

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS AND THE USE OF STRUCTURED GROUP LEARNING EXPERIENCES BY PART-TIME FACULTY WITHIN THE KENTUCKY COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM.

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May 2019

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Community colleges rely heavily on part-time faculty members (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Almost 70% of community college faculty teach part-time. Empirical evidence suggests that community college student success could decline as the employment of part-time faculty increases. In the face of clear evidence that collaborative interactions are vital to student engagement and success, the Community College Center for Student Engagement (2014a) found that few part-time and full-time faculty members frequently use structured group learning experiences (SGLE) in their teaching. SGLE are cohorts of first-year students who take classes together. Students who participate in SGLE are more likely to successfully complete developmental courses and have higher levels of

persistence than students who do not participate in SGLE (Center for Community College Engagement, 2014b). The purpose of this research is to analyze the survey data from the Kentucky Community and Technical College System to identify and explore individual and organizational factors that may relate to the use of SGLE among part-time faculty members. Identifying these factors presents Kentucky administrators opportunities to increase adoption of SGLE among part-time faculties.

The study employed Blackburn and Lawrence's (1995) theoretical framework from *Faculty at Work*. The researcher used a quantitative, ex post facto research design. Statistical analyses of pre-existing data from 968 Kentucky part-time faculty who responded to the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement during 2011-2016 was completed.

The major findings of this study suggest that part-time faculty who taught an SGLE were more likely to plan at least one SGLE than those who did not teach an SGLE. In addition, part-time faculty who taught an SGLE were more likely to participate on a college work team than those who did not teach an SGLE. Given the exploratory nature of the ex post facto research design, these findings are tentative and could provide a basis for future empirical research.

Based on these findings, the researcher offered the following recommendations to improve practice in the Kentucky System: inventory and assess college efforts to support part-time faculty, highlight and scale a promising college practice for adoption, and support and incentivize grassroots initiatives involving part-time faculty members.

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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February 2019

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Joe and to my children, Myles and Perrin, who gave boundless love and support, including swift kicks to finish. To my parents as well as my siblings for challenging me to achieve at the highest levels. Finally, but certainly not last, I dedicate this dissertation to my grandparents, the late Franklin and Naomi Mitchell, who instilled in me (and the rest of our tribe) the importance of education and a love of learning through inquiry. I am because you are.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Behind the completion of this dissertation were many who assisted my efforts. Without these partners, I would never have made it.

First, thanks to Dr. Rosemary “GK” Gillett-Karam, my dissertation chair. I will never forget how she set high expectations for my efforts. She granted me space to mature as an educator-administrator-scholar ready to contribute to the next phase of community college development.

Next, I would like to extend gratitude to Dr. Gwendolyn Joseph, an integral member of my committee, whose tough questions helped clarify my writing and focus my aspirations. I am fortunate that she is a colleague and friend.

Special appreciation to Dr. Michael B. McCall, the external member of my dissertation committee, whose keys opened doors of opportunities for me. His support has been transformative and I am forever grateful.

I must also thank Dr. Tiffany Thompson-Johnson for assisting my quest to be a quantitative researcher. With the emergence of analytics in higher education, she will play a major role in meeting 21<sup>st</sup> century demands to improve student success.

Last, I thank the following individuals, who encouraged and served as role models, guides and mentors during my dissertation process: Dr. Russell Davis, Dr. Tiffany Fountaine-Boykin, Dr. Jay Box, Dr. Gloria McCall, Ms. Alicia Crouch, Mr. Mark Hundley, Dr. Aaron Thompson, Mr. David Cazalet, and Mrs. Nancy Cazalet. The educator that I am now and will ultimately become is in part because of what you each contributed. Ubuntu!

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Consistent with its origins, the American community college values teaching. According to Nevarez and Wood (2010), teaching is an influential core value that characterizes the fundamental missions of these institutions. These institutions enjoy reputations as teaching powerhouses, because unlike their university counterparts, two-year faculty members rarely conduct research, scholarly inquiry, or write for publication (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Instead, community college faculty members spend an overwhelming majority of their effort on teaching (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Provasnik & Planty, 2008). Moreover, community college faculty members teach more classes than their counterparts at four-year colleges and research universities (Grubb, 1999).

According to the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Statistics (2018), community colleges employed almost 350,000 faculty members for fall 2016. The demographic profile of the community college professoriate is different from that of other sectors of higher education. According to Cohen and Brawer (2008), most community college faculty members hold a master's degree and 18 graduate hours in the discipline, or the equivalent experience in the occupation, they teach.

The community college mission shapes the work of its faculty (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Inclusive student enrollments and multiple missions affect the pedagogy employed by community college faculties. "A certain entrepreneurial spirit" (Grubbs, 1999, p. 7) exhibited by community colleges exacerbates the pedagogical challenges that community college faculty members face. Perhaps

in alignment with the various points of origins (Nevarez & Wood, 2010), these institutions willingly accept new roles and enter new markets in order to remain viable and relevant. The breadth and depth of the community college mission, coupled with the diversity of students and their needs, challenges community colleges to respond and build programs and services with qualified faculty and staff in adequate numbers (Eagen & Jaeger, 2009).

Community colleges rely heavily on part-time or adjunct instructors because of their expertise (Community College Center for Student Engagement, 2014a; Parsons, 1980). Part-time faculty members provide colleges with low-cost employees who are a flexible instructional pool responsive to local community needs and demands. Empirical evidence suggests that as the use of part-time faculty increases, student success could drop (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014). The adjunct pool presents an instructional workforce that is disconnected from the institution, its full-time faculty, and students. Furthermore, these adjunct workers tend to be less involved and committed to their institutions.

### **Introducing the Problem**

Between 2011 and 2014, the Center for Community College Student Engagement at the University of Texas (the Center) produced four reports as part of its national initiative, *Identifying and Promoting High-Impact Educational Practices in Community Colleges*. The first three reports identified 13 high impact strategies proven to increase engagement to students exposed to them. In alignment with Kuh's (2001) engagement theory, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (2012) seeks to determine the extent to which

students are engaged in measurable good educational practices and what they gain from their college experience. The 13 high impact strategies are (a) academic goal-setting and planning, (b) orientation, (c) accelerated or fast-track developmental education, (d) first-year experience, (e) student success course, (f) learning communities, (g) experiential learning beyond the classroom, (h) tutoring, (i) supplemental instruction, (j) assessment and placement, (k) registration before classes begin, (l) class attendance; and (m) alert and intervention.

The Center classifies five of these strategies as structured group learning experiences (*SGLE*): (a) orientation, (b) accelerated or fast track developmental education, (c) first-year experience (d) student success course, and (e) learning communities, and uses these practices to create a permanent set of items to capture feedback about community college practice and life. The Center added this set of feedback referred to as “faculty promise” in 2011. In an interview with U.S. News and World Report writer Joanne Jacobs (2012), McClenney, the former director of the Center, defined SGLE as promising practices for first-year students grouped together in small, structured cohorts or communities to take their classes together. This class of strategies reflects an aspiration of community college innovators at the Center to ensure student success through collaborative experiences during the first-year of college (CCCSE, 2012). Empirical evidence from the Center (2014b) indicates that developmental students who participate in orientation or a student success course are more likely to complete a developmental math or English course with a grade of C or

higher than students who do not participate in an SGLE-infused course. Furthermore, non-developmental education students who participate in a first-year experience are more likely than their counterparts who do not participate in a first year experience to persist to their second and third semesters.

### **The Problem and Purpose of the Study**

Despite clear and enduring evidence that collaborative learning and student-faculty interactions are vital to student engagement and success (Astin, 1993, 1999; Kuh, 2008; Karp, Hughes & O’Gara, 2008; Umbach & Warwzynski, 2008), the Center’s research from the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (hereafter “the Survey”) found that few part-time and full-time faculty members frequently utilize SGLE in their teaching. The Center (2014a) released these findings in a special report, *Contingent Commitments: Bringing Part-Time Faculty into Focus*. The purpose of this dissertation research study is to analyze data from the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (hereafter “the Kentucky System”) to identify and explore individual and organizational factors that may relate to the use of SGLE among part-time faculty members.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study employed Blackburn and Lawrence’s (1995) theoretical framework from *Faculty at Work*. This framework encourages the study of faculty. Faculty members are at the heart of changes occurring in higher education (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). In addition, the framework enhances understanding about why faculty behave as they do. Blackburn and Lawrence

posited there are “characteristics of individuals and their employing institution which combine and lead to variation in faculty motivation, behavior, and productivity” (1995, p. 15). Their framework contains structural as well as process components. The structural elements identify individual and institutional characteristics that interact to either aid or constrain faculty members in fulfilling their academic missions of research, service, and teaching. The proposed research will apply relevant individual and institutional criteria (from the literature review) as related to teaching and service to determine which factors might influence part-time community college faculty members to use structured group learning experiences (SGLE) identified by the Center. Individual factors could include gender, number of years teaching, and highest credential earned. Organizational factors could include award structures, governance models, and the availability of professional development offerings. The theoretical model, tested via regression analyses, rests on a motivational framework comprised of cognitive and non-cognitive components. The motivational component informs understanding about the process components or how individuals assess their abilities and interests in relationship to how they perceive what is important to their organization. Things perceived to be important receive attention while those perceived as unimportant get less attention. Therefore, individual behaviors vary over time.

Blackburn and Lawrence’s theoretical model is appropriate to help study and understand how community college faculty member inputs and institutional characteristics shape faculty behaviors, including choosing to use collaborative



learning strategies. Although the model includes a myriad of individual and organizational factors that influence behavior, the list is not exhaustive. In other words, the model provides a basis from which to identify and explore new individual and institutional characteristics that might drive behavior, such as faculty choosing to employ collaborative learning experiences in their classrooms. The authors tested the model using regression analyses across types of institutions, including community colleges.

### **Research Design**

The Survey collects individual attributes such as gender, race, years teaching, and highest credential earned, as well as other data that characterize organizational life (tenure status, employment status) for community college faculties. The quantitative data collected via the Survey are readily available for use in identifying possible relationships between the independent variable, use of these high impact practices, and the dependent variables, which are individual and organizational factors. Based on data available in the Survey, the dependent variables include part-time faculty member participation in institutional committees, part-time member involvement in planning or designing SGLE outside the classroom, and the years of teaching among part-time faculty members.

Since the study analyzed existing data sets from the Survey for the Kentucky System, the study employed a quantitative non-experimental ex post facto research design. The ex post facto design allows researchers an opportunity to look back in time to identify possible antecedents (dependent

variable) of the current outcomes (independent variable). This research design has the potential to inform the development and direction of future experimental research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

In this study, the observed outcome or independent variable, use or non-use (defined as teaching or facilitating) of structured group learning experiences (SGLE) by part-time faculty members within the Kentucky system, has already occurred. Consequently, there is no opportunity to manipulate this variable or the dependent variables associated with the outcome. The opportunity to understand and begin to relate study variables through an *ex post facto* research design is possible. According to Simon and Goes (2013), an *ex post facto* research design is an acceptable approach for studying hypothesized relationships. These studies are appropriate when it is impossible to select, control, or manipulate the factors necessary to study cause and effect, when the control of all variables may be unrealistic and artificial, preventing natural interactions with other influential variables, or when laboratory controls are impractical, cost prohibitive, or ethically undesirable.

### **Research Questions**

Based on background and context around community college faculty, the theoretical framework, as well as an understanding of the *ex post facto* research design gathered from Smith and Glass (1987), Cohen et al. (2007), and Simon and Goes (2013), discussed further below, the following research questions guided this study:

1. Is there a statistical difference in the use of structured group learning experiences (SGLE) by part-time faculty who report being involved with designing and planning SGLE as compared with part-time faculty who report no involvement in planning and designing an SGLE?
2. Is there a statistical difference in the use of SGLE by part-time faculty members who report participating on college committees or task forces (hereafter work teams) as a component of their workweek as compared with part-time faculty members who do not report participating on college work teams?
3. Is there a difference in the use of SGLE by part-time faculty members who report the number of times teaching an SGLE course as compared with part-time faculty members who do not report the number of times teaching an SGLE course?

### **Justifying the Kentucky Study**

The research herein analyzed the Kentucky system data from the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (the Survey) for 2011, 2012-13, 2014-15, and 2016. The 16 colleges of the Kentucky system participate in the survey on a rotating basis. One year, eight colleges engaged in completing the survey. The remaining eight colleges participated the in the fall of the following year.

The Kentucky system is the newest provider of postsecondary education in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Created in 1997 as part of the Kentucky Postsecondary Improvement Act, the system's mission is to provide college and

career readiness, transfer education, and workforce education and training (KCTCS, 2016). The system is comprised of 16 independently accredited community and technical colleges and a central system office. The system office provides the college leadership and support to achieve the stated mission.

Part-time faculty members represent the largest group of instructional employees working in the Kentucky system. According to KCTCS (2015), approximately 60% of the teaching workforce was part-time in fall 2013. During 2013, the Kentucky System employed 5,155 faculty, of which 3,141 were part-time.

Table 1.

*Kentucky Community and Technical College System 2011-16 Frequency Distributions – Faculty Promising Practices (SGLE).*

Faculty Group (PT or FT)	Survey Respondents N (% of total)	% of total Teaching or Facilitating				
		First-Year Experience	Learning Community	College Orientation	Student Success Course	Accelerated Dev Ed.
KY Part-Time	968 (27.6%)	138 (14.3%)	102 (10.5%)	70 (7.2%)	135 (13.9%)	118 (12.2%)
CCCSE Part-Time		2,529 (13%)	1,808 (9%)	1,421 (7%)	2,447 (12%)	2,031 (10%)
KY Full-Time	2,538 (72.4%)	479 (18.9%)	417 (16.4%)	318 (12.5%)	336 (13.2%)	453 (17.8%)
CCCSE Full-Time		4,190 (13%)	3,746 (17%)	3,325 (15%)	2,880 (13%)	3,545 (16%)

Total Kentucky Faculty Respondents = 3,506; Total Kentucky Colleges = 16

Total CCCSE Respondents = 47,699

Source: Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement

As indicated in Table 1, almost 28% of the respondents to the surveys from the Kentucky System in 2011-2016 were part-time faculty members. Each institution creates a master list of courses offered during survey administration, and Center staff randomly select the eligible course and the faculty teaching those courses for possible participation in the survey. Faculty members who provide a valid email address receive an invitation from the Center to participate in the survey. Furthermore, Table 1 demonstrates that both part-time and full-time faculty teaching within the Kentucky system utilize SGLE infrequently in the classroom. This pattern is similar to the Center's (2014a) national data presented in *Contingent Commitments: Bringing Part-Time Faculty into Focus*. These findings provide preliminary justification to study the phenomenon in the Kentucky System. This dissertation study intends to explore the use of SGLE among part-time faculty only. The 968 part-time faculty will be divided into two groups into the following groups and the groups will be compared: those who use SGLE (criterion group) and those who do not (comparison group). The comparison will be the search for possible relationships among SGLE (independent variable) and several individual and organizational factors (dependent variables).

Further review of the data in Table 1 indicates that SGLE utilization in the Kentucky System is similar to the national data reported by the Center (2014b). Between 2011 and 2013, 47,699 full and part-time faculty members responded to the Survey. These faculty members represented a cross section of U.S. public community colleges.

In addition to the prefaced data describing the utilization of SGLE among part-time faculty in the Kentucky System, the next section of this chapter identifies and discusses three contextual matters that further justify this research.

First, the Kentucky General Assembly instituted performance-based funding in July 2018 for all public universities as well as community and technical colleges. The intention of this approach to funding public postsecondary education is to incentivize institutions to graduate more students by connecting the distribution of legislative funding to outcomes (Spaulding, 2017). The performance model allocates 35% of the funding to performance on student success metrics such as student progression, diploma, certificate and associate degree production as well as transfers to four-year institutions, while 35% rewards institutional accumulation of credits. According to Spaulding (2017), the remaining 30% ties to costs associated with basic operations.

According to Crouch (2018), the overall graduation rate for the Kentucky System in 2016 exceeds that of institutions in the states that comprise the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and national rates reported by Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). See Table 2.

*Table 2.*

*Kentucky System Graduation Rates Compared to Graduation Rates for Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).*

Student Enrollment	Graduation Rates for 2015-16 (%)		
	KCTCS	SREB	National IPEDS
Overall	26.8	24.9	25.4
URM	16.6	20.3	19.6

Source: KCTCS official data reported to IPEDS

Disaggregating institutional data by race (Crouch, 2018), as shown in Table 3, demonstrates opportunities to enhance institutional and student success. KCTCS students who self-identify as under-represented minority (African-American, Hispanic, and Two or More Races) have lower graduation rates than their counterparts at national, regional and state levels:

- Three percent below the SREB states
- Four percent below the IPEDS rates
- 10% lower than the overall Kentucky System student population.

Furthermore, the gap has remained largely unchanged from 2012-13 through 2016-17. The gap has persisted even as URM and overall graduation rates have steadily improved over time.

Table 3.

*Kentucky System Graduation Rates (2012-13 to 2016-17).*

Kentucky Graduation Rates	Graduation Rate by Academic Year (%)				
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Overall	23.0	23.4	25.7	26.8	27.1
Under-represented minority student	13.1	14.3	14.3	16.6	17.2
GAP	9.9	9.2	11.4	10.2	9.9

Source: KCTCS official data reported to IPEDS

Finally, data from the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (2018) for the Kentucky System indicates that 66.2% of all first-time students for fall 2011 enrolled in a developmental course. Six years later, 36.6% of these students completed all developmental education. Furthermore, more than 23% of first time, credential-seeking students within the Kentucky System referred to developmental English during fall 2016 successfully passed a regular English course in fall 2017 (Voluntary Framework of Accountability, 2018). During that same period, almost 18% of first time, credential-seeking students referred to developmental math completed a regular math course. According to the American Association of Community Colleges, the Voluntary Framework of Accountability is an accountability system that provides sector specific metrics that help community college practitioners and leaders to articulate institutional effectiveness and value to the students, communities, legislators and other key



decision makers. The release of initial set of metrics occurred between 2009 and 2012. The Kentucky System received its first preliminary data reports late summer 2018.

Twenty-eight percent of the faculty respondents to the Survey in the Kentucky System were part-time instructors, while 72% identified as full-time faculty members. In 2013 (Community College Center for Student Engagement), when these faculty members were asked, “Do you teach developmental/basic skills/college prep courses at your college?” four percent of full-time faculty affirmed they instructed developmental education courses, while 23% of part-time faculty agreed.

The Center (2014a) reported that more than half of developmental education students receive instruction from part-time faculty. Part time faculty members play an essential role in educating community college students. These instructional workers may experience marginalization, few benefits, a lack of involvement in developing curriculum, use of instructional techniques that may improve student success.

Since the number of part-time and full-time faculty teaching or facilitating SGLE in Kentucky is on par with the national data, it appears the results of this study, to understand the antecedents of using SGLE among part-time faculty, could be beneficial. Discovering those factors could help administrators understand how to support and involve part-time faculty members. The benefits of improving the use of SGLE in Kentucky could lead to higher levels of student engagement and success. Achieving higher levels of student success would

help colleges in the Kentucky System meet expectations of the legislative mandate of performance based funding. These suggested benefits appear to justify studying this phenomenon in Kentucky.

### **Delimitations**

This study will focus on adjunct faculty use of SLGEs within the Kentucky system. Consequently, it may be inappropriate to generalize the results to full-time faculty within the Kentucky system. Further, the study results may also not correspond to the faculty teaching practices employed by a single institution or community college faculty members employed outside the state of Kentucky.

### **Limitations**

The ex post facto study design has limitations. First, there is a lack of control in that the researcher cannot manipulate the independent variable or randomize the subjects. Second, there is a lack of certainty about whether or not the causative factor has been included or identified in the study design. This uncertainty could lead to outcomes that do not produce a single factor as an antecedent. The relationship of two factors does not constitute cause and effect. In fact, the possibility of a reverse relationship is possible. The observed outcomes could be the result of a variable not identified. The size of each group could drop dramatically if the researcher uses matching to introduce randomization and create equal groups. The size of the groups could become too small to draw any real conclusions (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). These limitations do not render the *ex post facto* research design useless in efforts to study the topic.

### **Significance of Proposed Method to Discovery**

According to Simon and Goes (2013), an *ex post facto* research design is an acceptable approach for studying hypothesized relationships. These studies are appropriate when it is impossible to select, control, or manipulate the factors necessary to study cause and effect; when the control of all variables may be unrealistic and artificial, thus preventing natural interactions with other influential variables; or when laboratory controls are impractical, cost prohibitive, or ethically undesirable. In the case of the study proposed herein, the observed outcome or independent variable (use or non-use of structured groups learning experiences by part-time faculties from the Kentucky system) has already occurred. There is no opportunity to manipulate the variables leading to the outcome. The opportunity to understand and to begin to relate dependent variables, through an *ex post facto* research design, is possible. The outcome of the study could determine possible relationships. For the scholarly community, the identification of possible relationships could lead to future experimental research to isolate variables that might explain the observed behavior. Understanding the variables related to a particular behavior could help institutional leaders, pinpoint specific strategies to encourage greater use of structured group learning experiences among part-time faculty members.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

To reduce confusion for the reader, the definitions of key terminology presented in this dissertation follow:

*Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (the Survey):*

A companion survey to the Community College Survey of Student Engagement designed to elicit community college faculty (full and part-time) perceptions about student engagement experiences as well as report on faculty reaching practice and the use of professional time (Center for Community College Engagement, 2014a).

*Community College Survey of Student Engagement (the Center):* An

annual survey administered to community college students that assesses institutional practices and student behaviors that correlate with student learning and retention. The Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin, established the survey in 2001, in partnership with the NSSE, headquartered at the University of Indiana (Community College Survey of Student Engagement, 2014b)

*Ex Post Facto Research Design:* Investigates hypothesized relationships

between variables by observing existing conditions and searching back in time for plausible antecedents. (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

*Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE):* A companion to the

National Survey of Student Engagement that measures instructional staff expectations of student engagement and instructional staff teaching and learning practices (Indiana University, 2018).

*Kentucky Community and Technical College System (the Kentucky*

*System):* Created in 1997 as part of the Kentucky Postsecondary Improvement Act community and technical colleges, which is comprised of 16 colleges and

more than 70 campuses (Kentucky Community College and Technical College System, 2008).

*National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)*: This annual survey collects information from freshmen and seniors about their participation in programs and services that four-year institutions provide to support learning and personal development (Indiana University, 2018).

*Part-Time Faculty*: Often referred to a contingent faculty because their work is conditional. The employing college typically has no obligation to this class of employee beyond the current academic term (The Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014a).

*Structured Group Learning Experiences (SGLE)*: Promising practices for first-year students grouped together in small, structured cohorts or communities to take their classes together (U.S. News and World Report, 2012).

### **Summary**

This chapter outlined the history and background of the problem, introduced and discussed the problem and the purpose of the study, as well as the research design and related research questions. The researcher also justified studying this topic and associated data in the Kentucky System. Finally, the researcher introduced the theoretical framework undergirding the study and defined key terms. Chapter 2 includes a review and analysis of the relevant literature regarding part-time community college faculty and their contributions, as well as the challenge of their use for student success. The literature review also discusses factors that influence community college faculty behavior and an

expanded discussion of the theoretical framework. The review of the literature concludes with an overview of the literature on college impact and collaborative learning theory and practice.

## **CHAPTER 2: Review of the Literature**

Given the purpose of this quantitative study, which is to analyze data from the Kentucky System to identify and explore individual and organizational factors that may relate to the use of SGLE among part-time faculty members, the literature review describes part-time community college faculty members and institutional reliance on this class of instructional professionals. The benefits and consequences of community college reliance on this class of instructional workers follows. The chapter will identify and discuss the factors that influence the work of community college faculty in general. The chapter also elaborates Blackburn and Lawrence's framework from *Faculty at Work*. The literature review concludes with a discussion on college impact and collaborative learning theories. This final section highlights the role of institutions and their agents—in this case, full-time and part-time faculty—must play to create opportunities in support of student engagement. As one class of opportunities that face community college faculty, a brief discussion of collaborative experiences closes out this literature review.

### **Part Time Community College Faculty**

The composition of the American professoriate is undergoing dramatic change (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Across sectors of higher education, institutions are replacing full-time faculty members with part time or adjunct instructors. An enduring legacy of community colleges is a heavy reliance on part-time instructors (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). In 1993, 53% of community college faculty were part-time. Within a decade, the proportion of part-time

faculty grew to 62% (American Council on Education, 2008). According to JBL Associates (2008), two-year colleges hire more part-time faculty members than four-year universities. Between 2003 and 2009, the number of part-time faculty members grew an additional 10%. During this same six-year period, full-time faculty growth was one-fifth that of part-time faculty (Knapp, Kelly-Reid, & Grinder, 2010). For fall 2015, community colleges employed more than 371,000 faculty members (U.S. Department of Education National Center for Statistics, 2018). Of that number, almost 70% were part-time. The remaining third held full-time appointments. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2018), part-time faculty are more diverse than full time faculty, with 74% of part-time faculty reporting they are White, compared to 77% of full-time faculty.

Community college faculties teach approximately 37% of all undergraduates and roughly half of all freshmen and sophomores (Twombly & Townsend, 2008). Part-time faculty members at community colleges teach about two classes per semester (JBL Associates, 2008). This instructional load is less than half the average number of classes taught by full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty members at public four-year institutions (JBL Associates, 2008). In addition, it is more likely for part-time faculty members to teach developmental education courses (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Survey results from the Center (2014a) affirm this practice, with 54% of students in developmental education courses receiving instruction delivered by part-time faculty members.



Institutional life for part-time community college faculty is the subject of immense discussion and scrutiny in the literature. As contingent employees, part-time faculty experience marginalization among the overall workforce of a college (Community College Center for Student Engagement, 2014a). Being at the bottom of the campus hierarchy means, part-time faculty often learn what classes they will teach a few days or weeks before the semester starts. In addition, they have little to no access to professional development, administrative or technical support, or office space to meet with students (Community College Center for Student Engagement, 2014a; Kezar, Maxey, & Eaton, 2014).

Roueche, Roueche and Milliron (1995) observed that support functions available to full-time faculty are not as accessible to part-time faculty. In addition, the part-time faculty experience minimal opportunities to interact with each other or the full-time faculty or staff to discuss teaching and learning. In general, part-time faculty members are not part of committees that discuss curricular or pedagogical changes needed to improve student learning and success outcomes (Community College Center for Student Engagement, 2014a). Part-time faculty members receive considerably less pay and no fringe benefits, which can account for 30-40% of the total compensation for full-time faculty members (Cohen, Brawer, & Kiskar, 2014). In almost every way, these faculty members operate around the margins of their colleges. The part-time faculty corps is “chosen less carefully . . . because the institution is making no long-term commitment to them” (Cohen and Brawer, 2003). As such, the institution expends very little time or money in their selection. Community colleges rely

heavily on these instructional workers to train and educate more than half their students. Yet community colleges fail to support or integrate this significant component of its total workforce, which may indicate college support of student success. The next section of this chapter explores the benefits of hiring part-time faculty members.

### **Benefits of Hiring Part-Time Faculty**

To ensure quality, as well as garner prestige in the formative years, community colleges hired a combination of high school teachers and university professors to provide instruction. Over time, institutional administrators hired retired professionals to infuse cutting edge, real-world vocational experiences into classroom experiences (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Students and the entire campus community benefit when professional experts, who serve as part-time faculty instructors share their experiences through their instruction (Nutting, 2003). Nutting (2003) suggested these professional experiences strengthen courses by offering discipline-specific coaching as well as common sense mentoring that is of great benefit. In addition to offering real-world professional guidance, part-time faculty members also teach courses that tenured, full-time faculty members will not teach. Since the students who attend community colleges tend to be non-traditional, course offerings must be available during the day and night, face-to-face and online, during weekdays as well as weekends, for credit and for non-credit (Christensen, 2008). Part-time faculty members also bring to bear expertise that full-time faculty may not have, which means they

often can teach courses full-time instructors are unqualified to teach (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

Contemporary reasons for continuing to hire part-time instructors is the result of budgetary challenges administrators face in the wake of diminishing legislative allocation. As open access institutions that attract students who are economically disadvantaged, community colleges must maintain low tuition and fees. In this context, administrators maintain a balanced budget by cutting costs. Because part-time faculty are a low cost option, many colleges hire them out of necessity (Community College Center for Student Engagement, 2014a; Christensen, 2008). Institutions pay these workers lower wages, typically by the course, and they pay little to no benefits (Community College Center for Student Engagement, 2014a). According to Cohen and Brawer (2008), community colleges rely on this low-cost workforce to retain low costs and balance the budget.

Finally, Roueche, Roueche & Milliron (1995) suggest that community colleges will continue using part-time faculty members because they are a low-cost option and they provide college administrators flexibility to address community needs. In alignment with its economic function, community colleges expand and contract instructional capacity in response to local demand. As the economy grows, college enrollments decline as students find jobs (Smith, 2018; Juskiewicz, 2016). Conversely, when the economy slows, enrollments increase because business and industry sheds jobs and the population of displaced workers grows. According to the Center (2014a), expanding the size of the part-

time faculty workforce is a rational decision that increases institutional flexibility to manage and respond to last minute enrollment decisions of students. These faculty members also allow the college to respond to spur of the moment local demands for additional offerings of popular courses (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

What affects does the reliance on part-time faculty members have for the college? The next section will discuss the challenges community colleges face due to hiring large numbers of part-time faculty. The challenges influence full-time faculty as well as student success.

### **Challenges of Increasing the Use of Part-Time Faculty.**

The impact of using part-time faculty on student success is an emerging concern among community college scholars. According to Clark (1988), the presence of large numbers of part-time faculty may hinder efforts to professionalize the community college professoriate. Since community colleges emphasize teaching, a professionalized community college faculty would likely focus on teaching as a scholarly endeavor as opposed to mimicking the research and publication efforts required of university faculty (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). In addition, the effect of a large group of part-time faculty results in the transfer of large volumes of committee and administrative work to a small group of full-time faculty (Community College Center for Student Engagement, 2014a).

Roueche, Roueche, and Milliron (1995) stated that effective colleges evaluate their actions with what is best for students in mind. Community college scholars study the effect of hiring large numbers of part-time faculty to train and educate large numbers of students. As previously discussed, part-time

community college faculty members have fewer opportunities to interact with college faculty and staff. Straight-line projection suggests the same maybe true about their interactions with students. College impact and learning theories state that the impact of the institutional environment is critical to student engagement and success. Hence, interactions between faculty (that is part-time and full-time) and students as well as peer-to-peer interactions are essential. Classroom interactions in commuter environments are critical. For so many, this is the only place that a student can engage or be involved (Karp et al., 2008; Tinto, 2012). Yet, part-time community college faculty members may be largely unavailable to students. This lack of availability is particularly troubling when one considers that 54% of students in remedial education receive instruction from part-time faculty members at community colleges (Community College Center for Student Engagement, 2014a). The most vulnerable students receive instruction from the most marginalized among the total college workforce. Researchers may wonder if marginalization of part-time faculty equates to the marginalization of students. The results of several research studies suggest that increasing the usage of part-time faculty members has a dampening effect on community college student retention, graduation and transfer (Jacoby, 2006; Eagan & Jaeger, 2009).

Using advanced statistical analyses, Eagan and Jaeger (2009) examined the association between students' likelihood of transfer to a four-year college or university and the exposure to instruction delivered by part-time faculty members. Data analyses employed student data along with faculty employment data from 2000 and 2001 drawn from 107 community colleges of the California community

college system. Study findings suggested a direct relationship between the likelihood of student transfer and exposure to instruction by part-time faculty. Students were less likely to transfer as the exposure to part-time faculty instruction increased.

An additional study by Jacoby (2006) also explored the effects of part-time faculty employment on community college graduation rates. The study used student data from the National Center for Educational Statistics for 1,209 U.S. public community college in 2001. Multiple regression analyses determined the relationship between increased reliance on part-time faculty and graduation rate. Study results indicated a negative effect on graduation rates as the reliance on part-time faculty employment increases.

Recent research suggests that part-time faculty have no impact on student success (Yu, 2014). This empirical study matched individual student data with institutional employment data to determine that part-time faculty members do not affect community college student persistence or graduation rates. Other findings from this study suggest that the size of community colleges as well as high school GPA affects community college student success. The research studies presented here provide a mixed view about the impact that part-time community college faculty members have on student engagement and success in contemporary times.

The literature describing the working conditions of part-time faculty members suggests that institutions hire them “just in time.” In general, part-timers are paid less, receive fewer benefits, and have unequal access to

resources such as office space and parking. Finally, these individuals may not have access to the professional development activities enjoyed by full-time faculty (Christensen, 2008). Most are uninvolved in the business of the college outside their class. In almost every way, part-time faculty members operate on the margins of the institution.

### **Supporting Part-Time Faculty**

The importance of part-time faculty cannot be understated. These faculty members are part of community colleges in large numbers and there are few reasons to suggest this will change. Parsons (1980) offered a model to enhance part-time faculty involvement and engagement. Parsons' model is comprised of six elements to support the access and success of part-time faculty. The six elements include recruitment, orientation, communication, support services, instructional clinic, and evaluation.

With support from the Helmsley Trust and the Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation, *Achieving the Dream* (2016) initiated *Engaging Adjunct Faculty in the Student Success Movement*. The initiative supports the planning and implementation efforts of six *Achieving the Dream* colleges as they develop practices and policies that support instructional reform and enhance engagement of part-time community college faculty members. The Community College Research Center serves as the project evaluator. *Achieving the Dream* is working with the following colleges through 2019: Harper College (IL), Community College of Baltimore (MD), Patrick Henry Community College (VA),

Delta College (MI), the Community College of Philadelphia (PA), and Renton Technical College (WA).

Preliminary research findings from the Community College Research Center (Chavarin, 2018) highlighted the following three features of professional life gathered during interviews, focus groups and surveys of part-time faculty members: (a) complicated, (b) autonomous, and (c) impassioned. Part-time faculty members described the complexity of their professional lives by identifying with part-time community college students. These respondents indicated that many of the techniques used to engage students be used to engage part-time faculty members. Moreover, these part-time faculty members cited a lack of awareness about important institutional policies and other information as a challenge to their effectiveness and a barrier to instructional quality.

In the 2018 Community College Research Center data reported by Chavarin (2018), autonomy was a top-rated indicator of faculty satisfaction. Faculty members enjoy independence and the ability to own and deliver their curriculum without intervention. For some faculty members, however, autonomy constituted isolation. More than half of part-time faculty members agreed that they have a strong professional relationship with colleagues compared to almost 90% of full-time faculty respondents. Part-time and full-time faculty expressed passion about their subject and their students. Sixty-eight percent of part-time faculty members reported extreme to moderate satisfaction with their position compared with 71% of full-time faculty members.



Within the Kentucky System, Jefferson Community and Technical College (JCTC) created a cohort-based professional development program to better connect and engage part-time faculty, called the *Adjunct Academy*. The academy also seeks to create a community of adjuncts invested in developing their leadership skills (R. Davis, personal communication, November 2015). To accomplish the desired outcome, the academy consists of four mandatory workshops, for which all participants receive a \$400 stipend per session. The college received extramural funding for three years to offer part-time faculty members professional growth opportunities. Davis confirms the four workshops for which participants will receive a stipend focus:

- Workshop I: Orientation

The first workshop features an orientation for part-time faculty to JCTC modeled on the orientation for new full-time faculty members. This one-day session covers such topics as the Community College Mission, Blackboard Learning Management System, Reporting Grades, No Shows and Last Date of Attendance, Dealing with Difficult Students, ADA Regulations, and Library Resources.

- Workshop II: Integration with the Learning Commons & Academic Student Support

The second daylong session focuses on the delivery of direct services to students. This session trains part time faculty members to assist in existing departments in service of students. The session opens with an

introduction to the structure and function of academic student support and service provision to students on campuses. The session concludes with individual training sessions by service staff. At the conclusion of the training, participants received the opportunity to earn compensation for working in their chosen area for the remainder of that academic year in the event their scheduled teaching load is cancelled due to low enrollment.

- Workshop III: *Achieving the Dream (AtD)*

The third all-day session integrates participants in new initiatives focused on student success and completion through the *Achieving the Dream* project underway at JCTC. This session also includes an in-depth training session on serving under-resourced students and work on social equity issues.

- Workshop IV: Teaching and Learning

The final all-day session focuses on pedagogical practice and methodology for the classroom including active learning techniques, collaborative learning, etc. There is also discussion on retention strategies. (Personal communication, November 2015).

As the academy moved into its third year, Davis noted that participation has been good. Forty part-time faculty members participated in year one. For years two and three, 25 part-time faculty participated. The reduction in participants is a reflection of a small reduction in funding. Further, Davis observes several graduates from the first academy participating in shared governance at the

college (R. Davis, personal communication, November 15, 2016 and April 10, 2018).

The academy integrates part time faculty into the business of the college, which is to support student access and success. Moreover, the academy involves these part time faculty members into the college's major student success initiative, while also promoting and encouraging the use of active, collaborative learning techniques in the classroom. This integration appears to elevate part time faculty participation in the shared governance structure at JCTC.

### **Factors That Shape the Work of Community College Faculty**

As discussed later in the theoretical framework for this study, Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) outline a myriad of organizational factors that might interact with individual attributes to influence and shape faculty behavior. Organizational factors include award structures, governance models and the availability of professional development offerings, to name a few. Individual attributes include gender, number of years teaching and highest credential earned.

Twombly and Townsend (2008) cite three institutional factors that affect the work life of community college faculty: the multiple missions of the community college; number of years teaching; and level of involvement. This next section will elaborate the previous discussion of the community college mission as well as teaching experience and involvement.

## **The Impact of the Community College Mission**

Community colleges arose in response to a myriad of interrelated forces such as (a) the need to train workers for a growing industrial economy; (b) the communal desire to eliminate ignorance (c) an expectation to devote more custodial care to adolescents; and (d) the aspiration to expand educational opportunity in the United States (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Another important driver of community college development includes the birth of the research university (Nevarez & Wood, 2010). Intended to emulate the German *gymnasium*, the U.S. research university design required these institutions to abandon lower-division preparatory classes to focus on scientific research and technological advancement (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Nevarez & Wood, 2010). To achieve this vision, universities relinquished the teaching function to junior colleges, the precursor to today's community college.

In 1947, the Truman Commission on Higher Education released its first report. The findings and recommendations of this report highlighted the importance of community colleges in the nation. The commission report fueled the rise of the contemporary community college and solidified various aspects of the mission to include open access, low to no-cost, comprehensive programming, and lifelong learning—all of which fueled explosive institutional and enrollment growth. Furthermore, the report built a strong case for the two-year college to carry the lion's share of the responsibility of teaching democratic ideals and principles within local communities (President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947). With the earlier passage of the G.I. Bill in 1944, which created

a pathway for returning veterans to seek postsecondary education, community colleges experienced significant enrollment growth, increased racial diversity among students and changes to their mission and program (Vaughan, 2006).

In addition to a more racially diverse group of students, community college faculty members face students with varying levels of family support, academic ability, English language proficiency, and economic resources (Twombly & Townsend, 2008). Given the multiple missions of these institutions, community college faculty members must teach high school students who take advantage of dual-credit or dual-enrollment opportunities, in addition to “swirlers” and “retoolers.” According to Mullins (2010, p. 5), “swirlers” are university students who accelerate the completion of their undergraduate experience by also attending community colleges to complete their baccalaureate requirements. “Retoolers” are workers who return to a community college to gain a new skill to remain employed or advance their career (Mullins, 2010, p. 5).

An additional audience that community colleges must support and train is a growing number of students academically unprepared for college-level courses. According to Bailey, Jeong, and Cho (2010), in excess of fifty percent of community college students enroll in at least one developmental education course during their postsecondary educational journey. Data from their research study involving fifty-seven *Achieving the Dream* colleges in 2004 indicate that 59% of the students were enrolled in at least one developmental education course. Mellow and Neelan (2008) suggested that more than 60% of community college students remediate deficits in basic skills.

Aiding groups of academically underprepared students experience academic success is central to national, state and local efforts that democratize higher education through the open doors of community colleges (Mellow & Heelan, 2008; McCabe, 2003). The progression and success of these students is underwhelming. Many students fail to complete their developmental sequence and matriculate to regular education classes (Mellow & Heelan, 2008). The profile of these students may help explain the lack of success. Many of these students have negative high school experiences, which leads to poor basic academic skills and unrealistic career aspirations. In addition, students may face inadequate to non-existent support from family (Mellow & Heelan, 2008).

Other issues, beyond the student profile, which may explain the low level of progression through developmental education, include questions about the ability of assessments to help colleges prescribe an appropriate course sequence and a lack of consensus about how to organize developmental education (Mellow & Heelan, 2008). Bailey, et. al. (2010) highlighted the lack of clarity about the definition of college readiness. This lack of clarity results in many referred students failing to enroll in developmental classes.

Mellow and Heelan (2008) discussed concerns about who teaches these courses as well as what happens in these classes. According to CCCSE (2014a), part-time community college faculty teach more developmental classes than full-time faculty. Classroom practice occurs behind closed doors and little is known about what happens in these classrooms (MDRC, 2013). Grubb (1999) discussed teaching as an individual activity that often receives little attention.

Therefore, innovative teaching practice at community colleges surfaces in uneven and isolated ways.

CCCSE (2014a) reported that part-time faculty are more likely than full-time faculty to be new to teaching. According to national results from the Survey, 37% of part-time faculty have fewer than five years of teaching experience, while 13% of full-time faculty fall reported have five or fewer years of teaching experience. The Survey results also indicated that 39% of part-time faculty reported 10 or more years of teaching experience, compared with 65% of full-time faculty. What impact does the length of teaching experience have on faculty teaching behavior? The next section will discuss this factor.

### **The Effect of Teaching Experience.**

Two studies demonstrate the effect of teaching experience (in years) on instructional behavior among community college faculty. The first by Baker, Roueche and Gillett-Karam (1990), is from a survey research study of faculty in the book, *Teaching as Leading*. Based on the survey responses, these researchers identified teaching experience as an important factor related to effective or exemplary faculty.

In his qualitative research of 260 community college faculty, Grubb (1999) concluded that teaching effectiveness improves as a result of the “arduous task of trial and error” (p. 27) that individual faculty experience. The lengthy process that Grubb (1999) describes, suggests that as faculty members think about their teaching and take strides to improve technique, the effectiveness of instruction improves as the length of their teaching experience increases. These two

studies suggest a direct relationship between the length of teaching experience and improvement in teaching effectiveness.

According to the Center (2014a), “the practice of effectively engaging community college faculty has a lot in common with the practice of effectively engaging community college students . . .” (p. 8). Community colleges must consider ways to intentionally connect and involve faculty in the business of the college, which is to ensure the success of students. Involvement of faculty in shared governance and institutional decision-making can positively influence faculty behavior.

### **The Effect of Involvement**

One quantitative survey study of one hundred community college faculty from the United States Midwest by Thaxter and Graham (1999) suggests that while a majority of faculty respondents rates their involvement in institutional decision making as minimal, there could be benefits to faculty participation. Faculty involvement across characteristics (gender, tenure, professional age, etc.) was low in the five decision-making categories of instruction, students, institutional mission and goals, personnel and finance. It is important to note that full-time tenured faculty were more involved in personnel matters than non-tenured faculty. As observed in the private sector, community colleges could gain a more empowered faculty positioned to generate ideas and innovation as well as increased productivity. Contraindications for faculty involvement include the need for community college administrators to share power and information, all of which could suspend the decision-making processes. Specifically, failure to



utilize participative forms of management that include faculty could result in a college that “fails to respond to the demands of today’s world” (Thaxter & Graham, 1999, p. 673).

### **Theoretical Underpinnings**

This study employed Blackburn and Lawrence’s (1995) theoretical framework from *Faculty at Work*. Briefly, these authors posited that individual and institutional characteristics work together and lead to variation in faculty motivation, behavior, and productivity to achieve the research, service, and teaching missions of their employing institution (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). Thus, this framework can help increase understanding about possible factors that shape faculty behavior. The theoretical model tested using regression analyses rests on a motivational framework comprised of cognitive and non-cognitive elements. This section of the literature review identifies and further elaborates the theoretical elements in more detail.

### **Individual Properties**

Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) identify four individual constructs as antecedents to faculty behavior: socioeconomic characteristics, career or professional inputs, self-knowledge, and social knowledge.

- Socioeconomic characteristics include chronological age, gender, and race/ethnicity. These variables influence behavior by limiting or enhancing one’s access to resources and opportunities.
- The career construct includes career age, adjusted for chronological age. Career variables includes area of specialization (discipline),

highest degree earned, place of work, graduate school attended, and career age, adjusted for chronological age, to name a few. This construct indicates the extent of faculty teaching experience.

- The third construct, self-knowledge, is an indicator of individual understanding of the self. It measures self-image, such as self-assessed competence in select professional activities. This construct also measures self-efficacy in certain situations. Self-efficacy is comprised of competence and ability to influence decisions. These variables affect levels of engagement in different activities.
- The final individual construct is social knowledge. It represents how individual faculty members perceive their environment. This includes faculty member beliefs about others, who members can depend on, and how others expect members to behave.

### **Environmental or Organizational Properties**

Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) define environmental properties as “objective characteristics of the work setting” (p. 17). These organizational features are beyond the perceptions that individual faculty members hold about the environment (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). Three constructs comprise “environment”: environmental conditions, environmental responses, and social contingencies. Environmental conditions represent the structural and normative features of the institution. There are three sets of factors:

- 1) The first set includes the fiscal well-being of the institution, its geographic location, the composition of the faculty, and the system of

faculty governance. These factors affect access to resources needed for research.

- 2) The second set includes the composition of the student body, the quality of the library, laboratories, and other instructional resources.

These factors directly relate to and influence teaching.

- 3) The final set consists of normative features, such as the understanding of the institution's mission as shared by faculty and administrators.

Environmental response is the second construct in the framework's environmental factors. This construct represents formal feedback that faculty members receive about their performance. The most significant response faculty members receive is the awarding of tenure. Other forms of formal feedback originate from students' evaluations, peer reviews of publications and grant applications, administrator review of curricular proposals or requests for instructional materials. In addition, faculty receive feedback from people and organizations external to the institutions about requests for support, travel to conferences, grant proposals, and curricular proposals. These responses operationalize the shared understanding of the organization's mission and of what is actually valued.

The third construct, social contingencies, includes events that happen to faculty members in their personal lives, hence their work. The full complement of events includes some that are within as well as some that are outside the control of the individual faculty member. Due to limitations of the data collected via the Survey, this construct is outside the scope of the study.

## **Motivational Framework**

Undergirding and activating the structural components of the Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) framework is a set of motivational processes. The structural components presented and discussed above provide insight into what affects behavior, while the motivational processes shape understanding about how the factors influence faculty behavior. Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) define individual motivation as “the tendency to initiate and sustain an activity” (p. 54). The motivational framework is comprised of non-cognitive and cognitive motivational components. Motivation theories selected for the framework align with the achievement context of academic institutions.

The premise of non-cognitive theories suggests that individual decisions are predictable and based on internal needs, temperament, and external incentives. In other words, individual conditioning occurs over time in response to certain stimuli. The theories examined in this area include life course theory and personality development plus reinforcement and dispositional motivation.

In contrast, cognitive motivation theories indicate that individuals make decisions about how to behave by evaluating their ability to respond effectively and maximize gains (minimize loss). The authors reviewed expectancy, attribution, efficacy, and information-processing theories.

Discussions about teaching and the factors that influence that behavior among faculty are difficult to divorce from considerations about learning and students (Baker, Roueche & Gillett-Karam, 1990). The next section of this literature review discusses the role that institutions and their agents must play to

insure student learning and success. As agents of the institutions, all faculty are accountable for and must guide students toward learning and success. This is also true for the part-time faculty teaching corps, which represents a significant segment of the community college teaching force. These instructional professionals teach the most vulnerable learners on community college campuses: development education students as well as part-time students who attend classes at night, on weekends, and via virtual technology.

### **College Impact**

Questions and concerns from students, parents, taxpayers, and government officials about the quality of undergraduate education in higher educational institutions and the environments created to support the cognitive and social development of students have come to the forefront. In the last thirty years, several theories and models of college impact emerged: Astin's *Theory of Student Involvement* (1983), Chickering and Gamson's *Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education* (1987) along with Kuh's *Student Engagement Theory* (2001, 2008) and Astin's *Input-Environment-Outcomes* model (1993) are most often quoted for their contributions to understand student development in college. The major premise of college impact theories is that institutional agents – faculty and staff – should foster both the academic and social engagement of their students (Calcagno, Bailey, Jenkins, Kienzl, & Leinbach, 2007) through intentional policy and programmatic decisions.

College impact theories or models tend to focus on the sources of change. Institutional policies, processes, and practices should focus on increasing the

degree to which students are motivated to become involved (engaged) with their own learning (Astin, 1984). The sources of change include both the attributes of the student's institution and the experiences that students encounter while enrolled (Smart, Feldman & Ethington, 2006). These theorists posit that institutions and students share accountability for student outcomes. Are these models relevant to students who attend two-year commuter colleges?

At first glance, Tinto's model of student integration appears inapplicable to student persistence at community colleges. This belief has been fueled by the notion that community college students experience fewer opportunities to connect socially with the college due to a lack of time as a result of work, family, and other commitments (or to participate in student clubs or organizations). Preliminary research by Karp, Hughes and O'Gara (2008) suggests that students connect with the college both socially and academically through classroom experiences.

Classrooms at colleges and universities are critical places for student engagement. According to Tinto (2012), the new demographics of students are largely working commuters with minimal time on campus when not in class. As such, there is a need to integrate support into classrooms and to emphasize the key role of faculty in student success (Kezar & Maxey, 2014). The classroom may constitute the one place where working commuter students will experience engagement. Tinto (2012) lamented, that if the engagement of community college students is not happening in class, it may not be happening at all. Collaborations between students and faculty as well as between students in the

classroom are critical. The next section will briefly define and discuss collaborative learning.

### **Collaborative Learning**

According to Smith and MacGregor (1992), collaborative learning is a collection of educational approaches involving the educational efforts of groups of students as well as those of students and teachers. These group efforts involve two or more students searching for mutual meaning and solutions. Typically, these student groups are actively engaged in exploring or applying course content, as opposed to simply listening passively to an instructor's presentation (Smith & MacGregor, 1992).

### **Collaborative Learning in Community Colleges**

Terry O'Banion (1997) expanded the work of Barr and Tagg (1995), which focused on the transformation from teaching to learning, and wrote about the constraints that the traditional higher education architecture places on innovations to support learning. O'Banion (1997) said that the nation's educational system is constrained by tradition, hence limited by time, place, bureaucracy, and role. To overcome these limitations, O'Banion (1997) offered community colleges educators "the learning college"—a place where learning is first and can happen anyway, anywhere, and anytime. The learning college encourages institutional innovation through six principles:

- Substantive change;
- Learner engagement as full partners;
- The creation and availability of multiple learning options;

- The promotion of collaborative learning activities;
- Needs of learners will define roles of learning facilitators; and
- Institutional success is dependent on student success.

In discussing the importance of assisting learners to form and participate in collaborative learning activities, O'Banion (1997, 1999) identifies community college nursing programs as an example of successful cohort models. According to O'Banion (1997, 1999), nursing students study together and support one another in order to navigate a rigorous curriculum. These programs have some of the highest graduation rates in all of education. He believes that this success is not only the result of a highly selective program, but that its strong collaborative learning environment deserves equal credit.

Salis, Monahan, and Armstrong (2015) used a mixed method, non-equivalent control group study to investigate the effectiveness of collaborative assignments to enhance experiential learning using the high impact practice known as global learning. The independent variables were independent, experiential learning assignments; collaborative, experiential learning assignments; and, global and diversity learning course design. The dependent variable was the students' level of improvement in identifying and summarizing experiences, and demonstrating the connection to experience and analytical skills. Undergraduate community college students over 18 years of age who enrolled in a required health course served as the study participants. The results of this study demonstrated a positive relationship between collaborative



assignments, the use of global and diversity learning, and students' connection to experience and analytical reasoning skills.

Building upon classic theories of college impact, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) was born. The CCSSE focuses on the relationship between student persistence, learning, and engagement. This theory of the relationship between student involvement (Astin, 1999) and engagement (Kuh, 2001), states that students, who are highly involved or engaged into the social and academic environments of their institutions are more likely to persist and attain a college education. In alignment with Kuh's theory of engagement, the CCSSE survey examines the educational activities related to student success. To assess student engagement, the CCSSE uses five benchmarks: active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners. Using a quantitative research design that employed logistic regression analysis, the Center (2014b) reported positive relationships between student participation in high impact practices and completion of at least one development course or one gatekeeper course with a grade of C or better along with fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall persistence.

### **Community College Faculty Engagement in Collaborative Learning**

Twombly and Townsend (2008) posit that while there may be many factors which account for increasing community college success, the quality, preparation, and pedagogical skills of the faculty must be central. The literature

provides little about these factors or the relationship of these factors to teaching and learning process.

After observing teaching in approximately 260 community college classrooms, as well as interviewing faculty from those classrooms, Grubbs (1999) concluded that community college faculty adapt and innovate their instructional techniques to insure high quality learning experiences that meet needs of students. Faced with intense pedagogical challenges that are the result of the multiple mission of these institutions, Grubbs points out, there are pockets of innovation available to scale and sustain with sufficient institutional support.

According to the Center website (2018), the Survey elicits community college faculty member (full-time and part-time) perceptions about student engagement experiences, reporting about teaching practices and the use of professional time. In the CCCSE report, *Contingent Commitments: Bringing Part-Time Faculty into Focus* (2014), 71,451 faculty members responded to the CCCSE survey between from 2009 and 2013. In 2011, the CCCSE added a set of permanent items to the survey focusing on promising practices, such as SGLE. Since that time, 47,699 faculty responses to the survey since the change. The findings from the Survey have increased the awareness about the engagement of part-time faculty in the area of collaborative learning (Community College Center for Student Engagement, 2014a).

### **Part-Time Community College Faculty in Collaborative Learning**

In a study of the engagement of community college faculty and their use of collaborative practices, Schnetz (2002) utilized data from the 2000 Center for the

Study of Community Colleges survey to test the hypothesis that full-time and part-time faculty behave in essentially similar ways with regard to two instructional practices. Cross-tabulations, t-tests, and chi-square analyses determined whether the means for the two groups of faculty members were statistically different or similar. The two instructional practices studied were teaching methods in the classroom and faculty member behaviors outside the classroom. Pertinent to this study was the reported use of collaborative learning practices. It indicated that 10% of part-time faculty members use collaborative learning techniques while 27% of full-time faculty members use these techniques. These and other findings caused Schnetz to reject her original hypothesis.

Her findings were similar to those reported by the Center's (2014a) latest research from the Survey, which indicated that few part-time and full-time faculty members frequently use high-impact practices when teaching. CCCSE (2014b) released these findings in special report named *Contingent Commitments: Bringing Part-Time Faculty into Focus*.

This dissertation research analyzes a class of five promising practices, called structured group learning experiences (SGLE). The defining feature of SGLE is a cohort of students who take their classes together during the first year. According to the Center (2012), these instructional strategies seek to improve first-year student success via collaborative experiences. The next section of this chapter will briefly discuss collaborative learning in the community college settings.

## Summary

The original question undergirding this study was to understand why more faculty do not use SGLE in their classroom, when both theory and practice demonstrate these techniques to be effective in improving student engagement. The literature review presented a profile of part-time community college faculty and characterized how much two-year colleges rely on these instructional workers. The review also discussed the institutional benefits and challenges associated with heavy reliance on part-time faculty members. Through the literature review, the researcher became aware that the following individual and organizational factors might affect this behavior: number of years teaching, interactions with colleagues, involvement outside the classroom and institutional rewards.

The literature review concluded with a reminder about the importance of college impact theory and collaborative learning strategies. Several empirical research studies outlined the positive impact of using high impact practices such as collaborative learning on student engagement and success in the two-year sector.

Beyond the Center's (2014a) report on the use of high impact practices by part-time faculty, the review produced an additional study by Pam Schnetz (2002). Both studies present descriptive statistics that describe faculty behavior. Schnetz's analysis included cross-tabulations, t-tests, and chi-square analyses to explore the relationship between part-time or full-time faculty status and the use of two instructional practices of interest. Significant differences between part-

time and full-time faculty behaviors were noted. Her research confirms the power of using advanced analytical tools to explore faculty behavior. However, and most relevant to this study, this researcher was unable to find recent studies that identify and quantify factors related to community college faculty teaching behavior. Most of the literature cited in this review occurred a decade or more ago. As such, this study will attempt to fill the gap in understanding with a contemporary perspective on factors related to part-time community college faculty teaching behavior. Chapter 3 will outline the research design and procedures.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

Research is a process designed to collect and analyze information in order to increase understanding of a topic or issue (Creswell, 2012). Research begins with a question, followed by the collection of information to answer the question. The research process concludes with a presentation of responses to the question (Creswell, 2012).

This chapter justifies the selection of a quantitative research design to address the purpose of this study, which is to analyze data from the Kentucky System to identify and explore individual and organizational factors that may relate to the use of SGLE among part-time faculty members. Moreover, the chapter identifies and discusses the ex post facto research design as the appropriate choice for this dissertation research. Furthermore, this chapter outlines the research process as well as the methods to answer the questions and research the topic.

#### **Quantitative Research Design**

Simply put, quantitative research involves explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data for analyses using mathematical methods (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2002). Quantitative research helps scholars test objective theories by examining relationships among variables (Creswell, 2009) using the scientific method. Quantitative researchers tend to hold a post-positivist worldview. Post-positivists seek to identify and assess causes that influence outcomes (Creswell, 2009). Thus, quantitative research employs observation and measurement to

make sense of the world. Therefore, the researcher assumes an objective and distant stance to the research (Creswell, 2012).

Various instruments measure variables and generate empirical data for analysis using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2012). Quantitative research involves building a plan that pre-determines the study beginning and ending as well as the sequence of each step. These studies use observation, measurements of the objective world, and inference to expand the current knowledge base on the topic.

### **Ex Post Facto Research Design**

Given the purpose of this study, which is to identify and explore individual and organizational factors that may relate to the use/non-use (defined as teaching or facilitating) of structured group learning experiences (SGLE) among part-time faculty members from the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (hereafter the Kentucky System), this research employs a quantitative research design. Quantitative research helps uncover relationships between independent variables and dependent variables (Creswell, 2010). There are two types of quantitative research designs: experimental and non-experimental.

Quantitative experimental designs seek to determine causality, while quantitative non-experimental designs help determine the relationship between variables. There are three types of quantitative non-experimental research designs: survey research, observation and analysis of existing data, and historical research (Muijs, 2010). This study will use existing data from the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (the Survey,

hereafter). Since the study analyzes an existing data set, the study employs a quantitative non-experimental ex post facto research design.

An ex post facto research design seeks to investigate possible cause and effect relationships by observing existing conditions and searching back in time for plausible antecedents. In other words, the research advances in reverse. Rather than expose equivalent groups to different treatments, ex post facto research begins with groups that are different in some way and searches in retrospect for factors that might relate to the differences (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Ex post facto researchers explore for factors that appear associated with certain occurrences, conditions, or aspects of behavior (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Consequently, ex post facto research is a method used to tease out possible antecedents, events that happened in the past. The researcher cannot manipulate the variables or randomly assign participants. There are two kinds of *ex post facto* research: causal and comparative-causal research. Causal research involves looking at two sets of data for one group of participants. Comparative-causal research involves the study of one set of data for two groups (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The two groups are comprised of subjects similar in characteristics. The independent variable is present for one group and absent for the other group. The group that possesses the independent variable is the criterion group. The second group that does not possess the independent variable is the comparison group. In an attempt to discover the possibility of a relationship with the independent variable, the researcher studies how a set of dependent variables such as age, gender, race,



training, skills, et cetera might vary with the independent variable (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

Unlike an experimental quantitative research design, ex post facto investigations lack control over the variables. The lack of control is an inherent weakness that makes it impossible to isolate crucial variables. The evidence from this type of study illustrates the possibility of a relationship for conventional experimental testing in the future (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). In the study proposed herein, the observed outcome or independent variable, teach or facilitate structured groups learning experiences (SGLE) by part-time faculty from the Kentucky system, has already occurred. There is no opportunity to manipulate the variables leading to the outcome. The prospect to understand and begin to relate independent and dependent variables through an ex post facto research design is possible.

According to Simon and Goes (2013), an ex post facto research design is an acceptable approach for studying hypothesized relationships. These studies are appropriate when it is impossible to select, control, or manipulate the factors necessary to study cause and effect, when the control of all variables may be unrealistic and artificial, preventing natural interactions with other influential variables or when laboratory controls are impractical, cost prohibitive, or ethically undesirable.

Advantages of this approach include the immediate availability of the data, hence no need to obtain permission to conduct the study. Furthermore, these studies can take less time to complete (Simon & Goes, 2013).

## Research Questions

According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2006), quantitative questions are specific in nature. There are three categories of quantitative research questions: (a) descriptive, (b) comparative, and (c) relationship. Descriptive questions seek to quantify one or more variables, while comparative questions seek to compare two or more groups on some outcome. Relationship questions are concerned with trends between or among two or more variables. As discussed above, the research design used for this study is ex post facto. The study compared two groups of part-time faculty, those who teach/facilitate SGLE in their teaching (independent variable) and those who do not use SGLE. Thus, the follow research questions guided this study.

1. Is there a statistical difference in the use of structured group learning experiences (SGLE) by part-time faculty who report being involved with designing and planning SGLE as compared with part-time faculty who report no involvement in planning and designing an SGLE?
2. Is there a statistical difference in the use of SGLE by part-time faculty members who report participating on college committees or task forces (hereafter work teams) as a component of their workweek as compared with part-time faculty members who do not report participating on college work teams?
3. Is there a difference in the use of SGLE by part-time faculty members who report the number of times teaching an SGLE course as

compared with part-time faculty members who do not report the number of times teaching an SGLE course?

### **Null Hypotheses**

Based on these questions, the following hypotheses undergirded the study:

H<sub>01</sub>: The incidence of involvement in planning SGLE among part-time faculty members, who report the use SGLE, will be the same as that reported by part-time faculty members who do not use SGLE.

H<sub>02</sub>: The incidence of involvement in college committees or task forces will be the same among part-time faculty members who report teaching SGLE and those who report they do not teach SGLE.

H<sub>03</sub>: The length of teaching experience will be the same among part-time faculty members who report teaching SGLE and those who report they do not teach SGLE.

### **Variables**

For this study, the independent variable is part-time faculty use (teaching or facilitating) of SGLE. According to the Center (2014a), the use of SGLE is operationalized as either a teaching or a non-teaching role. Teaching roles include the use of these collaborative experiences in the classroom to engage students in learning. Tasks associated with the non-teaching role include planning and designing these experiences as well as training related to these experiences. Other non-teaching tasks include advising or referring students to these experiences (CCCSE, 2014a). Based on the review of the literature, as

well as guidance from Blackburn and Lawrence (1995), the following variables are most pertinent to teaching behavior: years of teaching, department assignment, interaction with colleagues, earned doctorate, tenure awarded, involvement outside the classroom with colleagues and involvement with institutional business. The data collected via the Survey include highest credential earned, tenure status, involvement with institutional business, as well as involvement with colleagues outside the classroom. The theoretical framework from Blackburn and Lawrence will guide the interpretation of findings from the ex post facto analysis of the data. As such, (a) the number of times the instructor has taught the select course, (b) involvement outside the classroom on college committees and task forces and (c) involvement in the planning or designing across the five SGLE will serve as the dependent variables for this study. The five SGLE include first year experience (FYE), learning communities (LC), orientation (OR), and student success course (SSC), and accelerated developmental education (ACC).

For purposes of ensuring reader awareness, the following section defines each SGLE. According to CCCSE (2012),

- First year experience, also called freshmen seminar, assembles small groups of first year students together to help them build relationships with other students as well as faculty. These experiences tend to offer students information about academic support services as well as access to student organizations.

- Learning communities are small groups of students taking a set of linked courses together. To maximize the benefits of the cohort, instructors tend to coordinate curricular and instructional efforts.
- Orientation is any experience that provides first-time students information they need to know before classes begin. Colleges use a variety of approaches, ranging from a two-hour version to a student success course that last an entire semester, as well as everything in between.
- Student success courses may be an extended version of orientation as indicated above. Typically, these courses help students build time management and study skills.
- Accelerated development education courses seek to “seed” students with information and intrusive academic support that quicken student matriculation to credit-bearing coursework.

As a class of high impact practices, the Center (2012) defines SGLE as promising practices for first-year students grouped in small cohorts to take classes together. The expected outcome of using these instructional practices is to increase student engagement, learning and success (CCCSE, 2012). Due to the manner Survey respondents answered the survey items, SGLE in this study are operationalized at the class level. In other words, this study does not distinguish between the five SGLE defined above. See the data preparation section for further discussion.

Survey data for the independent variable, teaching or facilitating SGLE, as well as the prefaced dependent variables, are nominal. According to Smith and Glass (1987), nominal variables are nonparametric. In other words, there is no ability or need to compute means or variance for this type of data. Descriptive statistics will be limited to frequencies and percentages. Data analysis employs non-parametric statistical techniques.

### **Data Source: The Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement**

The data source for this study is the Kentucky System data from the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (the Survey) for 2011-2016. From these data, the researcher computed descriptive statistics and performed quantitative analyses for this research study. According to the Center (2018), the Survey is a companion to the Community College Student Survey of Engagement. The Center administers both instruments and reports the findings to participating institution through the College Survey Report (CSR).

The Survey collects faculty perceptions of student engagement in their educational pursuits. Specific to this research, the survey elicits self-reported information from community college faculty about their teaching practices, and the use of professional time within and outside their classes (Community College Center for Student Engagement, 2018; Community College Center for Student Engagement, 2014b). Survey respondents provide demographic information such as current employment and tenure status, race, gender, chronological age, citizenship status, highest degree earned, and professional teaching experience.

Upon receipt of the data at the institutional level, the only demographic data available included highest degree earned and work experience outside the respondent's college. In order to maintain the identity of Survey respondents, CCSSE (2011, 2013, 2015, and 2016) institutional reports do not include personally identifiable information such as gender, race or ethnicity, chronological age, citizenship status or professional teaching experience.

The instrument seeks to facilitate the understanding of differences between faculty's perceptions of the student experience and the students' actual experiences (T. Bohlig, personal communication, August 21, 2018). As such, the Survey reports enable participating community colleges to review both faculty and student responses. One of the main purposes of the Survey is to prompt campus discussions (T. Bohlig, personal communication, August 21, 2018) when it appears students and faculty hold different perceptions of the same experience. In addition, the Survey uses the following benchmarks: active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners, all of which undergird the CCSSE as well. There is intentional overlap between the Survey and the CCSSE. For an excerpt of the item crosswalk between the two surveys in 2011, see Table 4.

Table 4.

*Crosswalk between 2011 Survey and CCSSE.*

Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (variable)	Community College Survey of Student Engagement (variable)
How important is it to you that students participate in a college orientation program or course? (FORIEN)	Student activities: college orientation program or course
How important is to you that students participate in organized learning communities? (FLRNCOMM)	Student activities: Organized learning communities

Full and part-time faculty from community colleges participating in the student survey who are teaching eligible courses receive and complete the survey instrument online. Faculty who provide a valid email address receive an invitation to complete the survey for their select course. The Survey depends on self-reported data from faculty.

In 2011, the Center added a new set of permanent items, called promising practices, which reflect a commitment to community college student success. These promising practices include the five high impact practices or structured group learning experiences (SGLE) upon which this dissertation study focuses. Moreover, the survey asks respondents about their (a) involvement in planning and designing SGLE for teaching and facilitation as well as (b) engagement in broader college business, such as participation in college committees or task



forces (hereafter “planning/work teams”). The Center (2014a) equates effective engagement of community college faculty with effective engagement of community college students. In other words, community colleges must define ways to connect and involve all faculty in the college’s primary mission (and business) of student success. This would include allowing all faculty, including part-timers, to design and plan how they teach or facilitate SGLE. Further, faculty involvement could take the form of participation in shared governance and institutional decision-making.

### **Data Preparation**

The Human Subjects Review Board of the Kentucky System approved a request to obtain college responses to the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (the Survey) on January 21, 2016. The researcher accepted four Microsoft Excel data files from the Kentucky System Office of Research and Policy Analysis. Each file contained data from Surveys administered during one of the following periods: 2010-11, 2012-13, 2014-15, and 2016-17. A single data set comprised of responses from 3,854 full and part time faculty members in the Kentucky System resulted from the merger of the four individual files. After the data merger, 1,108 respondents identified as part-time faculty members.

During a manual review of each case in the data set as received from the Center, this researcher discovered a host of individual respondents reporting involvement in teaching or facilitating more than one SGLE, the independent variable for this study. This presentation of the data violates the need for

independence between variables as required for statistical testing (Fields, 2013). In order to obtain a valid Phi Coefficient test result, the test assumes that individual responses are independent of each other. In other words, it is critical that each respondent contributes to one cell in a contingency table (Fields, 2013).

To account for the actual number of part-time faculty who planned and/or taught a SGLE, the researcher collapsed the five types of SGLE (FYE, LC, OR, SSC and ACC) into a single variable that reflects part-time faculty teaching or facilitating any SGLE. The result of this action created a new independent variable, “UNDUP SGLETEACH,” which reflects unduplicated headcounts. In response to similar findings for the SGLE planning/designing variable, the researcher also created a second new dependent variable, “UNDUP SGLE PLANNING.”

In alignment with the overarching research plan to use Phi coefficient to analyze dependent categorical variables, that are dichotomous, the researcher reframed Survey questions representative of the second and third independent variables, and recoded the respondent feedback. The coding scheme is presented in Table 5.

Table 5.

*Recoding Scheme.*

Variable	Original Survey Question	Original Response Categories	Reframed Survey Question	Recoded Responses
Dependent	About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week participating on college committees or task forces?	0=None 1 = 1 to 4 hours 2 = 5 to 8 3 = 9 to 12 4=13 to 16 5=17 to 20 6=21 to 30 7=31 or more	Do you participate on college committees or task forces?	No = 0 Yes = 1
Dependent	Prior to this term, how many times have you taught your selected course?	1=None 2 = 1 to 3 times 3 = 4 to 6 4 = 7 to 9 5=10 to 15 6=16 to 20 7=21 or more	NA	1=None 2=1 to 6 times 3=7 to 15 4 = 16 or more

After preparing the data, the Survey variables and survey items were isolated to create the final data set illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6.

*Survey Items Used in this Research Study.*

Study variable	Survey item	Survey variable
UNDUP SGLE TEACH (Independent Variable)	During the current academic year at this college, in which of the following ways, if at all, have you been involved in a structured experience for new students (sometimes called a “freshman seminar” or “first-year experience”)	FYETEACH
	During the current academic year at this college, in which of the following ways, if at all, have you been involved in an organized “learning community” (two or more courses that a group of students take together)?	LCTEACH
	During the current academic year at this college, in which of the following ways, if at all, have you been involved in college orientation?	ORTEACH
	During the current academic year at this college, in which of the following ways, if at all, have you been involved in a student success course (such as student development, extended orientation, study skills, student life skills or college success course)?	SSCTEACH
	During the current academic year at this college, in which of the following ways, if at all, have you been involved in an accelerated course or a fast track program (learning experience designed to move students through coursework in order to complete their educational goals more quickly)?	ACCTEACH
UNDUP SGLE PLAN (Dependent variable and organizational factor)	During the current academic year at this college, in which of the following ways, if at all, have you been involved in a structured experience for new students (sometimes called a “freshman seminar” or “first-year experience”)	FYEPLAN
	During the current academic year at this college, in which of the following ways, if at all, have you been involved in an organized “learning community” (two or more courses that a group of students take together)?	LCPLAN
	During the current academic year at this college, in which of the following ways, if at all, have you been involved in college orientation?	ORPLAN
	During the current academic year at this college, in which of the following ways, if at all, have you been involved in a student success course (such as student development, extended orientation, study skills, student life skills or college success course)?	SSCPLAN

Table 6 (continued).

*Survey Items Used in this Research Study*

Study variable	Survey item	Survey variable
	During the current academic year at this college, in which of the following ways, if at all, have you been involved in an accelerated course or a fast track program (learning experience designed to move students through coursework in order to complete their educational goals more quickly)?	ACCPLAN
COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT (Dependent variable and organizational factor)	Do you participate in college committees or task forces? (Recoded in Table 4)	FTASK
NUMBER OF TIMES SELECTED COURSE TAUGHT PRIOR (Dependent, variable and individual factor)	Prior to this term, how many times have you taught your selected course? (Recoded in Table 4)	FTIMES

**Research Participants**

After preparing the data, the number of research participants reduced from 1,108 to 968 part-time faculty from the 16 colleges in the Kentucky system who completed the Survey between 2011 and 2016. Part-time faculty members represent the largest segment of the instructional workforce for the Kentucky system. According to the KCTCS (2018), approximately 60% (or 3,141) of the teaching workforce was part-time in fall 2013.

As indicated in Table 7 below, less than 28% of the research participants were part-time faculty. Table 7 also indicates that few part-time and full-time faculty within the Kentucky System use SLGEs frequently in the classroom. This

pattern is similar to the national data presented by the Center (2014a) in

*Contingent Commitments: Bringing Part-Time Faculty into Focus.*

Table 7.

*Kentucky System 2011-16 Faculty SGLE Use.*

Faculty Group	Survey Respondents N (% of total)	% of total Teaching or Facilitating				
		First-Year Experience	Learning Community	College Orientation	Student Success Course	Accelerated Dev Ed.
Part-Time	968 (27.6%)	138 (14.3%)	102 (10.5%)	70 (7.2%)	135 (13.9%)	118 (12.2%)
Full-Time	2,538 (72.4%)	479 (18.9%)	417 (16.4%)	318 (12.5%)	336 (13.2%)	453 (17.8%)

*Note:* Total Faculty Respondents = 3,506; Total Colleges = 16.

*Source:* Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement.

In order to satisfy the requirements of the *ex post facto* research design, the researcher divided the study population of 968 part-time faculty members into two groups:

- Criterion group (1) includes part-time faculty members who report teaching or facilitating SGLE (n=313) and is referred to as “TEACH/TAUGHT SGLE” later in the narrative.
- Comparison group (2) includes part-time faculty who report not teaching or facilitating SGLE (n=654) and is referred to as “DID NOT TEACH SGLE” later in this narrative.

To compensate for the inability to control the variables, as well as randomize the participants into the two study groups, the researcher attempted to

match subjects in the groups. The objective of this procedure was to equate the two groups and control for variation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). In an effort to create groups with equivalent profiles, the researcher matched the groups on two factors. All study participants (a) were part-time faculty within the Kentucky System at the time of Survey administration and (b) responded to Survey questions of interest.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher utilized the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 24.0 (SPSS) to analyze the data. SPSS is a common statistical package in social science and educational research. Software packages utilize statistical formulas and carry out computations (Muijs, 2010). In order to make sense of the data received (Creswell, 2012), this researcher tabulated frequency distributions and percentages. Most data from the Survey are nominal. In cases where the data received was on a Likert scale or ordinal scale, the researcher converted the data from ordinal to nominal data as appropriate.

The researcher computed descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics classify and summarize demographics of the part-time faculty respondents. Creswell (2012) pointed out, inferential analyses “tell us how different the sample values are and allow us to make a judgment as to whether this is significant based on our knowledge of measures, the participants, and the data collection effort” (p. 188).

Since this study will involve comparing two groups, the researcher employed inferential statistics utilizing Phi Coefficient ( $\phi$ ) and Chi-square. Phi

Coefficient ( $\phi$ ) is nonparametric statistics employed when the variables are nominal and the objective is to determine the possibility of an association or relationship exists between two variables for research questions one and two. Phi Coefficient, a Pearson product-moment coefficient, is usually calculated on two nominal-dichotomous variables where both variables are categorical and are coded as 0 and 1 (Kolawole, 2001). That is to say, Phi coefficient measures the degree of association between two dichotomous variables. The Phi coefficient range represents perfect inverse and direct association from -1 to +1 (Lang & Secic, 2006). Moreover, Rea and Parker (1992) suggested that Phi coefficient relationships are none to negligible (.0 to .09), weak (.10 to .19), moderate (.20 to .39), relatively strong (.40 to .59), strong (.60 to .79), or very strong (.80 to 1.0). Chi-square was also employed to analyze the differences between independent and dependent variables for research question three. Supplemental analyses employed logistical and multinomial logistic regressions for the three research questions to assess whether the independent variable predicted the dependent variables

Supplemental analyses employed logistical regression for the three research questions to assess whether the dependent variable predicted the independent variables. Since the variables in the study are mostly dichotomous (0 = not present, 1 = present), logistic regression analysis allows the researcher to estimate the linear relationship of a non-linear relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable (Fields, 2013).



Because the variables in this study are binary in most cases, nominal in all cases, the Phi coefficient and logistics regression are the appropriate inferential statistical procedures to determine the existence of statistically significant relationships. To determine if relationships existed between variables, the three null hypotheses were tested at the .05 alpha level (see Table 8). Table 8 also presents the data analysis procedures for the three research questions.

Table 8.

*Data Analysis Schema.*

Research Questions	Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Statistical Procedure
1	H <sub>01</sub>	<b>SGLE (FYE, LC, OR, SSC, ACC)</b> Part-time faculty who teach/facilitate [0= No, 1= Yes]	<b>SGLE (FYE, LC, OR, SSC, ACC)</b> • Plan/Design [0= No, 1= Yes for at least one of the five SGLE]	Phi-Coefficient  Logistic Regression
2	H <sub>02</sub>	<b>SGLE (FYE, LC, OR, SSC, ACC)</b> Part-time faculty who teach/facilitate [0= No, 1= Yes]	<b>SGLE (FYE, LC, OR, SSC, ACC)</b> • Participate on College Committees [0=No, 1 = Yes for at least one of the five SGLE]	Phi-Coefficient  Logistic Regression
3	H <sub>03</sub>	<b>SGLE (FYE, LC, OR, SSC, ACC)</b> Part-time faculty who teach/facilitate [0= No, 1= Yes]	<b>SGLE (FYE, LC, OR, SSC, ACC)</b> • Times taught a course ○ None ○ 1 to 6 ○ 7 to 15 ○ 16 or more	Chi-Square  Phi-Coefficient  Multinomial Logistic Regression

**Validity**

Validity involves confirming that the survey instrument is measuring what it intends to measure (Muijs, 2010). According to the Center (2014a), the Survey elicits community college faculty member (full-time and part-time) perceptions about student engagement experiences as well as teaching practices and the use of professional time. Survey administration occurs during an academic term.

Faculty who provide a valid email address and who teach a select credit course during the prescribed academic term are eligible to participate in the study. The survey depends on self-reported data from faculty. The Center has never conducted a validation study of the Survey (T. Bohlig, personal communication, August 21, 2018). Given the intentional overlap between the CCSSE and the Survey as established above, the next section attempts to bridge this gap by presenting the results of two validation studies of the CCSSE. Since the Survey relies on self-reported data from faculty, the section will conclude with the parameters necessary to ensure the validity of such reports.

Using confirmatory factor analysis, the Community College Center for Student Engagement conducted a validation study of the companion student survey in 2008 (Marti, 2009). The study affirmed the construct validity of the five benchmarks that comprise the student survey. Table 9 presents the results of this CCSSE validation study, along with results from another validation study by Mandarino and Mattern (2010). With a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.70 in mind as the standard, the following results indicate a strong reliability of the items comprising the underlying benchmarks. The notable exceptions are the values presented for Student Effort.

Table 9.

*CCSSE Validation Study Results.*

Benchmark	Cronbach's Alpha	
	Marti (2009)	Mandarino & Mattern (2010)
Active and Collaborative Learning	0.66	0.64
Student Effort	0.56	0.38
Academic Challenge	0.80	0.75
Student Faculty Interaction	0.67	0.74
Support for Learners	0.76	0.74

As stated above, the Survey relies on self-reported data. There are concerns about the validity of these responses. Kuh (2002) commented that self-reported data was valid when the following occur:

- the requested information is known to the respondent
- the questions are phrased clearly
- the questions refer to recent activities
- the respondents think the questions merit serious and thoughtful response
- answering the questions does not threaten, embarrass or violate respondent privacy.

Built on sound psychometric principles, the CCSSE and the Survey seek satisfaction of the prefaced conditions (Marti, 2009).

## Reliability

Creswell (2012) defined reliability as the repeatability of scores from an instrument over time. The analysis reported in the Center's (2014a) report, *Contingent Commitments: Bringing Part-Time Faculty into Focus*, states that neither part-time nor full-time faculty members use high impact practices frequently in their classroom. The findings are based on data collected between 2011-2013 from 47,699 faculty (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014a). According to the Center (2014a), these findings confirm earlier reporting, which suggests the design of the survey instrument provides reliable scores that are repeatable over time.

## Summary

This chapter described and justified the ex post facto research design used in this study. In addition, the chapter outlined and defined the independent and dependent study variables, listed the research questions and provided a detailed description of the Survey, which is the data source for this research study. This chapter also included statements that:

- Identify the study population,
- Describe data preparation to include coding and analyses schema,
- Sought to validate the Survey,
- Discussed the reliability of the Survey,

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSES AND FINDINGS**

The purpose of this research was to identify and explore individual and organizational factors that may relate to the use/non-use (defined as teaching or facilitating) of structured group learning experiences (SGLE) among part-time faculty members from the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (hereafter the Kentucky System). A quantitative, non-experimental *ex post facto* research design advanced in reverse to identify factors that might relate to the teaching of facilitation of SGLE. This chapter presents the results of the data analyses, which progressed from descriptive statistical analyses, such as frequency distributions and cross-tabulations through inferential statistical analyses such as Chi-square, Phi coefficient and logistical regression. These analyses answer the research questions and test the research hypotheses.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

As discussed above, 968 part-time faculty from the Kentucky System completed the Survey between 2011 and 2016. Table 10 summarizes faculty participation in the Survey.

Table 10.

*Part-Time Faculty Participation during Survey Administration.*

Part-time faculty	Survey Administration Period				Totals
	2010-11	2012-13	2014-15	2016-17	
Headcount/year (% of sample population)	161 (16.6%)	276 (28.5%)	327 (33.8%)	204 (21.1%)	968 (100%)
Number of participating colleges	8	15	16	8	NA

Table 11 indicates that 32.4% of the 968 part-time faculty respondents teach or facilitate an SGLE, such as first-year experience (FYE), learning community (LC), college orientation (OR), student success courses (SSC) or accelerated developmental education (ACC). The remaining 67.6% reported that they did not teach or facilitate an SGLE. These data reflects that few part-time faculty in the Kentucky system teach or facilitate an SGLE.

Table 11.

*Unduplicated Headcount of Faculty Who Teach SGLE.*

Teach at least one SGLE		
Group 1	Yes	314 (32.4%)
Group 2	No	654 (67.6%)
Total		968 (100%)

*Note:* Total Faculty Respondents = 968; Total Colleges = 16. Source: Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement.

Approximately 71.7% (or 694) of the total study population held a master's degree. The remaining 274 part-time faculty reported their highest degree earned as associate, bachelor's, doctorate, first professional degree, and other credential. For the group of 314 faculty who teach or facilitate SGLE, 234 or (74.5%) report their highest credential earned as the master's. Similarly, for the 654 faculty who do not teach or facilitate SGLE, 70.6% (n = 462) held a master's degree. See Table 12 for all education levels of faculty who taught SGLE.



Table 12.

*Education Levels of Kentucky System Part-Time Faculty*

	Total Study Population	Group 1 (Teach SGLE)	Group 2 (Do Not Teach SGLE)
Total	968	314	654
Highest degree Earned			
Other	26 (2.7%)	8 (2.5%)	18 (2.8%)
Associate	56 (5.8%)	16 (5.1%)	40 (6.1%)
Bachelor	66 (6.8%)	26 (8.3%)	40 (6.1%)
Master`	694 (71.7%)	234 (74.5%)	462 (70.6%)
Doctorate	100 (10.3%)	25 (8.0%)	75 (11.5%)
First professional	26 (2.7%)	5 (1.6%)	21 (3.2%)

*Note:* Total Faculty Respondents = 968; Total Colleges = 16. Source: Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement

Few part-time faculty members in the Kentucky System engage in the planning or design of SGLE. Less than 10% of the Survey respondents indicate they plan or design these collaborative experiences. See Table 13.

Table 13.

*Unduplicated Headcount of Part-Time Faculty Who Plan SGLE.*

Group	Faculty Response	Plan at least one SGLE
1	Yes	92 (9.5%)
2	No	876 (90.5%)

*Note:* Total Faculty Respondents = 968; Total Colleges = 16. Source: Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement

One hundred and seventy-seven part-time faculty members reported participation in a work team. This level of participation means that almost 18% of the study population is involved with a work team. Approximately 82% of the part-time faculty members report not participating on a work team. See Table 14.

Table 14.

*Part-Time Faculty Participation on College Work Teams*

Group	Number and % Part-time faculty who Participate on a College Committee or Task Force
1	177 (18.3%)
2	791 (81.7%)

*Note:* Total Faculty Respondents = 968; Total Colleges = 16. Source: Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement

**Inferential Statistics**

RQ1: Is there a statistical difference in the use of SGLE by part-time

faculty, who report being involved with planning/designing an SGLE

as compared with part-time faculty members who report no involvement in planning/designing an SGLE?

***Part-time Faculty Who Teach SGLE and Plan SGLE.*** A two-way contingency table analysis, employing Phi coefficient, evaluated whether an association exist sbetween part-time faculty who taught an SGLE (no = 0 and yes = 1) and planned an SGLE (no = 0 and yes = 1).

A Phi coefficient found a moderate relationship between part-time faculty who taught an SGLE and planned an SGLE  $\phi = .355$   $p = .000$ . This finding suggests part-time faculty who taught or facilitated SGLE were more likely to plan at least one SGLE (77, 25%) than those who did not teach an SGLE (639, 98%). Thus, the Null Hypothesis was rejected. Table 15 includes the Phi Coefficient results.

Table 15.

*Phi Coefficient Results on Part-Time Faculty Who Teach and Plan SGLE.*

Planned an SGLE	Taught an SGLE	
	No	Yes
No	639 (97.7%)	237 (75.5%)
Yes	15 (2.3%)	77 (24.5%)

*Note.*  $\phi = .355$ ,  $p = .000$ . Column percentages in parentheses.

A supplemental analysis, using binary logistic regression, was performed to ascertain the effects of part-time faculty who taught an SGLE (no = 0 and yes = 1) on planning an SGLE (no = 0 and yes = 1). The baseline reference category

(coded as 0) for the binary logistic regression analyses of this study was part-time faculty who taught an SGLE.

The binary logistic regression model was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(1) = 115.282$ ,  $p = .000$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .241$ . The model explained 24% (Nagelkerke  $R^2$ ) of the variance in planning an SGLE and correctly classified 90.5% of cases. The Walden criterion demonstrated that taught an SGLE made a significant contribution to the prediction.

The results showed that taught an SGLE ( $OR = .072$ , (95% CI, .041 to .128),  $p < .001$ ) was a significant predictor of planning an SGLE. Essentially, part-time faculty who did not teach an SGLE were .072 times less likely of planning an SGLE compared to those who taught an SGLE. The Null Hypothesis was rejected. The binary logistic regression results are shown in Table 16.

Table 16.

*Logistic Regression of Teaching SGLE on Planning SGLE.*

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	df	p	OR	95% C.I.	
							Lower	Upper
Taught an SGLE								
No	-2.628	.292	80.810	1	.000	.072	.041	.128
(base = Yes)								

*Note:* Dependent variable, Plan an SGLE (No = 0 and Yes=1).

RQ2: Is there a difference in the use of SGLE by part-time faculty members who report participating on college work teams as a component of their workweek as compared with part-time faculty members who do not report participating on college work teams?

***Part-time Faculty Who Teach SGLE and Participate on a Work Team.***

A two-way contingency table analysis, employing Phi coefficient, evaluated whether an association exists between part-time faculty who taught an SGLE (no = 0 and yes = 1) and participation on a college committee or task force (no = 0 and yes = 1).

Phi coefficient found a moderate relationship between part-time faculty who taught an SGLE and participation on a college committee or task force  $\phi = .243$   $p = .000$ . This finding suggests that part-time faculty who taught an SGLE were more likely to participate on a college committee or task force (100, 32%) than those who did not teach an SGLE (577, 88%). Thus, the Null Hypothesis was rejected. The Phi Coefficient results are presented in Table 17.

Table 17.

***Phi Coefficient Results on Part-Time Faculty Who Teach SGLE and Participate on a College Work Team.***

	Taught an SGLE	
	No	Yes
Participation on a College Committee or Task Force		
No	577 (88.2%)	214 (68.2)
Yes	77 (11.8%)	100 (31.8 %)

*Note.*  $\phi = .243$ ,  $p = .000$ . Column percentages in parentheses.

A supplemental analysis, using binary logistic regression, was performed to ascertain the effects of part-time faculty who taught an SGLE (no = 0 and yes = 1) on participation on a college committee or task force (no = 0 and yes = 1). The baseline reference category (coded as 0) for the binary logistic regression analyses of this study was part-time faculty who participated on a college committee or task force.

The binary logistic regression model was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(1) = 59.980$ ,  $p = .000$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .088$ . The model explained 8% (Nagelkerke  $R^2$ ) of the variance in participation on a college committee or task force and correctly classified 81.7% of cases. The Walden criterion demonstrated that taught an SGLE made a significant contribution to the prediction.

The results showed that taught an SGLE ( $OR = .286$ , (95% CI, .204 to .400),  $p < .001$ ) was a significant predictor of participation on a college committee or task force. Essentially, part-time faculty who did not teach an SGLE were .286 times less likely of participating on a college work team compared to those who taught an SGLE. The Null Hypothesis was rejected. The binary logistic regression results are shown in Table 18.

Table 18.

*Logistic Regression of Teaching SGLE on College Work Team Participation.*

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	df	p	OR	95% C.I.	
							Lower	Upper
Taught an SGLE								
No	-1.253	.171	53.434	1	.000	.286	.204	.400
(base = Yes)								

Note: Dependent variable, Participate on a college committee or task force (No = 0 and Yes=1).

RQ3: Is there a difference in the use of SGLE by part-time faculty

members who report the number of times teaching an SGLE course as compared with part-time faculty members who do not report the number of times teaching an SGLE course?

***Part-time Faculty Who Teach SGLE and Number of Times Teaching a***

**Course.** Chi-square tests were performed to compare part-time faculty who taught an SGLE (no = 0 and yes = 1) and the number of times they taught an SGLE course (0 = None, 1 = 1 to 6 times, 2 = 7 to 15 times, 3 = 16 or more times). The Chi-square test found no significant difference between part-time faculty who taught an SGLE and those who did not with the number of times they taught an SGLE course,  $\chi^2(3, 968) = .697$ ,  $p = .874$ . Thus, the Null hypothesis was retained. No table was generated due to insignificant results.

A supplemental analysis, using a multinomial logistic regression, was also conducted to model the relationship between the predictor (part-time faculty who taught an SGLE) and the number of times taught an SGLE course (None, 1 to 6

times, 7 to 15 times, 16 or more times). In this analysis, the number of times taught an SGLE course (None, 1 to 6 times, 7 to 15 times) were compared to the reference category credits earned of (16 or more times). A statistical significance measure of .05 was used.

The overall model was not statistically significant  $\chi^2 (3, N = 968) = .699$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .001$ ,  $p = .873$  and, therefore, not more effective than the null model (intercept only). Because of the insignificant result, the remaining test results (likelihood ratio tests, parameter estimates, etc.) of the multinomial logistic regression were ignored because of the model not having explanatory power. No table produced.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented the researcher's processes to analyze the data. Data analyses progressed from descriptive statistical analyses such as frequency distributions and cross-tabulations through inferential statistical analyses, such as Phi coefficient, Chi-square and Logistic and Multinomial regressions. These analyses answered the research questions and tested the research hypotheses.

For research question one, Phi coefficient found relatively moderate association between part-time faculty who taught an SGLE and planned an SGLE. The finding suggests that part-time faculty who taught an SGLE were more likely to plan at least one SGLE than those who did not teach an SGLE. In addition, a binary logistic regression supplemental analysis showed that taught an SGLE was a significant predictor of planning an SGLE. Essentially, the



results suggested that part-time faculty who did not teach an SGLE were .072 times less likely of planning an SGLE compared to those who taught an SGLE

Phi coefficient results for research question two found a relatively moderate relationship between part-time faculty who taught an SGLE and participation on a college work team. The results suggested that part-time faculty who taught an SGLE were more likely to participate on a work team than that of those who did not teach an SGLE. In addition, a binary logistic regression supplemental analysis showed that taught an SGLE was a significant predictor of participation on a college work team. Essentially, part-time faculty who did not teach an SGLE were .286 times less likely of participating on a college work team compared to those who taught an SGLE.

Finally, for research question three, a statistically significant difference between part-time faculty who taught an SGLE and those who did not with the number of times they taught an SGLE course was not found. A multinomial logistic regression supplemental analysis also produced insignificant results.

Chapter 5 summarizes the research findings and results of hypothesis testing, along with implications for theory and recommendations for practice and future research.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, and Future Research**

The purpose of this research was to identify and explore individual and organizational factors that may relate to the use/non-use (defined as teaching or facilitating) of structured group learning experiences (SGLE) among part-time faculty members from the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (hereafter the Kentucky System). According to the Center (2014a), SGLE include collaborative learning experiences such as first-year experience (FYE), learning communities (LC), student success course (SSC), orientation (OR), and accelerated developmental education (ACC). Data from the Kentucky System indicate that few part-time faculty members teach or facilitate SGLE even though the research literature indicates these techniques result in higher levels of student success. The researcher conducted a quantitative, non-experimental ex post facto research design to meet the purpose of this study.

The chapter summarizes the findings of the data analyses from chapter four and discusses the implications within the context of the literature. In addition, this chapter outlines the theoretical implications of the findings, and presents recommendations for practice as well as future research.

### **Summary of Research Findings**

This study explored whether or not the occurrence of the independent variables: (a) part-time faculty designing/planning SGLE; (b) part-time faculty involvement in a college work team or (c) number of times part-time faculty report teaching a course could indicate the dependent variable, part-time faculty teaching/facilitating SGLE. The researcher hypothesized there would be a

statistically higher incidence of planning SGLE among those part-time faculty members who teach an SGLE than those who do not teach an SGLE. A second hypothesis conjectured there would be a statistically higher incidence of participation on college committees or task forces among part-time faculty members who teach an SGLE than those who do not teach an SGLE. The final hypothesis speculated that those faculty who report a number of times teaching would have a higher incidence of teaching SGLE than those who do not report teaching an SGLE before. Based on the theoretical framework and the literature review, these three independent variables are factors expected to shape community college faculty teaching behavior, hence could be antecedents of teaching or facilitating an SGLE.

In summary, the research findings appear to indicate a higher incidence of involvement in SGLE planning among part-time faculty who report teaching SGLE. Similarly, the findings suggest that part-time faculty members who teach SGLE have a higher incidence of participation on college work teams than those who do not teach SGLE. Overall, these research findings suggest that involvement in designing/planning SGLE as well as involvement in a college work team may improve the adoption of collaborative learning techniques among part-time faculty members. The Phi coefficient suggest the existence of moderate relationships between planning/designing SGLE and teaching/facilitating SGLE. Likewise, the Phi coefficient results suggest a moderate relationship between part-time faculty involvement in work teams and teaching/facilitating SGLE. It appears that more engaged faculty might be more willing to teach and facilitate

an SGLE in their classes. These findings align with recent research efforts that equate part-time faculty engagement with the engagement of students. These results contradict current institutional practices where institutions continue to invest minimal resources into this class of instructional worker. These results also suggest a need for strategic integration of and investment in part-time faculty as important instructional workers tasked to increase student engagement and improve student success outcomes.

## **Discussion**

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, which is an artifact of the research design, the findings are tentative. Yet, the results are defensible and can inform practice as well as contribute to theory. These results could also guide and shape future research. The following discussion will address each of these areas and offer a set of recommendations for practice and research.

### **Part-Time Involvement in Planning SGLE**

In this study, it appears part-time faculty who plan SGLE are more likely to teach/facilitate SGLE. According to Roueche, Roueche and Milliron (1995), effective teachers are goal-oriented. These teachers “set goals for themselves and design their courses to encourage their students. . . to achieve their own goals” (p. 85). Community colleges continue to rush the hiring process for part-time faculty. Many hires occur a few weeks to a few days before the start of a term (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014a). This practice may exacerbate low levels of part-time faculty involvement in the planning and design of SGLE. Schnetz (2002) reports that part-time faculty members were

less likely to have revised their syllabus or teaching objectives within three years of her study. A penchant for just-in-time hiring necessitates that part-time faculty receive pre-determined syllabi and textbooks. The Center (2014a), reports “. . . planning and designing SGLE . . . are typically undertaken by full-time faculty” (p. 12).

Consequently, part-time faculty are rarely involved in activities or assume roles other than teaching (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014a). The descriptive data analyses in this study bear out this claim. Ninety-five (or 9.5%) of the part-time Survey respondents reported participating in the planning or design of an SGLE. However, the study results also suggest that part-time faculty who are involved in planning their classes may discover new ways to improve their teaching practice. In this case, the improvement could be increased adoption of SGLE.

In many ways, when considering the engagement of part time faculty, one can look at the literature around student engagement for clues, because similar thinking undergirds these separate though related concepts (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014a). Student engagement focuses on what students do as well as what institutions do to promote student success (Kuh, 2001). Thirolf (2017) defines faculty engagement as “the actions and behaviors that faculty and the institution take to facilitate and promote faculty professional growth” (p. 305). According to Thirolf (2017), faculty engagement occurs when an institution creates opportunities for faculty to connect with each

other, and faculty members participate in order to foster more relationships that are stronger and more fulfilling.

### **Part-Time Faculty Involvement in College Work Teams.**

The study results suggest that participation by part-time faculty members in college work teams is a possible precursor to faculty teaching or facilitating an SGLE. The use of faculty work teams to insure faculty participation in institutional decision-making is an important principle guiding academic life (Miller, 2003). Referred to as shared governance, the purpose of these structures is to insure equal voice and involvement of faculty regardless of rank in decisions of the institution. Given the community college role in democratizing higher education in the United States, one would expect shared governance to be an important method for community colleges to live out their mission.

An important theme from the interviews of faculty by Grubb (1999) is that community college instructors are isolated. Teaching is an individual activity, but it is unnecessary that instructors be isolated. Teaching is a communal activity that occurs within social settings (Grubb, 1999; Roueche, Roueche, & Milliron, 1995). More specific to this study, Roueche, Roueche, and Milliron (1995) state, “part-time faculty should not function in isolation” (p. 93).

As discussed above, institutions typically hire part-time faculty members “just in time.” Furthermore, these instructional workers receive less pay, fewer benefits, have unequal access to resources such as office space or parking, and in most cases may not have access to professional development activities (Christensen, 2008). Outside instructional delivery, most are uninvolved in

governance as well as the business of the college. In almost every way, part-time faculty members operate on the margins of their institution (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014a).

This marginalization may relate to the evolution of community colleges. From inception of these institutions, powerful leaders wielding immense authority administered these emerging institutions. These institutions grew significantly because initial leaders often responded unilaterally and quickly to remain relevant. A hierarchy emerged with power flowing from the president through senior leaders, managers to faculty and front line staff (Alfred, 2008).

Contemporary community colleges retain these structures. College presidents and their teams continue to make important decisions related to the business of the college, while staff manage administrative functions. Theoretically, full-time faculty own the curriculum, manage their classrooms, and participate in student success initiatives and receive training and professional development. It appears, part-time faculty are hired ad hoc to provide instruction often with very little direction, support or guidance from the institution.

Community colleges must consider ways to intentionally connect and involve all faculty, especially part-time faculty, in the business of the college, which is to ensure the success of students (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014a). As the study findings suggest, involvement of part-time faculty members in college committees may encourage faculty adoption of SGLE. Colleges that use participative forms of management that include faculty could result in an institution positioned to respond to the demands of

today's world (Thaxter & Graham, 1999). Contemporary issues facing community colleges include increasing demand for higher levels of student success (Bailey & Morest, 2006). Higher adoption of SGLE among part-time faculty, which constitutes a significant number of instructional workers, could be essential to increasing student success.

### **Theoretical Implications**

This research study employed Blackburn and Lawrence's (1985) theoretical framework from *Faculty at Work*. This framework suggests that faculty performance is the result of individual characteristics, as well as attributes of the employing institution, working together.

As Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) hypothesized about faculty motivation, behavior, and productivity *at work*, this author questioned the relationship between the theoretical perspectives and faculty focus on teaching, research, and service at their institutions. This framework states that individuals assess their abilities and interests (self-knowledge) in relationship to how they perceive what is important to their organization (social knowledge). Things perceived to be important receive attention; those perceived as unimportant get less attention. Faculty are motivated to act based on what they believe they can do and what they perceive as important from their institution.

As this researcher pondered the relationship between the findings of the research questions and the theoretical framework, the following ideas emerged:

1. This study focused on part-time faculty and whether or not they participated in Structured Group Learning Experiences (SGLE), and it also



asked whether SGLE part-time faculty participated (or those who did not) in college committees and task forces.

2. The author could incorporate the Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) framework inasmuch as cognitive (making decisions about individual behavior based on maximizing gains and minimizing losses) and non-cognitive factors that affect their behavior (decisions based on institutional and internal needs) were relevant to the study.
3. Part time faculty did respond to the research questions by internalizing the needs of their students and themselves to create a structured learning environment and to participate in their colleges' committees and task forces.
4. Part-time faculty also revealed their "self-knowledge" and "social knowledge" through their self-efficacy and through the process of how they perceived, positively, their environment.
5. Although the study suggested the differences in behavior of part-time faculty who used SGLE and those who did not use SGLE and "commitment" it seemed clear that when part-time faculty became involved in SGLE, they did so to engage and support students in a collaborative learning environment.
6. Moreover, the issues of relevance of institutional support of part-time faculty remained, even in this study, and that was based on common discrepancies between resources for full-time and part-time faculty.

The theoretical framework states that intrinsic abilities and interests may lead individuals to seek improvement in their teaching practice. Therefore, part-time faculty members given opportunities to discover new ways of teaching—perhaps through planning and designing the SGLE experience—may be more likely to improve their teaching through these collaborative experiences (Roueche, Roueche & Millirion, 1995). In order for this to occur, institutions may need to be intentional in their hiring decisions. This intentionality could include extending the hiring timeline so that part-time faculty have opportunities to collaborate with full time faculty to design and plan SGLE as a prelude to instruction.

Second, colleges depend on part-time faculty to educate their students. Yet these institutions fail to provide full support to this portion of their instructional workforce. For an example, part time faculty do not often receive important information about resources available to help their students be successful. Through the social knowledge component of the theory undergirding this study, part-time faculty may experience marginalization on campus. Consequently, part-time faculty may feel undervalued and, hence unwilling to shepherd students through collaborative experiences that will increase the likelihood of success (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014a).

Third, because they do not receive important information, many part-time faculty may be uncertain about the institution's stance on student success. This lack of clarity may discourage part-time faculty from participating in efforts to

improve student success. Relative to this study, this may translate into low levels of teaching or facilitating SGLE.

The findings of this study appear to strengthen this theoretical framework. As applied to the study, this theoretical model suggests that faculty involved in teaching SGLE are more likely to be involved in planning SGLE. Similarly, part-time faculty who teach or facilitate SGLE may be more likely to participate in a college committee that contributes to broader college business. This may hold true because administrative and faculty leaders invited Survey respondents to participate in activities to plan SGLE, as well as to have a voice in college committees and decision-making. Through these invitations, the college signals that part-time faculty are important employees, capable of contributing to student success.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The findings from this study can begin to help administrative and faculty leaders within the Kentucky System identify and support existing and emerging approaches to ensure that part-time faculty members can be involved to improve the success of students through increased use of SGLE in classroom instruction.

Between 2011 and 2016, part-time faculty members in the Kentucky System represented 50-60% of the total instructional workforce (KCTCS, 2016). For fall 2017, the Kentucky System employed 3,073 total faculty and 57% (or 2,098) were part-time (KCTCS, 2017). In light of significant reductions to college budgets because of falling enrollments and declining legislative allocations, there

is an expectation that colleges in Kentucky will continue to rely on part-time faculty (J. Cecil, Personal communication, March 2, 2018). The number of part-time faculty members in the Kentucky System alone creates an imperative for college and system administration to begin involving this group in efforts to lift student success.

Secondly, community college scholars have concerns about the impact of using part-time faculty on student success. Two studies suggest that increasing the usage of part-time faculty members has a dampening effect on community college student retention (Jacoby, 2006) and graduation (Ehrenburg, 2006).

The advent of performance-based funding in Kentucky higher education is an important driver that might prompt intentional consideration and action to improve support and inclusion of part-time faculty as a potential mechanism to increase student success. The theory undergirding performance-based funding for Kentucky's higher education institutions is to connect funding to institutional outcomes such as persistence and completion. To encourage part-time faculty involvement, college and system administrators may want to take advantage of self-knowledge and social knowledge, to incentivize the use of SGLE:

1. *Extend the hiring timeline for part-time faculty.* Increasing the time between hiring and start of classes would afford part-time faculty the opportunity to work with full-time faculty to design and plan instructional delivery approaches, to include the use of SGLE.

2. *Assess and inventory college efforts to support part-time faculty.* The assessment would identify possible gaps and opportunities that lead to an improved future state. The following questions could drive this process:

- How many part-time faculty does your college employ?
- What percent of your college instructional workforce are part-time faculty?
- On average, how many courses do part-time faculty teach each semester?
- What support does your college offer part-time faculty?

The results would establish a baseline or current state as a prelude to defining an improved future state.

3. *Highlight and scale Jefferson Community and Technical College's (JCTC) New Adjunct Academy as a promising practice for adoption and adaptation at other colleges within the Kentucky System.* Intentional efforts to engage part-time faculty are emerging and new within the Kentucky System. An informal survey of college personnel indicated that three colleges hosted programs to support part-time faculty members. Of the three, two college programs were informal and emergent. The academy at JCTC was the only formal structured program in the Kentucky System. This program is a cohort-based professional development program designed to better connect and engage part-time faculty in the life and work of JCTC and to create a community of adjuncts invested in

developing their leadership skills (R. Davis, personal communication, November 2015). To accomplish the desired outcome, the academy provides participants \$1,600 to attend four sessions:

Table 19.

*Adjunct Academy Workshop Sessions*

Workshop	Description
Orientation	Topics for this one-day session include the community college mission, student services, records management, online instructional expectations and library services.
Integration with the Learning Commons and Academic Student Support	This session focuses on the delivery of direct services to students. The session introduces the structure and function of academic student support and participants receive training to deliver services. At the conclusion of the training, participants can self-select to receive compensation for working in their chosen area.
Achieving the Dream (Student Success)	The third session integrates participants in new initiatives focused on student success and completion through the <i>Achieving the Dream</i> project underway at JCTC. This session also includes an in-depth training session on serving under-resourced students and works on social equity issues.
Teaching and Learning	The final session focuses on pedagogical practice and methodology for the classroom including active learning techniques, collaborative learning etc. There is also discussion on retention strategies.

The academy integrates part-time faculty into the business of the college, which is to support student access and success. Moreover, the academy involves these part-time faculty members into the college's major student success initiative, which includes promoting and encouraging the use of active, collaborative learning techniques in the classroom. This integration

appears to elevate part-time faculty participation in the shared governance structure at JCTC.

As the academy evolves, Davis (2019) noted that participation has been good. More than 120 part-time faculty members participated during the first four years of the program. Further, Davis observed several program graduates participating in shared governance and volunteering on committees at the college (Personal communication, November 15, 2016).

4. *Identify existing and innovative grassroots initiatives that involve part-time faculty in student success efforts.* These initiatives can provide all faculty ways to lead and be involved. Further, these initiatives can provide part-time faculty members opportunities to bring forward their expertise and abilities for the benefit of students and the organization. There is a possibility that part-time faculty can help colleges overcome institutional blind spots with regard to improving student success.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

As discussed above, much of the research, publications, and discussion around the study of community college faculty (part-time and full-time) originated a decade or more ago. The study presented herein may increase understanding and contribute to the research annals. There is a continual need to expand the research to include contemporary perspectives. Ex post facto research is a useful approach when studying hypothesized relationships in the social sciences, although there are limitations. This design does not allow the researcher to

manipulate the variables. In addition, it is unclear whether the appropriate factor(s) were included in this study. In fact, the observed findings could be the result of an unidentified variable.

Other limitations of this research include the use of archived data, which constrained the type of questions and variables explored; and the data collection methods. These limitations lead to the following recommendations for future research. These recommendations are rooted in the literature:

- *Confirm the impact of SGLE use and non-use with regard to student outcomes.* The Center (2014a) reports that SGLE increase student engagement and success. The purpose of this study would be to quantify and confirm the impact of SGLE on student final grades. The study would compare final grades of two groups of students from the Kentucky System: those who participate in SGLE and those who do not participate in SGLE.
- *Quantify the impact of part-time faculty on student outcomes.* Two studies in the literature review (Eagan & Jaeger, 2009; Jacoby, 2006) suggested that part-time faculty employment has a dampening effect on community college student success. One study from the literature review (Yu, 2013) indicated that part-time faculty employment has no impact on student outcomes. This mixed review indicates a need to confirm the impact of part-time faculty in the Kentucky System. Since the use of part-time faculty will continue given budgetary trends, the research findings would provide administrators evidence about this population of instructors and



perhaps catalyze actions to integrate and support them as critical to improve student success. This study is particularly important in the wake of performance based funding. The intent would be to understand the relationship between use of part-time faculty and their effect on student outcomes.

- *Survey all part-time faculty from the Kentucky System about their use of SGLE.* Baker et al. (1998) and Grubb (1999) suggested a direct correlation between the length of teaching experience and teaching effectiveness. In this study, teaching experience appeared to have a statistically insignificant relationship with the use of SGLE. The purposes of the recommended study would include the adaptation of the Survey instrument to collect demographic information (i.e. gender, race, and years of teaching experience) and to confirm the relationship between the prefaced demographics and teaching/facilitating SGLE. An additional reason for this study would include increasing the participation of part-time faculty in the Survey.
- *Interview part-time faculty to learn more about their involvement.* During the course of this research, numerous questions emerged about the experiences of part-time faculty within the Kentucky System. The study would provide descriptive information about how part-time faculty in Kentucky are involved, which could help focus college and system administrators in Kentucky efforts to understand and support part-time

faculty. Questions that could be answered during a following up qualitative study:

- Discuss your involvement in college committees and task forces
  - What topics or areas do the committees you serve on focus?
  - Who engaged you to participate in the committee(s)?
  - What role do you play in these committees?
  - What types of decisions does your committee make?
  - Have you seen evidence of your committee recommendations implemented?
- *Extend and broaden the geographic scope of this study to include all states that comprise the Southern Regional Education Board.* This study would be an expansion of the study discussed above and include more faculty to support experimental research, the use of robust inferential statistical analyses to solidify the findings, and perhaps lead to the development of theory. This study could also address the delimitation of this study and perhaps provide results that could be relevant to a larger swath of community colleges on the way to a national study of all community colleges.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this research was to identify and explore individual and organizational factors that may relate to the use/non-use (defined as teaching or facilitating) of structured group learning experiences (SGLE) among part-time faculty members from the Kentucky Community and Technical College System

(hereafter the Kentucky System). SGLE are collaborative learning experiences that increase student engagement (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014a).

The major findings of this study suggest that part-time faculty members who taught an SGLE were more likely to plan at least one SGLE than those who did not teach an SGLE. In addition, the research findings suggest that part-time faculty members who taught an SGLE were more likely to participate on a college committee or task force than that of those who did not teach an SGLE.

An additional major takeaway from this study includes an understanding that for the near future, community college administrators will continue to

- Rely on part-time faculty to increase completion rates of a diverse student body. This segment of the instructional workforce will likely continue to grow in number as the economic situation becomes more constrained;
- Pay attention to the outcomes, such as student persistence, completion and graduation. This represents a paradigm shift to student success in the context of performance-based funding, while continuing to ensure the historic open-access mission.

At the intersection of these two requirements, administrators must answer the following question: How will community college administrators achieve the mission and related goals without increasing the inclusion, engagement and success of part-time faculty members?

One answer lies in the results of this study, which suggests that the professional life of part-time faculty members who teach or facilitate SGLE are

more likely to be involved in the design of their classes as well as broader business of the institution. The literature to this point suggests that part-time faculty are isolated and disconnected from their institutions, its students, full-time faculty and staff. The findings from this study provide tentative though important empirical evidence, which appears to, support the need for institutions to provide part-time faculty professional development that focuses on infusing their courses with structured group learning experiences. Part-time faculty are a significant segment of the community college instructional workforce. These professionals, who are highly skilled, impassioned, and committed, are essential members of the community of learners who strive alongside full time faculty and staff to achieve higher levels of success among diverse students who enter the community college open doors.

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