and your decision to adopt the suggestions of the task force and how did these processes affect those connections?

APPENDIX L

SELF-REFLECTIVE ESSAY

This self-reflective essay's purpose is to make transparent my position as a qualitative researcher and the assumptions that I bring to this study. By making my position as a qualitative researcher explicit from the outset, it is my hope that I can set my prejudices aside or, at the least, examine the findings in light of my pre-conceived ideas. Written prior to the start of the analysis, this essay complements the use of analytical memos throughout the process of coding and analysis.

Throughout this study I will struggle with separating my roles. For I am not only the researcher but am also a faculty member at the institution I am studying, was director of the grant which I am studying, and have been director of the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) at SMCC for the past five years. Due to these multiple identities I have possible conflicting motivations. As grant director and CTE director I wish to see this grant perceived as a success having spent two years working to make it so.

I have worked at SMCC for almost 13 years and have strong feelings about the direction of the institution, the administration, and the people I work with. As Director of the CTE I have gotten to know many of the faculty outside of my discipline, Culinary Arts, and have great respect for them. As with any large collection of people there are people that I find it difficult to work with and respect. I must endeavor to interpret and represent the opinions of the Participants and not be swayed by my personal opinion whether positive or negative.

I have a positive view of the concept of collaboration. I enjoy working in an institution that I perceive as trying to be collaborative. My choice of dissertation topic and my course of graduate work certainly is evidence of my inclination. Yet for this

study I need a healthy dose of skepticism. Collaboration is not an end in itself but merely a means to an end (Bruner, 1991).

Before starting this study I had assumed that the case studied here was collaborative and that the project was successful in many respects but that it did not have as deep an impact that I had hoped for. I believed that collaboration was the right way to address not only the issue of student engagement but many issues that face higher education institutions. I also believe there is no easy answer and that the problem of student engagement is something that higher education will struggle with forever. I see collaboration as a way to create bridges between groups and feel that many structural holes at SMCC could be bridged by collaboration. Questioning these assumptions has influenced my literature review and my research questions.

Inherent in my research orientation is an ontological belief that in the social sciences lived experience relative to time and place are of great importance and that what is required in order for us to truly perceive this reality is what Eisner (1998) calls "Educational Connoisseurship" – an appreciation coupled with "the ability to make fine-grained discriminations among complex and subtle qualities" (Eisner, 1998, pg. 63). Only then can we provide the "rich, thick description" (Merriam, 2002, pg. 29) that will enable others to perceive the phenomenon of the collaborative effort in a way that "illuminates, interprets, and appraises the qualities that have been experienced" (Eisner, 1998, pg. 86)

APPENDIX M

SOUTHERN MAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

Southern Maine Community College empowers students to respond to a changing world and enhances economic and cultural development in Southern Maine by providing a variety of educational opportunities and partnerships.

BELIEFS

Access:
Southern Maine Community College believes that access to higher education is a fundamental value of democracy.

Responsiveness:
Southern Maine Community College believes that the College must be responsive to the changing world and to the educational, social, and cultural needs of our diverse student population and the State of Maine.

Collaboration:
Southern Maine Community College believes that collaboration within the College and with the broader community is essential in order to achieve the College's mission and goals.

Personal Connections:
Southern Maine Community College believes that each individual deserves respect and encouragement and that the interaction among students, faculty and staff is an important part of the total educational experience.

VISION

Southern Maine Community College: the institution of choice for innovative and high-quality technical, transferable, cultural and community-based education.

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BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Paul J. Charpentier was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts on June 8, 1959. He was raised in Lawrence, Massachusetts and graduated from the Greater Lawrence Regional Vocational Technical High School with a degree in Culinary Arts in 1977. He then attended the Culinary Institute of America and graduated with an Associate's degree in Occupational Studies in 1979. After moving to Maine in 1985 to open a restaurant, he graduated summa cum laude from the University of Southern Maine in 1996 with a Bachelor of Science degree in applied technical education and a Master of Science degree in educational leadership in 2000. He is currently the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Southern Maine Community College. Paul is a candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Education, individualized in Post-Secondary Education and Learning from the University of Maine in August 2011.