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The Role of Communication in Strategic Planning at California Community Colleges

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The Role of Communication in Strategic Planning at California Community Colleges

A Dissertation by

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School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

February 2017

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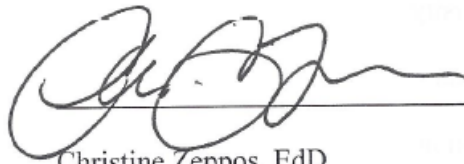
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My dear friend Clayton Barbeau was quoted as saying, "Where you place your time, you place your life and where you place your life you place your love." He has reminded me often to be kind to myself. In many ways this dissertation was a gift to myself. Earning a doctorate was a dream I thought was out of reach. Thank you Clay for being such a role model and mentor.

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I began my acknowledgements quoting my friend Clay, and I want to end this by quoting my soon to be two-year-old grandson Ruxin by simply saying, "Ta Da!"

ABSTRACT

The Role of Communication in Strategic Planning at California Community Colleges

by Linda Carvalho Cooley

Purpose: Community colleges continue to face an ever-changing environment. California Community Colleges are confronted with state initiatives, accountability, and accreditation changes that require integrated planning processes. The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the role of communication as perceived by community college planning committee members with regard to the strategic planning processes at California Community Colleges. A secondary purpose of this study was to explore the differences between the perceptions of administrators, faculty and classified committee members involved in planning processes at California Community Colleges.

Methodology: For this qualitative study, committee members directly involved in the planning process at California Community Colleges were interviewed. The participants included 7 administrators, 7 faculty members, and 7 classified staff members. An interview protocol and guide provided semistructured questions. Respondents were digitally recorded, and transcripts were reviewed. Triangulation included transcripts, artifacts, and the perceptions from three distinct perspectives.

Findings: All participants viewed the role of communication as a method to connect with others, as a method to ensure constituency participation, and as a method to create a meaningful process. Differences in perceptions did exist. Administrators indicated a stronger interest in process whereas classified staff expressed a stronger interest in connection. Faculty perceived the role of communication as both process and connection.

Recommendations: California Community Colleges could use this information to strengthen their planning processes by addressing the role of communication at their respective colleges. California Community Colleges need to address communication that fulfills the need for connection at the beginning of the planning process. In addition, California Community College planning committees should address why and how they will communicate planning to the committee and to the college. Such efforts will help to create a meaningful process that will enhance the overall quality of strategic planning at California Community Colleges.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

"Higher education is going through a period of unprecedented pressures for efficiency and effectiveness, including demands for tuition control, great student success, increased accountability, and in many states, rapidly changing demographics and increased competition" (Noel-Levitz, 2009, p. 1). Longanecker (2015) reported at a Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Consortium that completion, competency, assessment, and innovation are key to successful higher educational institutions. Significant changes in the demographics, competition from for-profit schools, and more accountability factors have increased the challenges by community colleges across the nation (Longanecker, 2015; Noel-Levitz, 2009; The White House, 2014).

According to the California Community College Chancellors Office (CCCCO, 2016a), community colleges were founded as open enrollment institutions providing basic skills, career technical education, college transfer, and lifelong learning opportunities. The California Community College system is the "largest system of higher education in the nation, with 2.1 million students attending 113 colleges" (CCCCO, 2016a, para. 1). Changing demographics, higher competition, dual enrollment, and other changes are all trends listed in the recent Student Success Scorecard, a 2015 State of the System Report distributed by the CCCCO (2015). Community colleges have taken on more responsibility and more accountability with many recent initiatives (CCCCO, 2015, 2016a).

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC, 2012) is the accrediting association for the western region in the United States. The ACCJC

(2015a) recently stated that although the number of community colleges in the western

region who have received sanctions has recently decreased, the reasons for the sanctions

remain the same. Consistently every year, for the last 5 years, over 60% of all

community colleges within the western region received warnings or sanctions on the

basis of "planning" (ACCJC, 2015a, p. 5). In response to the high number of sanctions

the CCCCO (2016e) has recently created a new division for institutional effectiveness "to

help colleges and districts improve their fiscal and operational effectiveness and promote

student success, while also reducing accreditation sanctions and audit findings" (para. 1).

The four goals proposed include accreditation, fiscal viability, student outcomes, and

compliance with federal and state guidelines (CCCCO, 2016e). A recent article from the

Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) specified that "institutional

effectiveness and learning outcomes are, in reality, calls for accountability and

demonstrated process improvement," which are in essence "core to the planning process"

(Hinton, 2012, p. 18).

The ACCJC (2015b) accreditation handbook observed that an "effective

institution ensures academic quality and continuous improvement through ongoing

assessment of learning and achievement and pursues institutional excellence and

improvement through ongoing, integrated planning, and evaluation" (p. 10). Richardson,

Richard, and Wolverton (1994) proposed that community college mission statements

hold the criteria necessary for long-term success. Richardson et al. (1994) further posited

that "strategic planning offers a systematic approach to integrating goals, policies, and

actions into a sequenced, cohesive whole in a way that carries an institution closer to

shared values" (p. 53). Strategic planning has been a model for change in many organizations (Bryson, 2011; Hightower, 1995; Mintzberg, 1994).

Research has claimed that successful strategic planning requires participation, leadership, and communication (Bryson, 2011). In addition L. L. Lewis and Seibold (1998) suggested that "strategic planning generally answers three questions: Where should we be going? What is our environment? How shall we get there?" (p. 117). According to Noel-Levitz (2009), "Effective communication is an often overlooked element of change management. The absence of proactive communication from a planning group leaves a vacuum which will be filled by the rumor mill, speculation or those in opposition" (p. 8). L. L. Lewis and Seibold (1998) proposed that communication scholars should study the role of communication in the implementation process of strategic planning, as a method of change, in order to add to the body of knowledge for organizational change. Researchers have found that communication is an important feature to strategic planning (Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; Pagel, 2011; Schultz, 2011; Washington, 2011; White, 2007). Explicitly researchers have investigated integrated planning processes and suggested more exploration into the role of communication (Pagel, 2011; Schultz, 2011; White, 2007).

Background

This background contains an investigation of the challenges faced by community colleges, the use of strategic planning in higher education, and how organizational communication has been used to increase the knowledge of community college planning. Next this background includes a review of the paradigms of organizational communication, communicative constitution of organization, and the role of

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communication in community college strategic planning. Finally, the current research

regarding the role of communication in community college planning is briefly explicated

indicating a gap in the current research.

Challenges Faced by Community Colleges

Community colleges advance a mission to be open enrollment institutions that

provide comprehensive programs to their local populations. Throughout the years,

community colleges have been challenged to meet the needs of a diverse population by

providing lifelong learning opportunities, basic skills, transfer courses, and vocational

programs. Currently, additional challenges have been placed before community colleges

with the insurgence of dual enrollment and the potential of offering bachelor's degrees.

In addition to these challenges, community colleges are also faced with more competition

from for-profit institutions and alternative educational options that offer their local

student-based online educational opportunities.

In 2014, SCUP conducted a study to assess the reoccurring themes in higher

educational trends. SCUP reported eight themes that emerged, which included leadership

and planning, partnerships/collaborations, integrated planning, teaching and learning

strategies, emphasis on accountability, tighter budgeting, optimizing existing physical

resources, and environmental sustainability (Society for Colleges and University

Planning [SCUP], 2014). Two of the themes centered specifically on planning and one

on accountability to assist in the accreditation process (SCUP, 2014). In addition,

community colleges have continued to take on more responsibility and have been

expected to maintain a high level of accountability (Hinton, 2012). The College

Scorecard is a public online portal created in an effort to show transparency regarding

student success for every college in the nation (American Association of Community Colleges [AACC], 2016; CCCCO, 2015b; SCUP, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Furthermore, community colleges rely on their accredited status for credibility and authenticity in the higher educational realm as degree-awarding institutions (Hinton, 2012).

Pointedly in California, continual changes to the accreditation process have increased the number of sanctions and warnings given to community colleges (ACCJC, 2016; SCUP, 2014). According to the ACCJC (2015a), over 60% of all sanctions imposed on community colleges in the western region, in the last 5 years, have been related to lack of planning or lack of integrated planning. Recent initiatives for California Community Colleges include but are not limited to Common Assessment Initiative, Online Education Initiative, C-Id and Transfer Degrees (California Senate Bill 1440), Baccalaureate Pilots, Career Pathways Trust, Education Planning Initiative, Student Success Act (California Senate Bill 1456), Adult Education Consortium Program (California Assembly Bill 86), Scorecard, Prison Education (California Senate Bill 1391), and Student Equity Plans (CCCCO, 2015b, 2016e). California Community Colleges continue to be charged with planning for all contingencies in the ever-changing world of higher education.

Strategic Planning

Planning for change and growth can be accomplished in many ways, and strategic planning has been a successful model of change that has been widely used in diverse organizations (Allison & Kaye, 2005; Bryson, 2011; J. Lewis, 1983; Mintzberg, 1994; Richardson et al., 1994). From the military to business to nonprofit and higher education,

the basic premise of strategic planning has evolved to be a strong tool for organizational change (Chaffee, 1985; Cope, 1981; Richardson et al., 1994). Although there is no solidarity in the definition of strategic planning, several factors continue to appear in the literature (Chaffee, 1985; Hightower, 1995; Richardson et al., 1994). First, strategic planning includes an assessment for where the organization is currently positioned, which involves an examination of internal processes (Cope, 1981; Hightower, 1995; Myran & Howdyshell, 1994; Richardson et al., 1994; Thomas, 2007). Secondly, strategic planning requires an assessment of external factors that may have an impact on the organization (Bryson, 2011; Hightower, 1995). Next, strategic planning generally indicates a forward view of where the organization would like to be in the future (Cope, 1981; Hightower, 1995; Richardson et al., 1994). Finally, decisions are made utilizing the previous three contingencies (Myran & Howdyshell, 1994; Richardson et al., 1994). Although strategic planning has not been an easy fit for higher education, research has been conducted on strategic planning in universities and colleges in order to assess participation, perception, and leadership styles (Bacig, 2002; Chaffee, 1985; Duncan-Hall, 1993; Hightower, 1995; Messer, 2006).

Organizational Communication

The study of organizational communication is complementary to the strategic planning process in that it views the traversing qualities of human interaction and organizational practices (Monge & Poole, 2008). The evolution of organizational communication theory offers a dynamic and complex view of communicative experiences relative to the planning process (Darling & Beebe, 2007). Organizational communication offers distinctive views on communication within organizations that can

illuminate the role communication holds at higher educational institutions (Messer, 2006). L. L. Lewis and Seibold (1998) affirmed that "implementation activities are fundamentally communicative and are exemplified by efforts to announce changes, train users, and seek feedback about the change" (p. 304).

Paradigms of organizational communication. Functional, critical, and interpretive paradigms have been largely researched and documented in organizational communication (HuangFu, 2014; Putnam, 1982; Putnam & Pacanowsky, 1983; Redding & Tompkins, 1988). These three paradigms offer avenues through which to explore the role of communication in organizational settings.

Classical models of organizational communication are often referred to as functional or positivist approaches (Putnam, 1982; Yuksel, 2013). Communication from this vantage point allows researchers to see the world as an objective and organized place (Burrowes, 1993; Littlejohn, 2002; Morgan, 1980; Putnam, 1982; Yuksel, 2013). Critical theorists give voice to the marginalized. This perspective focuses on the political nature within organizations where marginalization and hegemony can often transpire (Deetz, 1982; Yuksel, 2013). Hegemony occurs "when events or texts are interpreted in a way that promotes the interests of one group over those of another" (Littlejohn, 2002, p. 211). Littlejohn (2002) stated that critical theories seek understanding of the structural communicative processes that keep some members of an organization marginalized either politically, socially, or economically.

Interpretive theorists believe that meaning is socially constructed (Deetz, 1982; Littlejohn, 2002; Miller, 2009; Putnam, 1982; Yuksel, 2013). This implies a definition that communication is a process whereby individuals work together to create and manage

meanings with symbolic messages that are manifested in verbal and nonverbal behavior (De Beer, 2014; Mumby, 1993; Putnam, 1982). The reality within an organization would also be socially constructed with symbols and behaviors that represent the organizational experience (De Beer, 2014; Mumby, 1993). Saretsky (2013) concluded that social construction includes communication, specifically the conversations, and the language used within the heart of any organization. Hermeneutics, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, and phenomenology are also part of the interpretive paradigm (Littlejohn, 2002; Miller 2009; Putnam, 1982).

Categorically, an interpretive perspective would observe and question the methods used to seek meaning and understanding within the organization (De Beer, 2014; McPhee & Zaug, 2001; Saretsky, 2013). Functional research often consists of surveys, a practice which does not allow researchers to delve deeper into intersubjective meanings (Fish, 1990). Fish (1990) contended that survey methods would "lack richness of detail" and "presume what to ask before research begins" (p. 68). Interpretive research generally consists of in-depth interviews (Fish, 1990). Goldhaber et al. (1978), specified that the interpretive perspective, with a focus on process and understanding could be "potentially useful in solving problems of coordination, planning, employee relations, and human resource development in on-going organizations" (as cited in Fish, 1990, p. 68).

Communicative constitution of organizations. Putnam, Nicotera, and McPhee (2009) defined constitution as "forming, composing, or making of something in addition to describing the phenomenon that is constituted" (pp. 3-4). McPhee and Zaug (2000, 2009) proposed a communicative approach to understanding the nature of organizations.

Putnam et al. (2009) indicated, "Organizational communication scholars have long been fond of claiming that communication is the essence of organization" (p. 1). Putnam et al. (2009) summarized Karl Weick's work, which proposed that the term "organization" should be used as a verb whereby researchers could focus on "how communication is the means by which human beings coordinate actions, create relationships and maintain organizations" (p. 1). Taking the perspective that organization is a verb and not a noun changes the focal point, thereby implying that "organizations are communicatively constituted" (p. 1). Putnam et al. (2009) expounded that Communicative Constitution of Organization (CCO) works under the premise that "communication is more than social exchange, information processing, or a variable that occurs within an organizational container" (p. 2). McPhee and Zaug (2000, 2009) also posited the concept that Karl Weick introduced: "Organization was the process of organizing, of interpreting an enacted environment" (p. 22). McPhee and Zaug (2000, 2009) explained that this was a theoretical shift in defining organization as "a dynamic process" rather than something static (p. 22).

Role of Communication in Planning Organizational Change

Tolleson (2009) postulated that effective communication strategies are imperative to strategic planning. In his research Tolleson found, "The importance of the role of communication evidenced . . . was identified as a single key component of strategy execution process" (p. 155). Although Tolleson (2009) studied strategic planning in business organizations, he claimed that the same information could be applied to the field of education. Furthermore, he noted that communication was often taken for granted as an assumed ability rather than a skill that should be cultivated. Leslie and Fretwell

concluded that organizations that continued to thrive were those that were "able to articulate a vision for their institution, developed good information and open communication, and engaged in continuous learning and adaptation" (as cited in Lattimore, 2011, p. 89).

Bryson (2011) emphasized that communication is a necessity in strategic planning indicating that organizations should include communication strategies as part of the planning process: "Particularly when large changes are involved, people must be given opportunities to develop shared meanings and appreciations that will further the implementation of change goals" (p. 308). Bryson (2011) further pointed out the need to carefully consider the language used in any strategic planning process. Moreover, communication is needed for the inclusion of all stakeholders, internal and external (Bryson, 2011). In order for strategic planning to be successful, there must be commitment to organizational goals: "Strategic planning is about making sense of things and deciding what to do as a group. If you don't have significant consensus about your plans, you don't have a strategic plan that has much of a chance of helping your organization succeed" (Myran & Howdyshell, 1994, p. 179). Thomas (2007) pronounced that the role of communication is indelibly connected to organizational commitment. Putnam et al. (2009) proposed that communication is "a dynamic process that creates, sustains, and transforms organizations" (p. 8).

Current Research and Gap

Research on community colleges and strategic planning is abundant with focuses on perception (Olaode, 2011; Thomas, 2007), participation (Alfred, 1994; Bacig, 2002; Duncan-Hall, 1993), leadership (Houghton, 2000; Nolasco, 2011), and organizational

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effectiveness (Lattimore, 2011; McCarthy, 1991; Pagel, 2011; Phelps, 1996; White, 2007). Planning is a required component of the accreditation process (ACCJC, 2015b). Washington (2011) stated that "communication, cooperation, and consistency are essential for an institution to achieve its goals" (p. 138). Many researchers reference the importance of communication, but research on the role of communication in the strategic planning processes at community colleges is limited. Pagel (2011), Schultz (2011), and White (2007) researched the importance of integrating processes at California Community Colleges. All three researchers found that communication was vital to successful planning and suggested further research on the role of communication on the strategic planning process. A study that explores the role of communication in the strategic planning could add to the body of knowledge regarding planning process.

Statement of the Research Problem

Community colleges continue to face challenges that can include increased diversity and public accountability. In addition, accreditation standards subject community colleges to demonstrate the planning efforts related to all challenges, to prove the existence of integrated planning. It was noted that community colleges continue to provide more services for an increasingly diverse student population (ACCJC, 2016; CCCCO, 2015b, 2016e; Noel-Levitz, 2009). Diverse students require unique services, and services require planning that is integrated with other processes. Public accountability has also increased the competition with other institutions since students can access scorecards online prior to enrollment commitments. Studies suggest that Scorecard data are directly connected to planning and are often used as performance indicators for planning. Accountability, competition, and accreditation standards require

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California Community Colleges to integrate their planning processes in order to anticipate the challenges and initiatives that continue to mount from federal, state, and local agencies (ACCJC, 2015b; CCCCO, 2016e; Noel-Levitz, 2009). Despite accreditation standards that insist on comprehensive planning efforts, many California Community Colleges continue to receive warnings or sanctions regarding lack of planning or lack of integrated planning (ACCJC, 2015a). Planning processes and integration of planning processes cannot be handled in isolation. It stands to reason that a possible cause of this problem is the lack of communication within the community college planning processes (Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; Noel-Levitz, 2009; Tolleson, 2009).

Pagel (2011), Schultz (2011), and White (2007) investigated integrated planning processes. All three researchers concluded that communication is vital to planning, but their studies focused on integrating factors between program review and resource management. Pagel (2011), Schultz (2011), and White (2007) all concluded that the body of literature could be enhanced with further studies into the role of communication in planning processes.

Davis (2005), Olaode (2011), and Williams (2009) conducted studies on strategic planning at community colleges, focusing on leadership or the perception of leadership. All three studies concluded that open communication would diminish distrust, and increased inclusion would aid the strategic planning processes to be more successful. Although they mentioned communication as being vital to the planning process, their research did not address the role of communication in planning processes.

The role of communication has been cited as important to the success of strategic planning processes at community colleges, yet it appears that few researchers have investigated this concept (Davis, 2005; Olaode, 2011; Pagel, 2011; Schultz, 2011; White, 2007; Williams, 2009). L. L. Lewis and Seibold (1998) proposed that communication scholars could add to the literature on organizational change by viewing the role of communication at the "theoretical fault line between structure and interaction" (p. 128). From the previously mentioned research, one can conclude that there is a need for further study on the role of communication in planning processes at community colleges. The primary purpose of this study was to address the lack of research regarding the role of communication in planning. Describing and exploring the role of communication at California Community Colleges will add to the body of knowledge regarding strategic planning.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the role of communication as perceived by community college planning committee members with regard to the strategic planning processes at California Community Colleges. A secondary purpose of this study was to explore the differences between the perceptions of administrators, faculty, and classified committee members involved in planning processes at California Community Colleges.

Research Questions

1. How do committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning process at California Community Colleges?

a. How do administrative committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

b. How do faculty committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

c. How do classified committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

2. Are there any differences between the perceptions of committee members with regard to the role of communication in the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

Significance of the Problem

Communication is often cited as a vital component to planning but has been overlooked in the research on organizational change and planning (Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; Noel-Levitz, 2009; Pagel, 2011). Conversely, the role of communication can be investigated from an interpretive methodology that explores the communicative constitution of organizations as it pertains to the shared meaning within the strategic planning process (L. L. Lewis & Seibold, 1998; Putnam, 1982).

With all of the anticipated and current changes in California Community Colleges, planning has become far more crucial to safeguard successful accreditation efforts (ACCJC, 2016a; CCCCO, 2016e). California Community Colleges continue to face new initiatives, changing demographics, increased accountability, and more competition for students and funds (CCCCO, 2015b, 2016e). In order for California Community Colleges to ensure successful accreditation reports, planning committees need to consider all possible avenues to successful planning.

Community college strategic planning has long been a prolific area of research with a multitude of focuses. Researchers have studied strategic planning as it pertains to perception (Brewer, 2003; Nolasco, 2011; Olaode, 2011; Thomas, 2007), and leadership (George, 2001; Houghton, 2000; Nolasco, 2011). Studies have addressed strategic planning implementation (Lee, 2010; Wilcoxson, 2012), and participation (Bacig, 2002; Duncan-Hall, 1993; Ecung, 2007; McGinness, 2001). More recent studies have addressed integrated planning (Gallagher, 2007; Pagel, 2011; Schultz, 2011; White, 2007; Young, 2011) looking at the connection between different planning events at community colleges including budget allocation and program review.

Research on California Community Colleges has revealed the importance of integrating the strategic planning process to resource allocation and program review (Pagel, 2011; Schultz, 2011; White, 2007). The results illuminated a need for further research on communication (Pagel, 2011; Schultz, 2011; White, 2007). Although communication is often cited in the research as imperative to planning processes, the concept is generally taken for granted or encapsulated within perception, satisfaction, or participation rather than studied for its own merits (Bacig, 2002; Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; Noel-Levitz, 2009; Tolleson, 2009). Exploring the role of communication in the strategic planning processes from an interpretive constitutive lens could add to the body of knowledge regarding the planning process.

This study will add to the literature regarding planning at community colleges. With changing demographics, higher competition, and more accountability, community colleges across the nation will need to explore all possible avenues to integrate their planning processes. Clearly in California, where accreditation sanctions are highly

related to planning processes, this study will offer some practical information regarding the role of communication in strategic planning.

Research has investigated leadership, participation, satisfaction, and many other variables but seems to stop short of investigating the role communication plays in integrating strategic planning processes (Bacig, 2002; Chaffee, 1985; Duncan-Hall, 1993; Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; L. L. Lewis & Seibold, 1998; Messer, 2006; Olaode, 2011). Fleuriet and Williams (2015) indicated that "although references to the importance of communication and participation in the strategic planning process are not absent from planning literature, a focus on communication as the centerpiece of successful strategic planning is missing" (p. 69). This study will add to the research literature by investigating the role of communication in strategic planning processes from an interpretive, constitutive perspective that explores communication at California Community Colleges. McPhee and Zaug (2009) detailed "the four flows link the organization to its members (membership negotiation), to itself reflexively (self-structuring); to the environment (institutional positioning); the fourth is used to adapt interdependent activity to specific work situations and problems (activity coordination)" (p. 33). Since issues with planning have been the main reason for accreditation sanctions in the state of California, the results could have pragmatic applications for community colleges to consider.

Definitions

The following definitions are relevant to this study:

Community college. Community colleges are educational institutions, which are accredited to predominately offer associate degrees. They are also open enrollment institutions.

California Community College. California Community Colleges are "the largest system of higher education in the nation, with 2.1 million students attending 113 colleges" (CCCCO, 2016a, para. 1).

California Community Colleges Chancellor. California Community Colleges Chancellor is the chief executive officer of the California Community College system.

Shared governance or participatory governance. Shared governance or participatory governance is established by California Educational Code 70902(b), which ensures community college faculty, staff and students the ability to participate in decision making (State of California, 2014).

Strategic planning. Strategic planning is a systematic process for goal setting in which future trends, external environment, and current strengths allow decisions to be made (Hightower, 1995).

Organizational communication. Organizational communication is the study of how organizations send and receive messages (Zaremba, 2010).

Role of communication. Role of communication indicates the purpose of the communication. Communication has been defined simply as the process of sending and receiving messages, but the role of communication is often described as either a transmission process or a constitutive process (Adler & Proctor, 2014; Zaremba, 2010).

Transmission process of communication. Transmission process of communication is getting a message from one individual to another (Zaremba, 2010).

Constitutive process of communication. Constitutive process of communication is how communication creates relationships or organizations (Zaremba, 2010).

Paradigms of organizational communication. Functional paradigm of communication is a framework that views communication as a function that interacts between external and internal environments. Interpretive paradigm of communication is a framework that views communication as a way to create meaning and relationships. Critical paradigm of communication is a framework that views communication as political structures in which some voices are marginalized.

Interpretive theoretical models. From the interpretive paradigm listed above, interpretive theoretical models view communication as a way to create shared meaning.

Communicative constitution of organizations (CCO). CCO is a theoretical perspective that focuses on how organizations are created and maintained by communicative elements.

Four flows model. The four flows model was conceived by McPhee and Zaug (2000, 2009) as a theoretical model for communicative constitution of organizations. This model addresses the four distinct communicative elements within the organizations. The communicative elements include communication with members to initiate them into the organization (membership negotiation), communication that defines the organizational structure (reflexive self-structuring), communication that occurs when members need to adapt to or figure out how to accomplish tasks (activity coordination), and communication with elements outside of the organization (institutional positioning).

Membership negotiation. Membership negotiation is a concept in the McPhee and Zaug (2000, 2009) four flows model. This variable involves communicative acts that

initiate individuals into an organization. This form of communication is created to explain rules, roles, norms and behavioral expectations for members.

Reflexive self-structuring. Reflexive self-structuring is a concept in the McPhee and Zaug (2000, 2009) four flows model. This variable is the communicative acts that determine how work and structures will exist within the organization. Examples include organizational charts, chain of command, or process-defining documents.

Activity coordination. Activity coordination is a concept in the McPhee and Zaug (2000, 2009) four flows model. This variable is how communication is used during processes in order to get practical work done. These communicative acts are associated with how members use communication to adjust to or solve problems that arise in an effort to accomplish a task.

Institutional positioning. Institutional positioning is a concept in the McPhee and Zaug (2000, 2009) four flows model. This variable deals with communication between the organization and external entities.

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Delimitations

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This study was delimited to California Community Colleges who have engaged in strategic planning. The study was delimited to colleges whose planning committee consisted of administrators, faculty, and classified staff members. Finally, the study was delimited to California Community Colleges who went through the self-study accreditation process during the past 3 years and were not given any warning or sanctions.

Organization of the Study

The study of the role of communication in California Community Colleges includes five chapters, references, and appendices. Chapter I introduced the overall topic. Chapter II offers a comprehensive literature review detailing the challenges faced by community colleges, strategic planning, organizational communication, the role of communication in planning change, and the current research regarding communication and strategic planning. Chapter III provides the methodology utilized for this study including the sample selected, data collection process, and procedures for data analysis. Chapter IV shows the findings on the collected data along with a data analysis. Chapter V recapitulates the study, and covers the major findings, implications, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature pertinent to this study beginning with an explanation of the community college mission followed by challenges faced by community colleges across the nation, and namely the challenges faced by California Community Colleges. In an effort to address those challenges, many higher educational institutions have turned to strategic planning processes. The history of strategic planning along with the nuances necessary for strategic planning are described. Lastly, organizational communication, the theoretical framework, and the role of communication in strategic planning are explained.

Community Colleges

According to AACC (2016), community colleges were created as inclusionary institutions. Boasting an open-enrollment process, community colleges across the nation provide higher educational opportunities for their local service areas (AACC, 2016; Bogart, 1994; Lorenzo, 1994). As an institution, the community college opened the door for students to attend college close to home (AACC, 2016; Bogart, 1994; Lorenzo, 1994). AACC (2016) explained the community college mission as "the fountain from which all of its activities flow. In simplest terms, the mission of the community college is to provide education for individuals, many of whom are adults, in its service region" (para. 2). This association further identified that community college missions share some "basic commitments" that include "open-access admissions," "comprehensive educational programs," being "a community-based institution of higher education," "teaching" and "lifelong learning" (AACC, 2016, para. 2).

Challenges Faced by Community Colleges

Community colleges continue to face a high rate of challenges (Hanover Research, 2013; Hinton, 2012; Noel-Levitz, 2009; SCUP, 2014). In a report created by Hanover Research (2013), several key factors that face community colleges nationwide were identified; these included increased enrollment, decreased funding, performance-based funding models, college readiness, and student stratification among other top issues facing community colleges (Hanover Research, 2013).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the projected enrollment for public 2-year postsecondary institutions will continue to increase (Hanover Research, 2013; Kena et al., 2016; NCES, 2012;). Baum and Ma (2014) pointed out that across the nation the percentage of full-time equivalent (FTE) students who attend 2-year colleges is 37%. The U.S. Department of Education in a report written by combined efforts with the Institution of Educational Sciences and National Center for Educational Statistics indicated that the number of FTEs at 2-year institutions was 39% but projected a growth of 21% FTE students at 2-year institutions between 2014 and 2025 (Kena et al., 2016, p. 104). Baum and Ma (2014) pointed out that three states boasted that 50% or more of their FTE's attended 2-year colleges. California and Wyoming reported that 56% of their FTEs attended 2-year postsecondary colleges (Baum & Ma, 2014). Although enrollment has continued to grow, community colleges have experienced decreased or erratic budget funding (Baum & Ma, 2014; Hanover Research, 2013). State funding is often the primary revenue source for community colleges, and state budgets can be unpredictable due to the political and economic climate in their respective states (Barr & McClellan, 2011; Hanover Research, 2013). Barr and

McClellan (2011) claimed that "institutional and unit budget managers were caught off guard when the traditional sources of funding for higher education dramatically eroded in 2008" (p. 153). Barr and McClellan further asserted "dealing with a budget reduction is very challenging in a college or university because the budget is driven primarily by personnel costs" (p. 164). When budget revenue is cut, colleges individually decide where reduction in expenses can occur (Barr & McClellan, 2011). Barr and McClellan suggested several approaches frequently used by higher educational institutions including across the board cuts, targeted reductions, restructuring, and elimination of programs or services.

Due to competition for state funding, some states have adopted performance-based models (Hanover Research, 2013; McPhail, 2010; White, 2007). According to a report by Hanover Research (2013), 22 states have adopted models according to which colleges are rewarded for specific performance indicators such as "degree completion or transfer" (p. 7). Performance-based models are also suggested in the Completion Agenda proposed by the AACC (McPhail, 2010). In a call to action AACC joined other associations with a commitment "producing 50% more students with high-quality degrees and certificates by 2020" (McPhail, 2010, p. 2). Accountability has become a hallmark action in order to show "public commitment to raising student completion rates" (McPhail, 2010, p. 2). This will, in turn, display "transparency and accountability" (McPhail, 2010, p. 2). Currently, "only 34% of all college students graduate with a degree from a two or four-year college" (AACC, 2011, p. 1). Juszkiewicz (2015) added to the debate regarding completion by citing a discrepancy between student completion and graduation rates. She challenged that "the department of education's official

graduation rate is widely acknowledged to be a poor measure of student completion, especially for community colleges" (Juskiewicz, 2015, p. 5). Juszkiewicz asserted that the data are marginalized due to the limited scope:

> The graduation rate applies only to students who enroll in the fall, are first-time degree/certificate seeking undergraduates, attend full time and complete within 150% of normal program completion time at the institution in which they first enrolled. The majority of community college students attend part time. (p. 5)

Juszkiewicz compared the success rates from the Department of Education with the National Student Clearinghouse statistics claiming that, according to the Department of Education publications from the NCES, the most recent cohort from 2010 showed an "official graduation rate was 21%" (p. 6). She then shared the research conducted by the National Student Clearinghouse on the Fall 2008 cohort, which takes into account that some students may move to a different 2-year institution, move to completion at a 4-year institution, and that incorporates a tracking for a total of 6 years, but "all told, 39.1% of the students who started at a community college completed a program either at the starting institution or a different institution within six years" (Juskiewicz, 2015, p. 6).

College readiness is directly tied to student success (Student Success Taskforce, 2012). According to the Century Foundation Task Force on Preventing Community Colleges From Becoming Separate and Unequal (2013), "More than 60 percent of community college students receive some developmental/remedial education" (p. 21). According to the AACC (2011), "Six out of 10 students entering community college must take remedial courses to make up for knowledge and skills they did not learn in high school" (p. 2). The data show that incoming students are not prepared for the rigor of

college-level courses, which could, in turn, require more student support services and more time to fulfill their degrees (AACC, 2011; Century Foundation, 2013; Hanover Research, 2013; McPhail, 2010). Two separate reports conducted by Hanover Research (2013) and the Century Foundation (2013) indicated that in addition to increased enrollment, community colleges contend with student stratification. The increases to enrollment at community colleges indicated an increase in the percentage of students from the lowest socioeconomic population but decreased enrollment from the percentage of students from the highest socioeconomic population (Century Foundation, 2013; Hanover Research, 2013). Community colleges often have a more diverse population than their 4-year counterparts (Century Foundation, 2013). Community college tuition rates are more affordable, enticing students from all socioeconomic levels, but the largest increase in the student population comes from lower middle class to lower socioeconomic status areas (Baum & Ma, 2014).

Community colleges across the nation face a number of challenges including increased enrollment, competition for funding, lack of college readiness, and student stratification (AACC, 2011; Century Foundation, 2013; Hanover Research, 2013; McPhail, 2010). These challenges are abundant in California Community Colleges where 56% of FTEs attend college in 2-year institutions (Baum & Ma, 2014).

Challenges Faced by California Community Colleges

The California Community College system is the largest in the nation with 113 colleges and over 2 million students (CCCCO, 2016a). As a whole, the California Community College system has colleges that vary in size, are geographically situated in both suburban and urban locations, and exemplify the diversity of students who attend

college (CCCCO, 2016a). California Community Colleges are also confronted with many of the challenges faced by other colleges across the nation (AACC, 2011; CCCCO, 2012; McPhail, 2010). California Community Colleges encounter challenges including but not limited to accountability, recent initiatives, and accreditation sanctions (ACCJC, 2016a; CCCCO, 2015b, 2016a).

As open enrollment institutions, California Community Colleges enroll students of all ability levels. According to Baum and Ma (2014), in California the cost for community college is affordable and accessible. They further stated that "one in six full-time public two-year students are in California, which has the lowest tuition and fee price in that sector," which is equivalent to 21% of all 2-year college students in the nation as of 2012 (Baum & Ma, 2014, p. 10). In addition to the price being reasonable, community colleges were built to provide higher educational opportunities to their local service areas (AACC, 2016; Bogart, 1994; CCCCO, 2016a; Lorenzo, 1994). Their convenient location is integral to the success of the California Community College system mission (CCCCO, 2016a). Buckner (1996) specified that students attend college for many reasons and have a variety of goals such as personal enrichment or attaining specific skills. Some students may not intend to graduate or transfer, but accountability equates success with completion (Juszkiewicz, 2015). Skinner (2012) explained,

> As open access institutions, community colleges address a diverse population of learners with varying levels of academic preparation. Assisting the under prepared student to attain the basic skills needed to succeed in college has been a core function of the California Community Colleges throughout its history. (p. 2)

The Student Success Taskforce recommended 22 different policy changes to help increase student success in California (CCCCO, 2016f). According to the Student Success Taskforce (2012) report, "More than 70% of the community college students enter the system under-prepared to do college-level work" (p. 5). Success and student retention are a major concern for community colleges, more so than their university counterparts (Hanover Research, 2016). In addressing accountability, the taskforce further recommended defining success not just with completion but also the achievement students obtain during their educational journey including attaining college-level skills. Scorecards are publicly posted on the Internet to show transparency of success rates, but the picture still remains flawed (CCCCO, 2015b; U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

In addition to public accountability, California Community Colleges are also mandated to fulfill the obligations for recent initiatives, grants, and programs (CCCCO, 2012, 2015b; Student Success Taskforce, 2012). Although the initiatives are aimed at increasing student success, these initiatives also involve implementation, management, execution, and reporting (CCCCO, 2016e). Table 1 displays recent major initiatives that California Community Colleges have engaged in during the last 8 years. The initiatives, acts, measures, grants, or pilots have increased the areas which California Community Colleges address (CCCCO, 2012, 2015a, 2015b; Student Success Taskforce, 2012). These initiatives imply a need for planning, which would then require implementing, institutionalizing, and reporting progress for each area (CCCCO, 2012).

Table 1

Recent California Initiatives

Initiative	Description
▪ Course Identification Number System (C-ID) & Transfer Degrees (SB 1440) 2008	C-ID is a course numbering system to ease articulation and transfer from community college to higher educational institutions. Colleges created transfer degrees with C-ID designations. Common course numbering does not exist across the California Community College system.
▪ Doing what matters for jobs & the economy 2012-2016	Doing what matters is a program to help with California's economic recovery giving priority to jobs while promoting student success.
o Salary Surfer (2013)	Salary Surfer allows students to research potential earning for different degrees and certificates.
o CTE Launchboard (2016)	CTE Launchboard is an online tool that provides information on programs, student completion, employment outcomes, and labor market data.
▪ Student Success Act (SB 1456) 2012	SB 1456 is a framework targeted to fund core matriculation services including: orientation, assessment, counseling and advising, and development of educational plans.
▪ AB 86 Adult Education Consortium Program 2013	AB 86 planning and implementation for developing ways to serve adult in need of basic educational skills
▪ Student Success Scorecard 2013	The Student Success Scorecard is a performance measurement system that was created to provide transparency of success rates.
▪ Baccalaureate Pilots 2014	Establish statewide baccalaureate degree pilot program at 15 colleges.
▪ California Career Pathways Trust (CCPT) 2014	CCPT grant funding to create partnerships with businesses for career-relevant curriculum.
▪ Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI; SB 826) 2014	Program launched as a peer support for innovative and effective methods to increase success. Utilizes framework of indicators and partnership resource teams that meet with colleges in a supportive process to discuss goals for improvement.

Table 1 (*continued*)

Initiative	Description
▪ Online Education Initiative (OEI) 2014	OEI is to ensure that more students are able to complete their educational goals via access to high-quality online courses.
▪ Prison Education (SB 1391) 2014	Educational and workforce training opportunities for inmates
▪ Student Equity Plans/Program 2014	Creation of success indicators and programs to address disparity of student groups in an effort to ensure equal educational opportunities.
▪ Common Assessment Initiative–multiple measures assessment project (CAI) 2016	CAI is a movement to develop a new common assessment for ESL, math, and English state-wide.
▪ Education Planning Initiative 2016	EPI is a structured student support services portal to assist students in making educational decisions allowing them to make plans to attain their goals.

Note. Adapted from About the OEI. California Community Colleges Online Education Initiative, by the CCCCO, n.d., retrieved from http://ccconlineed.org/about-the-oei/; *Student Success Scorecard 2015 State of the System Report*, by the CCCCO, 2016, retrieved from http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/Portals/0/Reports/2015-State-of-the-System-Report-ADA-Web.pdf; Common Assessment Initiative, by CCCCO, 2016, retrieved from http://cccassess.org/; Doing What Matters, by CCCCO, 2016, retrieved from http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/Launchboard/Training.aspx; Inmate and Re-Entry Education, by CCCCO, 2016, retrieved from http://extranet.cccco.edu/Divisions/AcademicAffairs/InmateEducationPilotProgram.aspx; Institutional Effectiveness, retrieved from http://extranet.cccco.edu/Divisions/InstitutionalEffectiveness.aspx; Student Success Initiative, by CCCCO, 2016, retrieved from http://www.californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/StudentSuccessInitiative.aspx; *Basic skills Accountability,* by E. Skinner, 2012, retrieved from http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/Portals/0/reportsTB/REPORT_BASICSKILLS_FINAL_110112.pdf

An additional challenge facing California Community Colleges is the need to maintain accreditation. California Community Colleges are accredited through the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). In Standard 1 of the accrediting handbook, ACCJC (2015b) reported that colleges should demonstrate integrated planning in their self-study reports. In a recent newsletter, the ACCJC (2015a) reported that 60% of all sanctions and warnings given by the commission were related to

lack of planning or lack of integrated planning (see Figure 1). Colleges must maintain

their accreditation or they will be unable to confer degrees.

Five-Year Trend - Colleges on Sanction January 2011 - June 2015
Top Deficiencies Causing Sanctions

Colleges on Sanction	Program Review	Planning	Internal Governance	Board Roles & Responsibilities	Financial Stability or Management	Student Learning Outcomes Implementation	Employee Evaluation
2011 Sanctions (N=21)	19% (4)	71% (15)	24% (5)	67% (14)	62% (13)		
2012 Sanctions (N=28)	21% (6)	71% (20)	18% (5)	71% (20)	50% (14)		
2013 Sanctions (N=25)	28% (7)	64% (16)	20% (5)	68% (17)	52% (13)		
2014 Sanctions (N=16)	37.5% (6)	87.5% (14)	31% (5)	37.5% (6)	50% (8)	75% (12)	62.5% (10)
2015 Sanctions (N=12)	58.3% (7)	75% (9)	41.7% (5)	75% * (9)	50% * (6)	83.33% (10)	66.66% (8)

* 1 district with difficulties has affected the status of 4 colleges

Figure 1. Five-year trend. From Trends in deficiencies leading to sanction, by Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Spring/Summer 2015, *ACCJC News,* p. 5, retrieved from Accjc_news_spring_summer_2015.pdf

Community Colleges Summary

Community colleges face ever-increasing demands with higher enrollments, more

competition for funding, and a high percentage of students who are below college level

(AACC, 2016; Century Foundation, 2013; Hanover Research, 2013; McPhail, 2010;

Student Success Taskforce, 2012). Specifically, California Community Colleges face

public accountability, which has increased the number of initiatives mandated to help

increase student success (CCCCO, 2012, 2016e; McPhail, 2010; Student Success

Taskforce, 2012). California Community Colleges also are required to show integrated

planning in the accreditation self-study reports (ACCJC, 2015b). Consistently for the

past 5 years sanctions and/or warnings continue to be given for lack of planning (ACCJC,

2015a). With the amount of challenges facing community colleges, successful integrated planning can help to maintain accreditation and deal with all the demands placed on their institutions (ACCJC, 2015b; Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; SCUP, 2014). In order to be proactive, many California Community Colleges turn to strategic planning processes.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning has been a successful model of change that is widely used in many diverse organizations. Strategic planning has a thought-provoking history, has consistent basic tenets, and has been used in higher educational institutions. Despite some criticism, strategic planning remains a popular planning alternative.

History of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning has a rich history that began in the military but has been used in business, nonprofits, and in higher educational institutions (Chaffee, 1985; Hanover Research, 2013; Mintzberg, 1994; Snowden, 2002). The term strategy comes from the Greek noun and verb "strategos" meaning general or army respectfully (Snowden, 2002). Strategic planning emerged as a prolific area of study for business in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, but many stories regarding the use of strategic planning date back to before 6th century BC (Chaffee, 1985; Mintzberg, 1994; Snowden, 2002). Several accounts credit a famous Chinese General, Sun Tzu, for writing about strategic planning as a military construct in his book *The Art of War* (Chaffee, 1985; Mintzberg, 1994; Snowden, 2002; Williams, 2009). Snowden (2002) elaborated that General Sun Tzu believed in having extensive action plans prior to going into battle. Snowden concluded that General Sun Tzu wrote plans that were detailed, assigned responsible parties, and even specified communication methods in order to achieve intended results. Williams

(2009) emphasized that military plans are created to gain the advantage in battle where two opposing positions compete; this competitiveness is also conducive to business practices where companies vie to be better and more profitable than others.

As stated previously, the business world of the 1960s highly utilized strategic planning. Strategic planning was employed for decision making and allowed businesses to make "long-range planning, forecasting, and budgeting" (George, 2001, p. 19). Williams (2009) asserted that "during the period from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s, strategic planning enjoyed the heyday of almost unquestioned corporate popularity" (p. 25). Several major companies are noted for having successful strategic planning stories including the Ford Motor Company and General Electric (Snowden, 2002; Williams, 2009).

In the 1980s, criticism of strategic planning processes abounded, which created shifts to strategic management, strategic marketing, and strategic thinking (Bonn & Christodoulou, 1996; Mintzberg, 1994). The shift to strategic management relegated strategic planning to "be seen as only one part of a total approach towards strategic management" (Bonn & Christodoulou, 1996, p. 550). Strategic management offers more flexibility to strategic planning and takes into account the many aspects required for strategic decision making (Bonn & Christodoulou, 1996).

Strategic planning has a rich history from military to business to nonprofits to education (Chaffee, 1985; Mintzberg, 1994; Snowden, 2002). Strategic planning continues to evolve under strategic research to include strategic management (Bonn & Christodoulou, 1996; Gibbons, Scott, & Fhionnlaoich, 2015), strategic marketing (Kotler & Murphy, 1981) and strategic thinking. Strategic planning can be used in the military or

in business as the process appears to have flexibility in application (Tolleson, 2009; Williams, 2009). Even with the differences between combative competition and market competition, strategic planning does have some basic tenets that remain consistent (Snowden, 2002; Williams, 2009).

Basic Tenets of Strategic Planning

Research reiterates that strategic planning is a concept that is difficult to define (Chaffee, 1985; Hightower, 1995; Richardson et al., 1994). Notwithstanding the lack of a unified definition, strategic planning does hold certain tenets that exist across many different interpretations (Chaffee, 1985; Hightower, 1995). There are four basic tenets that are repetitive in the literature (Bryson, 2011; Cope, 1981; Hightower, 1995). The first tenet specifies that the organization assess their current status comprising of their strengths and weaknesses (Cope, 1981; Hightower, 1995; Myran & Howdyshell, 1994; Richardson et al., 1994; Thomas, 2007). The second tenet is to address the outside elements that can affect the environment of the organization (Bryson, 2011; Hightower, 1995; Richardson et al., 1994). The third tenet is recognizing a future position that the institution deems worthy of pursuing, and lastly, that decisions will be made by taking into account the first three tenets in order to move the institution or organization forward (Bryson, 2011; Chaffee, 1985; Cope, 1981; Hightower, 1995; Myran & Howdyshell, 1994). When these tenets are listed, one can see how they can be applied to higher educational institutions even if they were developed for military and later used in the corporate sphere (Tolleson, 2009).

Current Research in Strategic Planning

Research on methods for strategic change continues to be a prolific area of study that greatly influences strategic planning, strategic marketing, and strategic thinking processes (Bonn & Christodoulou, 1996; Bromiley & Rau, 2016; Jarzabkowski, Kaplan, Seidl, & Whittington, 2015; Ramirez & Selsky, 2016; Sharma & Yang, 2015). First, trajectories of recent strategic research are explained and their connection to strategic planning followed by the addition of a socio-ecological view of strategic planning processes.

Bromiley and Rau (2016) contended that among others there are three distinct trajectories within recent strategic research that include resourced-based view (RBV), strategy-as-practice (SAP), and practice-based view (PBV). Bromiley and Rau (2016) recently proposed a PBV that "attempts to explain performance based on things that are imitable" (p. 260). Jarzabkowski et al. (2015) asserted that Bromily and Rau were remiss in addressing the established practice theory insights. Jarzabkowski et al. (2015) specifically expressed that PBV focuses on the practices but ignores the importance of the "who" and the "how" that SAP research includes. They proposed a counter model for an integrated practice-theoretical approach to strategic management that includes the practices or acts conducted, the actors who implement such practices, and the ways in which the practices or processes take place. Jarzabkowski et al. (2015) asserted that "it is by integrating the what, who and how of practices that scholars can trace the links between firm practices and heterogeneous firm performance" (p. 250). The importance of PBV and SAP to strategic planning is indicative of the connection of strategic practices or acts to form strategic planning and the importance of the actors or

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practitioners to the outcome of the process (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015). Bromiley and

Rau (2016) countered that their approach adds a layer of research focusing on a major

variable in the arena of strategic research.

Ramirez and Selsky (2016) proposed "that when organizations face turbulent

contextual conditions, it is advisable for them to reorient how they consider uncertainty in

their strategic planning" (p. 90). Pointedly, Ramirez and Selsky (2016) implored a return

to socio-ecological approaches to strategic planning when uncertainty and rapid changes

are occurring. They suggested a return to scenario planning as a tool that can help

strategic planners during turbulent times. Ramirez and Selsky (2016) advanced the use of

causal textures theory (CTT), which points out that "parts of an organization and the

organization itself are interdependent with parts of the organization's environment"

(p. 93). CTT is grounded in an open systems theory approach (Ramirez & Selsky, 2016).

This approach addresses how the organization is situated in a larger contextual

environment that adds to the turbulence or uncertainty that strategic planners must

address (Ramirez & Selsky, 2016). Sharma and Yang (2015) argued that a hybrid

version of scenario planning lessens the emphasis on future prediction and can be a

valuable tool to help "executives to question their mental connections between trends,

strands and ultimate outcomes" (p. 426). They concluded, "Such strategic narratives can

unlock innovation more effectively than the 'abject failure' of forecasting efforts"

(Sharma & Yang, 2015, p. 427).

Ramirez and Selsky (2016) posited that contextual turbulence can best be

addressed by strategic planners if they utilize a socio-ecological approach to planning.

They further advised that "causal textures theory of organizational environments, is better

suited to appreciating and engaging the unpredictable uncertainty that characterizes turbulent environments than neoclassically based strategy" (Ramirez & Selsky, 2016, p. 100). Ramirez and Selsky (2016) conclude their advice by encouraging strategic planners to "extend their repertoire of tools to also include methods that help engage unpredictable contextual uncertainty like scenario planning" (p. 100).

Strategic Planning in Higher Education

Schendel and Hatten (1972) are credited with being the first authors to suggest that strategic planning or strategic management should be applied to educational institutions. Dooris (2002) asserted that strategic planning first came to higher education in the 1950s as a method to expand campuses or add facilities. Dooris (2002), Saretsky (2013), and Hill (2005) further declared that the Society for Colleges and University Planning, a prominent organization also known as SCUP, was founded by a group of higher educational planners in 1959. In the 1960s and the 1970s colleges began to have higher enrollments and more external pressures, which required them to utilize planning to assist with decision making (Snowden, 2002). Snowden (2002) stated, "Student and faculty movements during this period called for a voice in the decision making process and a more proactive approach to managing the institution" (p. 38).

Cope (1981) suggested that although not a natural fit, strategic planning "can be adapted for use in colleges and universities" (p. 19). Kotler and Murphy (1981) also indicated that "strategic planning procedures in higher education do not precisely parallel the process in a business setting" (p. 472). They postulated that "organizational inflexibility" and inclusion of faculty senates, which have a "crucial role to play in the planning endeavors of most colleges and universities," require modifications to the

strategic planning processes (Kotler & Murphy, 1981, p. 473). Business models of

strategic planning are generally based on a top-down approach that is inconsistent with

higher educational institutions due to shared governance (Snowden, 2002; Tolleson,

2009). The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) wrote in the 1966

Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities the importance of "shared

responsibility and cooperative action among the components of the academic institutions"

(para. 1). In addition, the statement also specified, "Effective planning demands that the

broadest possible exchange of information and opinion should be the rule for

communication among the components of a college or university. The channels of

communication should be established and maintained by joint endeavor" (AAUP, 1966,

para. 14).

    In 2014, SCUP also investigated trends in higher education planning concluding

that eight themes emerged. The eight themes included leadership and planning,

partnerships/collaborations, integrated planning, teaching and learning strategies,

emphasis on accountability, tighter budgeting, optimizing existing physical resources,

and environmental sustainability (SCUP, 2014). Higher educational institutions are a

collection of institutions divided by divisions, departments, and programs (Fleuriet &

Williams, 2015; Hinton, 2012). The college organizational structure is divided into

distinct areas based on disciplines or services that mandate program review processes

whose sole purpose is the focus of action plans intended for their individual program

needs (Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; Hinton, 2012). Programs are not always given the

opportunity to interact with other programs outside of their division or area unless they

do so in the form of committee participation (Fleuriet & Williams, 2015). Integrated

planning requires cross-college participation and planning that shows integration

processes on many levels across the entire institution (Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; Hinton,

2012). Hinton (2012) claimed that "the accreditation commissions began to insist

institutions have a strategic plan and an assessment plan in order to meet accrediting

requirements" (p. 7). She further declared that in addition to accrediting commissions

"state and federal governments began tying funding and regulatory oversight to

accountability measures, moving the business of the academy into the arena of political

discourse" (Hinton, 2012, p. 7). Accreditation requires planning, and the trends in higher

education illustrate the importance of planning (ACCJC, 2015b; Fleuriet & Williams,

2015; Hinton, 2012; SCUP, 2014).

Strategic Planning in California Community Colleges

California AB 1725 has been cited as the regulation that opened the door for

shared or participatory governance in California Community Colleges (Duncan-Hall,

1993; Ecung, 2007; Finnell, 2014; Schultz, 2011). Furthermore, the California Education

Code Section 70902 (b)(7) affirms,

> The governing board of each district shall establish procedures to ensure faculty,
>
> staff and students the opportunity to express their opinions at the campus level,
>
> and to ensure that these opinions are given every reasonable consideration, and
>
> the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making
>
> recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards. (State of
>
> California, 2014)

In addition to shared governance, California Community Colleges also have other

contingencies that require changes of the business model of strategic planning (Fleuriet &

Williams, 2015; Hinton, 2012). Explicitly, educational institutions are accredited bodies; the accreditation grants colleges the ability to confer degrees (ACCJC, 2016; Hinton, 2012; Pagel, 2011; White, 2007). Accrediting standards are requirements for California Community Colleges to maintain their accreditation status (ACCJC, 2016b; Pagel, 2011; White, 2007). The California Community College system is accredited by the ACCJC. The ACCJC accreditation handbook identifies planning as an integral part of a well-managed college. The ACCJC handbook emphasized that colleges are to "provide evidence of planning for improvement of institutional structures and processes" (ACCJC, 2015b, p. 6). Further, the ACCJC handbook affirmed that an effective college "ensures academic quality and continuous quality improvement through ongoing assessment of learning and achievement and pursues institutional excellence and improvement though ongoing, integrated planning and evaluation" (ACCJC, 2015b, p. 10). Standard 1 reiterates that the college mission guides "institutional decision-making, planning and resource allocation and informs institutional goals for student learning and achievement" (ACCJC, 2015b, p. 11). George (2001) argued that the mission and vision of the college should be taken into account during strategic planning processes at educational institutions. Concurrently, Standard 4 of the ACCJC handbook also mandated that "systematic participative processes are used to assure effective planning and implementation" of major decisions (ACCJC, 2015b, p. 24). Planning, therefore, has become an essential part of the higher educational system, and based on accreditation standards planning, is also mandatory (Pagel, 2011; White, 2007). Strategic planning is one method that California Community Colleges have attempted in order to respond to

the required planning processes, but criticisms remain of strategic planning itself (Schultz, 2011; White, 2007).

Critical View of Strategic Planning

There are several criticisms of strategic planning including the reasons for planning, relying on process, and that unlike the corporate world, higher education lacks the flexibility to keep up with changes and current trends (Chaffee, 1985; Dooris, 2002; Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; Hinton, 2012; Mintzberg, 1994; Saretsky, 2013). According to Saretsky (2013), one criticism regarding strategic planning is that it is often completed to meet a mandate. Once the mandate is fulfilled, the document sits on a shelf but is irrelevant to the institution (Saretsky, 2013). Hinton (2012) also concurred that disillusion follows planning when the effort creating the document results in "shelf documents" (p. 7). Mintzberg (1994) has been a vocal critic of strategic planning, insisting that planners "collect information," "evaluate strategy," and "implement" but skip over how to "create strategy in the first place" (p. 66).

Process over substance is also a recurring criticism Dooris (2002); Saretsky (2013) paraphrased Brian Quinn, a Dartmouth professor, but Mintzberg (1994) quoted Quinn's full comment regarding strategic planning:

> A good deal of corporate planning I have observed is like a ritual rain dance; it has no effect on the weather that follows, but those who engage in it think it does. Moreover, it seems to me that much of the advice and instruction related to corporate planning is directed at improving dance, not the weather. (p. 139)

In order for strategic planning to be successful, the purpose is clear, the goals attainable, and the organization aware of the goals (Mintzberg, 1994). Nonetheless, even Mintzberg (1994) admitted that strategic planning is a "process with particular benefit in particular contexts" (p. 4). He ends his book *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* on a hopeful note that "planning does have an important role to play in organizations, as do plans and planners, when matched with the appropriate contexts" (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 416).

Strategic planning has some inherent flaws when utilized at higher educational institutions where shared governance demands inclusion, and changes can require more time than in the business world (Chaffee, 1985; Fleuriet & Williams, 2015). Chaffee (1985) concluded that business models do not work for educational institutions because they cannot keep up with current trends. As an example, Chaffee expounded that strategic management had replaced strategic planning in the business world, but higher educational institutions were still focused on strategic planning. Furthermore, others argued that strategic planning was too linear, too structured, and relied too much on data (Dooris, 2002; Mintzberg, 1994). Regardless of this, Dooris (2002) further indicated that "even authors who have been relatively harsh in their evaluation of how strategic planning has been conceived and practiced have not, for the most part, concluded that planning is unnecessary or undesirable" (p. 27). He (2002) implored planners to use the tool wisely, "to listen to the market, to encourage the emergence of good ideas, to allow employees to contribute, to help managers recognize opportunities and make good decisions, and to help an organization flourish amidst change" (p. 27). Dooris stated that "relatively recent conceptions of strategic planning focus more than earlier approaches on

dynamism, the future, flexibility, organizational intelligence, creativity, and actually

moving from strategy to transformation" (p. 28).

Strategic Planning Summary

Strategic planning is a well-known and often utilized method for planning

(Allison & Kaye, 2005; Bryson, 2011; Chaffee, 1985; Hightower, 1995). Historically, it

has its roots in the military, but the process has been utilized in many organizations

including higher education (Chaffee, 1985; Mintzberg, 1994; Snowden, 2002; Williams,

2009). Current studies continue to enhance strategic research and strategic planning

(Bromiley & Rau, 2016; Jarzabkowski et al., 2015; Ramirez & Selsky, 2016; Sharma &

Yang, 2015). Strategic planning is not a one-size-fits-all construct, but there are some

basic tenets that are repetitive in the literature (Bryson, 2011; Chaffee, 1985; Cope, 1981;

Hightower, 1995). Higher education offers some complexity to strategic planning due to

shared governance, but accrediting commissions are requiring planning in their

accreditation process (ACCJC, 2015b; Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; Hinton, 2012; Pagel,

2011; White, 2007). Critics argue that strategic planning is too structured, but overall the

benefits outweigh the negatives (Chaffee, 1985; Dooris, 2002; Mintzberg, 1994). In

California Community Colleges, the accreditation standards mandate integrated planning

(ACCJC, 2015b; Pagel, 2011). Integration implies different factions working together to

coordinate their efforts. According to McPhee and Zaug (2001), "Integration is often a

communication process, the course of which can be complex and transformative" (p.

575). J. Lewis (1983) wrote that planning can actually be used to improve

communication and that "planning is more than producing a document" (p. 24). He

presented that the use of planning "is a human experience designed to improve

communication between various levels of the school organization" (J. Lewis, 1983, p. 24). In order to integrate processes, constituencies within higher educational institutions communicate with each other.

Organizational Communication

Zaremba (2010) defined organizational communication as "the study of why, how and with what effects organizations send and receive information in a systemic environment" (p. 16). He further defined the term systemic as a "combination of persons and departments that have a common goal" who are, therefore, interdependent (Zaremba, 2010, p. 16). Sotirin (2014) stated that organizational theorists study communication as an explanation, which "is what makes a communicative approach to studying organizations unique. This leads to a distinct contribution to the study of organization and the individuals connected to them" (p. 30). In order to explore organizational communication, basic terms should be defined followed by the communicational paradigms associated with organizational communication theory. Explicating the differences between transmission and constitutive communication sets the stage for the theoretical framework that arises from a communicative constitution of organization (Littlejohn, 2002; Putnam et al., 2009; Zaremba, 2010).

Communication

Littlejohn (2002) contended that "communication is difficult to define" (p. 6). He further pointed out that the term is "overworked" and definitions tend to fulfill specific purposes. A broad vague definition would be the act of sending and receiving messages (Littlejohn, 2002; Zaremba, 2010). Peter Anderson explained that how one defines communication will ultimately set the perspective that will "launch scholars down

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different theoretical trajectories, predispose them to ask distinct questions, and set them up to conduct different kinds of communication studies" (as cited in Littlejohn, 2002, p. 8). Several definitional distinctions have long been debated when defining communication; two specific instances are the issues of intentionality and understanding (Littlejohn, 2002). Communication can be intentional or unintentional (Adler & Proctor, 2014). Zaremba (2010) defined communication as nonlinear and irreversible, further indicating that the term communication should not be considered synonymous with understanding. Consequently, communication does occur even if the messages are misconstrued (Adler & Proctor, 2014). Communication can also be defined as a process in which a source or sender encodes a message then forwards the message along a channel to a receiver who then decodes the message (O'Hair, Rubenstein, & Stewart, 2016). Conrad and Poole (2012) defined communication as "a process through which people, acting together, create, sustain, and manage meanings through the use of verbal and nonverbal signs and symbols within a particular context" (p. 5). Zaremba (2010) suggested a definition that communication is "a transmission and constitutive process that occurs when people intentionally or unintentionally send and receive verbal and nonverbal messages" (p. 16).

Transmission. Communication viewed from a transmission perspective is based on the Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver linear models of communication (De Beer, 2014; Littlejohn & Foss, 2009; Miller, 2009). Zaremba (2010) described the transmission perspective with the metaphor of a filled bucket being moved from one location to another. During the voyage, the bucket may lose some of the contents, which in turn changes the original "message" by the time it arrives at the final destination.

Zaremba (2010) expounded that the elements from the voyage that alters the bucket contents could be seen as the perception of the receiver, feedback, biases, or the environment. Miller (2009) also defined the transmission model as "a way of moving information from sources to receivers" and implies that sometimes effectively getting the message to others can be as important as constitutive shared meaning (p. 12). Transmission models "depict communication as a process" (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009, p. 176). Although transmission models serve a purpose communication scholars "shifted from messages to meaning" (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009, p. 176).

   Constitutive. The *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory* acknowledged that "communication scholars began to focus on the communication process not as the exchange of messages or transmission of meaning, but as the creation of meaning" (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009, p. 176). Zaremba (2010) emphasized, "The constitutive perspective assumes that the act of interacting is a process that also shapes and defines the relationships between people" (p. 17). From a constitutive perspective, communication does not just move a message from one point to another, but the communication creates the environment, and therefore, the relationships (Miller, 2009; Zaremba, 2010). A metaphor to describe the constitutive perspective could be a club whose members are loud and communicative (Zaremba, 2010). The members of the loud club would behave differently than members of a quieter contemplative club such as a reading group with timid introverts (Zaremba, 2010). The type of communication constitutes the relationships between the participants and reinforces the behavior (Zaremba, 2010). The behavior is then imparted on to new members who quickly learn the behavior of their peers (Zaremba, 2010). Zaremba (2010) further explained that

communication should be considered by both transmission and constitution in that some messages are needed to give and receive information where other messages create the relationships between the interactants.

Organization

Miller (2009) defined organization as having "five critical features, namely the existence of social collectivity, organizational and individual goals, coordinating activity, organizational structure, and the embedding of the organization with an environment of other organizations" (p. 10). Conrad and Poole (2012) explicated the distinction between organization as a thing versus organization "as dynamic, ever-changing groups of people who were actively trying to make sense out of the events that took place around them, while pursuing their own individual goals as well as goals they shared with their coworkers" (pp. 9-10). Putnam et al. (2009) cited the work of Ruth Smith, who in 1993, presented a paper where organization and communication were defined in different formats. The first implied that organizations were a place where communication took place. The second opened the door for discussion of three possibilities: "communication produces organization, organization produces communication and the two co-produce each other" (Putnam et al., 2009, p. 7).

Paradigms of Organizational Communication

In 1982, Linda Putnam, a prolific organizational communication scholar, put together a paradigmatic meta-analysis of organizational research. She encapsulated organizational communication into three distinctive paradigms. Putnam (1982) maintained that "beliefs about social reality undergird the way we theorize and operationalize organizational communication" (p. 192). Putnam's contentions echoed

what Anderson (as cited in Littlejohn, 2002) proposed regarding the way definitions can lead one toward a particular trajectory of scholarship. Putnam (1982) specifically decided to categorize organizational research by paradigms due to the fact that paradigms "covers the broad spectrum of perspectives, theories and methodological assumptions" (p. 192). Morgan (1980) contended that paradigms should consist of three specific components:

> (1) a complete view of reality or way of seeing; (2) as relating to the social organization of science in terms of schools of thought connected with particular kinds of scientific achievements; (3) relating to the concrete use of specific kinds of tools and texts for the process of scientific puzzle solving. (p. 606)

Putnam (1982) utilized the same three paradigmatic categories as recommended by Morgan (1980): functionalist, interpretive, and radical humanistic/structuralist. Putnam (1982) explained that "functionalists view society as objective and orderly; behavior is concrete and tangible, and society has a real and systematic existence" (p. 194). Critical perspectives are similar to interpretive perspectives due to the fact that understanding shared meaning and lived experiences are vital to their research. The distinction comes when critical theorists focus on oppression, power, and hegemony (Littlejohn, 2002; Mumby, 1993; Putnam, 1982; Zaremba, 2010).

The interpretive paradigm presupposes that meaning is socially constructed (Deetz, 1982; Littlejohn, 2002; Miller, 2009; Putnam, 1982; Yuksel, 2013). Putnam (1982) further claimed that "constructed reality, then is actively maintained through the communicative experiences and the meanings enacted from these behaviors" (p. 200).

Interpretive Theories of Organizational Communication

As stated above, interpretive studies are concerned with understanding (Deetz, 1982; Fish, 1990). Deetz (1982) proposed, "All human knowledge is developed through a dialectic process" and "understanding is not a cumulative process but a transactive one" (p. 145). Four schools of thought emerge within the interpretive paradigm: phenomenology, hermeneutics, symbolic interactionism, and ethnomethodology (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009; Morgan, 1980; Putnam, 1982).

Phenomenology is the study of knowledge and how individuals attain knowledge (Littlejohn, 2002; Putnam, 1982). Stanley Deetz (1973) advanced three basic premises regarding phenomenology; knowledge comes from conscious experiences, meanings come from people not objects, and that meaning of language comes from the experiences obtained using language. As an interpretive perspective in organizational communication, hermeneutics is the study of any action or document as text (Littlejohn, 2002; Putnam, 1982). People within organizations often have stories and rituals that they enact as members of the organizational culture. In hermeneutics, a researcher would study the link between those stories and beliefs and values that underline them within the organization (De Beer, 2014; Putnam, 1982). Littlejohn (2002) summarized Barbara Ballis Lal's symbolic interactionism viewpoint, which indicated several premises that show that "people understand their experience through meanings found in the symbols of their primary groups" and that "people's actions are based on their interpretations" (p. 145). Ethnomethodology is an interpretive study that is heavily involved in conversation analysis. This would involve language patterns and how people organize their day-to-day activities (Littlejohn, 2002).

Several prominent theories have come out of the interpretive paradigm including

Anthony Giddens' structuration theory and Karl Weick's sense-making theory

(Littlejohn, 2002; Littlejohn & Foss, 2009; McClellan & Sanders, 2013; Putnam, 1982).

Utilizing both of these perspectives, James R. Taylor proposed work that focused on key

elements of organization that were purely communicative (McClellan & Sanders, 2013;

McPhee & Zaug, 2000, 2009; Taylor & Robichaud, 2004). Creating what is now referred

to as the Montreal School, James Taylor and his students "describe communication as

both site and surface of organizing and explore the oscillation between text and

conversation as constitutive to sense-making and therefore of organizing" (Littlejohn &

Foss, 2009, p. 704).

Table 2 lists research conducted in the interpretive paradigm. The table offers

examples of the research conducted under interpretive organizational communication.

The table specifies the name of the study, the theorist, a brief description, and offers the

references where the information was found.

Communicative Constitution of Organization

Noblet (2015) clarified that "communication is constitutive of organizations

because communication is the primary social process that creates organizations;

organizations, therefore, arise from communicative acts that give meaning" (p. 22).

Constitutive approaches are interpretive. The idea is to view texts (documents,

brochures, or even rules of an organization) as attempts to codify conversational

interaction in organizations. McClellan and Sanders (2013) explained Taylor's Montreal

School "attends to the complex ways in which social actions (such as conversations)

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Table 2

Interpretive Paradigm

Theory	Description	References
▪ Argument in organization—Anne Huff	Argument as a means of understanding ambiguity in organization	(Putnam, 1982)
▪ Sensemaking—Karl Weick	Reducing environmental uncertainty through talk	(Littlejohn & Koss, 2009)
▪ Cop Talk—Michael Pacanowsky's	How police culture is socially constructed	(Putnam, 1982)
▪ Montreal School—James Taylor	Metatheories communication as both text and conversation	(Littlejohn & Koss, 2009; Taylor, 1999)
▪ Structuration theory—Giddens	Social structures are made by and constrain human behavior.	(McPhee, Poole, & Iverson, 2014; Littlejohn & Koss, 2009)
▪ Four flows—Robert McPhee & Pamela Zaug	Membership negotiation, reflexive self-structuring, activity coordination and institutional positioning	(McPhee et al., 2014; McPhee & Zaug, 2000, 2009)

create and recreate organizations (as texts). In other words, organizations are

accomplishments of communication interactions" (p. 254). Taylor (1999) contended that

his theoretical inquiry is resolved "to a conception of communication as an intersection of

two dimensions—conversation and text" (p. 22). McClellan and Sanders (2013)

indicated that "those embracing a constitutive perspective recognize and appreciate the

complex ways organizational realities are inherently communicative" (p. 254). McPhee

and Zaug (2009) defined constitution:

> A pattern or array of types of interaction constitute organizations insofar
>
> as they make organizations what they are, and insofar as basic features of
>
> the organization are implicated in the system of interaction. This
>
> relevance is not necessarily outside the knowledge of members and others

who are communicating—while they may see themselves as powerless to destroy or fundamentally change the organization, they typically do know how to make their communication compliant to dominant organizational directives, or resistant, or irrelevant and non-organizational. After too many resistant choices by members, the climate of the organization may change, its legitimacy may sink, even in the face of top member resource control. So communication even by members low in power still does forceful work in the constitutive task. (p. 27)

McPhee and Zaug (2009) also offered a definition of organization as "a social interaction system, influenced by prevailing economic and legal institutional practices, and including coordinated action and interaction within and across a socially constructed system boundary, manifestly directed toward a privileged set of outcomes" (p. 28). Finally McPhee and Zaug (2009) summarized CCO by stating that "communication has a constitutive force" (p. 28). They also concluded "the whole communication process, rather than any one act or exchange, is the locus of constitution" (McPhee & Zaug, 2009, p. 28).

Theoretical Framework the Four Flows Model

Another prominent theoretical framework in communicative constitution of organizations is the four flows model by McPhee and Zaug (2000, 2009), which embraces the ideology that "communication is at once human and organizational" (McPhee et al., 2014, p. 80). McPhee and Zaug (2009) concluded that organizations require four distinct types of messages (McPhee et al., 2014; McPhee & Zaug, 2000).

McPhee and Zaug (2000, 2009) proposed the four flows model, which offers a framework for the communicative messaging found in organizations (McPhee & Zaug, 2009). The lenses used in the four flows model are membership negotiation, reflexive self-structuring, activity coordination, and institutional positioning (McPhee et al., 2014; McPhee & Zaug, 2000, 2009; Putnam et al., 2009). Spradley (2012) suggested that "the four flows are social structures brought into being by social interaction and are described as constituting the process of organizing" (p. 16).

Membership negotiation. Membership negotiation includes "the practices and strategies that constitute identities, positions, membership boundaries, and status gradations" (McPhee et al., 2014, pp. 80-81). Encompassed in membership identity, a researcher would look at the roles, identity, and the socialization of members in the organizational context (McPhee & Zaug, 2009). Noblet (2015) stated that member negotiation includes any communicative act or processes that organizations engage in "to decide who will affiliate with the organization; this could include the job application process, team selection, or any number of communicative acts that determine who is a member and who is not a member" (p. 21).

Reflexive self-structuring. McPhee and Zaug (2009) defined reflexive self-structuring or organizational self-structuring as "a communication process among organizational role-holders and groups" (p. 36). They explicated that this flow can be confused with activity coordination, but what makes this flow unique is that it "does not directly concern work, but rather the internal relations, norms and social entities that are the skeleton for connection, flexing, and shaping of work process" (McPhee & Zaug, 2009, p. 36). Researchers would review committee demographics, organization charts,

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procedural manuals, or any forms related to planning in order to see "any process that serves to steer the organization" (McPhee & Zaug, 2009, p. 36). Organizational structuring includes the communicative elements "determining organizational structure; for example, the decision to have a 'top-heavy' or 'bottom-heavy' organization" (Noblet, 2015, p. 21). McPhee and Zaug (2009) argued that these structures are important because they presuppose collaborative communication by implementing or "pre-fixing work arrangements and norms rather than let them emerge during collaboration" (p. 37). Self-structuring includes "a division of labor, a standard task-flow sequence and a series of policies and plan for work" (McPhee & Zaug, 2009, p. 38).

Activity coordination. McPhee and Zaug (2009) explained that activity coordination is the communication required to get pragmatic work done. The adjustments and modifications made by members in order to achieve goals are a perfect example of activity coordination (McPhee & Zaug, 2009; Noblet, 2015; Putnam et al., 2009). Noblet (2015) indicated that daily work functions fall under activity coordination including committee meetings. Activity coordination includes "effortful alignment of actors with disparate goals and inconsistent perspectives" (McPhee et al., 2014, p. 87). McPhee et al. (2014) further theorized that "the dialectics of control plays an important part in activity coordination" (p. 88). Although self-structuring directs how work will be done, activity coordination is the engaging in the communication to make that work happen (Noblet, 2015; Putnam et al., 2009). McPhee and Zaug (2009) argued that "the process of adjusting the work process and solving immediate practical problems requires the sort of communication" referred to as activity coordination (p. 38).

Institutional positioning. The final flow in the model is institutional positioning. This includes communicative elements that involve entities outside of the organization (McPhee et al., 2014; McPhee & Zaug, 2000). When institutions conduct strategic planning processes, they have to refer to the external environment for scanning, input, and reporting their plans (Allison & Kaye, 2005; Bryson, 2011). External entities or stakeholders for community colleges could include students, competitors, the local service area residents, and governmental agencies, such as accreditors (ACCJC, 2016). How the institution is viewed from the outside is a communicative message that is created and maintained by internal members.

Organizational Communication Summary

The study of organizational communication has evolved over the years moving theoretical researchers to investigate both transmission and constitutive models of organizational communication (Littlejohn, 2002; McPhee & Zaug, 2009; Zaremba, 2010). The three paradigms of organizational communication give a foundation for the terminology and trajectory of communicational inquiry (Littlejohn, 2002; Morgan, 1980; Putnam, 1982). The communicative constitution of organizations changes the focus of communication as a byproduct of an organization into the means of creating an organization (McPhee & Zaug, 2009; Putnam et al., 2009). Specifically the four flows model offers a theoretical framework to investigate four distinct but important communicative processes in organizations, which include communication for membership, communication for structure, communication for task accomplishment, and communication to entities outside the organization (McPhee & Zaug, 2009; Noblet, 2015; Putnam et al., 2009; Spradley, 2012).

Communication and Strategic Planning

Communication is indelibly etched into planning processes (Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; L. K. Lewis, 2011; Thomas, 2007). Organizational change requires planning and communication (Allison & Kaye, 2005; Bryson, 2011; Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; L. L. Lewis & Seibold, 1998; L. K. Lewis, 2006, 2011; L. K. Lewis, Schmisseur, Stephens, & Weir, 2006; Yuksel, 2013). Strategic planning is a method used to implement organizational change (Allison & Kaye, 2005; Bryson, 2011; Cope, 1981; Hightower, 1995). Many aspects of strategic planning require communication such as initiating the process, internal and external scans, creation of a mission, vision, values and goals, the implementation process, and the evaluation process (Bryson, 2011; Lattimore, 2011; Thomas, 2007; Tolleson, 2009). None of these aspects can be created or completed without communication (Bryson, 2011; Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; L. L. Lewis & Seibold, 1998).

Laurie K. Lewis (2000), a prolific writer on organizational change and communication, defined planned organizational change as "change that is brought about through the purposeful efforts of organizational members as opposed to change that is due to environmental or uncontrollable forces" (p. 45). L. K. Lewis is specifically interested in the role of communication on the implementation process of organizational change. She defined implementers as "those people in organizations who take on a formal role in bringing about the change effort and translating the idea of change into practice" (L. K. Lewis, 2011, p. 4). She further defined stakeholders as "those who have a stake in an organization's process and or outputs" (L. K. Lewis, 2011, p. 4). Communication is the tool utilized when people present changes that need to be made,

those in power make decisions, and organizational members share what is being done to external members of an organization (Bryson, 2011; Chaffee, 1985; L. K. Lewis, 2011; Nolasco, 2011).

L. K. Lewis (2011) similarly related that change terminology positively promotes change as something organizations should do. She then listed terms that linguistically paint a positive image of change, such as "continuous improvement" or "progressive" (L. K. Lewis, 2011, p. 22). L. K. Lewis argued that "the rhetorical force of labeling in this way pushes an agenda" for change (p. 22). In fact, Lewis argued that the "communication process and organizational change are inextricably linked processes" (p. 45). L. K. Lewis (2000) described a study of negative influences on organizational change that was conducted by Covin and Kilmnn in 1990. In that study, eight themes emerged. Three of the eight were directly related to lack of communication or miscommunication as negatively impacting organizational change: "a lack of meaningful participation," which indicates that the voice of the participants was either not included or not required, "the purpose of the program was not clear," which shows a lack of communicating the intention of the change, and "poor communication," which reaffirms the notion that communication is vital to change (L. K. Lewis, 2000, p. 48).

Furthermore, Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010) emphasized the importance of a "kickoff communication process," which is a "formal declaration to the organization that a transformation is underway. Its content, tone, and delivery have a significant impact on how people respond to the impending challenge" (p. 166). They advanced the claim that the "initial communication" regarding planned change "is a critical process for aligning the organization, the leaders, and the conditions required to

make this transformation successful" (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010, p. 167).

Ackerman Anderson and Anderson recommended the use of communication which will

"include multiple opportunities for employees to hear your message, talk and think about

it, formulate their questions, and have their concerns addressed" (p. 167). Kotter (2012)

correspondingly promoted the need for communication in organizational change. He

proposed seven strategies for communicating a vision of change, which include keeping

the message simple; utilizing metaphors, analogies, and examples; using different

forums; being repetitive; leading by example; addressing inconsistencies; and listening to

feedback.

   Strategic planning processes generally contain four basic tenets: internal scanning

of current status, external scanning of outside elements that affect the institution,

visioning a future position or change, and decision making that considers all of the

previous mentioned factors (Bryson, 2011; Chaffee, 1985; Cope, 1981; Hightower,

1995). All of the strategic planning tenets require some form of communication (Bryson,

2011). Rhonemus (2011) agreed that "execution and campus engagement are crucial for

successful implementation of a strategic plan" (p. 40). Additionally Bryson (2011)

suggested that communicative elements are required for successful strategic planning.

He advocated the use of forums wherein dialogue and deliberation are focal points in the

planning process. Bryson (2011) contended that

   strategic planning retreats, team meetings, task force meetings, focus groups,

   strategic planning newsletters and internet notices, conference calls, emails and

   social networking exchanges and strategic plans themselves – when used as

   educational devices—are all examples of the use of forums. (p. 373)

Moreover, Bryson (2011) listed six more areas where communication is implicit in strategic planning, such as

seizing opportunities to be interpreters and direction givers in areas of uncertainty, reveal and name real needs and real conditions, help co-leaders and followers frame and reframe issues and strategies, offer compelling visions of the future, champion new and improved ideas for dealing with strategic issues, and articulate desired actions and expected consequences. (pp. 374-376)

Bryson (2011) clearly and intentionally showed how communication is complicit in all of these arenas. Allison and Kaye (2005) likewise emphasized the importance of communication in the planning process, specifically the leaders of change, "all members of the planning committee must talk the same planning language" (p. 59). Consistency of message and having open communication can greatly assist the strategic planning process.

Strategic planning in community colleges has produced a prolific amount of research regarding many variables, such as perception (Olaode, 2011; Thomas, 2007), participation (Alfred, 1994; Bacig, 2002; Duncan-Hall, 1993), leadership (Houghton, 2000; Nolasco, 2011), and organizational effectiveness (Lattimore, 2011; McCarthy, 1991; Pagel, 2011; Phelps, 1996; White, 2007). However, the research stops short of assessing the role of communication with regard to strategic planning. Several researchers have found that communication is a key element for community colleges to attain their goals (Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; Pagel, 2011; Schultz, 2011; Washington, 2011; White, 2007). California Community Colleges have been the subject of many studies on integrated planning processes where the key findings showed that

communication was imperative to planning (Pagel, 2011; Schultz, 2011; White, 2007). Further research has been suggested to investigate more on the role of communication in planning processes (Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; Pagel, 2011; White, 2007). Researchers suggested to explore the role that communication has on the planning process according to those who implement strategic planning (Littlejohn, 2002; Putnam, 1982). Research on the role of communication in strategic planning at California Community Colleges could add to the literature regarding strategic planning processes within the California Community College system.

Previous studies indicated that communication is fundamentally linked to planning (Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; Pagel, 2011; White, 2007; Yuksel, 2013). Communication has a role in the strategic planning process as a method for organizational change (Allison & Kaye, 2005; Bryson, 2011; Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; L. K. Lewis, 2011; L. L. Lewis & Seibold, 1998). Researchers have continued to point out the importance of communication for implementation (L. L. Lewis & Seibold, 1998), engaging discussions (Bryson, 2011), and as a method to communicate the desired goals (Allison & Kaye, 2005). Research has investigated many elements regarding strategic planning, but the role of communication has not been investigated. McPhee and Zaug's four flows model offers a format with which the constitutive role of communication can be viewed in relation to strategic planning (McPhee & Zaug, 2009; Putnam et al., 2009).

Conclusions

Community colleges are open enrollment institutions that offer accessible and affordable educational options for students (AACC, 2016). Challenges continue to mount for community colleges across the nation as they face higher enrollment,

competition for funding, underprepared student populations, and student stratification (Hanover Research, 2013; McPhail, 2010). The California Community College system encounters public accountability, increased state legislative initiatives, and stringent accreditation standards (CCCCO, 2012, 2016e; College of the Canyons, 2015). Consistently, in the last 5 years, over 60% of all accreditation sanctions or warnings were issued for lack of planning (ACCJC, 2015a, p. 5). As community colleges encounter higher enrollment, more competition for funding, less prepared students, public accountability, increased state initiatives, and the rigors of the accreditation process, colleges are turning to planning processes such as strategic planning.

Strategic planning is a well-known change model utilized in a variety of organizations (Chaffee, 1985; Hightower, 1995). As originally conceived, strategic planning was cumbersome for institutions of higher education, but slowly the format has been modified to be a significant tool for change in the academic world (Cope, 1981; Kotler & Murphy, 1981). In spite of this, strategic planning has also been criticized for being too process oriented, and for not being appropriate for higher educational institutions (Mintzberg, 1994). Due to the multitude of initiatives and changes, higher educational institutions are often reactive rather than proactive in their planning processes (Hinton, 2012). A plan that is written to fulfill a mandate will sit on a shelf and not be relevant to the organization (Hinton, 2012; Mintzberg, 1994). Although strategic planning has been criticized, even the critics concede that the process is valuable if used correctly (Mintzberg, 1994).

Organizational communication is the study of how interdependent people communicate within an organization (Zaremba, 2010). The interpretive paradigm views

communication as a method to socially construct meaning. The interpretive paradigm

utilizes a constitutive view of communication. Putnam et al. (2009) explained that

"communicative constitution presumably embodies the material (composition or

elements), the formal (framing or forming), and the efficient causes (principles or rules

for governing) that bring organizations into existence" (p. 4). A prominent theoretical

framework was proposed by McPhee and Zaug (2000, 2009) known as the four flows

model. The four flows model offers a view of four distinctive communicative elements

in organizations: membership negotiation, reflexive self-structuring, activity

coordination, and institutional positioning (McPhee & Zaug, 2000, 2009). The four flows

model offers a strong method with which researchers could explore the role of

communication in strategic planning, which researchers have advised requires

communication (Fleuriet & Williams, 2015; L. K. Lewis, 2011; McPhee & Zaug, 2009;

Noel-Levitz, 2009; Pagel, 2011).

Communication is indelibly intertwined with strategic planning (Fleuriet &

Williams, 2015; J. Lewis, 1983). Organizational change theorists view strategic planning

as a method to invoke change and view communication as critical (Fleuriet & Williams,

2015; J. Lewis, 1983). Research on community colleges and strategic planning has been

abundant, and research indicates that communication is a vital element to the strategic

planning process, yet there appears to be little to no research regarding the role of

communication in the strategic planning process at community colleges (Pagel, 2011;

Schultz, 2011; White, 2007). California Community Colleges have also been the topic of

a prolific amount of research regarding strategic planning. Several researchers who

studied strategic planning in California Community Colleges specified that further

research should include what impact the role of communication plays in the strategic

planning process (Pagel, 2011; Schultz, 2011; White, 2007). Strategic planning is an

often utilized model for organizational change, and integrated planning is a mandated

requirement of the accreditation process for California Community Colleges; therefore,

the proposed study could have pragmatic implications.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The methodology chapter includes the purpose statement, research questions, and research design used in this study. The study explored the shared meaning of college planning committee members in strategic planning processes at California Community Colleges. This qualitative study utilized a phenomenological approach. This chapter also describes the population and sample utilized for this study. Data collection included interviews and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with administrators, faculty, and classified members of strategic planning committees at seven California Community Colleges. Data collection, data analysis, and limitations to the research design are also defined.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the role of communication as perceived by community college planning committee members with regard to the strategic planning processes at California Community Colleges. A secondary purpose of this study was to explore the differences between the perceptions of administrators, faculty and classified committee members involved in planning processes at California Community Colleges.

Research Questions

1. How do committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning process at California Community Colleges?

   a. How do administrative committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

b. How do faculty committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

c. How do classified committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

2. Are there any differences between the perceptions of committee members with regard to the role of communication in the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

Research Design

The research design selected for this study was a qualitative phenomenological approach. The objective of this study was to explore the perceptions of California Community College planning committee members with regard to the role of communication in strategic planning. Each participant had direct experience with the strategic planning process at their college.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) concluded that "qualitative research is based on constructivism, which assumes that multiple realities are socially constructed through individual and collective perception or view of the same situation" (p. 12). Qualitative inquiry allows researchers to view how individuals assign meaning to their experiences (Patton, 2015). Qualitative research includes "capturing and understanding diverse perspectives, observing and analyzing behaviors in context, looking for patterns in what human beings do and think—and examining the implication of those patterns" (Patton, 2015, p. 8). Qualitative research allows a researcher to explore phenomena from different participant perceptions.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stated that nine characteristics are "present to some degree" in qualitative research (p. 321). The characteristics referred to by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) include natural setting, context sensitivity, direct data collection, rich narrative description, process orientation, inductive data analysis, participant perspectives, emergent design, and complexity of understanding and explanation.

Qualitative research can be exploratory in nature thus adding new information to the study at hand "by building rich descriptions of complex situations" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 324). The research questions in this study called for a qualitative design. As stated previously, little to no research has been conducted on the role of communication in strategic planning processes at California Community Colleges, which indicated an exploratory qualitative design as an appropriate choice. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) further claimed that qualitative research designs can "show relationships between events and meanings as perceived by participants" (p. 324).

Phenomenological approaches are used to explore "meaning, structure and essence of the lived experience" (Patton, 2015, p. 98). For this research, the phenomenon was the perceived role of communication in strategic planning processes at California Community Colleges. Patton (2015) further suggested, "Phenomenology aims to capture the essence of program participants' experiences" (p. 116). Moustakas (1994) posited that "evidence from phenomenological research is derived from first-person reports of lived experiences" (p. 84).

Moustakas (1994) proposed that in phenomenological research there are four basic steps: epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis.

In the epoche phase, the researcher brackets his or her personal knowledge and preconceived ideology in order to "allow the phenomenon or experience to be just what it is and to come to know it as it presents itself" through the data (Moustakas, 1994, p. 86). In a phenomenological approach, the researcher must put aside their perceptions to focus on the shared meaning from human experience (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). Phenomenological reduction is taking the phenomena and describing them in "textual language" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90). Imaginative variation allows the researcher to view the phenomena from varying frames of reference (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) finally defined synthesis, which allows the researcher to combine all of the processes into one unifying essence.

The nature of the research questions allowed the researcher to explore the perceptions of various participants in the strategic planning process in order to identify themes and trends from varied perspectives. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) insisted, "The basis of phenomenology is that there are multiple ways of interpreting the same experience and that the meaning of the experience for each participant is what constitutes reality" (p. 346).

Table 3 describes an abbreviated version of the steps Moustakas (1994) recommended for phenomenological research. These abbreviated steps served as a procedural guide for data analysis in this study.

Table 3

Procedural Guide for Phenomenological Data Analysis

Step	Description
1. List and group:	Create lists of relevant expressions
2. Reduction and elimination:	Is it necessary? Can it be labeled/eliminated
3. Cluster and themes	Combine and cluster to create core themes
4. Final identification—validation	Are they expressed explicitly in the transcript? Are they comparable if not explicitly expressed? If no to the above questions they should be eliminated
5. Using the validated themes	Construct a textual and structural descriptions using verbatim examples, and descriptions of meaning and essences of the experience from varied perspectives.

Note. Adapted from *Phenomenological Research Methods*, by C. Moustakas, 1994, pp. 120-121 (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage).

Population

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined population as "a group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn and to which results can be generalized" (p. 489). The population is also sometimes referred to as the target population. The population for the study consisted of committee members who had direct involvement in the strategic planning process at a California Community College. The population included all committee members directly involved with strategic planning at colleges from the California Community College system. Currently there are 113 colleges in the California Community College system (CCCCO, 2016a).

The California Community College system is the largest higher educational system in the nation. Planning committee membership varies from college to college, but

California Education Code 70902(b) establishes shared governance processes that mandate inclusion for faculty and staff to participate in discussions that contribute to decision making at the campus level. Due to this stipulation, the population included members from three stakeholder groups: administration, faculty, and classified staff.

Target Population

The ACCJC (2015a) reported in their summer 2015 newsletter that accreditation sanctions and warnings have consistently been given to 60% of colleges for lack of integrated planning. ACCJC reports specified that 65 colleges went through the accreditation process between Spring 2013 and Fall 2015 (ACCJC, 2016). Seven of those colleges were not part of the California Community College system. Therefore, 58 colleges in the California Community College system conducted individual self-study accreditation reports and 37 of the 58 colleges did not receive warnings or sanctions of any kind (see Appendix A). The 37 colleges that did not receive any sanctions or warnings were diverse in location throughout the state. Furthermore, they were diverse in size; the smallest college boasted an enrollment of 1,922 and the largest reported an enrollment of 41,029. Planning processes are institutionally based and the variance in the size of the institution can create additional parameters not addressed in this study. Therefore, extremely small, less than 6,000 students, or extremely large, more than 25,000 students, were considered outliers and were eliminated from the possible sample. This removed nine of the 37 colleges leaving 26 possible colleges for a phenomenological study. The remaining qualifying colleges still offered varied sized institutions with enrollments from 6,000 to 25,000.

Sample

Samples for qualitative research are selected to "increase the utility of information" regardless of the size of the sample (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 326). Further, when generalizability is not the goal, probability sampling is considered inappropriate (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Patton (2015) claimed that "nothing better illustrates the difference between quantitative and qualitative methods than the different logics that undergird their sampling approaches" (p. 264). Patton explained the distinction as depth for qualitative sampling versus quantity for quantitative research citing that neither method is better they just offer different approaches. Qualitative researchers seek out samples that are "information rich" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 326).

Purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling was used for this study due to the nature of the phenomenon. Patton (2015) stated that purposeful sampling should be utilized when specific samples will provide information rich narratives that will provide "insight about the phenomenon" (Patton, 2015, p. 46). The sample also included different perspectives: administrators, faculty, and classified employees who were directly involved in the planning efforts. These different perspectives provided for triangulation of data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In addition to purposeful sampling, this study also utilized criterion-based sampling. Patton (2015) defined criterion-based sampling as method to ensure that all participants meet a predetermined set of standards. The following criteria were set to narrow the sample framework. Participants were selected if they did the following:

1. Worked at a college within the California Community College system

2. Engaged in strategic planning at their respective college

3. Served on a planning committee that consisted of all three constituency groups: administrators, faculty, and classified college members.

4. Were employed at a college that had a successful self-study accreditation, in the last 3 years, which resulted in reaffirmed accreditation with no warnings or sanctions.

   Snowball sampling. The study employed a snowball sampling strategy, which is defined as a method in which one or two information-rich participants direct the researcher to other participants (Patton, 2015). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) explained that "snowball sampling is also known as network sampling" (p. 327). They further indicated that "the researcher develops a profile of the attributes or particular trait sought and asks each participant to suggest others who fit the profile" (p. 327). The researcher limited the possible participant pool with criteria, but then sought out participants who fit the desired sample asking for referrals to add to the participant list. Once the list of 26 colleges identified possible participating institutions, the researcher relied on snowball sampling to secure participants. The researcher is employed at a California Community College and began the process by asking the chancellor, the vice chancellor, and the president at their college for contacts from the 26 possible participating colleges. From those recommendations, the colleges that agreed to participate also made suggestions for contacts at some of the other colleges on the list.

   Site selection was limited to institutions that met the criteria, were willing to commit individuals from the three constituency groups for participation in the interview process, and were recommended by the snowball sampling methodology. The sample included seven colleges where three committee members from each college were

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interviewed. The three committee members represented the three constituency groups: administration, faculty, and classified staff.

Profile of committee members. The participants included 21 individuals, three from each of the seven colleges. Their basic demographics show the experience working in education varied from 2 to 40 years. Most of the participants, 13, were women. There were only eight men involved in the study. There was an equal distribution of participants representing the three constituency groups: seven administrators, seven faculty, and seven classified participants.

<p style="text-align:center">Instrumentation</p>

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument. Creswell (2003) explained, "Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive," as such "one cannot escape the personal interpretation brought to qualitative data analysis" (p. 182). Creswell further stated that qualitative researchers must understand their own biases and accept that they will personally filter the data, thus allowing themselves to reflect on the honesty of their interpretation. Content-specific knowledge is helpful for the researchers so that they understand terminology, but phenomenological research calls for researchers to set aside their personal opinions and biases in order to listen to and document the participants' perceptions. Moustakas (1994) postulated that "in phenomenological research, perception is regarded as the primary source of knowledge" (p. 52). The term epoche comes from a Greek translation that means to "stay away from or abstain" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). Husserl (1970, as cited in Moustakas, 1994) believed that during the epoche stage, the researcher abstains from his or her personal thoughts and perceptions in order to understand the "essence" from the perspective of the participant.

This study utilized open-ended semistructured interview questions. Patton (2015) stated that "open-ended questions and probes yield in-depth responses about people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge" (p. 14). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) detailed that "phenomenological studies investigate what was experienced, how it was experienced, and finally, the meanings that the interviewees assign to the experience" (p. 356). Open-ended semistructured questions allow the interviewees to give their personal response and not select their answer from given options (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Interview questions were crafted with the theoretical framework in mind. McPhee and Zaug's (2000, 2009) four flows model proposes that organizational communication encompasses communication related to membership negotiation, reflexive self-structuring, activity coordination, or institutional positioning. Interview questions were charted to show which of the four flows each question would address (see Appendix C). Questions regarding initiation or roles of committee members sought to address the flow of membership negotiation. Questions regarding the organizational structures in place addressed reflexive self-structuring. It is important to note that reflexive self-structuring was also addressed via artifact collection. Organizational charts, committee operating agreements, or processes that are written and institutionalized allowed the researcher to see how reflexive self-structuring is communicated to the college at large or the community. Questions regarding actual interactive activities regarding the planning process, especially those that addressed the committees' ability to problem solve addressed the flow of activity coordination. Questions regarding communication between those on the committee and others

addressed the flow for institutional positioning. Again, it is important to note that artifact

collection also addressed institutional positioning as planning brochures, webpages, or

accreditation self-studies are publically available documents that speak to the institutional

positioning.

Interviews were scheduled for 1 hour per person and time varied based on the

responses and probes utilized. All but one interview was conducted face to face. The

one remaining interview was conducted by phone. McMillan and Schumacher (2010)

explained that "establishing trust, being genuine, maintaining eye contact, and conveying

through phrasing, cadence, and voice tone that the researcher hears and connects with the

person elicit more valid data than a rigid approach" (p. 357).

Validity

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined several forms of validity utilized in

research. They defined validity in qualitative research as "the degree of congruence

between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world" (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2010, p. 330). They further stated that "validity of qualitative designs is the

degree to which the interpretations have mutual meanings between the participants and

the researcher" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 330). In order to insure validity,

several steps were taken including a pilot test, defining terminology, standardization, and

the opportunity for participants to review their interview transcripts. The pilot test

employed individuals who were representative of the target population. The pilot test

participants included an administrator, a faculty member, and a classified staff employee

who had served on strategic planning committees at institutions that were not part of the

available sample. The pilot test was conducted to gauge the individual questions for

ambiguity. Several questions were altered or modified to ensure terminology would elicit responses that would answer the research questions. Feedback from the pilot test assisted the research to ensure that shared meaning would occur.

The interview protocol and guide was developed. All participants were asked the same questions, in the same order, in order to insure standardization within the process. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) concluded that standardization creates the grounds of validity in qualitative research design. All of the questions asked the participants about their perception of the role of communication within the strategic planning processes at their college. Participant interviews were recorded and transcribed in order to insure the validity of their responses. Finally, all participants were offered the opportunity to review their transcripts in order to clarify intent. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stated that "validity of qualitative designs is the degree to which the interpretations have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher" (p. 330). Validity was assured with digital recordings of every interview that was transcribed and voluntary participant review of transcripts.

Reliability

Golafshani (2003) defined reliability as "a concept used for testing or evaluating quantitative research, the idea is most often used in all kinds of research" (p. 601). Golafshani explained that in qualitative research, reliability would generate an understanding of the concept being studied. Qualitative researchers look for standardization, credibility, and trustworthiness when they look at the reliability and validity in their research (Golafshani, 2003; Patton, 2015).

In addition to the actual interview questions, the interview protocol and guide explained the process, informed consent, confidentiality, and key definitions and thanked the interviewees for their participation in the study (see Appendices B and C). Reliability was assured by several methods in the interview process and in the data collection. Standardized questions, clarity of language, and consistency of the researcher are efforts to increase the reliability of qualitative interviews (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). In addition intercoder reliability was also incorporated to ensure the credibility and consistency of the data.

Interview protocol and guide. The interview protocol and guide were used to maintain consistency (see Appendix C). Interview protocols establish the procedures for the interview where the guide provides a framework for the questions. Patton (2015) pointed out that interview guides can contain more or less information depending on the extent to which the researcher wants flexibility. In this study, all questions remained the same for each participant, and the order of the questions was also consistently maintained. The interview protocol and guide included participant language and every interview was conducted by the same researcher to ensure an additional element of consistency (see Appendices B & C). The interview guide and protocol established the order of the questions, the wording, and the method of questioning that was followed exactly the same for every interview in order to assure standardization of the process. Patton (2015) explained "that standardization is considered the foundation of validity and reliability in traditional social science interviewing" (p. 461). In addition to the questions, the interview guide also listed possible probes that could be used to enrich the

discussion. Patton (2015) indicated that "probes are used to deepen the response to a question" and "increase the richness and depth of responses" (p. 465).

Triangulation. Triangulation is defined as the utilization of multiple methods or data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). Data triangulation involves the use of multiple types of data (Patton, 2015). The study also utilized a triangulation of data in two ways: utilizing interviews and documentation and artifacts. Additionally the interviews came from three different constituency groups: administrators, faculty, and classified staff. The use of triangulation allowed the researcher to see consistency in the data, which further enhanced the credibility of the study.

Intercoder reliability. Intercoder reliability can also be referred to as triangulating analysts, interrater reliability, intercoder agreement, or scorer agreement (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) expounded that this process involves that "two or more persons independently analyze the same data and compare their findings" (p. 665). Lombard, Snyder-Duch, and Bracken (2004) explained that "intercoder reliability is a widely used term for the extent to which independent coders evaluate a characteristic of a message or artifact and reach the same conclusion" (p. 2). They further recommended that researchers "select an appropriate minimum acceptable level of reliability for the index or indices to be used" (Lombard et al., 2004, p. 3). For this study, an outside individual was selected who had experience in social science research. Specifically, the outside individual holds a Masters in Communication Studies and an Educational Doctorate in Organizational Leadership. The outside expert utilized the same process with a randomly chosen portion of the same data and the themes converged with a coefficient of .80 ensuring a high level of reliability.

Data Collection

Data collection transpired in two different formats: artifact collection and interviews. Each participant was contacted via e-mail or telephone in order to schedule an appointment for the interview. Interviews were conducted following the same interview protocol and guide. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) explained that "artifact collection is a non-interactive strategy for obtaining qualitative data" (p. 360). Artifacts can include personal documents, official documents, or other objects (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this study, official documents are the appropriate artifacts and included both informal and external communication documents. Artifact collection is institutionally specific and informal artifacts included meeting minutes, committee operating agreements, strategic planning documents, and planning brochures. Informal artifacts give the researcher a glimpse of the internal values and communication style of the organization. External communication artifacts were also institutionally specific but included the webpage, public announcements, brochures, and letters sent to external stakeholders. The documents gathered were to address two specific flows in the four flow model. Specifically, reflexive self-structuring requires documents that address the organizational structure and processes that are predetermined by the respective institutions. Institutional positioning refers to communication made to entities outside of the organization and in this study referred to communication outside of the committee membership.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) put forth a five-strategy process for collection and analysis of artifacts. Focusing only on the first two strategies suggested by McMillan and Schumacher, the artifact data collection included a modified three-step process (see

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Figure 2). First the researcher conducted field work to locate artifacts. Second, the

researcher asked participants to provide guidance and suggestions of informal or external

communication documents deemed important to the study. Lastly, all artifacts were

catalogued with a brief description of where the document was found, how the document

was found, and how the document was used by the college. Artifacts varied from

institution to institution; however, data collection did include a minimum of three

artifacts from each college. In all there were 21 artifacts collected from the seven

participating colleges. Although all artifacts were scanned and catalogued, any

identification of institution or names were eliminated to maintain confidentiality.

1
- Locate Artifacts Researcher Self Guided
- Researcher conducts field work to locate artifacts

2
- Locate Artifacts Participant Guided
- Participants offer suggestion of informal and external communication documents

3
- Identification and Catalogue Artifacts
- Category
- Description
- Use
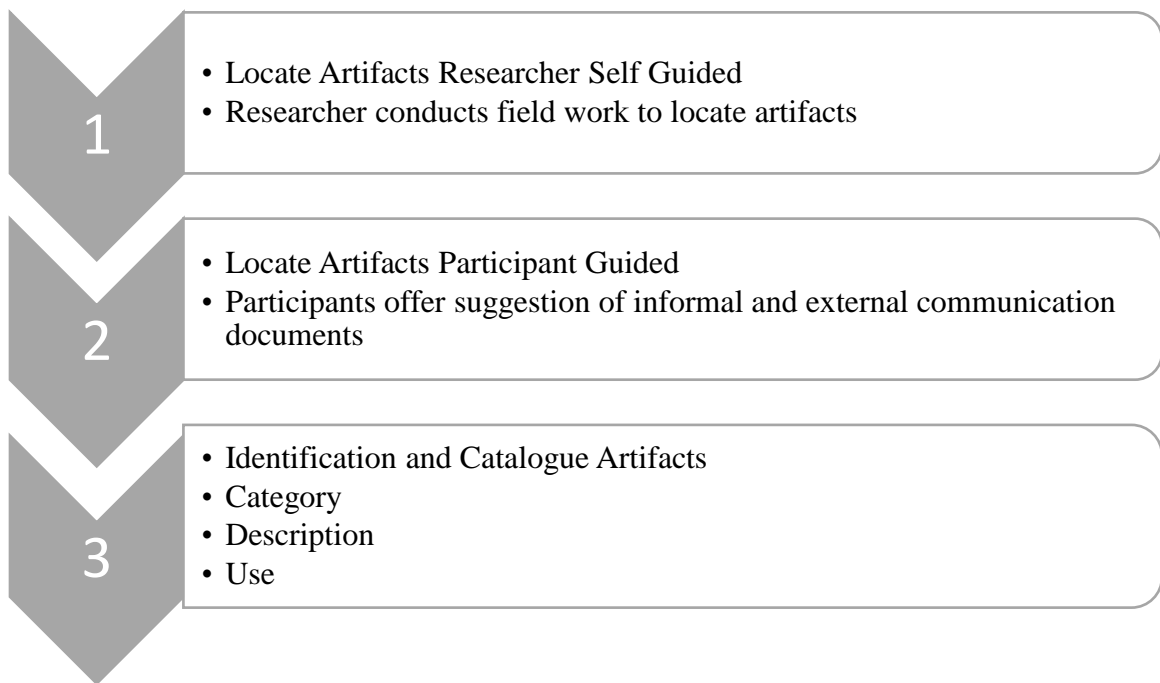
Figure 2. Artifact collection process. Adapted from *Research in Education*, by J. H. McMillan
and S. Schumacher, 2010, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson).

Human Subjects Considerations

In addition to the artifact collection, face-to-face interviews were also conducted at every college with the researcher using the interview protocol and guide with each of the participants. One interview was conducted by phone due to the participant's schedule. The research design along with the interview protocol and guide were approved by Brandman University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix E). In addition to providing consistency, the data collection procedures also included informed consent procedures. Potential participants were e-mailed an invitation-to-participate letter that described the purpose of the study (see Appendix F). All participants were given the Brandman University Research Participant's Bill of Rights and informed consent forms prior to the interview (see Appendices D & G). The informed consent forms included one granting permission to digitally record each interview and the other detailing the purpose of the study along with potential benefits and risks associated with participation in the study (see Appendix D). Interviewees were informed that there were no benefits and little-to-no risks involved with their participation of the study. Any references to institutions, roles, or names of individual participants remained confidential.

Conversely, the second form also detailed the efforts taken to insure confidentiality of all participants and allowed participants to indicate if they wanted the option to review their interview transcript (see Appendix D). The researcher needed to make sure that names and places were concealed to maintain confidentiality (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). All colleges were coded as were the participants and any reference to names of people or places were removed from all transcripts (e.g. College A, Respondent 1 or College B, Respondent 2). All signed consent forms and any

other material indicating the names of the participating colleges or interviewees were kept in a locked cabinet by the researcher where they will remain for 5 years after the study is completed. At that time the confidential information will be properly shredded and/or disposed of by the researcher.

Interview Procedures

Initial contact with all participants began with a phone call or e-mail introduction followed by another e-mail with the invitation-to-participate letter. Interviews were scheduled for face-to-face interviews allowing 1 hour per interview. Only one participant was interviewed by phone. Face-to-face interviews allowed the researcher to observe nonverbal communication "facial expressions, gestures, and movements can be triangulated with verbal data" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 363). Patton (2015) stated that researchers can garnish clues from the nonverbal behavior by observing participants during the interview. This allowed the interviewer to give appropriate reinforcement and support. He further explained that "head nodding, taking notes, 'uh-huhs' and silent probes . . . encourage greater depth in responses" (Patton, 2015, p. 469).

The researcher utilized a digital recording device with all interviews. Participants signed a consent form to have their interview recorded. The interview guide and protocol also contained a scripted introduction to the study and the researcher. The script also contained a request for permission to begin the digital recording. Digital recording allowed for verbatim quotations and assured accuracy (Patton, 2015). In addition to the digital recording, the researcher also took notes during the interviews to help set the pace, notate nonverbal communication, and to highlight terms or themes that seemed relevant.

Patton (2015) added that note taking can serve many purposes, such as assisting with the later analysis or as a backup if the digital recorder should malfunction.

Three committee members from each of the seven colleges were interviewed individually. All seven colleges provided an administrator, a faculty member, and a classified member to participate in the study. All interviews were digitally recorded. Interview lengths varied from participant to participant dependent solely on their individual conversation style. Interview recordings were sent to a transcription service and completed transcripts were returned to the researcher who reviewed each of the transcripts for accuracy. Participants were given the option to review their transcripts for accuracy and intent. Two participants selected the option to review their transcripts but did not make any changes to their transcripts. Figure 3 is a visual representation of the interview data collection process.

Data Analysis

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) explained that "qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories" (p. 367). In an inductive analysis, themes and patterns emerge from the data (Patton, 2015). Utilizing the four flows model by McPhee and Zaug (2000, 2009) assisted in categorizing the data through the theoretical frameworks four key areas, which include membership negotiation, reflexive self-structuring, activity coordination, and institutional positioning (see Chapter I or Chapter II for definitions). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) further acknowledged that qualitative analysis is inherently different from quantitative data analysis in that analysis is "an ongoing part of the study" (p. 367). Researchers reflect and analyze throughout
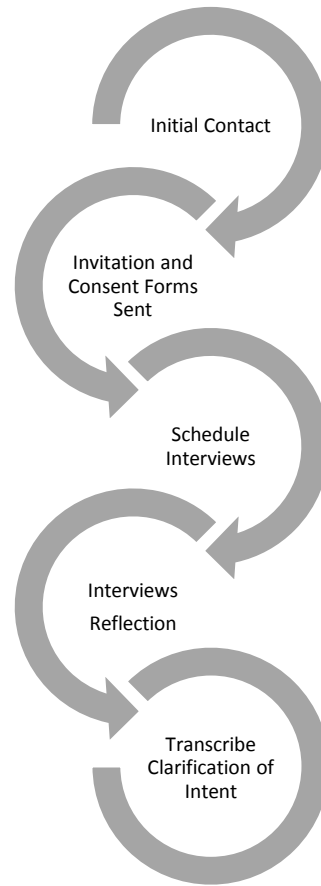
Figure 3. Interview data collection process.

the data collection process noting themes and key phrases that might end up becoming

consistent patterns in the end. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stated, "Inductive

analysis is the process through which qualitative researchers synthesize and make

meaning form the data" (p. 367). The following information shows the process for data

analysis utilized in this study including the use of NVivo. A procedural map of analysis

shows the analysis process employed for this study, these steps followed the data

collection maps in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

Procedural Guide for Analysis

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) provided guidance for the analysis and interpretation of artifacts including three strategies: analysis, criticism, and interpretation (see Figure 2). Several artifacts were gathered in the process of this study. Utilizing the three steps listed, the artifacts were categorized by where they were found, who uses each document, and how the document is used at the respective college. The interpretation strategy requires the collaboration of the messages and meanings in the artifacts with the information provided from the participants. In conjunction with the analysis of the documents, an analysis of the transcripts was also conducted. Utilizing the modified procedural guide from Moustakas (see Table 1), the process for analysis of data began with listing and grouping terms, reducing and eliminating, clustering themes, validating and finalizing the themes identified (see Figure 4).

List and Group

Reduction and Elimination

Cluster and Themes

Validation

Use Themes
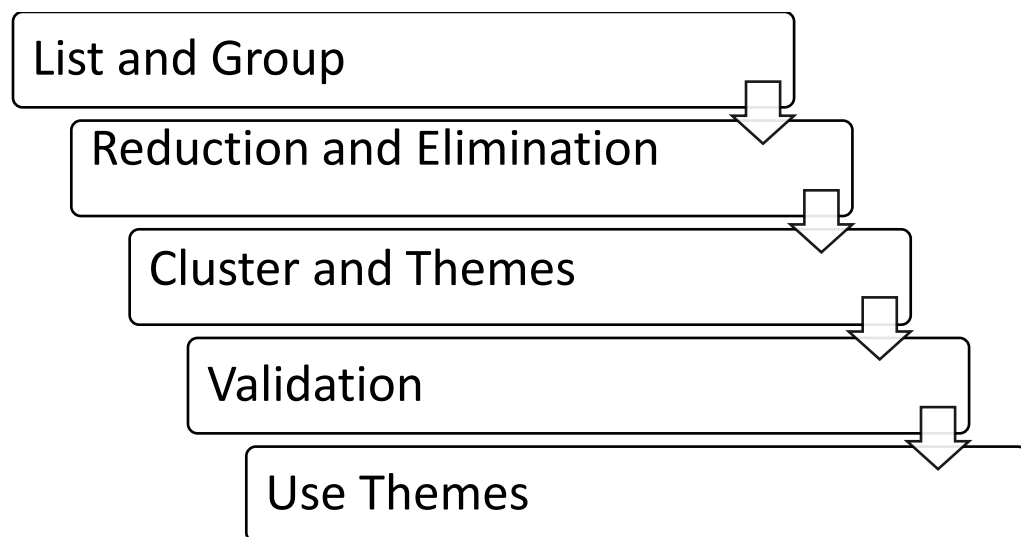
Figure 4. Visual representation of procedural guide to analysis.

Moustakas (1994) asserted that "evidence from phenomenological research is derived from first-person reports of life-experiences" (p. 84). Beginning first with the

epoche process, the researcher brackets his or her suppositions in order to remove his or her biases (Moustakas, 1994). Reflexivity is a state where the researcher experiences a deep reflection that is "grounded in the in-depth, experiential, and interpersonal nature of qualitative inquiry" (Patton, 2015, p. 70). Reflexivity requires a rigorous and critical self-exploration of personal biases and preconceived ideas (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). Secondly "in Phenomenological Reduction, the task is that of describing in textual language just what one sees" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90). The researcher utilized the words of the participants and terminology found in documents to show the textual language of the phenomenon. Lastly the essence of the lived experiences is synthesized in the phenomenological research process.

Theoretical Framework

Detailed attention was paid to all of the artifacts and transcripts to seek out themes in the data with the initial theoretical framework providing a starting point. The theoretical framework is an interpretive model used in the communicative constitution of organization methodology (for a more detailed definition see Chapters I and II). The four flows included membership negotiation, reflexive self-structuring, activity coordination, and institutional positioning, which helped to cluster themes in the initial phases of analysis. This allowed the researcher to focus on the theoretical framework but still allowed the themes to emerge from the data. Patton (2015) affirmed that analytical induction allows the researcher to begin to analyze the data "in terms of theory-derived sensitizing the concepts or applying a theoretical framework" (p. 543). In addition, the research questions remained a primary focus during the analysis.

NVivo

Patton (2015) suggested that the use of computers or specialized software can assist researchers in finding patterns in the data, but they are only a tool to assist the researcher. NVivo 11 is the recent software created by QSR International (2016) to assist in qualitative research. The software assists the researcher in organizing textual data. In this study, all of the transcripts and artifacts were scanned and put into NVivo 11. The researcher created the nodes, which are titles for themes. Many of the themes had emerged during the reflection on each of the interviews. Specific notations were taken during the interviews when discussions regarding the theoretical paradigms were discussed. After nodes were identified and entered into the program, all items; documents, and transcripts were then analyzed to see if the nodes were present. Information was then clustered according to the nodes. The researcher continually reviewed the data to see if other themes emerged. In addition, NVivo also allowed the researcher to conduct a frequency of terms analysis in order to seek out other possible themes. Many nodes were identified, but some were not supported by more than one or two documents.

<div align="center">

Limitations

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Several limitations resulted in this study. The research design clearly limited the scope of the study. In addition, the use of a purposeful and snowball sampling did not afford randomly selected participants; instead, participants met the proposed criteria and were recommended to participate. Once a college was secured, the actual members of the committee were also assigned by their respective colleges. The sample size was also small; therefore, the results are not generalizable to all community colleges. In addition,

the interview guide and protocol offered standardization but not the flexibility to greatly adjust the interview process. Conversely, participants may or may not have been forthcoming with their perceptions and opinions. The researcher was limited to the transcripts provided during the interview process. Rapport with the interviewee is critical, but with limited time rapport can be difficult to build (Patton, 2015).

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the role of communication as perceived by committee members at various California Community Colleges. The research design specified the use of an abbreviated procedural guide based on Moustakas (1994). The four flow model offered a strong theoretical framework in which to form interview questions that aligned with the research questions. This chapter detailed the purpose, the research questions, the research design, population, and sample. In addition, this chapter also detailed the data collection and data analysis procedures utilized. The following chapter details the data and results of the study.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Communication is often cited as imperative to planning processes, yet the literature review clearly indicated that research on the role of communication in strategic planning processes at California Community Colleges has been limited. As a result, this study focused on the role of communication as perceived by planning committee members at California Community Colleges. In an attempt to address the research questions, the researcher conducted interviews with 21 planning committee members and gathered 21 planning documents from seven different colleges in the California Community College system. This chapter presents the results of the research. This chapter begins with the purpose of the study, the research questions, the methodology utilized, the population, the sample, and the presentation of the data. The chapter concludes with the findings from the research.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the role of communication as perceived by community college planning committee members with regard to the strategic planning processes at California Community Colleges. A secondary purpose of this study was to explore the differences between the perceptions of administrators, faculty, and classified committee members involved in planning processes at California Community Colleges.

Research Questions

1. How do committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning process at California Community Colleges?

a. How do administrative committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

b. How do faculty committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

c. How do classified committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

2. Are there any differences between the perceptions of committee members with regard to the role of communication in the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

This qualitative study utilized a phenomenological approach to explore the role of communication in strategic planning at California Community Colleges. The study looked at the perceptions of planning committee members including administrators, faculty, and classified staff employees. Data were obtained via semistructured interviews and artifact analysis. An interview protocol and guide were used to maintain uniformity in the interview process. The use of a semistructured interview allowed the researcher to add additional probes as needed to provide depth to the discussion. The interview questions were developed utilizing McPhee and Zaug's four flows, the theoretical framework identified in the literature review.

The interview protocol, guide, research questions, and research design were approved by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) on the 6th of October 2016 (see Appendix E). Consent forms indicated the methods used by the researcher to protect the identity of the participants and their colleges. All participants

were given a code known only to the researcher. Any reference to a name or an institution was removed from the transcripts. Consent forms were signed prior to all interviews. All but one participant signed their consent forms in the presence of the interviewer. The final participant signed his or her consent forms, mailed them to the researcher, and after the consent forms were received, that interview was conducted by telephone. All but the one interview was conducted face to face. In addition to confidentially and participation consent forms, participants signed an audio consent form and all interviews were digitally recorded. The interviews were then sent to a transcription service. The researcher reviewed the recordings with their corresponding transcript to verify the accuracy of the transcribed content. Participants were also asked if they wanted to review their transcript in order to verify content. Two participants requested to do so and were given their transcripts; neither one of them opted to make any changes to their transcript. The researcher also collected artifacts regarding the planning process and removed the names of the colleges from all forms.

An abbreviated version of the steps Moustakas (1994) recommended for phenomenological research described in Table 3 served as a procedural guide for data analysis. An inductive analysis was used to identify general themes. The researcher listed common relevant expressions then reduced the number based on redundancy. Finally, the themes were clustered by the theoretical framework. Twenty-six themes emerged in the data, but five stood out as overarching themes across the framework. The research and findings are described in this chapter.

Population

The population utilized in this research included committee members who had direct involvement in the strategic planning process at a California Community College. The population included all committee members who were involved with strategic planning at colleges from the California Community College system. Currently there are 113 colleges in the California Community College system (CCCCO, 2016a). Committee members can vary from college to college, but California Education Code 70902(b) regarding shared governance implies that all three constituency groups should be included in the process (State of California, 2014). Therefore, the population was inclusive of all three constituency groups: administrators, faculty, and classified staff.

Sample

The final sample included three committee members from seven colleges. Each college provided an administrator, a faculty member, and a classified staff member. The following criteria were incorporated. Participants were selected if they did the following:

1. Worked at a college within the California Community College system.

2. Engaged in strategic planning at their respective college.

3. Served on a planning committee that consisted of all three constituency groups: administrators, faculty, and classified college members.

4. Were employed at a college that had a successful self-study accreditation, in the last 3 years, which resulted in reaffirmed accreditation with no warnings or sanctions.

Demographic Data

There were 21 participants in the study; there were seven individuals from each of the participant groups: administrators, faculty, and classified staff. Demographic data

questions were limited to gender, years in higher education, and years spent on planning. Table 4 indicates the distribution of gender by participant classification. There were eight male participants and 13 female participants.

Table 4

Participant Demographics: Gender

Participant group	Male	Female
1. Administrators	3	4
2. Faculty	2	5
3. Classified staff	3	4
Total	8	13

Participant demographics regarding the length of time working in higher education are displayed in Table 5. Classified staff participants had the least amount of time in education, where faculty participants had the higher number of years in higher education.

Table 5

Participant Demographics: Length of Time Working in Higher Education

Participant group	< 10 years	10-19 years	20-29 years	30 + years
1. Administrators	0	5	1	1
2. Faculty	0	3	2	2
3. Classified staff	5	0	1	1
Total	5	8	4	4

Participants were also asked how many years they had worked in planning. Faculty participants had the highest number of years in planning, and classified staff had the least number of years in planning (see Table 6).

Table 6

Participant Demographics: Length of Time Working on Planning

Participant group	< 5 years	5-9 years	10 + years
1. Administrators	3	2	2
2. Faculty	1	5	1
3. Classified staff	4	3	0
Total	8	10	3

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This portion of the study presents the findings of the research. First the overall themes were grouped according to the theoretical framework. Then the themes were analyzed according to the two research questions.

McPhee and Zaug's four flows allowed the researcher to group the themes according to each of the respective flows: membership negotiation, reflexive self-structuring, activity coordination, and institutional positioning (see Appendix I). The framework served as a starting point and 26 initial codes were found and clustered according to the four flows. Once all the data were coded, the researcher analyzed the results to answer the research questions.

Research Question 1

How do committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning process at California Community Colleges?

As an exploratory study, participants were asked questions regarding their perception of the role or impact that communication had on the planning processes at their respective colleges. In the analysis of the data, the researcher narrowed the themes to nine. Of those nine themes, five stood out as the most significant: connection to

others, creating a meaningful process, ensuring constituency participation, being collegial, and gaining a shared meaning. Each of these themes is defined in more detail in the pages that follow.

Table 7 shows the top nine themes (in alphabetical order), their frequency, their sources, and their placement in the top five. From the table, it is evident that five themes rose to the top. The top five themes are shown in Figure 5, which follows Table 7. Those themes are connection with others, create a meaningful process, ensure constituency participation, being collegial, and explain the process. These five themes were mentioned by all 21 participants.

Table 7

Frequency of Top Nine Themes and Sources

Theme	Frequency	Sources	Placement
1. Being collegial	98	21	4
2. Connection with others	134	21	1
3. Creating a meaningful process	116	21	2
4. Ensure constituency participation	102	21	3
5. Explain a process	86	21	5
6. Have a voice	77	20	
7. Gain a shared meaning	87	19	
8. Understand their role	56	21	
9. Counter resistance	64	19	
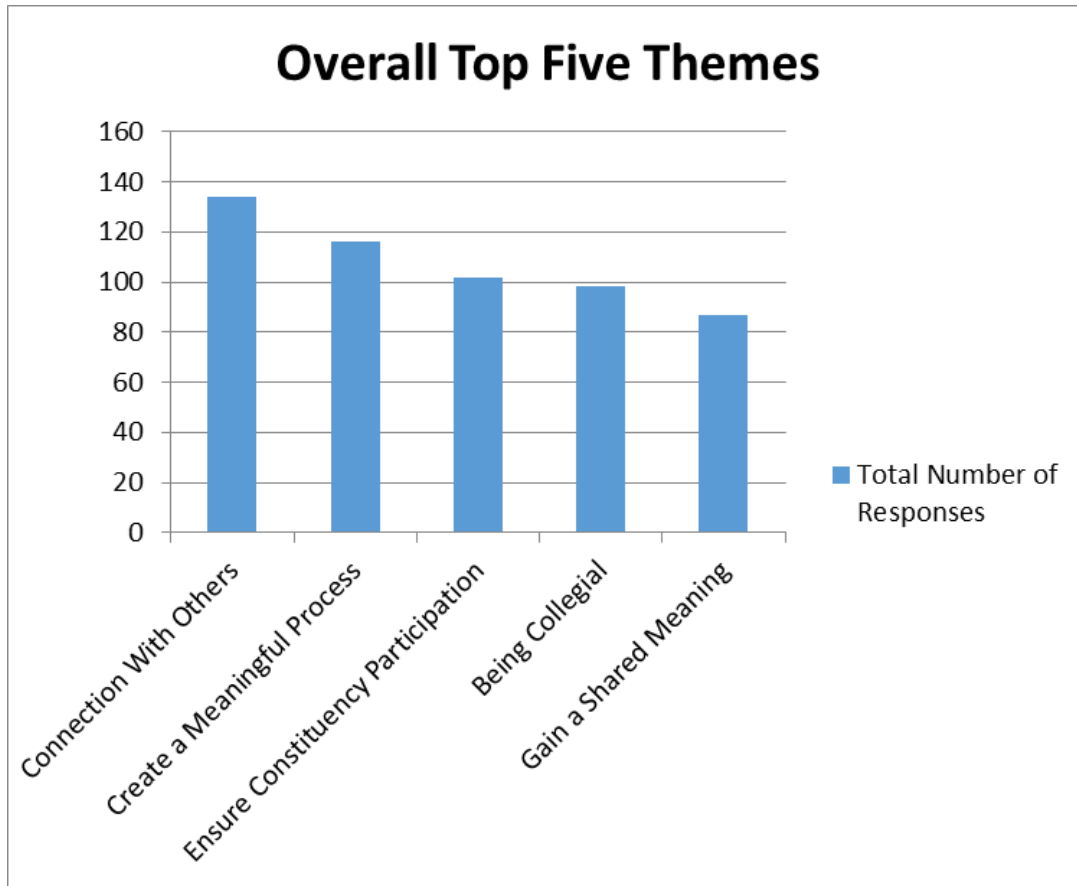
Figure 5. Overall top five themes.

Connection with others. Connection with others was the theme most often

mentioned when looking at the data. Connection with others was defined as

communication that allows participants to connect with others. This includes any

references to becoming friends, liking each other, learning each other's stories, inside

jokes, or bonding. All 21 participants mentioned the importance of communication that

allowed them to connect with other members of the planning committee. This theme was

referenced 134 times in the interviews. Organizational peer communication is an area of

research that has shown many important outcomes including social support and the

reduction of work-related stress (Kramer & Bisel, 2017). Participants in this study

discussed elements of support and connection with other committee members. Table 8

demonstrates the trends that emerged within this theme: trust, humor, mutual respect, and a general "liking" of the other members.

Table 8

Connection With Others Trends

Theme	Trend			
Connection with others	Trust	Humor	Mutual respect	Liking

Trust. Seven participants concurred that they connected to the group because they had trust for their committee members. Administrator Participant 2 indicated that planning only works when you include trust by saying, "You got to build trust to make that work." Administrator Participant 2 also stressed that "in the end it all comes down to trust." Faculty Participant 2 claimed, "People trust one another to come with their best interest at heart." Trust was also given to specific individuals when Faculty Participant 4 maintained that he/she trusted the administrator on the committee by saying, "I trust her implicitly," or Faculty Participant 7 who clarified, "I trust the administrative chair." The process, "which involved first of all a lot of trust," was also declared imperative by Faculty Participant 3. Finally, Faculty Participant 2 claimed that communication in the planning process "facilitated trust and willingness to see a lot of work done."

Humor. Another trend in this portion of the data included references to humor or laughter. Classified Participant 3 claimed, "The use of humor, I think humor has been a pretty good way to come together on common challenges and common understandings." Faculty Participant 2 indicated that "we had a very collaborative fun loving style to how we got the work done." Faculty Participant 2 further declared, "There was a lot of laughter"; and Administrative Participant 4 also stated, "There's a lot of laughter."

Classified Participant 3 mentioned that "the administrator was a bit of a joker, he made us chuckle about all sorts of things." Administrative Participant 6 stated, "People, I think feel comfortable in joking and comfortable in sharing information. I think in that way, we absolutely did bond." Classified Participant 4 indicated that the entire committee would joke about "the dog and pony show" and also mentioned assigning "snack patrol," joking that the snacks were the reason to attend the meetings. Faculty Participant 7 shared that humor was a staple at every meeting stating, "We do laugh, we do laugh a lot." Administrative Participant 7 also stated, "I know that one thing we say, we do laugh a lot in our work, we enjoy each other's company, and there's a lot of laughter and joking around."

Mutual respect. A third trend included comments about mutual respect for committee members. Administrative Participant 1 pointed out how he/she wanted to show his/her respect to the committee by thanking them on a regular basis, "One of the things that people say is that they like to be appreciated and acknowledged, and even if it's just a thank you, that is more than enough." Faculty Participant 1 declared that camaraderie develops respect:

Anytime you work on an important project and you finish it and it feels like an accomplishment, well you are grateful with the people that were there, contributed, and that you were a part of it. You develop an admiration and respect for people that have the similar goal, especially when you're successful.

Other individuals bragged about the people they worked with; for example, Faculty Participant 1 said, "She's probably the best administrator I've worked with"; Administrative Participant 3 stated, "It was a good group of folks, a very engaged group

of folks"; and Classified Participant 4 pronounced, "I just have so much respect for everybody that serves on the planning committee." Faculty Participant 4 shared a story of loss and shared how the committee had been kind and respectful of his/her grief. The participant indicated that it was the connection and respect that they showed that mattered the most.

Liking. The final trend that emerged in this theme involved comments or references to liking the other committee members. Faculty Participant 2 summed it up by saying, "I think that the harmony of this particular campus and this particular committee was really a sort of lovely way to talk about what we think is important." Administrative Participant 2 stated, "We generally like each other." Faculty Participant 2 also stated, "We strived for consensus and community building in the committee." Administrative Participant 3 explained, "It was just a wonderful committee"; then further shared, "I still have fond memories of the things we discussed on that committee."

In addition to the connection that came about in meetings, some respondents also referred to connections outside of the traditional meeting structure. Faculty Participant 3 explained that some of the committee members would often go out after meetings, and she claimed,

> Whenever there's a personal connection, when you actually believe that the people you're interacting with are human, you behave differently, and you behave differently even when you have an argument with those people . . . socializing, that blowing off of steam, together after working really hard together I think that we bonded.

Faculty Participant 2 recalled a planning retreat and described, "I brought in a guitar and a fire pit just to create the summer camp illusion." Administrative Participant 7 recalled a particular planning session that took place at her home where committee members held a potluck:

> I do remember one of the faculty members grabbed one of the cushions off the couch and stretched out on them while telling her thoughts on the strategic plan. I thought this is perfect! This is awesome! This is exactly what I wanted to happen, people just focused on the work, like a family.

Create a meaningful process. The second most mentioned theme was creating a meaningful process. Creating a meaningful process was defined as communication that addresses making a difference, making sure the planning meant something, that there was a shared meaning of the process, that all voices mattered, or the result was being a better college. This theme was referenced 116 times during the interviews. All 21 participants referred to creating a meaningful process and three defining trends emerged. Table 9 demonstrates the trends. Some indicated that the plan was meaningful if it was relevant to the institution, others connected meaning to the participation of people, and others indicated that meaning came from the communication.

Table 9

Create a Meaningful Process Trends

Theme	Trend		
Create a meaningful process	Meaning in the institution	Meaning from participation	Meaning from communication

Meaning in the institution. Several respondents addressed how their committee worked to find meaning that would help the institution as a whole. Administrative Participant 3 pointed out that the committee "had to figure out for itself, What are we? What do we want to do? We have a charge clearly, but how do we make this happen?" The same administrator went on to share that this took dedication and commitment from the committee, "For example, that first semester we met, again, we were only supposed to meet three times. We ended up meeting six times." Administrative Participant 3 continued,

> It really opened my eyes in terms of what a mission is and what a vision is and what values are because now I have a framework and now when I look at other colleges, I look at their vision and think that's not a vision. A vision's where you're supposed to be going, what's your future, and it's more of a value statement. It's affected me so much that I'm actually looking at other things through the lens of those conversations.

Faculty Participant 3 claimed, "What came out of it was that it stopped being a recommendation for us. Ultimately, we were successful, so our college was successful." Classified Participant 3 pointed out that their committee looked at planning as a whole and that program review process was vital: "We really honored their work in that and fostered and encouraged more dedication to the development of those documents." Administrative Participant 5 claimed, "It's supposed to be a meaningful process for everybody, and if it's not working then we got to fix it." Administrative Participant 7 added, "It was hard work and thoughtful work and not just rubber-stamping." Classified

Participant 7 defined planning as a method for "continuing to look for and strive to do better."

Meaning from participation. Respondents also felt that meaning can come from participation; Faculty Participant 1 explained, "We have forums to give everyone an opportunity to participate in the process, including students and classified, faculty of course, and administrators." Faculty Participant 1 further claimed that participation was vital, since "one person is not an expert at every area." Classified Participant 1 explained,

> The classified staff have been around here for a long time, and so they have more
>
> knowledge about what's really going on, or why something is written the way it
>
> is, and so they have a lot to contribute. They're happy to share it, especially if it's
>
> going to resolve some issue or prevent something.

Faculty Participant 3 added, "The reason the process kept going forward is that a small group of people kept communicating and kept doing the work." Administrative Participant 4 explained, "My role and I think the Planning Committee's role too is to shepherd through the process to make sure that it's inclusive, there's time for campus-wide input, etc."

Meaning from communication. Some responses indicated that communication provided meaning. Faculty Participant 1 stated, "Without communication, I don't know that planning can take place. Communicating starts, really, by getting the right people in the room, and then making sure that the process is transparent." Administrative Participant 2 added, "You've got to be prepared to go back and forth in conversation with what's best for the institution." Faculty Participant 2 stated, "I think that the

communication in the committee meetings was essential to a positive outcome for the college." Administrative Participant 4 stated, "We've tried to create an open atmosphere and work on ideas together; I think hopefully, people are amenable to that and appreciate that as an opportunity, and a safe space to share because we want to improve things." Administrative Participant 5 added, "Communication, it's candid, and it's productive and I would say it leads to improvement of the process." Classified Participant 5 added,

> Within the meeting, if people are not there to communicate what's been done in these groups, or communicate what's needed, and verbally I mean, and dialog is not happening around how to correct issues or create these things into plans, then it's not really a strong planning process, so I think that communication is key especially for everyone to say how different things that are going into plans would impact their area or the specific services that they're providing.

Ensure constituency participation. The third overall theme was to ensure constituency participation, and this theme was also referenced by all 21 participants. This theme was referenced 102 times during the interviews. In addition to the interviews, artifacts collected also demonstrated the importance of ensuring constituency participation. Ensuring constituency participation was defined as communication about reporting back to their respective constituency groups in an effort to keep them involved in the process. All seven colleges had an administrator in charge of the planning process. Some of the colleges did have faculty cochairs and one college had three cochairs, which included a classified cochair.

The artifacts indicated who would participate by listing the composition of the committee members. These artifacts stated the number of representatives from each of

the different constituency groups. The number or representatives from each constituency

group varied from institution to institution (see Table 10). The number of classified staff

committee members ranged from one to five. Artifact 11B indicated that only one

classified staff member was required on the planning committee, but Artifact 17B

indicated that five classified staff members were required on that college planning

committee. The number of faculty members ranged from two to seven. Artifact 12B

specified only two faculty members on their respective college planning committee.

Artifact 17B indicated that seven faculty were utilized on their college planning

committee. The number of administrators included in the planning process ranged from

three to seven. Artifact 11B and Artifact 16B showed only three administrators included

in their respective college planning committees. Artifact 12B specified seven

administrators in the composition of that college planning committee. Conversely

Artifact 15B indicated that faculty and classified participation/attendance "must exceed

management by one person" at all of the planning committee meetings as a method to

ensure constituency participation. Artifact 14A specified that the college wants to create

"a culture of participatory governance," further illustrating the importance of ensuring

constituency participation.

Table 10

Ensure Constituency Participation Artifact Range

Constituency	Number of Participants	
	Low	High
Administrators	3	7
Faculty	2	7
Classified staff	1	5

All of the participants mentioned the importance of constituency involvement in the process. Table 11 shows the two trends that emerged in this theme: use of constituency reporting and the need to pursue classified input.

Table 11

Ensure Constituency Participation Trends

Theme	Trends	
Ensure constituency participation	Use of constituency reporting	Need to pursue classified input

Use of constituency reporting. When participants addressed constituency reporting, they also referred to the responsibility or role of each member. Faculty Participant 1 explained the committee's process:

> It was a representative body. It was up to each committee member to go then, and help to spread the work that had been done, and to receive input from their constituent groups. Then, we gathered back at the committee again of representatives, and made adjustments based on feedback.

Classified Participant 5 also explained his/her role in the process:

> My role there is to bring back all of the policies or procedures that are coming up for a review or changes back to the classified union, and I let them know if there are any kind of red flags or anything that would be affecting classified staff.

Administrative Participant 6 added, "We have members of those groups from all constituent groups: students, faculty, administrators, classified staff. It's their responsibility to take that information and disseminate it back out amongst their groups."

Faculty Participant 4 reported, "I'm very proud of the strategic plan the planning committee came up with. I think all constituent groups were consulted, previous unit plans were looked at and things like that. I think that that worked very well." Classified Participant 7 also explained his/her role:

> I was asked by the Classified Staff Union to take a seat with the Strategic Planning Council to replace another staff person. For my understanding initially, what they explained to me, my role would be is to provide staff inputs, staff perspective for strategic planning purposes and that would be . . . I would look at things from that perspective and be able to share for staff expertise or looking at it from our perspective, so that that they would have a more well-rounded view in making decisions.

Administrative Participant 2 discussed the constituency role but also explained some issues with the process:

> They have a role in developing a draft of that, then that goes to all the constituent groups. The constituent groups then go through their process to approve that. Some are better than others, but all this stuff goes through our governance process.

> Administrative Participant 2 then concluded, "The faculty probably are pretty wired in terms of participation in the process. Our academic senate actually has a pretty good mechanism for getting input for anything that comes to them." Classified Participant 2 concluded that there were some issues with their constituency group:

> Because I'm classified and probably a much greater percentage of my constituency group maybe feels like they're not being treated as equals. I might

have gone out of my way more to push communication across and make sure

people know what's going on so they're not blindsided.

Faculty Participant 2 explained,

> I represented the faculty and so part of the role that I had to do was to make sure I
> understood what we were doing in terms of the strategic plan and then I had to
> articulate that in a meaningful way so that folks on the faculty could understand it,
> could then make sure that if there were questions that came from the constituent
> groups that they would be able to address those questions or to bring them back so
> we could have meaningful dialog and deliberative discussion about it. My role
> was really one of asserting important issues for faculty and then making sure that
> we understood the rational for things if we didn't particularly agree we needed to
> have a big picture view as well as some of the fine detail on it. My role was really
> one of nuance to understanding.

In addition to the responsibility of the roles, participants also wanted to have a deeper

meaning to the representation. Administrative Participant 7 explained,

> One of the things that, coming from faculty ranks and understanding the value and
> the importance of faculty being engaged in it, not just they come and take a seat,
> one of the things I felt like we needed to change was the engagement level of
> faculty. That if we are going to have faculty chairs on committees, then they
> really needed to be participating as chairs, as leaders, not just figureheads.

> ***The need to pursue classified input.*** Another trend that arose in the discussion

regarding ensuring constituency participation included comments that referred

specifically to classified input. Administrative Participant 1 stated,

The other piece of it is also, some administrators and some faculty, I think they

don't take the extra step to make it easier to engage the classified. I think the

perception is, we invited everybody; it's up to them if they want to come. That's

kind of like the whole concept of equity. Anybody can apply to college, but

everybody had different obstacles in order to apply for college, so we have to go

out of our way and make it easier for disadvantaged students to apply. Same

concept with classified. It's a little harder for them to step away from their tasks,

a little bit harder for them, maybe they think their manager doesn't approve them

leaving their desk and working all the pieces out, so I think there's two parts to

that.

Faculty Participant 3 indicated that classified inclusion was a goal for his/her process:

Because it was so critical, all the classified professionals on it got coverage, so

they could participate pretty consistently. And . . . That was great because

actually our classified members are like faculty, they stay forever. They really

have an institutional memory, and they often times know things that the rest of us

do not know. That kind of information is very helpful.

Faculty Participant 4 also expressed the need for classified input:

The years that I was on the committee, I got an enormous respect for classified.

They may not say anything because they're structurally different, but they're not

dummies. If we take the chance to tweak and pull out, and listen, that's 90% of it.

I can yammer, but am I an effective listener?

Classified Participant 7 also added,

I think the biggest area that staff continue to grapple with is: How do we

communicate with our constituents? How do we foster open communication and

an environment that staff felt comfortable to share their opinion and feedback?

Not all staff are comfortable doing that.

Being collegial. The fourth overall theme was being collegial, and this theme was

also mentioned by all 21 participants. This theme occurred 98 times during the

participant interviews. Being collegial was defined as communication that references

collegial discussion, being polite, allowing everyone to talk, or being respectful to other

opinions. One of the artifacts actually mentioned collegiality as a commitment for one of

the participating colleges; it said, "Being a supportive community that is distinctive in its

civility, where the views of each individual are respected, humor and enjoyment of work

are encouraged, and success is celebrated." This overall theme did not have any specific

trends but was still consistently stated by the respondents.

Classified Participant 6 explained, "There's a lot discussion, but opinions are

respected even if people disagree with each other and people tend not to take things too

personally or it's a calm but energetic discussion and there's room for participation."

Administrative Participant 6 also stated,

The role of communication is always important. I think that everybody realizes

that on the campus. The communication is very open. Very transparent. We

created an environment where everybody speaks up regardless of their position or

their place on campus.

The same administrator added, "We talk about confidential and sensitive issues that have to do with the campus that maybe wouldn't take place outside of that committee."

Faculty Participant 3 claimed, "It was not formally structured, and people talk across the room to each other. Even though it was a very informal setting, it actually held a great deal of collegial interaction." Classified Participant 2 shared, "A point was really made by all to listen to everything that people had to say." Administrative Participant 1 stated, "For the most part, most people feel comfortable expressing their opinions or discussing the group that they're representing or bringing ideas in that might be relevant to certain groups." Classified Participant 3 also added that "the chair has kept it collegial and respecting to the different points of view."

Classified Participant 4 stated, "We seem to all carry the same weight. Our opinions are valued, so it's a really nice committee to be on." Faculty Participant 7 specified, "We are very collegial in our speaking to each other. We try to recognize that." Classified Participant 7 also added,

> We talk about you know our discussions should be collegial. We can have vibrant discussions but they're going to be collegial. Then sometimes, we can agree to disagree and that's okay, but we're going to hear all sides. Everybody has the opportunity to have their voice heard. If it's a discussion, an agenda item that is taking longer, we may continue it at a further meeting.

Rules and norms also establish the collegiality for meetings. Administrative Participant 7 explained,

We're demanding in that we ask folks, we say it's a technology-free meeting, and

we've given one person on the committee permission to be on technology during

the meeting and that is our institutional researcher because there are times when

he needs to be pulling up data and stuff like that. We hold people to a standard.

If you're here, we want you here, we want you present, you're making important

decisions and they impact the college, and so keep your phone put away and pay

attention to what's going on in the meeting.

Gain a shared meaning. The final overall theme was expressed by all 21

participants. This theme recurred a total of 87 times in the interviews. Gain a shared

meaning was defined as communication that referenced bringing people together to make

sure they understood other areas of the institution, that they were speaking the same

language, clarification of intent, and content. Table 12 demonstrates the two trends that

emerged in this theme: how the committee gaining a shared meaning from others and

how the committee would ensure that others saw the shared meaning.

Table 12

Gain a Shared Meaning Trends

Theme	Trends	
Gain a shared meaning	Meaning from others	Share the meaning

Meaning from others. Several respondents mentioned the ways they gathered

information prior to their planning. Faculty Participant 3 shared,

One of the challenges I think of being a planning committee is that you first of all

have to learn a lot about the parts of the college you don't really understand very

well, or don't have much dealing with.

The same faculty participant then shared,

> We actually had forms that they had to fill out, and we had all of these different
> departments come and present to our committee. So they themselves could come
> in and tell us. These are the different issues, this is what we think the priorities
> are.

Administrative Participant 3 also stressed, "You have to get the people together. You have to get them onboard. I wanted to see it through that lens." Faculty Participant 1 added, "Communicating starts, really, by getting the right people in the room, and then making sure that the process is transparent." The same faculty participant then added, "We felt that meeting with everyone, giving everyone an opportunity to participate would generate a better vision." Administrative Participant 5 mentioned, "We need to hear from people who are actually doing the work." Faculty Participant 4 also claimed

> that communication and constant engagement with the campus community is
> really important because you can't, well obviously, achieve the goals of the plan
> if people aren't on the same page and aware of what they are. I will say that the
> most recent experience, in particular, I think we got good feedback on because it
> was so inclusive and providing opportunities for people to provide input into the
> process.

Sharing the meaning. Several respondents expressed the need to share the meaning to the college at large and the little ways they found to do that. Faculty Participant 7 shared one way of keeping everyone aware of the shared messages by focusing on the mission,

Communication, talking, making sure that we're verbalizing why we're here, little

things like putting the mission on the bottom of every agenda. . . . On the senate

agendas, you'll see the ten plus one listed next to any item. Those little

communication things that tap back to something else, help to remind people.

Faculty Participant 2 expressed how the committee shared meaning between

newer and seasoned committee members:

There's a lot of continuity of the membership. People who maybe are new are

working with people who have been there for a longer period of time so if

questions arise there's someone there to answer and address questions. I think

that's important.

This same faculty member also stated, "Overall the role that communication played was

one of it facilitated a communion of sorts among the participants."

Administrative Participant 7 explained, "Because we are talking and planning

together, when we go to those meetings, we're pretty much in sync. We're kind of all on

the same page as we represent the college." Classified Participant 4 concurred the same

thought by stating, "As a group, we tend to 100 percent agree pretty much all the time."

Classified Participant 3 shared how one of the items they created in the planning

process seemed to transcend the committee and earn shared meaning across the college,

I didn't realize it at the time that just creating that flowchart was going to foster a

little more goodwill, but it did because in accreditation, they told us that they were

surprised how many people were able to explain the flowchart because of the

simplicity. It really brought people a little bit closer together.

Research Question 1a

How do administrative committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

Administrative committee members perceived the role of communication in the planning process as a method to create a meaningful process, as a connection to others, and as a method to explain the process. Two of the top three themes for administrators are process related. Administrators perceive the role of communication to be process oriented. The majority of the comments related to role of communication as provided by the administrators indicated a propensity to relate communication to creating a meaningful process and an explanation of the process.

Figure 6 shows the top five themes identified by administrators. The administrative list includes four of the five top overall themes. The theme that does not appear in the top five themes for administrators is "being collegial." Instead administrators felt "explain a process" was more important and referenced that theme higher. Although process is important, administrators should consider the ramifications underlying this result. In addition, the order of importance is also varied from the top five overall themes. The differences are explicated in the analysis of Research Question 2.

Research Question 1b

How do faculty committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

Faculty committee members perceive the role of communication in the planning process to be a method to connect with others, create a meaningful process, and as a method to be collegial. This response is in contrast to the administrative response, which

was process oriented. Faculty members were more people focused in their responses. Faculty responses show a stronger interest in connection with others. Two of the three top responses for faculty clearly indicate a perception of communication as a method to connect and engage others in the discussion.
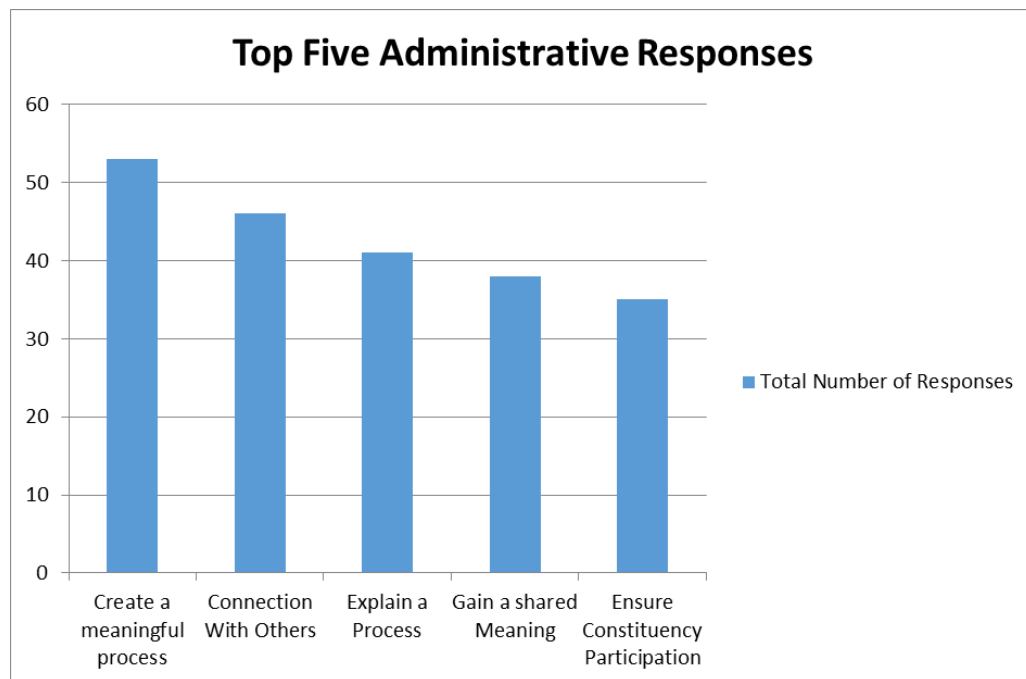
Figure 6. Top five administrative responses.

Figure 7 shows the top six themes identified by faculty participants. This graphic contains six themes instead of five because "explain the process" and "ensure constituency participation" tied with the same number of references. The list of the top five faculty themes includes all five of the themes listed by the administrators. The faculty list included one additional theme than the administrative list, "being collegial." This additional theme was one of the top five overall themes. In addition, the faculty list includes the theme "explain a process," which was not one of the top overall themes but was in the top five administrative themes. Finally, the order of importance is different

from the overall top themes. The differences are further explained in the analysis of

Research Question 2.
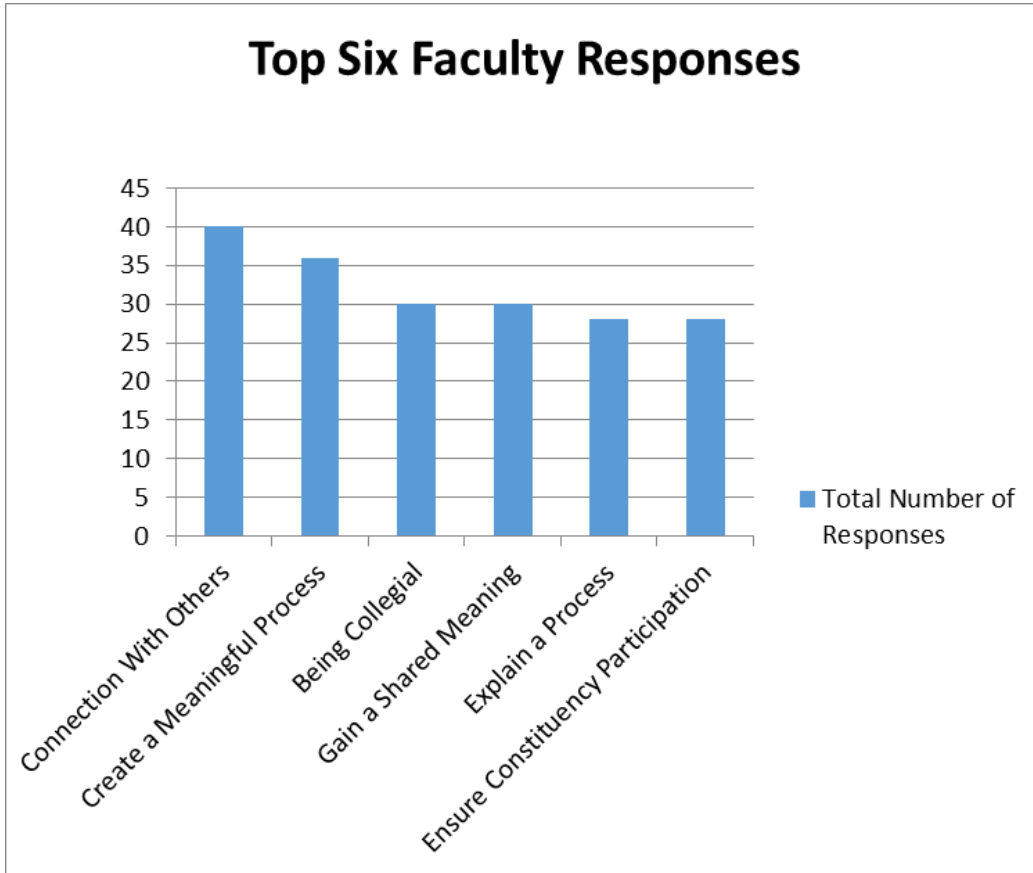
Figure 7. Top six faculty responses.

Research Question 1c

How do classified committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

Classified staff committee members perceive the role of communication as a method to connect with others, to ensure constituency participation, and as a method to be collegial. All three of the top responses for classified staff members involved participation and connection. Classified staff viewed the role of communication as a

process for connection. Their view was people oriented not process oriented. Out of the five top themes only one of them was process driven.

Figure 8 shows the top five themes as identified by the classified staff members. The top five responses for classified staff did not include "gain a shared meaning" from the overall top five themes. Instead classified staff members referenced "have a voice" as more important. In addition the order of which theme was referenced higher is also different from the overall themes and those differences are explained in more detail in the analysis of Research Question 2.
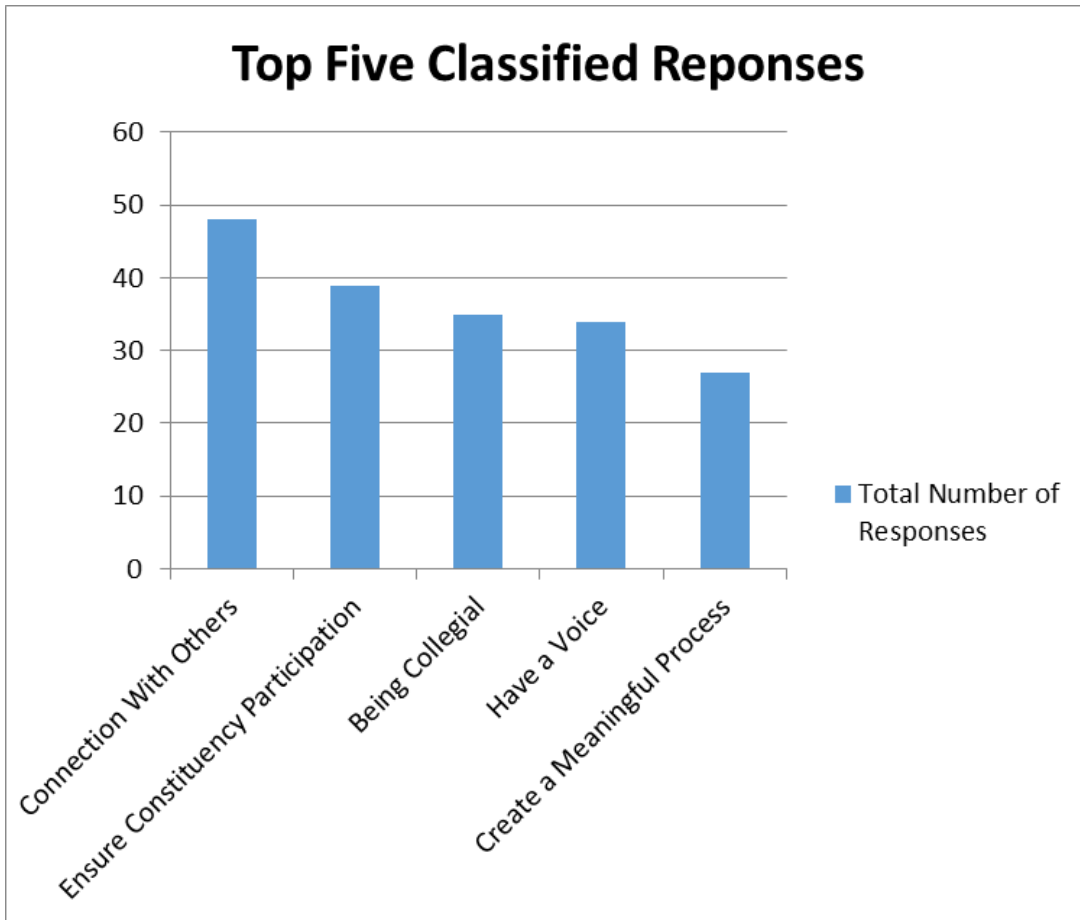
Figure 8. Top five classified responses.

Research Question 2

Are there any differences between the perceptions of committee members with regard to the role of communication in the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

There are several differences in perceptions between the three different constituency groups interviewed for this study. First, the administrators and faculty included the theme "explain a process" to the top themes identified by their constituency groups. Classified staff members included "have a voice" as an additional theme to their top five referenced themes. Finally, there were some substantial differences to the order of the overall top five themes.

Explain a process. Both the administrators and faculty included "explain a process" as their top themes. The only group to exclude explain a process from their top five was the classified staff. Communication that serves the role of explain a process only ranked at number 9 for classified staff. This theme ranked as the third highest for administrators and was tied for fifth place on the faculty list of top themes. In the interviews explain a process was referenced by all 21 participants but only received 87 overall references. The placement of this theme indicates that communication on the process did not seem as important to the classified staff. The placement also indicates that this theme was most important to the administrative participants. Eleven of the 21 artifacts collected included information that was consistent with the communicative theme of explain a process. These artifacts are generally prepared by administrators, which further confirms the importance of this communicative theme from an administrative perspective.

Explain a process was defined as communication that informs others how the planning will work; this includes orientations and training. Faculty Participant 7 explained his/her process: "I believe we do an amazing job of telling people about our process and verbalizing it as well as publishing our process." Administrative Participant 6 emphatically stated,

> We have to communicate the process itself. We have to communicate the results as we go, and also at the end of the process so people understand what the final end result is, and they have to understand what the decisions are along the way as we're moving throughout.

Administrative Participant 6 also added, "We have orientations for all of our planning." Administrative Participant 5 stated that they "give updates on where are we in the process a couple of times of the year, so we're beginning the process, we're at the end of the process."

Administrative Participant 4 explained that,

> Included in that are planning committee operating procedures that lay out how we run our meetings, what the expectations are for members, when and whether we allow for proxy votes or representatives or substitutes for regular voting members that type of thing. It's a combination of face to face and then the orientation materials, but not limited to e-mail or anything like that.

Faculty Participant 2 exclaimed, "Our vice president does a really great job of producing visuals" which he/she felt are

> a really good overview of our annual cycle and then how all the pieces fit together. It's a complex visual series that he has, but he does a really great job or

introducing everybody to it, talking us through the process, and explaining how the pieces fit together. I think that the visual communication piece is key.

Administrative Participant 2 explained, "If you have the consistency in terms of process, people know what to expect, and you don't have the breakdowns in communication," then followed up with,

The key thing is that we laid out, right at the beginning of the year, what the process is going to be for that year. When things are going to happen, what those things are going to be. In fact, we're in the process of doing that now. People get expectations set up front. There's a lot of information that goes out to the campus.

In addition Classified Participant 1 stated, "But we try and start every meeting by catching up, Okay, here's what we've done, here's where we are, here's where we're going, does anyone have any questions?" Administrative Participant 1 explained their process:

Here's where we need to be, and then we have a dialogue with the committee, about all the stuff we need to do to get to where we want to be and then keeping everybody on track, organized, meetings, all of that stuff, so I felt like I was herding people.

Have a voice. This theme was ranked in the top five themes for classified only. Classified ranked have a voice as their fourth highest theme. Have a voice was referenced by 20 out of the 21 participants and was mentioned 77 times in the interview process. Several artifacts addressed the importance of individuals having a voice in the planning process. In addition to ensuring constituency participation, Artifact 11C referenced the use of "considerable feedback" allowing everyone to have a voice. Have a

voice was defined as communication or references to ensuring that everyone can contribute and/or participate in the planning process. The lack of placement into the top five themes for administrators and faculty implies that communication regarding having a voice is not as important to them as it is to classified staff. This could be in part because administrators and faculty have more opportunities to voice their concerns regarding planning.

Artifact 15C specifically states norms for committee participation and clearly states that every voice gets heard. Classified Participant 1 stated, "I think that norm of everyone's voice counts, kind of thing, makes people feel comfortable." Classified Participant 1 continued, "I think people felt like their voice was heard, that their ideas were on the board." Faculty Participant 2 stated,

> Faculty have tenure and so they do feel a sense of responsibility to voice their concerns if there are concerns more so than I think classified or management do. I think faculty feel entitled to have a louder voice and I also think they feel a strong sense of responsibility to do so.

Classified Participant 7 explained, "I think that, it's more important if you have a buy-in from the college and everybody feels like this is something that they were part of. That they had a voice in the process before the decision was made." Classified Participant 6 stated, "I would like our constituency group to have more voice in the meeting."

Differences in the overall top five themes by constituency groups. Figure 9 shows the responses by constituency groups for the overall top five themes. This graphic representation shows that "connection with others was ranked highest by classified respondents. Administrators ranked create a meaningful process highest. Faculty ranked

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connection with others highest but they did not rank it as high as the classified

participants. There are several implications regarding this information. First of all,

administrators clearly feel that the communication regarding a meaningful process is the

most important type of communication whereas both faculty and classified felt the

connection made during the planning process was more important. Generally,

administrators are in charge of the process and from the data appear to be most concerned

with the process being meaningful while connecting to others and explaining the process

to others.
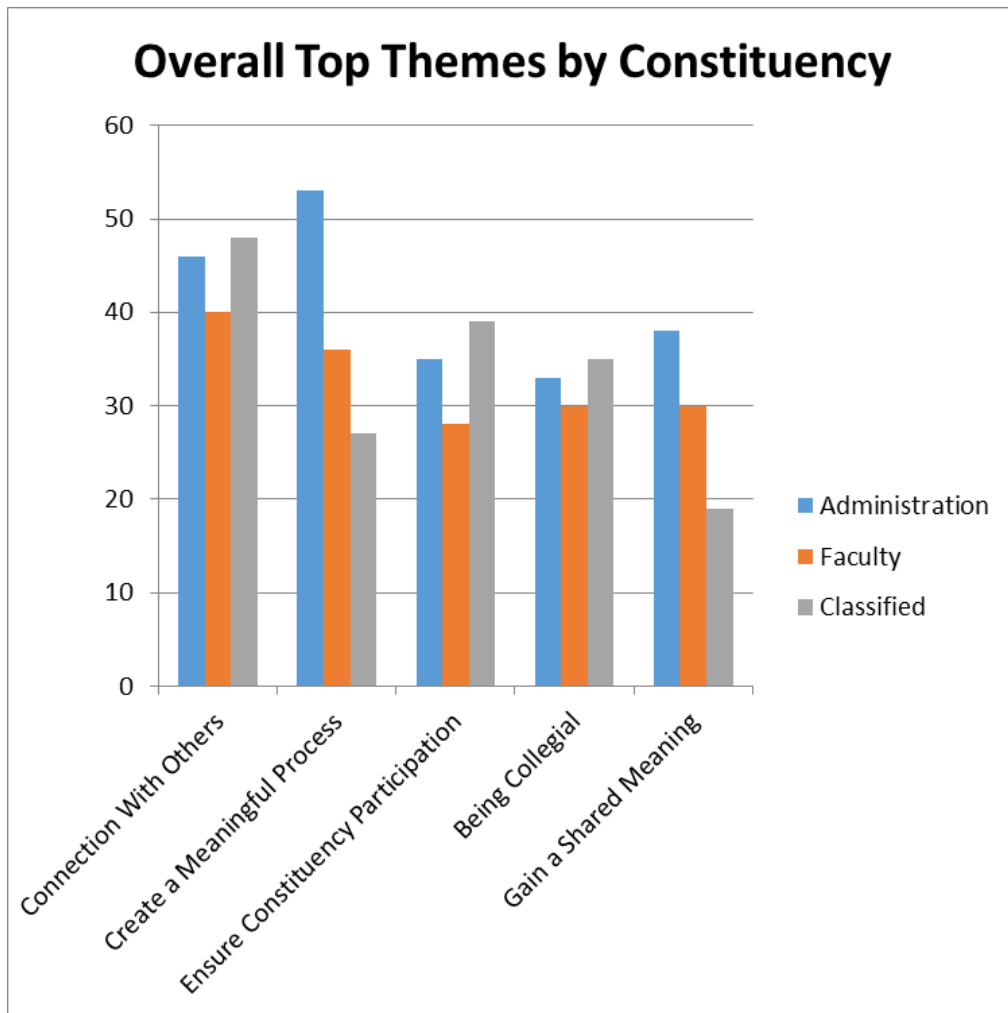
Figure 9. Overall top themes by constituency.

Figure 10 shows the difference between constituency groups on each of the overall top five themes. First of all, the differences between administrators and faculty shows the largest difference is in "create a meaningful process." The chart shows a difference of 17 references. The difference between administrators and classified shows a greater difference between responses on "create a meaningful process." The difference between administrators and classified is 26 references. From the chart, it appears the greatest difference between faculty and classified is tied at 11 references for both "ensure constituency participation" and "gain a shared meaning."
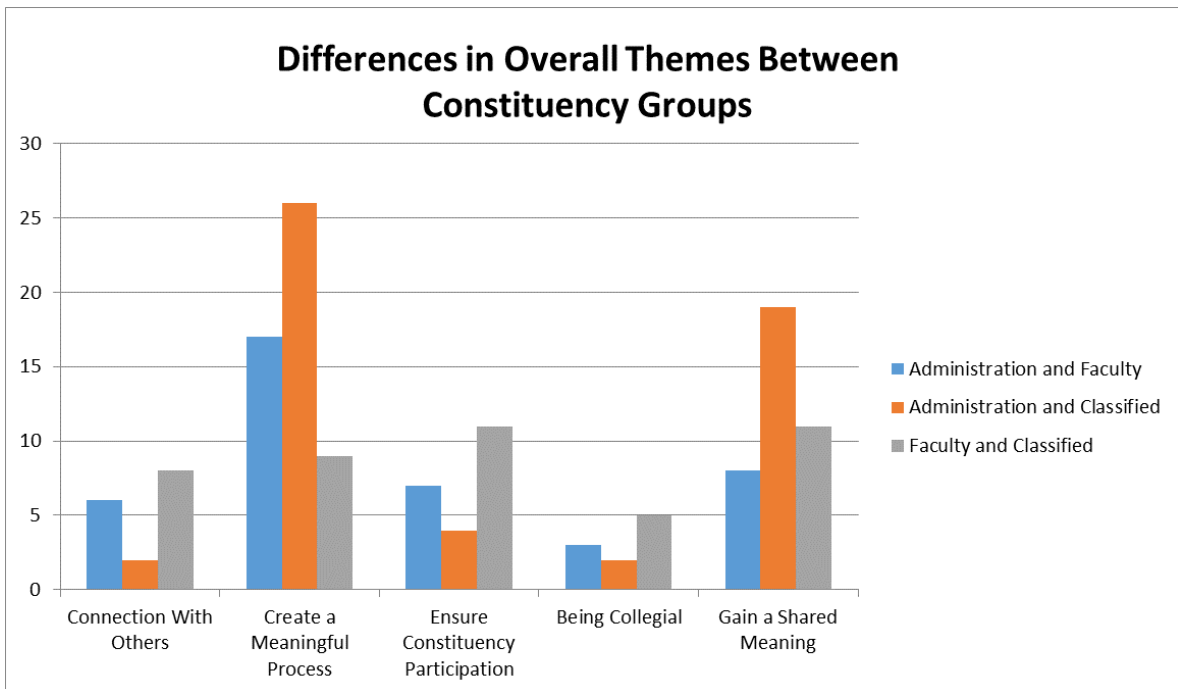
Figure 10. Differences in overall themes between constituency groups.

Table 13 shows the top nine themes and their ranking by constituency groups. Table 14 shows the three themes that ranked in the top five for all three constituency groups.

Table 13

Frequency of Top 9 Themes by Constituency Group

Theme	Administrators	Faculty	Classified
1. Being collegial	6	3	3
2. Connection with others	2	1	1
3. Creating a meaningful process	1	2	5
4. Ensure constituency participation	5	5 (tie)	2
5. Explain a process	3	5 (tie)	8
6. Have a voice	8	7 (tie)	4
7. Gain a shared meaning	4	4	6
8. Understand their role	10	7 (tie)	9
9. Counter resistance	7	6	7

Table 14

Three Themes That Were Categorized as Top Five per Constituency Group

Theme	Administrators	Faculty	Classified
1. Connection with others	2	1	1
2. Creating a meaningful process	1	2	5
3. Ensure constituency participation	5	5 (tie)	2

Summary

Chapter IV began with restating the purpose, research questions, methodology and sample. Those sections were followed by the description of the coding process and overall themes. The participants perceived the role of communication in strategic planning processes in California Community Colleges as a method to connect with others, create a meaningful process, ensure constituency participation, be collegial, and gain a shared meaning. All three constituency groups listed three of the top five themes: connection with others, create a meaningful process, and ensure constituency

participation (see Table 14). Although they ranked them in a different order, every constituency group did list them in their top five.

There were differences in the constituency groups with regard to the other two themes. Administrators ranked the communication regarding explaining the process as third whereas the faculty ranked the theme in fifth place. Classified staff did not rank the role of communication as a method to explain the process as high as administrators or faculty. Classified staff perceived that the role of communication should include having a voice and ranked that theme much higher than their counterparts. Classified staff ranked have a voice in 4th place where administrators and faculty ranked have a voice at 8th and 7th place. Being collegial was ranked in 3rd place by both faculty and classified but administrators ranked that theme at 6th place.

Based on the data, administrators perceived the role of communication to be more about the process. To review, the top five ranked themes for administrators were creating a meaningful process, connection with others, explain the process, gain a shared meaning, and ensure constituency participation. Classified staff perceived the role of communication to be more about the connection with others. Classified staff ranked their top five as connection with others, ensure constituency participation, be collegial, have a voice, and create a meaningful process. Their responses were more centered on connection and participation. Faculty shared similarities with both of their counterparts. Faculty had a list of top six instead of top five due to a tie. Their top themes included connection with others, create a meaningful process, be collegial, gain a shared meaning, ensure constituency participation, and explain the process. Faculty responses included process and connection.

Chapter V provides major findings, unexpected findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

California Community Colleges continue to face challenges that require

successful planning processes such as accountability, recent initiatives, and accreditation

sanctions (AACC, 2011; CCCCO, 2012; McPhail, 2010). Accreditation processes also

insist that colleges demonstrate integrated planning in their self-study (ACCJC, 2015b).

Consistently for the past 5 years, sanctions and/or warnings continue to be given for lack

of planning (ACCJC, 2015a). Several researchers have found that communication is vital

to the planning process, yet the literature review shows that little to no research has been

conducted on the role of communication in strategic planning processes at California

Community Colleges (Pagel, 2011; Schultz, 2011; White, 2007). Therefore, this study

examined the perceptions of committee members in regard to the role that

communication has on the planning processes at California Community Colleges. This

chapter summarizes the research by first presenting the purpose of the study, research

questions, the methodology employed, and sample used. Next this chapter covers the

major findings from the research followed by unexpected findings along with

conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future research. Finally, the chapter

concludes with a reflection and concluding remarks.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the role of communication as

perceived by community college planning committee members with regard to the

strategic planning processes at California Community Colleges. A secondary purpose of

this study was to explore the differences between the perceptions of administrators,

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faculty, and classified committee members involved in planning processes at California Community Colleges.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning process at California Community Colleges?

   a. How do administrative committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

   b. How do faculty committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

   c. How do classified committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

2. Are there any differences between the perceptions of committee members with regard to the role of communication in the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

Methodology

This qualitative study employed a phenomenological approach to explore the shared lived experiences of planning committee members regarding the role of communication in planning at California Community Colleges (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Moustakas, 1994). Semistructured interviews were conducted with 21 participants from seven different colleges. The participants represented the three constituency groups: administrators, faculty, and classified staff. The interviews were transcribed for analysis along with 21 artifacts from each of the colleges. Utilizing the

artifacts and the interviews from three different constituency groups allowed for a comprehensive view of the lived experience of the participants. The interview protocol and guide allowed for consistency in process but still allowed the researcher to add additional probes for deeper conversations (see Appendices B and C). McPhee and Zaug's four flows provided the theoretical framework used to guide the formation of interview questions (McPhee & Zaug, 2000, 2009).

The interview protocol and guide were approved by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix E). All participants were assured of their rights and the protection of their identity. All but one interview was conducted face to face; the remaining interview was conducted by phone in order to accommodate that participant's schedule. All interviews were digitally recorded and given to a transcription service. The interview transcripts were reviewed by the researcher for accuracy. The artifacts gathered from each institution along with the transcripts were individually uploaded into NVivo 11, which is the most recent software created by QSR International (2016) to assist in qualitative research. The use of computerized software can serve as a tool to help researchers to find themes in data (Patton, 2015). First the interview questions were mapped to the theoretical framework (see Appendix C). Themes for each of the four flows were also identified (see Appendix I). The researcher utilized both inductive and deductive methods to narrow the themes from 26 to the top nine themes based on the number of times they recurred in the data. The researcher triangulated the data by participant constituency group and the artifacts gathered from each of the colleges (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015). After the top themes were identified, the researcher created graphs for each of the constituency groups

and graphs to represent the entire sample. This allowed the researcher to see both the commonalities and the differences in the perception of the role of communication in planning processes. The information, graphics, and tables were then described in Chapter IV.

Population and Sample

The population for this study included planning committee members who had direct involvement in the planning processes at a California Community College. The population included committee members from the three constituency groups: administrators, faculty, and classified staff. The sample was narrowed by criteria that included the following:

1. Worked at a college within the California Community College system.

2. Engaged in strategic planning at their respective college.

3. Served on a planning committee that consisted of all three constituency groups: administrators, faculty, and classified college members.

4. Were employed at a college that had a successful self-study accreditation, in the last 3 years, which resulted in reaffirmed accreditation with no warnings or sanctions.

These criteria narrowed the target population to only 37 possible colleges in the California Community College system (see Appendix A). Purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to find "information rich" participants (Patton, 2015, p. 46). The researcher also employed snowball sampling in order to secure a purposeful sample of participants who fit the criteria. The sample included seven administrators, seven faculty members, and seven classified staff members. The sample consisted of eight males and 13 female participants. The span of experience working in higher education in this

particular sample ranged from 2 to 40 years while their experience in planning ranged from 2 to 14 years.

Major Findings

Research Question 1

How do committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning process at California Community Colleges?

Finding 1. Connection precedes process. When all of the responses were analyzed, the overall finding indicated that connection with others was the primary role of communication in the planning processes. This confirms the Communicative Constitution of Organization (CCO) view that communicative acts give the organization meaning (Noblet, 2015). The important work involved in planning is predicated on the connection between the individuals creating the plan. McPhee and Zaug (2009) defined organization as "a social interaction system" (p. 28). This finding further illustrates one of McPhee and Zaug's four flows, membership negotiation, whereby members of an organization utilized communicative acts to socialize with others to establish their roles, identities, and to give themselves a sense of belonging (McPhee et al., 2014; McPhee & Zaug, 2000, 2009; Noblet, 2015).

Finding 2. Communication establishes participatory or shared governance parameters. The second finding was that the role of communication was seen as a method to ensure participatory systems. California AB 1725 is generally cited as a regulation that implemented shared or participatory governance (Duncan-Hall, 1993; Ecung, 2007; Finnell, 2014; Schultz, 2011). The California Education Code Section 70902 (b)(7) states,

The governing board of each district shall establish procedures to ensure faculty,

staff and students the opportunity to express their opinions at the campus level,

and to ensure that these opinions are given every reasonable consideration, and

the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making

recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards. (State of

California, 2014)

This finding illustrates reflexive self-structuring from McPhee and Zaug's (2000,

2009) four flows which is the communicative acts that shape the working conditions.

Being collegial and ensuring constituency participation are both themes that speak to the

inclusion of members' voices. All committee members addressed this inclusion revealing

that the policies and plans are not just on paper but alive and part of their working

processes.

Finding 3. Process becomes meaningful through communication. The third

finding indicates that the role of communication creates shared meaning. This finding is

an example of McPhee and Zaug's activity coordination flow where communication is

used to get practical work done by making adjustments. These activities allow for

"effortful alignment of actors with disparate goals and inconsistent perspectives"

(McPhee et al., 2014, p. 87). Bringing people together to discuss their goals and

perceptions allows members of the organization to view the bigger picture rather than just

their interests. Processes and plans can be codified but without dialectical discussion,

shared meaning cannot exist. Integrated planning at a California Community College

requires different areas of the college to work together to plan for the entire college.

Fleuriet (2015) indicated that colleges are more individualistic in their structure where

separation exists between programs, departments, or divisions. Fleuriet and Williams

(2015) further contended that communication would be key to successful planning at

colleges: "A successful organization is one where stakeholders understand each other's

point of view, develop some degree of agreement, and choose to act in a collective way to

accomplish their mission" (p. 70).

Research Question 1a

How do administrative committee members perceive the role of communication

within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

Finding 1. Processes must be communicated. Administrators favored process

over connection. Administrators are often responsible for the planning processes and the

mandated requirements that go with those processes; therefore, a completion of the

process is more prominent in their responses. Although the process was important, this

finding does not fall under McPhee and Zaug's institutional positioning. Administrators

may have mentioned mandates such as accreditation and protection via documented proof

of communication; however, that was not the focal point of the administrative perception.

Administrator's perception fell in line with both McPhee and Zaug's membership

negotiation and activity coordination. As the leader, in most cases, the administrator was

charged with explaining the process and assigning roles, which is representative of

communication within the membership negotiation flow. However, the most reported

reference from administrators was not the explanation of the process but the meaning of

the process. Bryson (2011) emphasized that creating opportunities for shared meaning is

imperative for successful strategic planning. This finding further illustrates what the

Encyclopedia of Communication Theory points out, that communication is both the study

of meaning transmission and the study of how communication is a method to create meaning (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

Finding 2. Collegiality should not be compromised for process. In the top five themes for administrators, the theme of being collegial dropped off the top five list and was replaced by explain a process. Process is prominent in the minds of administrators who are often held accountable for completion of planning efforts. The other two constituency groups found greater importance in collegiality. Administrators need to be mindful of their approach to planning. Incorporating the promotion of collegiality could increase the opportunities for shared meaning, which, in turn, could impact the overall strategic planning process.

Research Question 1b

How do faculty committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

Finding 1. Connection, process, and participation create a complete picture. Faculty perceived the role of communication as imperative to three elements in the planning process: connection, process, and participation. Faculty responses indicate a value for inclusion and communication to connect with the other areas within the institution. Instructors by virtue of job description spend the majority of their work day communicating information to students. As such, instructors may see the value in communication in planning processes more prevalently than individuals who do not spend the majority of their day communicating. Some college planning committees had both an administrator and a faculty cochair; that could have influenced the faculty member's perception of the role of communication as a method to explain a process that

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would have meaning for the institution. In addition, faculty members participate in their Academic Senate process and work hard to have participatory or shared governance processes enforced. Faculty perception of the role of communication was displayed as both membership negotiation and activity coordination. The faculty responses indicated an interest in their assigned role for planning but also in their ability to report to their constituency groups, which is not an obligation for the administrators.

Research Question 1c

How do classified committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

Finding 1. Classified staff members want to be connected to the college process if not the planning itself. The responses from classified staff members were far more related to membership negotiation than any other of McPhee and Zaug's four flows. The data indicated that classified staff believe that the role of communication was a method to connect, to have a voice, and to participate. The process itself seemed minor to the connection and inclusivity of being on the planning committee.

Research Question 2

Are there any differences between the perceptions of committee members with regard to the role of communication in the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

Finding 1. Administrators believe communication can create a meaningful process, but faculty are a bit more skeptical. For the most part, faculty and administrators appeared to agree regarding their perceived role of communication, but the largest differences in their responses centered on creating a meaningful process. Although both

groups valued the communication that allowed for a meaningful process, faculty appear

to be less enthusiastic. Faculty tend to remain in their positions and at their colleges for

longer periods of time where administrators who are "at-will" employees without tenure

may consider moving to different colleges as the opportunities arises. Faculty often serve

as cochairs on committees giving them buy-in to the process; however, they might not

see the bigger picture associated with planning processes unless it affects their program

or classroom. In addition, faculty may end up working with several different

administrators over a period of time and see several variations of the planning process.

Finding 2. Administrators and classified staff are on different pages. The largest

disparity in responses occurred between the administrators and the classified staff.

Administrators are far more concerned with communication that affects process where

classified staff are more interested in communication that offers connection to others.

Classified staff may not see the significance of the planning processes and therefore focus

more on the connection with other committee members.

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Unexpected Findings

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The research revealed three unexpected findings. First, the acceptance of

communication as a purely transmission process rather than a constitutive process.

Secondly, the barriers that keep classified staff from participating in planning processes.

Lastly, the instability and mobility of administrators who run the planning processes.

Unexpected Finding 1

More than half of the respondents mentioned the practice of communicating

information regarding planning as a transmission process. Transmission of

communication is a theoretical lens that views communication as getting messages from

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one entity to another (Zaremba, 2010). Participants admitted that this process was a linear form of communication that did not guarantee anyone would receive the messages. The format most often cited was the use of e-mail. Several participants mentioned being told that others do not read the e-mail messages and some even referenced that messages can be filtered from inboxes to avoid having the inbox fill up. In addition, some of the participants also indicated that the massive amount of transmitted communication also served a specific purpose: protection. Administrative participant 1 stated,

> I think that faculty feel like admin sends way too many emails, and that they
> would prefer to have fewer emails with more, what they would consider to be,
> important points. However, administration's been burned quite a few times,
> where they were accused of not giving people an opportunity to provide feedback.
> So, it's like this Catch 22, almost like this lack of trust or lack of understanding of
> the process. So, then it creates this, okay, well we're gonna bombard you with all
> these emails, and it has the opposite effect, where the faculty go, okay, well I'm
> getting way too many emails, so I'm gonna ignore every single one now, and I'm
> not gonna reply to any of them. The classified are like well, they don't care what
> we think, so we're not going to read them or reply to them.

The transmission model does serve a purpose in communication. Specifically, this type of communication allows the committee to document that the communication occurred. This is often done to fulfill a mandate for outside agencies such as accrediting bodies. This illustrates the institutional positioning flow from McPhee and Zaug's four flows. Institutional positioning is described as communicative elements that convey messages to outside bodies (McPhee et al., 2014; McPhee & Zaug, 2000, 2009). These

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linear forms of communication allow committee members to document their existence, point to their location, and claim the task as communicated despite the reality that the communication may not be disseminated by any or all recipients.

This finding is in direct contrast to the role of communication found in this study. The role of communication in planning processes as perceived by all committee members was a connection with others, which is a constitutive view of communication not a transmission view. However, that result was based on the role of communication within the committee not necessarily the college at large. Communication from both perspectives has value, but it is an unexpected and interesting revelation to see such a difference in the views of the participants.

Unexpected Finding 2

Another unexpected finding was the barriers that keep classified staff from participating not only in the planning process but possibly in other committee work on college campuses. Several participants indicated reasons classified staff do not participate in the planning processes. Those reasons mentioned in the interviews included lack of coverage for classified to leave their posts, being asked to take notes instead of being treated as an equal member of the committee, needing supervisor permission to participate, working outside their scheduled hours without additional compensation, and being intimidated by the other participants. Classified Participant 4 stated,

> I know a lot of departments are still running short-staffed. We still haven't fully
>
> recovered I think from cuts from a few years ago. I think the workload is still

there. You just come to work and you just want to do your work. This is extra

work. It truly is extra work to serve on committees.

Faculty Participant 1 stated,

Unfortunately, when we look at behavior of classified versus faculty versus

administrator, the classified voice is always submissive. They're almost afraid to

speak. It takes a very strong leader in the classified rank to be in the room with

administrators and faculty members and be vocal. Most are just quiet. They

don't want to rock the boat.

Classified Participant 1 indicated,

I think there are some issues with how communication in general goes out to

classified. For example, when there are college-wide trainings, they'll be an

announcement, "Here's this training, here's the date. Classified, ask your

supervisors if you can go." It doesn't happen very often, but just every now and

again, you're like, "Hmm, I wonder does that really need to be there?" Because

of course, you'd ask your supervisor if you could go. The difference, it just kind

of points out faculty are independent, and managers are independent, and

classified . . . You don't have that level of autonomy.

Classified Participant 1 continued with another observation,

I have noticed in a couple of meetings that there's typically a note taker in that

meeting and the note taker is typically a classified person. Every now and again,

if we're short-staffed, the classified note taker will also be a committee member.

I think it makes a weird dynamic, because you can't really take good notes and

participate in a meeting. Sometimes I've noticed if that is happening, that the

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person taking notes isn't included in the meeting. People see them with their laptop and typing, so they just move right over them and go to the next person if we're going around the room.

Faculty Participant 3 offered their explanation for lack of classified staff participation in the process, "It's just because we don't offer any kind of compensation or even desk coverage for classified professionals when they want to participate in committees."

All of the barriers were expressed as valid reasons for lack of participation, yet no one offered a solution to the barriers. The results clearly indicate that classified staff desire communication that offers a connection to others, which could eliminate lack of interest as a reason for nonparticipation.

Unexpected Finding 3

The third unexpected finding resulted in several comments regarding the instability of administrative personnel. Several participants mentioned interim administrators and administrators who seem to vacate their positions quite often. This revelation brought up several communicative issues. First was the inconsistency of the messages regarding planning. Several participants shared that the process changed every time a new administrator was hired. Second administrators who felt vulnerable as at-will employees may not want to go against the wishes of the president. This situation could affect the meaningfulness of the process and even question the validity of the end result.

<div align="center">

Conclusions

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The research findings are in line with the literature review regarding the communicative constitution of organizations. The role of communication in planning

processes at California Community Colleges is a critical element that includes

communication regarding the process and the connection of participants. Based on the

literature review and the research findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Planning committee members need to connect with each other. Time spent getting to
   know each other, their role in the process, and time to recognize the humanity in each
   other could help the process move forward. The research findings suggest that
   building trust and using humor to get to know each other is beneficial to shared
   meaning. Communication that orients committee members to the process and to their
   responsibilities is cited in the literature as well as communication that allows team
   building and team connection.

2. The process itself must have meaning across the institution. Communication that
   encourages voices to share their goals and needs will allow the process to have a
   richer meaning. Offering opportunities for participation, feedback, and input give
   meaning to the process but also acknowledge the shared or participatory process.

3. Administrators are generally responsible for the completion of the process but should
   be mindful of the importance of connection, especially with regard to the classified
   staff. Communication that is nonprocess oriented could be implemented into the
   process to allow for more engaged classified participants.

4. Communication for transmission purposes is included in the process. For example, e-
   mailing the college of the status of the planning process is a current traditional format
   of communication. Team members should recognize that the use of this type of
   communication is more than likely for documentation of process not as a means for

creating meaning. The literature states that any form of communication can be useful but does not necessarily ensure meaning or understanding.

5. Classified staff members may not see the importance of planning processes to their work environment or the institution at large. This should be a major concern for planning committee members. Classified staff run the day-to-day operations of the colleges; if they do not see the impact or ramification of the planning process, then maybe the planning is not having the desired effect on the entire organization.

6. Barriers exist that limit participation such as power deferential, time of meetings, work responsibilities, and so forth. These barriers are systemic and need to be addressed at an organizational level. Participation of all stakeholders is important and required for planning processes, yet the institution is often run in silos where different entities (programs, departments, or divisions) do not interact with others. Knowing barriers exist will not eliminate them but acknowledging them verbally may be the first step in addressing potential solutions.

Implications for Action

Based on the conclusions in this study, several implications for action exist for planning committees at California Community Colleges. With the literature review and the data collected in mind, the following actions are recommended:

1. Planning committees at California Community Colleges should consider the role of communication as part of their planning processes. Deliberate planning of how the committee members will communicate to each other and to the college at large should be part of the process. The creation of a communication plan or a discussion of how

the communication should and will take place should be incorporated into the actual process from the beginning.

2. Leaders of the planning committee should consider the importance of connection for all participants. The intrinsic rewards of connection can outweigh the extrinsic completion of a task. Leaders should build in time for connection as part of the planning process such forms of connection could include team building exercises.

3. Administrators need to advocate for classified participation, including addressing the barriers that exist. Administrators are the only ones in a position to remove most of those barriers. One thing administrators could implement is a classified staff planning event where only classified staff participate. The event could be run by an outside consultant or a leader from within the classified staff. Since only classified staff would participate, the power deferential would be defused. In addition, if the college is not "open," classified staff could participate without concern for their daily duties or concern for supervisor approval. This event held annually could eliminate the systemic issues surrounding participation. The results from these planning events could be synthesized and presented to the planning committee.

4. Multiple forms of communication (e.g., e-mail, newsletters, social media, presentation, etc.) should be included in the planning process in order to reach the majority of stakeholders. Committee members should recognize and consider the implications of relying on communication for transmission only versus incorporating constitutive forms of communication into their planning processes. Communication that is for the purpose of transmission only may be the easiest to use and report as

evidence, but those forms of communication are not the best for creating a shared meaning.

5. The accrediting body, ACCJC is currently discussing changes to the accreditation process. One of the changes they should include would be to inquire about the forms of communication utilized by colleges to substantiate their integrated planning processes and the methods used to gauge the effectiveness of the communication. Purely documenting that communication occurred does not constitute understanding or dissemination of the information.

6. The California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) should add more training for administrative leaders at California Community Colleges to ensure that communicative acts that encourage collegiality and connection are as prominently pursued as process-oriented communication.

Recommendations for Further Research

Communication is generally taken for granted but often mentioned as imperative to many processes. There is limited research on the role of communication in planning processes therefore there are ample opportunities for further research. The researcher recommends the following areas as potential future research opportunities:

1. This study was limited to California Community Colleges; similar studies at universities or private institutions could be conducted to explore the role of communication at larger or smaller higher educational institutions.

2. This study eliminated outliers (colleges that with less than 6,000 FTEs and colleges with over 25,000 FTEs) due to the fact that those colleges may have different parameters that could influence the end results. A study that looked at smaller or

larger colleges could add to the literature regarding the role of communication in smaller or larger institutions.

3. Communication is a broad term and is often taken for granted. Creating a study that focused just on the modes of communication used in planning processes along with their perceived effectiveness could give more insight into how to effectively communicate the planning process.

4. Many participants addressed the power deferential between committee members, specifically the classified and the administrators. A study that explored the communication from a critical perspective looking at hegemony or barriers that keep the classified from full participation could offer some interesting insights.

5. Several participants mentioned the turnover of administrators in the California Community College system. Several studies could arise from this information, including the reasons for the turnover, how the change in personnel are communicated to the college, how colleges cope with the communication differences between administrators, the differences between interim and "full-time" administrators. However, the recommended research would be how college presidents and administrators charged with planning view the role of communication in the planning process. Several insights could come from knowing the perspective of the president and how his or her perception may or may not influence the administrator in charge of the process.

6. Planning processes are inclusive of strategic plans, educational master plans, facilities plans, program review, and integrated planning. A further study on the

communication involved in specifically assessing the results of one or more of these plans could offer insights on how to gather feedback and improve planning processes.

7. Communication is transactional, in that communicators are both senders and receivers of any and all interactions. This current study focused on the committee member's perspective. A study that addresses the perceived effectiveness of the received communication could highlight the significance of the communication being sent to the college stakeholders. This could guide committee members to modify their sent messages to be more effective based on the receiver's perspective.

8. Most of the participants mentioned specific interactive activities held as part of their planning processes. A study that focused on the communication used during those specific events along with a survey on the perceived effectiveness of the communication from the invited participants would also generate pragmatic ideas to improve the planning processes.

9. When looking at the California Community College structure, there are four constituency groups that are often referred to in the literature: administrators, faculty, classified staff, and students. Not all colleges include students into the planning process, but a study that focused on the perception of the role of communications from students who are involved in the planning process would add to the literature on communication in planning process.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

California Community Colleges are constantly facing new challenges including recent initiatives, an emphasis on accountability, and accreditation standards. Over 60% of the warnings and sanctions given to colleges in the last 5 years from ACCJC (2015a)

are directly tied to planning or lack of planning. Planning cannot exist without communication. Limited research on the role of communication in planning processes at California Community Colleges exists. Although the accrediting process itself is currently being challenged in California, planning will remain crucial to the success of all California Community Colleges.

This research was an exploratory study to investigate the perceived role of communication by the committee members who are directly involved in the planning process. If communication is critical to planning, how does it function and what is the role of the communication used? Conducting the interviews, the participants reinforced the difficulty in defining strategic planning and communication. Strategic planning is defined and conducted differently at every college. Communication is so engrained in everything we do that we often are unaware of the role communication has on our processes. The findings support the interpretive paradigm where meaning is socially constructed. When planning is intended to create meaning for the purpose, mission, vision, and goals of an institution, individuals need to come together to communicate their needs and goals. The results showed both connection and process as imperative roles for communication.

The findings also show some disconnect between the constituencies with regard to the role of communication in planning. Administrators seemed on one end of the spectrum toward "process," whereas the classified staff were posted on the other end toward "connection." The faculty appeared to view the role somewhere in between the two groups. This reveals that some discussion needs to happen to explore ways to make

the process more meaningful for classified staff while giving the administrators the appreciation for communication that connects the participants.

As an exploratory study, this research adds to the literature regarding the role of communication in strategic planning at California Community Colleges. By investing in the communication as part of the planning process itself, California Community Colleges can successfully integrate their planning processes to effectively confront the challenges of an ever-changing higher educational landscape.

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APPENDICES

List of Colleges/Status

College	Date of Self Study	CCC	Directory status	Action Status	Enrollment	Outlier
Coastline College	Spring 2013			Removed		
Copper Mountain College	Spring 2013				1922	Yes
Gavilan College	Spring 2013				5659	Yes
Golden West College	Spring 2013			Warning Removed		
Hartnell College	Spring 2013			Probation Removed		
Imperial Valley College	Spring 2013			Warning Removed		
Los Angeles County College of Nursing and Allied Health	Spring 2013	No				
Los Angeles Mission College	Spring 2013			Probation Removed Warning		
Los Angeles Pierce College	Spring 2013				19662	
Los Angeles Valley College	Spring 2013			Warning Removed		
Orange Coast College	Spring 2013			Removed		
San Joaquin Valley College	Spring 2013	No				
Carrington College of California	Spring 2013	No				
Cabrillo College	Fall 2013				13819	
Canada College	Fall 2013				6783	
College of San Mateo	Fall 2013				9824	
Cuyamaca College	Fall 2013				8539	
Grossmont College	Fall 2013				17948	
MTI College	Fall 2013	No				
Salvation Army Crestmont College	Fall 2013	No		Warning Removed		
Sierra College	Fall 2013			Warning Removed		
Skyline College	Fall 2013				10414	
Cerritos College	Spring 2014			Warning Removed		
Lassen College	Spring 2014				2103	Yes
Mendocino College	Spring 2014				3744	Yes
Mission College	Spring 2014		Warning			
Moreno Valley College	Spring 2014				8936	
Norco	Spring 2014				9860	

College	Term					
Ohlone College	Spring 2014				10270	
Palo Verde College	Spring 2014		Warning	Probation Warning		
Riverside City College	Spring 2014				16740	
San Joaquin Delta College	Spring 2014				16550	
American Samoa Community college	Fall 2014	No		Show Cause		
College of the canyons	Fall 2014				15461	
Contra costa college	Fall 2014				7240	
Crafton Hills College	Fall 2014		Warning	Warning		
Cuesta College	Fall 2014			Removed		
Diablo Valley College	Fall 2014				20762	
El Camino College	Fall 2014			Removed		
Long Beach City College	Fall 2014				25390	Yes
Los Medanos College	Fall 2014				8556	
Rio Hondo College	Fall 2014				18684	
San Bernardino Valley College	Fall 2014		Warning	Warning		
Santa Ana College	Fall 2014				41029	Yes
Santiago Canyon College	Fall 2014				16180	
Berkeley City College	Spring 2015		Warning	Warning		
Butte College	Spring 2015				13193	
College of Alameda	Spring 2015		Probation	Probation		
College of the Marshall Islands	Spring 2015	No		Warning Removed		
Laney College	Spring 2015		Warning	Warning		
Merritt College	Spring 2015		Warning	Probation		
Palomar College	Spring 2015				24668	
Pasadena City College	Spring 2015		Probation	Probation		
Santa Rosa Junior College	Spring 2015				26695	Yes
American River college	Fall 2015				32890	Yes
Chabot college	Fall 2015				13425	
Citrus College	Fall 2015				11876	
Cosumnes River colleges	Fall 2015				14593	
Folsom Lake College	Fall 2015				8567	
Las Positas College	Fall 2015				8827	
Napa Valley college	Fall 2015				6484	
Sacramento City college	Fall 2015				23323	
Santa Barbara City college	Fall 2015				19795	
Southwestern college	Fall 2015		Warning	Warning		
Taft college	Fall 2015				3098	Yes

Note regarding appendix A –Green rows were the colleges that qualified for the study per criteria.

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol

Brandman University, Doctoral Dissertation

Researcher: Linda Carvalho Cooley

Participant # _____

College # _____

Date of interview: _____

First I would like to thank you for your participation in this study. My name is Linda Carvalho Cooley and I'm a doctoral student at Brandman University studying Organizational Leadership and specifically I'm looking at California Community Colleges and their planning processes.

Brandman University requires that I go over the informed consent forms and that I obtain your signature for consent. I sent the forms in advance and want to make sure that you had an opportunity to review them. As you know I will be digitally recording our interview today and if you need me to stop the recording at any time, just let me know. The reason for the digital recording is to ensure that your responses can be transcribed verbatim. Your name and your college will not be known to anyone other than myself and the chair of my committee. For all records your college will have a code and you will be given a participant number. After the transcripts are completed participants have the ability to review them and at that time you can offer any correction to intent or terminology if you choose to do so but it is not required.

Do you have any questions? (Obtain signatures)

At this time may I have your permission to turn on the recorder?

To begin today I want you to know that my dissertation is examining the role of communication in strategic planning processes at California Community Colleges. I'm trying to gain a full picture of your process by looking at the perceptions from administrators, faculty and classified staff participants. You were asked to participate to speak from the perception of your role as a(an) (administrator, faculty or classified staff member). My intent here is just to explore how communication was used at your college in order to gather more information regarding the planning processes at California Community Colleges.

Do you have any questions or concerns for me before we begin?

Thank you and again keep in mind that we can stop the interview at any time and if there is a question that you would prefer to not answer just give me a verbal indication and we can skip that question.

We will start with some basic demographic questions first then move into the planning questions.

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide

Research questions:

1. How do committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning process at California Community Colleges?

   a. How do administrative committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

   b. How do faculty committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

   c. How do classified committee members perceive the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

2. Are there any differences between the perceptions of committee members with regard to the role of communication in the planning processes at California Community Colleges?

Interview questions: (questions in parenthesis are possible follow up/probe questions)

1. Tell me how you came to be on the strategic planning committee and what was your perception of your role on the committee?

2. Tell me about your perception of the role communication played in the strategic planning process at your college?

3. What do you remember about the communication used to initiate you or others to the planning process and what impact did that communication have?

4. Did the committee membership remain intact or were there new members who came into the process?

5. How were norms and rules established for your committee?

6. What is your perception of how the organizational procedures were communicated regarding strategic planning process?

7. Was there anything in the process that didn't go as planned? If so how was it handled?

8. What is your perception of the role that communication played in the committee meetings?

9. Did your committee have any interactive activities with participants outside of the committee membership and if so what impact did communication have on those activities?

10. As an (administrator, faculty member or classified member) do you think your perception of the role of communication is different from the other members on the committee? If so how and why?

11. If you feel your committee bonded as a team tell me how that occurred?

12. Is there anything else you would like to share with me regarding your perception of the role communication played in the strategic planning process at your college?

Interview guide for coding data

Questions	Research Question Addressed	Membership Negotiation	Reflexive Self-Structuring	Activity Coordination	Institutional Positioning
1	1, 2	X			
2	1	X			
3	1, 2	X			
4	1, 2	X			
5	1, 2		X		
6	1, 2		X		
7	1, 2			X	
8	1, 2			X	
9	1, 2				X
10	1, 2	X			X
11	1, 2	X			
12	1			X	

Note: Documents collected will address Reflexive Self-Structuring and Institutional Positioning.

Consent Forms

Informed Consent

<u>Title:</u> The role of communication in strategic planning processes at California Community Colleges.

<u>Researcher</u>: Linda Carvalho Cooley

<u>Purpose of study:</u> The study is a dissertation in Organizational Leadership at Brandman University. The purpose of this study is to describe the role of communication as perceived by community college planning committee members with regard to the strategic planning processes at California Community Colleges. A secondary purpose of this study is to explore the differences between the perceptions of administrators, faculty and classified committee members involved in planning processes at California Community Colleges.

Procedures: All participants will be interviewed individually. The semi-structured interview will take approximately one hour and will be digitally audio recorded. Permission for audio recording will be provided on an additional form. The interviews will take place in a private room to be determined by your college. Participants will be offered the ability to review their final transcripts in order to clarify intent. There are approximately 10 questions in the interview, with the possibility of some follow questions. Follow up questions are only to clarify or add more detail to your original responses. The topic of the interview questions will be about participants perceptions regarding the role of communication in the strategic planning process. All participants must be aware that a professional transcription service will be employed to transcribe the interviews.

Safeguards: Safeguards to minimal risks include:

- Time: The researcher will monitor the time during the interview process. If the allocated time has expired and the interview is still occurring, the researcher will stress the voluntary nature of staying beyond the anticipated allocated time to complete the interview. If the length of the interview is inconvenient for you, you may stop participating in the interview at any time without any consequence. There are no consequences of any kind if you decide not to participate.

- Confidentiality: Interview responses will be kept confidential and available only to the researcher and the chair of this dissertation. Interview recordings will be locked in a safe place at the researcher's home. Interview responses will not be linked to your name, address or institution. This is done to maintain confidentiality.

- Professional Transcription Service: The professional transcription service will not receive participant name, address or any other private form of identification. Within the interview, the participant may inadvertently name a person, place or institution. All of those references will be removed from the final draft but will be in the audio recording. There is a minimal risk that due to the professional transcription service but keep in mind they are a professional company and recognize that their professional integrity would be at stake if they violated any trust with clients.

As a participant I understand

1. The possible risks of this study are minimal. However, there may be some discomfort as a result of participating in the interview. I understand that I do not need to answer any interview questions that cause discomfort.
2. I will not be paid for my participation in this study. The possible benefit of this study is an increased understanding of higher education planning with a particular focus on the role of communication. The findings and recommendations from this study will be made available to all participants.
3. Any questions I have concerning my participation in this study will be answered by Linda Carvalho Cooley, available by email at carvalho@mail.brandman.edu or by phone at XXX-XXX-XXXX. Questions may also be addressed by the dissertation chairperson: Dr. Len Hightower at whightow@brandman.edu.
4. I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the investigator may stop the study at any time.
5. I also understand that no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be informed and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions comments or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618 or phone them at (949) 341-7641. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the Research Participant's Bill of Rights.

I have read the above and understand the terms of my participation in this study. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I hereby agree to participate in this study.

_____

Printed Name of Participant

_____

Signature of Participant

_____

Signature of Researcher

_____

Date

Digital Audio Recording Consent Form

Title: The role of communication in strategic planning processes at California Community Colleges

Researcher: Linda Carvalho Cooley

I understand that the research project in which I am agreeing to participate concerns my perceptions of the role of communication in strategic planning processes at my college. I understand that I will be interviewed for approximately one hour. I understand that this study is the basis for a dissertation that may be submitted for publication at a later date.

I further understand that the researcher will hold my responses in strict confidence and that no comments will be attributed to me by name in any reports on this study. I recognize that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw my participation in this study at any time or decline to answer any questions.

I hereby give my consent to allow digital audio recording of my interview. I understand that I can elect to receive a copy of my transcript once the digital audio recording has been transcribed so that I can review or clarify intent.

_____   _____

Print Name   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Signature of Researcher

Please check _____ if you would like to receive a copy of your transcript

If checked above please provide a mailing address below.

_____

_____

_____

IRB Approval

BRANDMAN University Chapman University System

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
IRB Application Action – Approval

Date: 9/28/16

Name of Investigator/Researcher: Linda M. Carvalho Cooley

Faculty or Student ID Number: B00165388

Title of Research Project:

The role of communication in strategic planning at California Community Colleges

Project Type: [✔] New   [ ] Continuation   [ ] Resubmission

Category that applies to your research:
[✔] Doctoral Dissertation EdD
[ ] DNP Clinical Project
[ ] Masters' Thesis
[ ] Course Project
[ ] Faculty Professional/Academic Research
[ ] Other: [_____]

Funded: [✔] No   [ ] Yes _____
(Funding Agency; Type of Funding; Grant Number)

Project Duration (cannot exceed 1 year): 10/2017
Principal Investigator's Address: XXXXXXXXXXX   Hanford, CA 93230
Email Address: carvalho@mail.brandman.edu   Telephone Number: XXX-XXX-XXXX
Faculty Advisor/Sponsor/Chair Name: Dr. Len Hightower
Email Address: whightow@brandman.edu   Telephone Number: XXX-XXX-XXXX

Category of Review:
[ ] Exempt Review   [✔] Expedited Review   [ ] Standard Review

Brandman University IRB Rev, 11.14.14   Adopted   November 2014

☑ I have completed the NIH Certification and included a copy with this proposal

☐ NIH Certificate currently on file in the office of the IRB Chair or Department Office

Signature of Principal Investigator: Linda M. Carvalho Cooley *Digitally signed by Linda M. Carvalho Cooley DN: cn=Linda M. Carvalho Cooley, o=Brandman University, ou=Organizational Leadership, email=carvalho@mail.brandman.edu, c=US Date: 2016.09.26 10:20:21 -07'00'* Date: 9/26/16

Signature of Faculty Advisor/ Sponsor/Dissertation Chair: Walter Len Hightower *Digitally signed by Walter Len Hightower Date: 2016.09.27 21:10:31 -07'00'* Date: 9/27/16

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
IRB APPLICATION ACTION – APPROVAL
COMPLETED BY BUIRB

<u>IRB ACTION/APPROVAL</u>

Name of Investigator/Researcher: Linda M. Carvalho Cooley

☐ Returned without review. Insufficient detail to adequately assess risks, protections and benefits.

☐ Approved/Certified as Exempt form IRB Review.

✓ Approved as submitted.

☐ Approved, contingent on minor revisions (see attached)

☐ Requires significant modifications of the protocol before approval. Research must resubmit with modifications (see attached)

☐ Researcher must contact IRB member and discuss revisions to research proposal and protocol.

Level of Risk: ☐ No Risk ✓ Minimal Risk ☐ More than Minimal Risk

IRB Comments:

IRB Reviewer: Dr. Donald Beissel

Digitally signed by Dr. Donald Beissel
DN: cn=Dr. Donald Beissel, o=Brandman University, ou=IRB Committee Member, email=beis1101@brandman.edu, c=US
Date: 2016.10.07 14:57:32 -07'00'

Telephone: _____ Email: beis1101@brandman.edu

BUIRB Chair: Dr. Douglas DeVore

Digitally signed by Dr. Douglas DeVore
DN: cn=Dr. Douglas DeVore, o=Brandman University, ou=BUIRB Chair, email=ddevore@brandman.edu, c=US
Date: 2016.10.07 14:56:59 -07'00'

Date: 10/06/16

<u>REVISED IRB Application</u> ☐ Approved ☐ Returned

Name: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____ Date: _____

BUIRB Chair: _____

Brandman University IRB Rev, 11.14.14   Adopted   November 2014

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APPENDIX F

Invitation to Participate Letter

Letter to request permission to conduct research at institution

Dear (name of president at respective college)

I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Education at Brandman University. In addition I am currently employed as a full time Communication professor at Reedley College in Reedley California. Currently I am the co-chair of the strategic planning committee and co-chair of the district strategic planning committee at my college. Over the last five years California Community Colleges have encountered numerous change initiatives, increased diversity and competition. Accreditation standards require that all colleges show integrated planning processes when writing their self-study accreditation reports. In the last five years over 60% of the colleges who received warnings or sanctions during the accreditation process were attributed to lack of planning. As a scholar and practitioner I am interested in the role of communication within the planning processes at California Community Colleges. The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of communication in strategic planning processes as perceived by planning committee members. Specifically I am interested in interviewing colleges whose self-study for accreditation in the last three years indicated no sanctions or warnings. Your college is an excellent example of successful planning processes.

With your permission I would like to interview three members of your staff; one administrator, one faculty member and one classified member who directly participated

on a planning committee for your college. The interviews would be individually given on days and times convenient to their work schedules in a room provided by your college. The interviews will not last longer than one hour. Finally I would like to request permission to gather selected school documents that will help provide additional information. Examples of the non-confidential documents include but are not limited to, planning documents, committee meeting minutes regarding planning, power point presentations, or newsletters.

I have obtained Institutional Research Board approval from Brandman University and will provide all documents to your college regarding my study procedures including my protection and confidentiality of participants. With your approval I would like to conduct the IRB approved research on your campus. Please contact me by email or phone if you agree to granting approval for your college to participate. Also let me know if there are any requirements at your institution to conduct this research. I would like to conduct this research during the fall of 2016.

If you have any questions or concerns you wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me directly. In addition you may also contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Len Hightower (phone number) or email him at hightower@brandman.edu

Sincerely
Linda M. Carvalho Cooley
Doctoral Candidate
Brandman University
carvalho@mail.brandman.edu

Invitation to participate in an interview

Dear (name of potential participant)

This letter is a follow up to our recent phone conversation. As you know your name was given to me as a potential candidate to interview for my research. I am a doctoral candidate at Brandman University in the Education Department. I also work at Reedley College as a communication professor. I am also the co-chair for the strategic planning committee at my college and the co-chair for strategic planning for the district planning committee. I'm interested in your perception regarding the role of communication in the strategic planning process at your college. I am seeking vivid, accurate, and comprehensive portrayals of that the experiences in planning were like for you, your thoughts, feelings and behaviors as well as situations, events, places and people connected with your experience.

I'm asking for your participation in this study by agreeing to an interview that will last no more than one hour. At any time during the interview you may stop or take a break. The interview will be digitally audio recorded. Interview recordings will be locked in a safe place. All interview responses will be kept confidential and available only to myself and my chair. Immediately after the interviews are transcribed and reviewed by me they will be shared with individual participants to ensure accuracy clarify intent of quotes.

I am attaching two consent forms for you to review. There is no need to print them as I will physically bring them to our interview for you to sign when we meet. Please respond

to this email and include the best number to reach you if you wish to participate further in

the study. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me directly. When I

receive your responding email I will contact you to arrange a day, time and location for

your personal interview.

Respectfully yours,

Linda M. Carvalho Cooley
Doctoral Candidate
Brandman University
carvalho@mail.brandman.edu

Bill of Rights

BRANDMAN University Chapman University System

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.

2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.

3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.

4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.

5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.

6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.

7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.

8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.

9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.

10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

Brandman University IRB   Adopted   November 2013

APPENDIX H

Synthesis Matrix

Citation	Community colleges	Challenges for community Colleges	Challenges for California Community Colleges	Strategic planning	Strategic planning in education	Criticism of strategic planning	Organizational communication	Communication	Communicative constitution of organizations
AACC (2011)	X	X							
AACC (2016)	X	X							
AAUP (1966)					X				
ACCJC (2012)			X						
ACCJC (2016a)			X						
ACCJC (2016b)			X						
ACCJC (2016c)			X						
Ackerman Anderson and Anderson (2010)								X	X
Adler and Proctor (2014)							X	X	X
Alfred (1994)	X			X	X				
Allison and Kaye (2005)				X					
Bacig (2002)	X			X	X				
Barr and McClellan (2011)	X	X							
Baum and Ma (2014)		X							
Bogart (1994)	X	X	X						
Bonn and Christodoulou (1996)				X		X			
Brewer (2003)				X	X				
Bromiley and Rau (2016)				X		X			
Bryson (2011)				X					
Buckner (1996)	X	X	X						

Source							
Burrowes (1993)						X	X
California Community Colleges (2015)	X	X					
CCCCO		X					
CCCCO (2012)		X					
CCCCO (2015)		X					
CCCCO (2016a)		X					
CCCCO (2016b)		X					
CCCCO (2016c)		X					
CCCCO (2016d)		X					
CCCCO (2016e)		X					
CCCCO (2016f)		X					
Century Foundation (2013)	X		X				
Chaffee (1985)		X	X		X		
College of the Canyons (2015)		X					
Community College Week (2015)		X	X				
Conrad and Poole (2012)			X			X	X
Cope (1981)			X				
Darling and Beebe (2007)							
Davis (2005)			X	X		X	X
De Beer (2014)					X	X	X
Deetz (1982)						X	X
Dooris (2002)			X	X	X	X	
Duncan-Hall (1993)	X		X	X	X		
Ecung (2007)		X	X	X			
Finnell (2014)		X	X	X			
Fish (1990)					X	X	X
Fleuriet and Williams (2015)				X	X	X	X
Gallagher (2007)				X	X	X	
George (2001)			X	X			
Gibbons, Scott, and Fhionnlaoich (2015)			X	X			
Hanover Research (2013)	X						
Hanover Research (2016)	X	X					

Source							
Hightower (1995)				X	X		
Hill (2005)	X	X		X	X		
Hinton (2012)	X		X	X	X		
Houghton (2000)	X		X	X	X		
HuangFu (2014)					X		X
Jarzabkowski, Kaplan, Seidl, and Whittington (2015)		X	X	X	X		X
Juszkiewicz (2015)		X	X	X			
Kotler and Murphy (1981)				X	X	X	
Kotter (2012)	X			X	X	X	X
Lattimore (2011)		X		X	X	X	X
Levitz (2014)		X					
Lee (2010)				X	X		
Levitz (2009)		X		X		X	
Lewis and Seibold (1998)				X	X		X
Lewis Jr. (1983)				X	X		X
L. K. Lewis (2000)				X			X
L. K. Lewis (2006)				X			X
L. K. Lewis (2011)				X			X
L. K. Lewis, Schmisseur, Stephens, and Weir (2006)				X	X		X
Littlejohn (2002)		X					X
Longanecker (2015)	X						
Lorenzo (1994)	X						
McCarthy (1991)	X			X	X		
McClamroch, Byrd, and Sowell (2001)				X	X		X
McClellan and Sanders (2013)						X	X
McGinness (2001)			X	X	X		
McPhail (2011)		X	X				
McPhee (2000)							X
McPhee (2000)							X
McPhee, Poole, and Iverson (2014)						X	X
McPhee and Zaug (2001)						X	X
McPhee and Zaug (2009)						X	X
Messer (2006)					X	X	X

Reference	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Miller (2009)									X	X
Mintzberg (1994)										
Monge and Poole (2008)				X	X				X	X
Morgan (1980)									X	
Mumby (1993)									X	X
Myran and Howdyshell (1994)			X							
NCES (2012)	X	X		X	X				X	X
Noblet (2015)					X				X	
Nolasco (2011)	X				X				X	X
O'Hair, Rubenstein, and Stewart (2016)	X	X			X				X	X
Olaode (2011)	X			X	X	X			X	X
Pagel (2011)	X			X	X	X			X	X
Paris (2004)					X	X			X	
Phelps (1996)	X				X	X			X	X
Putnam (1982)						X			X	X
Putnam, Nicotera, and McPhee (2009)				X	X	X			X	X
Putnam and Pacanowsky (1983)				X	X	X		X	X	X
Ramirez and Selsky (2016)				X	X			X		
Redding and Tompkins (1988)				X		X			X	
Rhonemus (2011)		X		X	X	X			X	
Richardson, Richard, and Wolverton (1994)	X			X	X	X			X	X
Sage eReference, Sage Publications, Foss, and Littlejohn (2009)				X	X	X		X	X	X
Saretsky (2013)				X	X	X		X	X	X
Schendel and Hatten (1972)				X	X				X	X
Schultz (2011)	X	X		X	X	X			X	X
Sharma and Yang (2015)	X			X	X	X	X			
Skinner (2012)	X	X		X	X	X	X			
Snowden (2002)					X	X				
Society for Colleges and University Planning (2014)		X								
Sotrin (2014)	X								X	X
Spradley (2012)									X	X
State of California (2014)				X					X	X

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Reference								
Student Success Taskforce (2012)			X					
J. R. Taylor (1999)						X	X	
J. Taylor and Robichaud (2004)						X	X	X
Thomas (2007)	X			X	X	X	X	
Tolleson (2009)				X	X			
U.S. Department of Education (2016b)	X	X						
U.S. Department of Education (2016a)	X	X						
Washington (2011)				X		X	X	
White (2007)	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Whitehouse.gov (2014)		X						
Wilcoxson (2012)				X	X	X	X	
Williams (2009)				X	X			
Young (2011)				X	X			
Yuksel (2013)						X	X	X
Zaremba (2010)								X

APPENDIX I

List of Codes by Theoretical Framework

Membership Negotiation

The role of communication was used to:

1. *Complete my job* (Communication that was done to fulfill their job description)
2. *Connection with others* (Communication that allows participants to connect with others. This includes any references to becoming friends, liking each other, learning each other's stories, inside jokes, or bonding. All of these references are outside of the "work" related connections but require some interpersonal connections)
3. *Constitute change* (Communication that discusses making change or a difference at the institution)
4. *Explain the process* (Communication that informs others how the planning will work, orientations, training, etc.)
5. *Gain a shared meaning of institution* (Communication that referenced bringing people together to make sure they understood other areas of the institution, that they were speaking the same language, clarification of intent and content)
6. *Have a voice* (Communication or references to ensuring that everyone can participate)
7. *Understand my individual role* (Communication used to explain the role of the committee members which may include committee orientations, or training that shows what committee members are supposed to do as committee members)

Reflexive Self Structuring

The role of communication was used to:

1. *Ensure constituency participation* (Communication about reporting back to their respective constituency groups to keep them involved in the process)
2. *Exclude voices* (Communication used to limit who can have an opportunity to speak)
3. *Inconsistent administration* (Communication related to changing administrators)
4. *Limit participation* (Communication used to limit who can participate)
5. *Predetermined therefore irrelevant* (Communication that indicates the process is preset)

Activity Coordination

The role of communication was used to:

1. *Be an illusion (faux communication)* (Communication that is given knowing it will not be read. For example stating that the information is there if people want to see or read it but knowing no one will. Sending out massive emails that no one

opens. This could also include documenting but not actually doing the communication)

2. *Be Collegial* (Communication that references collegial discussion, being polite, allowing everyone to talk, or being respectful to other opinions)
3. *Create a meaningful process* (Communication that addresses making a difference, making sure the planning meant something, shared meaning of process, that all voices mattered, the result being a better college)
4. *Counter resistance* (Communication that indicated they were talking or communicating to counter the resistance from others in order to avert resistance to the process or the plan. This includes answering questions, explaining and addressing confrontational issues)
5. *Explain change* (Communication that explains changes for the institution or how change will happen)
6. *Fulfill a mandate* (Communication for mandated purposes: accreditation or we were told to do this by the president or chancellor)
7. *Manage flexibility* (Communication that shows the willingness to change something in the process for example if someone pointed out a good idea and the committee or one person would make a change to the process in order to show flexibility)
8. *Method to complete a process* – (Communication used to finish the plan, how members communicated to finish the process)
9. *Protect (protection)* (Communication that was intended to protect themselves or the institution which include comments about past experiences of "getting burned" or making sure no one could say they weren't open to other voices, or that they didn't communicate)
10. *Prove process was completed* (Communication to prove the process was complete. This includes accreditation or documentation of the planning process)

Institutional Positioning

The role of communication was used to:

1. *Connect to outside the committee membership* (Communication that references communicating to people outside the committee membership)
2. *Meet accreditation standards* (Communication similar to "fulfilling a mandate" but specific to the accreditation process)
3. *Provide a positive view of the institution* (Communication used to show the institution in a positive light based on the planning)
4. *Show the process to others* – (Communication to describe the process for planning to others)