A CASE STUDY TO EXAMINE INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS
FACILITATING AND INHIBITING FACULTY PREPARATION
FOR TEACHING IN AN ONLINE MBA PROGRAM

A Dissertation in
Workforce Education and Development
by
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors that enabled and constrained faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program. Using the framework of Transformation Learning Theory to guide the research, this study enhances the field of online learning and higher education because it brings understanding to the topics of online education, faculty preparation, and online MBA programs. This study funneled existing literature and research related to the following five areas that laid the foundation for the purpose of this study: Force Field analysis as a framework for organizational analysis and change; online education principles for faculty; developing faculty competencies for online teaching; institutional resources for online teaching preparation; and faculty preparation for teaching in online MBA programs.

The single-site case study method was used to examine faculty preparation to teach in an online MBA program at a US university. The research questions were:

1. What were the facilitating factors at the institution that enabled faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program?
2. What were the inhibiting factors at the institution that constrained faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program?

An original interview instrument was developed using the assistance of five individuals serving as key informants. Data collection consisted of interviews with nine faculty members, interviews with three individuals that served in instructional design and management roles, and other primary and secondary sources of data. Collected data were coded using open and axial coding techniques.
Analysis of data resulted in development of five themes of institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors that enabled and constrained faculty preparation: Energy and Effort, Pedagogical Shifts, Technology Interface, Institutional Support, and Instructional Design and Program Support. Findings from this study could help orient institutions and faculty preparing to deliver and teach online MBA degree programs. The information gathered could be used by faculty, universities administrators, business schools administrators, program chairs and directors of online programs, and faculty development professionals to understand the institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors for faculty members preparing to teach online. By taking active steps to prepare and develop faculty to teach online, university institutions may support faculty with opportunities to develop not only discipline-specific business competencies, but also delivery-specific online teaching competencies.
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Sameer G. Kashyap, who is no longer with us, but lives in our hearts. Sameer taught me about dedication, joy, and unassuming acceptance of all people. With my family, all things are possible.
Chapter 1

Introduction

For higher education institutions with business schools, the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree may be considered the most recognized business degree, representing 72% of graduate business masters degrees conferred by US institutions annually (Business school data trends, 2012). With the increased growth of online and distance education, enrollments in online MBA programs represented approximately 9.6% of enrollments of all MBA programs in 2011 (Business school data trends, 2012). Similarly, “technology is one of the most compelling issues in higher education overall and in faculty development in particular. [Faculty] are deeply concerned about and engaged in issues of technology and teaching” (Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy, Beach, 2006, p. 35).

This research study was designed to investigate institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors that enabled and constrained faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program. This study enhances innovation in the field of online learning and higher education because it adds research to the intersection of online education, faculty preparation, and online MBA programs. Due to growth in the market of online education, interest in Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC) and Massive Open Credit Courses (MOCC), increased awareness of competency-based education, scrutiny of the cost of education, and the changing perception of the value of higher education, the landscape of online education is changing. In addition, the landscape of the MBA degree market is changing, with trends in lower cost providers entering the market, increased competition of traditional models of delivering education, disruptive market alternatives, and increased demand for global or internationally focused programs (Bisoux, 2013). With these changes, it is important for higher education institutions and
departments offering online MBA programs to understand the institutional factors inhibiting and facilitating the preparation of faculty teaching in online programs.

Faculty preparation for teaching online can vary greatly, especially with the lack of industry standards for faculty development in online education and with varying policies at higher education institutions. “Over the decades, many institutions have established centers, committees, or other structures to manage faculty development activities. At the same time, faculty development has become a professional field in which individuals acquire specific skills for supporting the professional growth of faculty colleagues” (Sorcinelli et al. 2006 p. xiii). As the landscape of online business degrees in higher education grows to become even more competitive, factors such as qualifications of faculty members and their preparation to teach online may become even more defining in distinguishing perceived quality among online MBA programs.

**Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this descriptive case study was to investigate faculty preparation to teach in an online MBA program at a US university. The research questions were:

1. What were the facilitating factors at the institution that enabled faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program?
2. What were the inhibiting factors at the institution that constrained faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program?

**Significance of the Study**

In January 2013, the US News and World Report released rankings of online graduate business programs, including the MBA degree. Of the five major categories on which the programs were assessed, the “Faculty Credentials and Training” category was worth 11% of the
overall ranking. In the US News methodology report, this “Faculty Credentials and Training” category is further qualified with the statement, “Strong online business programs employ instructors with academic credentials one would expect from a campus-based program, and have the resources to train these instructors on how to teach distance learners” (Brooks & Morse, 2013).

Institutions considering development, implementation, and redesign of faculty preparation programs for teaching in online MBA programs may ask questions like: What type of faculty development activities are in place to prepare for online teaching at various institutions? Are faculty members applying what they learn from their preparation to their online teaching? What activities are most helpful in enabling faculty preparing to teach online? What should be included in faculty preparation programs? What activities and experiences are currently missing from programs or the institution that would be helpful to start including or establish? What role does the institution currently have in faculty preparation to teach online?

The findings from this case study provide information into facilitating and inhibiting institutional factors related to faculty preparation to teach online MBA programs. In this study, questions about facilitating and inhibiting institutional factors related to preparation for faculty members teaching in an online MBA program were posed directly to the faculty members and other individuals involved in the preparation of the faculty to teach online through interviews.

Findings from this study would help orient institutions and faculty preparing to deliver and teach online MBA degree programs. The information gathered could be used by faculty, university administrators, business school administrators, program chairs and directors of online programs, and faculty development professionals to understand the institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors for faculty members preparing to teach online. By taking active steps to
prepare and develop the faculty to teach online, the university institutions may support faculty with opportunities to develop not only discipline-specific business competencies, but also delivery-specific online teaching competencies. In turn, programs can promote the research-backed faculty preparation initiatives in the recruitment of new faculty, as part of the data provided to national ranking surveys, as part of regional and AACSB accreditation reviews, and as a marketing tool to promote the quality of faculty teaching in the degree program to alumni, current and future donors, current students, and prospects considering application to the online MBA degree program. This study provides research-based evidence of institutional factors that enable and constrain faculty preparation for teaching in an online delivery format.

Limitations

For the purposes of this descriptive case study, the researcher interviewed faculty members that teach online MBA programs, and other individuals involved in preparation of the faculty members to teach online from one institution within the United States. The selected institution is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Faculty members not teaching in the online MBA program, or individuals not involved in faculty preparation were excluded for the purposes of this research study.

A study by Robinia and Anderson (2010) suggest that “online teaching efficacy levels may peak and begin to level after the third online teaching experience…suggest[ing] that administrators interested in increasing the online teaching efficacy of their faculty need to encourage and support online teaching efforts especially through the third online teaching course experience” (p. 174). Considering this previous study, the faculty members interviewed had at least three semesters of experience teaching in an online MBA program. The researcher was limited to the participants she gained access to, and only those participants who chose to
participate in the study and interview process; thus excluding people whom the researcher did not have access to, or people who chose not to participate.

**Assumptions**

According to Patton (2002) “qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (p. 341). It is assumed that each participant was willing and capable to provide thick descriptions of their experiences (Patton, 2002, p. 437). For the purposes of this study, assumptions were made that each interviewed participant was knowledgeable and truthful about his/her faculty preparation and online MBA teaching experiences.

**Theoretical Framework**

Preparing to teach online can be a transformative process for faculty members. By changing the delivery method, from a classroom-based, in-person, face to face format, to a distance learning, web-based, online format, faculty members must consider how to convey their content expertise, educational and expert insights, to students and learners they may never meet in a face-to-face environment. Is it enough to upload the same slides used in the classroom to an online format and assign the same readings, audio or videotape the lectures, and refer to it as an online course? Faculty members experienced with online teaching say it is not enough, and they find themselves thinking differently about their preparation, teaching, and role in the learning environment (Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

Transformative learning theory, referenced often as part of adult learning theory and practice, can be used to describe what faculty members may encounter and experience while preparing to teach online. Faculty members may experience a shift in their previously held beliefs and assumptions about online education, toward a new or adjusted paradigm of what it
means to teach and learn online. Mezirow (1991) describes transformational learning in the following way:

Perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective; and, finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings. (p. 167).

McQuiggan (2012) suggests, “Change in previously held assumptions and beliefs is at the heart of transformative learning theory. Professional development for faculty preparing to teach online presents a unique opportunity to assess previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching” (p. 30). McQuiggan (2012) adds that “an important aspect of faculty development t involves reflection on teaching experiences, and this is a vital component in a process of transformation that must be included in a faculty development program for online teaching” (p. 56).

Assumptions faculty previously held about the teaching and learning environment may no longer apply, or may need to be adapted or oriented to the online education environment. Factors to be considered include concepts such as: how faculty connect with students, integration of technology into courses, viewing students as contributors to their own learning with faculty members as facilitators of learning, the value and logistics of offering office hours, assigning group work, managing teams in the course, making courses accessible for hearing and visually impaired students, working with technology help desk support teams and instructional designers, making large investments of time upfront in the course design process, and perception and reality of how online teaching is valued and positioned at the institution. The concepts noted here may
be new topics to be considered that may influence and transform faculty teaching styles from face-to-face instruction to the online environment.

**Definition of Key Terms**

Below is a brief list of definitions that may be helpful in the context of this case study research.

**Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).**

“AACSB is an association of educational institutions, corporations and other organizations dedicated to the advancement of quality business education worldwide” (Business school data trends, 2012).

**Construct validity**

“Establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied” (Yin, 2003, p. 34).

**Faculty development**

“Faculty Development refers to those programs which focus on the individual faculty member. The most common focus for programs of this type is the faculty member as a teacher. Faculty development specialists provide consultation on teaching, including class organization, evaluation of students, in-class presentation skills, questioning and all aspects of design and presentation. They also advise faculty on other aspects of teacher/student interaction, such as advising, tutoring, discipline policies and administration” (Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education, 2007).

**MOCC**

Massive open credit course.

**MOOC**
Massive open online course (Catropa & Andrews, 2012).

Reliability

“Demonstrating that the operations of a study—such as the data collection procedures—can be repeated, with the same results” (Yin, 2003, p. 34).
Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter was to review the existing literature and research, and to ground the need for this study. Significant previous research has been done in the area of delivery of online education (Mayadas & Yeo, 2010; Moore, 1990, 2007; Moore & Kearsley, 2012; Shea & Bidjerano, 2009; Stephenson, 2001). More recently, researchers have begun to examine online teaching pedagogy, and often in the context of how similar and dissimilar it is to face-to-face teaching (Baran, Correia & Thompson, 2013; Forsey, Low & Glance, 2013; Lawrence & Lentle, 2013; Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Palmer & Schueths, 2013; Tsai, 2013).

In this study, the researcher has chosen to focus on institutional factors that may facilitate and inhibit faculty preparation for teaching online. This is different from the literature previously cited for two reasons: it is specifically focused on preparation of teaching, rather than the actual teaching; and because it is focused specifically on institutional factors. Figure 2.1 shows the map for the literature review, which visually demonstrates the narrowing of the larger body of online education, to specific previous literature highlighted in this chapter, which eventually funnels into the research questions of this study. In this chapter, literature was highlighted from five key areas for the purpose of study. First, Force Field analysis is described as a framework for organization analysis as it relates to institutional factors that work for and against change. Second, while widely published research exists about teacher effectiveness in secondary schools [Guskey, 1998; Housego, 1992; Ross, 1994; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy & Hoy, 1998; less research is available related to teacher effectiveness in online higher education. Therefore, distance education principles for faculty effective faculty instruction are discussed, and key practitioners associated with preparing faculty for effective online teaching are highlighted.
The third area of literature is about online teaching competencies, and how an institution may facilitate faculty developing those competencies. The fourth area of literature relates to resources for online teaching preparation. The fifth area of literature narrows specifically to MBA.
programs and business schools. The funneling of these five areas of existing literature demonstrates the foundation for the purpose of this focused research study.

**Force Field Analysis**

The theory of Force Field Analysis is relevant to the topic of this research study because it serves as a lens to describe institutional forces of change working for and against faculty preparing to teach online. Teaching online is considered a transformational process, where institutions and faculty are beginning to think about their teaching in terms of different pedagogy for online students versus face-to-face students, the technology being used to deliver content to the learner is different, and the student experience shifts to a new education delivery format and platform. With that, the Force Field Analysis theory provides a framework or process by which to examine the facilitating and inhibiting factors at the institutional level that may be influencing the goal of delivering online education.

“Force field analysis has been widely used by organization development practitioners to plan and implement organizational changes” (Thomas, 1985, p. 54). Kurt Lewin, the researcher credited with the theory of Force Field Analysis, which is presented visually in Figure 2.2, theorized that an institution, people’s behaviors, events within the institution, and change were influenced by facilitating or enabling forces that helped move the institution toward the goal, and inhibiting or constraining forces that moved the institution away from the goal.

Best described as a tug of war, a balance of forces and influences may facilitate and enable change. “The concepts of a psychological force, of tension, of conflicts as equilibria of forces, of force fields and of inducing fields, have slowly widened their range of application from the realm of individual psychology into the realm of processes and events which had been
Figure 2.2. Force Field Analysis and Organizational Change. Adapted from Thomas, J. (1985). Force field analysis: A new way to evaluate your strategy. *Long Range Planning, 18*(6), 54-59.

The domain of sociology and cultural anthropology” (Gold, 1985, p. 35). Figure 2.3 presents a Force Field Analysis diagram that serves as an example of forces operating in changing strategy.
Applying Force Field Analysis to Online Education

The change management concepts of Force Field Analysis can be broadly applied to numerous situations or professional fields. For the purpose of this study, the researcher reviewed relevant existing literature that specifically applied the concepts of Force Field Analysis to the area of online education (Lifter, Kruger, Okun, Tabol, Poklop, & Shishmanian, 2005; Barker, 2003). This is noteworthy because it shows precedent for applying Force Field Analysis to the field, and shows that the current study adds further insight and understanding of existing literature, particularly related to institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors.
A case study by Lifter, Kruger, Okun, Tabol, Poklop, & Shishmanian (2005) describes how a program to prepare personnel to work with infants and families from diverse backgrounds was transformed from a traditional classroom format to a web-based blended learning format. As part of the change process, Force Field Analysis was used to understand the internal and external forces influencing the possible transformation from a classroom to a web-based online delivery format. The authors suggested that the “article is intended to be instructive to others who are wrestling with how to adapt in organizational contexts that are dynamic and increasingly technological” (Lifter et al, 2005, p. 15). This article was relevant to the current study, because examination of the context of the organization, or institutional factors, were foundational to the research questions.

In the case study, an existing program preparing personnel to work with children and families from diverse backgrounds was being considered for transformation from classroom to web-based delivery. The program was funded by training grants from the United States Department of Education and Office of Special Education Programs. Future funding was in jeopardy of being cut. The university institution offering the program changed from a quarter to semester based academic calendar system. With these external factors in motion, consideration of program transformation became a particularly relevant issue (Lifter et al, 2005).

For data collection, practitioners in approved early intervention programs were sought for information about external factors of the personnel training program; faculty were sought for information about factors internal to the personnel training program. Using the Massachusetts Department of Public Health directory, potential practitioner participants were identified. A total of twenty-one practitioner participants volunteered for the interviews. Of the twenty-one participants, thirteen participants did not have the certification associated with the personnel
training program. The interviews were conducted by two counseling psychology doctoral
students. Practitioner participants were asked questions in the interview about the following
areas:

- Barriers to attending classes on campus
- Appeal of courses offered on the internet
- Respondents’ internet access
- Familiarity with the internet for academic purposes
- Concerns about a preservice program with a substantial online component (Lifter et al, 2005, p. 18).

Each of the seven faculty members involved in the program were interviewed in this study about
factors internal to the organization as it related to transformation of the personnel program to
web-based delivery. Faculty participants were asked questions in the interview about the
following areas:

- Faculty member’ reasons for participation in the program
- Organizational supports for, as well as barriers to, faculty and student participation in the
  program
- How the implementation of the program might be improved (Lifter et al, 2005, p. 18).

Figure 2.4 summarizes findings of the interviews by showing the key driving and restraining
forces for the program transformation in the format of a Force Field Analysis.
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<td>Cost</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time, effort, and financial expense of training</td>
<td>→</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increases in children, continued need for personnel</td>
<td>→</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficulties in recruiting and retaining personnel in state</td>
<td>→</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy (state certification)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development of alternative systems (i.e., portfolio)</td>
<td>→</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational context</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Semester transition (opportunity)</td>
<td>→</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Infrastructure for Web-based instruction</td>
<td>→</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Financial support for transformation to hybrid</td>
<td>→</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Responsibility of faculty across multiple programs</td>
<td>←</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Idea champion and others provide nucleus</td>
<td>→</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Faculty to learn Web-based technology</td>
<td>←</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Based on this Force Field Analysis process, the driving forces for change were deemed far greater in influence that the forces restraining the transformation to a blended online, web-based program. This Force Field Analysis was used in the decision to transform the program, but also
in various aspects of the actual transformation. When making strategic decisions about the program, the internal and external environmental factors were considered in the program design and delivery (Lifter et al, 2005).

The next article related to Force Field Analysis as applied to online education specifically examines how an institution used “the process of creating a faculty development program for asynchronous computer-based instruction offered at a distance (online courses)” (Barker, 2003, p. 273). When Sacred Heart University decided to put a Registered Nurse (RN) to Bachelor of Science (BS) Nursing program online, “the nursing faculty involved in this innovation had no experience in online teaching and did not even know what an online course ‘looked like’” (Barker, 2003, p. 273). Part of the process of developing the program involved developing faculty development programming that would prepare faculty to teach in the online program. Barker (2003) described that “before embarking on the implementation of online courses and a faculty development initiative, gaining the support and enthusiasm of the faculty [was] crucial (p. 274). Through a review of existing literature, “several factors [that] facilitated the willingness of faculty embrace distance education” were identified including:

- The opportunity to reach remote students
- Intellectual challenge and the opportunity to develop new ideas
- The opportunity to work with more motivated students
- Release time and other financial reward
- Opportunities for research
- Motivation to use technology
- The opportunity for recognition
• The opportunity to utilize support services
• Reduced travel
• Increased course quality
• Time flexibility (Barker, 2003, p. 274).

Based on a review of existing literature, five concerns or barriers were identified:

• Increased workload
• Altered role of the instructor
• Lack of technical and administrative support
• Reduced course quality
• Negative attitudes of other faculty

While the enabling factors “seemed to facilitate [their] adoption of online courses,” the institution also recognized the need to develop strategies to overcome the concerns and barriers (Barker, 2003, p. 274). Table 2.1 shows the institutional strategies developed to overcome the barriers of getting buy-in from the faculty members in preparation for teaching in the institution’s online program. This article is another example of how an institution can use the Force Field Analysis process to gain understanding of facilitating and inhibiting factors, and use it as a mechanism for discussing strategy to overcome the barriers.
Table 2.1.

**Barriers to Change and Change Strategies for Overcoming them**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Concerns/Barriers</th>
<th>Strategies to Overcome Resistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased workload</td>
<td>• Set reasonable limit for class size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reimburse or provide release time for course development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide support of instructional design consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide individualized technical support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Altered role of the instructor</td>
<td>• Assist with paradigm shift from teaching to learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognize that this shift is happening in the traditional classroom as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Base course design on sound principles of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of technical and administrative support</td>
<td>• Hire adequate support in the Information Technology department for software training and individual support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Set up a Help Desk for students and faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assign an Online Coordinator within the department/college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced course quality</td>
<td>• Integrate the online learning into the program evaluation plan and the outcome assessment plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Compare traditional and online courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Determine sound educational theory and principles to underlie course development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use instructional design consultant and/or principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative attitudes of other faculty</td>
<td>• Develop faculty innovators to serve as alternative positive role models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assure equal recognition for online courses and traditional courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reward innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Voluntary participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Adapted from Barker, A. (2003). Faculty development for teaching online: Educational and Technological Issues. *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 34(6), 273-278.*

**Known Professionals in the Field of Online Education Preparation**

With the growth of online education, researchers, practitioners, and faculty members have become involved in better understanding online education and how it is beginning to transform the way one looks at the delivery of education by way of remote technology. For the
purposes of this research study, the researcher looked at the works of two professionals in the practice of faculty preparation for online education; Alexandra M. Pickett and Dr. Lawrence C. Ragan. The researcher elected to examine the work of these two online education faculty preparation professionals because they are recognized experts in the field of faculty preparation for teaching online, they have won awards in recognition of their professional accomplishments, they have been in the field for several years after having served in various related professional roles, and their works relate the transformative nature of faculty preparation for teaching online. Work by Ragan and Pickett provides research and practice framework for behaviors for successfully online teaching.

**Work by Lawrence C. Ragan, Ph.D.**

Lawrence C. Ragan, Ph.D. is a director of the Center for Online Innovation in Learning (COIL) under the offices of the Vice President for Outreach and Vice Provost for Online Education at Pennsylvania State University (PSU). As a director of COIL, Ragan helps direct the COIL’s mission of research, scholarship, technology innovation, and leadership development programming. Ragan previously served as the director of Faculty Development, and previously as director of Instructional Design and Development for PSU World Campus, PSU’s campus for delivering online education. Since 2009, Ragan has served as a co-director of the Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning (IELOL) in partnership with the Sloan Consortium, and as an Affiliate Faculty member for PSU’s College of Agriculture. Ragan’s more recent work has been related to the topics of identifying competencies for online teaching success, describing online quality instruction, maintaining teaching presence, and faculty development programming (COIL at PSU, 2013). In addition to the research highlighted in this section, Ragan also led a
study examining the competencies for online teaching success which is described later in this chapter.

Ragan published work about the Innovations in Distance Education (IDE) project that was launched in 2005 as an initiative “to help faculty at Penn State, Lincoln, and Cheyney universities create a supportive institutional culture in which the possibilities of distance education could be realized” (Ragan, 2000, p.10). This research initiative recognized that “although the planned learning goals need not be altered for delivery via distance education, new instructional design strategies may need to be considered to support the intended outcomes” (Ragan, 2000, p. 16). This is important to consider, as what the transformational aspects of online education is not necessarily what is to be learned, but how it is to be delivered and learned. “Instructional design and development support should include a wide range of services to faculty in the creation and preparation of instructional materials for delivery via distance education” (Ragan, 2000, p. 16).

The publication by Ragan (2000) goes on to make recommendations and describe institutional support that should be in place to deliver online education:

The overall support system should address, at the least, technical support, instructional resources, faculty development, instructional design and development, and policy changes aimed at creating an environment conducive to distance education, and it should include:

1. A comprehensive system of technical support services should be in place to ensure the effective use of technologies in distance education programming for learners, instructors, and staff.
2. Faculty should have access to adequate support and development services in the areas of applied instructional technology and effective distance education methodology.

3. Support systems should be designed to provide 24/7 service for faculty and learners participating in distance education programs. This means that some level of access to support is provided 24 hours per day, 7 days a week.

4. Regular feedback mechanisms should be designed and implemented to assess the success and failures of the various support systems created for the distance education system.

5. Extending the distance education mission of the institution requires policy adjustments and accommodations for supporting the distance education instructor and learners. (Ragan, 2000, pp. 20-21)

With Ragan’s depth of experience in the field of online education, he is often requested to provide guidance, lectures, and presentations that can be specifically applied immediately, similar to on-the-job training or consulting. Ragan’s article titled “10 Principles of effective online teaching: Best practices in distance education” (n.d.) serves as the type of professional framework guide that he is often called upon to share. This is how Ragan has described the shifted pedagogy of the online classroom:

In the online classroom, an entirely new set of variables enters the equation. It’s a little like trying to drive in a foreign country. You know how to drive, just like you know how to teach, but it sure is hard to get the hang of driving on the left side of the road, you’re
not quite sure how far a kilometer is, and darn it if those road signs aren’t all in Japanese.

(Ragan, n.d., p. 2)

Ragan goes on to describe how the online classroom is different from what is known in the traditional classroom, and provides ten principles of online teaching. When studied in depth and applied to the online classroom, they principles may be applicable to the faculty members preparing to teach, the instructional designer that may be helping the faculty prepare a course for delivery, the institution in better understanding the challenges faced by faculty, and what can be done to better support faculty in this new online classroom environment.

The asynchronous online classroom has little or no similarity to the classroom experience. There may be no class schedule, no meeting room or physical location, and, certainly in the asynchronous classroom, no defined timeframe for operation. Even the dynamics between teacher and student is challenged because online we can all appear to be equal. Other than a vague sense of responsibility to teach the course, the instructor has little definition of these new and often ill-defined operating parameters. The course instructor is left on their own to figure out what constitutes a successful learning experience. (Ragan, n.d., p. 3)

Ragan presents the following principles for effective online teaching:

- Show Up and Teach
- Practice Proactive Course Management Strategies
- Establish Patterns of Course Activities
- Plan for the Unplanned
- Response Requested and Expected
- Think Before You Write
• Help Maintain Forward Progress
• Safe and Secure
• Quality Counts
• (Double) Click a Mile on My Connection. (Ragan, n.d., p. 2)

After examining each principle in depth, it is noted that each provides guidance for how to teach in the online environment based on one’s understanding and previous experience of teaching or being in a classroom. This is particularly relevant to the current study because it further illustrates the transformative nature of online education, that preparing to teach online may be different from what a faculty member has previously experienced or considered, and may change how they come to know the delivery of education and teaching.

Work by Alexandra M. Pickett
Alexandra M. Pickett is the Associate Director of the State University of New York (SUNY) Learning Network (SLN). The SUNY SLN is “the asynchronous learning network for the State University of New York under the offices of the Provost and Advanced Learning and Information Services” (SLN Education at SUNY, 2013). Pickett is recognized in the field of online education for her career depth and experience in faculty development, course design, developing resources and processes to train faculty and other instructional designer in developing expertise in online education. In addition to her technical expertise, she has added to the publication of research and practice related to online teaching pedagogy, teaching presence, and scalable course design (Shea, Li & Pickett, 2006; Shea, Pickett & Pelz, 2003; SLN Education at SUNY, 2013).

With over nineteen years of experience with online education, Pickett was included in this dissertation’s review of existing work as a recognized professional in the field of online
education preparation because of her role as a professional educator that works on the cutting edge of practice. Similar to the participants interviewed in this research study, the researcher also noted that other professionals, including those in the instructional designer role, like Pickett, may be very closely connected to faculty preparation for teaching in online programs. Pickett represents a practitioner that serves a faculty support role. Pickett’s practice in the field remains ahead of the research associated with the emerging issues of online education, related technology, and pedagogy, similar to what is found in other fields when they are rapidly expanding. Pickett reaches her audience of faculty, instructional designers, and other practitioners beyond SUNY primarily through her use of messaging through social media, professional associations, and other public forums. Pickett uses over twenty five platforms and venues, including Twitter, Facebook, and blogs to maintain her comprehensive electronic footprint. Her contribution to the field of online education is made by providing practical tools, training, learning from her own work experiences, and making information about online education accessible to masses of people. Institutions may consider have practitioners or hiring consultants like Pickett, to examine institutional inhibiting and contributing factors that may exist, related to technology, pedagogy, course design, staffing, and university systems, to reduce barriers and enable faculty preparation for teaching online.

**Competencies for Online Teaching**

Previous research and literature exists about competencies related to online teaching, as well as information about resources available to learn about the competencies and associated best practices (Batts, Colaric, & McFadden, 2006; Gautreau, Street, Glaeser, 2008; Graham, Cagitay, Craner, & Lim, 2000; Watwood, 2009). Research looking at competencies for teaching online has been included in this chapter because it further illustrates the transformative nature of
teaching online. Skills and competencies for face-to-face teaching may differ from what is needed for teaching in an online delivery format. “Teaching in a technology-rich environment is complex, so the online instructor must possess a broader set of skills and competencies in order to ensure learner success” (Bigatel, Ragan, Kennan, May, & Redmond, 2012, p. 59). The literature in this area uses the term “competencies” more loosely than as specifically described by McLagan (1989) as “an area of knowledge or skill that is critical for producing key outputs” (p. 77). Instead, as Rothwell and Sredl (2000) describe, professionals may choose to use the term “competencies” to actually describe behaviors or attributes.

Previous literature about faculty preparation and development suggests that “content for specific institutional needs may vary. Institutional context variables must be considered in designing a suitable faculty development program” (Bigatel, Ragan, Kennan, May, Redmond, 2012). This is specifically relevant to the current research study that examined institutional factors related to faculty preparation for teaching online, and these factors may be similar and dissimilar to factors as other institutions. Institutions have adopted a variety of approaches as it relates to defining and establishing effective practices to make them most relevant to their own student, faculty, governing bodies, and strategic approaches to online and distance education (Bigatel et al., 2012; Moore, 2009).

Research by Bigatel, Ragan, Kennan, May, and Redmond (2012) was conducted to identify seven categories of competency for online teaching success. This particular study by Bigatel et al. (2012) was included in this literature review because “the goal [was] to bring more specificity to the content of a faculty development program. This approach might prove helpful to other institutions” (p. 64). Faculty development programs are considered part of the institution, and may serve as a facilitating and inhibiting factor for faculty preparation as it
relates to the research questions of this study. In the research by Bigatel et al. (2012), the term “competencies” is used to describe teaching behaviors (p. 59).

The overall purpose of the study by Bigatel et al (2012) “was to identify and categorize the critical competencies for online teaching success from the perspective of experienced online faculty and professionals such as instructional designers, online program managers, support and technical staff, and administrators” (59). More specifically, the research question for the study asks about “the key competencies (teaching behaviors) for successful online teaching” (Bigatel et al, 2012, 59). An online survey instrument was developed based on previous literature and consultation with faculty and staff with experience in online teaching. The survey asked participants to respond to statements related to teaching behaviors with a scale ranging from 1 to 7, where 1 was “not important” and 7 was “very important.” Participants for the survey were sought via professional associations, listservs, faculty associated with the researchers’ university, and through personal and professional contacts of the researchers. Potential participants were requested to contact the research team to request a unique pass code that would have assigned them to a particular survey, and therefore preventing a participant from completing the survey multiple times. Through this process, 260 pass codes were requested by potential participants, of which 197 surveys were submitted. Of the 197 survey respondents, 113 self-identified as female, sixty four self-identified as male, and twenty did not report in either category. Also, of the 197 respondents, there was a wide variety of self-identified responses related to teaching experience: “no teaching experience (n=17), less than 1 year (n=16), 1 to 3 years (n=57), 4 to 5 years (n=40), 6 to 9 years (n=40), 10 to 15 years (n=23), 16 to 20 years (n=2), and more than 20 (n=1). For the purposes of assessing the reliability of the survey, Cronbach’s Alpha was calculated (alpha = 0.94). A factor analysis was conducted to group the resulting approximately 100 survey items
responses into similar categories. Results from the factor analysis showed that seven categories of competency were identified for a total of 30 skills and behaviors that provide “an organizational structure that may aid the design and development of faculty development programs in order to adequately prepare online instructors” (Bigatel et al., 2012, p. 73). The seven categories of competency areas and 30 skill and behavior areas are shown in Table 2.2.

“Teaching in a technology-rich environment is complex, so the online instructor must possess a broader set of skills and competencies in order to ensure learner success” (Bigatel et al., 2012, p. 59). Based on their finding, Bigatel et al. (2012) suggest future research to “examine the individualization of competencies to match disciplines” (p. 74), thereby clustering individuals from various disciplines to see whether certain competencies are required for groups who teach in specific content areas. While the current study includes faculty members from multiple university departments, they all have the common experience of teaching in a graduate business MBA program delivered online.
Table 2.2.

Seven Competency Areas Including 30 Skills and Behaviors for Online Teaching Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Skill or Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Learning (10 items)</td>
<td>The instructor encourages students to interact with each other by assigning team tasks and projects, where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor includes group/team assignments where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor encourages students to share their knowledge and expertise with the learning community.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor encourages students to participate in discussion forums, where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor provides opportunities for hands-on practice so that students can apply learned knowledge to the real-world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor provides additional resources that encourage students to go deeper into the content of the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor encourages student-generated content as appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor facilitates learning activities that help students construct explanations/solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor uses peer assessment in his/her assessment of student work, where appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor shows respect to students in his/her communications with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration/Leadership (5 items)</td>
<td>The instructor makes grading visible for student tracking purposes.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor clearly communicates expected student behaviors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor is proficient in the chosen course management system (CMS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor adheres to the university’s policies regarding the Federal Educational Rights &amp; Privacy Act (FERPA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor integrates the use of technology that is meaningful and relevant to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Teaching/Responsiveness (5 items)</td>
<td>The instructor provides prompt, helpful feedback on assignments and exams that enhances learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor provides clear, detailed feedback on assignments and exams that enhances the learning experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor shows caring and concern that students are learning the course content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor helps keep the course participants on task.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor uses appropriate strategies to manage the online workload.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimedia Technology</td>
<td>The instructor uses a variety of multimedia technologies to achieve course objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor uses multimedia technologies that are appropriate for the learning activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Decorum (4 items)</td>
<td>The instructor helps students resolve conflicts that arise in collaborative teamwork.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor resolves conflicts when they arise in teamwork/group assignments.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor can effectively manage the course communications by providing a good model of expected behavior for all course communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor identifies areas of potential conflict within the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological Competence</td>
<td>The instructor is proficient with the technologies used in the online classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor is confident with the technology used in the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Enforcement</td>
<td>The instructor monitors students’ adherence to policies on plagiarism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The instructor monitors students’ adherence to Academic Integrity policies and procedures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Framework for Acquiring Online Teaching Competencies

Identification of competencies for teaching is a separate question from how to acquire those identified competencies and what institutions should know about designing and supporting faculty development programs. Literature about acquiring competencies for teaching online is included in this research report because it supports the transformational nature of online education; the process to acquire online teaching competencies may be separate or different from what was known about developing face-to-face teaching competencies. This literature further illustrates that for the faculty member to be successful and receive the support needed to successfully teach online, institutional resources may be needed to support the cyclical nature of faculty acquiring the competencies to teach online.

Mishra and Koehler (2006) describe the integration of “three main components of learning environments: content, pedagogy, and technology” (p. 1017). Mishra and Koehler (2006) explain that these three interrelated components of online teaching help create a framework for how institutions may want to support faculty teaching online, especially in the creation of course design support teams. While many faculty members may be content or subject matter experts related to the course topic, understanding the pedagogy and technology of teaching online may be altogether a new experience.

Abdous (2011) developed a framework for understanding the process of faculty acquiring online teaching competencies in three sequential, non-linear phases of before, during, and after teaching a course. The framework was developed based on a review of the literature about teaching online, and is grounded in four basic assumptions based on the existing literature:

1. Competency is perceived as the knowledge, skills, ability, and attitudes required to effectively perform roles within an organization.
2. Learning is perceived as a personal enterprise with social and organizational implications, an enterprise which puts the student at the heart of this dynamic process. From this angle, faculty are viewed as instrumental in guiding, challenging, and widening students’ individual/social learning processes.

3. Technology is viewed as a tool for the realization of learning as construction and as a social process of meaning appropriation.

4. Online course development is envisioned as a team-based effort requiring both a streamlined workflow and the collaboration of several specialists (subject matter, instructional, and technical) working together in a team environment. (Abdous, 2011, p. 64)

The framework is shown in Figure 2.5. Abdous (2011) suggests that “the use of this framework should enable higher education institutions to development comprehensive and effective faculty development program, capable of helping faculty create and facilitate effective learning opportunities for all students” (p. 60). The framework highlights the cyclical nature of the process for acquiring online teaching competencies, reflection on pedagogy shifting from face-to-face teaching to online teaching, the use of student feedback, reflection on one’s own experiences and teaching background, and using lessons learned to revise and update courses for future offerings.
Abdous (2011) offers several practical considerations for implementing the proposed framework that specifically relate to the institution’s role in faculty preparation for teaching online. During the planning phase, Abdous (2011) makes the following suggestions:
1. Develop policies to demonstrate institutional support for online teaching, including policies governing ownership of intellectual property, workload, copyright, and evaluation.

2. Establish an action plan to address the traditional barriers of faculty participation in online teaching. These include compensation, funding, workload, rewards, recognition in tenure and promotion, and faculty development.

3. Conduct a pre-assessment to identify faculty readiness, particularly in terms of technical literacy, as lack of technical expertise is commonly cited as barrier to online teaching and learning.

4. Establish a faculty development program which covers and connects all pedagogical, managerial, social, and technical roles and competencies. It is equally important to establish a peer mentoring program to encourage experienced faculty to share their expertise and experience with new faculty teaching online. (p. 68)

During the design phase, Abdous (2011) suggests the following strategies an institution can implement to support faculty preparation for teaching online:

1. Set up a production team (instructional designer, instructional technologist, multimedia and graphic specialist), either centralized or decentralized, to provide sustained support for faculty during design, facilitation, and maintenance process.
2. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of each production team member involved in the design and development of the online course. As part of the production team, faculty members are viewed as the subject-matter experts.

3. Provide faculty with design templates, rubrics, and checklists to ensure consistency and quality throughout the design process, while encouraging innovation” (p. 74).

During the facilitation phase, Abdous (2011) suggests the following strategy an institution can implement to support faculty preparation for teaching online:

On the academic staff side, faculty preparedness has a significant impact on the way in which online teaching unfolds. Thus, provide both development opportunities and ongoing technical support is critical for an effective online teaching and learning experience. Additionally, tailoring the faculty development program to faculty readiness, interest, and motivation is equally important. If the faculty development activities can be provided via both a face-to-face and an online format, this flexibility in delivery method can enable the instructor the affordances of online learning (flexibility and individualization) while simultaneously providing him or her with the change to experience online learning, first hand. (p. 74)

Each of these practical considerations for implementing the framework for faculty acquiring online teaching competencies are influenced or managed at the institution level, directing resources, staffing, policy, and support for faculty teaching online. This literature is relevant to the current study because it demonstrates a framework for conceptualizing faculty preparation and developing teaching competencies specifically for online education. In addition, the
framework by Abdous (2011) may be used by institutions to explain the process, time commitments, staffing needs, resources, and support for faculty members and programs looking to offer online programs and courses.

**Institution Resources for Faculty Preparation for Teaching Online**

Research by Marek (2009) examined the support faculty use to learn how to teach online. This particular study is relevant to the current study because it examines the role of the institution in faculty preparation for teaching online. In the study, over 900 individuals identified by the American Library Association as faculty from Library and Information Science (LIS) programs were sent an electronic survey. The survey questions were developed based on existing literature in the field. Of the 900 surveys sent, 883 surveys were considered delivered electronically, and the study received 297 responses. The electronic survey consisted of 16 questions about support available to teach online, and which opportunities they had taken advantage of in the last two years. Findings in Table 2.3 illustrate percentage of frequency the respondent recognized informal training, formal training, and resource support as available at respondents’ institutions. When asked about the support opportunities faculty members had taken advantage of in the last two years, findings, shown in Table 2.4, illustrate that informal colleague support was the most frequent response.

Overall, the findings suggest that colleague or peer-to-peer support to teach online is the most frequently available support at an institution, and also the opportunity most leveraged by faculty members (Marek, 2009). In addition, faculty members utilize multiple sources of support for preparing to teach online. This research study suggests that institutional conditions can influence faculty members and their decisions to prepare and teach online.
Table 2.3.

*What Support for Learning How to Teach Online is Available to You at Your Institution?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Available</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal support through faculty peer-to-peer training</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal support through university IT workshops</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal training through the university</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal training through the LIS program</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little to no training offered</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.4.

*Support Opportunities for Learning How to Teach Online Which Respondents Have Taken Advantage of in the Last Two Years.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Opportunity Taken Advantage of</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal support from colleagues</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference attendance</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal training from the university</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal training from outside sources</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal training through the LIS program</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course release</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the findings, Marek suggests a model, shown in Figure 2.6, that highlights a “culture of support” to help faculty members for developing their online teaching skills. “The model consists of a multi-layered support system which includes formalized structures for program-level support and training, institutional-level supports, and outside continuing education opportunities” (Marek, 2009, p. 287). The finds from this research suggest that institutional conditions can help faculty members with decisions to prepare and teach online.

Figure 2.6. Creating a Culture of Support for Online Teaching. Adapted from Marek, K. (2009). Learning to teach online: Creating a culture of support for faculty. Journal of Education for Library and Information Science, 5(4), 275-292.
This model visually demonstrates the support structures that may have been available at an institution, but it does not demonstrate what resources faculty members used, found most effective or useful, and felt were a good investment over their time others. Also, this study only highlights resources, which may be considered institutional enabling factors, but it does not address topic institutional inhibiting factors that constrained faculty preparation, which the current study does examine.

**Faculty Development and the Business School Mission**

A case study by Legorretta, Kelley, and Sabylinski (2006) examines the implementation of the FAIR approach (FAIR, ALIGN, INTEGRATE, REVIEW) and proposes a framework for linking a business school’s mission to the faculty development program. Legorretta et al. (2006) use the College of Business Administration (CBA) at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) as the site for their research study. While it is not clearly specified in the article, the FAIR approach seemed to be developed based on the authors’ understanding of the AACSB accreditation standards, and previous literature. The FAIR approach “breaks the process of linking faculty development and school mission into 4 phases: focus, alignment, integration, and review (FAIR). Figure 2.7 further explains each of the four phases of the FAIR process.

The study cites previous literature related to AACSB standards, including the need for faculty preparation for development of online teaching skills (Blignaut & Trollip, 2003), and the increased emphasis on assessment as further need to examine the link between faculty preparation and the institution. In the article, the FAIR approach was implemented at the college level at the CBA and CSUS. Based on this implementation, the researchers propose a framework for linking a business school’s mission to the faculty development program, which is shown in Figure 2.8.
This article further highlights the needs to align the institutional goals and mission with the preparation and development of faculty in business colleges. The study also lays the groundwork for the current study that is related to faculty development for faculty members who teach in a business degree program. If online education and the online MBA program are to be considered a strategic part of the business schools, then aligning the mission, faculty development, and institutional factors to enable faculty preparation should be considered strategically important as well.
Faculty Preparation in Online MBA Programs

Arbaugh (2005) conducted research which provided insight into the faculty role influencing the optimal design for online MBA courses. Arbaugh’s study (2005) included a sample of forty four web-based or online MBA class sections across eleven semesters at a single site. The site included forty seven sections, but three sections were excluded from the sample because of lack of access due to lack of instructor permission. Though the forty four courses were considered web-based or online, thirty six sections at face-to-face, on-site orientation components, and sixteen sections had face-to-face end-of-semester meetings on-site, and most the students in the selected courses were considered part of on-campus, face-to-face MBA
program (Arbaugh, 2005). Having included face-to-face components initially appear to make this study similar to the current study. However, there are more dissimilarities because the site of the current study has far fewer face-to-face components, only 2 one week experiences in the entire MBA programs, and because the students are all enrolled in an online, non-campus based, face-to-face program.

Data collection consisted of a survey being given face-to-face to students with an on-site meeting, and an email survey to students that did not have a face-to-face, on-site meeting (Arbaugh, 2005). Students that did not respond in the first round of surveys were sent mailed a copy of the survey. Approximately 73% of the data was usable, and there were no significant differences between respondents and non-respondents (Arbaugh, 2005). A regression analysis of variables including media variety, course software usefulness and ease of use, perceived flexibility of on-line learning, supplementing web-based courses with on-site meetings, increased class section sizes, group-based assessments, and individual-oriented assessments was conducted against the dependent variables of perceived learning and student satisfaction with the on-line, web-based courses (Arbaugh, 2005). While Arbaugh (2005), proposed eighteen hypotheses in the study, the hypotheses are founded primarily around the topic of student satisfaction in online courses, the researcher of the current study reported the findings most relevant to the current research, around institutional factors related to faculty preparation.

Arbaugh (2005) acknowledged findings in the literature that “an emerging stream of research suggests that instructor behaviors and experience are predictors of learning and satisfaction in web-based courses” (p. 136). Recommendations made by Arbaugh based on the findings of his research were related to faculty behaviors and preparation for teaching MBA courses in an online format including: providing training to faculty in the area of online
communication and gender differences in web-based courses, preparing faculty to develop activities that encourage student interaction and learning communities, preparing faculty to use variety of media in the course space, and providing training to conduct on-site meetings to supplement web-based courses for a more positive student experience. Arbaugh suggests that areas for future research opportunity include looking at more universities and programs that are primarily delivered online.

Arbaugh (2005) suggested that his research had limitations including the note that most students in the study also took courses in a traditional, face-to-face format, in addition to their online courses. He suggests that areas for future research opportunity include looking at more universities and programs that are primarily delivered online. In the current study, the researcher has addressed these limitations by including a program that is almost completely delivered online, other than two weeks of face-to-face instruction, and that the students in the program take all of the courses in the program in this online delivery format.

**Strategies to Improve Online MBA Programs and Teaching**

A research study by Liu, Kim, Bonk & Magjuka (2007) explored barriers for faculty members teaching in online MBA courses, as well as faculty suggestions for improving the online MBA courses or program. While the study by Liu et al. (2007) references online teaching rather than faculty preparation, the population sampled, and the findings from the study are relevant to the current study. The 3 research questions guided the study by Liu et al. (2007) were:

1. What are the benefits that the online MBA professors perceive in teaching online MBA courses?
2. What are the barriers that these professors perceive in teaching online MBA courses?
3. What suggestions do they have for improving the online MBA courses and/or programs?
In this study, twenty-eight interviews with faculty teaching online MBA courses were conducted by a research team. The researcher was unable to determine if any special criteria were used in selecting the twenty-eight interviewees. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, and was the primary data method collection in the study. For purposes of trustworthiness and quality of the study, an interview protocol was established, and researchers served as pairs when conducting the interviews. The interviews were audio-taped, and professionally transcribed, and the transcriptions were analyzed for patterns and themes in the responses.

While the study resulted in eleven major findings across the topics aligned with the study’s research questions, the findings relevant to the topic of institutional factors facilitating and inhibiting faculty preparation are highlighted for the purposes of this study. A barrier to teach online that was identified was the Amount of Time and Heavy Workload Required for Online Teaching (Liu et al., 2007). Another identified barrier was the costs incurred by faculty members for the Internet Service Provider (ISP), especially for faculty members that traveled during teaching assignments (Liu, et al., 2007).

The study also resulted in 3 suggested areas for improving online teaching or program which are particularly relevant to the current study. The first area suggested for improvement was “Improving Online Technology,” which included topics related to improvement and ease of use of the educational technology and learning management tools (Liu, et al, 2007). The second area suggested for improvement was “Enhancing Faculty Support,” which included course design and technical support, and information about new technology, communicated in such a manner that made the information accessible to them as users (Liu, et al, 2007). Finally, the third area suggested for improvement was “Fostering a Learning Community for Online Instructors,”
which consisted of a forum for faculty members to share experiences, access training, and learning from colleagues.

**Literature Review Summary**

This chapter highlighted existing literature and research related to the following 5 areas of existing literature and research demonstrate the foundation for the purpose of this study:

- Force Field analysis as a framework for organizational analysis;
- Online education principles for teaching;
- Developing faculty competencies for online teaching;
- Institutional resources for online teaching preparation; and
- Faculty preparation for teaching in online MBA programs.

Each of these areas were included to show the depth, and also gap, related to research at the intersection of these areas, while demonstrating the need, and serving as the foundation, for this research study. The research conducted in this study adds new information to the body of literature in a variety of ways: it examines institutional factors, is specifically related to preparation for teaching in an online MBA degree program, and includes data collection from faculty member interviews, instructional designer interviews, and primary and secondary sources.
Chapter 3
Methodology

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the research methodology framework for this study. Information about participants, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and analysis are provided. The researcher describes the qualitative research methods used to examine faculty preparation for teaching in online MBA programs. The qualitative methodology for this research was guided primarily by literature from Creswell (1998) and Yin (1989a, 2003).

Purpose

The purpose of this descriptive case study was to investigate faculty preparation to teach in an online MBA program at a US university. The research questions were:

1. What were the facilitating factors at the institution that enabled faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program?
2. What were the inhibiting factors at the institution that constrained faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program?

Case Study Design

The researcher selected the case study tradition of qualitative research for the design of this study. Qualitative research methods are used to develop an understanding of a topic, concept or phenomenon that is highly contextual, less clearly defined, and needs to be explored in depth (Briner, 1997). According to Patton (2002), “qualitative data tell a story” (p. 47). For the purposes of this study, interviews were used as the primary data collection method. According to Patton (2002), “direct quotations are a basic source of raw data in qualitative inquiry, revealing respondents’ depth of emotion, the ways they have organized their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions” (p. 21). Yin suggests that
“even though [one’s] data collection may have to rely heavily on information from individual interviewees, [one’s] conclusions cannot be based entirely on interviews as a source of information” (p. 76). While individuals were interviewed as part of the data collection process in this research study, other data were also collected, including information on: overall institution structure and history, business school structure and administration, and the guidelines and operational procedures of the online MBA degree program.

**Case Study Research Map**

A case study research map is a useful tool in presenting the layout and design of the study. A case study research map presents the various stages of the research process, visually showing the path from commencement to completion of the research study; increasing the likelihood that the study could be repeated by an independent researcher, with other subjects and at other points in time. Figure 3.1 shows the case study research map for this study. While the case study design research map appears linear, in practice it is best described as sequential with a cyclical nature. For example, based on data gathered from the faculty member interviews, the researcher subsequently sought interviews from the program’s instructional designers and other relevant archival sources of information referenced within the interviews. Another example of the study’s sequential yet cyclical nature is that coding for the initial interviews started taking place as other interviews were being conducted, and then the original coding was revisited multiple times as more interviews were completed and themes emerged (Creswell, 2009, pp. 184-185).
Single Site, Single-Case Study Approach

This research study is presented as a single site, single-case design. Figure 3.2 shows a matrix of the different types of case study design (Yin, 2012, p. 8). This study was designed with a single unit of analysis, which is described later in this document. This study was designed with the single context of one university, in the single context of one online MBA degree program with multiple interview participants and archival sources serving as multiple points of data.

While this single site, single-case study approach limits the generalizability of the findings, it does provide an in-depth study of the single site. In addition, this study serves as a basis of further refining the research methodology, interview guide, and research map so the study may be repeated at other institutions. As noted by Tellis (1997)

A frequent criticism of case study methodology is that its dependence on a single case renders it incapable of providing a generalizing conclusion. Yin (1993) presented Giddens’ view that considered case methodology “microscopic” because it “lacked a sufficient number” of cases. Hamel (1993) and Yin (1984, 1989a, 1989b, 1993, 1994) forcefully argued that the relative size of the sample whether 2, 10, or 100 cases are used, does not transform a multiple case into a macroscopic study. The goal of the study should establish the parameters, and then should be applied to all research. In this way, even a single case could be considered acceptable, provided it met the established objective.

In the case of the current study, parameters are established for the case study site, as well as the interview participants. In addition, Yin (2003) presents five rationales for when “the single-case study is an appropriate design” (p. 39):

1. “When it represents a critical case in testing a well-formulated theory” (p. 40).
2. “When the case represents an extreme case or a unique case” (p. 40).

3. When the “case is the representative or typical case” (p. 41).

4. When the “case is a revelatory case...when an investigator has an opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomenon previously inaccessible” (p. 42).

5. When the “case study is a longitudinal case” (p. 42).

Two of these five rationales regarding the appropriateness of the single-case study design apply to this research study: the unique case and the revelatory case.
With regard to rationale two and the unique nature of the site, there were some features of the study institution that differentiate it from peer and competitor institutions, and other potential sites in the market. In the case of this research study, the site was an institution that offered an online MBA degree made up of multiple campuses that maintained their own academic authority and Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation. In addition, one more campus was involved in the offering of the degree, but purely as a centralized delivery unit of the institution, with no actual academic authority. This site’s very unique institutional structure would be considered rare in the marketplace, as compared to other institutions offering online MBA degree programs. Three other institutional structures that were dissimilar to this study’s site, but more similar to what was otherwise seen in the online MBA degree market are shown when:

- the institution’s online unit is completely separate from the rest of the university and is not integrated with the academic authority, faculty governance, and university policies of the rest of the institution; or
- the institution’s online MBA degree program is integrated with the business school, and therefore the business school is responsible for all parts of the program, including the academic authority, faculty governance, university policy, and delivery; or
- the institution is primarily focused on online and distance education, and may not have a model or tradition for campus-based, face-to-face instruction.

Because the institution’s approach to offering the online MBA degree program through centralized delivery services, and by way of four independently Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accredited business colleges, campuses, and divisions,
each carrying their own academic authority, and all of which fall under one university, would be considered a unique site, and therefore appropriate for the single site case study design.

With regard to rationale four, it was through the role of the researcher of this study and her connection to the site that made this study appropriate for the revelatory rationale of using a single site case study design. As described further in Chapter 4, the researcher was employed at the site for this study and was involved in the operations of delivering the online MBA degree program. While issues of faculty preparation for teaching in the online MBA program were outside of the normal scope of the researcher’s role as an employee, the researcher made a conscious effort to separate her role as a research analyst and a professional instructor to remove potential bias and reduce assumptions (bracketing) based on her previous experience in the field (Given, 2008). The researcher’s experience with the online MBA program may have served to increase the rigor of the study because of the existing connection to the institution, the online MBA degree program, and the colleague-type interaction with the program administrators, faculty, and instructional designers. The researcher brought a depth of knowledge and direct access to individuals and perspectives that someone not embedded in the position may not have had. With this deep and direct connection to the program, the researcher was positioned to ask questions with increased complexity and insight, with the opportunity not available to others outside the embedded, colleague-type connection.

**Unit of Analysis**

According to Yin (2003), confusion persists around the case study research and definition of unit(s) of analysis. This confusion may persist “because the data collection sources may be individual (e.g., interviews with individuals), whereas the unit of analysis of [one’s] case study may be organizational (e.g., the organization to which the individual belongs)—a frequent design
when the case study is about an organization” (p. 76). In this study, the unit of analysis is the university institution which offers the online MBA degree program.

**Case Study Protocol**

According to Yin (2003), establishing protocol for case study research “is an especially effective way of dealing with the overall problem of increasing the reliability of case studies” (p. 57). The case study protocol outlines the process for data collection, and the development of the data collection instrument itself. The protocol for this study is provided in Appendix A. Patton (2002) suggests that “the task for the qualitative researcher is to provide a framework within which people may respond in a way that represents accurately and thoroughly their points of view about the world, or that part of the world about which they are talking” (p. 21). Creswell (1998) suggests using the following five questions to judge the quality of the research study:

1. Did the interviewer influence the content of the subjects’ description in such a way that the descriptions do not truly reflect the subjects’ actual experience?

2. Is the transcription accurate, and does it convey the meaning of the oral presentation in the interview?

3. In the analysis of the transcriptions, were there conclusions other than those offered by the researcher that could have been derived? Has the researcher identified these alternatives?

4. Is it possible to go from the general structure description to the transcriptions and to account for the specific content and connections in the original examples of the experience?

5. Is the structural description situation specific, or does it hold in general for the experience in other situations? (p. 208)
This research used the five criteria identified by Creswell, and maintained rigor, quality, and reliability through the use of the case study protocol. To address the first criterion, the interviewer did not influence the content of the descriptions provided by the interview participants. Instead, the researcher asked semi-structured, open-ended questions, and used follow up and probing questions to clarify understanding and gain further insight into what the participant was communicating. After the interviews, (member checking) the researcher summarized the interviews and provided summaries of meaning to the interview participants to ensure that what the researcher understood and summarized was actually what was intended by the interview participants (Given, 2008). To address the second criterion, the interviewer had the interviews professionally transcribed and time stamped based on the audio recordings. The researcher then reviewed each transcription for accuracy, corrections, punctuation placement, and breaks based on the verbal and non-verbal cues of the interviews such as delays and long pauses.

To address the third criterion, the researcher organized the data analysis based on themes, and those themes were later verified by a Subject Matter Expert (SME) in the field of online education. Through this verification process, (open coding and axial coding verification; intercoder consistency; journaling) the researcher and SME reviewed each theme, discussed what was included and not included in the theme categories, and discussed how to resolve them when there was disagreement (Given, 2008; Creswell, 2007). This verification of coding strategy is described further in this chapter. For criterion four, each interview was coded by the researcher, and then similar themes were combined within and across interview participants, thus making sure it was possible to trace (audit trail) the connections from the descriptions and findings back to interview quotes by the participants. Finally, for criterion five, while this research study
examined a single site, the structure of the single site case study design, case design research map, and interview instrument could be used in other studies or contexts beyond those in the existing study. The intent in this study was not to generalize the results to other institutional settings.

**Instrument Development**

The interview guide for this study is found in Appendix B. Questions for the interview guide were developed based on prior research, literature from the field, and vetting of questions by key informants (Yin, 2003, p. 34). Referenced by Yin (2003), key informants, for the purposes of this study, included individuals involved in the higher education industry who were managing and teaching in online graduate degree programs, and are described in more detail later in this chapter. Table 3.1 demonstrates how the specific questions from the interview guide correspond with the study’s research questions.

Table 3.1.

*Interview Questions Corresponding with Research Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What were the facilitating factors at the institution that enabled faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program?</td>
<td>1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What were the inhibiting factors at the institution that constrained faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program?</td>
<td>1, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consistent with strategies contained in the literature pertaining to interviews with open-ended questions (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992), questions one through four are general and open-ended
about faculty preparation for teaching online. Questions one and questions four through twelve focus more specifically on the facilitating and inhibiting factors at an institutional level.

For purposes of standardization, rigor and consistency, all interviews were conducted by the researcher. The interview guide was developed so that a similar level of inquiry was sought from each participant. The researcher further refined the interview guide, using wording and order suggestions from the five key informants used in initial development of the interview questions.

The interview guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. Thus the interviewer remains free to build conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style but with the focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined. (Patton, 2002, p. 343)

Interview questions were written and organized to facilitate ease and richness of response to capture words and voices of the participants and facilitate obtaining thick description.

**Use of Key Informants to Develop the Interview Guide**

Five key informants were involved in the development and revision of the interview guide. All key informants had experience teaching university courses face-to-face and online, and developing online courses. Two key informants had varying levels and years of experience managing online graduate programs. One key informant had several years of experience of leading faculty development programs for instructors preparing to teach online. One key informant had experience both developing courses for online delivery, and teaching online. One key informant was a faculty member that currently teaches in the online MBA degree program at
the institution used as the site for this research study. Because of the nature of this faculty member’s involvement in refining the interview guide, s/he was not included as an interview participant in this study.

The key informants were presented with several possible interview questions in various orders. They were asked to review the questions, mentally recreate and describe their own preparation experiences, and answer the questions as though they were interview participants in the study. The researcher worked with the key informants to determine whether the questions were clear, concise, and addressed the intended topic and research areas. Information gathered from the key informants was used to further develop and refine the interview guide instrument. The strategies outlined above were utilized to increase the likelihood that the questions would lead to relevant, valid and accurate data (Yin, 2003, p. 34).

**Cognitive Interview Techniques**

Cognitive interview techniques were incorporated into the development of the interview guide. Strategies associated with cognitive interviews as an information gathering technique is described as a conversation to enhance one’s memory of events or an experience (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992). While the original context for the cognitive interview technique was intended for questioning eye-witnesses in police settings, for the purposes of this research study, the techniques were applied to “enhance retrieval of information from the witnesses memory” (McLeod, 2010). In this study, faculty members were considered “witnesses” to their own faculty preparation journeys. “The successful [interviewer]...is one who can infer how the [participant] has stored the relevant knowledge and then gently guide her search through memory to retrieve that knowledge” (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992, p. 15).
“One of the hurdles to overcome is the tendency for the police investigation to become depersonalized” (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992, p. 22). Three specific strategies suggested by Fisher & Geiselman (1992) to personalize the interview were included: using the participant’s name in the interview, periodically restating the participant’s last statements and following up with appropriate questions and comments, and handling incidental questions and matters prior to the interview in order to keep attention undivided during the interview process (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992, p. 22-23). In this research study, these three strategies were used as part of the interview data collection process. The researcher contacted and communicated with the interview participants through personalized e-mails. Though the communication was based on templates found in the Interview Guide in Appendix B and Interview Communication Letter in Appendix C, the e-mail responses were personalized and answered any specific questions the participants had about the research study, Internal Review Board (IRB) exemption status, and logistics of the interview process. Follow up questions and restatements of the participants’ last phrases were used to confirm understanding and clarify what was heard in the interviews. Prior to the interview process, the research shared the interview questions with the participants. In addition, as applicable, the researcher shared information about voice recording the interviews and collected demographic information by electronic survey as shown in Appendix D.

Fisher & Geiselman (1992) also suggest conducting interviews one-on-one between the interviewer and participant, (p. 53), which was done in this study via individual phone calls and face-to-face interviews. The interviewer is also encouraged to use open-ended questions (p. 74). More specifically, Fisher & Geiselman (1992) suggest using open ended questions “early in the interview before the information-collection stage” (p. 75). Fisher & Geiselman (1992) also state that the interviewer “should begin by asking an open-ended question, encouraging the
[participant] to develop as elaborate an answer as possible. If the [participant] has not described some relevant detail after having generated a richly detailed answer, the [interviewer] should follow up with closed questions” (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992, p.77). In this study, the researcher used this cognitive interview strategy of asking open-ended questions, and following up with more open and closed questions to get the fullest story, and thickest description from the participants about faculty preparation for teaching in the online MBA program. Interviews were voice recorded so the researcher could actively engage in listening and interacting with the interview participant without the distraction of note taking. The voice recording also ensured that an accurate transcript of the interview could be documented and reviewed (audit trail) as part of the coding and analysis phases of this research study. The researcher also considered pace in speaking and answering questions, allowing for time between responses and questions, and allowing for short silences and pauses within the interviews so the participant had time to further process their thoughts and possibly add information as they considered the question and their response thereby further activating their memories on the subject (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992, p. 77).

To a limited extent, critical incident question techniques were also used in the interviews. Critical incident and behavior event interviews ask people to recall their own experiences and behaviors from which the researchers can draw meaning (Flanagan, 1954). Rather than asking people how they feel about an issue or topic, critical incident and behavior event interview questions may ask participants about specific anecdotal evidence and stories of what they experienced and how they behaved (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Spencer & Spencer, 1993; McClelland, 1994; McClelland, 1998). This structure of interview questions utilized for questions five and six, and asked the participant to recall and describe times when their
preparation efforts were specifically facilitated or inhibited. Through the use of follow up or probing questions as needed, the researcher asked participants to report their actual behaviors and experiences.

**Securing IRB Exemption Status**

This research study was granted an exemption of review by The Pennsylvania State University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). The exemption letter documentation is provided in Appendix E. As described later in this chapter, measures were taken to secure implied consent of the participants and protect the identity of participants in this research study.

**Participant Selection Criteria**

For the purposes of this exploratory, descriptive case study, the researcher interviewed faculty members that teach in an online MBA degree program and others associated with preparation of the faculty for teaching online. A study by Robinia and Anderson (2010) suggests “that online teaching efficacy levels may peak and begin to level after the third online teaching experience…suggest[ing] that administrators interested in increasing the online teaching efficacy of their faculty need to encourage and support online teaching efforts especially through the third online teaching course experience” (p. 174). Considering this existing literature, the researcher limited selection of interview teaching faculty participants to those that had taught for at least three semesters in the online degree MBA program at the university site.

In this study, a total of twelve interviews were conducted, though the researcher began to observe open code saturation after five successful, information-rich and well-rounded interviews with thick description (Creswell, 1998, p. 54; Sandelowski, 2000; Morse, 1994; Patton, 1990; Van Kaam, 1959). “Thick description” is what most qualitative researchers consider a major criterion for evaluation of qualitative work (Farmer & Rojewski, 2001, p. 101). In addition to the
interviews, the researcher collected data through documentation, archival records, and direct observations by attending two online MBA faculty meetings.

The online MBA degree program had a total of twenty three faculty members that taught in the 2012-13 academic year. The researcher and the online MBA degree program Faculty Chairperson verified the names of the faculty members in the program that met the study’s participant selection criterion of having at least three semesters of experience teaching in the online MBA degree program. Of these twenty three faculty members, three faculty members did not meet the established participant selection criterion and were therefore not contacted for this study; one faculty member served as a key informant during the interview guide development process and was also excluded from actual research study interview requests. Of the remaining nineteen faculty members, nine faculty members participated in interviews, one faculty member declined to participate, five faculty members did not respond to the interview request, and four faculty members responded to the initial interview request but then did not respond with follow up communication from the researcher that included the research questions and a request to secure an actual interview time.

The three additional interview participants served in instructional design support and management roles for the online MBA program, and were selected and requested to participate in interviews because they were specifically mentioned during the faculty interviews. The three instructional design interview participants were referenced in faculty member interviews as individuals that had played some role in faculty preparation efforts to teach online. Each selected instructional design interview participant was perceived as helpful to faculty preparing to teach online, and the researcher determined it was important to get their perspectives on how they
helped faculty prepare to teach online. The nine faculty interviews plus the three instructional
designer interviews constituted the twelve interviews for this study.

**Implied Consent**

In the letter presenting interview details, found in Appendix C, the researcher provided
further details on the procedures for the actual interview. Each participant was also given a copy
of the interview guide prior to being interviewed. The researcher secured implied consent by
providing an interview guide and information by e-mail to the participants which outlined the
procedures of interview, and the following basic ethical principles of human participation
research:

1. The researcher identified herself as a Penn State researcher;
2. The study was being conducted for research;
3. A description of the procedures that the participant would undergo as part of the
   study;
4. The individual’s participation was voluntary;
5. They could end their participation at any time; and
6. Participants could choose not to answer specific questions.

Prior to beginning the interviews the researcher asked each participant to verbally provide
their implied consent to participate. All participants provided implied consent by verbal
acknowledgement and participated in the interviews. Following this process of securing implied
consent and verifying the requirements of the participants was critical to the rigor of the research
and methodology of the participant selection.
Protection of Participant Identities

For the purposes of this study, the researcher removed any personal and institutional identifiers from the interviews and reporting of the institutional, program, and faculty profiles. Identities of the individual participants and institution were kept confidential. Access to original data and sources, including any identifying information, was strictly limited to the researcher and the dissertation committee. For the purposes of this dissertation report, pseudonyms were not assigned, because the researcher determined that even through the use of pseudonyms, in triangulation of other various quotes and sources of data, it may have been possible to identify the participants and institution.

Data Collection

Following the tradition of qualitative research, defining specific variables were neither the goal nor the expectation for this case study research. Instead, stories, testimonials, and anecdotal data were the focus of the study with the intent of allowing common themes and meanings to emerge from the data collected and analysis process. Multiple sources of data were collected in this study including:

- Interviews with nine faculty members teaching in the online MBA degree program;
- Interviews with three individuals that serve or previously served in instructional design support or manager roles in the online MBA program;
- Agendas from semi-annual meetings of the faculty for the online MBA program;
- Text from the institution’s online MBA degree prospect website;
- Text from the institution’s websites and graduate degree bulletin;
- Text from the brochure of the online MBA degree program;
• Handouts and demonstration tools used by the instructional designers;
• Program-specific slides shared at a university workshop related to faculty capacity;
• Press releases and social media activity by the institution regarding the program; and
• Web-based media stories and information produced by external, non-institutional websites regarding the online MBA degree program.

The collection of these multiple sources of data facilitated data triangulation which is described further later in this chapter (Yin, 2003, p. 98). A detailed log of research activity was kept to document the chain of evidence (audit trail) of data collection.

For the purposes of this study, a total of twelve interviews were conducted. Interviews with the nine faculty members were recorded, for the purpose of gaining an accurate transcription, and so direct quotes could be documented. Some faculty members preferred to provide their initial responses in writing and allowed for follow up or probing questions by way of an interview or in writing. For the three interviews with the instructional designers, the interviewer took field notes during the interviews while also documenting direct quotes. Of the twelve total interviews, eight were conducted over the phone. Of the twelve total interviews, four were conducted face-to-face.

Data Analysis

The researcher had each interview transcribed in preparation for content analysis (Sandelowski, 2000). Content analysis “refers to the set of techniques that are used to identify patterns, categories and themes in recorded language” (Waltz, Strickland, & Lenz, 2005, p. 239). Summaries of the interviews were sent to each respective participant, giving each participant an opportunity to confirm his or her interview statements, and that the meaning interpreted by the
researcher is what was intended by the participant. Known as member checking, this process allowed participants to make any changes and additions, and added credibility and rigor to the study (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Patton (2002) describes “the period after an interview or observation [as] critical to the rigor and validity of qualitative inquiry” (p. 383). This post-interview phase gives the researcher an opportunity to review the tape recordings of the interview, add field notes, review answers to the interview questions, and check back with the participants to get clarification for unclear points or pieces of the interview (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) describes this post-interview debriefing period as “the beginning of the data analysis process” (p. 384).

**Coding the Interviews**

Once the participants made any necessary changes to their interview summaries, the data from the interviews was ready for content coding and analysis. The researcher used open and axial coding techniques to organize data in preparation for analysis (Saldana, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Figure 3.3 presents the researcher’s framework for the coding technique used in this study.
The researcher followed these steps in coding each interview using an open and axial coding technique:

- Listened to audio-taped interview while reviewing the interview transcription to make any corrections to the transcript; this step was repeated twice for each interview;
- Removed any specific names or personal identifiers in the transcription;
- Starting at the beginning of each interview transcription in a Microsoft Word document, the researcher chunked participant ideas, thoughts, or statements using the comments function of the software;
- The chunks of comments were then listed in a Microsoft Excel document;
- The chunks of comments were then categorized into open codes. These open codes consisted of direct quotes and summarized quotes by the participants and referenced if
what was being described would be an institutional facilitating or inhibiting factor, or a general comment;

- Open codes were then drawn together with larger and more general axial codes within the same questions, and then across different questions by the same participant;

- Axial codes were then drawn together across participants; the researcher looked for common themes and meaning, recurring and repeated phases, threads of discussions, and similar topics in the transcripts (Saldana, 2008; Sandelowski, 2000; Waltz et al., 2005).

- It was determined by the researcher through this coding process that codes, findings, and themes did not separate cleanly between institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors;

- A second coder independently reviewed the interviews, and coded the data using the open and axial code process.

- An online education industry subject matter expert was helpful in verifying the coding of open and axial codes into convergence of themes.

- Based on the discussion between the researcher and industry expert, previous literature in the field, and findings unique to this research study, the researcher further refined the convergence of themes. The researcher moved forward with analysis in the study with 5 more precisely defined themes.

A snapshot of the coding scheme from this study is shown in Figure 3.4.
Figure 3.4 Snapshot of Open and Axial Coding Scheme for this Study
Coding the Archive Data

For the purposes of this study, in addition to interviews, the researcher collected documents, archival records, and direct observations, as additional forms of data from multiple sources. (Yin, 2003, p. 86). Program faculty meeting agendas, program web site text, program brochure text, press releases regarding the program, and content about the program found on various web sites were included as archival data. Similar to how the interviews were chunked into open codes, and then axial codes, from which overarching themes emerged, the other forms of data were coded in similar fashion.

Data Triangulation

Yin (2003) suggests that “a major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence” (p. 97). For the purposes of this study, the researcher collected interviews, documents, archival records, and direct observations, and triangulated data from multiple sources (Yin, 2003, p. 86). Figure 3.5 presents the researcher’s framework for the triangulation technique used in this study. In this study, data were triangulated across interviews (between interviewee triangulation), but also across different forms of data (data source triangulation). For example, as shown in Figure 3.6, the faculty members cited key helpful strategies and the role of instructional design support staff. They also cited the value of the semi-annual program faculty meetings as a valuable resource in the preparation efforts. Upon review of the archived agendas for these faculty meetings, it was observed that instructional designers served as guest speakers for the meetings. This demonstrates that meaning and findings may be trustworthy because it may be triangulated across multiple data collection techniques (sources).
**Figure 3.5.** Data Triangulation Scheme Framework

**Figure 3.6.** Snapshot of Data Triangulation Scheme for this Study

- Faculty reported semi-annual faculty meetings were helpful; instructional designers represented 50% of the time at the meetings, per meeting agendas documents

- Multiple faculty interview quotes about support from instructional design staff

- Multiple instructional designers reported tailoring their work with faculty based on the needs of the faculty member

- **Enabler:** Support role of instructional design staff
Verification of Coding

For the purposes of this research study, a second coder was enlisted to analyze the collected data. Patton (1990) suggests that “it is helpful to have more than one person code the data. Each person codes the data into a classification scheme separately and then the results of the coding are compared and discussed. Important insights can emerge from the different ways in which two people look at the same set of data, a form of analytical triangulation” (p. 383). Patton (1990) also notes “the [category] set should be reproducible by another competent judge...The second observer out to be able to verify that a) the categories make sense in view of the data which are available, and b) the data have been appropriately arranged in the category system” (as cited in Guba, 1978, pp. 56-57).

In this study, the second coder independently reviewed the interviews and coded the data using the open and axial coding process. The researcher and second coder were in consistent agreement about the open codes and axial codes, and there were no major points of disagreement or difference in the coding strategy. The second coder was qualified to do coding, as s/he was experienced in the coding process by way of having completed multiple graduate level courses in qualitative research methods, and by earning a doctorate degree through successful defense of an original, qualitative, case study research project.

Once the researcher had coded the data, the themes and findings were discussed with a subject-matter expert in the field of faculty preparation for online teaching, as a verification of the coding. The subject matter expert consulted in this research study had studied qualitative research methods in multiple graduate-level courses, has conducted qualitative research, include research design, coding, and content analysis for multiple qualitative research studies. The online
education industry subject matter expert was helpful in verifying the coding of open and axial
codes into convergence of themes. According to Patton (1990)

“Guba (1978) suggests that in focusing the analysis of qualitative data an
evaluator must deal first with the problems of ‘convergence.’ The problem of
convergence is figuring out what things fit together. This leads to a classification
system for the data (p. 402).

The researcher and the subject matter expert reviewed the codes, the meaning and
organization behind the coding, and verified the codes in relation to the existing literature,
research, and practices in the field. The researcher and subject matter expert agreed on the
analysis and categorization for five of the initial seven themes which will be discussed in depth
in Chapter 4. The two remaining initial themes were discussed further and were determined to be
best suited not as themes related to this study’s research questions, but rather additional concepts
and information that shed light on the topic overall, and may be best suited for future research
opportunities. These two other topics of compensation and program life cycle are addressed
further in Chapter 5.

**Strategies to Judge Trustworthiness of the Information**

Yin (2003) suggests there are four tests of validity and reliability relevant to judge the
quality of empirical research (p. 33). Yin also suggests that “for case studies, an important
revelation is that several tactics to be used in dealing with these tests should be applied
throughout the subsequent conduct of the case study and not just the beginning” (Yin, 2003,
p. 35). For the purposes of this case study research, two of these tests are applicable. Below are
the descriptions of the two relevant tests, construct validity and reliability, and how this study
meets the standards of these tests.
Construct Validity

Yin (2003) describes construct validity as “establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied” (p. 34). Yin describes three tactics to develop construct validity: using multiple sources of data, establishing a chain of evidence, and having key informants review the drafted case study report. In this study, all three tactics were applied. Multiple sources of data including interviews, documentation, archival records, and direct observations related to overall institution structure and history, business school structure and administration, and the online MBA degree program were gathered during the data collection phase. The collection of these multiple sources of data is also described as data triangulation (Yin, 2003, p. 98). A detailed log of research activity was kept to document the chain of evidence, such that could be described as appropriate in the data collection, analysis, and descriptions for future research opportunities.

In the data collection phase, interview participants were provided with summaries of their interviews based upon the meaning understood by the researcher, with an opportunity to review, clarify, and correct information they provided. Known as member checking, this strategy further develops the credibility and rigor of the study (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process is further described later in this chapter. Individuals involved in the higher education industry, and people involved in managing and teaching in online graduate programs were engaged in the development and refinement of the interview guide, therefore increasing the likelihood that the questions would lead to relevant and accurate data. With strategies in place to address each tactic, this study met Yin’s test of construct validity for judging the quality of research design.
Reliability

While generalizability of findings is not the purpose or goal of qualitative research, maintaining protocol and demonstrating that the research is repeatable is relevant to maintaining rigor of the research (Yin, 2003; Patton, 2002). Yin (2003) describes reliability as “demonstrating that the operations of a study—such as the data collection procedures—can be repeated, with the same results” (p. 34). Yin describes two tactics to develop reliability: using a case study protocol and developing a case study database. In this study, both tactics were applied.

A detailed case study protocol was established, describing the data collection process in depth. In addition, a detailed interview guide was established to maintain consistency and a replicable process with each interviewee. In addition, a detailed database, beyond the summarized case study reports, which included all field notes, transcribed interviews, observations, archives, and data were stored, making it possible for another researcher to retrace the study and independently examine the data collected. With strategies in place to address both tactics, this study met Yin’s test of reliability for judging the quality of research design.

Member Checking Interview Data

Each interview transcript in this study was synthesized and reduced to a summary based on the researcher’s understanding of the meaning of the interview participants’ words (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). The researcher extracted the relevant portions, eliminated irrelevant portions, and summarized meaning, which Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest are the part of the data analysis process. After all interviews were collected, these summary documents were shared with the respective interview participants for their feedback and to ensure the research had captured the faculty member’s intent and meaning through the
interview process. Each participant had an opportunity to provide feedback, further detail, or corrections. In the few cases where participants responded with additional comments, the comments were a general restatement of the existing content.

**Role of the Researcher**

As a member of the higher education community for over ten years, and specifically serving in a program management and leadership role in the online and distance education community for over four years, the researcher has developed a depth of knowledge of program management, operations, leadership strategy, marketing and student engagement presence, and adult learner student services for online and distance education. The researcher closely partners with graduate business faculty, program staff, and administrators to manage the delivery of graduate degrees, including the MBA. The researcher has also served as an instructor of first-year seminar courses for a business school.

It is noted that while the researcher has experience managing graduate business programs for an online, distance education delivery format, preparation for teaching in the online MBA is outside of the normal scope of her role as an employee associated with the operations of program delivery. Because faculty preparation is normally outside of her professional role, she made a conscious effort to separate her role as a researcher and professional, to remove potential bias and reduce assumptions based on her previous experience in the field. It is also noted that the researcher’s experience with the field could serve as a strength to increase the rigor of the study because she has a depth of knowledge on topics peripherally related to the topic of faculty preparation, and is positioned to ask questions with increased complexity and insight.

In addition to professional experience in distance and higher education, the researcher has other credentials that qualify her to conduct this study. The researcher has academic experience
with several graduate courses in the area of research design, methods, data collection, and
analysis. In January 2013, the researcher earned the Certificate for Online Teaching from the
Penn State Outreach Faculty Development unit after completing five fully online courses that
prepare individuals to teach online. In Fall 2012, the researcher was nominated for and
participated in the Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning (IELOL). IELOL is a
unique blended-learning, leadership development program. Sponsored by Penn State University
and the Sloan Consortium, IELOL is designed to serve the leadership development needs of
professionals in the rapidly expanding field of online learning (http://sloanconsortium.org/
IELOL).
Chapter 4

Data Analysis

The purpose of this chapter was to present the findings of the research study based on analysis of the data collected. This chapter a profile of the online MBA degree program used as the site for this research study, a profile of the faculty interviewed for this research study, the purpose behind organizing the findings and analysis into five major thematic areas, key observations about analysis of the findings, depth and detail about the five major themes, and two other thematic areas that emerged from the analysis of the data, but were not included in the five major themes.

Institutional Profile

The institution used as the site for this case study research was established as one of the nation’s first agriculture colleges. The institution was a large, doctoral-granting, research university in the United States with a history of leadership that “established a series of undergraduate branch campuses, primarily to meet the needs of students who were location-bound during the Great Depression” (Our history, 2013). The institution was geographically disbursed across the state through a series of several campuses (Our history, 2013). Today, the institution is distributed across multiple campuses, employs 17,000 faculty and staff, and serves over 100,000 students (This is [Institution name removed for confidentiality], 2013).

[Institution name removed for confidentiality]’s administrative policy ABC [pseudonym letters to protect Institution confidentiality] states:

The Department of Distance Education/[unit name] will be the single delivery unit for academic programs and courses originating through and approved by a [Institution] academic unit, using the name of the University, that use technology
as the primary delivery method to serve off-campus students. (Policy ABC Role of the Department of Distance Education, 2006).

Policy ABC goes on to explicitly state that the academic responsibility for programs reside with the academic units gaining academic approval to deliver them through the institutional unit:

All academic units of the University may propose programs for delivery through Distance Education/[Institutional unit]. The academic unit is responsible for gaining appropriate academic approval for the program for distance education delivery. Academic units are responsible for assigning faculty to the program, for academic quality, for certifying degrees, and other academic responsibilities. (Policy ABC Role of the Department of Distance Education, 2006).

This part of the policy was foundational for understanding how the online MBA operates with multiple partnering academic campuses and [institution unit name removed to protect institution confidentiality] as the delivery unit, which will be described later in section. Policy ABC goes on to describe the contribution [institution unit name removed to protect institution confidentiality] may have in the delivery of academic programs, which included the online MBA program:

As appropriate, Distance Education/[institution unit name removed to protect institution confidentiality] will provide support services, such as instructional design and technology support, faculty development, marketing and promotion, and registration, records, and related student support and will ensure that programs conducted in the name of the University through distance education comply with the policies and procedures established by the University. (Policy ABC Role of the Department of Distance Education, 2006).
Finally, Policy ABC also mentions that “Degree programs delivered via Distance Education/\[institution unit name removed to protect institution confidentiality\] will be monitored by the Faculty Senate and/or the Graduate Council” (Policy ABC Role of the Department of Distance Education, 2006), which is also important to note when understanding the responsibility of academic authority of the online MBA degree program, and will be described later in this section.

**Program Profile**

The online MBA program from [Institution name] launched in the in the early 2000s. Multiple campuses of the University academically and administratively partnered to offer the online MBA degree program. At the time of data collection for this research study, the academic home of the online MBA program was designated as the Graduate School at the university, and one of the campuses was designated as the administrative home. Each of the partnering campuses maintained their own separate Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) Accreditations, and with that resided the academic authority of the online MBA program. [Institution unit removed for confidentiality] was the delivery unit responsible for collecting tuition, providing student services, student engagement activities, career counseling, student and faculty technical help desk support, instructional design and media support, admissions functions, marketing and recruitment strategy, market research, program management support, and several other administrative services related to the operations and delivery of online programs. Academic rigor is integral to the nature of the program (MBA Degree Program – Overview, 2013). The researcher observed that at other universities it is often noted that the online delivery division is completely separate and not academically integrated into the rest of the university. In the case of this online MBA degree program, the student
degrees and diplomas reflect the same notation and wording as those earned by students in traditional, campus-based, face-to-face MBA degree students. There is no marker, indicator, or distinction made to reflect the online MBA degree was earned through a distance education delivery model.

The University Bulletin for Graduate Program provides an overview of the curriculum of the online MBA degree program:

The [online MBA program] curriculum emphasizes cross-functional organizational thinking; focuses on business planning and strategy; closely follows the quality guidelines for accreditation of AACSB (American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business), the accrediting body affiliated with The International Association for Management Education; and uses cutting-edge instructional technology to transcend issues of time and space, and to support effective teaching and learning. (Master of Business Administration, 2008).

There are four core business areas included in the curriculum of the online MBA degree:

- Financial Reporting, Analysis, and Markets
- Domestic and Global Economic Environments
- Human Behavior in Organizations
- Creation and Distribution of Goods and Services (Master of Business Administration, 2008).

The online MBA degree program also features six thematic areas which are integrated into the curriculum at the course-level:

- Leadership
The breadth and depth of the curriculum reflects the breadth and depth of the backgrounds and expertise of faculty members teaching for the program.

In addition to integrated course work, the online MBA degree program includes two residency face-to-face experiences ([Institution unit name removed for confidentiality], 2013). The first residency features a visit to a company. “Analyzing how a company operates is an important part of any MBA program. [Institution’s] [online MBA degree program] takes this educational analysis a step further by involving [online MBA degree program] students in real-world learning” ([Name removed for confidentiality], 2013). The second residency takes place at the University Park campus where the students compete in a comprehensive business simulation ([Institution unit name removed for confidentiality], 2013).

The faculty members come from a variety of academic disciplines and join together to deliver an integrated curriculum (MBA Degree Program – Overview, 2013). The online MBA degree program consists of nineteen graduate-level courses for a total of forty eight credits which were carefully arranged so it would be possible for the student to complete the degree in twenty four months (MBA Degree Program – Course Schedule, 2013). For students beginning the online MBA degree program in the fall 2012 or spring 2013 semesters, a package price was
established which included tuition, books, course materials, technology fees and residency costs. There were no additional charges for out-of-state residents.

Since the inception of the online MBA degree program, an instructional design team from [Institution unit name removed for confidentiality], with hand-picked team members best suited to support the program, was assigned to partner with the faculty members to design and support the courses for the online MBA degree program (Instructional Designer Interviews). An instructional design manager closely oversaw the selection of the instructional design team for the online MBA program (Instructional Designer Interview Participant; Faculty Member Interview). The instructional design manager was responsible for handling negotiations when there was disagreement about how certain course design issues would be handled, integrating existing literature and best practices into the design of the program, and looking for solutions to functions and features the program wanted to see in the delivery technology of the courses. The instructional design manager was seen as an integral part of the team to the faculty members, especially in the initial development stages of the delivery of the online MBA courses. As one faculty member said, the “[Institution] would be in a heap of shit if it weren't for [instructional design manager] and her ability to recognize stuff” (Faculty Member Interview).

Having entered the student market over twelve years ago, when very few traditional universities were developing and delivering online programs, this program was positioned as a leader in the field. In the Student Stories section of the online MBA Degree recruitment page, students offered testimonials of their satisfaction with both the academic content and delivery of the program. The researcher also noted that five of the nine students featured on the Student Stories page were members of the Armed Forces, and spoke highly of the online, distance education model as a way to complete their education while serving their country (MBA Degree
Program – Student Stories (2013). Over the years, the online MBA program has established practices and process for various administrative, academic, and operational policies and functions. The accumulated years of experience in delivering the online MBA degree program has helped the program become well-established not only in internal processes, but in the overall marketplace landscape. The university institution as a whole is no longer new to the delivery of online education, and the online MBA program has become a reasonably “well-oiled machine.”

Faculty Profile

While it is common to have geographically disbursed students in online and distance education programs, a unique quality of the online MBA program in this research study was the nature of the geographically disbursed faculty members that teach in the program. During the period this research study was conducted, the program faculty teaching in the online MBA program met face-to-face twice during the year, for the purposes of reviewing the program, to discuss upcoming or recent changes, to stay current with accreditation status updates, hear updates from Program Chair and Executive Committee members, discuss ways to better serve the students through integration of course work, to get training on new course design features, and to make decisions about course design technology they were interested in pursuing in the future (Program Chair [name removed for participant confidentiality], 2013a; Program Chair [name removed for participant confidentiality], 2013b).

The faculty members that taught in the online MBA program all had the distinction of having being granted graduate faculty status by the institution’s graduate school (MBA Degree Program – Faculty, 2013). Student recruitment and promotional materials for the online MBA program provide the following messaging to prospective students about the program faculty:
The faculty members who teach in the [online MBA] program are all full-time, [institution] graduate faculty. With more than a century of combined experience in industries from consulting to manufacturing, these respected individuals bring with them a wealth of theoretical knowledge and personal work experience. They have not only proven themselves successful in their industries and in teaching in a traditional classroom environment; they have been specifically trained to teach effectively online as well. Combined with a team of learning-design specialists, our faculty ensures that the course content is dynamic and relevant to today’s ever-changing business world. ([Institution unit name removed for confidentiality], 2013).

As part of the study, the researcher used an electronic, pre-interview survey as one way to collect demographic information about the faculty interview participants (Appendix D). Five of the seven faculty interview participants completed the electronic, pre-interview survey. For the remaining two faculty members, demographic information was collected from the faculty member’s biography as listed on the institution’s business school or college’s website when available. Of the faculty interview participants:

- All had earned a doctorate degree in the areas of Accounting, Business Administration, Finance, Management, and Operation Strategy.
- All had three or more semesters of experience teaching in an online MBA program
- All had earned tenure status with the university
- Ranged in university teaching experience from 17-30 years.
- Ranged in university experience teaching online from 3-14 years.
• Ranged in other professional work experience from 0-7 years.

Faculty members from each of the partnering academic campuses were interviewed for the purposes of this research study.

Development of Five Themes

The purpose of this case study research was to investigate faculty preparation to teach in an online MBA program at a US university. The research questions were:

1. What were the facilitating factors at the institution that enabled faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program?

2. What were the inhibiting factors at the institution that constrained faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program?

Through the data collection, data analysis, and summarization of meaning phases of this research study, the researcher found that the themes and findings did not neatly fit into two clearly distinguishable categories of institutional facilitating factors and institutional inhibiting factors. The idea of holism and not being able to clearly separate institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors is consistent with Kurt Lewin’s work of Force Field Analysis (Gold, 1985, p. 10). Therefore, for the purposes of this research study, the analysis was provided as a collection of five major overarching themes presented with subsections for more specific findings and analysis.

Key Observations in Focusing the Research Study

Part of the challenge the researcher faced in this study was of keeping the participants, data collection, and analysis focused on the scope of this research study. This may have been due to the nature of the topic of online education, which is experience rapid growth and change, the transformational nature of the participant experiences, and the nature of teaching in higher
education. It was important, as part of the qualitative data collection process, that the researcher collected the data through whatever means the participants could provide it, but then reduced the data to chunks and themes relevant to this particular research study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

One key observation the researcher found when keeping the focus on the research study was that when asked about their online teaching experiences, many participants spoke of their experiences in comparison to their experiences in face-to-face class environments. This is consistent with transformational learning theory, where participants often describe what is new, based on their previous understanding of the old and what has changed. Another key observation made by the researcher was that the interview participants and multiple data sources referenced for this study generally did not distinguish between the preparation phase and the teaching phase. This may be consistent with how faculty members traditionally view the process of teaching, with preparation efforts as part of the teaching instead of a separate phase or pre-phase to entering the classroom.

I taught in the resident MBA program, so prepping for [the online MBA program], in a sense, was done automatically or done without my thinking about it in terms of simply preparing, and teaching that. Then, what I attempted to do was to bring that material into the [online MBA] program. Which I learned, after the first year of doing it, they don’t all translate equally well. (Faculty Member Interview).

This may also be related to how curriculum development, research agendas, and teaching loads are closely related for faculty members, and separating the preparation efforts as a separate process may be a new and transformative process (McQuiggan, 2012).
Another key observation was the intertwined nature of interview participants describing their own professional and personal facilitating and inhibiting factors with the institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors. This observation is consistent with Kurt Lewin’s work on Force Field Analysis, because it is recognized that a variety of forces, including those that individuals bring to the field, many serve as forces for and against change (Gold, 1985). The intertwined and transformative nature of the research study topic and findings were a challenge to keeping the research focused on institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors for teaching in the online MBA program. Stories and experiences, as shared by the participants, overlapped across topics, and so it was the researcher’s role to understand how the stories shared related to the research topic of institutional factors enabling and constraining faculty preparation for teaching in online MBA programs, and to ask probing and follow up questions to gain meaning from what was being shared.

Another key observation was that while there was convergence of themes, it was important to note that not all interview participants provided data that related to all five major themes. While each participant met the criteria established for the purposes of this study, they each brought their own unique experiences to the MBA degree program and the interviews. While some themes were mentioned more often than others in the interviews, it does not make the lesser mentioned themes less important to this qualitative case study research. Swanborn notes “it is important to realise that we cannot expect frequencies from a case study to be counted” (p. 132). Miles and Huberman (1984) further caution researchers on the concept of “counting” in qualitative research by noting, “the hallmark of qualitative research is that it goes beyond how much there is of something to tell us about its essential qualities” (p. 215). In this study, the researcher went beyond counting how often a particular item was mentioned in an
interview, and instead looked for information, codes, and themes that described the essential qualities of understanding institutional factors that facilitated and inhibited faculty preparation for teaching in the online MBA program.

**Theme 1: Energy and Effort**

This theme describes the facilitating and inhibiting factors related to the energy and effort that faculty reported investing in preparation to teach for the online MBA degree program. Time is included in this theme as an investment of energy and effort. Interview participants reported this theme of energy and effort in a variety of ways which will be described in this section.

**Time**

Faculty reported investing short- and long-term efforts, as part of a continuous course improvement process, when preparing to teach and actually teaching an online course. Other than providing instructional design and technical support for some of the iterative nature of the course content, set up and technical logistics, faculty did not report an additional facilitating factor that would have eased the constraint of additional time needed for preparing to teach in the online MBA program. One faculty member described the biggest constraint as the “inherent nature of the beast” (Faculty Member Interview) because of the amount of time it takes to prepare to teach and actually teaching an online MBA program. He went on to say, “A lot of faculty will say, ‘Well, gee, teaching in the [online] MBA sounds like a really neat thing. It’s always interesting. Then they do it one time, and they say ‘Holy Smokes—this is more than I bargained for’” (Faculty Member Interview).

There were similar findings across faculty members and interview participants who reported that teaching online was more time-consuming than teaching in residence, and people that had not taught online before could not relate to the concept of how much additional work
and time was involved. Furthermore, this extra time and effort was generally not recognized as part of the teaching load. The amount of time it took to teach in the online MBA program was more than expected, at least initially, by faculty members. One professor went on to say, “You wind up being a 24-7 prof” (Faculty Member Interview). This theme was further triangulated by the interview participants that served as instructional design professionals for the online MBA program. One instructional designer interview participant described a milestone document that is created to serve as a timeline, task list, and communication tool between the designer and faculty member while building and authoring a course. Three instructional Designer Participants mentioned that faculty members were often surprised to see how many other people were involved and the number of tasks involved in building an online course. One Instructional Designer Participant mentioned an image, as shown in Figure 4.1 of how s/he explains the distribution of time and effort it takes to develop an online course.

![Figure 4.1. Distribution of Faculty Time Across the Semester for an Online vs. Face-to-face Course.](image)

Another faculty member described time and effort invested in preparation to teach in the online MBA program, not by the number of hours, but rather by the placement of those hours; over the weekend. The faculty member described the scenario in the following manner:

We had one guy come in and teach in the [online MBA program]...He made a comment that students wanted him to answer e-mails on the weekend, and he didn’t answer e-mails on the weekend. He didn’t work on the weekend. To which my comment was, “Well, if you don’t work on the weekend, you don’t belong in the [online MBA] program because the students generally do their work on the weekend, and that’s the most important time you have to be available, not the least important. (Faculty Member Interview).

This faculty member connected the level of faculty member energy, as well as investment and placement of the amount of time required by faculty members to the success of the students in the online MBA degree program, and went on to state that if the faculty member s/he was referencing would have been made aware of this program expectation in the preparation phase under the mentorship of another faculty member, this faculty member would have had a better understanding of the level of effort and time commitment that is required to prepare and successfully teach in the online MBA degree program.

The inhibiting factor of not being recognized for the extra time required in preparation to teaching online was presented as an institutional constraint. Setting up the course, learning new technology, and learning pedagogy to teach online was not considered in the faculty member’s teaching load or compensation. While some faculty members reported being compensated for authoring a new course, faculty were not compensated or released from other responsibilities while preparing their own course for teaching online. This may have been due to the institution’s
practice not to recognize the additional time, effort, and learning that went into a faculty member’s energy and effort in revising and updating an existing course, and to develop his/her own technology skills in preparation for teaching in a course for online delivery. A faculty member said, “Basically, if you have to put extra time into it, in terms of learning a new technology or something like that, that’s not taken into consideration in terms of your remuneration or the time that you put into it” (Faculty Member Interview). This comment about compensation relates to the amount of additional time needed for faculty to develop their own skills related to technology in preparation to teach the online program, and not necessarily related to compensation as a means for influencing motivation in preparation to teach; this distinction is discussed later in the Chapter.

**Support for Use of Graduate Assistants**

One interesting finding around the topic of energy and effort in preparation to teach in the online MBA program was the use of Graduate Assistants (GAs) to supplement the instruction of the faculty member, and also to release some time responsibilities of the faculty member. Multiple faculty members interviewed would have liked to use GAs as part of their online teaching, but it was not supported by the institution. One faculty member reported, “Technically, I’m not allowed to use those graduate assisted hours for teacher related purposes. That’s a huge constraint” (Faculty Member Interview). The faculty members reported the use of GAs in face-to-face teaching, and would have liked to have similar support for online teaching. They cited several reasons why having a teaching assistant or graduate assistant in the course would be beneficial for the students and the faculty, and how the lack of institutional support for having GAs in courses served as an inhibiting factor in preparation to teach online. One faculty member described the need for GA support as it relates to serving students better by saying:
In residence programs, for example, you often have graduate students, where your students can come either to your office hours or their office hours. By simply making a greater number of office hours like that, you can answer a lot of people’s questions. I try to be available when I teach these things online, but there’s a limit to how much time I could spend. Even if I’m spending it with several students at once, it’s still a limited amount of time that you could spend, and people keep talking about 24/7, but I am going to get sleep, and I am going to do other things from time to time. Just providing a greater number of graduate students, I think, would help. Especially in a field like accounting, where I know the students are having a hard time. (Faculty Member Interview)

Faculty also reported that GAs may have more experience in the online delivery space, could answer questions and provide additional support to students. Without this GA support, students rely solely on the faculty and the other students in the class for support. If the institution considered the use of GAs similar to what is practiced in the face-to-face teaching environment, it may enable preparation of existing faculty to focus on how best to staff challenging and technical courses, by providing increased support and access to supplemental teaching support to students in the online delivery environment, and freeing faculty for teaching responsibilities.

**Faculty Energy and Effort on Non-teaching Related Activity**

Faculty reported that another major effort that took time and energy of faculty teaching in the online MBA program was that spent on non-teaching related activities. One faculty made a distinction between what s/he considered his/her role and not his/her role in the course environment by saying, “My job is to teach and to help people to learn. It’s a waste of my expertise to spend a lot of my time doing really tedious work like figuring out the mechanics of
how to use the stupid grading interface in ANGEL, and stuff like that” (Faculty Member Interview). One faculty member said, “No matter how many resources we provide, and how many times we tell them, [the students] always still come to the prof first with problems” (Faculty Member Interview). Faculty members reported that even with reinforcement of messaging to students who to contact for technical troubleshooting, when an issue arose in the course delivery, the faculty members were the first point of contact for the student. One faculty member reported, “I feel like I’m always the one on the front line, and anything that goes wrong, including inability to access E-reserves with the library winds up as something I need to solve” (Faculty Member Interview). The other services in place to address the student issues were perceived by faculty members to be a facilitating factor to prevent time of faculty members being sucked away for non-teaching related activity, and the institution should consider reinforcing this communication further to reduce the amount of time faculty members spend on these types of issues.

**Effort away from Tenure Process**

One of the key ways this program distinguishes itself from other online programs and other MBA programs in the market is by the almost exclusive use of tenured or non-tenure track, full-time faculty members. This program distinction of relying on tenured or non-tenure track, full-time faculty members was an important facilitating factor as it relates to time, energy, and effort in enabling faculty preparation. Because preparing to teach online was recognized as a time and effort intensive process, and the institution no longer wants the non-tenured faculty member to take time or effort away from the tenured process. Two faculty members reported getting involved in teaching for the online MBA program when a colleague was in jeopardy of
not earning tenure because of the amount of time s/he was spending in preparing to teach online. One faculty member said:

I got into teaching online a couple years ago because we had a faculty member who was a tenure track assistant professor who was doing the two [MBA] courses...two sections of [course number], and it was just eating his time up a lot. We were afraid of his time conflicts and trying to meet all the expectations of the tenure process. The epilogue to that was he failed tenure. Didn’t get it. But the other part of that is I wound up with [course number]. (Faculty Member Interview).

While the quote above provides one faculty member’s perception of their experience, the researcher in this study recognizes that preparing for teaching in the online MBA program may not have been the actual and sole reason why the particular person referenced did not secure tenure, and that other non-related factors may be intertwined or related to this matter.

From the information gathered in the interviews, this practice of only using tenured or non-tenure track, full-time faculty was not always in place for this program, but was later added to better support the needs of the faculty pursuing tenure. A faculty member explains, “I was originally scheduled to teach only the last course in the [online MBA program]. But the person who was supposed to teach in the term [number] course didn’t make tenure, and they asked me to do it” (Faculty Member Interview). The faculty member went on to say, “I was not tenured. I have had a real issue with assigning non-tenured people to teach in the online program, particularly in the early days” (Faculty Member Interview). The faculty member explained why s/he made the decision to teach in the program, though s/he was not already tenured, by saying, “I was not tenured, but I also came with a lot of industry experience...It was not something I
would recommend to people who are not tenured” (Faculty Member Interview). A faculty member reported getting tenure in spite of the increased workload of teaching in the face-to-face classroom, and in the online program, which was a challenging workload that consumed large amounts of time and effort.

**Theme 2: Pedagogical Shift**

This theme describes the factors related to recognition that faculty members may transform or shift their teaching pedagogy for techniques from a classroom-based, resident instruction, face-to-face environment to a distance education, online environment. Faculty members in this study described the pedagogical shift in a variety of ways across the interviews. Interview participants primarily focused of the following topics related to shifting pedagogy for teaching online: they compared their own online teaching and preparation experiences in relation to their previous resident instruction teaching experiences; they described various aspects of their preparation experiences in relation to the pedagogical shift; and discussed strategies utilized to develop or maintain their teaching presence in the online courses and program. Finally, related to institutional factors, faculty members described how their preparation for teaching online was enabled by awareness that preparing to teach online was an iterative process. As one faculty member noted:

> What happens initially is you have taught in the resident program. You're teaching in the online program. The platform has shifted. You are not exactly sure about how the platform works. You may have a certain understanding. “OK, this maybe looks like a good activity and will work well online,” but it may not work like that. It's true for even resident sections. Every time you make an effort, you learn as to what worked and what failed, and you need to analyze it carefully as to why
it failed so that your next activity does not follow the same pattern. Then you
learn from your own successes and failures and start building on it. (Faculty
Member Interview).

In the section, the researcher will describe the various ways faculty members described the pedagogical shift.

**Faculty Describing the Pedagogical Shift**

In the interviews, faculty members described their transformed perspective and shifting pedagogy in relation to their preparation to teach online. A faculty member noted, “It's an interesting experience. It's like drinking your first martini. The first one I ever had I really didn't like that well, but now I order them regularly” (Faculty Member Interview). This shifting or transformation of pedagogy is described in relation to overlapping perspectives of technology, the student experience, and how the field of online education is viewed by administrators and institutions. One faculty member noted:

You have a different platform. Both [face-to-face and online] don't work for all
courses and for all faculty members. Understanding the differences is important.
Differences are not merely technological. What happens is most of our efforts that
focused on technology at this point and duplicating the classroom experience in
the online environment without understanding the uniqueness of online
environment and the people who teach in the online environment... the platform
has changed and people really do not understand what is online teaching. (Faculty
Member Interview).

The faculty member went on to describe faculty preparation resources for teaching online, in relation to the understanding of shifting pedagogy of online teaching:
Professional development for online teaching is very mechanical. "We will look at this technology. We will look at this particular thing." It's really the content of the post, how it needs to be presented, how you can make the best use of that technology an online forum. A lot of these connections are completely missing. It has nothing to do with the professional development people themselves. It's just the fragmentation of disciplines in general, and a view of online as a technology-driven medium. I really don't think it is a technology-driven experience. It is really still at a certain level, a personal experience, just like the in-class experience. The problem is an online education has been viewed as a machine where you can reach thousands of people. (Faculty Member Interview).

Comparing Face-to-Face Teaching to Online Teaching

Multiple faculty members interviewed in this study described their experiences in preparing to teach online as a comparison in relation to their previous experiences of teaching in resident instruction, face-to-face, classroom environment. Faculty members mentioned how their preparation to teach involved starting with their face-to-face classroom content, and attempting to adapt it to an online format. Other faculty members described using content that already existed for the course, written by someone else, and adapting or changing it to suit online delivery, or their own teaching style. One faculty member described working with an instructional designer on this process and noted, “I would send them notes that I would have, which often was in a resident instruction format, and they would tell me what they needed me to change. Then I would attempt to do it. We'd go back and forth” (Faculty Member Interview). An instructional designer described his/her role in a faculty member’s preparation by saying:
When a faculty member would give me their content, and it would just be their slides from teaching in residence, I would say, “You are more than your power points.” And the notes she had actually became the course content. When working with this faculty member, I had to figure out how to get what I needed in a way the faculty member would be comfortable. (Instructional Designer Interview Participant).

This instructional designer went on to note that “after teaching an online course, the faculty talked about rethinking their resident instruction courses” (Instructional Designer Interview Participant).

Communication clarity was also raised by faculty interview participants as something that seems to need shifting, along with shifting understanding of online teaching. One faculty member noted:

In a resident class, if I write an assignment that I'm going to hand out in a resident class or if I go over it in class, people can raise their concerns. Someone can raise their hand and say, "So are you saying you want this? You don't indicate what font you want used?"....But when you're online they may not email you...and they must just make the assumption. Then you have to deal with the result. Sometimes they just screw up the assignment that they submit. (Faculty Member Interview).

In this example in particular, the faculty member described an example of how lack of clarity on an assignment would be handled differently with regards to the face-to-face versus the online classroom. In the interview, the faculty member went on to describe his/her preparation process for teaching online by adding more specificity around his/her course instructions, which he adapted to fit the online delivery format. Similarly, another faculty member noted:
One of the things that you don't, or at least I didn't appreciate, I would imagine of most people this online the first time, you don't appreciate the significant lack of being able to read faces. When I'm doing a resident program I can look in the audience, and I know whether the students are absorbing the material or whether they're lost. If I see it on their faces that they're lost, I can stop at that point and raise questions or give new examples. You don't have that at all. Even as simple and as obvious as that is, it didn't really click with me. I think, in fact that was one of the biggest things I had to learn in doing this. I had to assume what type of reaction students would be having. (Faculty Member Interview).

Another faculty member described taking advantage of technology to create an online learning environment for the student, and how preparation could be more involved that recreating the classroom environment:

It's not just taking what you say as an instructor and putting it online. It's taking the experience of the learner and recreating that experience online. Sometimes that means trying to replicate what you do in the classroom. But sometimes that means taking advantage of technology, and things you can do online that you can't do in the classroom. (Faculty Member Interview).

**Faculty Teaching Presence**

Faculty members mentioned “teaching presence” as something they considered when they were preparing to teach online. A faculty member further elaborated on his/her understanding of “being present” in the online classroom:

One of the most important variables in teaching online, to me, is the concept of presence. The students know that you are present, and that you care about them,
and so forth. Also, beyond this presence, that there's some degree of spontaneity. That it's not just some canned program. I just find different ways, using the communication venues that I have with my students, to be innovative, or create that sense of humor, or respond to current events, or things like that, that establish presence. (Faculty Member Interview).

A faculty member described how a preparation course for teaching online helped him understand how to use available technology to have a teaching presence in the course with students:

I learned some things in terms of bulletin boards. The updating, and then the importance of the constant touch with students, and doing it in so many different ways. Whoever the instructor was showed us at least a dozen different ways of touching, whether through email, or when you log on, having a different message on the bulletin board, and different things in terms of bulletin boards and the lessons themselves. Showing us a whole variety of ways to get our message across, and try to have a smiley face in front of the student. That was my big take away from that (Faculty Member Interview).

One faculty member noted the following experience, in relation to the course set up influencing teaching presence:

Well, the first time I taught a class online, I think I had maybe 17 students. From a communication philosophy, meaning centered framework, it was a disaster. It was a nightmare. Because the course went well. Everybody liked it and all. It was offered again. But from my perspective, the nightmare was that instead of having one section of 17 students engaged around the content of the course, I had 17 sections with one student each. (Faculty Member Interview).
Recognizing Iterative Process of Preparing to Teach Online

Faculty members reported that with the shifting pedagogy, and new or transformational understanding of the online course delivery environment, faculty members experienced a “learning curve” during their preparation efforts to teach online.

When you are shifting a platform, initially you do have a learning curve. For some faculty it's a steep learning curve, for some faculty members it's really no curve at all. It depends, just like in resident teaching. (Faculty Interview).

Other faculty members discussed making adjustments to their courses in preparation to teach for the next offering. One faculty member noted, “I like to think that as many times as a I teach a single course I never teach it exactly the same way moving forward” (Faculty Member Interview). One faculty member noted his/her experience of preparing to teach in the online MBA program, and the need to make adjustments to the course between offerings:

I taught in the resident MBA program, so prepping for it, in a sense, was done automatically or done without my thinking about it in terms of simply preparing, and teaching that. Then, what I attempted to do was to bring that material into the [online MBA program]. Which I learned, after the first year of doing it, they don't all translate equally well. I had to make significant adjustments after the first time I was doing this. The course has since stabilized, but it was a big difference between the first time and second time I was doing this. (Faculty Interview).

Another faculty member described his/her experiences of shifting pedagogy for online teaching and the iterative course preparation process through a specific example related to her course design and how conducted student-to-student and faculty-student interaction in the course:
I realized by setting the course up the way I had, I designed a course where they interacted with the computer, where they interacted with me, but never with each other. There wasn't enough of me to go around to seventeen students all the time, all day. That was the biggest mistake, and that was my mistake. I made a very concerted effort to avoid that mistake ever since. (Faculty Interview).

Another faculty member described the iterative process of adjusting the course and preparing to teach online while working together with an instructional designer:

   It's an ongoing learning process where what [the faculty member and instructional designer] learn in one semester or one year gets rolled over to the planning process for the following year where we're saying, "OK, gee, that didn't work too well or that gave us some problems. Let's make sure we short circuit it." (Faculty Member Interview).

   The instructional designers for the online MBA program also reported the iterative nature of faculty preparing to teach in the program, and described how they support the iterative process. As one designer noted, “we put more design time into the repeat process now. When a new instructor wants to make changes, we make those changes” (Instructional Design Interview Participant). One instructional designer described the suggestion s/he provides to the faculty members preparing to teach online, and while teaching online for the first time, by saying, “I tell the faculty to keep list of all the things that worked and didn’t work while teaching their first time. Then we would go back and make the changes after the first run” (Instructional Design Interview Participant).
Theme 3: Technology Interface

This theme describes the facilitating and inhibiting factors related to the technology interface in preparation to teach for the online MBA degree program. The extent of use of technology is an important part of the delivery of online education. By extension, how faculty members engage and interact with technology interface and tools during course design, preparation, and teaching phases of online course delivery is also important. Interview participants reported this theme of technology interface in a variety of ways which will be described in this section.

Barriers of Institutional Technology Standardization

Faculty members reported that the institution’s efforts to standardize various aspects of the design of the program, especially as it related to course design was inhibiting factor in preparation for teaching in the online MBA program. By standardization, faculty reported that various aspects of features they wanted to include in the design of their courses were either denied, or delayed, in consideration of the larger picture of the rest of the program, or other online programs delivered by the same institution. One faculty member described the constraint in the following way:

I wanted to have some interactive exercises within the course, and it was difficult to get that done, and we didn't do it. We're talking eight years ago or whenever [the online MBA program] first started. I'm not saying the technology didn't exist. It simply could have been that the [institution], when they were trying to get the entire thirty credits of [the online MBA program] courses up, and running for the first offering, they didn't have the time to integrate some of that more interactive
content in there. Either way, I had brought it up, and it was, "We can't do that right now. We can do this." (Faculty Member Interview).

Other faculty member went on to describe issue of technology standardization as a barrier by saying

“I would sum it up as I get the feeling that the technical designers who design the interface, that they're in control. I'm not, and I just have to do things their way. That's probably, maybe, too strong a statement, it's not quite being fair, but that's just how it comes off sometimes” (Faculty Member Interview).

One faculty member, one of the only interviewed faculty members with extensive technology experience prior to teaching for the online MBA program described this issue of standardization as a significant barrier to preparation, and described his/her experience in overcoming the barrier:

We can talk about the features that seem standard in the online MBA [now], most of those actually I initiated. For example - [educational technology software]. I was the one that demanded an online virtual classroom. I was the only user in the whole [institution] for over a year and they were going to cancel it. It was expensive. Until [instructional designer] went on a campaign to get other people to use it. (Faculty Member Interview).

One faculty member described his/her perspective of why the institution was limited by the issues of standardization:

There are two problems...Number one, they were used to correspondence courses. They were used to physical workbooks. They had no idea of the potential of not being constrained by page, after page, after page. Second thing, they were
following the education research. As people remind me, I always told them, "Anything in an education journal is at least two years old." I was following what was happening in the commercial world, in terms of what technology companies were doing. That's where we were so lucky to have [instructional designer]. (Faculty Member Interview).

Standardization of technology was perceived by faculty members as an inhibiting factor for preparing to teach in the online MBA program.

**Limitations of the Learning Management System**

The learning management system (LMS) is an education technology tool that serves as the primary platform for how students and faculty interact with the online course content. Faculty reported the archaic nature of the learning management system used at the institution and for this online MBA degree program, and therefore as a constraint for preparing to teach in the program. One faculty member with some experience teaching online prior to teaching for the online MBA program said, “There are limitations to the video based instruction based on the [LMS] so the system used probably isn’t as glitzy as what I have used in private industry” (Faculty Member Interview). And while the faculty reported constraints of the LMS, the online MBA program is more than technology. One faculty member said, “Look at us. We use [LMS], which is really a dinosaur. It is the most frustrating and constraining platform there is and we do a wonderful job using that platform. It really reflects on the people who are using it rather than the platform itself” (Faculty Member Interview). This faculty member’s comment reflects the program’s perspective of delivering a good program, in spite of the limitations of technology.
Understanding Technology for Teaching Online

Faculty members interviewed reported varying levels of experience with use of technology in teaching courses. Understanding the technology of teaching online, and developing their skills in this area, was something each faculty member reported they spent time learning. One faculty described his/her experience in the following way:

I had to learn a number of things in terms of technology...I may be at the bottom of the people teaching the [online MBA] program in terms of technology skills. I had to learn a variety of things....At that time I was not even using Skype.

Programs that they were using in terms of communicating with their classes - all that was new to me. (Faculty Member Interview).

Other faculty members described their need for more information about emerging technology for teaching online. One faculty member said, “I really have no idea of what other technologies are out there in terms of possible different ways to interface with my students or things like that. Because I'm presuming that this is a constantly emerging field, then I assume that's important” (Faculty Member Interview). Faculty reported the initial constraint of understanding technology for teaching online, as well as the ongoing need for information about emerging technology.

Theme 4: Institutional Support

This theme describes the facilitating and inhibiting factors related to the institution in preparation to teach for the online MBA degree program. While aspects of the other themes relate to the theme of institutional support, this theme examines the holistic role of the institution. One faculty member said:

There is a lack of understanding of what it actually means to teach online.

Sometimes, I wonder if the institution really knows what it's like to grade, to form
relationships with students online, academic, professional, educational relationships, where you're getting them through their final projects, and you're trying to meet two sections of new students at the same time. There is a human limit. (Faculty Member Interview).

Interview participants reported this theme of institutional support in a variety of ways which will be described in this section.

**Institutional Resources in Place to Deal with Non-academic Issues**

Faculty members recognized the facilitating factors associated with having resources in place to deal with academic issues. While this topic relates to the Effort and Energy theme mentioned earlier, having the resources in place helps to reduce constraints. One faculty member reported:

> I have heard stories from a number of small schools where they’re told to develop online courses but are really never told what to do and how to go about developing online courses. The existence of [institution’s online delivery unit] itself was very, very helpful in essentially enabling and facilitating the courses. (Faculty Member Interview).

While recognized as a facilitating factor in creating the courses, the institution’s delivery unit was also seen as an inhibiting factor because of the bureaucracy it created. The faculty member added that

> The flipside of [institution’s online delivery unit] can also be a constraining and inhibiting factor because then it becomes bureaucratic, and we have these issues where you are really looking at the programs not from a teaching viewpoint but
programs as some type of a product that you're to look at from the viewpoint of
dollars and cents. (Faculty Member Interview).

Other faculty reported the value of having technical support professionals at the institution to
assist with issues of trouble shooting and training. While this seems to be a program support
topic, rather than an institutional support topic, it is reflective the culture of the institution, to
make resources available to faculty in this program to support a quality online MBA program.
More specifically, the availability of technical support assistance to meet the specific needs of
faculty members was reported as valued. One faculty member with significant depth of skills and
experience reported certain technical staff with in-depth knowledge of various technical topics,
and spent time collaborating with the faculty members on these detailed topics as an enabling
factor. On the other hand, another faculty with less experience with technology related topics
reported value in having someone that just explains what was needed to use the tool, rather than
the technical background associated with the tool. This faculty member reported:

I wanted to know, "How do I do this? What makes it work?" I wanted steps 1, 2,
3, 4, and be done with it...In terms of talking with some of the tech people, I think
some of the tech people were good. I mean it was a flip side, it's like I'm the
student, and they are the teacher. They have to understand where I'm coming
from...Some [technical support] people could relate directly with my problems.

(Faculty Member Interview).

Overall, having resources to help deal with non-academic issues were perceived as facilitating
factors when it supported specific faculty preparation efforts, especially around technical support
and course design, but also an inhibiting factor because it added administrative and bureaucratic
constraints. Topics related to the support associated with instructional designers are discussed further in this chapter.

**Departmental Support**

Having or lacking departmental support was visible in a variety of forms across the faculty interviews. One faculty member said, “I'm not sure that the policies are designed to promote the well-being of the faculty, or even the students, in terms of the time, pressure and the technology” (Faculty Member Interview), but lacked specificity around any particular policy. Faculty members referenced a lack of understanding by administrators about the challenges associated with teaching and preparing to teach online:

Online teaching is essentially being pursued at different institutions and the impetus is really coming mostly from the administration because of various reasons. Because they see that you can reach a national and an international audience. You can make a lot of money. "A lot of peers are doing it, so let's do it." A lot of these administrators have very little idea as to what is involved in online teaching. A lot of those ideas come from what they hear in teaching forums, or conferences. There is very little experience in terms of actually teaching a course. (Faculty Member Interview).

One faculty member identified departmental support “in the generic sense” that a two credit online MBA degree course counted in the faculty member’s teaching load as a three credit course (Faculty Member Interview). One faculty member reported a lack of support by his/her department when it came to technical support because the teaching assignment was part of the online MBA degree program:
It's interesting how you have these very specific boundaries. If it was a [college] related activity, then they would help me, but if it's not [college], if it was [the online MBA program], especially if it's [not] part of my regular pay, then they treat it as, "You go find out on your own." The tech people at [college] also would not help.

As one faculty member noted about a department’s support of research agendas over teaching, or preparation for teaching:

If you have a culture where your star faculty members merely do research and there is very, very little in terms of teaching involved, as is the case in most of the higher level research driven institutions, online teaching really doesn't matter.

(Faculty Member Interview).

Faculty interview participants responded to the question about institutional or departmental support for faculty preparation, or lack thereof, in relation to how they perceived value of teaching within their department or institution. It seems that if the department did not seem to value or support the teaching assignment, the concept of preparation to teach online may also not be considered of value.

**Access to Technology to Support Online Teaching Preparation**

Faculty members reported a lack of access to technology resources needed to prepare to teach online from their campus/college. For this sub-theme, it was particularly challenging to separate preparation from actual teaching. One faculty member noted:

There used to be a policy that faculty would get a new laptop every three years. They recently changed that to every four years. That summer my PC just was not working well. Its battery life was really low. I travel a lot, and I use it. I just want
to be online all the time when I'm teaching a course. I paid $1,800 to buy myself a new laptop, and 98% of the use of that is for [institution’s] use. (Faculty Member Interview).

One faculty member, around a similar idea, noted:

When it came to even providing additional services, like things that perhaps weren't in accordance with university policy, but can't Internet access. I use my phone a lot a day. All of these things that you need to have and to have access to and availability to [in order] to do a really good job, These are not some of the things the university supports. (Faculty Member Interview).

The researcher also noticed that in an online MBA degree faculty meeting, the Program Chair made an announcement that if any faculty members needed access to technology, including hardware or software, that they should send their requests to the online MBA degree administrative program office. The researcher also noted that for faculty teaching and preparing to teach in the online MBA program, software may have been provided to the faculty by the instructional design team (Administrative Manual, 2013, p. 68). This leads the researcher to question if the faculty members were aware that there were separate avenues they may have pursued for software and hardware technology needs.

One faculty member reported not having issues with gaining access to technology in preparation to teach online, and said:

[The technology people] loved to talk to me because I knew what they were talking about and they loved to show me stuff that I might be able to use. Besides that, I was considered a power user in our college so I basically got anything I asked for when it came to computer resources. I was the first one with a CD-ROM
writer. I was the first one with it. I had the reputation of “we really don't understand why [faculty member] wants this stuff but whatever [faculty member] is buying, we're all going to be using in five years. I had this reputation of understanding the technology. (Faculty Member Interview).

Being an outlier to this issue of lack of support for access to technology needed to prepare and teach online, the researcher probed further in the interview with this faculty member. It was noted that this faculty member, self-identified and was recognized by his/her college dean, instructional designer, and various other individuals at the institution as an “early adopter” of technology, a “power user” who was perceived as “ahead of the curve,” “frugal,” and “a few times of being really right [about technology]” (Faculty Member Interview). This was the only faculty member interviewed that provided numerous examples of how his/her early adoption of certain software and education technology tools lead to adoption and widespread use by other faculty members and online programs. This “early adopter” perception was supported two instructional designer interview participants (Two Instructional Designer Interviews).

Overall, some faculty reported not getting access to the technology they need to prepare to teach online as an inhibiting factor. This may be a reflection of the institution not considering the needs of faculty preparing to teach online as separate or different from teaching in a resident classroom-based teaching environment. While one faculty member did report not having inhibiting issues with access to technology, this person seems to have developed a presence over the years as an individual highly competent with technology, and serves as a pilot for possible future technology to be integrated more widely into other programs and parts of the institution.
Theme 5: Instructional Design and Program Support

Institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors for faculty preparing to teach online exist at the level of the course design and delivery, in addition to administration and departmental levels. The role of the instructional design team was frequently mentioned by faculty members as an institutional facilitating factor. Program-level activities and support was also discussed as a facilitating factor in preparing to teach online. Both the role of the instructional design team and program support will be discussed in this section.

Instructional Designer Support for Course Design and Setup

Faculty members interviewed in this study used the following terms to describe the instructional designers they worked with in preparing to teach online: “invaluable,” “very helpful,” “pleasant,” “fantastic,” and “supportive.” Interviewed faculty members elaborated on the helpful qualities and behaviors of the instructional designers: “could directly relate to my problems,” “assisted in innovations,” “facilitate processes,” “mentored,” knew what was going on,” formed a partnership,” and “made suggestions.”

Based on the interviews, overlap seems to exist in faculty experiences and realization of different pedagogy for teaching online, and the facilitating role of the instructional designer. This may be due to common occurrence that faculty members may not have previously worked with instructional designers for their resident instruction courses, and the designer may be one of the first people they would have interacted with at the content and design level of their course to be delivered online. As one faculty member stated, “All that instructional design stuff - I was totally and completely clueless. If I had to do any of it, it would still be waiting to be done” (Faculty Member Interview).
Multiple faculty members explained how instructional designers were particularly helpful in preparing to teach by helping with course setup, design, and creating an overall cohesive structure to the delivery of the courses. One faculty member said:

Initially, we found, at least I found, the instructional designers invaluable.

Without instructional designers we would not be where we are today. They were very helpful in designing the courses. Not only because our courses were looked upon by somebody else so that we have the benefit of a second eye looking at all these things, but also because the courses were packaged correctly. (Faculty Member Interview).

Another faculty member reported:

I think working with [Instructional Designer], and the instructional design team, it was her and there were several other people also that were assisting her...just in setting things up. It was a nice process. I would send them notes, which often was in a resident instruction format and they would tell me what they needed me to change. Then I would attempt to do it. We'd go back and forth. Dealing with the instructional designers - that was a pleasant process. I thought that it was a great help, especially in the first two years doing this, in terms of trying to set [the class] up so it actually would work with the program. (Faculty Member Interview).

Another faculty member reported his/her experience with an instructional designer familiar with the overall look and feel of the design of all courses across the online MBA program.

What was very helpful and supportive...were the instructional designers who knew what was going on in these courses. They could tell me what was working
well, and what the best practices were. Now I can go into these courses, really almost any course [in the online MBA program], and know right away how this is going to work, and where the backlog is going to be. Having the [instructional design] staff to have some continuity in how these courses are running given multiple instructors across the sections, there needs to be somebody who can look across the courses and see what's going on in each, what's working, and where to change things. (Faculty Member Interview).

Other faculty members described how the instructional designers were particularly helpful to faculty members as they were preparing to teach by making suggestions of innovation that could be used in the design or delivery of the courses. A faculty member said, “the instructional designers will make suggestions on innovations or notice delivery that may cause confusion to students with a suggestion as to how to modify” (Faculty Member Interview).

**Instructional Designers as Collaborative Partners**

Beyond course setup, faculty members described their work with instructional designers as collaborative partnerships. A faculty member reported, “I would say if we were mentored at all by anyone, it was by the [instructional designers] who were there to, at least on the instructional design end, educate us as to what could be done (Faculty Member Interview). Another faculty member described his/her collaborative interaction with the instructional designer by saying:

What [instructional designer] did with me was we really formed a partnership. She would make suggestions. She'd never tell me, “OK, we had some conversations early on about how this was going to happen.” Instead, she would write suggestions in there in purple, and then she would send them back to me.
She would say, "I'm not reading it as a subject matter expert, but your students aren't going to be subject matter experts, either. This doesn't quite make sense to me. Do you think you could reword it?" It was a very collaborative session always. (Faculty Member Interview).

Given that multiple faculty members described their collaborative working experiences with the instructional designers, the researcher interviewed the instructional designers specifically mentioned by the faculty members. Related to faculty preparation for teaching online, the instructional designers interviewed for this study reported the collaborative partnership in a variety of ways. One instructional designer said, “When I work with faculty, I give them all of the expectations up front, just as they are asking of their students” (Instructional Design Interview Participant) and referred the researcher to a website that provides Quality Assurance standards for online courses at the institution (McQuiggan, 2014). The instructional designer reported that sharing those standards with the faculty member as they prepared to partner to develop the online course helped faculty members understand the components of the work needed for developing an online course, and set a roadmap for the process and preparation. Another instructional designer noted, “When working with this faculty member, I had to figure out how to get what I needed in a way the faculty member would be comfortable...Instructors need to feel the designer is on their side. We are a team” (Instructional Design Interview Participant).

The researcher interviewed a member of the instructional design team that had responsibility for oversight of processes and personnel for instructional designers that work closely with faculty members. Related to the collaborative working partnerships among faculty members preparing to teach online, and their instructional designers, s/he noted:
We push conversations. The faculty [members] know the instructional designers are listening to them. When things aren’t going well, we find solutions. The instructional designers are listening to their concerns. And the faculty understand this….We get back to them. We are responsive when they complain, even if it ends up being a dead end. (Instructional Design Interview Participant).

The instructional designer also noted the high level of support the institution has committed to the faculty of the online MBA program through instructional design services by adding, “We treat this as a flagship program for [institution], and see it that way. The [online MBA program] is special, and we step outside of the box to support and design it, and faculty appreciate that” (Instructional Design Interview Participant).

The instructional designer described the qualities s/he looks for when choosing an instructional designer to assign to the online MBA degree program team to work with the faculty members. Specifically noted are the following characteristics of an instructional designer that would be a good fit for the online MBA program:

- Pays attention to detail. Faculty do not like mistakes, and have high expectations
- Has self-confidence, including being calm, collected, listens, and is respectful
- Is creative with technology, looks at the problems and tries to solve them
- Comes from a good design school
- Is willing to try new things
- Is the “cream of the crop” (Instructional Design Interview Participant).
The instructional designer elaborated on characteristics or behaviors to look for in a possible instructional designer that would inhibit him/her from being a good fit for the faculty of the online MBA program:

- Gets defensive
- Has a personality of having a set way of doing things, finds it hard to look at another way of doing things, this does not go over well with faculty
- Gets fixated on internal processes (Instructional Design Interview Participant).

The instructional designer described the advice she gave instructional designers, as related to working with faculty members preparing to teach online, “I stress with my instructional design team that all faculty are not the same, including what motivates them, and that you need to tailor your response to work well with them” (Instructional Design Interview Participant).

**Instructional Designer Insight into the Student Perspective**

Faculty members reported that another way instructional designers facilitated their preparation to teach online was by offering understanding or information about the perspective of the online student experience. Understanding the online student experience and perspective shaped how faculty designed various aspects of their course, and influenced their preparation for teaching online, as they recognized that the online student’s experience may be different from the experiences of students in the traditional classroom. As one faculty member noted:

[Instructional designer] would say, "I'm not reading it as a subject matter expert, but your students aren't going to be subject matter experts, either. This doesn't quite make sense to me. Do you think you could reword it?” It was a very collaborative session always. (Faculty Member Interview).
Similar experiences of having an instructional designer review the online course and provide suggestions based on the potential online student experience were mentioned by multiple faculty members.

One of the faculty members who did really well [teaching] in the course told me that the instructional designer told him that he himself didn't understand what is being written, so the students would not understand it. So the faculty member reworked those things. (Faculty Member Interview).

A faculty member discussed how the institution’s decision to assign an instructional design team to the faculty members of the online MBA program served as a facilitating factor for preparing to teach and deliver the program:

Right from the beginning, the [institution online delivery unit] and the [online MBA] program had a staff of instructional designs who would make it work and make it pretty, and make it flow, and make it meaningful, again, from the students perspective. (Faculty Member Interview).

**Program Support**

With regards to support from within the online MBA degree program, multiple faculty members described semi-annual faculty meetings for the online MBA program. One faculty members found the meetings to be an institutional enabling factor and valuable resource where s/he could get colleague input about teaching in the program (Faculty Member Interview). Another faculty member described in detail the types of activities that take place at the faculty meetings:

This was an entirely in-house effort. The [online MBA program] faculty meetings were great as a source of new ideas, dissemination of best practices. We were
sometimes visited by [institution] resident experts. Some of those [presenters] gave us some good ideas. All in all, those meetings became the basis for learning more about online teaching. The biggest factor was that it was informal. We can go around and talk to people who have become good at online teaching. We share syllabi. We share things back and forth. Many people want to look at other courses; they're allowed to look at other courses. They can borrow ideas. We have a lot of cross-fertilization of ideas in the program. You can see if you look at the syllabi, you will see that there are a number of things that look similar, but with a certain twist in a particular program. A lot of good ideas have already been adopted by different professors. It’s more like informal mentoring-types and culture-type issues rather than a specific standard operating procedure. Teaching is not exactly a science. To that extent, professional development training resources will have to be tailored to a particular program, to a particular class of professors. (Faculty Member Interview).

The idea of preparation for teaching online consisting of sharing information among faculty members at the faculty meetings was repeated by multiple faculty members.

The best things that have happened, as far as preparing and continuous improvement, is having these twice a year faculty meetings with the [MBA] program. That’s where get new ideas. That's where we get development. That's where we get collaboration. That's where we get sharing. (Faculty Member Interview).
Compensation

Compensation was a possible theme the researcher had initially considered exploring for the findings of this research study, after doing some initial open and axial coding. The online education industry subject matter expert was helpful in verifying the coding of open and axial codes into convergence of themes. However, in further discussion with the subject matter expert consulted in this research study, as previously described in Chapter 3, the researcher decided that the mention of compensation was outside the parameters of this case study as it did not specifically relate to institutional factors in relation to faculty preparation for teaching online.

The topic of compensation was mentioned by some of the faculty interview participants. One faculty member reported, “I did get extra compensation. The extra compensation has been generous. I guess that probably would be the biggest [supportive] policy thing” (Faculty Member Interview). This quote, while it mentions compensation, does not seem to explain the connection between compensation and preparation. Another faculty member reported, “I was compensated for creating the course that I teach and this creation was, by far, the biggest part of my preparation efforts” (Faculty Member Interview). This quote, while seeming to connect compensation to preparation, in the context of the rest of the interview, it seems to connect time related to preparation efforts. Amey and VanDerLinden suggest “there is little justification for believing that money is the main source of faculty motivation (2002, p. 23).

Amey and VanDerLinden go on to suggest that “intrinsic rewards often overshadow the limited material rewards of a faculty position....Extrinsic rewards do not generally alter attitudes or emotional commitments that underlie behavior (p. 23). The concept of intrinsic rewards, though not about institutional factors and therefore beyond the parameters of the current study, appeared in the faculty interviews. When asked about how s/he came to teach for the online
MBA program, one faculty member reported having “interest” in the program (Faculty Member Interview). Another faculty member reported:

I was intrigued by online teaching and I used to hear about online teaching from my colleagues. Initially almost all the professors who were drawn to online teaching were more of a risk-taking nature, [and were] more interested in knowing how this medium, where you really do not see students, will work. How can you excel in such an environment? A lot of it was essentially self-driven. (Faculty Member Interview).

Another faculty member reported, “I figured that it would be good skill-building for me. That’s why I did it in the very beginning” (Faculty Member Interview). These quotes from the research study interviews may suggest that while compensation may have been mentioned by a few faculty members, there appears to be clearer, direct connections between various intrinsic motivations for faculty preparing to teach in the online MBA program over the external motivation of compensation. For this reason, compensation was not included as an overall theme in the findings of this research study.

**Signs of an Established Online MBA Degree Program**

As previously discussed in Chapter 3, a subject matter expert was consulted in this research study, and was helpful in verifying the coding of open and axial codes into convergence of themes, and verified the codes in relation to his/her own experiences with the existing literature, research, and practices in the field. The subject matter expert, upon review of the data and codes, marked an absence of commonly held faculty member preparation concerns related to the logistics of student registration, student advising, course accessibility for visual and hearing impaired students, students accessing appropriate course materials, and other questions that seem
to arise in programs. The researcher reviewed the transcripts thoroughly again for details and comments that may shed light on topics related to these concerns. No statements related to those topic areas were present in the transcripts. However, the concept of a program life cycle may serve as an explanation for this noted absence of concerns reported by the faculty members from this program. As shown in Figure 4.2, Bowling (2001) describes the five stages of the life cycle of an extension education program:

- **Conceptualization Phase** – “In the conceptualization phase, the program springs from the educator's current knowledge base. During the first phase of the program life cycle, an educational opportunity is identified, ideas are generated, and rough drafts of the program are produced” (para. 4).

- **Development Phase** – “In the development phase, the program parameters and rough draft generated in the conceptualization phase are refined and solidified into a final product ready to be tested with participants. In this phase, the level of detail is increased significantly....After several "trial runs," the revision process will slow to a crawl, and the program moves to the maturity phase” (para. 8-9).

- **Maturity Phase** – “In the maturity phase, programs are at their highest efficiency. Although minor tweaking or customization for a specific audience may take place (for example, teaching leadership to elected officials is different from teaching leadership to community volunteers), the program is ready to be used at a moment's notice. All significant bugs have been eliminated, and the presenter is familiar with the content and the flow of the program. Evaluations and attendance are high. Presenters' enthusiasm is strong. Life is good. This is where educators are sometimes lulled to sleep” (para. 10-11).
• Decline Phase - There are multiple factors that make an educational program successful. Watching both presenter indicators and participant indicators can help Extension professionals monitor these factors. When the indicators begin to drop, the program is entering the decline phase.... A declining number is the first sign that it is time to renew, revise, or redefine a program” (para. 12).

• Termination Phase - Once program participation has dropped to levels that make presentation either difficult or severely inefficient because of lack of participant interaction, the program should be terminated. This is not always easy” (para. 14).

Understanding the education program life cycle may shed light on the reason why some items the subject matter expert expected to see in the data were not present. Being that this institution’s online MBA program has been operating for over ten years, the program may be in the Maturity phase of the life cycle. In that case, many of the processes or traditionally held uncertainties from faculty about various aspects of the program may already have been addressed years ago, and earlier in the program life cycle.
One faculty member said:

I have to tell you, [researcher], you are talking to a veteran. We started [the online MBA degree program] in 2003. At that time, online learning was just a gleam in the eye of most of the higher education institutions. We had absolutely no experience as an online learner or as an online teacher. It was more or less a process of discovery. (Faculty Member Interview).

Another faculty member described his/her experience related to her depth of experience with online teaching and early participation in the online MBA program:
I'm sure I wasn't the first person to teach online at [Institution]. But I'm going to guess I was among the first. I started teaching online and developed a course [Institution] in 1999, I think it was. I was part of the curriculum development team that designed the [online MBA] program. I was with experienced in online....When I started using [Learning Management System], [Institution] owned the beta version. They were trying to decide whether to switch from [Educational Technology] to [Learning Management System]. Everything was coming together in the late 1990s and around 2000, and then the [online MBA program], we start working on that probably in 2000. (Faculty Member Interview).

One Instructional Designer Interview Participant noted in the interview that the program faculty and management staff had experienced several questions or uncertainties related to various aspects of the program in its early inception. Yet, over the years, and seemingly like the Mature Phase of the program life cycle suggests, many of the questions, processes, and cultural aspects of the program had either answered the questions, or established a protocol or precedence on how various functions would be handled.

**Chapter Summary**

Consistent with Lewin’s work of Force Field Analysis, the researcher found that analysis from this research study did not separate into two completely separate categories of institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors that affected faculty preparation. Therefore, the findings were described as five large themes, with subsections with more detailed analysis. The five themes consisted of the following areas: Energy and Effort, Pedagogical Shift, Technology Interface, Institutional Support, and Instructional Design and Program Support. While compensation and
program life cycle were topics that found in the interviews, both topics seem separate from the research scope specifically about institutional factors enabling and constraining faculty preparation, and were therefore excluded from the final list of five overall themes.
Chapter 5
Summary, Recommendations, and Implications of Practice

Study Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors that enable and constrain faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program. Using the framework of Transformation Learning Theory to guide the research, this study enhances the field of online learning and higher education because it brings understanding to the topics of online education, faculty preparation, and online MBA programs. The single-site case study method was used to examine faculty preparation to teach in an online MBA program at a US university. The research questions were:

1. What were the facilitating factors at the institution that enabled faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program?

2. What were the inhibiting factors at the institution that constrained faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program?

This study funneled existing literature and research related to the following five areas of existing literature and research demonstrate the foundation for the purpose of this study: Force Field analysis as a framework for organizational analysis; online education principles for teaching; developing faculty competencies for online teaching; institutional resources for online teaching preparation; and faculty preparation for teaching in online MBA programs.

Single Site, Single-Case Study Approach

This research study is presented as a single site, single-case design, with the single context of one university, in the context of one online MBA degree program with multiple interview participants and archival sources serving as multiple points of data. While this single
site, single-case study approach limits the generalizability of the findings, it makes for a more in-depth study of the single site. Within the context provided by Yin (2003), this study meets rationale for the appropriate use of the single-case study design by the unique nature of the site, and the revelatory nature the role of the researcher brings to the study.

**Data Collection**

A case study protocol and case study research map were developed for this study. A profile of the institution, online MBA degree program, and faculty members in the program were developed by the researcher, based on the data gathered, to get further information and provide background on the site for this research study. An original interview instrument was developed using the assistance of five individuals serving as key informants. Multiple sources of data were used in this research data. This facilitated the triangulation of data in the data analysis phase.

Data collection consisted of the following sources:

- Interviews with nine faculty members teaching in the online MBA degree program;
- Interviews with three individuals that serve or previously served in instructional design support or manager roles in the online MBA program;
- Agenda from semi-annual meetings of the faculty for the online MBA program;
- Text from the institution’s online MBA degree prospect website;
- Text from the institution’s websites and graduate degree bulletin;
- Text from the brochure of the online MBA degree program;
- Handouts and demonstration tools used by the instructional designers;
- Program-specific slides shared at a university workshop related to faculty capacity;
- Press releases and social media activity by the institution regarding the program; and
• Web-based media stories and information produced by external, non-institutional websites regarding the online MBA degree program.

Faculty interview participants were selected for interviews based on the criteria that each had at taught for at least three semesters in the online MBA degree program the university site. This criteria was established based on a study by Robinia and Anderson (2010) suggests “that online teaching efficacy levels may peak and begin to level after the third online teaching experience” (p. 174). Based on data gathered from the faculty member interviews, the researcher sought interviews from the program’s instructional designers and other data sources referenced during the interviews.

Data Analysis

In this study, a total of twelve interviews were conducted, though the researcher began to see saturation after five successful, information-rich and well-rounded interviews with thick description (Creswell, 1998, p. 54; Sandelowski, 2000; Morse, 1994; Patton, 1990; Van Kaam, 1959). Collected data were coded using open and axial coding techniques. The researcher used open and axial coding techniques to organize data in preparation for analysis (Saldana, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For the purposes of this research study, a second coder was enlisted to analyze the collected data. A subject matter expert in faculty preparation for online education was included in the verification of the coding, and convergence of themes. Analysis of data resulted in development of five themes of institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors that enabled and constrained faculty preparation: Energy and Effort, Pedagogical Shifts, Technology Interface, Institutional Support, and Instructional Design and Program Support.
Strategies to Judge Trustworthiness

In this research study, strategies were used to meet standards by Yin (2003) of construct validity and reliability for judging the trustworthiness of the information collected. To meet the measures of construct validity, multiple sources of data including interviews, documentation, archival records, and direct observations related to overall institution structure and history, business school structure and administration, and the online MBA degree program were gathered during the data collection phase. The collection of these multiple sources of data is also described as data triangulation (Yin, 2003, p. 98). A detailed log of research activity was kept to document the chain of evidence, such that could be described as appropriate in the data collection, analysis, and descriptions for future research opportunities. In the data collection phase, interview participants were provided with summaries of their interviews based upon the meaning understood by the researcher, with an opportunity to review, clarify, and correct information they provided. Known as member checking, this strategy further develops the credibility and rigor of the study (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To meet the measures of reliability, a detailed case study protocol was established, describing the data collection process in depth. In addition, a detailed interview guide was established to maintain consistency and a replicable process with each interviewee. In addition, a detailed database, beyond the summarized case study reports, which included all field notes, transcribed interviews, observations, archives, and data were stored, making it possible for another researcher to retrace the study and independently examine the data collected. With strategies in place to address both tactics, this study met Yin’s (2003) test of reliability for judging the quality of research design.
Summary of 5 Themes

Consistent with Lewin’s work of Force Field Analysis, the researcher found that analysis from this research study did not separate into two completely separate categories of institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors that affected faculty preparation (Barker et al, 2003; Gold, 1985; Lifter et al, 2005; Thomas, 1985). Therefore, the findings were described as five large themes, with subsections with more detailed analysis. The five themes consisted of the following areas: Energy and Effort, Pedagogical Shift, Technology Interface, Institutional Support, and Instructional Design and Program Support. The first theme of Energy and Effort included analysis about constraints of time that faculty members faced, the institution’s lack of support for the use of graduate assistants to assist faculty in online courses and how this influenced time and effort for faculty members, and online preparation and teaching as time and effort away from the effort geared toward the institution’s promotion and tenure process. Findings for the first theme were aligned with the literature previously discussed in Chapter 2 (Barker et al, 2003; Lifter et al, 2005; Liu et al, 2007). The second theme of Pedagogical Shifts described various examples faculty members gave, in relation to their own experiences with shifting pedagogy, how faculty members may think about their online teaching as a comparison to their face-to-face teaching, and recognition that preparing to teach online was an iterative process. Findings for the second theme were aligned with the literature previously discussed in Chapter 2 (Abdous, 2011; Liu et al, 2007; Mishler, 2006; Ragan, 2000; Shea et al, 2003).

The third theme of Technology Interface described the barriers faculty faced in efforts to standardize technology at the institution, limitations of the learning management system, and the challenges of preparation as faculty attempt to understand the technology needed for teaching online. Findings for the third theme were aligned with the literature previously discussed in
Chapter 2 (Abdous, 2011; Bigatel et al, 2012; Liu et al, 2007; Mishler, 2006). The fourth theme was about institutional support, which described some institutional factors and resources in place for other support staff in place to handle non-academic issues, as well as barriers to access the technology needed by faculty for online teaching. Findings for the fourth theme were aligned with the literature previously discussed in Chapter 2 (Abdous, 2011; Arbaugh, 2005; Bigatel et al, 2012; Legoretta et al, 2006; Marek, 2009; Ragan, 2000). The fifth theme of Instructional Design and Program Support included information about the semi-annual faculty meetings that were reported as helpful and supportive, as well as the role of the instructional designer being partnered with the faculty member to support course setup, design, and to provide understanding of the online student learner perspective. Findings for the fifth theme were aligned with the literature previously discussed in Chapter 2 (Abdous, 2011; Liu et al, 2007). While compensation and program life cycle were topics that found in the interviews, both topics seem separate from the research scope specifically about institutional factors enabling and constraining faculty preparation, and were therefore excluded from the final list of five overall themes.

Force Field Analysis was used in this research study to explore the institutional factors that facilitated and inhibited faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program. The five major themes of this research study, along with the sub-categories, were mapped into an original Force Field Analysis figure, as shown in Figure 5.1. When a sub-theme was determined to enable faculty preparation, based on the analysis of this study, it was indicated by a single-lined arrow under facilitating factors. When a sub-theme was determined to inhibit faculty preparation, based on the analysis of this study, it was indicated by a single-lined arrow under inhibiting factors. When the researcher determined that a sub-theme could be considered either an enabling or constraining, depending on the institution, and how it governs or manages
processes, policies, and resources, it was determined to be in either category with a broken-lined arrow. The Force Field analysis process, as demonstrated in this research study, could be applied to other institutions to determine their own institutional facilitating and inhibiting factors for faculty preparing to teach in online programs.
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<tr>
<td>· Resources in Place to Deal with Non-academic Issues</td>
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<td>· Departmental Support</td>
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<td>· Access to Technology to Support Preparation</td>
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<td>Theme 5: Instructional and Program Support</td>
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<td>· Instructional Designer Support for Course Design and Setup</td>
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<td>· Instructional Designers as Collaborative Partners</td>
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<td>· Instructional Designers Insight into Student Perspective</td>
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<td>· Program Support</td>
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← → Indicates that the factor can be enabling or constraining, depending on how the institution addresses or manages processes, policies, and resources.

*Figure 5.1. Force Field Analysis for Institutional Facilitating and Inhibiting Factors for Faculty Preparation in an Online MBA Program.*
Recommendations and Implications of Practice for Institutions

Findings from this research study may have important implications of practice for institutions offering, or considering online programs. This study demonstrates that institutional factors can lead to substantial implications for faculty preparation for teaching and delivering online programs. In this section, specific recommendations, grouped by theme, are discussed.

**Theme 1: Energy and Effort**

Institutions, stakeholders, policy-makers, budget officers, and department administrators may consider encouraging the allocation of sufficient time to faculty members for course design and the iterative process of preparing to teach online. The institution should consider how the encouragement or discouragement of use of graduate assistants by faculty members in preparation to teach online enables or constrains faculty preparation and the institution’s overall mission of offering online education programs.

The institution should consider how the time, energy, and effort of faculty members are leveraged, in relation to online education, and if certain time-consuming, non-academic duties are best managed by other individuals, groups, coordinators, or existing resources beyond the faculty members. The institution should consider how preparation for online teaching is valued or evaluated in the university’s promotion and tenure process. Issues around the use of graduate assistants, the promotion and tenure process, and management of non-academic issues vary across institutions, depend on a variety of factors, and a generalized strategy should not be applied as a best practice for all institutions.

**Theme 2: Pedagogical Shift**

Recognizing that faculty members experience transitions of pedagogy in preparation for online teaching, institutions should consider how they support faculty members as they tailor
their preparation resources and programs. Faculty members report transformative perspectives about online preparation and teaching from their previous experiences in the classroom-based, face-to-face environment. Faculty members should be given the preparation resources to not only adjust their previous, classroom-based courses to the online delivery format, but also be provided with resources to reflect on the new opportunities and innovation that teaching in the online environment can offer. Institutions may consider supporting their faculty members in exploring their new understanding and pedagogy of teaching online. Faculty members should be encouraged and supported in finding ways to create a strong teaching presence in the online delivery format. The institution should foster an environment that allows for the iterative process of preparing to teach online as faculty members, transition from teaching in resident-based classroom to the online environment, explore the important pedagogical issues of online learning and teaching, and prepare and develop strategies for maintaining a teaching presence.

**Theme 3: Technology Interface**

As faculty members prepare to teach online, institutional factors associated with technology may enable and constrain preparation, and the technology they can access. Standardization of technology may have positive ramifications, such as streamlining institutional firewalls, being able to service and support the full breadth of devices being used, and reducing customized, high cost solutions for niche programs that may also drain resources. However, in a fast-paced growth area like online education, new technology solutions are rapidly emerging, and innovation is outpacing education policy, education infrastructure, and limits of outdated and archaic learning management systems. Institutions interested in offering online education programs, developing well-prepared faculty, and advanced educational technology that is on the forefront of the field, should consider how to infuse innovation, exploration, and strategy for
cutting edge technology, design, and development into the units and people that would embrace possibilities for advancing the institution’s technology plans, and disseminate training, resources, and information accordingly.

**Theme 4: Institutional Support**

As online education continues to be considered a rapidly growing aspect of higher education, institutions should consider how they develop infrastructure and support for the rapid growth, including how they will prepare faculty to teach online. Institutions should consider how they use, focus, or leverage the time of the faculty members. At most traditional, residential universities, several academic support services available to students, faculty, and staff are often coordinated and managed by professionals outside of the faculty ranks. If institutions intend to offer similar resources and breadth of services to their students at a distance, studying through online education, higher educations can use the transformed online learning environment to find new models to deliver these resources and services. This may involve personnel and staffing plans, budget and resource allocation, and changing how departments perceive online education in relation to an institution’s mission of teaching, research, and service.

Institutions should also consider how they allocate resources for faculty members preparing to teach online, as their needs may be different from those faculty members teaching in a classroom-based environment. Would faculty members who primarily teach online be interested in exchanging their offices, or parking pass for other resources like newer laptops, mobile devices, software licenses and technology, and mobile high-speed internet access? Asking questions along these lines may begin to help explore how institutional resources can be appropriately handled to support faculty members teaching online.
Theme 5: Instructional Design and Program Support

In this research study, access to a strong instructional design team was recognized by faculty members as one of the most significant institutional facilitating factors that enabled faculty preparation for teaching online. Institutions may want to consider how to leverage this finding, and determine how instructional design and development units are organized to enhance online education, quality course design, faculty preparation efforts, innovation among instructional designers, and online program goals and technology. Institutions should consider program infrastructure, organization, and budget models so that appropriately selected and trained instructional designers can be facilitated to form collaborative partnerships with faculty members, provide guidance on course design, program and technology innovation, and perspectives of the student experience online.

Instructional designer may serve a critical role, through their expertise and collaborative interaction styles, for some faculty members to understand and implement best practices for online teaching pedagogy, and help faculty members adjust their course delivery from a classroom-based, face-to-face format to an online learning, distance education format. Institutions could consider promoting a supportive professional development environment where instructional designers are encouraged to develop their own skills in design, work with faculty, innovation, and education. An institution that fosters an environment where faculty and instructional designers work collaboratively to prepare, develop, and deliver online courses, and integrate use of cutting-edge educational technology may lead to increased likelihood that faculty members get better service and mentoring from instructional designers.

Finally, online education programs may consider holding meetings or forums on a regular basis, through formal and informal settings, to bring faculty members together to sharing ideas,
best practices, and experiences. Learning from each other while sharing course syllabi, teaching strategies, and their own successes and failures may help faculty preparation. In addition, this practice of holding regular meetings may foster a collaborative climate, and help develop a community for faculty members new to the program as a resource to learn from more experienced faculty members.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

In this study, the researcher examined institutional factors that facilitated and inhibited faculty preparation for teaching in an online MBA program. Analysis of data resulted in a variety of enablers and constraints that converged across five themes: Energy and Effort, Pedagogical Shift, Technology Interface, Institutional Support, and Instructional Design and Program Support. Each of these themes and their associated sub-categories may be considered important areas of future research to begin to understand how each theme, sub-category, and associated institutional factor may be quantified for development of a quantitative measurement inventory. In addition research may be expanded to include other online programs, geographically dispersed institutions, universities with varying student populations, and online programs with varying tuition price points and in various stages of the program life cycle.

In this study, only tenured faculty members were interviewed for faculty interviews. Another area of future research would be to examine faculty preparation for other classifications of instructors, including non-tenure track, fixed-term, adjunct instructors, and individuals without prior resident instruction teaching experience. In this study, faculty members reported making changes to their courses before, during, and after course delivery, and they described their preparation efforts as iterative. An area of future research would be to examine if there is an optimized timing for a multi-phased plan to deliver faculty preparation, and what the learning
outcomes, phases, or competencies of each phase would include. Finally, this research study was limited to examining institutional factors, and did not account for the personal facilitating and inhibiting factors faculty members may have experienced when preparing to teach online, which may be another area to consider for future research.
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Appendix A

Case Study Protocol

The following is a Case Study Protocol adapted from Yin (2003, p. 68).

A. Overview of the case study project

1. The purpose of this descriptive case study was to investigate faculty preparation to teach in an online MBA program.

2. The research questions include:
   a. What were the facilitating factors at the institution that enabled faculty preparation for teaching in online MBA programs?
   b. What were the inhibiting factors at the institution that constrained faculty preparation for teaching in online MBA programs?

B. Field procedures

1. Make contact (e-mail/phone call/skype) with “Program Chair” interview subject at institution.
   a. Share invitation letter, purpose of study, research questions, credentials of researcher.
   b. If subject agrees to participate, and has appropriate approval from institution:
      i. Secure names of other possible subjects at institution, following similar process described above.
      ii. Schedule interview details (date/time/method of communication).
      iii. Share interview guide questions in advance of interview.
      iv. Conduct interview, based on interview guide. Take an audio recording of each interview
      v. Answer any questions of interview subject, and provide researcher’s contact information, should further questions arise later.
      vi. Share that a summary of the interview will be provided to the participant for his/her review, clarification and corrections.
      vii. Request permission to contact the participant in the future, should further questions arise, or there is a need for clarification or additional information.
      viii. Thank participant for the interview.

2. Review other data sources including documentation, archival records and direct observations related to overall institution structure and history, business school structure and administration, and the online MBA program. This may include information related to the following topics:
   a. Overall university structure
   b. Overall business school/division/college structure
   c. Overall MBA degree structure
   d. Number of credits and time to degree completion
e. Specialty tracks and strengths  
f. Program chair and administrative oversight  
g. Accreditation  
h. Goals and mission  
i. Target audience  
j. Face-to-face and online components  
k. Content delivery methods and technology requirements  
l. Student price and financing options  
m. Faculty achievements and descriptions  
n. History  

3. Conduct coding and analysis.  
a. Discuss similar themes across cases  
b. Discuss summarization of meaning  
c. Discuss themes as they may tie back to the study’s conceptual framework  
d. Discuss areas for future research opportunities.
Appendix B

Interview Guide

The following is the interview guide developed for the purposes of this research study. The questions were shared with the participants prior to the interview.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study, exploring institutional factors related to faculty preparation for teaching in online MBA programs. Participation in the interview implies consent to participate in the research. My plan is to take an audio recording of our interview, from which I will derive a transcript that I will send to you for review. You will have the opportunity to make transcript edits to ensure that your comments accurately reflect your intended message. If it is acceptable to you, I may also follow up with you for further clarification or information. For the purposes of the study, after you have had a chance to review the transcript, personal identifiers will be removed to reduce one’s ability to link statements to individuals. You can reach me at [phone number removed for privacy] or by [email removed for publication privacy] after our conversation today should you have any questions.

1. How did you come to teach for the online MBA program?

2. Describe the extent of your experience as an online learner—in any form or forum—prior to teaching for the online MBA program.

3. Describe the extent of your experience teaching online—in any forum/form—prior to teaching for the online MBA program.

4. Describe how you prepared to teach for the online MBA program.

5. With regards to your institution, describe a time when your preparation efforts to teach in the online MBA program were enabled or facilitated.

6. With regards to your institution, describe a time when your preparation efforts to teach in the online MBA program were constrained or inhibited.

7. At your institution, tell me about the policies in place that enabled or facilitated your preparation to teach in the online MBA program.

8. At your institution, tell me about the policies in place that constrained or inhibited your preparation to teach in the online MBA program.

9. At your institution, what professional development, training resources, or experiences were available to you that enabled your preparation to teach in the online MBA program?

10. At your institution, where—or from whom—did you receive the most support in preparation for teaching in the online MBA program? Where—or from whom—did you receive the least support?
11. In an earlier question, you mentioned constraining factors that inhibited your preparation to teach in the online MBA program. How did you respond to or fill those gaps you experienced?

12. At your institution, if you could change one thing to improve faculty preparation for teaching in the online MBA program, what would it be?
Appendix C

Interview Communication Letter

Greetings Professor [INSERT NAME],

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study to discover how faculty members prepare to teach in your online MBA program. I recognize that your participation in this study is voluntary, and that you may end your participation at any time.

Below are the details for our interview time:
[interview date, time, phone number researcher will call]

Along with this e-mail, I have attached a copy of my questions for our interview. As a participant, you may choose not to answer specific questions. During the interview, my plan is to take notes as we speak, and also take an audio recording.

After we are done today, I will transcribe our conversation, and send it back to you for review. You will have the opportunity to make edits to ensure that your comments accurately reflect your intended message. If it is acceptable to you, I may also follow up with you for further clarification or information.

For the purposes of the study, personal information from the data collection will be cleaned, to remove links from statements to individuals.

I am very thankful for your participation and appreciative of the time you are taking to chat with me.

Thank you in advance for your help!

Best regards,
Shubha Kashyap

Shubha G. Kashyap, PhD Candidate
Workforce Education and Development
The Pennsylvania State University,
[address removed privacy]
[phone number removed for privacy]
[email removed for privacy]
Appendix D

Pre-Interview Demographic Information Collection Survey

Demographic information for online MBA Faculty Preparation for research study.

Thank you for participating in this research study. If you have any questions, please contact the researcher at [phone number removed for privacy] and [email removed for privacy].

*1. Please note that for data analysis and reporting purposes, names and identifiers will be replaced with pseudonyms.
   Last Name: ____________________________
   First Name: ____________________________

*2. Do you have 3 or more semesters of experience teaching in an online MBA program?
   □ Yes
   □ No

*3. Which option below best describes your appointment with the university?
   □ Emeritus Faculty
   □ Tenured Faculty
   □ Tenure-lined Faculty
   □ Adjunct Faculty
   □ Affiliate Faculty
   □ Fixed Term Faculty
   □ Fixed Term Staff
   □ Temporary Faculty
   □ Independent Contractor
   □ Lecturer
   □ Senior Lecturer
   □ Research Associate
   □ Other (please specify)

4. If you wish to elaborate on your response in Question 3, please do so here: ____________________________

*5. Please describe your professional experience.
   Years of university teaching experience: ____________________________
Years of university experience teaching online

Years of other professional work experience (if applicable)

Highest Degree Earned

Discipline/Subject area of Highest Degree Earned

6. If you wish to provide additional information related to any of the questions above, please do so here:

*In order for the survey submission to be considered complete, these questions need to be answered.
Appendix E

Internal Review Board Exemption Letter

Date: August 15, 2013

From: The Office for Research Protections - FWA#: FWA00001534
Philip C. Frum, Compliance Coordinator

To: Shubha G. Kashyap

Re: Determination of Exemption

IRB Protocol ID: 43121
Follow-up Date: August 14, 2018
Title of Protocol: Faculty Preparation for Teaching in Online MBA Programs at Three Universities the United States: A Multi-case study

The Office for Research Protections (ORP) has received and reviewed the above referenced eSubmission application. It has been determined that your research is exempt from IRB initial and ongoing review, as currently described in the application. You may begin your research. The category within the federal regulations under which your research is exempt is:

45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects’ responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Given that the IRB is not involved in the initial and ongoing review of this research, it is the investigator’s responsibility to review IRB Policy III “Exempt Review Process and Determination” which outlines:

• What it means to be exempt and how determinations are made
• What changes to the research protocol are and are not required to be reported to the ORP
• Ongoing actions post-exemption determination including addressing problems and complaints, reporting closed research to the ORP and research audits
• What occurs at the time of follow-up

Please do not hesitate to contact the Office for Research Protections (ORP) if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your continued efforts in protecting human participants in research.

This correspondence should be maintained with your research records.
Shubha G. Kashyap

Education

Ph.D. Workforce Education & Development      May 2014
Penn State University

M.A. Student Affairs Administration      Aug. 2004
Michigan State University

B.S. Psychology      Dec. 2000
Michigan State University

Professional Experience

Associate Director, Penn State World Campus      July 2012 - present
Penn State University

Senior Program Manager, Penn State World Campus      July 2010 – July 2012
Penn State University

Program Manager, Penn State World Campus      Oct. 2009 – July 2010
Penn State University

Penn State University

Penn State University

Tutoring Services Coordinator, Student-Athlete Center for Academic Excellence      Aug. 2003 – May 2004
Florida Atlantic University

Florida Atlantic University

Football Academic Graduate Assistant, Student-Athlete Support Services Center      Aug. 2001 – July 2002
Michigan State University

Lansing Community Newspapers, Division of Hometown Communications

Additional Education, Research, and Professional Interests


Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning      July – Nov. 2012
Penn State University and SLOAN Consortium

Executive Coaching Certification, Executive Program, Penn State University      Oct. 2009 - Dec. 2009

Business Essentials Certificate, Penn State University      May 2006 - Dec. 2006

United Kingdom & Ireland: European History, Arts & Humanities

Professional and Research interests include: Organization Development, Higher Education Administration, Online Education, Business Education, Faculty Preparation, Coaching, Program and Project Management, Business Strategy, Education Access & Opportunity, and Serving Diverse Learners.