Get Engaged: An investigation of rural community college faculty's experiences with work engagement

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Get Engaged: An investigation of rural community college faculty's experiences with work engagement

by

J. Kate Burrell

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Human Development & Family Studies

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2014
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and soon to be husband.

My parents John and Cathy, you taught me the value of hard work, dedication, and commitment. My siblings, Julie, Jodi, and John you have always inspired me to laugh, think, and compete. My nieces and nephews you remind me to be present, ask questions, and to enjoy the ride.

To Brad, thank you for your love and understanding. You add to my happiness and helped me realize dreams do come true.

I owe this accomplishment to all of you.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank my committee members, colleagues, friends, and family. This journey would not have been complete without your support and guidance.

I would like to express my gratitude to my committee members Dr. Susan Maude, Dr. Christine Cook, Dr. Dan Robinson, Dr. Mary Jane Brotherson, and Dr. Gayle Luze. I will always be grateful for your words of encouragement, meaningful feedback, and motivation for continued success. Thank you to my Major Professor Dr. Susan Maude, your patience and understanding provided excellent support for me to complete the study. I greatly appreciate the continued encouragement throughout the process as well as your constructive feedback to keep me moving forward. Dr. Mary Jane Brotherson and Dr. Christine Cook, thank you for your guidance in qualitative research. I have a great appreciation for each of you as educators and qualitative researchers.

I would like to thank my dedicated, inspiring, enthusiastic community college colleagues, without your help this would not have been possible. Thank you for your willingness to help and give suggestions in the midst of your busy schedules. I would also like to thank Curtis, a well deserving honors student, who many times acted like a graduate student in his second year of his undergraduate education.

I would like to thank my invaluable network of supportive friends whom without I could not have survived this process: Karah, Heather, Alyson, Brenda, Mindi, Denise, Greta, Nancy, and Rita. Rita, you will always be my coach. A special
thanks to Greta and Nancy for your willingness to read my work and discuss my research.

Finally, I want to thank my family and Brad, without your unconditional love and support this would not have been possible. Thank you for believing in me and encouraging me through.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand rural community college faculty members’ experiences with work engagement. As community college enrollments grow, it becomes increasingly important to have faculty who are engaged in their work. Recent research suggests engaged students require engaged faculty (Kezar, 2011). One of the most significant factors in student learning and graduation are the interactions and relationships students develop with faculty members (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2010). This study addressed how rural community college faculty members perceive, experience, and sustain work engagement, as well as why work engagement is important in rural community college faculty.

Two rural community colleges, one small and one mid-sized, were investigated. While these colleges differed in size, they shared similar characteristics in course offerings, programs, and extracurricular activities. Data collection consisted of one-on-one interviews of both full-time faculty members and faculty administrators; in addition, documents and websites were reviewed. There were a total of eight participants between the two colleges, six of which were faculty members. The faculty members were involved in a series of three interviews. Upon analysis, four shared themes emerged from the data. The themes included a) understanding the multidimensional role of rural community college faculty, b) recognizing work engagement is student-centered and rooted in passion for the field and for the community college system which matches the faculty members’
personal values, c) fulfilling requests for constructive feedback from students and administrators and offering opportunities for professional development, and d) identifying the importance of work engagement as a shared experience that enhances the faculty members’ and students’ experiences. The findings indicate the need to promote professional development and opportunities to network amongst the faculty within the institution and with colleagues in the same disciplines at other colleges. In addition, the research suggests there is a cost to work engagement (or lack of engagement) that both faculty and administrators need to recognize.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Background

Community colleges have recently experienced tremendous growth in enrollment, and now serve 44% of America’s undergraduates (American Association of Community Colleges [AACC], 2008). Walter Bumphus, president and CEO of the AACC, recently noted during the current economic downturn community colleges have been asked to serve more students with significantly less resources (AACC, 2011).

With growing enrollments and reduced funds, full-time faculty have larger class sizes and added responsibilities outside of the classroom. It is important to understand how these added demands and reduction of resources have impacted faculty members. Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) note that professional burnout often occurs when there is a workload mismatch. Potentially, the added responsibilities coupled with high enrollments can place community college faculty at risk to experience symptoms of burnout. Until recently, little attention has been given to higher education faculty and their experiences with burnout, as well as it’s opposite, work engagement. Especially noteworthy is the paucity of literature and studies about rural community college faculty.

The issue of burnout in faculty is especially critical in terms of community colleges located outside of urban areas. The Chronicle of Higher Education states that rural community colleges have experienced the most growth of all community colleges in the United States (Nelson, 2012). This growth is in spite of the fact that, rural community colleges traditionally have fewer resources, less space, and limited
access to community partnerships (Nelson, 2007). In particular, faculty members face several challenges at rural community colleges including a heavy workload, the likely sense of isolation due to living in a rural community, and students who are socially and economically diverse that may be underprepared for college-level work (Murray, 2007). The strain experienced by rural community college faculty can lead to difficulties creating a balance across work and life. According to the American Psychological Association (APA) about 35% of individuals who are in the workforce, say their job interferes with their family and personal time (2007).

Job burnout is one of the leading occupational hazards for current professionals in the United States and continues to grow (Leiter & Maslach, 2005). Thompson, Brough, and Schmidt note people who experience burnout often perceive their work as underappreciated and have lower levels of job satisfaction leading to increased health and psychological difficulties (2006). The challenges faced by faculty have the potential to negatively impact instructional quality and retention of quality instructors.

Statement of the Problem

Educators, health professionals, and human services workers have occupations that are directly related to the well-being of others. Burnout has been studied since the 1970’s in social services, medical fields, and since the early 1980’s the K-12 education field, especially focusing on teachers. Professional burnout is an individual experience that is specific to job, characteristics, and organizational characteristics (Maslach et al, 2001). Burnout is defined as a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job, and is characterized by
dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Burnout researchers have proposed the conceptual opposite of burnout as work engagement, noting the contrast to exhaustion as vigor and cynicism is dedication (Gonzalez-Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Lloret, 2006). Occupations of particular concern are those facing emotional challenges when working intensively with other people in caregiving and teaching roles.

Education, in particular, is a helping profession characterized by high levels of burnout. Abundant available research links situational factors to burnout in the K-12 educational systems but has not fully been explored with the higher education systems specifically in rural community colleges. Historically, post-secondary education has been ignored from the research on burnout but has recently gained more attention. The occupation was once thought to be a less stressful job compared to other social services, but more current understanding of research suggests college professors are vulnerable to burnout as well (Lackritz, 2004; Watts & Robertson, 2011).

Two important categories are currently being investigated related to burnout experienced by higher education faculty. The first category classifies the common elements of burnout in educators; the growing gap between the student ability and grade expectations, institutional bureaucracy, a feeling of underappreciation, and a lack of support (Crosmer, 2010; Hutton & Jobe, 1985). The second category seeks to explain the elements of work engagement among higher education faculty. According to Leiter and Maslach (2004), engagement is defined in terms of the same three dimensions as burnout, but on the positive end of the spectrum including a)
high energy, b) strong involvement, and c) sense of efficacy. Work engagement has positive outcomes on two intertwining levels: individual and organizational. Individual work engagement promotes personal growth and the organization benefits through the performance quality of the employee (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010).

Articles in The Chronicle of Higher Education and ERIC Digest note that the sources of stress in higher education have remained unchanged for over 25 years. The stress factors most frequently cited include lack of faculty participation in decision-making, the increase in “under-prepared students” coupled with students’ own expectations for high grades, unclear institutional expectations, and very low salaries (Claglett, 1980; Crosmer, 2010). The gradual process of the stressors can be detrimental to both professional and personal functioning (Watts & Robertson, 2010).

The responsiveness of community colleges to community workforce needs typically results in steadily increasing enrollments (Kasper, 2002). During the recent economic downturn, community colleges have experienced enrollment increases; however institutions have suffered continued losses of state and federal funding with nearly 86% of state directors of community colleges report facing budget challenges (NCSDCC, 2010). When budgets decrease, role responsibilities increase for employees.

Rural community college faculty members also face challenges of social engagement with colleagues in their fields. The isolated culture of teaching can cultivate feelings of frustration and limit opportunities for reflection (Chang, 2009).
Teachers spend the majority of the day interacting with students and have limited time with colleagues or administration. Due to the relatively secluded culture of the classroom, teachers can become frustrated and emotionally depleted (Fullan, 2001).

Rural community college faculty members often work alone in their departments because of limited budgets, large teaching loads, and limited access to mentors (Murray, 2007). Rural community college faculty are typically separated from additional resources and their particular colleagues in the field. With high rates of burnout documented in the K-12 systems and similar conditions in higher education, more research is needed to explore what factors contribute to burnout in rural community college faculty and to help administrators recruit, retain, and train quality faculty members.

Recent research on burnout has provided a new framework. The field of positive psychology has contributed to the transition from burnout to emphasis on work engagement. Schaufeli, Salanova, and Gon (2002) define work engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind characterized by 1) vigor; 2) dedication; and 3) absorption. A positive sense of the work community including attributes of comfort, shared praise, happiness, and humor can reduce burnout among employees. Mutual respect and fairness can impact burnout positively as well (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Work engagement is a relatively new construct, with few links associated to the research in positive psychology and the effects on community college faculty members. According to the State of the American Workforce report (2013), 30% of employees in the workforce feel actively engaged. Studies have recently begun to investigate community college faculty but
more research is needed to explore the positive personal characteristics and organizational qualities associated with work engagement.

As community college enrollments increase, it becomes critical to have faculty who are engaged in their work. Recent articles suggest engaged students require engaged faculty (Kezar, 2011). One of the most significant factors in student learning and graduation are the interactions and relationships students develop with their faculty members (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2010). According to the American Association of Community Colleges [AACC] (2012), community college faculty has more student contact hours than any other educational sector; 67 percent of community college faculty teaches from 75 to more than 150 students. Community college faculty is educating a growing proportion of our nation’s undergraduates and the need to increase work engagement in full-time faculty is a significant need.

The current literature related to community college faculty job satisfaction and what factors contribute to burnout is limited. Particularly in a rural setting, there is a lack of detailed case studies addressing faculty experiences with work engagement or burnout. With the recent increases in community college enrollment, the strains of a rural setting, and the desires of the current college student population, a gap in the literature exists in terms of how a rural community college faculty member experiences burnout and work engagement.

Purpose

As more students enroll in rural community colleges (Murray, 2007) and more faculty is needed, it is important to understand workplace engagement among
college instructors. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand the experiences of rural community college instructors and how they perceive, experience, and sustain work engagement.

Research Questions

This dissertation study will address the following research questions:

1) How do rural community college faculty members perceive and experience work engagement?

2) What do faculty members in rural community colleges believe to be important to sustain work engagement?

3) Why is work engagement important to rural community college faculty?

Significance

At this time, very limited literature exists which examines the experience of work engagement in rural community college faculty. Cases of burnout in teachers have been well documented in education journals, but little attention has been given to community college faculty especially in a rural setting. Because community college enrollments have grown by over two million students in the past three years (Johnson, 2011), the need to study burnout and work engagement in those faculty members has been amplified. As enrollments increase and the diverse needs of students widen, retaining quality community college faculty becomes a concern. In 2000, Sanderson, Phua, and Herda found as many as 40% of current full-time faculty have seriously considered leaving the profession. Many community colleges have instituted faculty development programs to meet the changing needs of a more diverse student body, to keep up-to-date with technological advances, and to reduce
burnout (Stolzenburg, 2002). However, systematic program evaluations of faculty burnout and work engagement remain limited.

The qualitative case study approach used in this research will offer rich, thick descriptions of experiences of rural community college faculty (Merriam, 2009), I will supply a detailed account of faculty perceptions of job engagement in a rural community college and their perceptions on how to support rural community college faculty. Future community college administrators, human resources professionals, and faculty members will thus have a resource to gain an understanding of work engagement and how faculty deal with the issue. This study will also offer an important contribution to the existing literature on burnout in higher education in general and expand the more recent field of job engagement.

Definitions

Throughout this case study, the terms burnout, work engagement, and rural community college faculty will be utilized. The term burnout is a term associated with many meanings. For this study burnout will be defined by the three following traits a) emotional exhaustion, b) cynicism or negative approach towards others (depersonalization), and c) reduced personal accomplishment or a lack of professional efficacy (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Chang, 2009; Maslach & Jackson, 1981, 1993; Yu, 2005). According to Leiter and Maslach (2004), engagement is defined in terms of the same three dimensions as burnout, but on the positive end of the spectrum including a) high energy, b) strong involvement, c) sense of efficacy.

Cohen and Brawer (2008) define a community college as any institution regionally accredited to award associate of arts or associate of science as the
institutions highest degrees. In this study, a rural community college will refer to an institution of higher education (IHE) in an economically distressed region of 50,000 people or less (U.S Census Bureau, 2010). The Rural Community College Initiative (RCCI) describes the rural United States in terms of low total population, low educational attainment, and high rates of illiteracy, slow job growth, low per-capita income, and high poverty (Kennamer & Katsinas, 2011). The current study will examine full-time faculty working in rural community colleges in the Midwest United States.

Dissertation Overview

The dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction and overview of the research study. Chapter 2 examines the literature related to community college faculty, burnout, and work engagement. The professional literature examines the history of burnout and the role of burnout in education, specifically higher education. This section assists the reader in understanding the phenomenon of burnout and its antecedents. The literature describing work engagement relates directly to the positive experiences individuals feel related to the workplace. An overview is provided of work engagement frameworks which exist in literature, outlining current assessment models used to understand work engagement in multiple disciplines. The limited existing literature on rural community college faculty’s experience of burnout and work engagement reveals insight into the knowledge and understanding of the role requirements and frustrations. The literature on rural community college faculty also demonstrates the need for additional research in this area of higher education.
Chapter 3 describes the methodology of this dissertation. This chapter reviews the epistemology framing the study, the methodology utilized, the study methods, goodness and trustworthiness in qualitative research, and researcher positionality. In this chapter, I describe the two rural colleges studied and overview the participants at the respective colleges.

Chapter 4 overviews of the findings that evolved in the multi-site case study. The chapter describes the experiences of rural community college faculty members in regards to work engagement. The findings section is organized by four themes that emerged during the data analysis process. Chapter 5, the final chapter, provides a discussion of findings, my recommendations for practice and for future research.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature related to community college faculty experiences with work engagement and burnout. Within this literature review, the characteristics of community college faculty are identified, the roles, responsibilities, and competencies are outlined, and finally the challenges faced by rural community college faculty are described. The second section reviews burnout in education; describes the phenomenon and associated common characteristics; also included within this section is a description of the role of burnout in higher education faculty. The final section reviews the conceptual framework of work engagement, describes the construct, and notes the paucity of literature related to work engagement.

Community Colleges

According to the AACC (2012), nearly 1200 community colleges in the United States currently enroll nearly 44% of all undergraduates. A community college is defined as any institution regionally accredited to award associate of arts (AA) or associate of science (AS) as its highest degrees (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Vaughn, 2006). Community colleges are distinct from other institutions of higher education because of their commitment to community building, comprehensive program and course development, and inclusiveness for all culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse students (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Vaughn, 2006). According to the 2005 Carnegie Classifications of Colleges’, 57% of public two-year institutions are located in rural communities and these colleges employ 42% of full-time two-year faculty
(Cejda, 2010). According to the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (2004) two-year college faculty lead public institutions in instructional workload and have lower overall salaries than four-year public college faculty. In general, faculty workload is calculated by three measures: (1) the total number of hours faculty work each week to meet their job responsibilities, (2) the weekly number of hours spent in instructional activities, and (3) the weekly number of hours spent on scholarly activities (governance, planning, community service, and customer service) (Meyer, 1998).

Community college faculty

At their inception, community colleges relied on faculty members to serve as part-time administrators. More recently, the roles and responsibilities of community college instructor positions have focused on teaching and scholarship. The standard teaching hours for instructors in the community colleges are 15 credit hours per semester, according to the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges (2012). In addition to teaching course requirements, community college faculty, especially those employed by rural community colleges, are often expected to perform additional non-instructional duties, such as, lab supervision, tutoring, advising, and extensive committee work (Eddy, 2007; Glover, Simpson, & Waller, 2009).

The traditional community college faculty member shares similar characteristics across the United States. According to the National Center of Educational Statistics (2008) one-third of all community college faculty are full-
time. A community college faculty is typically comprised of both full-time and part-time faculty positions with little gender differences (NSOPF, 2004; Townsend & Rosser 2007). However, nearly 80% of instructors employed in two-year public colleges are white or Caucasian (NSOPF, 2004). The education level of the community college faculty is similar across the nation. According to the National Center of Educational Statistics (1999), 62% of community college faculty members hold a master’s degree, 18% have earned a doctoral degree, and the remaining 20% have a bachelor’s degree or less. Another issue facing the community college arena is the aging population of the employees. Even more critical is the fact that a large proportion of community college faculty is nearing the age of retirement. Retirement predictions for current community college faculty range between 10 to 40% of current faculty will retire within the next 10 years (Outcalt, 2002; Rifkin, 2000). Aging and retirement of full-time faculty from community colleges is a pressing concern; potential instructors need to be recruited to avoid a shortage of well-prepared, credentialed faculty to serve at these institutions in the very near future (Hardy & Laanan, 2006).

Roles, responsibilities, and competencies

Research has well established the centralized role of the community college faculty member as a “teacher” (Flannigan, Jones, & Moore, 2004; Gahn & Twombly, 2001 Gruber, 1999; Sprouse, Ebbers, & King, 2008). As Smith (2010) points out, “Community college faculty have emulated the professoriate’s teaching and service roles while deemphasizing the research tasks typically associated with the university professoriate” (p. 44). Community college faculty members teach more
credit hours than their counterparts in other higher education models (Townsend & Rosser, 2007) and prefer to have their job performance based on teaching effectiveness as the main criteria of assessment. They are most satisfied with the autonomy they have regarding their instructional duties (Hardy & Laanan, 2006). However, Townsend and Rosser (2009) suggest the faculty work week has been extended in the last 15 years because community college administrators have required additional expectations for faculty to conduct service and research. Workload has been noted as an issue related to job satisfaction (Hardy & Santos, 2006).

From 1980 into the 1990s, community college presidents and the AACC placed more emphasis on scholarly work and research by faculty. The emphasis on scholarly activities was linked to the belief if faculty did not conduct scholarship, their claims of being excellent teaching institutions would diminish (Boyer, 1990; Vaughan, 1991). Community college faculty indicate five barriers to involvement in basic and applied research activity: (a) lack of funding; (b) lack of support; (c) lack of time due to teaching load; (d) lack of professional development in research and limited experience; and (e) lack of value in the college and department for research (Hardré, 2012). Vaughan (1991) advocates that community college faculty should focus on scholarship activities rather than only research. According to Heath, “Scholarship stimulates a professor’s passion for a subject, which in turn stimulates students to engage the subject and develop their intellects” (1996, p.114).

Scholarship activities were measured in the NSOPF 1993 and 2004. Townsend and Rosser (2009) analyzed the results and found “faculty members in the 2004 study
had a significantly greater scholarly output of juried and nonjuried articles and presentations; book reviews, chapters, and creative works; presentations; and exhibitions and performances” (p. 679).

In 2010, the results from a survey of The National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges (NCSDCC) found enrollment increases predicted at community colleges in 35 states with no state reporting an enrollment decline. The continued increase in enrollments for the community college system can impact the job duties of the full-time faculty member (Hardy & Santos, 2006). Faculty workload has become significantly more demanding since 1993 with higher number of credit courses taught per semester/quarter; faculty members have also generated significantly more scholarly output (Townsend & Rosser, 2009).

Faculty in community colleges face unique challenges “The most important challenge for community college instructors is to develop the ability to adjust styles of teaching to the diverse learning styles of students” (Vaughn, 2006, p. 7). College student expectations of the classroom experience have changed from previous years. The “Sage on Stage” approach is considered outdated. Students now want a professor who is a “cross between a stand-up comic, a serious scholar, and a readily accessible and caring mentor” and a classroom that is “replete with rigorous up-to-date and relevant content for some, fun and entertaining for others” (Strage, 2008, p. 5). Bain (2004) recognizes excellent college teachers as people who “achieve remarkable success in helping students learn in ways that make a sustained, substantial, and positive influence on how students think, feel, and act” (p. 5). However, it’s reported that faculty get little support and little time to improve how
they teach (Berrett, 2012). College teaching, especially at the community college level, includes a personal investment as well. The more community college students feel they are being cared for by their faculty, the more likely they will return to that institution (Boyer, 1995; Nakajima, Dembo, & Mossler, 2012).

Community college student

The community college classroom encounters distinctive challenges, in part, because of the diverse groups of students who attend community colleges. The roles and responsibilities of the student have shifted; just as those have for faculty. Most community college students navigate multiple roles beyond being a student. For example, nearly 41% of students work full-time, nearly one-third of all students have families, and one-fourth are single parents (Horn & Nevill 2006). Based on the data from the 2003–2004 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, the age of the attendee varies based on programs; 47% are traditional students and make up 67% of the transfer student population while the remaining students are age 24 or older. In terms of gender and ethnicity, nearly two-thirds of students are white and 58% are female. Finally, one-fourth of community college students fall into the lowest socioeconomic group.

In addition to the challenges community college faculty face with the diversified roles, ages, and socioeconomic status of their students, the varying academic abilities of their learners can provide additional obstacles. According to Daiek, Dixon, and Talbert (2012) “An overwhelming proportion of students entering community colleges are underprepared to meet the rigors required of college-level course work” (p. 37). Researchers recognize this lack of preparedness is
multifaceted; students struggle with note-taking, remedial mathematical skills, poor reading comprehension, and difficulty with higher level analysis (Michael, Dickson, Ryan, & Koefer 2010). Low academic achievement negatively impacts student persistence. Students with higher cumulative grade point averages are twice as likely to return and graduate from the community college (Nakajima, Dembo, & Mossler, 2012).

Challenges for rural community college faculty

The demands placed on college professors by students and administrators in rural community college systems continue to expand. Often rural institutions only have one individual responsible for teaching in a respective field; therefore, that faculty member may bear the sole responsibility for the entire curriculum (Murray, 2007; Vander-Staay, 2005). There are a number of rural institutions that are isolated and resource poor. Personnel at rural community colleges are not always given the opportunity to connect with colleagues at other rural community colleges (McJunkin, 2005) even though the issues the staff experience are similar (Kennamer & Katsinas, 2011). Murray and Cunningham (2004) observe that rural community college faculty members who think about leaving the profession report being overwhelmed by workload and diverse student abilities as reasons. As more students enroll in community colleges and faculty work to train and retrain diverse Americans for the workforce (AACC, 2008), it is important that administrators recognize the negative impact of burnout on work engagement and professional satisfaction of rural community college faculty.
Burnout

The stresses of the workplace in general have long been recognized. Over the past three decades researchers have defined, measured, and outlined the antecedents of burnout. The accounts of burnout have increased and diversified; the term is often used as a metaphor for mental weariness (Bryan 1998; Schaufeli, Taris, & Rhenen, 2008), especially in reference to employees in the social sciences, education, business, and medical fields (Bolano, Marino, & Lopez, 2008; Conrad & Kellar-Guenther, 2006; Figley, 2006; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Schaufeli, Maassen, Bakker, & Sixma, 2011). Freudenberger (1974) offers one of the earliest descriptions of burnout; he identified burnout as the state of complete depletion experienced by people in the service and helping professions who work in an intense environment, with long hours and a disproportionate workload. The term “burnout” reflects a complex psychological syndrome embedded in an interpersonal context that impacts an individual’s self-concept and perception of others (Lambie, 2006).

Education in particular, is characterized by high levels of burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter 2001). All jobs involving intense interaction with others and sustained emotional involvement, as is experienced in the teaching field, have the potential impact upon employees’ level of burnout (Figley, 1995). Yu (2005) claims:

Teaching is generally recognized as an intense, highly pressured profession in which burnout is common, exhibiting the following three basic traits: (a) emotional depletion, whereby teachers have a very depressed morale and emotions and complete lack of enthusiasm for their work; (b) dehumanization, whereby teachers adopt a negative, insensitive attitude toward those they are
teaching; and (c) a low sense of individual achievement, whereby teachers set a low value on their work and its significance (p. 55).

Definition of burnout

Burnout is commonly defined as a three dimensional construct that includes (1) exhaustion, (2) cynicism, and (3) lack of professional efficacy (Maslach, 1993; Schaufeli, Taris, & Rhenen, 2008). According to Maslach et al. (2001), exhaustion is the most reported and analyzed aspect of burnout as well as the most obvious identifiable characteristic. In education, emotional exhaustion is often related to the demands of teacher-student relationships (Davis, 2001; Hargreaves, 2005). Teaching offers opportunities to develop closeness and intimacy with colleagues and students, however teaching also provides occasions to feel worried, frustrated, and disappointed (Chang, 2009). In addition, teachers report feeling drained by the challenges faced with policy and “inefficient bureaucracy” (Bryne, 1998, p. 4).

The second dimension of burnout is cynicism or also referred to as depersonalization. Cynicism is an attempt to put emotional distance between oneself and the service recipients while actively overlooking the unique qualities that make people engaging (Maslach et. al., 2001). For instance, a teacher who lacks concern for his or her students’ emotional well-being or incorporates a “blame the victim” approach can exhibit this dimension (Lambie, 2006). Cognitive distancing is an immediate reaction to exhaustion and has consistent links in burnout literature across a wide range of occupational settings (Maslach et al., 2001). Kahn and colleagues (2006) suggests teacher cynicism increases when negative social support is prominent, yet depersonalization decreases when positive emotional support is
valued by institutions. Typically, women report higher scores on the emotional exhaustion facet of burnout whereas cynicism is higher in men (Grayson & Alvarez 2008; Maslach & Jackson 1993; Purvanova & Muros 2010).

The final dimension of burnout, professional efficacy, appears in parallel with the cynicism and levels of exhaustion (Lieter, 1993, Maslach et al., 2001). As Maslach et al., (2001) note, “The lack of efficacy seems to arise more clearly from a lack of resources, whereas exhaustion and cynicism emerge from the presence of work overload and social conflict” (p. 403). Low congruence between a person and his or her occupation creates a higher likelihood of burnout.

Teacher efficacy can be defined as “the teacher’s belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context” (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, p. 233). The impacts of efficacy have long been studied; Bandura found efficacy beliefs predict effort, persistence, and level of success (1977, 1986, 1997). A teacher’s sense of efficacy affects teacher behaviors such as effort, persistence, and commitment as well as being less critical of student mistakes and more willing to take risks (Hanson, 2002; Knoblauch & Woolfolk Hoy, 2008). In addition, collective efficacy can impact teacher burnout and vary among schools. Collective teacher efficacy is recognized as “the school faculty’s shared perceptions that they can work together productively and effectively to promote student learning” (Bandura, 1997, p 168). Burnout among colleagues can be a consequence of teachers frequently communicating to each other about work related problems (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2000).
History of burnout

Employees have struggled to balance the demands of work and personal life for generations. The construct of burnout began to gain scholarly attention in the 1970’s (Maslach, et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2011; Watts & Robertson, 2011; Yu, 2005). The initial studies suggest burnout was a syndrome caused by prolonged stress in the work environment (Blasé, 1982). Pioneer research on burnout was typically descriptive in nature and directed at employees within health care and human services. The early articles provide direct accounts of emotional depletion and loss of motivation and commitment in human services employees (Maslach, et al., 2001).

In 1975, the number of articles published in the field was 5 and by 1980 it was nearly 200 articles a year; by the end of the decade 300 articles a year were published on burnout. The mid 1980’s is referred to as the empirical stage and is credited to the pioneering researcher Christina Maslach (Schaufeli & Bunk, 2003). In 1981, Maslach and Jackson developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) which led to more systematic empirical research. By 1998, nearly 90% of studies on burnout used the MBI (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998, Schaufeli & Bunk, 2003). Maslach, not only authored the most widely used research measure on burnout, but also has co-authored an organizational intervention program to deal with job burnout (Schaufeli & Bunk, 2003). Initially the MBI was created for individuals from human services fields but in the 1990s research extended into other fields including education, business, and military (Chang 2009; Maslach, et al., 2001). Presently, the MBI is supplemented with the Area of Worklife Scale (AWS) to measure work
engagement, the antithesis of burnout, thus creating an instrument that can be used to measure the well-being of a full spectrum of employees (Maslach, et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Bunk, 2003).

Current research extends the concept to all occupations, uses complex methodology, and employs longitudinal research to see the impacts of burnout over time. For example, Schaufeli and colleagues (2011) completed a 10 year study on primary care physicians’ experience of burnout using the MBI and a patient demands scale finding physician burnout is a relatively chronic condition for doctors. In education, Brouwers and Tomic (2000) found in their longitudinal investigation of burnout in secondary teachers that experiences associated with burnout have negative impacts on teachers. The adverse effects impact classroom management, lowers self-efficacy of the instructor, and challenges teachers’ belief that they can inspire their students.

Framework of burnout

According to Maslach & Leiter (2008), chronic mismatches between the employee and six domains of the job environment may lead to burnout. The present study used the following six domains from the AWS as the framework for data collection, as indicated:
Table 1

_Areas of Worklife Framework_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>Workload mismatch is experienced when too many demands exhaust an individual’s energy or resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Employees have insufficient control over the resources needed to successfully complete work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>Reward mismatch involves limitations in appropriate financial, social, and intrinsic rewards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>People are social beings and thrive in communities when individuals use humor, comfort, praise, and respect. Often individuals are isolated from others or make social contact impersonal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Fairness communicates mutual respect; when unfairness occurs in matters such as pay or promotions it can generate cynicism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>A mismatch in values can create conflict between individual values and organizational values.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The context for the described mismatches includes the interactions between variables as well as the interactions between people in the context of the workplace.
Such mismatches provide a “conceptual framework for the crisis that disrupts the relationships people develop with their work” (p. 416).

The Work Life framework helps to identify mismatches in individual’s experiences and organizations that lead to burnout. Although burnout is a gradual process and occupational stress is prevalent among many sectors, higher education is of particular importance due to the likelihood of the detrimental impacts on student attainment (Watts & Robertson, 2011).

Characteristics of burnout

In 2007, a study from the APA found that over one-third of Americans cite jobs which interfere with family or personal time as a significant source of stress. Burnout is associated with adverse effects related to physical (e.g. immune system functions) and mental health (e.g., anxiety and depression) (Grossi et al, 2003). Employees most prone to burnout include those who are young, single, and highly educated (Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzales-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). Typically, professional burnout includes both situational and dispositional factors that influence an employee’s emotional well-being.

Situational

Job, occupational, and organizational characteristics are most often cited as the situational factors that contribute to burnout. The job characteristics identified with the phenomenon are poor resources, lack of social support, and limited job control (Schaufeli et al., 2007). Job demands and the lack of resources necessary to achieve those demands, have strong links to negative employee experiences (Maslach, et al., 2001). It has been found that employees tend to be more sensitive
to resource loss than resource gain which challenges job engagement (Hanaken et al., 2006).

Job characteristics consistently correlated to emotional exhaustion include role conflict and role ambiguity (Maslach et al., 2001; Sonnentag, 2003). Role conflict is influenced by the contradictory demands of the job. For instance, Chang (2009) references the obstacles educators face as they attempt to fulfill job responsibilities: large class sizes, long work hours, lack of instructional support, limited resources, and time pressures. Other significant pressures for educators include potential conflict with students and the prospect of negative student evaluations (Doyle & Hind, 1998; Pretorius, 1994).

Finally, social support from colleagues and administrators has gained notable attention in relationship to employee burnout. McClenahan, Giles, and Mallet (2007) investigated the impact of support from work peers and the influences of these relationships on employee burnout. Positive social support can create positive influences whereas negative interactions can influence burnout. In education, the frequency with which teachers are exposed to colleagues with student- and work-related problems impacts levels of burnout (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2000). However, teachers who have mentors and supportive supervisors are more likely to become effective teachers (Howes, James, Ritchie, & Howes, 2003).

Another situational characteristic of burnout is occupational, especially in terms of those individuals in jobs that require intensive work with others. The emotional stressors predominately challenge individuals in jobs who have a teaching or caregiving role (Maslach 2003). The final situational factor relates to
the organization. Maslach et al., (2001) identifies two characteristics cited with burnout as the organization’s values and social, cultural, and economic forces. The authors’ overview reveals that the values of an organization influence the cognitive and emotional relationships employees develop with their work.

Dispositional

Numerous personality characteristics have been studied in an attempt to link traits to burnout as well as to identify at-risk populations. In general the findings indicate individuals with poor self-esteem and passive coping strategies experience more symptoms of burnout. It is hypothesized that employees with idealistic or unrealistic expectations of their work are at higher risk for burnout. Burnout and stress are higher among individuals with an external locus of control (Maslach 2003; Roddenberry & Renk, 2010).

Particularly in education, an individual teacher’s susceptibility to emotional contagion can increase the likelihood of burnout (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2000). Teachers who identify themselves with others who are doing worse and contrast themselves with teachers who are doing better are more vulnerable to the experience (Carmona et al. 2006). Resilient teachers have strong connections with others, manage time well, and adapt to change with creativity (Howard & Johnson, 2004).

Scholars continue to call for research on interventions to alleviate burnout and create work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2003; Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008; Van Horn, Schaufeli, & Enzmann, 1999). The critical problems facing K-12 teachers are well documented
in the literature. Accordingly, opportunities exist for further empirical investigation to generate a clearer understanding of burnout within teaching staff working in higher education (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Watts & Robertson, 2011).

**Burnout in higher education**

Studies of burnout on higher education faculty are more limited (Lackritz, 2004; Watts & Robertson, 2011) and even more so on community college faculty (Dee, 2004). The daily stressors experienced by community college faculty, if they remain unchanged, can lead to higher rates of burnout. Linville, Antony, and Hayden (2011) suggest balancing adequate classroom and office space against reasonable workload expectations to improve the quality of job satisfaction in community college faculty. According to Maslach et al. (2001), burnout is correlated to work overload. Bakker and Demerouti (2006) suggest that workers who are experiencing burnout may create additional job demands and fewer resources, thus making the problem more complex.

A lack of appropriate rewards for work, which may include a low salary, a lack of intrinsic rewards, and/or a lack of recognition, can devalue work (Maslach et al., 2001). Often, teachers have high work demands and limited opportunities for social, emotional, and professional support. Teacher burnout is highest among institutions with ill-prepared students, student apathy, and students with low social engagement (Friedman, 1995; Schaufeli & Butunk, 2003).

According to the AACC, the community colleges are facing high numbers of faculty retirement (2012). Hardy and Laanan (2003) found in a sample of nearly
100,000 faculty members that over 40% were planning to retire in the next ten years. The retirement of faculty leads to two potential issues 1) recruitment and retention of new faculty, and 2) mentoring of new faculty (Murray 2005). The retirement boom will likely increase the need for new faculty to enter the field, emphasizing the need for recruitment, retention, and training of new faculty. The second potential issue arises in professional development. Mentoring young faculty will be limited due to the amount of retirees, thus making professional development opportunities more challenging. Often young adults are more vulnerable to burnout (Ghorparde, Lackritz, & Singh, 2007). Linville and colleagues (2011) identify specific factors influencing job satisfaction as a crucial element to improving the work of community college faculty because job satisfaction is an indicator of job retention. Lackritz (2004) suggests that student satisfaction is related to a teacher's experience with burnout, thus possibly impacting the educational attainment of the student. A review completed by Watts and Roberston (2010) reveals that burnout in university teaching staff is comparable with other education and medical fields. Little research has been focused at the community college level. The lack of research creates a concern of burnout experiences among faculty and the possible detrimental effects on student experience (Gillespie et al., 2001; Murray 2005). In addition, there is a concern for potential negative effects on the institution as a whole (Gillespie et al 2001).

Burnout studies have led to new constructs, most namely work engagement and compassion fatigue. Work engagement has roots in positive psychology a field discovered by Martin Seligman (2000). Prevention researchers have found human
strengths that buffer mental illness: courage, future mindedness, hope, interpersonal skills, work ethic, and honesty (Selgiman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The field of work engagement investigates these qualities in the work place. A branch of research evolving from burnout is compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue is described as the outcome of being in prolonged contact with someone experiencing trauma in the workplace or home (Figley, 2002). Compassion fatigue, as opposed to burnout has a sudden onset due to working with populations who have experienced a stressful event (Figley, 2002). Conrad and Kellar-Guenther (2006) suggest that high rates of compassion fatigue do not relate to high rates of burnout. Due to the more pervasive nature of work engagement and burnout the current study will focus on these two constructs.

Work Engagement

According to the American Psychological Association (2007), nearly three-quarters of Americans mention work and money as leading causes of stress. In turn, job satisfaction among workers in the United States continues to decline. According to the State of the American Workforce Report (2013), nearly 70% of individuals report not feeling engaged in their work, 20% report actively feeling disengaged. In the field of education, teachers demonstrate higher levels of job dissatisfaction and more difficulties with job transition than in other occupations which indicates a need for additional literature on studies and strategies to support job engagement.

Definition of work engagement

Companies and educational institutions expect employees to be proactive, recognize and accept personal responsibility for professional development, and
remain committed to high-quality performance and the larger concerns of the organization (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). However, a paucity of literature exists in the field of work engagement in education, particularly beyond defining the construct or its measures. Many scholars, organizations, and consulting firms rely on multiple definitions of work/job engagement. A commonality among the definitions is that one’s engagement in work is positive for the organization and indicates commitment, passion, enthusiasm, and energy, thus encompassing both attitudinal and behavioral components (Macey & Schneider, 2008). A more recent definition of work engagement has been outlined by Gonzalez-Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker, and Lloret (2006) as

a multidimensional construct defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption. Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one’s work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. Dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. Absorption is characterized by fully concentrating on and being deeply engrossed in one’s work, where time passes quickly and one has difficulty detaching one’s self from work (p. 166). The definition reflects the dimensions involved in the AWS described earlier and the Job-Demands-Resources Model (JD-R). Leiter & Maslach (2004) define engagement as a state of high energy, strong involvement rather than cynicism, and a sense of efficacy.
In general, work engagement is viewed as a constructive experience for both the individual and the organization and is characterized by a high level of energy and strong identification with one’s work (Schaufeli et al., 2008). Engaged employees demonstrate a commitment to success, believe work is fun and apply effort to work because of a genuine enjoyment found in their work endeavors (Schaufeli, et al., 2008). Macey and Schneider (2008) describe engaged employees as having high levels of energy, enthusiasm and job immersion which influences the perception that time spent in work-related tasks passes quickly.

History of work engagement

After 35 years of studying the effects of burnout on employee performance and job satisfaction research on work engagement has emerged (Kahn, 1990; Maslach, et al., 2001; Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008). Early studies focused on job satisfaction. The widely-accepted definition as developed by Edwin Locke’s (1976) is "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences" (p. 1300). Locke’s paradigm emphasizes the emotions one associates with his or her job, whereas studies since 1990 of work engagement apply a more global approach to the perception of one’s work. In 1990, Kahn conceptualized work engagement as “harnessing of organizational members selves to their work roles; in engagement people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances” (p. 694). Current research notes the terms “job satisfaction” and “work engagement” are different constructs but suggest that there is substantial overlap between satisfaction, commitment, and engagement (Leiter & Maslach, 2004; Welfald &
Downey, 2009) and the terms are often used interchangeably (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Currently most scholars assess work engagement through quantitative analysis, applying the AWS or the job demands–resources model (JD-R) (Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011; Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001a). The JD-R model is an open, investigative model that does not include defined sets of particular demands, resources, mental states, and outcomes but provides a framework for work engagement. In comparison to the AWS, provides six specific criteria which influence burnout and work engagement.

Framework of work engagement

Areas of work life scale

Recently the AWS became the multidimensional model of burnout and engagement used by many American scholars. The model assesses six domains, fairness, values, community, reward, control, and workload as they work to promote employee engagement. The areas are described in the earlier section on burnout and remain the same in work engagement. The model suggests matches in the areas of work life result in employees with vigor, dedication, and absorption. Maslach and Leiter (1997) suggest when the work environment and the employees beliefs match a greater sense of work engagement will exist. A 2004 study conducted by Leiter and Maslach found stable relationship patterns among the AWS as related to engagement and burnout. Thus supporting the validity of the model. The scale incorporates burnout, work engagement, and provides a global assessment for all employees (Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011; Leiter & Maslach, 2004).
Work engagement is commonly accepted as the opposite of burnout (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Bakker, et al. 2008; Maslach & Leiter, 2008); however, recent studies have suggested the construct is not opposite. Crawford, LePine, and Rich (2010) found that relationships of job demand with burnout have not been mirrored by opposite relationships with engagement, based on employee perception of the demand as a challenge or hindrance. However, personal resources resulting in positive self-evaluations have been linked to resiliency of employees; these resources are also predictive of goal setting, motivation, and job and life satisfaction (Judge, Bono, Erez, & Locke, 2005).

Job demand-resource model (JD-R)

The Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) model is a comprehensive attempt at synchronously explaining the well-being and ill health of employees. The JD-R model has been applied to measure burnout in various occupational settings in a nearly exclusive manner, typically relying on some form of the previously mentioned Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996; Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, & Jackson, 1996). The Job Demand-Resource model was created by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli in 2001 to challenge the prevailing view; that burnout was only found in the human services, such as teaching, health care, and social work (Demerouti, et al., 2001a). Since the JD-R models' inception it has gained popularity among researchers and is currently recognized as one of the leading job stress models. The JD-R models’ high popularity can be attributed to its versatility. The model is now used throughout the world and in a variety of different fields including healthcare, industry, and transport (Demerouti, et al.,
nutrition production (Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003); dentistry (Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008); and is used extensively in the field of education (Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005; Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007; Lorente Prieto, Salanova Soria, Martínez Martínez, & Schaufeli, 2008).

The model relies on the assumption that every occupation has specific risk factors associated with job stress, and these factors can be classified in two general categories; 1) job demands, and 2) job resources (Demerouti et al., 2001a, Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The JD-R model is an open, investigative model rather than a model that includes well-defined sets of particular demands, resources, mental states, and outcomes as in the AWS. The JD-R integrates all occupations, by noting specific variables of risk associated with job stress, but that all risk variables can be classified in these two generalized categories of job demands and job resources. Demerouti et al (2001a) offers this definition of the terms of the model:

Job demands refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort or skills and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs. Job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are either/or a) functional in achieving work goals; b) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs c) stimulate personal growth, learning, and development (2001a, p. 312).
The fact that all types of resources, demands, and outcomes are involved is considered both strength and a weakness with the model. The models’ flexibility can be used in a variety of contexts, but this comes at the cost of limited generalizability (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

The JD-R model is a descriptive model that specifies relations between variables, as opposed to an explanatory model. The JD-R model does not provide any particular psychological explanation, except that by definition job demands may lead to exhaustion and health problems, and that job resources have motivational potential that can lead to work engagement and in turn, positive organizational outcomes. Job Demands are not necessarily negative, they may turn into job stressors when meeting said demands requires high effort that the employee has not adequately recovered from (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Examples are an unfavorable physical environment, a high work pressure, and emotionally demanding interactions with clients. Job resources are not only necessary to deal with job demands, but they also are important and valued in their own right because they are means to the achievement or protection of other valued resources. Job resources can be located at various points, such as the level of the organization as a whole (career opportunities, job security, salary), interpersonal and social relations (supervisor and colleague support), and at the level of task such as skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and performance feedback (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job resources have been positively linked in work engagement studies which in turn have predicted organizational commitment (Bakker et al., 2007, Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008).
The JD-R model recognizes two underlying psychological processes play roles in development of job strain and motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The first process is that job stress or burnout develops when certain job demands are high and when certain job resources are limited (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001a). This hypothesis has been confirmed by several organizations when previous studies have shown that poorly designed jobs or high job demands deplete employees’ mental and physical resources leading to a state of exhaustion, whereas the absence of job resources leads to cynicism, reduced performance, and undermines motivation (Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005; Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003; Demerouti, et al., 2001a).

The second process offered by the JD-R model is motivational in nature where it is assumed that job resources have motivational potential and lead to low cynicism, superior performance, and high work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The JD-R model proposes that in addition to the main effects of job demands and job resources, the interaction between the two categories is important in the development of job strain and motivation. Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou (2007) found job resources to be important in motivating teachers and are particularly relevant when teachers are confronted with high job demands. Moreover, it is proposed that job resources may buffer the impact of job strain, including burnout. One study focused specifically on the relationship between well-being and job demands, and found sharply defined evidence for the proposed interaction (Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).
Educational organizations can benefit from investing in resources at work (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007).

*Psychological conditions*

According to Kahn’s (1990) research and outlined in Table 2, three psychological conditions permeate moments of job engagement.

Table 2

*Psychological Conditions of Work Engagement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Meaningfulness is described as the significance of work goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningfulness</td>
<td>in relation to personal values and standards including work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>role fit, job enrichment, and co-worker relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Psychological safety is defined by Kahn (1990) as “feeling able</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>and willing to show oneself without fear of negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consequences to self-image, status or career (p. 708).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Psychological availability is the individual’s belief that they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>have the physical, emotional, or cognitive resources to engage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the self at work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three psychological conditions are theorized to influence the level of work engagement in employees (May et al., 2004). The first condition is reflected upon the perceived value of one’s work, a high value on work can increase the degree of job engagement. The second condition relates to the comfort level an individual
feels being themselves in the workplace. Employees who feel they can employ personal characteristics without negative consequences can also show a higher degree of engagement. Finally, the energy level and confidence an employee has to complete the intended job goal. Employees who experience overload tend to withdraw and disengage from their work (Kahn, 1990; May et al., 2004).

Current directions in job engagement

Current literature on work engagement suggests a positive role of a) psychological detachment, b) psychological meaning, and c) stress-reduction interventions. Recent studies indicate an employee’s ability to psychologically detach from work during personal time remains an important factor in work engagement (Sonnentag, 2003; Sonnentag, Binnewies, & Mojza, 2010).

Organizations can support employee detachment by encouraging employees to be unavailable (e.g., via e-mail or phone) during their nonwork time and design employee’s work demands accordingly (Fritz, Yankelevich, Zarubin, & Barger, 2010). Sabbaticals are intended to provide respite for faculty. Davidson and colleagues (2010) conducted a study on the respite quality of sabbaticals for faculty. The findings encourage faculty detachment from the organization along with administrative encouragement to tailor the experience to faculty needs, abilities, and personal meanings. Secondly, current studies in business have identified characteristics of work engagement, which are applicable to the educational setting. Psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability have been proven to improve employee’s engagement in work (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004). Finally, it has been suggested that educators use stress-reduction interventions such as teacher support
teams and mentoring groups (Davis 2003) and to reduce role ambiguity and role
overload (Kahn, Schneider, Jenkins-Henkelman, & Moyle, 2006) to help improve job
engagement. However the effective strategies can be less appealing to policy
makers because they are perceived to encourage less work (Berryhill, Linney, &
Fromewick, 2009).

Summary

There is a rich literature base on community colleges in general, and the
faculty characteristics and pedagogy. Researchers have thoroughly examined the
history, roles, responsibilities, and challenges of community college faculty. Authors
have suggested community colleges are facing a hiring crisis due to the impending
retirements of faculty and the decreased interest in this profession by young
graduates, especially in rural institutions. As community colleges’ faculty face higher
rates of faculty turnover, retention and recruitment become increasingly important.

The education sector has produced a number of studies related to burnout in
PK-12 education. Important themes on high rates of burnout include the
characteristics of the individual, job, and organizations. Despite the many merits of
the existing literature on teacher burnout, a very limited amount of work has
focused on higher education work engagement (Watts & Robertson, 2010). The
lack of literature underscores the need to address the experience of work
engagement in rural community college faculty. A detailed case study that examines
the perceptions of work engagement in community college instructors would
supplement current literature, and thus potentially improve the community college
faculty and student experience. The majority of currently available research focuses on PK-12 teachers. In addition, this research has a limited review of work engagement in education. Specifically, lacking links to engaged instructors and the role of the students and college associated with those experiences. This case study will supplement current literature on the rural community college faculty experiences with work engagement and thus add an important dimension to the discussion.
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Purpose and Research Questions

The methodology for this dissertation was qualitative case study research. This qualitative dissertation investigated the experiences of faculty burnout in two rural community colleges. This case study explored the perceptions of burnout and work engagement in rural community college faculty.

Research Questions

The dissertation study will address the following research questions:

1) How do rural community college faculty members perceive and experience work engagement?

2) What do faculty members in rural community colleges believe to be important to sustain work engagement?

3) Why is work engagement important to rural community college faculty?

The methodology section discusses the research approach, specific methods, and data analysis. The setting explored in the study will be described as well as the participants to provide a contextual description of antecedents to burnout and work engagement. The position of the researcher is included in the methodology to help establish the rigor and trustworthiness of the investigator and investigation.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a complex and broad approach to study social phenomenon. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define qualitative research as:

A situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible....They
[qualitative practices] turn the world into a series of representations; including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world (p. 3).

Qualitative research, therefore, is interpretative research, research where the biases, values, and judgment of the researcher become plainly stated and are considered useful and beneficial (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research for this study is appropriate as the experience I have had teaching in community colleges can add value to the data collection and data analysis.

The qualitative approach works well when studying work engagement in rural community college faculty members. Each study participant will share a similar role at their college, but have different perspectives that can offer insight into the phenomenon of work engagement as it relates to community college faculty. Many community colleges have experienced increases in enrollment, as well as significant declines in state revenue, higher tuition, and flat or declining state student aid while simultaneously adding heightened accountability and pressure to advance student success (D’Amico, Katsinas, & Friedel 2012). The participants shared their experiences of how they have handled these conditions as well as how they perceive their own burnout and work engagement. I appreciated the opportunity to practice qualitative research and paint the portraits of the participants’ understanding of work engagement and effects of burnout. As the researcher, my training in counseling was a valuable asset to the data gathering process. I value the participants’ insights; together they provided a rich, thick, and
descriptive account of the underreported occurrences of burnout and work engagement in higher education faculty. The detail and description of burnout and work engagement perceptions chronicled in this study is best completed in the qualitative paradigm.

Qualitative research presents “a wealth of detailed information about a much smaller number of people and cases. This increases the depth of understanding of the cases and the situations studied but reduces generalizability (Patton, 2002, p. 14). The qualitative inquiry as explained by Jones (2006) is not to generalize cases but rather to provide rich detail to transfer knowledge. Qualitative research aims to study humans in their natural setting in order to understand various aspects of behaviors and interactions (Lichtman, 2012). The focus is to describe multiple realities and develop understandings in an evolving, descriptive manner (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Creswell (2003) identified the following characteristics unique to qualitative research:

- Qualitative research takes place in the natural setting.
- Qualitative research uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic.
- Qualitative research is emergent rather than tightly prefigured.
- Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive (p. 181-182).

The qualitative case study emphasizes a bounded system, the context of the system, and the modes of analysis to address trustworthiness and goodness in the practice. The qualitative case study, therefore, focuses on insights of participants and data collection, triangulation, and careful interpretation by the researcher. A
A case study is an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon, social unit, or system bounded by time or place (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Stake, 2003; Yin, 2003). My intent is to offer an in-depth case study of faculty work engagement as it relates to burnout in rural community colleges, and the individuals’ experience to deal with both.

Philosophical Foundation

The epistemological perspective for the case study is rooted in the constructivist view. Crotty (1998) describes the constructivist view by stating “meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (p. 43). In human development, the contextualist view recognizes the importance of situation specific research (Goldhaber, 2000). Amis (2005) claims individuals make sense of the world around them based on their own values and individual experiences, thus leaving interpretation unique to individuals and their perceptions.

Theoretical Influences

Janesick (1994) refers to qualitative research as a dance. Janesick (1994) depicts choreography as an essential component to dance and compares this to the theoretical framework in qualitative research. Without choreography there is no spirit of the dance, so without theoretical underpinnings there is no essence of structure in qualitative research. Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2006) argue that having a theoretical perspective in qualitative case study research “adds philosophical richness and depth to a case study and provides direction for the design of the case study research project” (p. 54). In case study research, a theoretical perspective provides a critical framework for the study focus. Crotty
(1998) called the theoretical perspective “the philosophical stance lying behind a methodology” (p.66). In this research the philosophical stance will be guided by both a theoretical perspective and conceptual framework.

The social cognitive theory of human development provided the lens which shaped the thought processes for this research and guided the interpretation of the data. The social cognitive theory is largely based on the work of Albert Bandura (Boyd & Bee, 2012, Feldman, 2014, & Goldhaber, 2000). The theory posits that individual learning occurs by observing others and incorporating the influence of behaviors, environment, and cognitive assessments (Goldhaber, 2000). Thus, relating well to the multidimensional concepts of burnout and work engagement.

The faculty's thoughts of work engagement affect his or her behavior which in turn influences the college community environment; however, a reciprocal process can result. A construct of particular importance in this research is self-efficacy. Bandura (1993) defined it as a person's judgment of his or her capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to perform a task. Grounded within the social cognitive theory, a teacher's sense of self-efficacy is linked to positive teaching outcomes (Woolfolk, 2009).

**Conceptual framework-areas of work life**

In this study, the Areas of Work Life Scale [AWS] (Leiter & Maslach, 2004; Maslach & Leiter, 2008) guided the development of interview questions. The AWS and Job Demands-Resource (JD-R) Model influenced data analysis. According to Stake (2003) the phenomenon selected and theoretical framework for the study shapes the data collection. AWS provides the framework for the interview
questions providing a burnout-engagement continuum. The questions in the interview incorporated the six domains of work life; workload, control, community, reward, fairness, and values. The data analysis reviewed those domains as well as the JD-R emphasis on job demands and job resources.

Case Study as the Research Design

The case study approach is an effective research method used in many settings to investigate individuals, groups, organizational, and political structures (Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Yin (2003) suggests the case study is appropriate for a “how” or “why” question being asked about contemporary events not suitable for manipulating relevant behaviors. In case study research, there are predominantly six sources of information for case studies; documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. Oftentimes interviews are the most important mode of data collection (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Case studies in social sciences spotlight the participants' perceptions and direct experiences within their environmental context aligning closely with the constructivist philosophical foundation.

Cases studies are accepted as providing interest for both their individuality and their commonality (Stake, 1995; Yin 2003). Psychology, sociology, anthropology, education, and other social sciences have valued the work of case studies for many years. Merriam (1988) explains a case study as such:

A basic design that can accommodate a variety of disciplinary perspectives, as well as philosophical perspectives on the nature of research itself. A case
study can test the theory or build theory, incorporate random or purposive sampling and include quantitative and qualitative data (p. 2).

Defining the case study

The complexity of a case study is revealed in the description and definition. Stake (2003) and Merriam (1988) use the common language “bounded system” as part of the crucial components of case studies. Merriam (1988) defines a case study as an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group in a bounded system selected because it is an instance of some issue or concern. This dissertation research uses the bounded unit of rural community college faculty, specifically college faculty serving in resource-poor counties. Stake (1995) defines the case study similarly, but focuses on the complexity of the case. The definition proposed by Stake (1995) “case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances (p. xi). Case studies are expected to capture the intricacy of a single case, but the bounded system can fluctuate between one individual and an entire organization. The freedom of the case provides researcher’s opportunity to emphasize diverse elements of the case study. The diverse elements in this study includes vocational as well as arts and sciences faculty, whose students have vastly different goals. Yin (2003) provides additional suggestions for case study research. He proposes data should come from multiple sources, be situated in “real-life” context, and have data collection guided by prior theoretical definitions. The breadth of the case study definition provides usefulness for human development.
For the purposes of this research, the “bounded system” described by Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995) was rural community college faculty employed full-time. Specifically in my research study, the case was a multi-site study, often found helpful in education (Creswell, 2007). The case included six faculty members from two Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) in one economically distressed region of 50,000 people or less. Three participants worked at a rural community college serving nearly 1500 students, while the other three participants worked at another rural community college serving nearly 4600 students. According to Stake (1995) in qualitative case study research the reader determines what can apply to his or her context, as the researcher I wanted to provide more insight to the reader by providing experiences from a small and mid-size college, with hopes more information can be transferred to the reader.

Characteristics of a case study

The case study emphasizes individuality and implies knowledge and understanding (Stake, 1995). Flyvbjerg (2006) states the case study “produces the type of context dependent knowledge that research on learning shows to be necessary to allow people to develop from rule-based beginners to virtuoso experts” (p.222). Detailed accounts of the case in rich thick detail should provide clear insights into the phenomenon at study (Johansson, 2003). Stake (2003) discusses six essential characteristics of the case study; bound the case, select the phenomena, seek patterns of data, triangulate key explanation, select alternate interpretations and develop assertions about the case. The case study gains credibility by
thoroughly triangulating the descriptions and interpretations, not just in a single step but continuously throughout the period of study (Stake, 2003).

According to Stake (1995) the selection of the case should be based on the maximum amount of learning the researcher can gain. Yin (2003) discusses three characteristics of exemplary case study work:

“1) The individual case or cases are unusual and of general public interest, 2) the underlying issues are nationally important, either in theoretical terms of in policy or practical terms; or, 3) both of the preceding conditions have been met (p. 162).”

Based on established research (Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Buunk, 2003; Kahn et al., 2006) the topic of burnout in employment is of interest to the general public and the underlying issues of job engagement in community college faculty appear to be of importance nationally due to the increasing numbers of students enrolling (Court & Kindman, 2008; Eddy & Murray, 2007).

*Descriptive case studies*

Merriam (1988) describes three primary types of case studies; descriptive, interpretive, or evaluative. This dissertation will be guided by descriptive case study which provides a detailed account of the phenomenon under study. The descriptive case study is useful for innovative programs and practices or for issues where little research has been completed (Merriam, 1988), fitting appropriately for the topic of work engagement.

In addition to Merriam’s (1988) description of case studies, Stake (2005) discusses two additional types; intrinsic and instrumental. In the intrinsic case
study, the researcher completes the case because of a general interest in the case and because it provides an intrinsic sense of satisfaction. The instrumental case study provides the researcher with a general understanding of a particular phenomenon. It is an instrument used to gain further insight.

This dissertation research was instrumental in nature because it offers a "general understanding" of the experiences and perceptions related to work engagement in rural community college faculty. The research follows Merriam's descriptive case study approach. Merriam (1988) asserts descriptive case studies “are useful...in presenting basic information about areas of education where little research has been conducted” (p. 27). My intent is to offer an in-depth, descriptive account of the faculty's perceptions of job engagement and burnout.

Research Sites

Two Midwestern community colleges were selected in this multi-site case, both institutions serve lowest socioeconomic counties in the same respective state. Each campus location was selected based upon professional working relationships with the institutions and researcher. In addition, each college/campus website was reviewed; the researcher examined accrediting agencies, counties served, mission statements, board minutes, programs of study, academic calendars, and existence of intercollegiate athletics. According to Patton (2008) a typical sampling site is one that is selected because it is not in any major way extreme, deviant, or intensely unusual. Each college is guided by the statewide strategic plan for community colleges which includes the following five specific goals:
1) Provide high quality, comprehensive educational programs and services accessible to all people of the state.

2) Develop high-skilled workers to meet the demands of the state’s changing economy.

3) Maximize financial and human resources to assure provision of comprehensive community college services and to allow the state to compete on a national and international level.

4) Demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency for achieving the system mission and goals.

5) Recruit, enroll, retain, and/or graduate persons of underrepresented groups (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status) in all programs.

In addition, a statement of policy which identifies the following as services that are required to be included in the community college’s mission.

- The first two years of college work, including preprofessional education.
- Vocational and technical training.
- Programs for in-service training and retraining of workers.
- Programs for high school completion for students of post-high school age.
- Programs for all students of high school age who may best serve themselves by enrolling in vocational and technical training, while also enrolled in a local high school, public or private.
• Programs for students of high school age that provide advanced college placement courses not taught at a student’s high school while the student is also enrolled in the high school.

• Student personnel services.

• Community services.

• Vocational education for persons who have academic, socioeconomic, or other handicaps that prevent succeeding in regular vocational education programs.

• Training, retraining, and all necessary preparation for productive employment of all citizens.

Finally the state outlines a credit hour to include at least 800 minutes of scheduled work for a classroom course; at least 1,600 minutes for a laboratory course; at least 2,400 minutes for clinical work; or at least 3,200 minutes of work experience. The colleges and participants in this study were all assigned pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality to the greatest extent possible.

Rural community college A

Community college A is located in a rural mid-size community with a population of 7500. According to the Carnegie College Classification system the college is considered a small, two-year public institution with mixed part-time and full-time students (2012). The college has one main campus and two centers. The college serves 8 counties and a portion of 5 others who are ranked in the lowest median incomes in the state.
The college opened its doors in the mid-1960s with an annual enrollment of nearly 1,500 students. During the 2012-2013 academic year, enrollment at the college reached almost 1600 students. The college grants Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), Associate of Applied Science (AAS), and Associate of Applied Arts (AAA) degrees; in addition various diplomas are awarded in vocational and technical programs, as well as adult and continuing education courses. The overall graduation rate is near 43% with a transfer out rate of about 23%.

*Rural Community College A* is accredited by the State Department of Education and the Higher Learning Commission, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Institutions of Higher Education and additional specialized accreditations in vocational programs. The college is governed by an 8-member board of directors each representing a district in the college service area.

At *Rural Community College A* the tuition ranges from $152 to $164 per credit hour. The academic calendar follows the semester system with a five day academic week. *Rural Community College A* has nine different intercollegiate athletic teams participating in the National Junior College Athletic Association. The college has various extracurricular clubs for students to participate. The college has on campus housing available.

In 2012, at *Rural Community College A* the faculty to student ratio was 20-1 and employed 53 full-time faculty members. The degrees for faculty members at the institution include two with a doctorate, thirty-six with Masters Degrees, five with a Bachelors Degree, two with an Associates Degree, four with Diplomas, one with a Certificate, one with a High School Diploma, and two were unreported.
Rural community college B

*Community College B* is located in a mid-size community in a Midwestern state in the United States with a population of 24,800. According to the Carnegie College Classification system the college is considered a medium size, two-year public institution with mixed part-time and full-time students (2012). *Rural Community College B* serves a 10 county service area with three campuses and one service center. The college provides service to some of the poorest counties by income in the state, nearly 85% of all students receive financial aid support.

The institution was founded in the mid-1960s. In 2012 the enrollment reached nearly 4600 students. The college grants three degrees; AA, AS, AAS. The overall graduation rate is near 24% with a transfer out rate of about 14%.

*Rural Community College B* is accredited by the State Department of Education and the Higher Learning Commission, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Institutions of Higher Education and other specialized accreditations in vocation programs. The college is governed by a 9-member board of directors. The college employs approximately 950 full and part time employees.

At *Rural Community College B* the tuition ranges from $124 to $224 per credit hour. The academic calendar follows a quarter system and a four day academic week. Rural Community College B has nine intercollegiate athletic teams participating in the National Junior College Athletic Association. The college has approximately forty various extracurricular clubs and organizations in which the students can participate. The college has on campus housing available.
Research Participants

The sampling technique to identify participants for this dissertation was purposeful sampling. Esterberg (2002) offered a definition for purposeful sampling that stated researchers “intentionally sample research participants for the specific perspectives they may have” (p. 93). Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2006) suggest in purposeful sampling the researcher identifies “information rich cases that hold the greatest potential for generating insight about the phenomenon of interest” (p. 66). Sampling is completed when saturation occurs and no new information is coming from new participants and data collected becomes redundant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Two sites included in this case study were two rural community colleges located in the Midwest region of the United States and include three participants from each college. A combination of typical case and network sampling strategies were employed. Merrian (2009) defines a typical sample as a group selected because they reflect the “average”. Network sampling begins with a few participants who possess certain characteristics and then are asked to identify others who are known to have similar characteristics (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The researcher had previous professional relationships with individuals at the selected institutions to begin the participant recruiting process.

The researcher contacted individuals after reviewing the college websites to ensure similarities in accreditation, mission, and degrees awarded. A phone call was made to a contact at the Midwestern rural community college (Appendix A). During the phone conversation the nature of the research was described. A follow-
up email was sent which described the research project for interested individuals (Appendix B). The researcher asked for recommendations for additional participants. The selected faculty included instructors in arts and sciences and vocational programs.

The primary focus of investigation included full-time faculty members currently employed at rural community colleges in the midwest. In this study, a rural community college will refer to an IHE in an economically distressed region of 50,000 people or less (U.S Census Bureau, 2010). Full-time employees were included because they were able to provide insights into their experiences beyond the classroom. In addition, two full-time administrators at the same IHEs were interviewed to discuss successful practices of their faculty members as well as the recruiting and retention tools used with employees. The administrator interviews were not part of the bounded unit, but provided insights into the practices and policies related to burnout and work engagement implemented by the college. The administrator interviews added opportunity to triangulate the data and explore the sites beyond faculty experience. Part-time employees, part-time faculty members, and part-time administrators, were not included in the study.

The participants were comprised of both males and females in young and middle adulthood. In the state studied, a typical community college instructor, was female, 47.9 years of age, and white (State of the Community College, 2013). Each participant was Caucasian which reflects the dominant ethnic race in the selected state. The participants education ranged from a post-secondary diploma to Ph.D.’s. The state community college full-time instructional staff ranged from ages 24 to 75
with the average age of community college full-time instructors at 49.5 years (State of the Community College, 2013). The participants in the study represented the typical ages of faculty members with an average age of 45.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Years of Experience in Education</th>
<th>Career Tech/Arts &amp; Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Faculty Community College A (Anna)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>M.S.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Career Tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Faculty Community College A (Cindy)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>M.S.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Faculty Community College A (Jack)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>H.S. Diploma</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Career Tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Faculty Community College B (Kim)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>B.S.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Career Tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Faculty Community College B (Julie)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Ph.D</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Faculty Community College B (Larry)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Ph.D</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection Methods

Jones, Torres, and Armino (2006) provide a structural framework for data collection in qualitative research. Initially researchers should gather a multitude of data and resources on the topic of interest framed in a theoretical context. Secondly, gathering relevant data can include interviews, documents, and observations. The researcher should then compare the results with other resources and theory. Finally, the data collection should reach data saturation to ensure the detailed accounts within the specific case can be applied in ways others can use the information.

Interviews

In most forms of qualitative research much of the data collection methods include interviews (Merriam, 2009). “We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe” according to Patton (2002, p. 340). Patton (2002) continues to say “The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective (p. 341).” As Merriam (2009) claims:

Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. It is also necessary to interview when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate (p. 88).

This statement captures the researcher’s intent for conducting interviews, and it establishes why interviews offer a unique perspective in qualitative research.

Seidman (2006) offers an interviewing model which includes three interviews per participant to maximize in-depth interviewing which guided the
interviews in this research. The purpose of the first interview was to learn about the participant and his or her experience beyond the topic being studied. In this study, the first interview asked participants about his/her background, work history, and work to build rapport with the individual.

The initial interview in most cases was completed remotely, over the phone. The interviews were not recorded, but during each interview the researcher took detailed notes and gathered specific quotes during the conversations. Following the interview, the researcher completed an interview summary sheet (See Appendix H) and employed memo-writing (See Appendix K). Memo-writing is a process of reflection about issues raised in the setting and how they relate to theoretical, methodological, and substantive issues of the study (Merriam, 2009). Here is an excerpt from a memo after the first interview was completed:

I felt inspired by her love for the community college. The participant viewed difficulties as challenges, an opportunity to become better as an instructor and person. Many people might negatively perceive the diverse student ability in the community college classroom or few community resources as a limitation. She viewed it in a positive light, which influences her work on student engagement. She discussed difficulties understanding each learning style of the student and the limited time to work with students individually. However, her optimistic outlook prompts an eagerness and excitement to find ways to address the challenges in unique ways. For example, after attending conferences and researching flipped classrooms, she implemented the process, even though she felt uncertain and unprepared.
The notes, memos, and observation summaries from this first interview helped lead to codes and themes, specifically leading to themes related to the appreciation of the community college system. Charmaz (2006) suggests successive memo-writing keeps the researcher involved and helps catch thoughts, comparisons and connections, and provides direction for new ideas and insights. The memos provided a place to make comparisons between data, codes, and categories and provide a constant opportunity to practice reflexivity in the research process.

The second interview in Seidman’s (2006) model “is to concentrate on the concrete details of the participants’ present lived experience in the topic area of the study” (p. 18). The questions focus on links to the research questions, impressions formed from the experience, and a reflection on the theoretical framework guiding the study. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and were audio-recorded and transcribed. Following the second interview the researcher completed an interview reflection activity (See Appendix K) and continued the process of memo writing. The interview reflection activity provided guided questions for the researcher to answer following each interview. Here is an excerpt from the reflection activity following a second interview with a participant:

She shows a strong willingness to be a part of the team and appears to have a clear understanding of her skills and is willing to work hard. She told stories regarding the importance of her peers as it relates to student achievement, especially in regards to poor achievement. She discussed being drained by poor ability because in cases of students and staff it requires more work from
her. Her stories fit well with Maslach’s AWL workload domain as well as the job demands from the JD-R.

Jones, Torres, and Armino (2006) advocate for a systematic approach to reflexivity in higher education by using self-reflection, reflection with other researchers, reflection with the participants, and reflection on the theoretical framework.

The final interview was intended to allow the participants to reflect on their experience and to make meaning of the earlier interviews (Seidman, 2006). Seidman (2006) emphasizes the importance of listening critically to the interviewee; saying, “Listening is the most important skill in interviewing. The hardest work for many interviewers is to keep quiet and to listen actively” (p. 78).

In this study the third interview was held remotely as well. The interview was not recorded, but once again notes were taken during the interview and memo-writing occurred following the interview. During this interview the participant reflected on the meaning of work engagement. Here is an example of how a participant did this in the third interview:

It is so important to recognize in yourself when burnout is peaking. It is not a burnout state but it comes and goes. I may know it will be bad this week, but when it lightens up I need to embrace and enjoy the light times. There is a happy point in the end.

This participant made meaning of her experiences with burnout as she reflected over the other two previous interviews.

I sought to use six types of questions as described by Patton (2002), and exhibited in Table 4.
Table 4

*Patton’s Six Types of Interview Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Question</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience and Behavior</td>
<td>Questions elicit responses about the participant’s past, actions, behaviors, and activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion and Values</td>
<td>Questions evoke responses related to person’s beliefs and opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td>Questions provoke affective responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Questions elicit factual knowledge from participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory</td>
<td>Questions concerning specific data about what was seen, heard, touched, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic</td>
<td>Questions evoke responses in reference to particular demographic details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The six types of questions were addressed in the interviews within this study (Appendix D). Esterberg (2002) acknowledged timing and the order of questions as components of the in-depth interview that assist in soliciting the most reliable data. Esterberg (2002) wrote, “You should place easier, less threatening questions at the beginning and save more controversial or sensitive questions for the middle or end, once you have developed some rapport and established some trust” (p. 96). The researcher placed the easier questions in the first interview and the beginning of the second interview to create conditions in line with Esterberg’s suggestions. Before
interviews the questions were reviewed by current community college faculty members to test social rigor and goodness of the questions.

The interview process utilized in this research study followed the guidance of Seidman's (2006) three-interview approach. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. In this study each faculty member was interviewed at least two times. In the cases when only two interviews were used, the first and second interviews as described earlier where combined and typically lasted about 90 minutes. The interviews were combined to accommodate the participant’s schedule and occurred with three participants. Following review and completion of the informed consent form (Appendix F), the researcher arranged both face to face and telephone meetings with faculty participants. After three faculty participant interviews, the interview protocol was adjusted for the second interview. Because of the lengthy participant responses, the grand tour interview questions were adapted to more directly reflect the research questions.
The researcher interviewed two administrators at each site. The administrator’s interviewed in this study were not based on Seidman’s three interview approach; instead each administrator was interviewed only one time. The goal of the administrator interview was different than that of the faculty participants. The administrators served as a resource to find institutional policies.
and recognition programs which are intended to lead to work engagement. In addition, the administrators discussed observations and experiences they perceived to be engaged in their work as a way to triangulate data by using multiple data sources. Following completion of informed consent (Appendix G), one hour face to face interviews were conducted.

At both colleges an administrator was contacted by the researcher to ask permission to use employees at the institution in the research study. Both institutions reviewed the research purpose and data collection methods. Neither college required institutional based review boards as the approval of Iowa State University Institutional Review Board was sufficient in both cases. Each college administrator provided approval to the researcher via phone or email.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in case study research is consistent with many qualitative research methodologies. This research study followed the data analysis procedures explained by Yin (2003) and Creswell (2009). The researcher is given the discretion to choose the data analysis procedures for their particular study. In this study, I used the Areas of Work Life Scale (AWS) and Job Demands- Resources Model (JD-R) to design data collection. Case studies benefit from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (Yin, 2003). During my data analysis I reviewed the memo’s, transcripts, documents, and notes independently of the models. I was the interpreter of the data and to be faithful to my participants and the data collected, I decided it was best to analyze the data initially without the theory guiding the process. The data analysis emerged first
through the analysis of raw data and then correlated back to the theoretical models, which fits consistent with qualitative research. Yin (2003) suggests the researcher search for patterns by comparing results with patterns predicted from theory or the literature. Once the codes and themes emerged I then analyzed how the themes fit back with the model, which is addressed in the findings and discussion section.

Yin (2003) suggests researchers use pattern searches and explanation building in data analysis for case study research to improve trustworthiness and goodness. In this study initial patterns revealed appreciation for the community college and the faculty’s respective fields, challenges with the role as a faculty member at a rural community college, and the value placed on work engagement. Those initial patterns were then analyzed into five themes. This mode of data analysis directly comes from bounding the case and selecting the topic of study. The rural community college faculty are the case in this study with emphasis on their experience with work engagement and burnout. Attending to place and time brings context to the structures and relationships that are of interest (Van Wynsberghe & Kahn, 2007).

Yin (2003) suggests explanation building as the second step in data analysis. The researcher looked for causal links and or explored plausible or rival explanations and attempts to build an explanation about the case. As I reviewed the data and explored patterns, participants described the experiences related to work engagement as energizing, motivating, essential, rewarding, but also time consuming and overwhelming. The energy expended during work engagement was rewarding, but it became clear that to sustain engagement required additional
effort, responsibility and sacrifice. Researchers can generate working hypotheses and learn new lessons based on what is uncovered or constructed during data collection and analysis in the case study (VanWynsberghe, 2007). During the explanation building process data is triangulated and alternative interpretations are pursued. The faculty participant data was triangulated with administrator interview transcripts, faculty contracts, recognition programs, faculty goal agreements and the state's Condition of the Community College. Stake (2003) emphasizes triangulation of key observations as a basis for interpretation then proceeds to evaluating the need for alternative interpretations.

The data were examined through the open coding process and then the examination adhered to Creswell’s six steps of data analysis.
Table 6  

*Creswell’s Six Steps of Data Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organize Data for Analysis</td>
<td>This consists of transcribing interviews, optically scanning material, typing up field notes, memos, or sorting and arranging the data into different types depending on the sources of information (p. 185).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Through Data</td>
<td>Identify a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning (p. 185).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis With Coding</td>
<td>Organize the material into “chunks” before adding meaning. This involves taking text, data, and creating categories and labeling those with a term (p.186)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify Themes</td>
<td>Use the coding process to generate a description as well as categories or “themes”. Generate a small number of themes, five to seven is suggested for a research study (p. 189).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Represent</td>
<td>Decide how the themes and categories will be represented in the qualitative narrative (p. 189).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>Make meaning of the data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this research study, memos, interview summary sheets, field notes, and transcripts were coded and codified using Esterberg (2002) description “work
intensively with your data, line by line, identifying themes and categories that seem of interest” (p. 158). A codebook was used for notes taken during interviews one and three and for each transcribed interview (Appendix I). An example code was poor student performance; the participant said “I had a student a couple years ago that really struggled. I had to put more energy and time for this one student not to hurt others and really it isn’t fair to the other students.” This code later merged into a subtheme regarding diverse student abilities.

Following Creswell’s two stages of coding and identification of themes, memo-writing for codes was used before the data was represented in narrative. Here is an excerpt from a memo which was reflecting on codes as they moved to themes:

It appears many faculty value their work at the community college and generally fits with their personal values. Many connections to the colleges have been community based, many people “come home” or “come back” to teach at the rural community college. Are human resources professionals recruiting students? Is the campus community encouraging students to return and teach at the institution? It appears in the majority of cases faculty has become involved in the community or within the campus community and therefore have been retained. In the same instance when a faculty member rooted in the community feels burnout it can feel even more overwhelming and isolating “I’m deeply tied to the area, I have to find my way through feelings of burnout. There is nowhere else for me to go.” The faculty
members have to find their way through experiences of burnout back to engagement by learning ways to deal with underprepared students, multiple roles, and limited budgets.

Memo-writing for codes and themes is defined as the researcher’s written reflections on the study’s codes and themes and complex meanings of patterns found in the data (Charmez, 2006; Saldana, 2009).

The data analysis process seemed comparable to a group of children’s playing at recess. They initially move without pattern or direction, but then they focus themselves and make a decision moving to playground equipment or to friends. Early codes went in many directions. A few examples were workload, work engagement, student-centered, poor performance, disconnected, stressor, multiple roles, and personal values. The codes grew from participant statements and my research memos. For instance, a participant discussed how her personal values matched her work. She said, “I’m blessed to have the same schedule as my children”. In this example, the code was “values”, this matched the Areas of Work-Life Scale (AWS). Like a child at recess running to join a game of basketball, the many codes began forming organized patterns.

The data analysis was multi-layered. I reviewed the codes several times and then arranged them in categories where codes shared multiple characteristics. An example of a category I created in this research was feedback. Many codes revolved around discussions regarding feedback. Some examples of codes relevant in this category were student perception forms, the value of student perception forms,
ways of feedback, individual administrator/faculty member meetings, classroom observations, desire for more advice, etc. The central topic in these codes focused on how faculty members were given feedback, their desires regarding feedback, and the value placed on current response/evaluation systems. The categories in the study were analyzed individually initially, and then in comparison to the other categories. The categories merged into the four themes and relevant subthemes for the study.

Trustworthiness & Rigor

Fundamental differences exist between qualitative and quantitative research, however the measurement of quality is often assessed from the quantitative paradigm. In qualitative research credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are the standards associated with quality research (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002; Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This qualitative research study was guided by these standards and strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

Credibility, in qualitative research, attends to whether the researcher accurately represented the participants’ thoughts, feelings, and actions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). It parallels internal validity in quantitative studies. Credibility is reached through the triangulation of data sources, member checks, and peer review (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This dissertation research study addresses credibility through triangulation of multiple data sources
using interviews from faculty members and administrators as well as document review. The researcher conducted member checks with three participants.

Transferability mirrors external validity in quantitative research; it refers to the degree to which the study has made it possible for the reader to decide whether the results transfer to their own settings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Rich thick description, discovery of new meaning, and inductive reasoning combine together to discover new relationships, concepts, and understanding which can lead to transferability of the case (Merriam, 2001). In this study, the articulation of meaning and understanding of burnout and work engagement in rural community college faculty will transfer to other individuals in similar situations. The study design intentionally sought two sites to incorporate experiences from small to mid-size rural community colleges.

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), dependability mirrors reliability in quantitative research and in qualitative research it refers to whether others can track the process and procedures used to collect and interpret data. Dependability in qualitative research can be achieved through data triangulation, peer review, and systematic coding and recoding (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study included an audit trail (Appendix J), which is “a detailed account of the methods, procedures, and decision points in carrying out the study” (Merriam, 2002, p. 31) to help ensure dependability.

Finally, confirmability in qualitative research parallels objectivity in the quantitative paradigm. However, in qualitative research it is assumed and valued
that the researcher brings in a set of assumptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In this study I completed three member checks to confirm the data was interpreted accurately. Confirmability reveals the data to be examined to confirm the interpretations of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, audit trails, written field notes, memos, and reflexive journals will be used to add to the confirmability, as well as the researcher’s positionality (Denzin, 1994). Merriam (2002) suggested positionality is a critical self-reflection by the researcher regarding assumptions, worldview, biases, theoretical orientation, and relationship to the study that may affect the investigation” (Merriam, 2002, p. 31). In an effort to provide confirmability in this study, the following section addresses researcher positionality.

Researcher positionality

As recommended by Merriam (2002), I have described my background and set of assumptions that influence the study. Researcher reflexivity is the examination of the “self as researcher” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Jones, Torres, and Aminino, 2006) and requires me to think critically about my relationship with the research topic and how it impacts my decisions in data collection and analysis (Glesne, 2006). As outlined earlier Jones, Torres, and Aminino (2006) suggest a systematic approach to reflexivity in the context of higher education and recommend researcher’s address the following questions:

1. Why is it that I am involved in the present study? What is it about me and my experiences that lead me to this study?
2. What personal biases and assumptions do I bring with me to this study?

3. What is my relationship with those in the study (p. 125)?

Experiences that lead me to this study

I am a middle class, white female, in young adulthood who currently serves as a full-time faculty member teaching classes in psychology and human development at an urban community college. For nine years I worked in a rural community college as an instructor, teaching 15-18 hours a semester as well as being an assistant volleyball coach, and advising 20-30 students annually. For three years, I worked as a career counselor helping students explore majors of study and prepare for internships, part-time and full-time jobs. My roles in higher education have provided me with both positive and negative experiences working with college students, faculty and staff members, parents, and administrators.

Personal biases and assumptions

In order to establish goodness, confirmability, and trustworthiness of this study I must recognize my own biases associated with this study and explore my experiences that will allow me to be responsive to the data and allow the reader to understand my positionality (Merriam, 2009). I approach this study with two distinct lenses; as a community college faculty member and as a former career counselor. First, I bring my experience as a faculty member and my beliefs about the community college system to this research. I value the community college system and what it offers to students, faculty, and to our country. Although, an imperfect system, I believe there are positive impacts to thousands of students and
communities. I believe the demands on rural community college faculty members need to be understood in a meaningful way. I worked in a rural community college district which included some of the lowest socioeconomic levels in the state. The students in my classes were diverse in age, in academic abilities, in socio-economic status, and at times naive to a world outside of the rural community. I struggled to balance my assorted roles as instructor, coach, advisor, committee member, and colleague. I felt overwhelmed and yet other times inspired. I experienced cyclical encounters between feelings of burnout and engagement. My goal is to help find meaning and give a voice to the struggles of rural community college faculty members.

Another reason for studying work engagement and burnout comes from my second lens for which I view this research, that of a former career counselor. I believe people deserve to have a career they find fulfilling and individuals will flourish when this occurs. I would spend hours working with students to help them identify their skills, personality characteristics, and vocational passions. As I asked students these questions daily I continually evaluated my goals, passions, and values in the process. One reoccurring self-reflection is I take pride in my work and want to help others grow intellectually and emotionally. These experiences and reflections have led me to this research topic and population. I feel rural community colleges are valuable contributors to our educational system and their work engagement is vital to the continued success of post-secondary education. It is my goal as the researcher to make these biases evident and to continually evaluate these and emerging assumptions throughout the research process.
Relationships with Participants

According to Merriam (2009), qualitative case studies are limited by the sensitivity and integrity of the researcher because in qualitative research the investigator is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. My relationship with the participants is as a colleague. I have professional relationships with faculty and staff at the selected institutions and a stronger working relationship with a few of the participants. According to Yin (2003), a researcher should be “sensitive and responsive to contradictory evidence” (p. 59). My previous experiences, professional role, and participant interactions will be continually reviewed as a part of reflexivity for this research. In exploring our self as a researcher is “it is not implied that the ‘self’, or aspects of the ‘self’, are static or unchanging, or that they are always known” (Simmons, 2009, p. 81). As I progressed through the research process, my level of self-awareness and self-reflection grew through the knowledge I gained.

Ethical Considerations

Qualitative researchers face many ethical issues that surface in data collection, analysis, and dissemination of reports (Creswell, 2007). As Eisner and Peshkin (1990) discuss:

Researchers need both cases and principles from which to learn about ethical behaviors. More than this, they need two attributes: the sensitivity to identify an ethical issue and the responsibility to feel committed to acting appropriately in regard to such issues (p. 244).
Close attention must be made to the ethical issues at every step of the process in qualitative research.

During the data collection process, each member read and signed an informed consent form. The informed consent document addressed the description of procedures, confidentiality, reciprocity, participants rights, contact information if there are problems (Appendix F & G). The participants had opportunities for questions and/or further explanation of the informed consent as well as choices of locations to hold the interviews.

Jones, Torres, and Aminio (2006) discuss potential ethical issues related to the nature of the leading questions in interviews and encourages close attention to these instances to ensure the participants views are able to be portrayed. In this research each interview ended with opportunities for the participant to ask questions and communicate anything else they feel is relevant to burnout and work engagement. However, as participants discussed aspects of engagement, discussions of burnout occurred. In some instances participants critically reflected on why they continue in the career path at the institutions. McClenahan, Giles, and Mallet (2007) notes social support from work peers can influence relationships on employee burnout and engagement. Throughout our interviews I tried to create an environment which reflected positive social support by actively listening to participants. Bakker & Schaufeli (2000) found that the frequency with which teachers are exposed to colleagues with student and work-related problems impacts
levels of burnout. It was my intention in each interview to support the participant, by actively listening and paraphrasing.

Throughout data analysis, the integrity of the data must be protected (Erickson, 1986). Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants to maintain confidentiality. The researcher regularly reported participants’ quotes to offer the reader an inside view of the data but removed identifying data.

During the research process, careful respect and diligence were practiced towards all potential ethical issues. For example, each college was in the same state although the state name is not given to help maintain confidentiality of the institutions. Additionally, as the colleges were described, citations were not used to reduce identifiable characteristics of the participating colleges and participants. All information gathered to describe the college is available in public documents.

Limitations

The scope of this study is limited to research at two rural community colleges and therefore, results can be appropriated to similar contexts. The faculty participating in this study included three white females, and three white males, therefore; the experience of rural community college faculty member of a different ethnicity is not represented in this study. The participants all worked at the main campus, so issues common to satellite campuses were not addressed in the study. The limited number of participants should be noted. Due to the nature of the intensive interview process and the busy nature of the career less participants were
selected. The participants were all full-time faculty so the experience of adjunct instructors was not addressed.

The colleges selected were in the same region which could provide a limited view of national differences. In addition, the colleges represented the counties with the lowest socioeconomic statuses in the respective state. The tax base of these institutions is lower than institutions serving counties with higher socioeconomic status. Rural community colleges not in economically distressed regions would not be represented in this study. Finally, the study does not detail the experience of the student; rather the study investigated the perceptions of work engagement from the viewpoint of the faculty members and administrators.
CHAPTER 4.

Findings

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand work engagement as it relates to rural community college faculty members. I believed not only administrators would benefit from gaining a better understanding of faculty experiences regarding work engagement, but also faculty members who might realize they are not working in such isolation. The movie Shadow Lands says we read to know we aren’t alone. This chapter presents a brief summary of the data analysis as it led to the key themes in this research study. My primary method of investigation was faculty interviews at two college sites. At each site I supplemented the data by interviewing an administrator and by college reviewing websites and documents. The categories in the study were analyzed individually initially, and then in comparison to the other categories. The categories merged into the four themes and relevant subthemes for the study.

Four major themes emerged from this study:

1. The overwhelming majority described the role of a rural community college faculty member as multifaceted. Its multiple roles increase the challenge of balancing work load and demands placed by students, administrators, and colleagues.

2. The definition of work engagement for rural community college faculty members is rooted in passion for their field and for the community college system. It takes a student centered approach, which matches the faculty members’ personal values.
3. All participants expressed the desire for constructive feedback from students and administrators, as well as purposeful peer interactions and opportunity for professional development.

4. All participants believe work engagement to be important for the community, the college, and for individual and student success. However, the majority of participants indicated there is a cost to work engagement.

Following is a discussion of the findings with excerpts from interviews that support and explain the findings in rich thick detail. In the following sections subthemes are utilized to support and expand the four major findings. My intent was to provide the reader an opportunity to access the participant’s words and their stories of work engagement. I used data gathered during the in-depth interview process with the six full-time faculty members and faculty administrators to offer descriptive accounts of the cases. I reviewed and utilized documents which included faculty handbooks, faculty contracts, recognition programs, the state’s Condition of the Community College.

The emphasis in this section is on letting participants speak for themselves. The quotes taken from the interview transcripts and interviews attempt to represent multiple participants’ perspectives and capture the richness of work engagement and burnout experiences. When appropriate, I supplemented administrator interview quotes in to the summary to enhance the description. Table 7 briefly outlines the four themes and associated subthemes.
Table 7

Four themes and subthemes

Themes & Subthemes

A. The role of a rural community college faculty member is multifaceted.
   1. Multidimensional nature of the role
   2. Workload & Demands
   3. Transition to teaching
B. The definition of work engagement in a rural community college.
   1. Passion & appreciation
   2. Personal values match
   3. Student achievement focus
   4. Cycle of the academic year
C. Expressed desire for constructive feedback and work based recognition.
   1. Limitations of student evaluations
   2. Avenues of feedback from administration
   3. Additional resources - peer programs, training
D. The importance work engagement
   1. The impact on student success
   2. Strong team and family-like atmosphere
   3. Community
   4. Sacrifices are involved in work engagement.

Theme 1

The overwhelming majority of participants described the role of a rural community college faculty member as multifaceted. The multiple roles increase the challenge of balancing work load and demands placed by students, administrators, and colleagues.

The primary finding of this study recognized the multidimensional role of a community college professor/instructor. All participants held roles beyond their hired position which placed additional demands on them and impacted their overall workload. The faculty members held multiple roles ranging from teacher, advisor,
mentor, committee member, colleague, department chair, “bingo caller,” and many more. Julie explained the roles as “unwritten rules” of work in a rural community college:

When you are in a rural community college, you have to do everything. Not only are you expected to handle your classroom, assignments, duties working with students, but you are expected to be on lots and lots of committees. You are expected to volunteer for a lot of things. And that’s one of the unwritten rules. You are expected to help sell tickets at the basketball games, to work for the Glow Run, to work the golf tournament, to work the foundation auction. The longer you work in a rural community college, the more you are expected to do and expected to be; it’s kind of like once you wear the hat, you will always wear the hat. So if you work the golf tournament once, you are going to work the golf tournament for the next 20 years. You call BINGO once for casino night for students; you are going to be calling BINGO for the next ten years.

Julie has worked at the same rural community college for thirteen years. She compared her roles at the college to the children’s book *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins* (Dr. Suess, 1938). Once you wear a hat, people see you have done well and want you to wear another. Eventually, the hats become more prestigious and potentially fulfilling, however all of the previous hats remain. Julie described it as someone never being able to shed a role once he or she has accepted it. “The hats kind of pile on after a while, and to balance those hats becomes a real
challenge because burnout occurs and you can only wear so many hats before your hat rack and your head are full.”

Participants spoke of the multiple roles with both laughter and disgust, but with an overarching level of acceptance, Anna said “That’s just what we do here; there’s only so many people to do so many jobs.” Larry acknowledged the difference between wanting to participate on committees and needing to as, “There are some people that do lots of committees. I do too and not necessarily because I wanted to.” The ability to choose a committee can increase the faculty member’s engagement in the committee’s work. This was reflected by Cindy as well. “It depends on the committee. Curriculum committee, I don’t find that very exciting. Assessment committee is a lot of work, but I see the good in it and I like it. I guess the other ones are voluntary and I like the ones I volunteer in.”

The multifaceted nature of the job is itself multifaceted. Not only must instructors serve in various and sundry capacities for the institution, they must also fill many roles for their students. Jack works largely with the same students all day. He describes his many roles almost as if he were an interdisciplinary team of one, as he attends to students’ personal and academic issues:

I’m an educator, recruiter, counselor, coach and evaluator. Evaluator is my least favorite one [role]. I’m coaching them at national competitions and in the labs, trying to get them to be better. You have given them the instruction and then encourage them. The work gets a little better and a little faster. I’m sometimes a counselor to the students, too. We’ve had students that maybe a friend may have committed suicide or friend died in a car accident or
girlfriend/boyfriend left them. We are together most of the day and when they have problems and you gotta listen to them. Almost be like a dad.

The participants’ roles regarding committees, clubs, and councils are sometimes assigned and at other times the participants volunteer. The role originates in many forms; sometimes it comes as an assignment from an administrator, other times it is based on a request from colleagues, and sometimes it arises to fill a need in the department/college. Larry is a program director, serves on six committees, and oversees a campus club, which he notes is “time consuming work.” The club advisor role is a voluntary position which entails Larry’s involvement in “weekly meetings, field trips, visits to four-year schools, service projects, informational tables at events and recruiting days, and a multi-day field trip each spring.”

Jack, who teaches in a vocational program, discussed the added “unofficial” role of recruiter to maintain the longevity of his program. The recruiting role can interfere with his fundamental role as an instructor.

We are always mindful that student numbers are equivalent to funding and without funding, you don’t have a job. If I don’t have students, my program goes away. Therefore, I am a recruiter, educator, obviously, educator; that is number one. That’s where I draw the line sometimes. I have an obligation to these students; I can’t always take off and go on school visits. I’ll try to go out to the high schools, usually, Christmas break and spring break, again so I’m not cancelling classes.

Jack placed a strong value on the students’ experience. He reflects a level of ownership and commitment to his program which was also expressed by many of
the participants. Jack gave his free time, thus avoiding interference with the quality of his students’ education.

Workload & demands

The primary role of each participant was as an instructor/professor. Although the faculty participants represented different disciplines they each acknowledged challenges with workload and demands. Three participants said about their day, “I never get everything done I want to get done.” Julie discussed the difficulty managing her days:

I have to manage my own chaos. And the chaos sometimes gets pretty severe. I’m busy and I have learned. I think that is the critical part of learning; how to manage it. I don’t think we do a good job of helping people manage it as an institution. We just like to pile more hats on and say good luck! I think in higher education we have such smart people; we assume smart people know how to balance things and to make things work right. I don’t think that’s always the case (Julie).

Though each administrator acknowledged the demands associated with position, “We know, they’re busy,” this admission did not resolve the frustration experienced by both parties.

The greatest demand placed on professors/instructors in the classroom is due to the broad range of student abilities. An overwhelming majority of participants noted stories related to diverse student abilities. Cindy described it well: “It is not a like a kindergarten class but it’s hard to figure out the learning styles. New group each semester, trying to figure out how they work together, how
they work alone, I typically figure it out in the end. I wish I could figure them out earlier.” Anna, a career and technical instructor, describes her experience. “I had a student a couple years ago that really struggled. I had to put more energy and time for this one student not to hurt others and really it isn't fair to the other students. But I couldn't allow them to hurt the people we work with. So the other students don't get as much attention.” Larry added that beyond the range of student abilities itself, the students on the lower end of the spectrum who lack necessary skills place a huge burden on the instructor.

I just feel like a lot of our students need more hand-holding than that. We have some outstanding students that are just top notch but we've got the whole spectrum. I have students that can barely write an English sentence and trying to find the...navigate that is part of the challenge, part of the fun. There's another balancing act, you know try to be concerned but at some point, some students, you just can’t save them all, they are just not where they need to be in college, this isn’t what they needed to do.

Enrollment without the oversight of an advisor compounds the issues created by the range and/or lack of student abilities in the classroom. Larry discussed the process of registration in many community colleges. He reported that students who do not have a grasp of the big picture or an understanding of their own capacities may enroll in courses beyond their capability.

...we have online registration and students can register for classes without ever talking to a human being and they don't know what classes they want or
need. They are just registering for some classes because that’s what they need to do right now.

Another piece of the puzzle is connected to student behavior in the classroom, not ability. Learning how to navigate the battlefield of student behaviors is different for each instructor. Those instructors who maintained a healthy understanding of students’ situations and behaviors were better able to maintain engagement. Anna is an example of an instructor who does not allow student behavior to interfere with her engagement, with her students, and her job.

Some teachers get so mad for students being on their phone and they get so angry. I think it is their choice. Some teachers get mad it they are sleeping in the class. It rarely happens to me. If they are then they probably worked the night shift and they come apologize. I don’t get mad, I think it is their choice. I look at it if they aren’t engaged, they are probably the ones not passing. I think it is part of my personality and my generation. I have seen people 15 years older than me bothered by cell phone use. If I get something bad on my evaluations, I don’t take it personal. My coworker does the same thing; some other coworkers take it so personal.

Outside of the classroom, the greatest factor that impacted workload/demands was the lack of quality adjunct instructors. The problem of procuring quality adjuncts frustrated administrators and instructors alike. The majority of faculty interviewed taught more classes than required by contract. Most noted the difficulty finding qualified adjuncts within their region; coupled with a need for multiple classes for students to complete degrees. An administrator said,
“It is very hard to find qualified adjuncts.” This difficulty resulted in increased course loads for instructors. Cindy, an arts and sciences instructor for sixteen years, said she has taught more classes than required by contract for as long as she can remember. “I usually teach six classes, six different courses with three labs. That is nine courses to prep. I’m in class from 8:45 till usually 2:30 or 3:00 depending on if we have lab that day or not. That doesn’t include any preparation or grading or lab set-up.”

Though the impact of the overload on her schedule is clear, Cindy acknowledged that she does not completely understand the rationale behind administrators putting instructors in this position. She says:

And maybe that’s what administration does is “Hey we need this class taught and we’ll pay you extra for it.” Because they know we can’t find an adjunct, I mean they can but it takes a lot of extra money. And then they have to police the adjuncts. So maybe they know they’ve got us over the barrel. We know that finding adjuncts is an issue, especially during the day. But yet between the three of us in the department we all have enough overload that we can hire another person. So you wonder if because we’re taking overload, they’re not going to hire another person. Because I would be happy to give up a class and I think each instructor would feel the same way. I added two classes to my classload, one class with a lab because I felt it was better for the students.

Both sentiments, Cindy explained, regarding poor student performance and lack of available adjuncts are also supported by Anna’s statement. “My level of accountability is higher and adds a different level of stress. The full time people take
the brunt [of the workload] so we can retain the part-timers[adjuncts]. I had a semester when I had seven students and four were very poor. That was a semester I hated my job.”

Administrators and faculty members are burdened with not just finding quality adjunct instructors, but also ensuring that those adjuncts are a good fit for the college community. Hiring new adjuncts and instructors can be a point of stress and success. Anna illustrates this issue “I have been here 7-8 years and I have mentored and mentored and mentored. When you work with someone who is good that is awesome. It’s really awesome, but when you have someone who is poor it is VERY difficult. We have had a lot of turn over.” The administrators and faculty note, finding the “right fit” is a significant element in hiring practices. An administrator describes the experience:

We may have two individuals that are equally qualified or even somebody that might be a little more qualified. Even though the other individual is qualified, we’ll pick the better fit rather than somebody who’s got the Ph.D. If they don’t fit, you just kind of know. Student services and student engagement are really the whole purpose of why we’re here.

The administrator emphasizes the importance of situational awareness as at times, it is more important than content knowledge.

Kim describes the experience and responsibilities of working alone in the department while the college searched to fill a position:
Since I’ve been here, I’ve been alone twice and for long periods of time; like six months. When you are in a department of two and one is gone, that leaves guess who to do all the work. They [the college] were trying to fill the position but just couldn’t, so it took a long time. I didn’t blame them for not filling it because they were trying to, but it was just so much work. Too much work really, and of course I got paid the same. It was an awful lot of responsibility and everyone wanted something from you, like two days ago.

Getting started

Learning to teach is the final component of this theme, specifically in the technical and vocational programs. Each vocational participant expressed the difficulty they experienced making the leap from understanding their respective fields to learning how to teach it to others. The arts and science faculty members did not share this same experience because they gained teaching skills in their graduate programs. However, all three career and technical instructors made note of the difficult transition from industry to education. Kim had this to say about her entry into education:

I’m glad I didn’t really know what I was getting into. It is a quite difficult transition. When you are in the technical fields the transition to teaching is very hard, especially when you are not trained as a teacher. That’s one of the differences of a community college. They hire people with technical training, but no training in teaching. I had no experience teaching or organizing a class.
In all three cases the first year experience is filled with uncertainty and preparation. Anna explained, “The first year is overwhelming. I mean, you have no idea what you are doing. The area you work in is what you know, but you don’t know how to teach it. It takes a long time to prep the classes.” The difficulty of learning to teach and to find the time to prepare, challenges the instructors. Jack, who has worked in the college system for several years, vividly remembered how he wanted to leave his job shortly after he began because he lacked training in education.

I was working in the industry and struggling with employees. I didn’t think they were coming out with what they needed to know. I remember the first semester here, I was ready to go back [to working in industry]. I was going to fulfill my contract and that was it. I was done....I had had it. I wanted to go back. It was long hours and kind of depressing because I didn't know anything about teaching. I was always comfortable in the lab but wasn't always in the classroom, I did a lot of my first teaching demonstrations by doing projects. My problem was, I was probably too hands-on. When I started, I just jumped in and maybe did too much to help them [students]. I looked at things I didn't get and what I thought students needed, and I taught that way. The 2nd year [teaching] was probably tougher than the first year. The first year I experienced it and then I knew what I wanted to change. But it [the second year] was the same thing, long hours and constantly making changes, something didn't work quite the way I wanted it to. It was always changing. If it wasn’t for my supervisor at the time I wouldn’t be here.
He gave credit to a strong administrator for helping him through this difficult period. Jack recognized the lack of training in pedagogy was a fundamental problem for him as new faculty member.

Theme 2

*The definition of work engagement for rural community college faculty members is rooted in passion for the field and for the community college system. It takes a student-centered approach, which matches the faculty members’ personal values.*

Within the rural community college systems, work engagement was multilayered just like the role itself. Participants emphasized the influence of positive attitude as well as a match with personal values. Cindy says “I do think that your attitude or your thoughts about the day are important. So I try to start the day with ‘I want to be good. I want to be a good mother. I want to be an effective educator.’ I say that every morning when I wake up, and that helps me through.” The administrators share the belief regarding optimism as it relates to student engagement. “It’s somebody who has a positive attitude; it’s somebody who takes a personal, vested interest in the student. And you can see that. I think a faculty person is doing a good job when I can go in and the lights are on in the classroom, the students are engaged by talking to one another, interacting with technology, engaged in the material.” The respondents conveyed passion related to their disciplines and teaching through a student centered focus. The faculty member participants talked with passion and enthusiasm. They shared a love and excitement for their field. As one faculty member stated, “I love a field that to some
people is unlovable”, they protect, advocate, and educate in disciplines and programs in which they are emotionally and academically connected.

As the participants discussed their appreciation for their chosen disciplines it sounded as if they were treating the field with the unconditional love a parent would show to a child. Participants showed a sense of pride as they talked about their discipline. Jack said “passion is probably the one word I’d have to use to describe my feelings toward my field. I’m passionate about the industry.” In addition to passion, a level of expertise was acknowledged. Larry described work engagement “if you’re engaged with your work, you enjoy it; you feel like you do a good job, I would like to think that I’m an expert in my subject areas. I want continuous improvement and keep up with my field and keep up with educational techniques, ideas, pedagogical techniques.”

The participants valued their role as a teacher. Julie said “I love the community college system; I like the teaching end of things.” Many participants shared Julie’s appreciation for teaching. “I love the community college system, what it stands for and the emphasis on teaching.” Cindy’s mentor told her “if you really want to teach you should go to the community college.” She discussed later her commitment to the community college system. “We live on a farm, so we’re not moving. But, if I were to move I would probably go to another community college, I don’t think I would go to a four-year [institution]. I do like the small size, I think we have something special because of that.”
In addition to appreciation for their respective fields and for teaching, the participants revealed an appreciation for the community college system overall. Three of the participants’ were themselves graduates of a community college. Nearly every instructor and both administrators noted the value and goals of the community college to the area it serves. Jack recognized the value of a community college, especially in times of economic downturn “now in this economy, two-year degrees are preparing students and getting them into the workforce quicker. Community colleges are probably more valuable than they have ever been.”

The participants worked at institutions that served the lowest socioeconomic regions of the state and identified the significance of the services provided to the region. “The concept of a community college is to improve your community.” Jack said “this part of our state needs our college, the K-12 enrollment is declining, the general population in our district is declining, but this area needs us, we make a difference, we have to educate people.” Another said “We are effective. So cost efficient.”

Personal values match

Personal values become significant in understanding work engagement by the interviewed faculty participants. Anna outlines her personal values as they relate to work, emphasizing the significance of working hard, valuing education, and maintaining a perspective that all jobs have up’s and down’s:

You will never find the perfect workplace you have to weigh all of your options. Looking at it now I base my career choices on my family time. It is
how much effort I put into it too. I’m no longer on probation, I could put little effort but I would never morally do that. The things I value are honesty, integrity, and wanting people to be successful but knowing where the limits are. I value education. It’s been really good for my students that I am going back to school. In my summer class we talk about education and the opportunities available to a person when they are educated. I’ve been impressed with how many students continue on. Respect is another value of mine. It is important to find humor in everything or you can’t handle it all. The job allows me to have a good family life and that is huge for me.

Julie explained her classroom approach mixed with her personal insights and views regarding student persistence, high expectations, and treating students with compassion.

I am student-centered, open discussion oriented rather than lecture based. I am a participant with the class, not the dictator, participant teacher rather than lecture-based. I think I am friendly, outgoing, and have a solid reputation. I am not overly strict but compassionate and hold high expectations. I think it is important to realize things happen to people, computers crash, grandparents die, cars break down, and babies are born. I’ve never understood how people could be so stuck on their deadline to not hear a student’s story. I would want someone to listen and try to understand me. I give students a deadline and then a 5 day grace period. I don’t need the excuse, just turn it in to me. It doesn’t make that much of a difference in my
world. I’m still going to grade it. If a student perseveres, that is more important. It works for me but it is not the philosophy of others. I think I’m considered a popular faculty member, I always have full classes. Not because it is easy, you will work hard but always be treated with respect. If I treat them with compassion and then they go treat five others with compassion we are living in a better world. The compassion chain continues.

Not only is Julie discussing her personal philosophy but she has found ways to successfully integrate that into her role as a faculty member. She is able to hold high expectations, while treating students with respect that she believes all people deserve. Setting high expectations was another common pattern. Jack’s philosophy on life and personal values match his work. They influence his connections to his supervisors, students, and the college:

I work hard, I play hard. I get that across to the students. Probably when I was younger that bothered me in what other people thought because I wanted people to like me. But I don’t care anymore I do what I need to do to get the job done. I work as hard as I can with what I have. That satisfies me. I’m more comfortable in my own skin. The college takes care of me. I’m not, I probably should be, but I’m not in it necessarily for the money because when you’re dead and gone your money won’t go anywhere. But I would rather be remembered for being good at something like teaching. It means a lot to me that I can have a beer with the supervisor, if we go to an assessment meeting or a conference out of town. We can relax and talk shop or sports; I value that.
Jack is genuine with his students, coworkers, and administrators. He highlighted the importance of enjoying what you do, while emphasizing the significance of having an effective skill set:

You have to make it fun, you need to have fun and you need to show students that. I had good instructor and he had a passion for his field, I never forgot that. I love to work in my field, it’s not the most profitable thing but I have a passion for it, I’m good at it, and I want to parlay that to my students and try to have fun with it. My philosophy on life, career, anything else is if you don’t have pride, you don’t have anything. I want to be better; I treat it kind of like a competition. I want to be better than the next instructor and next technician and show that to my students. We are a small town, but we've gone to Nationals and last year a student finished 4th in the nation. The year before we were 3rd, we typically rank 6th or 7th, our lowest score has been 11th.

Outside of matching personal values, the next greatest impact for faculty members work engagement is student success. A significant amount of job satisfaction comes from helping students grow both academically and personally. Student success is a tool that is both motivating and energizing for the faculty members:

Today we were in the lab and we celebrate, we always joke about celebrating little victories, depending on the students ability we might celebrate the fact that he got a little thing right, but for another I need to challenge him. But seeing those successes and seeing their confidence and seeing them get
excited, you know problem solving, you know just seeing the student succeed probably drives me more than anything. But it is the really about the success for each student, sometimes we celebrate a C because that is great work for that student. Or on the other hand, when a student finishes a project and it looks really good or as good or better than people in the industry that really pumps me up. We can see it. We have students that caught on and they are doing a better job than some people in the field that drives me. Seeing my students in the field doing well, making good money, making more than I am and being successful. That probably drives me more than anything.

Jack describes student achievement as multidimensional; some students greatly surpass his expectations, while others simply show improvement from one day to the next. Both levels of achievement were equally motivating for Jack. Larry shared the same experience in regards to student engagement. “There are individual lectures and classes, now and then, that you walk out and say oh man I really made some progress there and everybody is asking great question.” Kim furthers the notion as she describes the motivation and energy that comes when students draw a connection between classroom content and practical application:

I love it when students really get it. Sometimes even when a student quotes you or they say something you said in class. It’s a really cool feeling...ahhhh they were listening and it is energizing. You show them something and they act like the care about it by asking more questions. It’s cool when they
connect the information outside of the class, that's a real boost, when students connect the textbook material to real life situations.

Cindy discussed the multitude of experiences in regard to student expectations and achievement. For her, realistic expectations coupled with a willingness to work hard and engage in the material is energizing:

Every experience is different so it depends... if I’m working with a student who thinks he/she should get a chance to pass the class after getting 15% on a midterm, then I'm completely de-energized but of course most of the time helping students is energizing. I guess so much so that after 4 ½ hours of helping students or a 2 hour lab, I’m usually wiped out, physically and mentally.

Time away

The dedication, vigor, and absorption in their role as a community college faculty member came in two parts: one is due to extended breaks and the other came by understanding the cycle of the academic year. All of the participants expressed an appreciation for the time away that is built into the academic calendar. The time away provided an opportunity to rejuvenate and reflect. Julie discussed how the summer break impacts her. “I get the second half of the summer where I don’t have to be on campus. I use that deliberately as my rejuvenation time. And I really try and take care of myself on breaks. I make a point of not scheduling anything work related during that time off. So I can get a break.” Anna feels the same renewal of energy and spirit in the summer “I can’t beat the schedule and in
the summer I realize why I love my job. The summer break is such a rejuvenator.”

Not only are the extended breaks used as a time to relax and reflect upon their work, but it helps circumvent feelings of burnout. Jack illustrated this:

I would not do this if I couldn't have that break. There are people I've worked with back home and they don’t understand why I need a seven week break to recharge my batteries. When we graduate students in June, I don’t think about any of this for about two weeks, I’m outside, I’m camping, and I’m completely away from it. Then I start thinking about changing syllabus and curriculum. But if I had to teach year round and maybe just had a week here or there I wouldn’t do it. I’d get out of it because that’s where your burn-out would happen. It'd kill me.

Summer sessions also provide an opportunity to really feel engaged in their work. All participants gave credit to summer as their favorite time, either because of the extended break or because of the concentrated focus on a subject they enjoy. Jack said “I love the summer session; I love the topics I teach. It's more relaxed around here.” Larry supported the same idea “Summer time is my favorite class because we get to go on hikes and incorporate content.” Cindy enjoyed the opportunity to have a narrowed focus, “I enjoy the summer session the most because I only have one class with 20 students, that’s the only subject and that is all I teach. I stay much more focused when it’s one class and receive higher evaluations.”
The second part of defining work engagement in rural community college faculty members is understanding the cycle of the academic year. There are times that create more stress than others. Kim said:

I love the start of the term. There is so much energy and focus. I really don’t enjoy the end. There are so many demands. You are wrapping up so many things and also trying to get things ready for the next term. You are grading student’s work and trying to create a syllabus and work packets for the next session.

Kim talks about the simultaneous pressure of the end and beginning of the semester. Jack also recognizes the cyclical nature of the work and the need to take breaks, especially when feeling overwhelmed:

We describe it down here [in the department] as extreme highs and it can be extreme lows too, but after you’ve been here awhile you start understanding the long-term, learning to pace yourself and not burn yourself out. You can’t do the long hours every day, there’s times when you have to get out of here and go to your kids’ basketball game or something.

Jack also said "I feel energized when I come back from summer break or Spring Break, Christmas Break. I’ve had a chance to recharge my battery and get it going again. Probably least energized, you know you’re getting ready for finals and you’re stressed and trying to get everything completed.” The overwhelming majority reported an increase and decrease of feelings of engagement over the course of a
year. Cindy also recognized the end of the semester as being difficult, but also includes the middle of the term as well:

It happens usually right in the middle and right at the end. The middle is... I think you reach a point where everybody should be moving into a direction. We have the foundation laid and the newness wears off and I just feel overwhelmed. And then at the end you have all these deadlines to meet and students want all these grades put in, even though it might be one or two assignments that I need to put in. They're pressuring me. “When are you going to have that done?” That makes me feel overwhelmed. Just that question makes me feel like I'm behind.

The deadlines are a source of stress; coupled with meeting the typical demands of the job. Julie discussed how she handles increased work load and demands:

My burnout time periods are times I get so busy that I don't have time for me. And then I experience a lot of what I feel is personal burn-out. There's not enough time for the people who should matter the most, my kids, my family, because life is too busy with 85 whatever's I need to do on campus. I have had to deliberately choose things like I will not take my computer home that needs to stay at work. Because if I take it home, then instead of relaxing with my kids on the couch, I'm checking my email or thinking oh I can just quick get this done. Instead of doing what I should be doing as a mom or a wife at that point. The other hats in my life. When it interferes with my personal life then I feel like okay I have got to take a step back. It's just about treating
yourself well in the process and so sometimes I give myself little holidays. Like, I'll say ok it's really feeling panicky; the panic and the anxiety are ramping up so okay this Friday I am going to go have a pedicure. And during that time I won't do anything work related. I won't do anything. It's like just in this time I'm going to read a trashy romance novel, I'm not going to think about work. And sometimes that's a challenge.

She identified the challenge to disconnect from work but understands the importance of the break. The work-life balance is an issue for many of the faculty participants. Kim said “to be prepared for Monday sometimes I have to come in over the weekend and sacrifice time with my kids. But when you are passionate about something and you want to be good at it you aren't willing to do it poorly.”

One college follows a four-day work week. The three faculty members at that institution discuss the schedules relevance to work engagement. Kim says “I have a great schedule, I work four nine hour days a week and I get to have 11 weeks off every year, it's hard to beat.” Whereas Julie does not feel the four day work week is a break, rather it is used as a “catch up day:”

I never have a Friday off. That's a hole, to me that's a giant myth, that we have Friday's off. Most people I know have something that you are grading on a Friday. I never really have a Friday off, you are catching up on work. You may be home but your grading all of things that you couldn't get graded in the four little days that you had to grade them. I don't know anybody except for maybe support staff and even support staff comes in a lot of times
on Fridays and works. Also, Friday is errand day for everybody that works here. If you go to any place in town, you will run into eight people from work. Everybody’s at Wal-Mart, Target, Hy-Vee, Fareway on Friday because it’s you know, “your day off”, but at the same time it’s really not your day off because everywhere you go it’s like “Oh, hi!” And then you’ve got to catch up to find out what’s going on in their department.

Within this statement she portrays the time off provides an opportunity to keep on track with the demands of the job but also connect to other employees. Julie did not express the shorter work week as an escape for rejuvenation, but as an extension of work. This was also supported by Larry:

I’m usually working on the 5th day. That’s when I grade papers and lab reports and writing tests and stuff. The advantage is you don’t have to come into the office. And if you get your work done, then you do have the opportunity to take a 3 day weekend somewhere every now and then. So that’s an advantage.

Theme 3

All participants expressed the desire for constructive feedback from students and administrators, as well as purposeful peer interactions and trainings.

The value of student evaluations

An overriding finding was the inadequacy of the current feedback systems for faculty member improvement. Community colleges utilize teacher evaluations as a
primary source of providing feedback and evaluation for instructors.

Overwhelmingly, instructors do not find the surveys useful in their professional development. The participants often feel the teacher evaluation system is overused, illustrated by Jack’s response: “We’re surveyed here and I counted it up once and I think there were about 13 [different surveys in an academic year] by students, employers, advisors, and supervisors.”

Many instructors believe there is a disconnect between the evaluation results and what actually occurs in the classroom. Students often report experience based on single incidents during the semester or do not provide enough details to accurately report their perspective. As a result, instructors must ferret out valid teacher evaluation information. Kim describes the difficulty with the instrument when she says, “many of the questions seem to be too vague; sometimes the students don’t understand the meaning, and therefore, the results aren’t valid. I wonder if the questions could be worded less academically and written more for student understanding.”

The student evaluation surveys do not provide constructive feedback for the instructors, therefore inhibits their ability to change pedagogy. Anna said:

Learning how to teach is overwhelming. I wish student perception forms were more in depth and detailed. People will write good things, but I need the comments to be more detailed. I have never had any bad comments from students. I don’t know how some people stick with it when they get bad evaluations. The way we use them [evaluations] is not enough. For example,
I started using clickers in my classroom. We need to evaluate my classroom to see the effectiveness. I need administrators and other faculty to see how using the clickers affected my classroom. There is something to gain from the information on the student evaluations, but the tool itself is not very helpful.

Anna pinpoints the difficulty of using the data from the teacher evaluations because it does not suggest improvements or enough detail to make modifications. In fact, it can become detrimental to the instructor’s confidence, especially for new faculty members in career and technical programs. In her statement she recognized the value of the evaluation, but the tool as currently designed has limited applicability. In most cases students have not yet had the training to impart knowledge. Therefore they are not in a position to help improve the instructor’s skills, especially the way the current instruments are being designed. The participants felt the student’s feedback was more about “complaining” or “venting” rather than an emphasis on constructive criticism. For example, a participant discussed the student comment “make the class shorter.” She said, “I can’t really do anything about that; we can’t make less content or shorter classes.”

Two participants, Cindy and Kim distinctly described the negative emotional experience associated with the year-end teacher evaluation results even when they received positive responses. Cindy said:

I know student perception forms are supposed to be a tool to help us, but I really hate going over them. I suppose the only ones I really focus on are the
ones I do bad on. But yeah, I usually score high on enthusiasm so I forget about that one. I do not think about the positive things that they tell me. Because human nature, you know it takes ten good positive things to make up for one bad one. Because even if my administrator says “oh yeah, this looks good” I take every comment to heart and I dwell on it all summer long. Students complain about the same things every year, most of which is due to the amount of courses I teach. They always say I’m not very organized. I’ve worked really hard to be organized with what I’m doing the next day. And of course it’s all written down so if students come ask me “What are we doing tomorrow” I’m like “I don’t know I have to get my paper” or “What did we do yesterday?” “I don’t know I have to get my syllabus.” I don’t know if they’re saying that, that’s being disorganized because I really love the planning aspect. I try to think of ways to improve in those areas and become better. Another comment that comes up a lot is that I don’t explain the assignments very well so I try to think how do I explain the? I wish I had more detailed information of what I didn’t explain very well.

Teacher evaluations by students may negatively impact instructors by undervaluing the work they have put into preparing for classes:

Every single time I go over those [year-end evaluations] I get irritated about things, they don’t get it at all. They have no idea how much time I put into this and they come and may or may not be listening. It can be very disheartening when you are feeling like you are working really hard to help them learn
practical information. When people make catty comments or comments that aren’t valid or are not changeable (Kim).

The faculty members believe the students respond based on isolated situations or an experience they had, rarely reflective of the quality of instruction or knowledge obtained. Jack provides an example:

The negative comments can beat you up. Because if I do student evaluations that day and if I just chewed them out for being tardy or being absent and then here you are getting your evaluation and you know you’re gonna get creamed on it. They aren’t always relevant. Here is an example for you. I bought stickers and when they earned a 90% they got a sticker. It became kind of a running joke with the students but they wanted them. It was desired to get that sticker. I had a student that never got one, his score wasn’t ever high enough. On his evaluation of the course he beat me up because he never got a sticker. He thought it was dumb. He thought it was childish, he didn’t see that it was a type of motivator to get them going, and it worked.

The instructors believed the students provided valuable feedback by the level of engagement they demonstrate or questions they ask in the classroom. As Larry explained:

I can’t think of any specific examples but I’m sure there have been times when somebody’s comments lead to, you know changing something here and there.
Mostly you end up reading them and wonder what class these people were sitting in because I never said anything like that. Um, I’m always available to do this...you know, so, most of the time the comments are off the wall and not all that useful. I guess I like to think that in my classes I’m very, very approachable and just talking with students and just getting verbal feedback and nonverbal feedback from students and I think that’s more valuable to me than these evaluation forms. Where I don’t even think they were paying attention in class when they filled it out.

Real time feedback in a direct manner is what is most valuable to the participants. Anna gave an example: “I had a student say ‘I wish you taught this all the time, you just make it more enjoyable.’ I thought those are the days you walk away and say I enjoy doing this. It takes a long time to realize that everyone teaches differently, but it was moments like that that just made me feel good.” Because of the workload demands, it was refreshing for Anna to hear praise from the student.

The timing of the evaluation results influenced the effectiveness and validity of the responses. Kim said “sometimes I don’t get the results until six weeks after the class has finished and it is hard for me to remember the context.” The student responses in the evaluations have very little to do with how much they learned in the course. Cindy discussed this issue as she applied her own form of student feedback: “I asked a class this summer questions about what makes a successful student and what kind of teacher do you want that helps you learn. I got comments back that had nothing to do with getting their papers back quickly, which is often a
response I get on my evaluations.” It seems to be a parallel process, faculty like students, desire timely, constructive feedback regarding their work.

The remaining two participants’ responses help guide the students through the process and because of that, feel that they get more meaningful feedback:

I always make sure that I walk in and I tell students okay, now this is the last piece we are going to do today. This is evaluating the class. And here’s what I want you to do. I want you to be honest. I want you to tell me what you liked about the class. And I’d like you to tell me things that you think could be improved or changed.” Because what I find is that students don’t know what to put on there. I said, “so I want you to think about it. Think about the textbook, think about the things we did in class. Think about this. I say take your time on this.” I said, “I promise you I do read them and I promise you that I do make changes based on what you say in here.” I tend to have really good positive feedback from students. I’m never offended at what they say. You will always get the critic--the student who wasn’t engaged to begin with, they weren’t interested, they hated the class. Whatever, we will always get that. But I have also gotten really good responses and good ideas from student perceptions. But I think it’s because I do coach them and encourage them to be honest.

Feedback from administrators

In addition to the feedback provided by students, participants discussed the importance of administrators’ feedback. Faculty members’ responses showed that
receiving timely, constructive feedback was a key to their feeling positively engaged in their work. An overwhelming majority discussed the importance of “having people beyond students knowing what I do.” Anna appreciated “being recognized for the work I do; most of mine comes from students and it would be nice to hear from administrators and peers.” Cindy supported that point of view when she added “I would like feedback from someone other than a student” Larry also explained his experience with observation:

Our previous Dean would come to classes every now and then and sit in and actually have an idea of what you’re doing, how you’re doing and... our current Dean doesn’t do that. I think it’d be nice to have your superior having a better idea of what you’re doing.

At this institution the student evaluations are the talking piece for your yearly communication with your Dean and those don’t necessarily feel like those are very valuable as a reflection. Having the dean observe the class is thing that comes to me that would improve that meeting. We have a good Dean, even though she doesn’t come in to look at your classes, but she’s a good Dean, she's supports us 110%. (Larry)

Though Larry appreciates his Dean's support, he wishes she would visit his classes to gain a first-hand perspective of what he’s doing. When asked about how to create a better system here was Cindy's response:

A feedback system to meet regularly with faculty members and administrators so that they get a chance to see what we’re doing in the
classroom. My evaluation that I just went through, I’ve been there 15 years and this is my 2nd evaluation. He came into 1 class of 10 students for an hour and a half. He saw one little snippet so I think evaluations should include much more time with the faculty. This is only the second time an administrator has been in my classroom. So that in itself, you know if they didn’t come into my classroom because they realized that “oh, she’s doing okay.” By him coming in, it’s almost like, there’s recognition there that I’m doing okay. I am doing okay. He saw it. Yeah! And he had the opportunity to say, that’s a good evaluation and sometimes that’s all I need. That tiny reward.

Administrators, deans, and supervisors play a pivotal role in recognition; this was acknowledged by faculty members and administrators alike. Anna stated:

I appreciate when administrators are actively engaged in what we do. Advocating for our profession. Working on complementing others across campus is a common theme that could improve on our campus. When you address everyone with one issue it causes animosity for the person when it is directed to the group. It’s frustrating when administrators don’t directly address the individual or the department.

An administrator mirrored the need to recognize faculty work:

I think that recognizing how much they pour into what they do and telling them thank you, goes a million miles. I mean I really don’t think it’s hard. I’m very simple about it. I think if you, if you can empathize with them a little bit,
recognize what they do, and I just think thank you goes a ton. It goes a really long way. Because I do appreciate what they do, you know, they go above and beyond and more often than not. Knowing that not every situation is gonna turn out all rainbows and butterflies but that as long as they've done everything they can to try to make the situation positive or learning experience a positive one. That we’re grateful for what they’ve put into it and in turn I think that makes them engaged and makes them want to continue to do well. I think that it is so important to recognize people. I really do, employee recognition to me is huge. I have thank you cards, if I see somebody do something that I think is pretty great, I’ll just write a little thank you and stick it in the mail. I do keep a list of who I have sent those to. There are people that do a really good job all the time that you don’t recognize because they always do a really good job. That’s their normal. And so I want to make sure that I’m kind of keeping track. And if there’s somebody that I’ve never checked that sticks out to me. Um, is there something I can offer them and do they need some staff development.

Kim acknowledged the positive and supportive role her supervisor plays in influencing her work:

She helps us come to solutions; she is supportive and energizes us. It’s like a little pat on the back every time we meet with her. She gives feedback I like what you are thinking but maybe think about this or could you also do this? She also says things like ‘you handled that situation so well, thank you.’ I can’t tell you how many times she has told me good job. Especially when
there were long lapses of time I was working alone in the department essentially doing two jobs. It was very overwhelming. I was teaching my classes, doing the administrative work, helping the sub. She told me the entire time ‘I cannot tell you how much I appreciate you.’ Honestly, it was too much and if that it wasn’t for her I would’ve gone to look for another job. But she was constantly telling me thank you and trying to support me in any way she could. Especially when you think to yourself “does anyone even know I’m doing all of this stuff.” She made efforts to thank me.

In discussions related to recognition all participants described systems or lack of systems in place to recognize faculty at their respective college. One institution had a program which recognized achievements of faculty based on work, while the other college recognized the length of time a person was employed. Kim, who works at the college who recognizes work based achievements, won two awards in the past academic year. One accolade was from her national organization, the other was through the institution. Her supervisor recommended her for both and continuously encouraged her throughout the process. Each year this particular community college recognizes the top 20% of their faculty which is accompanied with a raise. “It was nice to be recognized in front of the entire college for my work, the raise was nice obviously, but for me I really did not care about the money. It was the recognition because I have worked very hard for this department and I really wanted to be acknowledged for that.” Larry described an experience when he received a college award based on the quality of his work, but his story had a less positive outcome. When he received his recognition, Larry articulated a sense of
pride for receiving the award; however, a few years later the college discontinued the award and it changed the meaning for him. “I received the ASHLI award (A Student Higher Learning Initiative) for going above and beyond with students, a few years later they stopped giving that particular award. So it lowered the value, I still have the certificate hanging on my wall, but people walking into my office would have no idea what it was, if they weren't here in 2004.” The award was devalued because it was no longer given. According to Larry, it limited the institutional significance and decreased peer recognition. The meaning and acknowledgement were no longer associated with pride, instead replaced by a feeling of emptiness.

Anna, a member of the college that does not have a work-based recognition program said, “I think one of the problems is no one acknowledges anybody. Our college gives awards for longevity but it is not acknowledging your work. I think it would be good for administration to do, acknowledge people's work.” Cindy supported the notion and explained further:

There's no rewards at our school. I mean at 15 years, whoo hoo! The 10 year reward, whoo hoo! There’s no singling out, there’s no stipend, no "hey you’re doing a brand new way of teaching, I think you should get a $500 reward or even a pat on the back. I’ve thought about this. When I become rich I would have a fund. I would set up a fund that rewarded teachers for doing something really awesome that semester. And maybe not just one [instructor], but several would get rewarded and recognized. Recognition is probably something that I am selfishly saying. I think that I got into
education not realizing that there are no such things as that, pat on the back. It’s more of an internal, ‘okay, I know I helped people’s minds expand’ and that’s good enough. I think that just recognition from administration saying, good job is important. Even being given a chance to talk to instructors about what they have done in classes would be really cool. When other instructors tell me of some of the neat things that they did and how it worked, and how it didn’t work, I get inspired. And then I think, ‘oh maybe I could try this and do that or switch it up and make it fit for my class.’ So just that in itself is enough recognition for me, the money thing is a wish.

As Cindy notes, another piece of the feedback challenge is to create occasions to learn valuable and effective teaching strategies from peers. The need for quality peer training opportunities, accompanies the need for quality administrator and student feedback. Many faculty participants recognized the benefits they gain from peer review and peer observations. Often the participants, especially the career and technical instructors, were surprised by the lack of required observation time. Frequently, in fields outside of education this is the first step in the training process. Kim said “I was shocked that I was never required to observe another teacher when I started. I had to initiate it myself; I asked another teacher if I could watch their class. Coming from my previous work experience this was surprising.”

The busy schedules, as discussed in the initial theme, reoccurred during discussions of peer review and training. Cindy noted “I would love to but I just don’t have time. We are all so busy it’s just hard to find time to meet with other
instructors to discuss what’s happening,” in reference to pedagogy and technology.

Kim described a project she is trying to spearhead related to peer to peer feedback:

If I could improve one thing it is peer engagement. People always say teaching is a lonely profession, because you are out there on your own you don’t see others doing it. You don’t always know if you are doing a good or bad job, there’s no one really out there giving you feedback on how to improve or what is working or what isn’t. I’ve kind of started this little project that hasn’t taken off yet. But the idea formed from taking a course in my Master’s program, it’s on peer observation. I’ve been asked by others to come watch my classroom. I always think I wonder what they are going to see? When I first started I was at a new teacher course, a guy was telling us he got up the guts to video tape himself after 5 years. I thought it was funny he said ‘I had to have the guts to do it” and then I thought ‘I guess I wouldn’t want to do that either.’ So I’m trying to start a voluntary project, to give brief comments on what they thought you did well, really just to share ideas. I think getting feedback from another instructor, someone who isn’t worried about “is this going to be on the test’ is so valuable. Even if it isn’t from an experienced instructor, it is important to see someone else’s style, see whether the students are engaged, are they [student] acting the same way in their class as they do in my classroom. I just think it is something we could do more of and it is so interesting to see all the approaches. I think you can pick up good ideas. Always people say, ‘where would we get the time from.’

The project that I’m trying to start, I don’t know how much interest we will
have, but even if we can get 5 or 6 people involved. It's just to observe another teacher, at least one time a term. I think there could be some really great ideas come from it, I just think it could be so interesting.

Larry also had a similar experience. As program director he tried to implement a voluntary system to observe peers, but he said “my colleagues were not interested; I suppose they didn’t think they had enough time.” The overburdened role is a recurring theme in the experience of the full-time faculty members.

The final piece of the feedback puzzle, according to participants, related to opportunities for professional development. Trainings were found to energize as well as de-energize faculty members based on relevance of the topic and the speaker. As Anna says:

The meetings at the beginning of the semester de-energize me. I often feel like I have all of this stuff to get done and I don't get paid enough to listen to this. My issue with trainings is they hardly ever relate back to college academia. I get that is it hard when you are on a campus with multiple disciplines to find something to fit everyone, but the timing of it just feels like a waste of time. I have so many other things to do to get ready for classes to start. But when I go to trainings in my field, I feel very energized.

Often, on-campus professional development sessions are scheduled during critical planning times leaving faculty members feeling overwhelmed. Due to the timing, they are more critical of the value and relevance of the material; thus compounding the already limited time to complete the overburdened roles.
Anna noted her renewed perspective after field-based professional development, Larry agreed when he described his attendance at the annual state meeting for his discipline:

The meeting is always near the end of September and I usually come back from that energized. That’s a really good meeting. We get most of the teachers in our discipline from around the state come to that meeting. I know all the other [discipline] teachers at all the other community colleges. There are presentations and things going on there. You learn a lot about what you are doing compared to what everybody else is doing in the state.

He values the networking opportunity with peers. Cindy also noted the impacts professional development opportunities have on her classroom environment and ultimately student learning:

I went to the conference in Chicago for the Higher Learning Commission and came across a professor there that described the different learning styles of the students today. He said the flipped classroom is how we should be teaching this group, they learn best this way. And after about two years of thinking about it, wondering ‘would this work.’ I jumped in and tried it, even feeling underprepared. But I like it. I actually have done an assessment on it and the exam scores went up like 10 to 12% each exam throughout the semester.
Although Cindy felt unprepared she was willing to implement a new teaching strategy she learned at a conference. The new strategy, similar to the experience shared by Larry, had a direct impact on student achievement.

One downfall noted by participants is the time sacrificed to attend the professional development. Jack described his experience:

I try to go during Christmas break so I don't have to cancel class. I think I'm allowed I think it's six or twelve days that I can go do training but I hate to cancel class. I would rather go on Christmas break. A lot of times I do it to travel, I just ask to be reimbursed for the class cost and that's it, but I love going to those.

Faculty members and administrators alike discussed the availability of professional development opportunities. The requests from faculty members are typically reflective of the college's budget. An administrator said “their requests are always fiscally conservative.” For example Cindy said “some years when the budget is low I don’t ask to go to trainings because I know money is tight”. The administrators supported the faculty's belief of the value placed on professional development:

The college does do a good job supporting professional development. We do have funding for staff development so that staff, any staff or faculty can apply. There is a committee to approve requests. And really they rarely say no, I mean really, because people don’t ask for things they don’t need, I mean they aren’t going to Vegas for a ten day conference or anything. They come back so refreshed.
Theme 4

All participants believe work engagement to be important for the community, the college, and for individual and student success. However, the majority of participants indicated there is a cost to work engagement.

It was not surprising all participants found work engagement to be important. There were four subthemes 1) the impact on student success; 2) strong team and family-like atmosphere; 3) community; and 4) sacrifices are involved in work engagement. Each faculty member expressed appreciation for an opportunity to discuss the topic of work engagement. Participants reflected on characteristics as they related to work engagement which included enthusiasm, positive attitude, humor, and an optimistic outlook. Both Jack and Larry said “sometimes we have to make lemons into lemonade.”

Student achievement

The first subtheme relates to student achievement. Faculty members view their work engagement as critical to student success. Kim said:

Students know if you like what you do and are passionate about your topic. We’ve all had teachers that didn’t seem to care and that is draining. Everybody has also had really great teachers who love what they do and that inspires. It is important for faculty to be engaged because it influences students. It’s about modeling what you want from them [students].
Work engagement was important not only for individual fulfillment but also student engagement. The energy and dedication of the instructor impacts the learning environment. Jack said "some days you can sell ice to an Eskimo and things are working". He also recognized his attitude and enthusiasm influenced the students’ attitude and performance. Being engaged in your work is “really a choice you make” Julie stated.

Accepting change and ambiguity comes in many forms for rural community college faculty. In many cases it can add to dedication and motivation. Cindy describes embracing change, even in the midst of uncertainty, as a significant component to student engagement and ultimately her own work engagement. She discusses changes in pedagogy:

I’m still so under prepared to make the change to a flipped classroom. I don’t have all the skills or the comfort zone to say, “I’m going to switch gears in the middle of things.” I don’t have that confidence yet. I had to remind myself that this is a new procedure and I am going to mess up and it’s okay because I can see that students are learning better and they’re engaged and they’re energized. I just have to remind myself. When I see them engaged it always motivates me.”

Many faculty members said their motivation is heightened when learning is occurring for students. Larry said “it is really cool when you see the light bulb go on.” The faculty members adjust to their student needs, whether it be offering additional classes, providing extra tutoring, or changing their schedule to
accommodate students. Jack explains how being adaptable provides benefits for him and the students he educates:

I self-inflict, my Tuesday and Thursday go to 4:30 because my students have to take a general education. By moving to a later afternoon I have the 2nd year students alone and it gives me more one on one time with them and then the first year students stay later in the day. It's the same amount of time for the students to be here, but it just added to my time. The bad thing is the longer day for me and sometimes I don't go to meetings because of that, the good part is I get more one to one time with students. So it works. I actually really enjoy the one on one time it provides.

He was empowered to make the decision. It was a decision that sacrificed his time, but helped the students and therefore increased his personal satisfaction and student engagement.

Significance of work engagement

In the second subtheme all participants outlined the significance of work engagement as it creates a strong team and family-like atmosphere. Working with quality peers allows for a shared workload and a feeling of connectedness to the college and community. There was a significant focus on a family atmosphere. Julie talked about the longevity and loyalty of employees:

So the people who are working there [rural community college] tend to stay for a very long time and we have a greater loyalty and we have more full-time
people than we do part-time people. The structures are different, but that also means engagement-wise we have this family sort of environment, we are closer to the people we work with. And the close relationships balance the burnout.

Many of the participants discussed the college as a family. Jack explained “I bring the values I was raised with, you know hard work, loyalty, integrity and I want to do my part. I want that from others too, I want to know I can rely on them.” Julie explains how she was welcomed to the family:

At the first convocation, in my first year, they welcomed all of us [new hires] to the family. On the first day I went, I don't need a family, I have a family, I need a job. Now I look at it years later, and go it’s such a special place to work and those relationships are so important; and we joke about, oh it’s the college connection. Oh welcome to the family, once you are in the family you’ll never get back out, but there’s truth there. And it’s like, you may be nuts you may be crazy but your our nutter and you are now crazy with us. So come on. You know? And we will joke; I say things like “Oh, its Cousin Kate. How are you doing Cousin Kate?” I make a joke out of it. It’s like and here’s sister Jen. And you know. There’s one of the faculty, the head of culinary arts, I refer to him as Father O’Mara and he refers to me as Sister Julie. It’s you know, because we are always saving somebody. So there are these internal jokes that have developed over time. And you just know who you can trust, who you can’t trust, who’s
reliable, who’s not. And until people prove themselves in this new world, work world, there’s a level of ‘we are going to see how you do first’ and see which side of the fence you are going to be on.

Julie’s reaction represents a distinct difference between an engaged employee and as others described “someone punching the time-clock”. Larry explains further “you see some of everything, just like with the student population. There are some faculty, who in my impression, just come in and do their job that day and then they’re done. But probably more of them are on that wanting to help end of the spectrum.” A sense of reliability and trust develops as faculty members successfully navigate the commitment to the work, the students, and the college. Underlying all of this is an aspect of fun and humor, which becomes appreciated and needed in a line of work that can be highly demanding. Anna and Jack both said “if you can’t laugh about it you are in trouble.” A value is placed on people who are willing to help and “go beyond” the designated job description to “be part of the family.” The participants held high expectations for themselves and those around. As Jack describes:

I have high expectations for coworkers just like I do of my students. When I want to go to another office on campus, I expect them to be there between the hours they say they will be. I’m on a timeline; I need to get stuff done. But when nobody is around, I have problems with that. You have a job to do, do it.
In a field filled with time constraints, deadlines, and student demands depending on each other is fundamental to success. Participants appreciate the quality of work in colleagues. Jack continued:

I admire people that are good at their jobs, but I don’t have much tolerance if they’re not, especially if they’re not giving it what they need to. We have a lot of good people working here and you know most of them will exceed your expectations on what you need.

Work engagement is a shared experience, when people are effectively working together a strong team develops:

You just need to know that, there's just the expectation that people can count on you and people know if they can count on you or they can't count on you. It's like "well, we will ask this person because they volunteer for everything. Don't ask that person over there." But there's an expectation that we will all do certain things because it is a very small world. And it's a small world in terms of the environment of the college and a small world in terms of the environment of the community with it being a rural community. Everybody has a connection to the college and you've got to keep that in mind with every interaction that you have. So I think there's a consistent thought pattern about being involved, and that to me, is an expectation of engagement that is in place and if you aren't a team player, people figure it out real fast (Julie).
A genuine appreciation develops when colleagues are “pulling their weight” but caution is exercised when it’s not overtly demonstrated. Kim adds to the idea “you need to trust that people will help you out, it also means you need to be willing to help them as well.” Anna also illustrated this point in regards to communication:

Communication is key in the process. In my field it is communication that makes the team a success. When we have dangerously poor [students], you expect everyone to pull their weight. I will be the one hard on them. Sometimes you can’t fail them if someone gave them a high enough grade. We know they are not safe. It creates meetings, paperwork and a large investment of time. I spent twenty hours on one student in two to four weeks. I had a semester when I had seven students and four were very poor. That was a semester I hated my job. It felt like it was not fair. It is not my fault, that we have people refusing to flunk people. I can’t help the stronger students.

When there is a weak link in the chain, someone else picks up the work, potentially leading away from engagement to burnout. High standards become crucial in early training experiences for new members of the “family.”

People give new faculty a lot more understanding of screw-ups, “well they’re new[faculty] we need to give them some time”. “Do we in this case?” You know? “Really?” “Cause don’t you think that maybe we should lean on that?” We need to come down harder and say no this is important to the college and here’s why. We need to take a bigger stand. We need to not be afraid if we
are going to lose them and really use it as a learning tool. Explain it to them, ‘Here's why, if you treat people better maybe you’d have better responses.’

We don't have a very good mentoring program, in fact we have a terrible mentoring program.

Expectations need to be explained to new faculty members as part of improvement of mentoring programs. Kim recalled an experience when she was welcomed to the campus.

There was a lady I knew that works here, I did not know her well, but I knew her. She said “welcome to the campus, we are so glad to have you. The first year is hard”. It was all in the same breath and I thought to myself that was interesting. Now I understand, she was trying to comfort me and tell me it would be ok. Looking back I really appreciate the gesture. There are so many unwritten rules and expectations that just happen that you aren’t prepared for. It would be really nice to have a better way to train new people that will help them and us and the college.

Peers have high expectations and want to provide coaching and assistance to help new faculty members succeed. A strong focus was placed on educating the “new family member” to help create a strong team. To help them understand the values of the college and the importance of work engagement. Many linked work engagement to the level of understanding of the culture of the community college as well as the traditions within the institution. For example, Julie provides this advice to newcomers:
Get involved. Be very open and be very cognizant of the traditions and the power structures that are in place. Because traditions are very much like traditions in a high school, once they are established they stay. So we’ve always done it this way, so we are going to continue doing it this way because it works. It’s effective. And doesn’t mean you might not have the best new idea, but we could add to it, but be very aware of what the tradition is and what the historical precedent is. Before you try to change the world. That goes for if you are coming in and taking over for how somebody else did it, figure out how they did first "I’m the new such and such." "Oh okay." So you are the new Becky because Becky was in that position for 30 years, probably. So figure out how Becky did it [the job], and before you change the wheel, so you don’t make everyone uncomfortable. Change needs to happen slowly and deliberately in our world. Because the traditions and the connections between people are important and you don’t want to step on those. So figure out the politics, figure out the power structure, and figure out the traditions before you change it up. I have a situation. I have new faculty member in my department who took over for a 25 year employee, and there are lots of repeating events that happen. I just said, before you change the world; let’s look at what the traditions are. She had some real struggles last year because she wanted to jump right in and do things all her own way. We are not opposed to change, change is good. Let’s just manage the change. The change needs to make sense to those people who are hearing about it.
Similar to entering a new family, it is important to learn the traditions, beliefs, dynamics and roles the members play before making suggestions for improvement. The participants recommended new faculty members take time to understand the college. Change is welcome, however it should only happen after strengths and weaknesses of current programs are evaluated. With an understanding of expectations and traditions, work engagement can increase for the group and the new employee as they are accepted into the “college family.”

Community

The third subtheme revolves around the community within the institution and the rural area. The participants recognized the limited opportunities in the rural areas in which they live, while still crediting the college as “a great place to work.” Cindy had this to say, “even though we’re all isolated, I think we do have a lot of in common things, most of us, one – we’re all there for our students and we put them on pedestals. So I think that binds us as a community. Most of us probably aren’t going much further.”

Five of the six participants are living in the area they were raised, they described it as “being home” or “coming home.” With this level of attachment comes a connection to the college. As Larry states, “I grew up near here and my family and I moved back and it’s like home.... I mean that’s [laughs] I mean this place is a nice place but other schools are nice too. It’s an inertia thing, I live here. If there was another job at some other college, I’m not interested in going somewhere else.” Larry’s statement also emphasizes the earlier recommendations to provide strong
mentoring and training. The connection to the community and college was often a reciprocal process. Sometimes the commitment to the community influenced the commitment to the college and vice versa:

We are very low paid in comparison to other colleges. That is frustrating. If my husband knew I could leave and go to another institution and make double, and I would have an easier load and a 9 month contract. I have a 10 month contract, we are thinking about changing the curriculum, I figured out I would lose eight grand, eight grand! I want to stay here and help our community. I know we put out good students, but money wise. I mean, I know we have great benefits but there is point. I get why people get frustrated.

Participants rooted in the community felt a commitment to the college as described by Anna. Even in the midst of frustration, an underlying commitment emerges. Cindy also agreed “My husband is a farmer; we are tied to this community. I have to figure out work engagement because burnout is not really an option for me.”

Julie, the only faculty member interviewed that was not from the area, described her experience connecting to the community because she connected to the college:

When I first was hired, on the first day of my employment we have, we affectionately call it Love Fest but it’s staff development day. And it used to happen on the first day of work, now it happens about a week into work, where it’s essentially we all gather faculty and staff gather together from
every area of the college so the county centers come in everybody comes to campus for the afternoon. And we have what we call the State of the Union address where the president addresses the college about what’s coming up, where we are at, and we give a bunch of awards away, favorite alumni and best faculty member, we give all these awards away and it’s fun. Well, the first time I went to that was the first day of my first day on the job. They always introduce every new faculty, every new staff person, doesn’t matter if you are the custodian or if you are the grounds keeper or you are the vice president. They are going to introduce you on day one. And you have to stand up and they list all of your background, where you came from and your degrees and it’s a long lengthy process, some years. Some years it’s quick, we only have a few hires. But they also welcome you officially to the family. There’s this family concept around campus and the first year I was there, I was like I don’t need a family. But at a rural community college it is definitely more of a family environment. People stay for a long time in their jobs, they stay with the institution for 10, 20, 30 years. Not in the same position because they you know, the positions change and the hats change, but there is that dedication to the institution that I don’t think you necessarily see in other places.

Julie moved to the community for the job, but has been at the college for 13 years. She said “don’t get me wrong, I like the community but I’m still here because of my job at the college”. She has dedicated her career to the institution.
Sacrifices

The final subtheme discussed the sacrifices involved in work engagement. Although deep commitments are formed within the institutions and community, often times there are costs to engagement. Participants who said they were engaged in their work acknowledged the additional time work engagement requires, thus, supporting the earlier notion of a shared work load. The more faculty and staff engaged in the campus community, the more balanced the approach can be for each individual. Cindy explained how vital movements begin:

If we want a committee to do something really important you get the people that are the “good” instructors that are dedicated and motivated. We don’t go to the ones who aren’t doing things in the classroom. So...so then you have to do more committee work and keep up with all your classes and stay organized.

Seemingly contradictory to basic psychological principles of reinforcement and punishment, as adding more work is more likely a punishment, potentially decreasing the “dedicated and motivated” behavior. Similarly, Anna expresses her challenges:

My supervisor said if there is a class that needs to be picked I’m going to give it to you because students just do so much better in your class. And I love to teach, I love it, but sometimes I just don’t like it. I think to myself that I used to have all 175 students in one year and I got burned out. So that got changed, but I don’t want to keep picking up extra work because I’m good.
Although satisfying, it does come with additional workload that needs to be balanced to experience work engagement versus burnout. Many participants articulated a sense of pride when asked to help, it made them feel valued. Kim added:

“There is a cost to your personal life, sometimes to be prepared for Monday I come in over the weekend and sacrifice time with family. But when you are passionate about something and teaching it to others you won’t sacrifice it and go into a class unprepared.”

It was not surprising to hear of the emotional, physical, and time costs associated with work engagement.

Faculty members are an integral part of the institution; therefore it is important for them to maintain a work-life balance. Faculty participants and administrators discussed how they circumvent the costs of work engagement. Julie explained how important it was to “manage the chaos”:

There are times were I have said, “I know where there’s a weak point [in the college] but I’m not saying anything because I don’t want to deal with it.” And I have enough hats over here so I get real, the longer I do it, the smarter I get about what battles I want to choose to, or challenges I want to choose to take on. Sometimes they’re battles, a lot of times they are just a challenge. So, I’ve got one that’s been rolling around in my head now for probably 4 years and I haven’t done anything with it because I know if I do it, then there will just be another hat. Do I think it’d be important and worthwhile and I’d feel really
good about it if I did it? Yeah. Yeah, but I also have to manage my workload. So it's just about treating yourself well in the process and so sometimes I give myself little holidays. Like, I'll say ok it's really feeling panicky um; the panic and the anxiety are ramping up so okay this Friday I am going to go have a pedicure. And during that time I won't do anything work related. I won’t do anything. It's like just in this time I'm going to read a trashy romance novel, I'm not going to think about work. And sometimes that's a challenge.

Faculty members balanced the demands by acknowledging the cycle of the academic year and taking time to rejuvenate themselves. Another key aspect is having understanding and supportive administrators. One administrator described her approach to faculty members:

Food and drink, I mean, what in your personal life are the things that bring you together? You unwind, you relax, you eat, and you maybe have a drink. You don’t talk about work for a little bit. The funny part is people are networking interdepartmentally when they normally are maybe stuck in their office all day long. We usually eat and laugh a little bit, so just trying to engage them in that way instead of everybody kind of working in their silos. Cause everybody's so busy. And I think letting them know that we get that, we know that they are busy, and likely I'm going to have something else that I need them to do from time to time and just recognizing that. But then talking about the purpose, and not just saying here's what I need you to do, go do it. Here's what I need you to do, here's the efficiency it's going to create. Here's
how it's going to make it better for all these other people including yourself.

You know, really just kind of explaining that.

All participants talked about tight schedules, but each had the desire to reach out to
each other more. Adding lunch to a meeting is an effective use of time, their
schedules are tight and it adds a social element and engages the faculty participants
in the meeting. An administrator said, “I feed them [her faculty members] lunch for a
required meeting. I mean, the first time I did that you would have thought that I
gave them each a hundred dollar bill.” When food is available it provides an
opportunity for people to gather socially and enjoy each other.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the four major themes uncovered in this study. Data
from faculty participants and administrator interviews revealed perceptions of
work engagement in rural community colleges. Typical of qualitative research a
multitude of participant quotations were used to provide an accurate interpretation
of their experience.

The primary finding was to understand the role of the community college
faculty member. The overwhelming majority described the role of a rural
community college faculty member as multifaceted. The multiple roles increase the
challenge of balancing work load and demands placed by students, administrators,
and colleagues. The rural community college faculty position is vastly different
from other faculty roles in higher education. Participants believed that to
understand work engagement correctly in this population, the multidimensional role must be understood.

The second theme defined elements of work engagement as it relates to rural community college faculty. All participants’ agreed; in order to have vigor, dedication, and absorption in their work it must be rooted in a passion for your field and the community college system. The excitement of teaching the field helps overcome day to day difficulties, and helps “celebrate small victories.” The common challenges associated with underprepared students can be problematic, but a student centered approach can help the faculty member recognize student success at varying levels. Finally a match with the faculty members’ personal values defines work engagement. The majority of participants discussed the value of “helping people” as it relates to work engagement, but all noted the appreciation and rejuvenation gained through academic breaks.

The third finding focused on the desire for constructive feedback and professional development. All participants expressed the desire for constructive feedback from students and administrators. Better and more systematic feedback is needed to sustain work engagement including celebration of work achievements. Oftentimes participants reported the limited value of student evaluation forms, noting the tool, as designed, lacks validity. Each respondent recognized students’ ability to give valuable data in the correct context. In addition, many participants discussed the desire to have more feedback and classroom observations from administrators. Finally, the participants want purposeful peer interactions and
continued opportunities for professional development to enhance work engagement.

The last finding from this study reflected the research question “why is work engagement important in rural community college faculty.” The majority of participants believed faculty members model engagement practices for students. When a faculty member demonstrates high energy and dedication in their teachings it is reflected in student behaviors. The faculty participants also discussed the importance of a shared work load and supportive family-like atmosphere. The multifaceted role of a rural community college faculty member requires them to rely on others. The majority of faculty respondents discussed how connecting to either the campus community or community in general can help in employee retention. However, the majority of participants indicated there is a cost to work engagement. Many faculty participants discussed the praise given to engaged individuals is also accompanied by additional roles and responsibilities.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Literature related to work engagement for college faculty is limited, especially regarding rural community colleges. Despite the paucity of literature, the phenomenon is increasingly important due to the increase in student enrollment and the challenges rural community colleges face to find and retain qualified candidates. Kezar (2011) suggests engaged students require engaged faculty members. As noted in the literature, community college faculty members are less likely to leave when they are positive about their work-life and satisfied with their jobs (Rosser & Townsend, 2006), while community college faculty members who feel underprepared (Murray, 2004) and overwhelmed by the workload (Hardy & Laanan, 2006; Twombly & Townsend, 2008) are less satisfied and more likely to leave the college. High rates of faculty turnover can be costly to the reputation of an institution and to the quality of instruction (Bright, 2002).

The purpose of this multiple-site case study is to investigate the role of rural community college faculty members’ experiences with work engagement. Following a comprehensive examination of literature, it appears this is the first study to address work engagement in rural community college faculty. This research study is framed by three fundamental questions:

1) How do rural community college faculty members perceive and experience work engagement?

2) What do faculty members in rural community colleges believe to be important to sustain work engagement?
3) Why is work engagement important to rural community college faculty?

The first research question “How do rural community college faculty members perceive and experience work engagement?” is answered by the themes that emerge during this study, specifically, by the first two themes:

- The overwhelming majority of respondents describe the role of a rural community college faculty member as multifaceted. Multiple roles increase the challenge of balancing workload with demands placed by students, administrators, and colleagues.

- The definition of work engagement for rural community college faculty members is rooted in passion for the field and for the community college system. Work engagement takes a student-centered approach, which matches the faculty members’ personal values.

Understanding the multifaceted role of the rural community college faculty member is fundamental to the perception of work engagement. The findings indicate faculty members are involved in multiple aspects of the college. The primary role as an educator is typically followed by several additional and time-consuming roles. However, faculty members who accept this as the multidimensional nature of the job can effectively maneuver these roles and increase the likelihood for higher levels of engagement. The findings indicate supervisors and administrators can help faculty manage various roles by supporting them during times of extensive demands, which tend to be cyclical in nature. In addition, allowing time for faculty members to rejuvenate during breaks is important to support work engagement.
The second theme describes how faculty members define work engagement. When rural community college faculty members demonstrate a passion for their respective fields and the community college system, their peers and colleagues perceive a higher level of work engagement. The findings in this case study suggest rural community college faculty members who are engaged in their work are also passionate about their field. Faculty members who approach the subjects they teach with excitement and energy not only positively impact the students they teach, but also the culture of college. An appreciation of the community college system is helpful to understanding the meaning of work engagement. Consistent with community college research, the findings indicate that faculty members’ emphasis is on teaching, and he or she approaches the job with a student-centered focus. For instance, in Chapter 4, Jack, a study participant, describes how he helps students understand success at their academically-appropriate level. He suggests a need to celebrate the victories of all students at all levels. He notes there are times when a faculty member needs to praise average scores in below-average students because the focus is on improvement and achievement for each student, thus fostering student development. In this study’s findings, the challenges that come with varied student abilities and behaviors is a point of frustration for faculty members. However, in light of work engagement, the challenges should be approached with intentional interventions, humor, professional development, and camaraderie.

The final component to understanding how rural community college faculty perceive work engagement comes from matching personal values to work requirements. The findings show work engagement is higher when a faculty
member's personal philosophy matches the institution's mission as well as the demands of the job. One reoccurring and relevant personal value is to hold high expectations, a personal value which translates to colleagues and students served. By holding high expectations, the potential to improve a faculty member's skill set increases. Because of the multiple demands of the job, the findings strongly reflect the need to have breaks to rejuvenate and re-energize faculty members.

The second research question in this study was "What do faculty members in rural community colleges believe to be important to sustain work engagement?" Multiple themes, some which overlap, emerge regarding this question. For instance, faculty members believe creating a resilient family-like work atmosphere where constructive feedback is given helps maintain work engagement.

First, each participant expresses the desire for constructive feedback from students and administrators, as well as purposeful peer interactions. Given the isolated nature of the teaching profession, which can be intensified in the rural community college setting, scheduling times for professional development and camaraderie influence the sustainability of work engagement. Effective administrators provide meaningful, immediate, and constructive feedback using specific examples and person-centered language. For example, a participant notes that she has received student evaluation responses which make reference to a perceived lack of organization; however, she spends hours preparing for each class and follows the syllabus closely. Typically, her response to student questions about past and previous assignments has been, “I don’t know; we’ll have to look at the syllabus.” In this case, the faculty member has planned and is organized but simply
has difficulty with remembering the details. An administrator could suggest that rather than starting with “I don't know,” she could begin with “Let’s check the syllabus,” which might change student perception. This form of feedback is constructive and specific.

Secondly, the close relationships created in small rural colleges help maintain work engagement. One participant mentions the close relationships developed with other faculty and staff at the institution help balance burnout, as Julie notes in Chapter 4, “Not only do you enjoy them but you can rely on them to do their part.” All participants recognize the family-like environment and its influence on work engagement.

Finally, sustaining work engagement relates to managing a work-life balance. The faculty members, specifically those who have worked at the colleges longer than ten years, articulate the need to purposely schedule breaks from their work. The participants recommend to leave work early or avoid bringing work home, especially during times of stress. Scheduled academic breaks are associated with maintaining work engagement and avoiding burnout, because they provide opportunities to reflect on accomplishments and time to relax. Lastly, work engagement is sustained when faculty members understand the cyclical nature of job demands over the course of the academic year.

The final research question, “Why is work engagement important to rural community college faculty?” is addressed by the last theme in the research study. All participants believe work engagement is important for the community, the
college, the faculty members, and student success. However, the majority of participants indicate there is a cost to work engagement.

The results suggest that how a faculty member perceives work engagement can influence other faculty members at the same institution, particularly in the rural community college setting. For instance, when a faculty member is energetic, absorbed, and dedicated, that person can positively influence the college community by motivating others. The participants place great value on distributing the workload. In an era of reduced state funding, almost all community colleges must deal with budget challenges, which can impact hiring. When fewer faculty members are available, work engagement becomes increasingly important to guide faculty behaviors to create a strong team-like atmosphere within the college. To create a culture of engagement in rural community colleges, work engagement needs to be a shared experience across multiple disciplines.

Participants in this study indicate there is a sacrifice related to work engagement, however. Often good performance is praised and then followed by additional workload in the forms of committee assignments, higher student enrollment, or other leadership roles. By understanding the added demands, administrators and faculty alike can counteract the feelings of burnout associated with the added workload. The faculty and administrators interviewed in this study perceive work engagement and burnout to be opposite constructs, reflective of the Areas of Worklife Scale (AWS) and Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R).
Areas of Worklife Scale & Job Demands-Resources Model

Faculty members are an integral part of the community college system and face significant challenges which need to be balanced with positive outcomes. The conceptual framework for this study is based on two leading models: a) the Areas of Worklife Scale and b) the Job Demands-Resources Model. The AWS includes six domains: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. This model suggests successful matches in the areas of work life result in employees with vigor, dedication, and absorption, while chronic mismatches between the employee and the domains may lead to burnout. Maslach and Leiter (1997) suggest when the work environment and employee beliefs match, a greater sense of work engagement will exist. The participants mentioned all six domains, as they related to burnout and work engagement, thus supporting the AWS. According to the findings in this study, the most significant domains were community, values, and workload. Although rewards, fairness, and control influenced work engagement, they were not as impactful.

In 2001, Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli developed the job demands-resource model (JD-R). It is a versatile model that relies on the assumption that every occupation has specific risk factors associated with job stress classified in two general categories: 1) job demands, and 2) job resources (Demerouti et al., 2001a; Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Job demands refer to the aspects of employment that require sustained effort or skills and are associated with certain physiological and/or psychological
costs. Job resources refer to the aspects that help achieve work, reduce job demands and/or stimulate personal development (Demerouti et al, 2001a). The model identifies job demands as potential stressors, which can lead to burnout, and job resources as potential motivators, which can lead to work engagement. The findings in this study align closely with the JD-R framework. Rural community college faculty identify job demands placed in part by the varying amount of roles within the position and challenges they faced with diverse student ability. Vocational instructors note the job demands required in the transition from industry to education. In this research, job resources focus on academic, financial, emotional, and psychological support from faculty colleagues and administrators. The opportunities for relevant professional development energize participants, who are also motivated by a family-like atmosphere where the workload is shared.

Figure 1 encompasses the AWS and JD-R. The figure shows the relationship among job resources and job demands, and their effect on engagement. If the Job Demands-Resources work in tandem (rotate clockwise), then engagement is allowed to develop and be sustained (rotate). If job demands and resources work in opposition (rotate in opposite directions) or one is undervalued or mismatched (seizes) then engagement is not allowed to develop or be sustained (seizes).
Community colleges that provide a supportive environment with constructive feedback can enhance work engagement by helping meet the demands of the job. The match between workload, values, community, control, fairness, and rewards are all parts of the work engagement experience. In this model both the JD-R and AWS were combined.

Recommendations and Future Directions

This dissertation study, conducted with faculty members at two rural community colleges, produces several common themes that illuminate the experience of work engagement. The qualitative case study methodology utilized in this study offers a detailed examination of the experience of six full-time faculty members serving rural community college institutions. Faculty members not only bring a set of expectations and values into the workplace but also a range of personality dispositions, knowledge, and skills (Dee, 2004).
Based on the findings of this research, several recommendations can be made to faculty members and college administrators to improve work engagement.

Community college leaders need to foster a supportive, team-based atmosphere, which can aid both faculty and student development. Teachers who have supportive mentors and supervisors are more likely to become effective teachers (Howes, James, Ritchie, & Howes, 2003). Administrators may find strategic advantages in processes which provide performance-based feedback to faculty. The results of this study support a multidimensional approach (Kirkpatrick, 1975) to student evaluations focused on teaching effectiveness, thus supporting the Marsh & Roche (1997) recommendation to critically examine student evaluation assessments in multiple contexts. The evaluation process was found to be an essential component of work engagement.

The study findings reveal the multiple roles and expectations placed on rural community faculty members by peers, administrators, and students. Teacher burnout is highest among institutions with ill-prepared students, student apathy, and students with low social engagement (Friedman, 1995; Schaufeli & Butunk, 2003); however, individuals who feel their work is appreciated develop a sense of engagement and an investment in the workplace (Boyd & Bee, 2011). Murray (2005) suggested administrators develop recruiting tools and advance mentoring programs to help give faculty a realistic understanding of the community-college environment. This study’s findings support this notion.
Recommendations for practice

Rural community college faculty members, like many educators, often work in isolation from other professionals. The findings imply faculty members and administrators should make intentional efforts to promote positive interactions between colleagues as well as provide meaningful feedback, which can enhance work engagement.

- Add a social element, such as food, to meetings, which allows for effective use of time while providing a means of connecting with others.
- Balance the discussion in meetings between administrator-driven topics and topics which emerge naturally (by both faculty and administration).
- Review the effectiveness of mentoring programs within institutions for both the new employee and mentor.
- Provide opportunities for interactions between faculty, administrators, and staff.
- Educate new faculty members on the job demands of community college instructors.

Research recommendations

While this qualitative study enhances the developing body of research in work engagement, it also sheds light on the need for further research. The recommendations for future research related to work engagement and rural community colleges include:
• Studies that focuses on the relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement, and the impact of each on faculty performance.

• A study exploring the link between faculty work engagement and student engagement and performance.

• A study that focuses on the differences between arts and science faculty and career and technical faculty experiences with work engagement.

• A study featuring rural community college faculty with diversity in ethnicity.

• A qualitative research study identifying effective campus-based professional development systems.

In conclusion, this study shares work engagement ideas and experiences from rural community college faculty members. With the growth in community college enrollment, especially in rural institutions, the critical nature of faculty work engagement is highlighted. The results suggest understanding the roles and responsibilities outweigh a faculty member’s passion for his or her field and appreciation for the community college system when it comes to work engagement. In addition, their desire for meaningful feedback and administrator support play an integral role in engagement. Based on this study future research should identify differences between job satisfaction and work engagement, investigate the links between student engagement and faculty engagement, and employ various research methodologies.
APPENDIX A. RECRUITMENT SCRIPTS

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT FOR PERSONAL CONTACT AT AN INSTITUTION (NON FACULTY)- A phone call will be the method of contact.

Hello, I am Kate Burrell a graduate student in the Department of Human Development & Family Studies at Iowa State University and a full-time faculty member at Des Moines Area Community College. I am completing a research study investigating the role of work engagement in rural community college faculty. In this research, work engagement will be defined in terms of three dimensions including a) high energy, b) strong involvement, c) sense of efficacy. I will interview the faculty member about their experience as a rural community college faculty member and if or how they perceive work engagement in their position. The questions in the interviews will ask about the individual’s career path and their views on workload, fairness, stress reduction, and psychological meaning of their work. The interviews will provide data for my dissertation on how rural community faculty experience work engagement.

There are little or no risks for participating in this study. Neither faculty names nor organization will be connected with your responses.

Do you think members of your institution be willing to participate? Could you recommend 5-10 faculty members at your institution that might be willing to be interviewed about the topic?

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT FOR PARTICIPANT Faculty- A phone call will be the first method of contact to reach the potential participant; if unable to reach them an email will be sent. The following script will be used to recruit participants.

Script:

Hello, I am Kate Burrell a graduate student in the Department of Human Development & Family Studies at Iowa State University and a full-time faculty member at Des Moines Area Community College. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study to investigate work engagement in rural community college faculty. In this study work engagement will be defined in terms of three dimensions including a) high energy, b) strong involvement, c) sense of efficacy.

I have asked you to participate because you have been recommended by __________ (Some cases this will not be needed because a direct contact can be made through personal contacts or the researcher).
As a participant, potentially you could be asked to participate in three meetings with the researcher. If all three sessions are needed the first discussion can be phone interview or face to face interview, the second will be a face to face interview, and the final discussion will be a follow-up phone call. The questions in the interviews will ask about your career path, your views on workload, fairness, stress reduction, the psychological meaning of your work and advice for others at rural community colleges. In some cases, I will request your review of the data interpretation if you are willing. I will interview you about your experience as a rural community college faculty member and how experience work engagement in your position. The interviews will provide data on how rural community faculty experience job engagement for the researcher’s dissertation.

There are little or no risks for participating in this study. Neither your names nor organization will be connected with your responses.

If you would like to participate in this research study, please reply to this email or call me at 515-491-1319. If you have questions, please contact me at jkburrell@dmacc.edu or by phone or you may contact my advisor, Dr. Susan Maude, at 515-294-8695.

Thank you for your consideration,

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT FOR PARTICIPANT HR/Faculty Administrator-A phone call will be the first method of contact to reach the potential participant; if unable to reach them an email will be sent. The following script will be used to recruit participants.

Script:

Hello, I am Kate Burrell a graduate student in the Department of Human Development & Family Studies at Iowa State University and a full-time faculty member at Des Moines Area Community College. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study to investigate work engagement in rural community college faculty. In this research work engagement will be defined in terms of three dimensions including a) high energy, b) strong involvement, c) sense of efficacy.

I have asked you to participate because you have been recommended by __________ (Some cases this will not be needed because a direct contact can be made through personal contacts or the researcher). I feel you would provide great insight into
trends you have observed of faculty members at your institution who demonstrate work engagement.

As a participant, I will interview you about your experience working with rural community college faculty members and how they experience work engagement. I will ask you about any trends you see related to resiliency in your faculty as well as policies or procedures your institution has in place to help work engagement in your faculty. The goal of the interview will provide data on how rural community faculty experience job engagement for the researcher’s dissertation.

There are little or no risks for participating in this study. Neither your names nor organization will be connected with your responses.

If you would like to participate in this research study, please reply to this email or call me at 515-491-1319. If you have questions, please contact me at jkburrell@dmacc.edu or by phone or you may contact my advisor, Dr. Susan Maude, at 515-294-8695.

Thank you for your consideration,
APPENDIX B: FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

Thank you for your time during our phone conversation on _____. Here is more information about my study.

My dissertation research is about work engagement in rural community college faculty. The goal of the research is to use qualitative methodology to investigate the role of work engagement in full-time faculty members at rural community colleges. As more students enroll in rural community colleges (Murray, 2007) and qualified faculty are needed, it is important to understand workplace engagement among college instructors.

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand the experiences of rural community college instructors and how they understand work engagement. This dissertation research will address the following research questions:

1) How do faculty members perceive work engagement in a rural community college?

2) What do faculty members in a rural community colleges believe to be important to sustain work engagement?

The research intends to identify themes related to individual’s commitment to their role and institution obtaining the information through interviews and document reviews. The primary mode of data collection will be interviews with full-time faculty members in rural community colleges; potentially each faculty member would be interviewed three times. In addition a faculty administrator or human resources employee will be interviewed and asked about policies and procedures designed to enhance work engagement.

Community colleges have recently experienced tremendous growth in enrollment serving 44% of America’s undergraduates (American Association of Community Colleges [AACC], 2008). As community college enrollments increase, it becomes increasingly important to have faculty who are engaged in their work. Recent articles suggest engaged students require engaged faculty (Kezar, 2011). In addition to the growing enrollments, community colleges have seen a reduction in funding and lower budgets. Also, full-time faculty has larger class sizes and added responsibilities outside of the classroom. It is important to understand how these added demands and reduction of resources have impacted faculty members’ resiliency. Rural community college enrollments increased at a higher level than urban community colleges it becomes increasingly important to understand the role
of work engagement in this population to maintain a strong workforce and quality education.

Please let me know if you need additional information. If you are interested in participating in my study or know someone who might be please contact me at jkburrell@dmacc.edu or by phone at 515-491-1319.

Thank you,

Kate Burrell, M.S.
APPENDIX C: DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic Data Sheet

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study. Please complete the survey below. The information collected in this questionnaire is completely confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study. You may skip any question or refrain from answering any question you do not feel comfortable answering.

Demographic Data Sheet

Gender:  _______ Female  _______ Male  __________

Age:  _______

Please list your Race/Ethnicity (e.g. Asian, Caucasian, etc)  
___________________________________

Highest Degree Obtained (e.g. M.S.):  
______________________________________

Major (e.g. English)  
______________________________________

Do you teach primarily courses in (please circle)
Artists & Sciences  or  Vocational Programs

Years at Current Institution:  ____________________________

Years as a faculty member:  ____________________________

Current Department:  ____________________________
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: FACULTY

Informed consent completed prior to:
INTERVIEW 1: Phone Conversation or face to face (includes demographic questionnaire)

Goals:
1) Build Rapport.
2) Learn about the participant’s background (demographics, work history, education).

Background & Work History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal College Experience</td>
<td>• Tell me about your experience in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What was your favorite part of the experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What was your least favorite part of your college experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Who was your favorite college instructor? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Position</td>
<td>• Tell me about your role as a faculty member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How did you get to your current position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What influenced your decision to work at a community college?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How long have you worked in education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have you had any other jobs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How many credit hours do you teach each semester?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Approximately how many students do you teach each semester?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How long have you been in your current position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are your favorite classes to teach?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is the primary education goal of the students who enroll in your courses? For example, to earn an Associate of Arts degree and transfer or to earn a degree or diploma and begin working?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Self-reflection | • How would you describe yourself as an instructor?              |
|                | • How do you think the students in your classes describe you?   |
|                | • How do you think other faculty members would describe you?    |
|                | • How would you describe yourself as a colleague?               |

| Next Time | • Think about what work engagement means to you.                 |
|          | • Before our next meeting could you create one or more six word memoirs about your job? Researcher will explain and provide examples: Hemingway was once |
INTERVIEW 2: Face to Face

Framework of the AWS – Special emphasis on psychological detachment, psychological meaning, and stress-reduction interventions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Workload | Workload mismatch is experienced when too many demands exhaust an individual’s energy or resources.  
• Can you tell me about your typical work week?  
• *Do you ever feel overwhelmed because of the amount of work? Can you describe more about those experiences (when they occur, how often)?  
• If you could change one thing about the demands of your job what would they be?  
• *Does your energy level change over the course of a day/week/semester? If yes, can you describe what types of things provoke the change?  
• *Can you think about a time where you have felt like you were working too hard at your job? Can you explain?  
• When you feel most energized by your work, what is your workload like? |
| Control | Employees have insufficient control over the resources needed to successfully complete work.  
• If you could make one system change to improve work engagement and job satisfaction what would it be?  
• What stands in the way of making this change happen?  
• What types of systems are in place that help you feel in control of your work?  
• *How do you feel about the resources you have available to help you complete your work? Is there anything in particular you want?  
• How do you feel about the amount of resources you have to do your job? Tell me about them. |
| Reward | Reward mismatch involves limitations in appropriate financial, social, and intrinsic rewards.  
• *Can you think of a day/semester when you felt energized by working? What happened during that day?  
• How do you feel about your achievements as a faculty member? Can you tell me about some of those?  
• Can you describe an instance where you were recognized with an award or reward for the work that you have done?  
• How do you see people react when they are rewarded at your college? |
• What types of rewards/incentives are part of your job?
• If you were going to get recognized for your work, what type of recognition would you like?
• If you could design an award/reward for yourself what would it be?
• Do you feel like there are costs to work engagement? If so how?

Community

People are social beings and thrive in communities when individuals use humor, comfort, praise, and respect. Often individuals are isolated from others or make social contact impersonal.

• Tell me about the sense of community within your institution.
• Describe your interactions with your colleagues/administrators.
• How do you feel after working with students?
• How do you feel after attending meetings?
• What types of activities do you do with your colleagues outside of working hours?
• What are you doing to help develop a sense of campus community at your institution?
• How would you like to be supported as a faculty member?
• What do you enjoy about your community college?

Fairness

Fairness communicates mutual respect; when unfairness occurs in matters such as pay or promotions it can generate cynicism.

• Can you tell me about a time when you found yourself harder and less sympathetic with students/colleagues/administration than perhaps they deserve?
• If you could create the perfect community college, what would that look like to you?
• *Think about the fairness of your campus, what areas are fair, what areas seem to be unfair?

Values

A mismatch in values can create conflict between individual values and organizational values.

• Can you tell me about some worthwhile things you have accomplished in your job?
• Tell me what a good day is like for you. Do you feel better about yourself on a good day? What does it make you think about?
• How do you define success as a faculty member?
Interview 3: Phone Conversation

- Summarize last two interviews. Does this sound accurate to you?
- What do you feel is most important to understand work engagement in rural community college faculty?
- Is there anything that you have thought of since our last interview that you wanted to tell me?
- Is there anything else you think I should understand about job engagement better?
- Is there anything you would like to ask me?
APPENDIX E : INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: ADMINISTRATORS

**Build rapport**

**Grand Tour Questions:**

What types of policies/procedures do you have at this institution that might enhance work engagement or retention of your faculty members?

What type of activities does the college have to help faculty engagement?

How would you explain behaviors, attitudes of faculty members you would consider engaged in their work?

Why do you think faculty members stay engaged in their position? Do you think your campus contributes to this? How?

Describe a valuable faculty member? What is their relationship like with staff, other faculty, and students?

In comparison to other colleges what makes faculty members want to stay at this institution?
APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT: FACULTY

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: Get Engaged: An investigation of rural community college faculty’s experiences with work engagement

Investigators: Kate Burrell (researcher), Dr. Susan Maude (supervisor)

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION

This study is being conducted by a graduate student at Iowa State University to fulfill the dissertation requirement for Human Development and Family Studies. Kate Burrell is a PhD graduate student and Dr. Susan Maude is the supervisor for the research. The purpose of the study is to conduct research to develop an understanding of work engagement in rural community college faculty. The outcome of this study will be used as data for the researcher’s dissertation and possible publication. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a full-time faculty member at a rural community college.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, your involvement may include participating in three 30-60 minute interviews and in some cases a final review of data interpretation if you are willing. You will be asked questions about your experience as a faculty member at your rural community college. The focus of the questions will revolve around your perceptions of experiences related to work engagement. There are no right or wrong answers; participants are free to stop at any point during the research process and participants can refrain from any question.

The format of the three interview protocol will be as followed:

- **Interview 1** - The first interview will be completed over the phone or face to face (the participant will decide). This interview will focus on the participants work history and education.

- **Interview 2** - This interview will be conducted in person. The questions will ask your perception of topics related to workload, values, fairness, rewards, and community as it relates to your community college. The face-to-face interview will be conducted at a mutually agreed upon time and location identified by the participant. The face to face interview will be audio-taped and transcribed for documentation; all participant information will remain confidential and non-identifiable and will be stored in a secure place and all tapes will be destroyed upon completion of the research.

- **Interview 3** - The final interview will be done over the phone. The purpose of the third interview is to briefly review of the interpretations of the data
collected during the first two interviews and provide an opportunity for additional reflections.

You will also be asked to complete a short demographic survey that identifies your gender, age, race/ethnicity, and years in education. In the weeks/months following the interviews, if you agree, you may be contacted by the researcher to review the interpretations of the data collected from the interview. This process gives you the opportunity to volunteer additional information and provides you the opportunity to assess adequacy and accuracy of data and preliminary results.

RISKS
The risks of this study are very minimal. While participating in this study you may experience possible discomfort discussing reasons for feelings related to burnout often times the opposite of work engagement.

BENEFITS
It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit rural community colleges by enhancing the understanding of work engagement in full-time faculty. This information may lead to future studies investigating how professional development can be designed to enhance work engagement.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION
You will not have any costs from participating in this study and can earn a $5 gift card for each interview, potentially earning $15 in gift cards for your participation. Should you be interested in a copy of the final paper please indicate below.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer and you may stop answering questions at any time. You may decide not to participate in the study or leave the study early for any reason and it will not result in any penalty.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Records identifying participants will be kept confidential and will not be made publicly available. Your name or college will not be associated in any publication or presentation with the information collected about you or with the research findings from this study. Instead, the researcher(s) will use a pseudonym rather than your name. Your identity as a participant will not be disclosed to any unauthorized persons. Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to your identifiable individual responses. When results of the study are shared with others, only summarized data will be released and no identification will be included. To ensure confidentiality the following measures will be taken:
- No identifiers will be left on the interview recordings, the transcripts, or the data instead pseudonyms will be used. The list of identifiers will be stored in a separate locked cabinet in a locked office.
The person who will have access to the identifying data is the researcher.

All data gathered will be kept in a password coded computer file in a locked office.

Any references to your identity that would compromise your anonymity will be removed or disguised prior to the preparation of the research reports and publications.

The identity of your workplace will be kept confidential when results are disseminated, only demographic information of the institution will be included.

The demographic information collected will never be assigned to the participants' responses. The demographic categories will include the following: gender, ethnicity, department by vocational or arts and sciences, years of service in ranges (2 years of less, 2-5 years, 5-10 years, 11-15 years, 15-25, 26 years plus), age of participant and education (B.A., M.S., Ph.D.). All data collected will be secured on a password protected computer or in a locked cabinet.

The interview recordings and transcriptions both hard copy and a data disk will be stored in a locked file cabinet away from Iowa State University and only the researcher will have access. All audio recordings will be destroyed following completion of the research.

Federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the ISU Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies with human subjects) may inspect and/or copy study records for quality assurance and analysis. Although I will take precautions to help ensure confidentiality by letting you select the location of the interviews, by not using your name in the study, and will not connect your responses with your name or name of your institution. There is still a chance that confidentiality may be compromised I cannot guarantee complete confidentiality simply due to the nature of your study.

**QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS**

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact: Dr. Susan Maude (research supervisor) by phone 515-294-2370, or by email smaude@iastate.edu
- Or you may contact me at Kate Burrell by phone at 515-491-1319, or by email at jkburrell@dmacc.edu
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, Office for Responsible Research, (515) 294-3115, 1138 Pearson Hall, Ames, IA 50011.
PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE
Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document, and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant’s Name (printed) ______________________________________________________

_________________________________________  ________________________________
(Participant’s Signature)           (Date)

_____ I would like to receive a copy of the final paper. Please email it to me at _______________________

INVESTIGATOR STATEMENT
I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

______________________________  ________________________________
(Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent)           (Date)
Title of Study: Get Engaged: An investigation of rural community college faculty's experiences with work engagement

Investigators: Kate Burrell (researcher), Dr. Susan Maude (supervisor)
This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION
This study is being conducted by a graduate student at Iowa State University to fulfill the dissertation requirement for Human Development and Family Studies. Kate Burrell is a PhD graduate student and Dr. Susan Maude is the supervisor for the research. The purpose of the study is to conduct research to develop an understanding of work engagement in rural community college faculty. The outcome of this study will be used as data for the researcher's dissertation and possible publication. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a supervisor of full-time faculty member (or – work in human resources (form will change with participant) at a rural community college.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES
If you agree to participate in this study, your involvement will include a 30-60 minute interview. You will be asked questions about your college's policies and procedures related to faculty retention and perceptions of faculty engagement. The focus of the questions will revolve around your perceptions of experiences related to work engagement of faculty. There are no right or wrong answers; participants are free to stop at any point during the research process and participants can refrain from any question.

- **Interview** - The interview will be conducted in person. The questions will ask your perception of topics related to workload, values, fairness, rewards, and community as it relates to your community college in relationship to faculty members. The face-to-face interview will be conducted at a mutually agreed upon time and location identified by the participant. The face to face interview will be audio-taped and transcribed for documentation; all participant information will remain confidential and non-identifiable and will be stored in a secure place and all tapes will be destroyed upon completion of the research.

RISKS
The risks of this study are very minimal. While participating in this study you may experience possible discomfort discussing reasons for feelings related to burnout often times the opposite of work engagement.
BENEFITS
It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit rural community colleges by enhancing the understanding of work engagement in full-time faculty. This information may lead to future studies investigating how professional development can be designed to enhance work engagement.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION
You will not have any costs from participating in this study and could earn $5 in a gift card for your participation. Should you be interested in a copy of the final paper please indicate below.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer and you may stop answering questions at any time. You may decide not to participate in the study or leave the study early for any reason and it will not result in any penalty.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Records identifying participants will be kept confidential and will not be made publicly available. Your name or college will not be associated in any publication or presentation with the information collected about you or with the research findings from this study. Instead, the researcher(s) will use a pseudonym rather than your name. Your identity as a participant will not be disclosed to any unauthorized persons. Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to your identifiable individual responses. When results of the study are shared with others, only summarized data will be released and no identification will be included. To ensure confidentiality the following measures will be taken:

- No identifiers will be left on the data disk and the list of identifiers will be stored in a separate locked cabinet.
  - The person who will have access to the identifying data is the researcher.
- All data gathered will be kept in a password coded computer file in a locked office or in a locked cabinet in a locked office.
- Any references to your identity that would compromise your anonymity will be removed or disguised prior to the preparation of the research reports and publications.
- The identity of your workplace will be kept confidential when results are disseminated, only demographic information of the institution will be included.
- Federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the ISU Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies with human subjects) may inspect and/or copy study records for quality assurance and analysis.
Although I will take precautions to help ensure confidentiality by letting you select the location of the interviews, by not using your name in the study, and will not connect your responses with your name or name of your institution. There is still a chance that confidentiality may be compromised I cannot guarantee complete confidentiality simply due to the nature of your study.

**QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS**
You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact: Dr. Susan Maude (research supervisor) by phone 515-294-2370, or by email smaude@iastate.edu
- Or you may contact me at Kate Burrell by phone at 515-491-1319, or by email at jkburrell@dmacc.edu
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, Office for Responsible Research, (515) 294-3115, 1138 Pearson Hall, Ames, IA 50011.
PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE
Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document, and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed) ____________________________________________

_________________________________________  __________
(Participant's Signature)  (Date)

_____ I would like to receive a copy of the final paper. Please email it to me at
___________________________________________

INVESTIGATOR STATEMENT
I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

___________________________________________  (Date)
(Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent)
APPENDIX H : EXAMPLE INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

Interviewer/Participant Observer: Kate Burrell

Observation/Interview Date/Location: Off-campus Coffee Shop
Participant(s): Anna

1. Briefly describe/reflect on the person(s) involved.
Confident and direct, takes pride in her work and has realistic expectations of others to achieve. Values her family, willing to discuss her experiences, appreciates and values helping others succeed. Has a desire for people to find the right fit and willing to talk with them when there is a mismatch. Not intimidated by process or position, will support what she believes with action and communication.

2. What were the main impressions or issues that emerged to you in this contact?
Willingness to be a part of the team. Understands her skills and willing to work hard. Desire to have everyone doing their part to make the team a success. Is drained by poor ability because in cases of students and staff it requires more work from her. Strong connection to student success, willing to have difficult conversations, values communication and recognition. Appears to be a good leader, non judgmental clearly outlines goals when goals aren’t met will take action to remedy.

3. Summarize the information/ideas you got (or did not get) on target research questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do rural community college faculty members perceive and experience work engagement.</td>
<td>Seeing students succeed, supporting the student through the learning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unwilling to pay enough in some positions to get quality people or retain quality people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Additional mentoring/training because she is a strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reward-Lack of recognition and would like more. When she gets it rejuvenates her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workload-Low ability of students and some peers increases workload</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do faculty members believe to be important to work engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Grew up in the community values the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extended time off in the summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The job fits well with her family values and schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helping people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Community
- Grew up in the community values the area
- Reward
  - Extended time off in the summer
- Values
  - The job fits well with her family values and schedule
  - Helping people

### Reward

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why is work engagement important to rural community college faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication &amp; fairness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication is fundamental to group success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a community that values success and learning in multiple forms – not a one size fits all approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards which are achieveable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Communication & fairness
- Communication is fundamental to group success
- Creating a community that values success and learning in multiple forms – not a one size fits all approach
- Maintaining perspective
- Standards which are achieveable

#### 3) Why is work engagement important to rural community college faculty

4. **How is the faculty member supported?**
   - She is supported by her supervisor but often times has to ask for the support. She feels as though administrators don’t know her role/performance well enough to support emotionally but do with assistance. She does need to ask for the support.

5. **What does the faculty member enjoy about their job?**
   - Watching students succeed, understanding the difficult road students are on and supporting them as they reach their goals. Enjoys that it fits well with her family schedule.

6. **What does the faculty member not enjoy about their job?**
   - The time and energy that it takes for people who are failing and will not meet the standards. The lowest ability faculty and students take the majority of time detracting from those who can succeed.

7. **Describe anything else that stood out to you as salient, interesting, or important in this contact?**
   - How importance communication and support is for her success. In her position courageous conversations is fundamental in her field. Students need to have adequate skills to stay safe. Enjoyed the conversation and her desire to be good at what she does but also her desire to love her work even in the face of challenges.

8. **Are there any areas needing clarification/further exploration in subsequent observations/interviews?**
How does she want recognition? What value does she find in student evaluations? What does she think is essential to work engagement in rural community college faculty?
### APPENDIX I: CODEBOOK SAMPLE

Excerpt from Participant 1 Interview 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wanted to be better</strong></td>
<td>We had a lady come in to train us with a low self-esteem started to realize as a students I ask a lot of questions. When I wanted to go in the nursing field, she would get so mad at me for asking questions. She would cry and if I asked and I would have to apologize. I remember thinking there have got to be better teachers than this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desire to learn</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multiple styles</strong></td>
<td>Realize all of those styles, important to mix it up to hit all repeat it differently helping reviewing things and going back over it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good mentor</strong></td>
<td>Always ask how things are going, her influence on how she taught me it came from her. Patience, allow you to get to a point before you messed up, not to offend them. Why are we doing what we are doing with this patient, calm, smart and confident. Don’t always know what you are doing but you can figure it out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Path to rural cc position</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desire to learn</strong></td>
<td>Wanted to go back to school, and my husband said why don’t you consider teaching instead of going back to school. I’ve always had a strong desire to learn, working in education gives me that opportunity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desire to have a values match</strong></td>
<td>I knew I didn’t want to continue with that job and hours and be a mom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model learning</strong></td>
<td>If I don’t know I say, let’s talk it through. We know our patient doesn’t have heart disease look up meds. I believe in active learning, we learn it all together. If you are asking questions, they get mad they don’t understand, they are embarrassed to say they don’t know especially as a new grad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Struggles in the first years</strong></td>
<td>I didn’t really understand what I was doing. I had no teaching experience, high expectations and didn’t really understand what they knew.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undervalued</strong></td>
<td>We don’t get paid enough money. The administrators don’t really understand the specifics of our field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values Match - flexibility</strong></td>
<td>No weekends no holidays, no night shift in the field I’m in is very difficult to have a normal schedule. The flexibility we just rotate hours around with other.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
faculty and it's no problem. I feel that is a benefit of a technical program, we can help each other by covering different classes and adjusting our schedule.

| Student perceptions | Just did evaluations – pretty good she is new techniques in the classroom, gives examples, tell stories, break it down to the basics to help students understand. They’d say I'm tough and doesn’t put up the a lot of junk. I had a comment that said “This is the first class I can stay awake and don’t have to worry about falling asleep”.

| High Expectations |

| Self assessment | Still learning, motivated, easy to motivate in nursing they represent you and you don’t want them to go harm anyone. Look at quarterly licenses ban to see if any college or former students are on the list.

| Psychological safety – ok to not know | Admit you don’t know, role mode that with students, it gives them confidence.

| Communicate with students | when I flunk students I never had a students say I didn’t know this was happening. Do midterms, tell them they aren’t doing well.

| Comparison to others | I get probably the least amount of complaints but there are really poor classroom instructors. If someone is really bad at teaching it is a double edge sword. It creates more work to help them and also help the students in the situation and that creates burnout.

| Added work for poor coworkers |

| Embrace change | Always trying to do changes in the classroom, embed a video in a PowerPoint, helping move things forward.

| Psychological safety | Described as others see her - Confident, mentor, honest

| Team player | Team player, you have to be a team player if you step out and allow them to get away with something the rest of us are screwed.

| Importance of the team |

| Inspiration – student success | Hearing from students later and them saying how much they like their job. I'm known for telling stories, explain smells or give sounds. Get emails saying I learned from this come into my head.

| Enjoyment – self improvement even with doubt | There is always a chance to step up your game. I'm going back to get my doctorate to see how I can get some changes going. I'm good at being in the
<p>| Willingness to improve | classroom, but I’m concerned because I’ll lose all the ability to influence students. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Overview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 2013</td>
<td>Reviewed four college websites, looked at accrediting agencies, course offerings, extracurricular activities, and mission statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2-29 2013</td>
<td>Email communication to the President of Rural Community College A requesting permission to use the college. The emails provided a brief overview of the study and outlined the research process. Approval was given via email on April 29.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 29, 2013</td>
<td>Sent email approval to an academic administrator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1, 2013</td>
<td>I made a follow-up phone calls administrator who gave me a list of 5-10 people. We also set up a time to meet and discuss work engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1-18, 2013</td>
<td>Sent email requests and made phone calls to recruit participants. Snowball sampling was employed. Initially I recruited from the list from administrators, and then asked participants for suggestions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 10, 2013</td>
<td>Set up a phone meeting with participant Cindy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 13, 2013</td>
<td>Set up a phone meeting with participant Anna.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| May 22, 2013 | Met with four participants individually at Rural Community College A to complete the second interview.  
• Anna’s interview lasted 90 minutes and was held off campus.  
• Cindy's interview lasted 60 minutes and was held off campus.  
• The administrator’s lasted 90 minutes and was held on campus.  
• Jack’s interview lasted 90 minutes and was held on campus. Jack’s first and second interviews were combined due to scheduling conflicts. |
<p>| June 2013    | During researcher reflection and transcribing it was decided to shorten research questions. The participants were talking for long periods of time and not all questions were covered. The interview questions were condensed for the second interview, using the following grand tour |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Tell me about a time when you felt,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>energized, absorbed and confident about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do you describe work engagement in a rural community college,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perceptions/experiences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What value do you find in student evaluations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How are you supported by administrators?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What keeps you energized in your work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do you think are the most important ways to feel engaged in your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can you tell me about individuals you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have worked with who you would classify as engaged in their work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did you observe?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is there anything else you would like to say about work engagement in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community college you think I should know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can you explain times or an instance when</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
you feel overwhelmed because of your work? What did/do you do during those times?

- Do you feel work engagement is important in rural community college faculty? If so can you explain?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August/September 2013</td>
<td>Email follow up to Anna to schedule the final interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 8, 2013</td>
<td>Phone call to administrator at Rural Community College B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13, 2013</td>
<td>Follow up email to administrator explaining the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13, 2013</td>
<td>Third interview with Anna, Rural Community College A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 25, 2013</td>
<td>Approval given via email to use Rural Community College B. The administrator asked the department chair to ask faculty volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 26-October 5, 2013</td>
<td>Lists of volunteers were emailed from Rural Community College B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 26-October 5, 2013</td>
<td>Phone calls and emails were sent to recruit faculty volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October, 2013</td>
<td>First phone interview with Julie lasted 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 10, 2013</td>
<td>Met with four participants individually at Rural Community College B to complete the second interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Kim’s interview lasted 90 minutes and was held on campus. Kim’s first and second interviews were combined due to scheduling conflicts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Julie’s interview lasted 60 minutes and was held off campus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The administrator’s lasted 60 minutes and was held on campus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Larry’s interview lasted 90 minutes and was held on campus. Larry’s first and second interviews were combined due to scheduling conflicts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October/November, 2013</td>
<td>Email follow-up to Cindy to schedule the final interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 16, 2013</td>
<td>Third interview with Cindy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November/December, 2013</td>
<td>Follow-up emails with Julie to schedule the third interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 18, 2013</td>
<td>Third interview with Julie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January/February, 2014</td>
<td>Conducted follow-up conversations with three study participants. This included the third interview and member checks. The member check included a review of code, initial themes and subthemes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX K: MEMO-WRITING: RESEARCHER REFLECTION

Participant Cindy: Interview 1

I finished this first interview with a great deal of energy. I would explain my experience in line with work engagement, the time went quickly, both the participant and I were immersed in the topic, and talked in depth about her experiences leading her to this job, a direct reflection of vigor, dedication, and absorption.

I felt inspired by her love for the community college. The participant viewed difficulties as challenges, an opportunity to become better as an instructor and person. For example, many people might negatively perceive the diverse student ability in the community college classroom or limited community resources as a limitation. She viewed it in a positive light, which influences her work on student engagement. She discussed difficulties understanding each learning style of the student and the limited time to work with students individually. However, her optimistic outlook prompts an eagerness and excitement to find ways to address the challenges in unique ways. For example, after attending conferences and researching flipped classrooms, she implemented the process, even though she felt uncertain and unprepared. The result of the change demonstrated higher student grades and she spends more time individually with students during class time.

The participant seems to have a great sense of internal locus of control, meaning she finds demands in her work as in her control. Although she understands the difficulties with the job she loves what she does. I was surprised by her lack of confidence about her fellow faculty. Enjoys a challenge and enjoys her subject. Finds connecting learning to individual students a challenge. Passionate at what she does, thinks less about herself. Finds confidence in her classroom and subject wants to be perceived as good, but difficult to describe. Found her path by attending a community college. Goal oriented, loves planning and gets excited to teach the topic.

I feel justified in my topic and recognize its importance. It seems community college employees know the importance, understand how it can help, but simply don’t have the time to commit to research. My committee said I could be an expert and I shrugged it off. But I do want to be an advocate to help the world understand the value of a community college instructor and add value to their life. In my first discussion, a former community college faculty member had inspired Cindy and was very instrumental in her path it makes me wonder if he knows. I think there is hope for that as an instructor but to really hear the influence is amazing. I think the first
two years of community college can be very influential in developing one’s self and gaining confidence. It makes me want to understand this further. What can I do to help?

Questions to consider: Are employees of a community college seeing themselves as less? “junior college?” Does love what you do help you be better at what you do? How are colleges helping the people who love the job get better at the job? Are colleges providing training opportunities?
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