The Union Makes Us Strong? Technology Implementation in a Collective Bargaining Culture

A doctoral thesis presented
by

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to the
Graduate School of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

in the field of
Education
College of Professional Studies
Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts
March 2020
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to:

Jack & Noni and Ginny & Jack

Late but with Weight
Acknowledgements

The desire to be educated, to know, to learn, was a gift given to me by my father and supported and encouraged by my husband, Jack. My mother’s own educational attainment later in life was inspiring, too. They helped me to believe that I could believe in myself. This belief was nurtured by mentors and teachers throughout my professional career and academic journey.

So I express deep gratitude to my mentors Professor Paul Keating, Dr. Louis Pullano and Dr. Joan Scocco of Brookdale Community College for helping me to reach for my educational goals; and to Dr. Diane Krumrey and Dr. Paula Voos of Rutgers University for teaching me to think critically; and to Asha Chana and Maritsa Barros, my Northeastern University friends for becoming my Boston buddies and taking the doctoral journey by my side. Without my Northeastern University professors, particularly Dr. Lynda Beltz and Dr. Kristal Moore Clemons, I would not have gained the knowledge and skills needed to complete this journey.

Dr. Beltz is without question a scholar, teacher, mentor, and friend: clear of mind, pure of heart, her insights and emotional connection to me is something for which I am grateful and will cherish, always.
Abstract

Community colleges may be uniquely situated to meet the challenge of constant change and must do so for continued relevance: the community college model is increasingly significant in a world of economic, social, and technological change. Discovering how the existence of a union influences the acceptance and use of learning management system (LMS) technology in a community college entails determining if a collective bargaining environment affects an institution’s cultural expectations around decision-making. Eleven educational administrators and three Union leaders were engaged to study the processes used to craft change initiatives as framed by stakeholder theory and seen through the lens of sensemaking. An analysis across these eleven community colleges reveals that we see what we expect to see because it is framed within that which we have seen before. The very existence of Unions within the institutions effectively sets up if not an equal partner – or adversary – in decision-making, but at the very least an interest group of stakeholders that needs to be considered before, during, and after decision-making processes. A balance of stakeholder interests and administrations willing to make the final call despite cultural push-back was revealed to be a successful organizational model. Process review and changing organizational constructs which introduce technological solutions can only be successful in an environment of trust: trust in the decision-makers, and trust in the technology.

Keywords: decision-making, collective bargaining, LMS technology, resistance, trust, public sector, New Jersey, leadership
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Notions of collegiality are at the heart of institutions of higher learning. The collegium model employs the rich traditions of academia, where the faculty are at the center because the roles of developing curriculum, delivering content to students, and the study of their subject, are the anchors upon which the entire organization is tethered (Manning, 2018). In effect, it is a decentralized model which takes advantage of the good-will of faculty and is emblematic of a distributed leadership model which in practice may appear to be more time-consuming; however, there are circumstances under which it is more administratively efficient. This is apparent in the nominally egalitarian nature of community colleges. With open-admissions, community ties, and a focus on teaching and learning, the community college model is increasingly significant in a world of economic, social, and technological change. Community colleges may be uniquely situated to meet the challenge of constant change and must do so for continued relevance. Building coalitions, creating simple structures to identify and address issues, and modeling trustworthy behavior puts organizational leaders on the path to successful change implementation (Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

Despite this, some community colleges struggle to change and fail to practice the philosophies of inclusive decision-making in effective ways. Distributed leadership is apparent in matters of the curriculum, can be in hiring practices, and may be in other matters such as the implementation of technology toward process changes. When an institution is governed by collective bargaining agreements, takes past practices seriously, and moves cautiously toward change, it is tempting to blame the Union when change does not happen. It is imperative that institutions pay attention to these common themes: inclusive processes; organizational culture;
and the ability to change processes through a shared understanding of the role of technology so that a synergy may be achieved through which an institution may change, grow, and thrive. Success in the management of a community college may be reached when administrative leadership recognizes and considers the sometimes-competing goals of stakeholders, since, “regardless of the superior formal powers of the top management, policies in universities are the result of a balance of interests in which the academic community maintains defining powers over policy substance and strategic orientation, without exercising veto rights” (Braun, Benninghoff, Ramuz & Gorga, 2015, p. 1841). One such group in community colleges is the Union and one such consideration is the collective bargaining agreement (CBA).

The formal organizational structure of a community college is hierarchical, with many of the tenets of bureaucracy in evidence. Bureaucracies often receive a bad rap; however, organizations must have structure in order to escape chaos. The ways organizations are led, the ways people and processes are managed, and the ways this can have effects upon institutions are all important considerations that have been studied before, during, and since industrialization. A hierarchical, rule-governed organizational structure (Höpfl, 2006, p. 8) is the basic construct defined by Max Weber, who envisioned organizational and societal structures that are fair, rules-based, and efficient; he also warned that bureaucracy could lead to an "iron cage" where people's contributions are akin to "cogs" in the machine of management.

This notion of the "iron cage" is explicated by DiMaggio and Powell to explain the similarities between bureaucracies: this becomes like a circular conclusion where innovation is stifled, diversity of thought discouraged, and leaders don't lead - we end where we have started, with mere structure. This is caused by coercive, mimetic, and normative isomorphism. Rules and structures are created to meet standards imposed from outside of the organization; or the
organization copies another; or an organization perpetuates its practices because its members all think alike (1983). Weber did not create or advocate for the bureaucracy; he described it and warned against it in many ways. While an attribute of the bureaucratic model is standardization of service delivery where the delivery of services follows a prescribed manner and creates the most efficient path (Reddick, 2011, p. 348) having the additional nimbleness to move beyond standardization is a key component of organizational change.

Perhaps Adam Smith had it right that social structure demands that the different skills working people possess must be recognized within an organization, as did Karl Marx who saw the relationship between employers and employees as one of opposition, where “the relative gain accruing to one party defines an associated loss for the other” (Morgan, 2013, p. 277). A system which moves organizations toward not only efficiency, but a bureaucracy in which individualism is valued, could break us out of the iron cage (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2013). Educational institutions like community colleges have moved toward mimicking for-profit businesses in both mission and structure. Without the strong collective bargaining agreements in place right now, it is possible, perhaps likely, that employee skill-sets would be valued less, and the bottom-line valued more.

Management theories present ideal, rational models to which real-world institutions may aspire; however, it is more likely that a model like “organized anarchy” may exist, in which “multiple realities may be assumed” and people align with those with whom there is an affinity, whether by virtue of job title or a coalition like a Union. Since these realities are partially contextual and partially formed and “tempered” by organizational culture and tradition, managing people and processes can be messy (Manning, 2018, p. 135). Cohen and March’s take on administering higher education institutions still rings true, as they speak to organized anarchy
being defined by “problematic goals, unclear technology, and fluid participation” (1986, as cited in Manning, 2018, p. 135).

Classic definitions of management describe processes of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling resources which are material, human, financial, and informational. Flowing from the organizational mission, goals are set to be operationalized through strategic, operational, tactical, and contingency plans; the institution’s structure must be set to support the attainment of those goals. Important to that structure are managers capable of leading and motivating employees, directing operations, and controlling ongoing activities by setting standards, measuring performance, and taking corrective actions when needed. A broad skill-set including conceptual, analytic, interpersonal, technical, and communication proficiencies in a leader with the ability to influence and affect the behavior of others sets up the perfect management conditions through which the organization succeeds. People though are not perfect, and to embody all of this in one person is unrealistic; thus, participative leadership with inclusive, known, decision-making processes can be an effective way to utilize institutional knowledge and gain buy-in from stakeholders toward meeting the institution’s mission and goals (Pride, Hughes & Kapoor, 2013).

Information technology, particularly Web 2.0 with its promise of collaborative features, was heralded as a game-changer for our personal, educational, and business practices. While it is evident that these technologies have been impactful, it is less obvious whether we have layered technology on top of traditional processes or used these technologies to foster innovation and organizational change. Consequential changes in organizations are accomplished through transparent procedures involving an acknowledgment of the culture, an assessment of its processes, and the application of technological solutions. Technology in the classroom and in
the workplace is meant to enhance the learning experience, boost productivity, and foster innovation. Instead, we may look to technology to force needed changes and forge connections which are critically important to the transmittal of information and as drivers of focused change.

The identification of the approaches to overcome the obstacles of an entrenched organizational culture which clings to practices that may no longer make sense, and to plan for and implement technological solutions which will enrich the culture, not replace it, requires an understanding of institutional barriers to technology adoption. It is through exploration of current practices, careful planning, and the deployment of relevant tools with accompanying communication initiatives, that people may embrace change for the future health of an organization.

**Significance of the Research Question**

Virtually every organization has become increasingly reliant on technology for compliance or to communicate with stakeholders, keep records, and provide avenues for flexibility and innovation. Less talked about are the effects of the methods by which technology selection and implementation are achieved in light of an organization’s culture. While there is ample and informative research on leadership styles, organizational culture, and the use of technology in the classroom, there appears to be a gap in the research on the selection and implementation of technology in community college collective bargaining environments. Organizational innovation implies changing how we do the things we do to do them better. The performance of a community college is measured by a variety of factors including fiscal soundness, completion rates, and community support. Taking stock of all of the knowledge possessed by an institution of this nature and systematically making improvements can be achieved through leadership processes which take advantage of native strengths like intellectual
pursuits and engagement initiatives. These processes will foster innovation and lead to improved outcomes (Noruzy, Dalfard, Azhdari, Nazari-Shirkouhi, & Rezazadeh, 2013).

The inverse of progress is inertia. An organization must be equipped with the people and processes to lead change, make relevant decisions, engage employees, and utilize technological solutions appropriately. Many an institution’s culture is driven in part by the hierarchal nature of its organizational structure. Research-based evidence exists around examining these constructs, showing that an employee’s reaction to and acceptance of change depends in large part on their place in the chain of command, with the distance between their role and the top of the structure a contributing factor (Hill, Seo, Kang, & Taylor, 2012). Findings show that hierarchical distance between employees and the top management team negatively influence employees’ affective and normative commitment to change.

Since, “at the population level the organization is viewed as analogue to a community” providing employment opportunities and the opportunity to serve the greater good, “the unit character of a population so defined depends on a shared fate. All members share to some extent in the consequences of organizational success or failure” (Hannan & Freeman, 1977, p. 934) as is the case for those employed by community colleges.

In addition, perceived top management communication effectiveness partially mediated these relationships. Managers’ transformational leadership behaviors enhanced perceived top management communication effectiveness of their workgroup members, thereby influencing their commitment to change (Hill, et al., 2012). Many of those employed by community colleges in New Jersey are members of labor unions; thus, the place of those groups and weight of their influence is one data point to be considered in administrative processes such as the selection and implementation of technology.
Public sector unions “have consistently represented about a third of the employees in government up to the current level of about 36 percent (Noe, et al., 2017 as cited in Savino, 2019, p. 132) more than five times higher than the rate of private-sector workers (Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 2020), and New Jersey’s numbers are even higher at around 60%, with a total of .6 million workers in New Jersey members of a union (BLS, 2020).

A hierarchical structure puts one in mind of following orders, leaving one’s own thoughts at the door. Higher education employees may be buffeted by the challenges of the perceived “red-tape” and be suspicious of processes which claim to cut through it (van der Voet, 2016). When a process is known and followed the conclusions reached are more likely to be embraced. The question then becomes one of calibrating the change to employee groups and using the constructs of those groups to plan and implement changes. People use social consensus information to decide which way to react to information and how to proceed when there is
uncertainty in the outcome (Worley & Mohrman, 2014) and a Union culture is one such construct. In an environment where administrative motives are understood, and trust between various groups exist, the likelihood of successful change outcomes increases.

We must be aware though that the institutional culture may have produced homogeneous groups from which a decision may be reached not because of its efficacy, but because of this matter of social consensus (Schulz-Hardt, Frey, Lüthgens, & Moscovici, 2000, p. 666). The ability to recognize, understand, and honor an institution’s culture is a must for a leader and in the community college sector part of that culture is embedded in the collective bargaining environment (Abassi & Zamani-Miandashti, 2013, p. 508). Letting go of cultural constructs which have been in place and with which we are comfortable is not easy. In fact, “the transformational process requires a process akin to grieving as outdated and habituated thought structures are replaced by new paradigms” (Poutiatine, 2009, p. 202) so when it becomes necessary to challenge the status quo or move quickly without expected or protracted consultation, the administration needs to be clear in its goal and transparent in its processes.
Communication challenges may also be a part of an organization’s culture, limiting access to information to only those in institutionally defined leadership roles. In order for leadership practices to effectively change the culture when needed, two-way communication vehicles must be constructed so that the knowledge that is necessary to make informed decisions is available at all levels. This will ensure that groups of employees are empowered to make meaningful recommendations and decisions with the aid of the facts needed (Becker, Einwiller, & Medjedovic, 2014). One way to accomplish this is through the communication style of the leader: it is the leader’s job to not only make sure the group gets the information but to interpret it if necessary. It might be that communications reference information that has not been widely shared, so the people who are managing the change must be sure to give their take in order for the group to have a sense of what they are dealing with (Hill, et al., 2012, p. 771). The Union structure holds out possibilities for this engagement, but may be seen as an adversarial construct where the parties gird for conflict, not collegiality.

In the examination of the effects of a collective bargaining or union culture as relates to management practices around the selection and implementation of technology, an awareness that “the public employer has also preserved the right to privatize public services and has demonstrated a willingness to privatize services” (Keefe, 2015, p. 16) is notable since a Union’s caution in embracing technological change may be tied to the fear that current represented jobs may be eliminated.

**Research Problem and Research Questions**

The goal of this research study is to determine how the existence of a union influences the acceptance and use of learning management system (LMS) technology in a community college. The information obtained during the study should help to inform community college
administrative personnel and union leaders in the decision-making processes around the selection and implementation of this technology

How does a union environment affect the implementation of new technology at a community college? What effects do decision-making processes have on the implementation of new technology at a community college? What effects do perceptions of the community college’s culture have on the implementation of new technology at a community college?

The identification of the approaches to overcome the obstacles of an entrenched organizational culture which clings to practices that may no longer make sense, and the planning for and implementation of technological solutions which will enrich the culture, not replace it, requires an understanding of how decisions are made and enacted. Perhaps counterintuitively, a collegial or political culture may hinder the effective implementation of new technology: hierarchical, bureaucratic practices may be more likely to result in an effective process. A collective bargaining agreement, in my experience, helps to extend the goal of Weber’s vision of bureaucracy in defining roles with fixed renumeration and setting fair guidelines for the achievement of goals. The non-unionized members of the staff at community colleges have less certainty in both what they do and how long they will be doing it. While there may be cases where weaker union employees are retained, that could be a function of supervisors being unwilling to issue accurate evaluations and take the time to follow processes for removal. Non-unionized staff generally includes upper-level management like the executive administrator participants in this study.

In some ways, the connections that we seek with each other and with each other’s work and ideas have been damaged because of an over-reliance on information and communication technology as the answer. This problem of practice has manifested itself in many ways,
particularly in the way organizations claim to be moving toward the future, while making no discernible changes. Organizational leaders need to understand the role of technology, processes must be examined to ensure current efficacy, and the appropriate technology put in place to support institutional goals.

Realizing that we exist in a microsystem where people will act and respond in direct relation to their role, or as their role is perceived by those around them, is instructive particularly as relates to the perception of power. Perhaps the appropriate atmosphere of respect and support will in fact foster change, because of the relationship "between the structure of the person and of the situation” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 7). If we know who we are and how we are perceived, we may take steps to alter the narrative and drive its change.

Understanding the organizational culture, actively including stakeholders in initiatives, preserving an institution’s legacy, and telling the truth serve to underpin an organization’s existence. Leaders can make change the new reality for an organization when there is an inclusive process trusted by employees that follows through on its promises. Making use of leadership processes to craft change initiatives, foster collaborative administrative processes, and encourage employee leadership will result in an organization of change agents capable of moving an institution forward. And sometimes, an organization’s leadership needs to make a decision and select and implement technological solutions despite cultural pushback and organizational fear of change. It is tempting to blame other entities such as the Union when approaching change initiatives without first laying the groundwork: the relationship need not be an equal partnership, but it must be considered.

Theoretical Frameworks
The modernist approach is most concerned with the environment in which an organization operates, and the postmodernist approach is most concerned with the relationships within an organization: while structure is of interest here, more informative to this study are the ways groups interact toward the attainment of organizational change. Bunnell & Riegler write that, "Many constructivist approaches assume a dualistic relationship between constructed reality and mind-independent reality. They maintain that constructed mental structures gradually adapt to the structures of the real world" very much analogous to the construct of sensemaking, which aids in understanding the importance of creating sense out of experiences: organizing reality. Knowing that what we see (perception) and how we learn (cognition) are associated and how this helps to frame research is informative to the process here (2011).

The theoretical framework for this study relies on sensemaking and stakeholder theories. Does an organization exist only in the eyes of those who view it? Is there a “social construction of reality”: indeed, “social structure is an essential element of the reality of everyday life” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 48). Karl Weick started a conversation about organizing rather than organization: his work helped evolve researchers’ thinking about an institution’s outside environment - as less-important than previously believed - and his work spawned streams of inquiry on enactment, sensemaking, adaptation, and stakeholder theories. In addition, using structuration as an additional lens acknowledges that human agency and social structure are not separate concepts or frameworks: together these are produced by social action and interaction. The study of structuration means examination and analysis of the ways in which social systems are produced and reproduced in social interaction (Giddens, 1984, pp. 25, 26) and the discovery of whether these structures are an important lynchpin to the management of change. We can take a research approach which recognizes situational realities, or we can try to find one truth
that fits in any situation: context and situational considerations are what creates a person's reality.

*Sensemaking*

The way organizational players think about their organization and their place in it is a process that includes the interpretation of information through a lens of prior experience. It is those social experiences in which they have participated that provide a framework toward understanding (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Reality is that which we see, and organizational realities are most affected by the actions of those in leadership positions. Sensemaking is a dynamic wherein “reality is formed based on the outcomes of sensemaking, a process called enactment” and plays a crucial role in decision-making processes (Weick, 1995, as cited in Zeni, Buckley, Mumford, & Griffith, 2016, p. 840). Specific to the business domain, Weick (1995) introduced sensemaking as a model for how individuals interpret, understand, and then act based on their social environments. Within organizational settings, sensemaking presents a descriptive model for decision-making that better represents actual leader behavior when engaged in decision-making versus what prescriptive models would call for (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005).

Still, organizations have goals and rules even though “individual goals and intentions may be only loosely related to behavior” (March and Olsen, 1976), and “rules may well be inferred from behavior instead of causing behavior” (Weick, 1979) since the premise is that the reality is enacted and made sense of - it is actions which govern, not the rules. Since structure is needed, and rules provide this, a feedback cycle is created whereby behaviors become predictable, stifling innovation (Anderson, 1999, pp. 220-221). Anderson believes that Weick would tell managers to stay out of the way and let the natural course of action happen. This is
not necessarily in line with other research which emphasizes the roles of stakeholders and the circumstances under which this so-called “natural” course of action does not benefit institutional goals.

The flow of research shows that identification with an organization, while reliant on a number of factors, is most affected by the ways people perceive the behavior of others in the context of specific situations: normally, there is a feeling of ambivalence. That people rely most on information gathered by extracting meaning from their own behaviors is a central tenet of (Weick’s) sensemaking theory:

“The factor that has the strongest influence on the resolution of ambivalence is people’s own behavior, in this case behavior that reconnect(s) members to their organization’s identity. That people rely most on information gathered by extracting meaning from their own behaviors is a central tenet of sensemaking theory. More than a process of interpretation, sensemaking involves people actively shaping the situations they are trying to understand. Enactment—by which people’s actions affect their environment and thus partially construct their own reality is central to interpretation, and vice versa, and both the interpretations and enactments that allow us to make sense are closely tied to identity. Identity is both a lens that colors how people make sense of events and, in part, a product of enactment—through enactment we come to understand who we are by observing what we do” (Petriglieri, 2015, p. 542).

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory stands atop an institution’s mission and values, whereby administrative leadership clearly articulates what the institutional goals are, how those goals tie back to the mission and values, and how those who are associated with the institution will take
part in achieving those goals. It is a values-based theory which assumes that it is not only necessary to conduct business ethically, but that the values which drive the mission are front and center in every part of every process and in every part of every relationship between leadership and stakeholders. “It asks managers to articulate the shared sense of the value they create, and what brings its core stakeholders together. It also pushes managers to be clear about how they want to do business, specifically what kinds of relationships they want and need to create with their stakeholders to deliver on their purpose” (Freeman, Wicks, & Parmar, 2004, p. 364) and effectuates sensemaking:

Stakeholder theory legitimizes the notion that anyone with an interest in the success of an institution – employees and unions, for example – should have a seat at the table and a voice in the decision-making processes because the success or failure of those processes directly affects them. The theory does not distinguish between profit-driven enterprises and educational institutions such as community colleges since, “whatever the ultimate aim of the corporation or other form of business activity, managers must take into account the legitimate interests of those groups and individuals who can affect (or be affected by) their activities” (Donaldson and Preston 1995, Freeman 1994 as cited in Freeman, Wicks, & Parmar, 2004, p. 365). While this legitimization makes sense in terms of other accepted management theories and practices, it does not necessarily assist in determining when the interest of a stakeholder might be in conflict with institutional goals.

Critics of the Theory

The notion of strict stakeholder equality, as the application of the theory might be interpreted are common in the literature among stakeholder theory apologists and critics alike (Phillips, Freeman, & Wicks, A., 2003, p. 380). Sensemaking as a theory is contextual to the
environment, positing that individuals view themselves and their role differently depending upon the circumstances. It also devalues the role of the external environment, which does have effects upon community colleges particularly as pertains to accreditation and funding.

**Rationale for Application of Sensemaking and Stakeholders Theories**

Organizational culture is in the eye of the beholder: what one employee sees, another may not; therefore, literature which addresses how culture is identified; how culture is honored; and how culture through the lens of sensemaking may be approached are key strands of inquiry and the basis for managing change. One stakeholder group under study here is a collective known as the Union, and determining this stakeholder’s goals, standing in decision-making processes, and ability to thwart or move technological and organizational changes forward is needed to answer the research questions.

**Application of Sensemaking and Stakeholders Theories to the Study**

Educational institutions need to quickly respond to changes in technology to meet the needs of the students and other stakeholders. A large organization with many players with divergent goals and opinions may find it difficult to respond quickly and appropriately. The nimbleness with which an organization meets the demands of a competitive playing field, keeps costs low and constant for institutional stability, and integrates technology with new or existing processes, will go a long way toward a productive environment for teaching and learning. Since “engaging with technology means adjusting to the rapid and unpredictable changes associated with technological development, and integrating technology in pursuit of new institutional goals requires organizational changes” (Owen & Demb, 2004) without appropriate changes organizationally, technology may be an expensive add-on that is underutilized or maintains institutional status quo.
During sensemaking, “people develop some sort of sense regarding what they are up against, what their own position is relative to what they sense, and what they need to do” (Weick 1999, p. 42). One form of a sensemaking process is identified through the use of narrative where “individuals bring events and structures into existence and set them in motion, reduce and revise their meanings until a set of plausible narratives emerges, solidify these narratives as they resonate with experience, and use the narratives as a source of guidance for further interpretation and action” (Patriotta, 2003, p. 370) so that it is the stories that are told and retold that become the reality which moves the organization to action – whether that action is participatory or oppositional.

An examination of the philosophy of technology assumptions present in the thinking of K-12 technology leaders and how these assumptions may influence technology decision making is also informative to the present study concomitant with stakeholder theory. An exploration of whether technological determinist (the belief in inevitability) assumptions are present shows that stakeholders hold different views about technology – some leaders feel technological change is inevitable and good and should drive the way things are done, while others hold the opposite view (Webster, 2017). Educational stakeholders include the students these professionals are shepherding toward higher education where technology adoption may lag behind expectations.

These conclusions can help to inform the problem of practice from the perspective of analyzing leadership views and how these may or may not have influence on technology adoption and process change. Research on these views conclude that educational goals and curriculum should drive technology, and that institutions which cannot keep up with technology will be left behind (Webster, 2017). A risk is that this can on occasion mean a quickness to adopt
technology for the sake of technology, without aligning the technology implementation with educational and institutional goals.

Technology as the driver of change can be shown to be the wrong approach; however, this is often the case as organizations seek to solve problems or appear innovative without first doing the hard work of process review. Process review and changing organizational constructs which introduce technological solutions can only be successful in an environment of trust: trust in the decision-makers, and trust in the technology.

**Definitions of Key Terminology**

**Collective Bargaining** - the process by which wages, hours, rules, and working conditions are negotiated and agreed upon between an employer and Union for all the employees collectively which it represents. In the United States, three-quarters of private-sector workers and two-thirds of public-sector employees have the right to collective bargaining. This right was established for private sector employees in 1935 under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). In 1962, President John F. Kennedy issued Executive Order 10988 which recognized the right of federal employees to collectively bargain, and served as a model for local, municipal and state employee unions. Public sector labor laws differ state by state.

**Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)** – legal document within which the terms and conditions of employment for represented job classifications are written upon agreement of the employer and the Union. Also referred to as the contract.

**Collegium Model** – governance in institutions of higher education whereby membership in particular groups, such as the faculty, gives standing for a place in decision-making processes where everyone has a more-or-less equal voice. Egalitarian and democratic.
Community College - regionally accredited institutions, which primarily award the associate degree as their highest award. In New Jersey, Community Colleges are open-admission, funded by the state, county, and student tuition, and heavily unionized.

Culture – the ways of “being” built up by a group of people and transmitted from one generation to another. The customs, beliefs, rules, knowledge, and collective identities and memories developed by members of all social groups that make up an organization and supply meaning. The ideologies, practices, tastes, values, and norms as well as collective representations and social classifications of an organization. The way things are done.

Innovation – something new, different, or changed in an established order, practice, method, or technological tool.

Janus Decision – Decided in June, 2018; held that it is unconstitutional for state governments to require government workers to pay union fees as a condition of employment, even when those workers are not themselves union members. Supported by the Trump administration, the decision overturned the Supreme Court's 1977 precedent in Abood v. Detroit Board of Education, in which the Court approved mandatory public sector union fees on the grounds that non-union "free riders" should have to contribute something toward collective bargaining activities that benefit them.

Learning Management System (LMS) – online platform upon which courses are built and teaching and learning interactions, assessments, and communications take place.

Occupational Union - A union which confines its recruitment to particular occupational areas, many of which require the holding of certain qualifications, such as teachers, in the same way as craft unions represent certain professions like carpenters and electricians. Also called
organized associations. Refers here to members of the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) and American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

**Organized Anarchy** – an organization with problematic goals, unclear technology, and fluid participation: ambiguity dominates. A theory used to explain decision-making models in higher education. Also called the garbage can model.

**Public Sector** - consists of government jobs and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises, and other entities that deliver public programs, goods, or services. Community colleges are part of the public sector.

**Represented Jobs** – not all jobs in a community college are represented by a bargaining unit. All full-time faculty, some part-time faculty, and some administrative and staff positions are represented.

**Stakeholders** – a person or group who has a stake in the success of an enterprise or business. In this study, stakeholder refers to executive and administrative groups and individuals, faculty groups and individuals, students, and the unions.

**Technology** – the use of tools to extend what a person can do, to include computers, systems where data is stored and communication can occur. An LMS is a teaching and learning technology for example, and email is a communication technology.

**Union** - an organized association of workers, often in a trade or profession, formed to protect and further their rights and interests.

**Union Density** - conveys the number of labor union members who are employees as a percentage of the total number of employees in a given industry, or state, or region.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

The inverse of progress is inertia. An organization must be equipped with the people and processes to lead change, make relevant decisions, engage employees, and utilize technological solutions appropriately. Information technology, particularly Web 2.0, was heralded as a game-changer for educational and business practices. While it is evident that these technologies have been impactful, it is less obvious whether these technologies have fostered innovation and significant change. This problem of practice has manifested itself in many ways, particularly in the way organizations claim to be moving toward the future, while leaders do not lead and cultures do not respond. The goal of this research study is to determine how the existence of a union influences the acceptance and use of learning management system (LMS) technology in a community college.

An organization’s inability to change processes or explore alternatives negates any advantage that technology can bring. It is through exploration of current practices, careful planning, and the deployment of relevant tools with accompanying communication initiatives, that organizations can embrace change for the future. Information and communication technology can support change, foster innovation, and enhance interaction. Until an organization embraces this notion, technology will remain a distraction, incapable of overcoming organizational inertia. This literature review will examine change leadership, culture and sensemaking, engagement, decision-making, and technology.

Change Leadership

Change should not be imposed: it must be led. An examination of how education leaders can gather and use data to lead appropriate change is germane in determining the role of leadership as a determinant of successful change. Feedback needs to be gathered in a structured
manner in order to be useful for process changes and other decisions. An analysis of how goals are set based on the data collected, specifically, how the data may be used to create changes in structures, is an action worth pursuing (Sun, Johnson, & Przybylski, 2016). The responsibilities of leadership, the impact of who is a leader, and the determination of whether, when and how change is warranted are important constructs in change leadership. The literature indicates that groups composed of like-minded individuals with a shared understanding of an organization’s attributes are homogeneous; thus the orientation is to the past, not the future. When people are too much alike they are less likely to take new approaches in thinking and they are less likely to advocate for meaningful change (Schulz-Hardt, Frey, Luthgens & Moscovici, 2000). Despite this, stakeholders like unions need to be included in processes for other reasons to be articulated here. Stakeholders may enmesh attitudes toward an organization with views of the organizational leader, and since “trust connotes a high-quality social exchange relationship with the organization” (Aryee, Walumbwa, Mondejar, & Chu, 2015, p. 237) that means that trust of leader flows from that position throughout the institution.

**Authentic Leadership Builds Trust**

Leadership frameworks occur in abundance throughout the literature. The ability to lead is only possible within an environment that is perceived as ethical and fair, and where stakeholders trust organizational leaders: it is the authentic leader who is most likely to effectively achieve key changes in an organization (Chiaburu, Diaz & Pitts, 2011). Social exchange theory holds that people seek equity in what they and others do; thus, when we observe that others are rewarded more for the same things we have done, we are less motivated to be on board (Redmond, 2015). The responsibility of a leader is to create an atmosphere in which employee expectations for fairness are fulfilled and their needs are met. A successful leader
capable of leading change will ensure a balanced and fair relationship between leaders and employees (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007) such that stakeholders trust the leader, and thus the change process. Vigoda-Gadot further expound upon the political nature of organizations where bias may be reduced through the enactment of these concepts of fairness resulting in positive feelings by employees: satisfaction in one’s job is shown to be a determinant in the successful leadership of change (2007).

The initial decision to pull together a team and who will be on that team is the critical first step for an organization’s leader when technology change is contemplated. Beginning with the formal authority inherent to the role, the authentic leader begins an honest conversation about an issue, creates a process to address that issue, and shows through actions – doing what they said they would do – that stakeholders can trust them. It is when major changes are needed that weak trust becomes another problem to be surmounted since, “with big changes in a fast-moving world it’s a huge problem” (Kotter & Cohen, 2002, p. 50) and technology changes are often big changes that cannot happen when trust has not been established.

Leaders cannot assume that stakeholders trust them, but can act in ways toward building or repairing the trust-bond. In many cases, stakeholders trust the leader as a person – reliance – “believing in the person’s character and ability”, believing in the leader’s goodwill and good intentions. More important in change management processes, and harder to maintain, is confidence – “believing that (I) can depend on something in the future regarding another individual or group”: will what was said in a moment in time be delivered reliably (Burke, 2018, p. 396). In order to be trusted we need to trust others, as social exchange posits and shows, but “the initial problem is to prove one’s trustworthiness” (Aryee, et. al, 2015, p. 235) so leadership engagement with stakeholders that is transparent in both form and substance is recommended.
Trust is more likely when a leader is seen as “procedurally fair” (Jones, Wiley, Lopilato, & Dahling, 2020, p. 111) so that when the clarion for change comes from the top of the organization, stakeholders are more likely to heed the call. Setting the culture for change starts at the top of the organization and can trickle down throughout. Because “cognitive trust in a leader can create a willing or receptive frame of mind among employees” (Du, Li, & Luo, 2020, p. 2) even when that leader displays an authoritarian style the conditions under which innovation and change are possible can be achieved. This trust may be taken advantage of to engage stakeholders in processes and decision-making which are consequential to technology selection and organizational change.

Leadership Toward Stakeholder Engagement

The composition of the workforce, which may have different expectations, needs, and reactions to the presentation of change, represents one more challenge for a leader. The literature suggests that different generations are motivated by different types of engagement; thus the ability to recognize and identify the appropriate types of engagement for the different groups must be pursued. Without this action, the institution can expect to lose the benefits of the knowledge and influence of the experienced members of the staff, while also finding difficulty in retaining the interest of those of lesser tenure (Klarner, Todnem & Diefenbach, 2011). Both groups are likely to respond positively to well defined change processes when this aspect of leadership responsibility is fulfilled.

In order for trust to exist, relationships must exist, and for relationships to exist, employees must be engaged. Within an organizational culture there exists norms which are seen to be rewarded such as loyalty to the leadership. The literature indicates that in hierarchical cultures there is an acceptance of unfair power balances with low employee engagement. This
acceptance though does not bode well for change management, since it could result in a follow-the-leader mindset whereby the low-engaged employees contribute no new ideas and tolerate mediocrity (Fulmer & Ostroff, 2017); thus, employees of an organization cannot be engaged if there are no overarching goals to reach. To reach those goals, employees involved in change initiatives need information which empowers them to act; however, information without a structured process and those overarching goals can result in a “predictable mess” (Kotter & Cohen, 2002, p. 118).

Engagement of employees may manifest in a variety of ways. The first step in engagement may be ensuring that employees believe they are a part of something and that their contribution matters. Battilana and Casciaro showed this through their study of informal employee networks and how members of the networks played a role in organizational change (2012). The authors focused on the conditions under which people were able to convince other people to be a part of a change initiative. The findings indicate that certain people are change agents within the networks to which they belong, and it is partially through that sense of belonging that people influenced other people to go along with change initiatives (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012) as can be the case in the union environment. In addition, getting to the point where stakeholders believe that it is a part of their job to be engaged as change agents is necessary in a rapidly evolving workplace. Change is not a luxury, it is a requirement that is constant, so the engaged stakeholder is an ongoing need to be addressed by an organization’s leader (Kotter & Cohen, 2002, pp. 177 – 180).

Rensis Likert concluded that organizations may be classified by one of four leadership styles: exploitive-authoritative; benevolent-authoritative; consultative; and/or participative which speak to the relationships within the organizations. An advocate of the participative system,
Likert argues that, "it most effectively taps into human resources and is also the most productive organizational system" (as cited in Mumby, 2013, pp. 100-101). Likert’s work also highlights the importance of informal communication to build trust, to lead toward group decision making, and to achieve organizational goals (Mumby, 2013) the basis for employee engagement.

Finally, healthy organizations engage the stakeholders in a culture of continuous learning. This is especially important in an educational institution. The literature on the successes of a learning organization suggests that a commitment to the concept is a key piece toward organization growth and change (Ali, 2011). The people who are responsible for operating within organizational frameworks must be given the opportunity to grow and may do so when they are engaged with the goals of the organization. When the environment is conducive to employee initiative and fosters engagement, positive outcomes occur (Kuntz, Malinen, & Naswall, 2017).

**Employment Relations in a Union Environment**

There are a number of models around governing employment relations which define the roles and interests of employers and employees from an economic perspective. Some of these models characterize the relationship with represented employees by denigrating the notion of unions and advocating for an at-will employment relationship, while others recognize the possible shared interests of employers and unions (Budd, 2014). Looking at any workplace, researchers generally agree that issues of power and authority, voice in decision making, job security, and lack of trust are all determinants in measuring employment relations (Kaufman, Barry, Gomez, & Wilkinson, 2018, p. 695).

Institutions determine which model will fit organizational goals, and work with employees, unions, and other stakeholders through that model’s lens. Whether embracing the
egoist, unitarist, pluralist, or critical employment relationship, the approach selected makes a difference in leadership practices such as decision-making and change management (Budd, 2014 and Nechanska, Hughes, & Dundon, 2020) but in a collective bargaining culture, the pluralist lens works for most forms of workplace processes that presuppose both common and conflicting interests between stakeholders (Budd, 2014, p. 508). A pluralist approach is a participative approach which “recognizes that firms are made up of "sectional groups whose interests may coincide or may conflict with rival sources of leadership and attachment" (Geare et al. 2006 as cited in Ross & Bamber, 2009, pp. 25, 26) and may be used to build trust and stakeholder engagement. It must be noted though that the dynamics between leadership and unions may lead to the resistance of rational, participative approaches when hierarchical structures are firmly in place (Johnston, 2002).

In those cases, adoption of a unitarist approach may occur which, “implies that workers should have allegiance to only one authority, usually management. Under this approach, any other allegiances by workers, to a union or other institution, is seen as detracting from their commitment to the employer” (Ross & Bamber, 2009, p. 25) and herein lies the dichotomy of the collective bargaining culture. When management is ideologically opposed to unions, or predisposed to mistrust unions because of past bad experiences (enactment) the unitarist approach is a go-to for management and an antagonism to unions. It is unrealistic to assume that “issues of power and politics are non-existent or unimportant” or that all stakeholders are single-mindedly motivated as the unitarist approach suggests (Thursfield, & Kellie, 2013, p. 489). The pluralist approach, when structured by rules and practices - sometimes in a collective bargaining agreement - recognizes that competing interests may be brought to bear for needed organizational change (Dundon, & Dobbins, 2015).
Power

We find ourselves in professional situations where sometimes everything seems to go our way, while at other times we cannot seem to get anything done. Getting in on the conversation (positional power); using personal, expert knowledge to contribute to the initiative at hand (expert power); and finally, influencing and shifting the focus of the people in the room to arrive at an outcome personally believed to be the best (referent power) are all strategies for using different types of power (Mumby, 2013). Because at most organizations, if you are not at the table when the decisions are being made, it is very difficult, sometimes impossible, to make any meaningful contribution. Raven and French describe positional power such that, “since a given position always has rights, duties, and obligations ascribed to it, the acceptance of a person’s legitimate occupation of that position includes acceptance of his right to fulfil the prescriptions of that position” (1958, p. 406) and in hierarchical structures, this is the kind of power that is real and has teeth.

Systems

Since systems are purposeful, and since stakeholders inevitably compete for pieces of the pie in terms of power and resources, having the ability to talk about complex issues using a vocabulary which accurately describes the relationships inherent in organizations is important. Systems thinking is the term used to describe the ways organizations can learn and change and grow, and within that holism is "joined-up thinking"; the emphasis on process and structure is open-systems concept and complexity theory. Systems thinking draws from other disciplines and thus addresses issues with people, processes, and structure (Jackson, 2003).

All organizations can benefit from looking at structure and process, although many may claim to have done this, the question becomes has it been done with adequate guidance or
transparency. Often, people in leadership positions are drawn from the faculty and have no management training without which meaningful organizational change and learning cannot occur because knowledge that is specific to an academic discipline and the ability to teach it is not analogous to the knowledge needed to manage complex systems.

**Structure**

Managers wield power in most organizations, and the way this power is perceived and used and distributed determines how much agency is in force. In many institutions, power is firmly in the fists of management. In such cases, there is no hint of empowerment of employees; rather they are viewed as merely another resource by which profit or goals may be attained. Knowing that “resources are of two types, human and nonhuman ... that can be used to enhance or maintain power” and knowing that the knowledge and complexity of human resources are challenging to manage, leaders need to recognize that the way to maintain power depends on a willingness to share it, or control it. Since an objectivist sees no real difference in the treatment of either type of resource (Sewell, 1992, pp. 9 & 10) when leadership is strictly hierarchical and exploration of this construct is in order. This is in spite of settled research which finds that the responsibility of a leader is to create an atmosphere in which employee expectations for fairness are fulfilled and their needs are met: a successful leader capable of leading change will ensure a balanced and fair relationship between leaders and employees, in accordance with equity theory (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007) with the recognition that human resources are the most critical to successful organizations.

Yet many organizations, including those in higher education, have structurally remained bureaucracies where there is a hierarchical chain of command whereby “each lower office is controlled and supervised by a higher one” so there is a consistent, known system of norms and
rules to be followed (Walberg, 1970, p. 409). Even knowing that shared power and processes can be successful, a continuation of bureaucratic control ensures that the bureaucracy itself increases its power, “not only because they are rational and efficient, but because they accumulate knowledge through experience and record it in stores of documentary material or "official secrets.” Collegial and bureaucratic forms of organization obviously conflict in theory and practice” (Walberg, 1970, pp. 409, 410) making this contradiction a barrier to changes in process and implementation of new technology. Taking a historical cue from Weber, the interest of management might be less in efficiency and more toward inclusion toward a balanced organization as “his concern was the principles that made the domination of the society legitimate” and in describing the negative attributes of the spread of bureaucratic principles (Andersen, 2002, p. 351).

An organization may be state-maintaining; goal-seeking; multi-goal seeking; purposive; purposeful; or ideal-seeking. In addition, an organization may be designed as more focused on adaptation or learning (Ackoff, 1971). Many community colleges may be fairly described as state-maintaining, thus adaptive, since they are in many ways too wedded to the past and resist doing anything unless forced. So while community colleges have the capability to be purposeful for example, they may not have the processes in place to make it so. In order to understand how systems work, we look to biology, philosophy, and psychology and other sciences to discover that "The whole is more than the sum of its parts" meaning that if one part of a system is damaged in some way, the rest of the system is damaged. If one part of a system does not work, the whole system does not work. Further, patterns such as relationships, and structures such as constituents are dependent on each other and affect the workings of the system (Capra, 1997). An organization's patterns may involve hierarchical relationships without regard to actual
knowledge; rather, the organization works more often to implement the leader’s will as opposed to a collaboratively achieved and vetted ideas.

Finally, open-systems characteristics are concerned with the exchange of energy resulting in some end, and figuring out how to repeat that pattern. Katz and Kahn list nine characteristics of open-systems: importation of energy; the through-put; the output; systems as cycles of events; negative entropy; information input, negative feedback, and the coding process; the steady state and dynamic homeostasis; differentiation; and equifinality (Katz and Kahn, 1966). Within many community college organizations, despite missteps and challenges, homeostasis has been maintained in honoring the mission of the institution through a genuine desire to honor history and culture; however, when the output in enrollment does not keep pace with the needs of the organization, tensions will arise.

Power flows through the organization by virtue of the organizational structure and an acknowledgment that contextual knowledge exists outside of the chain of command. A community college relies upon faculty to lead efforts toward meeting institutional goals by sharing discipline-specific content and engaging students in the classroom. The skill-set needed to do this matches the skill set needed to engage in college-wide decision-making processes, including those around the technology needed for communication, administration, and teaching and learning. These inclusive processes will foster innovation and lead to improved outcomes (Noruzy, et al., 2013) particularly when institutional leaders let some of the levers of power be pressed by stakeholders.

During times of organizational change and during decision-making processes, it should become obvious that people matter; however, this is not always the case. There may be the temptation to assume that people are interchangeable, and factors other than skill set may be used
when organizing change initiative groups. The literature shows that the composition of work
groups and the attributes of the leader of those groups is an important indicator of whether
beneficial change will result (Muehlheusser, Schneemann & Sliwka, 2016); thus inclusion need
not mean bring in the usual players, rather bring in the players that have the knowledge, not just
the title. This new mix with the union stakeholder may bring the benefit of new relationships
and new results.

Further, leader impact may be most apparent when major structural changes are in the
implementation stage. The literature observes and defines differing attributes for leadership
effectiveness, specifically between traditional authoritarian and more collaborative views. On
the one hand, where the strength of a leader was measured by virtue of the change happening,
people with those skill sets are viewed as strong leaders, versus whether the resultant change was
approached and implemented in a collaborative manner. Cases of successful change
implementation where it was clear that new leaders actively embraced new organizational
constructs and operating values were studied and observed to have styles and transformational
skills needed to get the change done, whereby it appeared that the leader intrinsically possessed
leadership skills. This conclusion was found to be flawed when examining the results of the
change: change has to happen, but it is what happens after it is done that must be assessed
(Worley & Mohrman, 2014).

**Employee Leadership**

Even when organizations have the benefit of respected, transformational leaders, without
leadership from within the employee ranks, successful change implementation may not be
achieved. The literature shows that it is valuable to look at how and why employees perceive
their workplace in a certain way, and how change management can be operationalized while
recognizing these perceptions; thus planning for a more successful implementation becomes possible (Fabelo, O'Connor, Netting & Wyche, 2013). When a process is known and followed the conclusions reached are more likely to be embraced. The question then becomes one of calibrating the change to employee groups and using the constructs of those group to plan and implement changes. People use social consensus information to decide which way to react to information and how to proceed when there is uncertainty in the outcome. This means that when there are several alternatives, with none immediately superior to an individual, a group decision may bring consensus and serve as a guide to future behavior and reaction behavior (Worley & Mohrman, 2014).

Moreover, Worley & Mohrman find that many leaders hire people like themselves, thus multiplying the number of leaders with the skills perceived to be transformational. The tentative conclusion — and implication for action — is that change is a function of getting the right person into the lead roles; however, rather than a reliance on one person to lead change, the authors find change leadership should be a function of everyone's job. This approach allows for a nimbler organization that can shift focus and implement changes appropriately. While there is still the need for personnel with specialized roles in change management, without an entire organization’s ability to learn how to change, no leader is able to be an effective change agent (2014).

**Decision-Making**

Weick argues that "decision makers in organizations intervene between the environment and its effects inside the organization, which means that selection criteria become lodged more in the decision-makers than in the environment" (Weick, 1979, p. 125) countering Katz & Kahn’s assertions about environmental factors whereby, “in preserving the character of the system the
structure will tend to import more energy than is required for its output. To ensure survival, systems will operate to acquire some margin of safety beyond the immediate level of existence. The most common type of growth is a multiplication of the same type of cycles or subsystems – a change in quantity rather than in quality” (Katz & Kahn, 1966, p. 24) thus the replication of the usual and the obvious outcomes.

Without first setting the stage for creating change by “generating widespread conversation, instead of a small group of managers” in the planning, much of change will be forced and may not achieve productivity and other gains that may be the goal of the change (Pideret, 2000, p. 789). In a study of how a higher education institution approached the implementation of a major change, Kezar and Eckel found that although faculty and staff did not expect to have their voices heard, there was an “unheard of” level of participation in meetings because of the feeling of responsibility toward students (2002). In fact, “one advantage of decentralization is that it decreases the time span within which the organization fulfills its tasks” (Gruner & Schulte, 2010, p. 744) because power is distributed, stakeholders are engaged, and decisions are more balanced.

Another factor of note is whether those who wish to be involved in decision-making have the information that they need to make informed decisions, because “at the decision level, the most critical variable is decision informity - the degree to which each team member has all the information necessary to perform his or her role in the decision-making process. A person might be well informed on one decision but poorly informed on another; that is, decisions are nested under individuals” (Hollenbeck et al., 1998, p. 270); thus, to successfully wide decision-making processes transparent transmittal of information must be achieved.
Deciding when and how to include stakeholders to effectuate organizational change may be informed by stakeholder theory, since leaders “can offer language and action to show that they value relationships with other groups and work to advance their interests over time” (Freeman, Wicks, & Parmar, 2004, p. 365) in the inclusion of stakeholders in structured ways.

**Conclusion**

The role of an organization’s leader is paramount in effectuating change: the evidence is in some respects ambiguous since it has been shown that a strong leader is necessary to move an organization forward, yet employee engagement and involvement is needed as well. Whether leadership is embodied in one person, or leadership is the embodiment of the collective, it is clear that knowing how to share appropriate information and communicate in an effective manner is critical in the management of change. Managers wield power in most organizations, and the way this power is perceived and used and distributed determines how much agency is in force for employee stakeholders. Since “part of what it means to conceive of human beings as agents is to conceive of them as empowered by access to resources of one kind or another” (Sewell, 1992, pp. 9 & 10) the establishment of systems and structures which promote employee leadership are key components of community college decision-making.

**Culture and Identity**

Literature that addresses collective memory and organizational identity endurance is pertinent to exploring why it is important to change while it is equally important to remember and honor where we came from and how we became successful, particularly for organizations that sometimes look back more than looking forward. Determining how members of an organization come to have a shared understanding of why they do what they do and how they do it and its importance in the success of that organization is one way to identify and memorialize
institutional knowledge and creates the base-line culture of the institution. This notion of a collective memory and how it can support or inhibit change and how the identity of the organization can be preserved, even amidst that change, is worthy of exploration. The importance of capturing moments in time particularly as organizations move toward internal consolidation and administrative changes is a critical component of gathering institutional knowledge (Anteby, Molnár, 2012). Also of interest is identifying those ways that organizational members view notions of identity and culture and how they make sense of those constructs particularly within the collective bargaining environment.

**Honoring Organizational Culture**

Organizations thrive when there is a shared understanding of the meaning of the work, and a shared understanding of overarching goals: this is the organization’s culture. The literature discusses how the type of organizational culture has an impact upon perceptions and implementations of change. Some organizations set strict boundaries under which employees operate, while other organizations have more collaborative, looser constructs where employees feel empowered to explore alternatives and enact innovative ideas. Lee, Idris & Delfabbro found that hierarchical culture is considered to be strong because it is formally maintained, with rules and behaviors understood and followed. This strength though is also a barrier as it can stifle creativity and impact employees negatively (2017).

Another interesting take on this issue concerns work unit culture: where there may be an overarching organizational culture but within work units a specific, different cultural dynamic prevails. Different cultural types may be identified to look at the underlying reasons employees perceive their workplace in a certain way, and how change management can be put into practice with these perceptions as a guide. This recognition - that there are cultures within cultures
which influence successful change - is useful knowledge as initiatives are approached (Fabelo, O'Connor, Netting, & Wyche, 2013). A culture of stakeholder empowerment should be the direction leaders pursue, which can be facilitated through attention to engagement with stakeholders such as unions (Triatmanto, Wahyuni, & Respati, 2019, p. 85).

An organization’s culture may be resistant to change for very good reasons. Some of the literature concludes that inertia can be good because organizations which change too often and respond too quickly to trends hurt routines and ultimately render the organization obsolete. It is also noted that the most successful organizations are flexible but the approach to major change is not as a first-line of action. Looking at the changes made, the frequency of the changes, the magnitude of the changes, and the results of the changes to compare resulting success and failures not just of the change itself, but of the organization as a whole is instructive. The rapidity of change and the frequency of change are the two main factors identified as problematic, with inertia or stasis the better alternative (Stieglitz, Knudsen, & Becker, 2016). Counterintuitively, sometimes doing nothing is the best course of action, and this must be recognized by community college leaders.

**Honoring Legacy Knowledge**

The importance of capturing moments in time particularly as organizations move toward internal consolidation and administrative changes is a critical component of gathering institutional knowledge (Anteby & Molnár, 2012). This notion of a collective memory and how it can support or inhibit change and how the identity of the organization can be preserved, even amidst that change, should be exploited for its positive connotations for change management. Furthermore, studies looking at how the experiences of past changes are remembered and shared are informative to current change strategies as past processes can inform contemporaneous
changes (Beck, Bruderl & Woywode, 2008). If an “organization’s primary strategy is to protect the organizational identity”, and if managers are indeed “managed by cultural influences”, then an organization as seen through the symbolic perspective on change must find ways to ensure that the changed values and norms as envisioned by the leadership is appropriately communicated so that the entire organization lands on the same page (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2013, p. 186).

The literature suggests that while most organizations undergo a variety of small changes in processes almost continuously, major changes can be abrupt, thereby disquieting to stakeholders, particularly if historic practices were not considered. Historic practices are important to consider because there is a reason for those practices: abrupt changes without this consideration cause a dearth of process flow and lack of core knowledge. Inertia is a continuation of the norm: capturing what the norm is will be a valuable action for the institution for legacy knowledge and an ethical construct for change.

**Sensemaking**

Does an organization exist only in the eyes of those who view it? Is there a “social construction of reality”: indeed, “social structure is an essential element of the reality of everyday life” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 48). Karl Weick started a conversation about organizing rather than organization: his work helped evolve researchers’ thinking about the environment as a less-important variable than previously believed, and his work spawned streams of inquiry on enactment, sensemaking, adaptation, and stake-holder theories.

Karl Weick treated organization as a cognitive process such that “organizations exist only in the minds of members where they appear as cognitive maps of socially constructed reality” (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2013, p. 34), beginning a line of inquiry which has resulted in work like that
of Sarasvathy on decision-making, where she shows that through effectuation a dynamic
decision-making environment involving multiple interacting decision makers is assumed
(Sarasvathy, 2001).

Previous to Weick’s work, studying organizations as concrete systems, the state and
environment of those systems, and how they change and function always emphasized the
importance of the external environment: the organization described as an entity unto itself with a
specific state and specific goals (Ackoff, 1971, p. 665). The open-system approach begins by
identifying and mapping the repeated cycles of input, transformation, output and renewed input
which comprise organizational pattern. Open systems are not at rest but tend toward
differentiation and elaboration, both because of subsystem dynamics and because of the
relationship between growth and survival (Katz & Kahn, 1966, p.25). While the internal
environment is acknowledged, it is not emphasized.

Part of what makes a reality within an organization is the perceptions surrounding who
controls what but, "highly centralized systems of control tend to make (organizations) slow and
ineffective in dealing with changing circumstances" (Morgan, 2006, p. 50). Still, Weick's theory
of enactment-retention-selection puts decision makers in organizations at the center stage of the
organization's evolution (Weick, 1979). Sarasvathy interprets this to mean that in contradiction
to theories where evolution is by selection through the environment, decisions are made through
effectuation, and shows that this is not by design or cause, rather, “in the theory of enactment, a
nonlinear process that is strongly evocative of the "living forward" model of effectuation is
assumed” and becomes the core decision unit within the process of sensemaking (Sarasvathy,
2001, pp. 254-255). Further, recognizing the importance of management’s ability to “simplify
their cognitive domains and converge quickly on a schema that defines the "truth" about
problems or issues they are facing. This convergence process tends to exclude multiple interpretations of a problem or issue, creating order even in the absence of empirical evidence that the interpretation being adopted is valid” thus determining their own reality (McKinley, Zhao, & Rust, 2000, p. 239). Weick puts it best, “In the short term, at least, knowing what to do next and feeling that one's actions are meaningful may be as important to a manager as objective proof that the actions are rational” (McKinley, et. al, 2000, p. 239).

The flow of research shows that identification with an organization, while reliant on a number of factors, is most affected by the ways people perceive the behavior of others in the context of specific situations: normally, there is a feeling of ambivalence. Petriglieri reports that Weick’s work on sensemaking shows that, “the factor that has the strongest influence on the resolution of ambivalence is people’s own behavior, in this case behavior that reconnected members to their organization’s identity. That people rely most on information gathered by extracting meaning from their own behaviors is a central tenet of (Weick’s) sensemaking theory, the ‘‘process through which people work to understand novel, ambiguous, or confusing events’’ (Petriglieri, 2015, p. 542).

**Conclusion**

Organizational culture is in the eye of the beholder: what one employee sees, another may not; therefore, literature which addresses how culture is identified; how culture is honored; and how culture through the lens of sensemaking may be approached are key strands of inquiry and the basis for managing change.

**Technology**

Educational institutions need to quickly respond to changes in technology to meet the needs of students and other stakeholders. A large organization with many players with divergent
goals and opinions may find it difficult to respond quickly and appropriately. The nimbleness with which an organization meets the demands of a competitive playing field, keeps costs low and constant for institutional stability, and integrates technology with new or existing processes, will go a long way toward a productive environment for teaching and learning. “Engaging with technology means adjusting to the rapid and unpredictable changes associated with technological development. Integrating technology in pursuit of new institutional goals requires organizational changes”: without appropriate changes organizationally technology is an expensive add-on (Owen & Demb, 2004).

**Trust in Technology**

In reviewing the literature on this topic, of particular interest was a qualitative study which examined what philosophy of technology assumptions are present in the thinking of K-12 technology leaders which investigated how the assumptions may influence technology decision making, and explored whether technological determinist (the belief in inevitability) assumptions are present. Interestingly, the stakeholders held different views about technology – some leaders felt technological change was inevitable and good and should drive the way things were done, while others held the opposite view (Webster, 2017) as explicated in the section on the application of the theory in this study. In cases where “management is engaged in the process of strategy execution but delegates explicitly or implicitly the responsibility for technology transformation” and is too far removed from the process, stakeholders’ belief in the process may suffer (Henderson, & Venkatraman, 1993, p. 481).

These conclusions can help to inform the problem of practice from the perspective of analyzing leadership views and how these may or may not have influence on technology adoption and process change. Findings include the prevailing schools of thought as educational
goals and curriculum should drive technology, and keep up with technology (or be left behind) (Webster, 2017). A risk is that this can on occasion mean a quickness to adopt technology for the sake of technology, without aligning the technology implementation with educational goals.

Another study looked at how perceptions of new technology implementation and planning processes, and organizational climate have on whether technology deployment was perceived to be effective. The results of the study indicates that these factors do indeed influence new technology deployment effectiveness. The author indicated that this study was looking not at the macro level, but at the micro level; capturing individuals’ perceptions will be critical to predicting a successful outcome to any process, including technology and other changes (Bellamy, 2007).

Lippert and Davis found that the degree of trust held by stakeholders is a major determinant of whether or not a planned adoption of a technological tool will be successful. Two forms of trust are asserted to be relevant: interpersonal trust, and technology trust. Thus, it is both trust in the people who are making the technology decisions and trust in the technology - or lack thereof - itself which can thwart the effort (2012). The authors’ focus on trust and technology is well founded and communicated. They assert that the total trust environment of the institution and what respected stakeholders believe is the main way to know whether a technology implementation will be successful (Lippert & Davis, 2012).

Managing Processes with Technology

Another relevant piece of the literature examines the relationship between information technology applications and management actions. Knowing that leveraging technology to manage processes, communications and more, can be critical, this study looks to define the value that technology can bring to an organization (Jifeng, Ming & Han, 2016). Knowing its value is
not always a signpost to adoption though, since many times technology adoption must be accompanied by process, people, or other changes, it might be that organizational structure must adapt to technology; here the authors examine this possibility as well as how technology adapts to organizational structure. This construct influences an organizations’ performance outcomes (Schmitz, Teng, & Webb, 2016).

Keeping in mind that rapid changes in technology and the competition under which institutions operate can be drivers of more technology, Bishwas’s study highlights the effects of rapid change in a globalized society, to include technological change and what is described as cut-throat competition. Its focus is on how to manage organizations under these circumstances, and how to use the notions of innovation and flexibility to strategic advantage. Organizational vitality is pointed to as a result of the successful management of change (Bishwas, 2015). This is heartening to learn as the use of technology to support change, rather than drive it, is a sound change management technique.

**Conclusion**

Technology as the driver of change is shown to be the wrong approach; however, this is often the case as organizations seek to solve problems or appear innovative without first doing the hard work of process review. Process review and changing organizational constructs which introduce technological solutions can only be successful in an environment of trust – trust in the decision makers, and trust in the technology.

**Summation**

The complexity of ideas and actions related to culture, trust and engagement allow for merely scratching the surface of this critical people piece of change management. While it may seem intuitive that employee empowerment fosters a healthy organizational climate, it is not
clear under what specific framework this can be achieved. Honoring and documenting past practices and discovering why these practices have endured is critically important, particularly if an organization has enjoyed success in the past. Sometimes keeping things as they are is the right course of action since change can be harmful to stakeholders even when they are given voice in the process. Overall, understanding the overarching and underlying culture, actively including stakeholders in initiatives, preserving an institution’s legacy, and telling the truth serve to underpin an organization’s existence and inform the practice of the scholar-practitioner.

Ineffective leadership, lack of trust, and an entrenched organizational culture resistant to change may preclude an institution from implementing technology solutions which could enhance productivity and foster innovative processes. The goal of this research study is to determine how the existence of a union influences the acceptance and use of learning management system (LMS) technology in a community college. Information and communication technology can support change, foster innovation, and enhance interaction. Until an organization embraces this notion, technology will remain a distraction, incapable of overcoming organizational fears. Even when seemingly inclusive processes are established to select new or different approaches many stakeholders react fearfully. Some of that fear occurs because of lack of trust in the leadership: when leadership announces a process and does not follow it, not only is this not transparent, it is perceived as obfuscation (Biron, Gatrell, & Cooper, 2010).

It is imperative that institutions pay attention to these common themes: inclusive processes; recognizing and respecting individuals’ contributions and a lack of leadership, or leadership poorly done; and the ability to change processes through a shared understanding of the
role of technology. Only then will a synergy be achieved through which an institution may change, grow, and thrive.
Chapter Three: Methodology and Approach

The goal of this research study is to determine how the existence of a union influences the acceptance and use of learning management system (LMS) technology in a community college. The information obtained during the study should help to inform community college administrative personnel and union leaders in the decision-making processes around the selection and implementation of this technology.

The identification of a research problem; a framework within which to study it; and the discovery of organizational theories which point toward solutions are necessary steps to adequately reflect upon the question of how we can change while staying the same, and make sense of organizational reality.

Virtually every organization has become increasingly reliant on technology to produce a product, communicate with stakeholders, keep records, and provide avenues for flexibility and innovation. Along with that reliance has come concerns about privacy and security of information as well as fears about the control of management over workers (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2013, p. 127). Less talked about are the effects that technology can have on an organization's structure, such as shown by Woodward's analysis whereby "structure was related to performance ... when the type of core technology ... was taken into account as a key contingency" (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2013, p. 130).

It is interesting to look at the theory of the social construction of technology where the technology itself is "shaped by complex socio-cultural trade-offs" and the technology itself has "both a technical and social presence" (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2013, p. 139). We use technology in ways that still allow for interactions with one another that may not even be strictly necessary because of what the technology is capable of. The fears of post modernists like Heidegger,
where the inverse is true - technology can control us and what we do - and other theorists who warned of power being held by those for whom efficiency is the only desired end - need also to be taken seriously (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2013, pp. 140-141).

In my organization, a community college, technology continues to be a contentious topic because of fears of replacing people and changing processes. My interest in this is a real one since one of the things that I do is manage educational technology and promote its use. Structurally, the department is in an odd place in the organizational chart, since the college has yet to come to grips with the ways technology can improve processes and support learning and teaching.

**Positionality**

In the approach to framing questions and seeking answers in the research process, it is of benefit to the activity to be aware of positionality; this is particularly important for me since I have been within my current workplace for over two decades. Working within a social construct which is very familiar, it is sometimes difficult to envision another point of view. Since the workspace is changing, with demographic shifts away from people who look like me and think like me, it is important to examine one’s point of view and recognize one’s own bias. Milner emphasizes the importance of not just looking at ourselves, but researching the self in relation to others, reflecting upon how we have come to believe what we believe, and broadening that thinking to encompass systems (Milner, 2007, pp. 394 - 397).

The scholar-practitioner recognizes the importance of questioning one’s own assumptions, particularly as relates to approaches to a problem of practice and assumptions about solutions. The scholar-practitioner must be sure to explore different points of view from different people and, "to engage in processes that reject the exploitation, misinterpretation, and
misrepresentation of people” (Milner, 2007, p. 395).

“It can be difficult to avoid leading questions based on assumptions or a particular world view. Often researchers come to a study expecting to see certain events occur and may write questions around those expectations. Often such questions tend to assign attributes to a situation or a group of people in advance and thereby violate the essence of qualitative inquiry in ways that may not be desirable. Writing leading questions that arrive at certain conclusions before collecting data can bias a study in a way that damages its credibility” (Agee, 2009, p. 444).

Thus, the recognition that the answers I think are obvious may not be, and that careful, ethical, and clean-slate approaches will serve the research process well: the questions I ask must not anticipate the answers

**Qualitative Research Approach**

According to Meadows, “the aim of qualitative research is to help understand social phenomena in a natural, rather than experimental setting with emphasis on the meaning, experiences, and views of the participants (2003, p. 398). Thus, no hypothesis is stated and no conclusion is assumed, rather a central question and associated sub-questions are crafted, with the intent, “to explore the general, complex set of factors surrounding the central phenomenon and present the broad, varied perspectives or meanings that participants hold (Creswell, 2003, p. 140).

The philosophical underpinnings of the scholar-practitioner stem from Socrates’ assertions about the examined life: achieving self-knowledge, thinking critically, and acting ethically. The practical application of what we know must be used to encourage agency, break down cultural boundaries (Jenlink, 2005) and achieve transformation of the individual or the
institution (Nganga, 2011). The scholar-practitioner’s role is grounded in academic research yet applied in real-world scenarios (Short, 2009) where leadership in a changing world can sometimes be uncomfortable; however, the social and educational possibilities for people and institutions are well worth it (Jenlink, 2005). Driven by the philosophy of phenomenology and its emphasis upon a lived experience, but defined around a “bounded system” Case Study seeks to describe and analyze an entity in essence, while Ethnography looks to describe and analyze culture (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Discovering the genesis of an idea or construct which has provided guidance in studying organizations allows for a historical look at how scientific inquiry has moved understanding from the accepted points of view toward knowing what is legitimate in the now.

To begin that inquiry, the research will be approached from the symbolic-interpretive perspective, with an emphasis on the role of social structure and interaction. Does an organization exist only in the eyes of those who view it? Is there a “social construction of reality” or indeed is, “social structure an essential element of the reality of everyday life” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 48) and does this reality inform how organizations can successfully implement technology and change.

The contextualization of data permitted by the qualitative approach will allow answers to emerge which recognize the participants lived experience as a driver toward change. In fact, the Case Study approach may be used for both quantitative and qualitative analyses, and has been a recognized framework historically, since “naturalistic inquiry was the primary research tool until the development of the scientific method. The fields of sociology and anthropology are credited with the primary shaping of the concept as we know it today” (https://writing.colostate.edu/guides/page.cfm?pageid=1287&guideid=60) as is psychology, and
it is this naturalistic method where members of an organization may be observed and interviewed which gives Case Study its strength (Poneterotto, 2005, p. 132).

Organizations make sense of what is going on through the narratives created by teams of people engaged in processes which result in organizational knowledge creation, utilization, and institutionalization (Patriotta, 2003). The fragments of our work lives may lead to ambiguity; however, we strive to make sense of it all. Although each individual’s reality may be different, and each individual may view their role through the lens of their own experience, these pieces equate to an organization’s identity.

I want to know how institutions organize reality to manage change by capturing the stories of the people who are making the plans, and the people who are doing the work.

**Interpretivist Framework**

A subjective approach to research questions, utilizing the interpretivist paradigm, where there is more than one right answer to be found through qualitative research, takes knowledge to be contextual: nothing is true outside of the person (Butin, 2010, pp. 58-62). The answer that is discovered is correct within the context of the people who make up the organization and the researcher who may be a part of it as well. Understanding comes in part from knowing what the subjects understand their reality to be. The conclusion of interpretivist research will be expressed as a story (Butin, 2010).

It often seems to me that those with whom I work are uninterested in change because they believe the way they do things is the right way, the only way: if something is not clearly broken, why fix it? My own perceptions of where change needs to happen are colored by my personal and organizational experiences. The questions I ask must not anticipate the answers and the people to whom these questions are posed must not be only the like-minded. The type of
knowledge produced, and how questions are structured are dependent upon the paradigm selected by the researcher (Merriam, p. 44)

**Organizational Identity and Culture**

As a long-time employee of an organization that sometimes look back more than it looks forward, literature that addresses collective memory and organizational identity endurance fits nicely in exploring why it is important to change while it is equally important to remember and honor where we came from and how we became successful. Determining how members of an organization come to have a shared understanding of why they do what they do and how they do it and its importance in the success of that organization is one way to identify and memorialize institutional knowledge. This notion of a collective memory and how it can support or inhibit change and how the identity of the organization can be preserved, even amidst that change, is of great interest to me (Anteby & Molnár, 2012). Also of interest is identifying those ways that organizational members view notions of identity and culture and how they make sense of those constructs. But a, “major facet of the innovation process is to learn from experiences, so that an organizational memory can inform the organization in its quest to sustain innovation. With the completion or abandonment of innovations, some of these experiences are later captured in narratives” suggesting that memorializing and repeating these stories is in fact a step forward (Bartel & Garud, 2009, p. 113).

**Methodology**

**Participants**

The New Jersey Distance Education Affinity Group (DEAG) is a state-wide organization composed of representatives of the 18 community colleges in the state, operating as a community of interest through the New Jersey Council of County Colleges. Each community college
operates separately: it is not a system; however, the institutions share commonalities. The Chair of the DEAG was contacted for permission to engage the group as participants in this study and has approved the project. The DEAG was formerly known as the New Jersey Virtual Community College Consortium (NJVCCC) with the purpose of sharing online courses, training initiatives, and best practices for the development and implementation of technology both administrative and educational.

The organization’s evolution to the current DEAG construct, with its mission a collegial effort to provide value and support through cooperative purchasing, collaborative professional development opportunities, online course quality assurance, inter-institutional communication, and other initiatives, has sharpened its scope. The members of the group are leaders in information technology, distance education, and instructional design departments and are involved in the selection of technology, the implementation of technological systems, and the training of end users. All 18 community colleges operate under various collective bargaining agreements and many employees are represented by unions such as the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

Seven to ten volunteers from the DEAG will be sought for the study, providing a cross-section from the state and its varying demographics. Three to five local union leaders and one state-wide union representative will also be sought for the study, providing a perspective that may be different from the DEAG members.

An active engagement with members of an organization provides insight to its culture. Viewing that culture through the theoretical perspective of fragmentation, which “conceptualizes the relationship among cultural manifestations as neither clearly consistent nor clearly inconsistent” (Martin, 2002, p. 2) this study will analyze the interviews conducted, and present
findings pertaining to decision making, change management, leadership, and subcultures in a collective bargaining environment. The fragmentation perspective acknowledges ambiguity, aspects of which are anticipated, particularly regarding the management of change in higher education. Incorporating interview questions designed to elicit storied responses provides a macro level view of the culture at community colleges.

**Recruitment**

A presentation (Power Point attached) about the goals of the research will be made to the Distance Education Affinity Group (DEAG) to solicit study participants. This presentation will be made by me at a state-wide DEAG meeting as placed on the agenda and introduced by the Chair of the DEAG. The audience will be composed of distance education professionals from throughout the state who have all been involved to varying degrees in the selection, implementation, and training of end users on Learning Management System technology at their home institution.

I will address the group in a face-to-face presentation, where I will convey the purpose of the research. I will describe the study goals, explain the study procedures, and emphasize that confidentiality will be maintained during the collection, analysis, and reporting of resulting data. I will ask the group if there are any questions, and answer those questions. At the conclusion of the presentation, I will hand out a paper information sheet (attached) with my student email address. Only those who email my student email address will be provided next steps, including the consent form which will be discussed at the beginning of the first interview.

I will identify union leaders through a search of the NJEA data base, to which I have access. In an initial, introductory email from my student email account, I will relate details of the study and research questions and ask for participation. I will describe the study goals,
explain the study procedures, and convey that confidentiality will be maintained during the collection, analysis, and reporting of resulting data. I will also ask that the union leaders respond to my Northeastern email to let me know if they will participate. Those who volunteer will email me at my student email address and will be then given next steps.

The student researcher will use only their student email address throughout the study. All forms and presentations will use only the student email address and it will be made clear that any emails/calls to the student researcher’s work contacts will be deleted without response.

All of the study participants will be English speakers; thus, no translation is necessary. As discussed, I will describe the study goals, explain the study procedures, and emphasize that confidentiality will be maintained during the collection, analysis, and reporting of resulting data at a face-to-face meeting of the Distance Education Affinity Group (DEAG) as well as in communications to Union leaders. It will be clear that since I will know their names, anonymity is NOT possible.

Those that email my student email address to volunteer will be provided a consent form. I will explain that participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time. I will discuss the consent form at the beginning of the first interview. An unsigned consent will be read at the beginning of the interview and they will provide verbal consent while being recorded. Individual interviews will be conducted either face-to-face, by telephone, or via web conferencing software.

**Procedures**

I will read aloud while being recorded the unsigned Consent Form prior to beginning any interview. Only those who verbally consent while being recorded will go on to be interviewed. One 45-minute personal interview will be conducted in person, by phone or via web-conferencing for a live, face-to-face experience for the collection of qualitative data. I will
remind the participant of the study goals, study procedures, and emphasize that confidentiality will be maintained during the collection, analysis, and reporting of resulting data. The participant will be asked for permission to make an audio and/or video recording of the interview. The participant will be asked to provide the researcher with a copy of the institution’s collective bargaining agreements, if available. I will give all participants in this study a copy of the transcripts and ask them to confirm that it accurately reflects the information they conveyed.

Recordings of verbal consent will be retained at the researcher’s home, as well as in a password protected virtual space for three years following the end of the study. Video and/or audio tapes will be retained for three years following the end of the study. Data will be stored on flash drives and on virtual space such as One Drive, accessible only via account password. Data files will be password protected. At the end of the retention period, audio, video, and text files will be removed and deleted from the virtual location, and hard copies physically destroyed by shredding.

No direct benefits are offered or will accrue to the participants. This will though be an opportunity for those participating to consider the implications of the processes of their institution in the selection and implementation of technology initiatives which could inform process change for future initiatives.

By documenting and analyzing the constructs surrounding collective bargaining environments, the common practices of technology implementation and the various methods of decision making, resultant findings may add to the knowledge base around those considerations in light of existing understanding. Participants will be asked:
1. How are decisions made at your institution? Is this a collegial process or top-down? Probe: Do you feel your voice is heard when decisions are being made? Whose voice is most considered when decisions are made?

2. How do people at your school manage change? Are processes in place because they make sense today or because that’s the way things have always been done? Probe: Do you see things you would like to change? Do you think you could make those changes happen?

3. Tell me about the last time there was a technology change or upgrade contemplated by the administration: did the change happen? Why or why not? What were the challenges to making this change? Who was involved? Was there an effect on college operations good or bad as a result of the change?

4. Describe your role specifically, describe the challenges, describe what you considered to be successful and what you considered to be unsuccessful.

5. What formal and informal processes are in place for the selection and implementation of new technology. Are these processes followed consistently?

6. Are there any training initiatives in place for staff to manage changes in technology? Are these training opportunities voluntary or mandatory?

7. Is technology selection and implementation addressed in collective bargaining agreements? Does this help or hinder the community college in reaching its goals? What is the specific clause or may I see a copy of the agreement? If you could change the language around technology in the collective bargaining agreement, what would it say?

8. If technology selection and implementation is not addressed in the collective bargaining agreement, do you think it should be? What should it say?

9. If you were to describe to an “outsider” the essence of the institution both positive and negative, what incidents would you describe? What do these incidents say about the organization? Probe: Why is this important to the culture of the institution?

10. Are there identifiable subcultures or cliques at the institution? Probe: Do you belong why or why not?

11. Does a collective bargaining environment help or hinder change overall? Is this different than changes in technology? Why?

12. Does the organizational structure at your institution help or hinder change? How would you change the structure if you could?

Data Analysis

It appears that utilizing software such as Dragon Naturally Speaking to get a framework of the words spoken as a starting point to edit will work well for this study. During the interview process, I will also note non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions, and during the transcription process, will engage in pre-coding by bolding certain phrases to which the subject had a certain tone of voice or when laughter was nervous or there was hesitancy.
Saldana speaks to this practice of pre-coding suggesting that this will yield items of interest and may even suggest a title of the resulting report (2016, p. 21).

In order to organize the data into categories which makes sense in the context of the research question, In Vivo Coding will be used. The attraction here is the actual words used by the interviewees are so important and the method is described as being meaningful for novice researchers with an added ability to portray what the subject’s experience actually means in their own words (Saldana, 2016, p. 106). Also of interest is a “three-step data analysis process: pattern coding, memoing, and proposition writing (Miles & Huberman, 1994 as cited in Eckel, 2000, p. 219) first within each interview grouping and then across the entire case study. This first-level coding strategy allows for seeing how words and phrases, used in answer to very different questions, give a lens through which to look at the interview as a whole and to analyze more deeply for meaning regarding the research questions. The analysis phase will call for more than one method since “sometimes the participants says it best; sometimes the researcher does” (Saldana, 2016, p. 109). Therefore, once the words of the subject are run through the transcription software, I will listen to the interview again, make any corrections, and note additional information from notes taken during the interview. These notes will be my thoughts and words which occur as the interview is in process to give further context and initial analysis to the interview questions.

Ethical Considerations

In both research and practice we must safeguard our own integrity and the integrity of our work, so a grounding in ethics is necessary now and moving forward. Resting upon the principles of professional competence; integrity; professional, scientific, and scholarly responsibility; respect for people’s rights, dignity, and diversity; and social responsibility, the
American Educational Research Association’s code of ethics categorizes standards under 22 headings. As a scholar-practitioner, all of these categories are relevant: my own ethical code shared here honors these constructs while highlighting classifications which are of particular interest in my organization and for my problem of practice. Freedom of expression; confidentiality and integrity; honoring diversity and objectivity; data-led decision making; honoring organizational culture; and honoring legacy knowledge form an ethical paradigm to guide me in my research and in my work.

Key components of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) were used in constructing the interview questions and in determining the process of data collection which includes confidentiality and anonymity of the participant sources, and preservation of confidential information through assignment of codes to each interviewee. The goal of this project is to effectuate a successful process by which information needed for analysis is obtained.

“During the inquiry process, a researcher needs to see questions as tools for discovery as well as tools for clarity and focus. In the end, good qualitative questions are dynamic and multi-directional, drawing the reader into the research with a focus on a topic of significance and at the same time functioning as lenses that are directed outward by the researcher to capture the nuances of the lives, experiences, and perspectives of others” (Agee, 2009, p. 446).

At the heart of the effort is a commitment to ethical practices and academic integrity which will result in accurate information through which a scholarly analysis may be conducted. Confidentiality and other commitments made to the interview participants will be honored. Pseudonyms will be used in transcribing interviews. Any names that may come up in the
interview will be represented by initials. College affiliation will be known only by the researcher.

**Limitations**

While the participants will encompass personnel from at least seven of the eighteen community colleges, the study will not include equal representation from management staff and union leadership. This study looks at one state only, New Jersey, and while there may be applicability beyond that state, the number of union members and union density is mixed in the region (chart shows top ten states). In addition, the effects of the Janus decision are unknown at this time.
Chapter Four: Results

Boal and Shulz define leadership occurring, “as meaning makers draw on the organization’s memory, attempt to achieve a level of cognitive consensus, and facilitate the sharing of knowledge” (as cited in Raelin, 2016, p. 143) implying that leadership is not embodied in one person, but in the collective. A glaring contradiction exposed through the interviews pits the norm of collegiality against the fact of hierarchical, top-down decision making. Since the culture of each community college reporting was influenced by the existence of Unions and collective bargaining agreements (CBA), it is important to understand that the normative scope of Unions towards collective bargaining, wages and benefits, and working conditions is more than these. The very existence of these organizations within the institutions effectively set up if not an equal partner – or adversary – in decision-making, but at the very least an interest group of stakeholders that needs to be considered, before, during, and after decision-making processes.

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### Role | Explanation
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Educational Administrator | Administers one department in a college academic division in which LMS administration, online course development, instructional design, and/or training occurs. Close student and faculty contact. Mid-level managers and directors who report to an executive administrator. May also teach courses but not primary role.
Executive Administrator | Administers more than one department in a college academic or administrative division and is part of the college’s administrative leadership group. May also teach courses but not primary role.
Union President | Elected representative of a collective bargaining unit. Leads the union in all aspects of the contract.
Union Field Representative | Professional staff member of a state-wide union organization.

### Who Has Standing to Make Decisions?

A fundamental challenge for management is determining which groups or stakeholders have standing to be involved in a particular decision-making process. Sensemaking is apparent here when looking at the perspectives of the groups: as Mary said, “The senior leadership seem to have the greatest voice and responsibility in decision-making. But these people are long removed from day-to-day interaction with students, faculty and staff and others have no such experience at all, so it’s a recipe for poor, disconnected decision-making. On rare occasions where decisions are given greater input, leaders are often “weak-kneed” and fold to the most vocal constituent”.

“It’s understood that in the spirit of collegiality to get everyone’s voice is a good idea. But I think also to be perfectly honest about it, well, it’s good that the administration is willing to be heavy handed and mandate some things otherwise it wouldn’t happen. You know in all reality this is to the advantage of the student because sometimes some people or some groups of people think they know everything, and they really don’t know much about technology at all”,
said Ari. He then told a story about a student complaint about how the course technology was not being utilized to the potential he (the student) expected and when he did not get answers that dealt with the problem, went outside of the institution to complain, which could tarnish the reputation of the institution as a whole. Ari’s thoughts on who had standing to be a part of the decision-making process regarding technology had him preferring to have as many stakeholders involved as possible, but “when a decision was made without faculty input it was in the interest of time – if there is a system change maybe consult with one or two faculty not with a big committee. Then tell why it was done and how it was done – big committees bog things down”.

Dan acknowledged the challenges of working with big groups of people when decisions needed to be made, but when his institution did a major environmental study of LMS’s, all groups considered to have an interest in the outcome were asked to participate. He invited 35 individuals, members of different unions, IT people, and administrators, and he said that “about a dozen faculty worked through the entire process and were involved at every step. We all worked together to narrow down the list, vet the vendors, created survey instruments and did our best to gather input from everyone. The decision made at that time, to not switch vendors, was approved by the administration”.

Describing an LMS change process, Ed said that a top-level administrator organized the process, but charged him with leading it on the ground. He was told “to make sure there was equal representation of faculty and staff, but the people appointed to the committee were chosen by the administration and everyone had an equal say” to ensure that both administrative and teaching issues were addressed. Ed would have preferred to have a few “nay-sayers” on the committee to gather up front what objections might arise, but did not have that authority. The process, in his view, was “successful because everyone walked away feeling they had a say in
what happened: The administration did not have a preference” of what system would be adopted, so the committee’s recommendation was implemented.

“Decisions generally are faculty voices considered, but more top down, administration has the final say. The contract limits some of that when it comes to whether we have to pay anybody for changes. We’ve recently had a leadership change, it’s a whole different style, you know it’s like a generation change with the leadership and they came in without any experience working in a union environment, and I think they wanted to shake things up a bit because they thought the institution is stagnant and they want changes to happen” related Bob when talking about who is or should be involved when technology changes are being considered. These comments align somewhat with Nan’s comment about actual contractual language which shows that, “generally the references (in the CBA) are about incorporation of technology in the classroom, who manages the technology, and/or acceptable use policies related to use of campus/public tech resources” not about having a voice in decision-making.

But Nan went on to say, “It is always helpful to have a CBA and a unionized workforce. The overall aims and purpose of collective bargaining fosters a meeting of the minds, a clear understanding of employment provisions and expectations, and a clearly defined process to resolve discrepancies of interpretation and settlement of disputes. Workplace challenges are inevitable so whether we are talking about the most effective way to include technology or any other element of employment, collective bargaining provides an equal voice at the table between the employer who wants to make changes and the employees who have to operationalize and implement the programs/products/services”. This philosophy of voice in decision-making about an LMS, and whether or not it should be equal, is at the heart of this research study.

*Collective Bargaining Culture*
One criticism about a union environment heard from some of the interviews was that collective bargaining agreements tend to hinder rather than support change, specifically technology change. Kate, a union president, answered that by saying, "That’s not what a collective bargaining agreement is for, and I would say it could help change, if people feel secure in their salaries and work conditions, it protects your money and working conditions, then you can work on these other things together in a collaborative way. So, you guys are safe, I have this other thing I want you to work with me on. We see that the future is going to be online, not just here in this county, but we need your feedback, we need you to give us feedback on what kind of LMS is best for the teaching part, we can pick it from the technology part and the cost part but we need your input on the pedagogy part. I think if the college if they really wanted to could say the contract is settled the compensation and the benefits so let’s use the opportunity to collaborate if people are always fighting about everything else, they’re not going to want to work on things together”. So Kate’s take is that the faculty stakeholders are more likely to consider change because there is safety around their jobs in the contract. Without that contract, any change might be viewed as threatening to job security

“The integration of technology in the student experience is inevitable. Students today have grown up with technology as an essential part of their lives. Colleges and all societal exchanges must incorporate tech is some capacity to remain relevant in the lives of those utilizing the services. Having the stipulated provisions of technology incorporation outlined in a CBA provides bright line rules and clear understanding of expectations and purpose”, according to Nan. This bright line referenced, in reviewing collective bargaining agreements, appears to separate what a technology tool is used for, whether its use is required, how it will be supported, but not what it is. Nan though, thinks that there should be contract language that’s more specific,
“Yes, I believe anywhere that faculty and staff are to be held accountable by management for use and/or integration of technology should be outlined in a CBA to ensure consistency of practice and clarity of expectations. The language must be limited in scope, clearly identify who is responsible for what aspects, and a process when a concern comes to attention. Additionally, the advancement of social media as a function of faculty/staff engagement with students should be outlined and better understood. One significant challenge is that contract negotiations occur less frequently than the constant evolution of technology. For that reason, I always encourage a committee or task force be identified to oversee and update any technology provisions contained in a CBA. That way, during the life of the agreement, necessary adjustments can be made in a timely and relevant manner instead of waiting for formal negotiation sessions on the entire CBA”.

The community colleges studied were almost equally split between having contract language that was very specific about how faculty members will be compensated for their time when it comes to course conversion, training, and mentorship, and having no compensation or vague compensation language with references to other curriculum development compensation. All of the contracts emphasized the voluntary nature of using technology to teach, and all of the contracts had clauses that either established committees to look at issues should circumstances change or clauses around re-opening the contract to address teaching with technology issues. Our resident cynic, Ari, does not want more contract language since, “it might give faculty the upper hand and slow down or stop technology initiatives.
Organizational Structure

“Selection and implementation of technology doesn’t always fall under academics it falls under information technology. Everybody knows that IT does not consult all parties; they will make a change that affects other areas and don’t consult” was Helen’s observation about who is making decisions, and who has standing to do so. She said that, “Normally, when we investigate a product, if it’s an academic technology or something we think will help the students or faculty, we take a look then pitch it to the upper level for cost or a pilot, testing, then we go live. The exception to that was during a recent LMS change the (vendor) contract negotiations were protracted, so there was no time to test as much as wanted. When people make decisions, they don’t always think about what else it impacts, like windows of time needed. Upper administration will say “I’m confident you’ll get it done” and of course we did. Faculty were not involved, there was no test environment. But they were told and communicated with in all forms as much as possible”.

Cliques and subcultures appear to be abundant, existing along organizational lines, within the respective bargaining units, and in individual departments. While Larry said that, “there are
multiple cliques and subcultures. There is the leadership and everyone else” the major subculture is the faculty: this is the group that either opposes or moves toward major changes. All of the other described subcultures are subordinate to it according to 90% of DEAG member interviews.

Endurance of Organizational Culture

The stories told illustrated the research whereby organizational culture is a “central construct in understanding the evolution of organizational identities in the face of environmental changes, suggesting that collective history, organizational symbols, and consolidated practices provide cues that help members make new sense of what their organization is really about and give that new sense to others” (Chatham & Jehn, 1994, p. 525). The cultural constructs communicated by the participants emphasized the importance of the past to the interpretation of the present for most of those interviewed.

Generational Differences?

“You know all of us administrators who work with the faculty prefer collegial processes, there’s lots of reasons, but one is that relationship I talked about before. But it seems to me that you’re taking a chance when you open up decisions about technology because there are those, you know, there are “negative nellies” – people who are older nearing retirement add subterfuge element, tenured faculty go along because of that process (promotion is in the CBA and it’s the older faculty who have the power in that process). Power users (of technology) are the newly tenured – younger people who know what’s going on, maybe would like to change, but don’t want to rock that boat”, Ari said.

This is an interesting strand of inquiry which was mentioned by others interviewed: since some stakeholders are dependent upon colleagues in the same group to attain job security or
advancement, they may be more likely to remain silent. Management and the union stakeholder may become situational allies; however, this is dependent upon which voices within that stakeholder group are loudest, at least sometimes. Bob said, “We may introduce choices but we find that the faculty group have an overwhelmingly loud voice in making decisions, the voice that is most considered is the faculty, more so before we had a new administration, but even now it’s hard not to be swayed by it or at least consider it”. Mary took this a step further in saying, “while all voices should be considered, there should not be opportunity to hijack the process and change it in midstream and for a small vocal minority to have a disproportionate voice” implying that it is this group who is actually listened to by management, and should not be because they oppose any change, always, if it wasn’t their own idea.

**Who Has Needed Information?**

Another factor of note is whether those who wish to be involved in decision-making have the information that they need to make informed decisions: interviewee’s responses seem to indicate that they think they do, but only sometimes. Without the appropriate information, “At the decision level, the most critical variable is decision informity, which is defined as the degree to which each team member has all the information necessary to perform his or her role in the decision-making process. This is a decision-level variable because a person might be well informed on one decision but poorly informed on another; that is, decisions are nested under individuals” (Hollenbeck et al., 1998, p. 270); thus, the desire to be a part of the process requires transparent transmittal of information, another area of interest to leadership.

There was general agreement between the study participants of the important role budgets play and the rights of the administration to make some decisions because of fiscal realities. Of note though was Kerry’s union perspective about the fiscal efficacy of making an LMS
technology change, and the roles for each group. “When the administration or executives are considering making an economic decision, LMS is expensive, we understand that you have to make choices based on fiscal responsibility, but our time is also expensive. And so, while I think we were sympathetic to the expense we understood by going to a cheaper option we knew there was going to be a lot of expense involved because it was going to be off our backs, weeks of training and thinking and that’s the thing that nobody understands about teaching, your teaching is fundamentally about how you think, and plan and that’s the hard work”.

While the interviews revealed that innovation and shared decision making is valued, the truth of the culture is that hierarchy rules in many cases. Finally, and most deeply held, are the assumptions that despite this fact, participants continue to believe in the value of governance and committee structures, and continue to participate. The majority of the executive administrators interviewed said that decision-making is shared: the majority of educational administrators and union representatives said that it is not, but disagreed about which group’s voice is paramount when shared decision-making occurs. Jack asserted that, “my voice is heard but not always listened to” from a middle-management, educational administrator perspective, while Flo said, “users don’t have the right to dictate, they don’t know enough, they don’t understand the pricing, they don’t have the information or expertise.” This dichotomy deserves further analysis and attention by leadership.

“Decisions are made top-down. College goes ahead and does things to get around talking to the faculty. Small group of people do these things - make a decision and then tell people about it rather than come in and ask for opinions. Faculty voice is considered when decisions are made only after the fact; the attempt is to bring people in line with a decision after it’s already been made. I can sort of understand that strategy because of
the pressures they have and other people they have to answer to far more than the faculty and they probably feel we’re not well informed, and they think that they have to decide things for us” said Larry, speaking from the union’s perspective.

The belief that structure is needed and leaders often know best was characterized by Irene’s assertion about organizational structure as a, “typical hierarchy, helpful in many ways because there is a clear chain of command. When there is a proposal it goes up the chain, it’s a hinderance it can take a lot of time, relatively speaking. Depends on value added. Despite hierarchy as a potential barrier, it can move the entire institution to where the administration wanted them to be. But it’s a tremendous lift”.

The literature reveals that these community colleges do not stand alone in the approach to decision-making and in the implementation of resulting changes. In a study of how a higher education institution approached the implementation of a major change, Kezar and Eckel found that although faculty and staff did not expect to have their voices heard, there was an “unheard of” level of participation in meetings because of the feeling of responsibility toward students (2002). In fact, “one advantage of decentralization is that it decreases the time span within
which the organization fulfills its tasks” (Gruner & Schulte, 2010, p. 744); this was not recognized by the study participants.

**What Is the Process?**

Although every study participant related a sometimes it is, sometimes it isn’t understanding of collegial decision making, none could say confidently that there were processes in place that were followed around technology selection and implementation. Mary rued this situation and felt strongly that this should be, “clearly described in college policy documents. The documents would describe the process, the role of leadership, faculty, staff, IT and the responsible departments and administrators. While all voices should be considered, there should not be the opportunity to hijack the process and change it in midstream” as had been the case in a technology selection process related in the interview. This sense of ambiguity can doom a process; “with less ambiguity power is taken from the cynics” (Kotter & Cohen, 2002, p. 128) so the hijacking process described is less likely to occur.

Responses to questions about legacy processes and change unveiled some levels of dissatisfaction with how change is processed within the organization. Whether or not an employee is motivated to effect change or whether it was likely to occur was often driven by history and heritage. There was also some anxiety at suggesting change should occur. Although the interviews demonstrated differentially interpreted meanings throughout the organizations, there was still some level of demonstrated effectiveness that translated into an organizational collective that was aligned with the organizations’ overall mission, values and beliefs. Every single person interviewed, no matter the affiliation, mentioned students and how their own role in processes around technology selection ultimately affected what was described by Bob as “the most important stakeholder: the students”.

The nimbleness with which an educational organization meets the demands of a competitive playing field will go a long way toward a productive environment for teaching and learning. “Engaging with technology means adjusting to the rapid and unpredictable changes associated with technological development. Integrating technology in pursuit of new institutional goals requires organizational changes”: without appropriate changes organizationally, technology is an expensive add-on (Owen & Demb, 2004). Changes need to follow a process, too, whether in setting the institutional goals, or selecting the appropriate technology to help meet those goals.

Relating a story about a proposed LMS change, Mary said that, “there was so much confusion about who was responsible for making the decision, who would be involved in making recommendations and what the driving factors for selecting an LMS should be. As the process and the commitment of leadership was very fluid, the process was ultimately hijacked by a small group of vocal faculty resistant to change and largely unwilling to consider any changes to the current LMS”. This seems unlike a process described by Irene where there was a, “technology initiative, identified as a need by the administration, and the faculty agreed that it was a need, and the administration put together a training” but further probing revealed that this effort was clearly driven by administrative leadership and there is some question around at what point in the process there was faculty “agreement”.

In the one case, the process was ill-defined from the start, in the other, the process was defined clearly and it was known that the administration was in the driver’s seat. The question then becomes is the Union being appeased, is it being dealt with head-on, or is it being ignored. The consequences for the way stakeholder interests are handled – appeasement, challenge, or
dismissal - might be unique to a particular institution and a particular leader, but it matters. It also matters what’s in the collective bargaining agreement.

College A: CBA Selected Clauses, Distance Education, Online, & Hybrid Teaching

4. **Compensation** for creating a model course and/or related course components, whether done by an DL Mentor or under the supervision of a DL Mentor, will be three (3) contact/credit hours of released time or a $3,000 stipend, whichever is preferred by the DL Mentor. Instructional design support from CIT/CITL will be provided as requested.

It is expected that model courses will need to be revised whenever the textbook for a course is changed, when a new edition of a text is issued, when, in the judgment of faculty members of the relevant department, scholarship and research has changed or should be updated, when the course management system used by the College is changed, when necessary to meet evolving Quality Matters standards, and for other agreed-upon reasons. **Compensation** for such revision work will be payment at the administrative (two-for-one) rate with a minimum payment equivalent to one-third (1/3) of the value of one (1) contact/credit hour at the faculty member’s overload rate.

5. **Compensation** for mentoring activity will be payment at the administrative (two-for-one) rate with a minimum payment equivalent to one-third (1/3) of the value of one contact/credit hour.

College B: Selected Clauses, Distance Learning

ARTICLE 24 - DISTANCE LEARNING

The Faculty Association and the College recognize that technology allows for different instructional modalities including, but not limited to ITV courses, web-based courses and other distance learning. This technology is to enrich the learning experience. The intent is to endeavor not to displace, replace, reduce or otherwise limit the role of the College Faculty Association represented faculty members.

Faculty Association encourages all faculty members to become proficient in the art of teaching within these modes of instruction; however, participation in distance education or web-based teaching shall be voluntary.

24.3 Faculty member(s) choosing to develop a course may avail themselves to the curriculum development resources (See Article 18.9). The proposed distance learning course, whether prepackaged or original, shall be

24.7 The willingness of the College Faculty Association and the College recognize that because of the rapidly changing nature of technology, situations and conditions may arise that may warrant additional review; thus, either party may open a joint discussion to revisit this Article at any time during the duration of this contract.

Technology: Infrastructure or Work Space?
Technology as the *driver* of change is shown to be a risky approach; however, this is often the case as organizations seek to solve problems or appear innovative without first doing the hard work of process review. Process review and changing organizational constructs which introduce technological solutions can only be successful in an environment of trust – trust in the decision makers, and trust in the technology.

Ari admitted to being cynical of decision-making processes, but expressed some satisfaction that his relationships made some things easier. This was partially a result of striving to make people feel supported, to give them a sense that they were not alone and could trust his department. His own reputation for being fair was important and he said that in order to be successful he needed to be, “an advocate for the faculty; lots of hand-holding; make them feel good so that word-of-mouth would get around from faculty to faculty about how they were treated” and more would come and work with him.

Since there is no specificity in any of the collective bargaining agreements around the selection and implementation of technology, including Learning Management Systems, Bob’s report about “the faculty being an entity unto themselves” and a lack of cohesiveness between the administration and technology users (faculty) was not surprising and in line with most of what was said by others. “It’s what’s best for the student – that’s what should drive the culture, and what should drive decisions and I think that both sides have that at heart. But faculty sometimes question motives” of the administration, making the issue of trust in what is being communicated of decisive importance to getting things done.

And yet Dan observed that since it is known that he continues to teach while maintaining his main administrative role, in conversations with faculty around technology change he has been told, “you are not one of us, but you can be sometimes” signaling a strong endorsement from the
faculty that his motives toward technological change are also informed by considerations they may have. This is borne out through the union perspective of Kerry, who said, “that’s the thing that nobody understands about teaching: your teaching is fundamentally about how you think, and plan and that’s the hard work” implying that if the decision-makers are not in the classroom, the standing to make decisions which may alter the learning space are possibly illegitimate, and certainly lacking in crucial data.

Technology as a broad category can be said to be in constant change, but concerning an LMS in particular, Chris made a strong case that since, “technology’s not addressed in collective bargaining agreements, we want to have an environment where everyone’s opinion is accounted for, but not contractually. There are certain times when a technology can be vetoed by IT – we’re looking for system integration issues, and compliance issues around security and accessibility, certain underlying pieces. Technology’s becoming like water to a place; it’s core infrastructure and you don’t have that in the contract. It’s not a working condition. You don’t have anything in the contract about what kind of pipes you use to bring water into the college.”

Collective bargaining agreements need to be a consideration when making technology changes. Gerry’s analysis of the challenge seems to get at the core issues when saying, “there
are times when the users’ time has to be taken into account. It comes to the time input when the technology changes, and the compensation that needs to be made, and that’s where sometimes when you would like to change you would not move or move based on what resources you have available. The union protects the employees, it plays a big factor in terms of how it effects the overall process of the technology change”. Conversely, Helen said, “Teaching is different, when it comes to training associated with an LMS, it should be considered to be part of your prep, shouldn’t have to pay you extra for that just like you are not paid in preparing a lecture” for a face-to-face class.

Gerry said, “In terms of the LMS we oversee the course creation and training aspects, the challenge is in integrating systems for the accounts, we do not have model courses or what some people call courses of record; we have courses developed by a faculty member so now we’ve created - by giving the autonomy to the faculty we’ve created a huge number of sections all different by each faculty member”. In ceding the course development wholly to the faculty, Gerry’s institution, and most others, have set up a dichotomy whereby the LMS needs to integrate with other technical systems, but since it is also the space where individual courses,
individually developed by faculty, reside, if there are changes contemplated to that space, both parties can argue that the weight of their voice is most important.

Technologies like Learning Management Systems are infrastructure: without these systems, institutions could not ensure security of student information, proper registration of students, grading, and other administrative necessities. Despite the fact that most contracts do not require faculty to teach online, once they do, there is a legitimate claim to be made that since the LMS is the only way to teach the class, and any changes will require a great deal of time to reconfigure course material, they either should be paid to do so, or the status quo should remain in place.

**Maintaining the Status Quo**

Dan thinks that most people would rather not change the way they do things, and even when forced to make a change in technology, “It’s pretty predictable what’ll happen. Managing change – when faculty has to change, they choose something that looks and feels most like the thing they already had. The others may have been better, but not that much better that it would make me want to change. We are willing to accept change when we can see an obvious, identified value. Change when I think about it and talk about it I use the band aid analogy. Some people like to rip the band aid off quickly, and just go with the change, and other people like to ease off the band aid slowly. When we contemplate change, we generally don’t do an extended pilot, we just go for it”.

When a group has experienced a technology change and remembers the amount of work that was involved, they are more likely to want to maintain the status quo, according to Kate. “The last time we changed the LMS it was a positive experience in going through the training to teach online, extensive, lots of time, but valuable, we had no choice when (product X) was ended
– the technology was going away. The decision-making process was not in our control because we had to do it. People came to a union meeting and presented it to the faculty. I felt that the communication was very good, teachers were teaching the teachers and saying why it was going to be good for us but there was a little bit of anxiety. Faculty bought into it because faculty described it to faculty. There was a wide number of opportunities to learn about it. The fact that makes the difference is largely faculty members who are willing to help others and mentor them through the change. I spent probably a full week of time thinking about how I was going to design the course it took me a lot of time. It took a long time. That shaped the way we considered changing again, and we knew how many hours we spent the last time and became more of a part of the conversation. So, when we were considering another change, we knew how much time was spent in training, we didn’t mind but it is time and work and effort”.

This remembrance of things past aligned with Bob’s story, “The last time, everyone knew they didn’t have a choice; one system was being deprecated they had to move to another. They decided to stick with something they believed was close to what they already had. Recently, we were looking again because of budget considerations, and I was vocal with the administration but the faculty was not involved. Faculty were not the driver; ultimately, the administration felt the move was not recommended, it wasn’t worth saving the money, but who knows why they decided that. I do know if they (the administration) had involved the faculty we probably wouldn’t have changed either because of all of the work they would have had to do”.

When it comes to change management, Jack said, “there are a lot of resistors here. I work with a lot of faculty, doing training, and working with them on other technologies. Most faculty are resisting to changing what they already know and are comfortable with. When we were doing an LMS search, one said to me we’re probably going to vote to stay with what we
have; some of us don’t know how to do it, and some of us are lazy, and we both laughed. This is an exaggeration, and it was said in a joking manner, but there is a certain amount of that’s the way we do things here, we always have, and I’ve seen some resistance to … look, I can understand it to some degree, they may say I have to keep adapting to a whole new system every three to five years and I don’t even get paid for it”.

Since the deference given to academic governance and faculty in higher education settings may create a bias toward the status quo (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), 1996) administrative leadership must adopt management practices that recognize stakeholder voice, but do not bow to it when other imperatives are paramount. Collective bargaining is a process, too, and a contract cannot exist unless and until both sides agree.

**Conclusion**

It may be to an institution’s overall advantage to maintain things as they are, but that should be management’s choice, not its fallback position. Overall, the tenor of the interviews was one of, at the very least, exasperation with lack of known decision-making processes, and
for some, bitterness toward what was perceived as lack of leadership. Knowing that “information is the life blood of an organization” and knowing that it is through information that organizational learning will be propelled, it is fair to say that without shared information an organization cannot learn (Mirvis, 1996, p. 13) and without learning, an organization cannot change.

To understand the challenges organizations face in embracing and enacting an organizational learning construct, it is instructive to take a look at organizations as social systems. "In the open systems framework, repeated inputs of information and energy shape patterns of behaviour by demarking boundaries and stimulating differentiation of functions or subsystems. Organizational roles illustrate: they specify duties, divide work and authority, and exert control. In time, roles are learned by organization members and role behaviour becomes habituated" (Mirvis, 1996, p. 14). Habituation means that we become used to thinking about or doing something in a certain way such that we don't even think about it. And this means we are not learning on either an individual or organizational level.

But it is difficult to know what is working and what is not in an organization: this is an area where community colleges should concentrate efforts, to find ways to make this determination and to follow up with efforts toward change. But Mirvis warns about, "the difficulty organizations have in gathering and making sense of the information needed" since the "culprits range from denial and discounting to blaming and flank protection” (1996, p. 20).

This means that taking risks must become a part of the organizational culture, and that means that the organization needs to learn how to do that. Research is a journey: it must start with a direction in mind, but it may arrive at a different destination because of what is found
along the way. What has been discovered here is not quite what I expected, but it is a valuable step with much-needed information to inform organizational change processes.
Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications

We get what we expect to get, and we do what we have done before. Those expectations set up a dynamic that needs to be carefully managed if real change is expected to occur. The author of the sensemaking lens through which this study was focused writes, “assumptions provide a reality that is taken as a given, a reality that exerts influence over what one notices and ignores and labels as significant” (Weick, 2004, p. 657). Community colleges are the largest provider of higher education in New Jersey, enrolling over 325,000 students annually and with 6,554 full-time employees (NJ Council of County Colleges, 2017) so the imperative to manage internal organizational processes effectively to support all stakeholders has real-life consequences.

Collective Bargaining Culture and Change

Determining how the existence of a union influences the acceptance and use of learning management system (LMS) technology in a community college entails determining if a collective bargaining environment affects an institution’s cultural expectations around decision-making. The institutions under review are all in the public sector, in a state where collective bargaining for faculty is almost a given, and union density is high. Studies around the effects of union membership on job satisfaction in the public sector reveal that union membership can increase satisfaction so collective bargaining and other administrative processes should be approached collegially rather than as strictly adversarial processes. This approach recognizes the shared value “such as preference for service to society” as a motivating factor in working toward common goals (Davis, 2013, p. 80) and lays some of the groundwork for stakeholders to have all of the information needed to make an analysis and participate in decision-making processes.
The purpose of decision-making is to anticipate and solve problems, comply with outside mandates, and select courses of action to move an institution forward toward its goals. The collective bargaining culture can bring with it those aspects of sensemaking where stakeholders see a situation through past experiences and anticipate similar outcomes. This study revealed some of those preconceived notions which are borne out through other studies where management personnel believe that faculty stakeholders, including the union, are too self-interested to participate in processes and will not come to solutions which show real commitment to the institution. Unions come to the process with memories of adversarial contract negotiations, for example, and believe that administrators have nefarious motives such as getting additional work with no compensation, or replacing them, or substantially changing their working conditions (Bucklew, et al., 2002, pp. 82, 83). If something is in the contract, it moves beyond the philosophical over to the necessary and required, and if something is not in the contract, maybe it should be – and it does not have to favor one side or the other; rather, it should bring clarity of meaning for both.

To speak of a collective bargaining culture is to speak of an institution where the first instinct in decision-making is to include as many stakeholders as possible, as evidenced by this study. It also speaks to a culture where trust has to be earned, since collective bargaining is also a fight for one side to get something and the other side to give something. The theoretical lens of sensemaking predicts that stakeholders will feel a closer identification with an organization when they have observed behaviors that are in keeping with the way they think things ought to be, and most stakeholders think that the way things ought to be includes their opinion in decision-making processes. Organizational culture is an evolving construct as are stakeholder’s perceptions of that culture. This ambiguity around what to do and the ambivalence that stakeholders feel are
influential factors in decision-making: the stories told by those interviewed reflect how they feel they themselves are treated as well as observations about how others are treated. There are both positive and negative experiences with which we identify, and mechanisms which bring about a balance to stakeholder relationships can help resolve issues and set the stage for ongoing stakeholder dialogue (Petriglieri, 2015).

Cultural Ideals

Student success was the universal phrase uttered by all interviewed: the belief that everything that is done at the community college should lead to this is undoubtedly deeply ingrained in the culture. Some ambiguity and mixed-messaging was apparent however, as budget considerations were mentioned almost as many times. Student success is the driver, but financial realities are sitting in the passenger seat.

An analysis of these two seemingly divergent statements concerning the driving vision of the community colleges may be seen as a paradox, “a contradictory true statement that captures the core of the culture” (Driskill & Brenton, 2011, p. 119) whereby pragmatic considerations may be seen to trump idealistic concerns. This seeming anomaly adds complexity and ambiguity and interviewees indicated a cultural confusion. Since the predominant culture of idealistic notions continues to be embraced, it is important that some clear guidelines of interpretation be established because “organizational responses to institutional complexity - where an institutional logic is emerging that is associated with sets of values and beliefs, but lacks clearly defined practices and routines that represent legitimate instantiations of those values and beliefs” (Bertels & Lawrence, 2016, p. 340) will lead to further ambiguity.
Culture may be a source of harmony and reduction of conflict: that which we share we value. Ashkanasy’s analysis of this sentiment as, "linked to an idealistic notion of culture" (2011, p. 15) may be accurate, but the idea of consensus is one norm the study participants highlighted throughout the interviews despite also reporting hierarchical decision making and hesitance to suggest changes.

All Things Being Equal?

While the driving force of an employer is rarely to ensure that employee voice and equality is always top of mind, there is some evidence that collective bargaining environments promote an efficiency of resources beyond the walls of the institution – these are economic, not political imperatives (Galbraith, 2002, p. 224). The notion of a balance of power is familiar to all who study economics or politics; contemporaneously, labor unions as a whole are at their weakest than at any other time in history since legalization; however, in states where labor laws allow for public sector unions, this voice brings us toward the relevant dialogue which is necessary for institutional success.
Community colleges in New Jersey are in just that position, with a heavily unionized faculty and staff and no signs yet of Janus-decision defectors. It is worth it to engage. This research study captured information about successful collegial processes in the selection of technology. Research around increased communication, better interpersonal relations, and gains in informal resolution to problems when there are joint committees between unions and management shows that these constructs can be utilized effectively (Voos, 1989, p. 111).

Stakeholders may or may not want to participate or collaborate, but will be more likely to have the wish to do so when those with less power “are treated fairly” and there is some balance of power (Kelman & Hong, 2014, p. 150).

Mary Parker Follett "envisioned flat, non-hierarchical collectives that could empower people" leading to the realization of personal potential. Her concept of the communication process emphasizes the process of "relating" - and in communicating we are changing one another. Follett’s take on how to deal with conflict speaks to domination, compromise, and/or integration: the goal is to resolve issues so that everyone is a winner (Mumby, 2013, pp. 94-95).

Ultimately, it is the job of leadership to analyze each decision-making opportunity with an eye toward balancing competing priorities (Eckel, 2000). Evidence from the study aligns most with domination of the administration with someone higher up in the chain of command or someone in the union with the loudest voice serving as a barrier. This construct is disempowering to stakeholders, and disempowering to the change process (Kotter & Cohen, 2002, p. 102). No organization can operate efficiently without some form of structure: for my organization, and many community colleges, a professional bureaucracy is the default and in many cases allows for operations to flow smoothly (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2013, pp. 106-108). Professional staff members with specific expertise can, for the most part, handle day-to-day operations in a manner
which utilizes their skill sets. The trouble begins however, when the structure cannot respond to environmental forces which demand change. More than the structure though a bureaucratic mindset can hurt an organization since flexibility and adaptation are necessary for organizational change.

**Leadership Competencies**

The American Association of Community Colleges recognizes that all leadership jobs “deal with internal and external politics, management of fiscal and human resources, communications” and organizes mentorship and academies to ensure the ability to do so is understood by college presidents (2018). The competencies highlighted here match the findings of this study whereby leaders need to establish or support a culture where information is shared transparently, stakeholders are engaged honestly, and relevant data is used effectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area</th>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Culture</td>
<td>Culture of the institution and external community</td>
<td>Find ways to articulate your support for the community college mission, vision, and values to the internal and external college community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Organizational structure</td>
<td>Understand the responsibilities of each of the key positions within the organization and ensure that they are deployed in the most effective and efficient ways to advance the institution’s goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Success</td>
<td>Data Usage</td>
<td>Effectively utilize pertinent data in decision-making. Present qualitative and quantitative data to support your position(s) whenever possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Leadership</td>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>Always be open, honest, and forthright. Do not harbor a hidden agenda. Be clear about your motivation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Institutional Team Building</td>
<td>Support activities that build a high-functioning team united behind the institution’s goals. Learn about the strengths and weaknesses of members of your team, and deploy them in ways that can maximize their effectiveness.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collective Bargaining</td>
<td>Understand the process and schedules to review collective bargaining agreements in your region. Get to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Infrastructure</td>
<td>Technology Master Planning</td>
<td>Actively engage in the college’s technology master plan to ensure that planning is aligned to current and future needs in the classroom and operations of the institution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Traits</td>
<td>Embrace Change</td>
<td>Embrace a change management philosophy. Establish an institutional culture that empowers faculty and staff to be risk-takers in developing and implementing evidence-based strategies to enhance student outcomes.</td>
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**What’s It All About? Connecting Institutional and Technology Goals**

Information technology is a broad category under which visions of infrastructure, network capabilities, computer hardware, administrative software and educational technology may be imagined as the key to unlock the secrets to meeting an organization’s goals. While it is accurate to say that information technology is a critical component for a productive and communicative educational environment with the potential to improve teaching and learning, without an understanding of how IT goals align with organizational goals, IT initiatives are sure to disappoint. The return on investment from IT tools is negligible when organizational and IT strategies do not sync. Strategy involves both formulation and implementation: decisions and choices about what to do based on why it is being done (Henderson & Venkatraman, 1993, p. 472).

Administrative and educational technology needs to be well-thought out since community colleges are complex institutions and “always require creativity in model development and managerial approaches which allow them to act in a complex context entailing academic freedom, diffuse aims, and great sensitivity to environmental factors” (dePaula, Araujo, Tanaka, & Cappelli, 2015, p. 352). The philosophy of academic freedom is beyond the scope of this inquiry; however, it was invoked both by leaders of the union and educational administrators in conjunction with the question of whether a Learning Management System (LMS) should have
contractual language around its selection and use. No collective bargaining agreements (CBA) reviewed had language of that nature despite the fact that the LMS is where teaching is conducted; however, most contracts had clauses around teaching online courses – teaching in this modality could not be required of faculty. Some, but not all, contracts also had language around payment for course conversion to the online environment including language indicating payment when there was an LMS change.

Clear identification of educational and administrative processes that need to be changed; communication about those processes; and changes to contracts or jobs may lead toward a smoother transition in using new systems. Because “the major areas of institutional operations, both academic and professional, are affected by these changes, with most areas being impacted by multiple simultaneous initiatives” the process of technology selection and implementation could be improved with the addition of an explicit framework or more sophisticated way to measure the alignment between institutional and information technology goals. This would provide a solid, quantifiable measure that could be used as a cross-check (Dent, 2015, p. 532). Institutional mission and goals should drive information technology goals, not the other way around as was the case in some institutions.

While it is true that, “in higher education the CIO must not only be technologically savvy, but must also understand governance, and the real purpose of higher education” it is also true that an office of information technology is not an academic department – it is a support department. Thus, understanding the decision-making role of the CIO versus end-users and understanding how leadership looks to process-change or technology change is informative (Dlamini, 2015) to administrative leadership. Stakeholders such as the union deserve recognition in technology decision-making processes because they have standing as users and because it is
they who will be using the system. This does not mean though that every stakeholder should have veto power over an initiative if it meets the requirements of the mission, goals, budget, and other administrative considerations.

**Making Sense of it all with Sensemaking**

Determining how members of an organization come to have a shared understanding of why they do what they do and how they do it and its importance in the success of that organization is one way to identify and memorialize institutional knowledge and define its culture. “‘I know who I am because I saw what I did” (Weick, 1979, as cited by Petriglieri, 2015, p. 536) sums up the enactment of sensemaking stakeholders employ when they are a part of a process with structural, process, or technological change as its goal. Interest intensity - a stakeholder group's degree of discontent or feeling of urgency - is the primary condition driving it to take action to influence the focal firm” (Rowley & Moldoveanu, 2003, p. 204) so that there may be a perception of a high level of resistance to change.

There is some evidence to support the idea that resistance is brought about not by the stakeholder group, but by leadership’s inconsistency in defining processes, “saying one thing and doing another”, or failing to communicate how the proposed change will have impact institutionally (Burke, 2018, pp. 378, 379). Assuming resistance is a self-fulfilling prophecy; it is not a given - it could be ambivalence - and leaders make a mistaken judgement by trying to avoid it. Rather, they should use it to manage the change process since resistance is a form of engagement, and decision-making is a process, not a battle of us-versus-them. “By assuming that resistance is necessarily bad, change agents have missed its potential contributions of increasing the likelihood of successful implementation, helping build awareness and momentum for change, and eliminating unnecessary, impractical, or counterproductive elements in the
design or conduct of the change process” (Ford, Ford, & D’Amelio, 2008, p. 363). Weick advocated handling the skeptics, the wafflers, and the undecideds by instituting “small, less controversial changes” so that it could be seen that change was not only possible, but relatively painless (Weick, 1984, as cited in Kelman & Hong, 2015, p. 146).

We get what we expect to get and need to manage our own sensemaking process both as a member of a stakeholder group and as a member of leadership.

Enactment of Sensemaking: We See What We Expect to See

Communicating What’s in it for You

The way Weber conceived of communication was as the "transmission of information along formal bureaucratic channels" such that the systems employed across an organization are impersonal (Mumby, 2013, p. 79) but knowing that such forms of communication are disempowering, competent leaders need to turn the proverbial page.

The scaffold upon which power is built and communicated begins with the perceptions of individuals and results in the cultural behavior of the organization: Follett’s vision of collective communication is relevant here. We are looking at social constructions and how we fit and communicate within them, and how we need to recognize that, "difference is socially constructed
and also shaped by power” and confront this both personally and organizationally (Mumby, 2013, p. 253). In the simplest terms, individuals come to define themselves in no small part through their work life: successful organizations are composed of those individuals who have “strong attachments to an organization, attaining and sustaining a stable work identity” so that when they play a part in a change process, they are committed enough to the organization to see it through and to want a successful organizational outcome (Petriglieri, Ashford, & Wrzesniewski, 2019, p. 125).

The old adage that it is not only what you do but how you do it that counts is borne out in the literature around communicating decisions, specifically under the constructs of “communication congruence and evaluational congruence”, whereby the personal communication preferences of managers should be superseded by the preferred communication methods of those who are to be affected by the decisions. This framework suggests that different control styles are likely to promote project efficiency, quality, and adaptiveness (Wiener, Mahring, Remus, & Saunders, 2016).

Another study around communicating decisions looks at how perceptions of new technology implementation and planning processes, and organizational climate have on whether technology deployment was perceived to be effective. The results of the study indicate that these factors do indeed influence new technology deployment effectiveness. The author indicated that this study was looking not at the macro level, but at the micro level; capturing individuals’ perceptions will be critical to predicting a successful outcome to any process, including technology and other changes (Bellamy, 2007). We see again that the reality that is seen by the stakeholders within the organizational cultural parameters is a driver of the success, or failure, of institutional initiatives.
Collective Memory and Change

It is better to do nothing than to do something too quickly or too often; inertia or stasis is the better alternative (Stieglitz, Knudsen, & Becker, 2016). Inertia is a continuation of the norm, and capturing what the norm is can be a valuable action for an institution. Capturing the norm though can only be a function of a particular time in a particular context with particular stakeholders. In trying to ascertain the meaning of something, whether it is a work of art or the meaning of our organizational memories, “we believe that we live in a fixed reality, a world in which culture is fluid and nature is rigid or the present is fluid and history rigid, but that is an illusion” (Knausgaard, 2020) in both cases because of the mutability of our sensemaking process.

An organization is not a machine; it is a cultural system where narratives support the flow of information, and community colleges have the means to identify technology champions from among members of unions or through general interest, and should do so to set the tone as positive and allow for evangelization. Schein indicates that culture can only be learned, it cannot be imposed, and it operates on many levels (2010). It is a historical construct whereby things are done for a reason, and understanding those reasons inculcates newcomers to that culture and reminds stakeholders that the past can inform the present. Taking some cues from learning theory, overcoming prior knowledge is a cognitive process that takes more than one exposure to stick. Knowledge that is inaccurate, or “distorted” or deeply held, like institutional memory, needs “time, patience, and creativity” and multiple exposures to be changed. Changing stakeholder thinking about the possibilities for change processes to work is one of the challenges that must be met in order to move forward (Ambrose, Bridges, Lovett, DiPietro, & Norman, 2010, p. 27). Learning happens when people take what they know and do something with it - actions - and similarly organizations learn from what they do, how they do it, and by analyzing
the results; however, without changes in thinking at the individual level, organizational thinking cannot change, thus the organization itself cannot change (Kim and Senge, 1994).

Interestingly, the meaning and memory subsystem carries the most weight and is the hardest to change as it is tied to the organization’s culture (Schwandt & Marquardt, 2000, pp. 229-235). We can extrapolate then why community colleges may not be learning: leaders have yet to figure out a way to crack the culture – recognizing its beauty but changing its outlook.

**Collaborative Processes and Change**

Every organization is interested in change, whether that change is in response to an external dictate, a change in mission, or in pursuit of better organizational outcomes. The concept of social complexity holds that the systems in which we operate are also social systems; thus, for an organization to remain stable throughout a change, and in order to make those changes to be accepted, it must be recognized that the people involved will self-align in ways that may not be planned. "Social context" allows for organizational learning - while the effects ultimately are on the individual, the changes occur within the group (Antonacopoulou and Chiva, 2007).

In community colleges, committees are often formed to look at issues and recommend solutions; however, there may be no opportunity to move forward without various people and departments objecting loudly. If instead we let this play out with the operationalization of recommendations enacted as a logical next step, the organizational learning sought would be more fluid and possibly more effective.

Next, the notion of the workplace as a social-ecological system where people think they know what everyone else knows - that there is a shared understanding - is not necessarily true. Each participant brings to the table an individual view that effects how they approach issues,
think about issues, and make decisions about those issues. Complexity thinking means that participants begin from a place which recognizes this; there is a change in the "frame-of-reference" such that we learn together as an organization to come to a "shared understanding"; thus the typical hierarchical constraints are broken (Rogers, et al., 2013). A recommendation that comes to mind here involves the typical ways we approach technology selection, where a product is selected based on the needs of a sub-set of people who are not aware of the needs of others in the organization. This cycle must be broken as it can perpetuate processes that are no longer relevant. The challenge is in identifying a way to arrive at this common frame-of-reference and in deciding whether there should be contract language around it.

Information technology has the potential to support the strategic initiatives of higher education institutions like community colleges, giving us “a road that provides everyone the opportunity of enhancing their intelligence by using information technologies deployed in strategic ways” (Privateer, 1999, p. 77). Roads can lead to nowhere, so where the institution wants to go must be determined before we begin the trip. This study revealed that there are institutions which did make strides towards technology adoption which served the institution well. Actions identified by the participants include the alignment of IT goals with institutional goals; recognition of the culture and the identification of technology champions to convert critics; process, policy, and job description changes; targeted, context-specific training; a pilot
program – all these can bring the community college’s objectives into reality in smoother, more transparent processes.

The notion of "collective competence" and how groups can be more successful if this is achieved may lead to organizational success should be understood. Collective competence refers to the ways individuals are dependent upon one another, a “network and systemic competence” (Bertolini, Macke, & Wolf, 2016, p. 107) where one person’s contribution may be communicated as a cooperative effort where the concepts of leadership, and learning, and trust are at the center. It highlights the importance of understanding other stakeholder’s interests and for leaders to take those into account. The understanding of the concepts of sensemaking and the interdependence of stakeholder goals can lead to the conclusion that being a part of a decision-making group demands the acceptance of the idea that the success of one member will lead to the success of all members. Finally, it is true that if we know what we don’t know, we can look to others to fill in those knowledge gaps. The success of collective competence relies on individual competence and the confidence in others to broaden what we know ((Bertolini, Macke, & Wolf, 2016).

When members of an organization have been operating under the emotional dimension of change, people do not feel valued as change is planned and implemented; they feel like they are boxes on a chart, not actual human beings with the individual value that they bring (Pideret, 2000). Unions help to place that stakeholder group in a position beyond the organization chart, and help to determine how people’s value is represented contractually including around working conditions and philosophical constructs such as academic freedom (Garfield, 2008, p. 28). An area that deserves more attention and study is what this really means, as it is an “area that relates closely to both locus of control and decision making, and it is not ground that is given lightly for

**I’ve Got the Power?**

Those who perceive they have power may be tempted to exploit it in decision-making processes, particularly when circumstances are sensed to be pivoting upon their approval or buy-in. However, even when there are benefits to be accrued by a stakeholder group, people may “forego a rational set of net benefits associated with collective action, because they are motivated to express and be recognized for a particular identity garnered to those participating as members of the (stakeholder) group” (Rowley & Moldoveanu, 2003, p. 215) even if that identity is antithetical to their goal. By virtue of the fact that the stakeholder, perhaps the union, is now a part of another stakeholder group – the decision-making body - a new identity emerges which makes it possible to come to consensus. With every new collaborative effort comes the initialization of change, creating “heightened arousal for supporters” such that moving directly to the task at hand instead of trying to convince skeptics first is more supportive of the process.

Observations from this study’s participants confirm research showing that stakeholders often do not want to get involved in decision-making, “but still want to retain the right to veto any proposals that directly affect them” (Fowler & Gilfillan, 2003, p. 473): no actual participation but possession of the ultimate standing. Since the committee structure is a known standard for decision-making in the academic environment, why not join the committee, never show up, and just vote no if it’s a change that’s too much work or unappealing in some way. The label of “dangerous stakeholder” fits this type of player: someone who has power by virtue of interest-group membership, but no legitimacy by virtue of non-participation in the process.
These are the “loudest voices” described here and can be coercive and lead to bad decisions. (Boonstra & Govers, 2009, p. 180).

When stakeholders suspect that the administration will respond to pressure against a possible change, they are more likely to mobilize against it and they are more likely to do this if they have seen it happen before, as evidenced in the literature and in this study. Engagement which yields balanced decisions based on real input and common goals is more likely to be achieved when stakeholders perceive that past is not prologue, that sensemaking enactment is not absolute, and that influence is limited within a framework set specifically for a particular decision. Alliances may be formed for purposes of decision-making, and this should be the goal overall: institutional goals should drive every decision, and every decision-maker should have the information needed to engage productively. Although these alliances may be temporary and they may be ambiguous, they can point toward the needed leadership style to get things done (Butterfield, Reed, & Lemak, 2004).

Stakeholder engagement is likely to be effective when leadership understands the theory’s tenets since “stakeholder theory seems to provide managers with more resources to find success” (Freeman, Wicks, & Parmar, 2004, p. 365) such as decision frameworks, engagement strategies, and communications which may be modified and contextualized. Bureaucracies lend order and give guidance to the members of an organization; it is the intended "fair application of rules" in a bureaucracy that Weber envisioned and underpin an organization's social structure that keeps this construct relevant (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2013, pp. 91-92).
Conclusion

In some ways, yes, the Union does make us strong. It provides a construct through which administrators can speak to the faculty at large. It provides a buffer between the faculty at large and the administration. And since the union at issue may be characterized as an occupational union, it provides the structures needed to insure academic excellence, teaching requirements, and more. Both despite and because of this, it is imperative that institutions build inclusive processes which share knowledge and recognize the contributions of stakeholders in order for consequential change and future-oriented operations to occur. Only then will a synergy be achieved through which the institution may change, grow, and thrive.
We see what we expect to see because it is framed within that which we have seen before. Even when seemingly inclusive processes are established to select new or different approaches many stakeholders react fearfully. Some of that fear occurs because of lack of trust in the leadership: when leadership announces a process and does not follow it, not only is this not transparent, it is perceived as a smokescreen (Biron, Gatrell, & Cooper, 2010). The collective bargaining culture benefits community colleges because much of the working conditions and terms of employment are codified. There is lower employee turnover when there is a unionized workforce, a major cost-saving feature that budget-conscious leaders recognize, and one reason among others that management is well-served by working with, not against, the union. And “because the employees support the union, if management works harmoniously with that union, it is more likely that the employees will support management as well” (Abraham, 2017, p. 236) particularly when the membership has shown through its past actions that it is willing to oppose management as a collective when goals seem at odds. Psychological studies have shown that the “presence of a rival group increases polarization” so management needs to show it is not the enemy, it is a partner, even when that partnership may result in decisions which do not meet the preference of all stakeholder groups (Christensen, Rothgerber, Wood, & Matz, 2004, p. 1296).

The role of administrative leadership, particularly that of the community college president, deserves further study. Some of the presidents in this study came from faculty roles, so “while experience in the collegium should give a president insight into the intricacies of professional relations, too much experience may lead to an over-identification with the collegial role which may interfere with his assumption of presidential responsibilities” (Walberg, 1970, p. 417) when time or goal sensitive decisions need to be made and stakeholder groups are not on board.
Community colleges may be uniquely situated to meet the challenge of constant change and must do so for continued relevance: the community college model is increasingly significant in a world of economic, social, and technological change. It is possible to take this model and replicate its success in matters of organizational change. An organization is as strong as its roots, since even though storms of change may shake the branches, the strongly rooted survive and grow. It is through recognition of the contributions of all of the members of an organization and the confidence of those members to work together in a trusting environment where change will be a positive force. It is when communication about structure and decision-making will support the organization’s culture that the reality that we see is the reality that we seek.

The workplace is not a democracy, nor should it be. It needn’t be a dictatorship either if stakeholders agree on the mission and purpose of the enterprise and acknowledge the inherent strengths that the other sides bring. Perhaps most importantly, there needs to be a balance of stakeholder interests and administrations need to be willing to make the final call. Knowing what works in theory is important: implementation and action can stand atop this knowledge for significant organizational change.
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