

4-2018

Leadership Styles in an Online Higher Education Setting: A Phenomenological Study of Online Professional Learning Communities

Cathy Busay

Concordia University - Portland

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.cu-portland.edu/edudissertations>

 Part of the [Education Commons](#)

CU Commons Citation

Busay, Cathy, "Leadership Styles in an Online Higher Education Setting: A Phenomenological Study of Online Professional Learning Communities" (2018). *Ed.D. Dissertations*. 145.

<https://commons.cu-portland.edu/edudissertations/145>

This Open Access Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Theses & Dissertations at CU Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ed.D. Dissertations by an authorized administrator of CU Commons. For more information, please contact libraryadmin@cu-portland.edu.

Concordia University (Portland)

College of Education

Doctorate of Education Program

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE
CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE READ AND APPROVE THE DISSERTATION OF

Cathy Louise Busay

CANDIDATE FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Chad Becker, Ph.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee

Dana Barbarick, Ph.D., Content Specialist

Donna Patterson Hawkins, Ph.D., Content Reader

ACCEPTED BY

Joe Mannion, Ed.D.

Provost, Concordia University, Portland

Sheryl Reinisch, Ed.D.

Dean, College of Education, Concordia University, Portland

Marty A. Bullis, Ph.D.

Director of Doctoral Studies, Concordia University, Portland

Leadership Styles in an Online Higher Education Setting: A Phenomenological Study of Online
Professional Learning Communities

Cathy Busay

Concordia University – Portland

College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education
in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in
Higher Education

Chad Becker, Ph.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee

Dana Barbarick, Ph.D., Content Specialist

Donna Patterson Hawkins, Ph.D., Content Reader

Concordia University–Portland

2018

Abstract

The world of online higher education is still in its infancy. This provides the opportunity for universities to create environments where online adjunct faculty acknowledges a sense of belonging and collaboration working with leaders who inspire, support, and mentor. Leaders, who truly listen, are open and honest. Support will inspire online adjunct faculty to deliver a high caliber of instruction to students. In this study, leadership styles and working in collaboration within a virtual environment were investigated using a qualitative, phenomenological study design. Adult learners in leadership capacities in online higher education described their lived experiences in working with online adjunct faculty in professional learning communities (PLCs). Results revealed that treating online adjunct faculty as professionals, having a support system, building relationships and community, a leader's values/qualities, a leader's professional skills/styles, collaborative climate, and challenges to collaboration are the themes present in this study. Conclusions from this study support the idea of collaboration as being instrumental to allow online adjunct faculty to be supported in an online environment led by collaborative leaders.

Keywords: higher education, online, collaboration, support system, building relationships

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all educators and leaders in online higher education who work tirelessly with students and faculty to ensure a high caliber of education for all. Without the passion that exists in the hearts of all who teach, the education of our students would suffer. Working within a virtual environment can create a place where faculty may not feel connected to the university and its mission and goals. Creating a place where leaders work with online as adjunct faculty in collaboration can alleviate this feeling of lack of connectedness.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to acknowledge the support of my chair, Dr. Becker. I thank you for your support, words of encouragement, and patience as my dissertation evolved. I also want to thank my committee members, Dr. Barbarick and Dr. Hawkins, for their support and words of wisdom throughout the process. I appreciate all the kindness, encouragement, and support from my committee.

Finally, I want to thank my husband and family for their constant support throughout the process. Without their words of encouragement, I would not have been able to accomplish this task and finish this degree.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Conceptual Framework for the Problem.....	2
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Purpose of the Study.....	4
Research Questions.....	5
Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Proposed Study.....	5
Definition of Terms.....	6
Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations.....	7
Chapter 1 Summary.....	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	10
Introduction to the Literature Review.....	10
Conceptual Framework.....	13
Review of the Research Literature and Methodological Literature.....	17
Faculty Support.....	18
Professional Learning Communities.....	18
Building Community.....	19
Professional Development.....	22
Leadership Theories.....	25

Transformational Leadership	26
Servant Leadership.....	27
Change Leaders.....	27
Online Leadership Styles	28
Collaborative Leadership Styles	29
Transformational Leadership Style.....	29
Distributive Leadership.....	33
Review of Methodological Issues.....	35
Synthesis of Research Findings	38
Critique of Previous Research	39
Chapter 2 Summary	40
Chapter 3: Methodology	43
Introduction.....	43
Research Questions.....	45
Purpose and Design of the Study	45
Research Population and Sampling Method	47
Instrumentation	48
Data Collection	48
Identification of Attributes.....	49
Data Analysis Procedures	50
Limitations and Delimitations of Research Design	51
Validation.....	52
Credibility and Dependability.....	52

Expected Findings.....	52
Ethical Issues	53
Conflict of Interest Assessment	53
Researcher's Position	52
Ethical Issues	53
Chapter 3 Summary.....	55
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results.....	57
Introduction.....	57
Description of the Sample.....	60
Research Methodology and Analysis.....	60
Conceptual Framework and Methodology.....	61
Interview Process	62
Phenomenological Research Design.....	64
Summary of the Findings.....	64
Presentation of the Data and Results	69
Online Faculty as Professionals	70
Support System	71
Building Relationships/Community.....	73
Leader's Values/Qualities	75
Leader's Skills/Styles	77
Collaborative Climate	79
Challenges to Collaboration.....	81
Chapter 4 Summary	82

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion	84
Introduction.....	84
Summary of the Results	85
Discussion of the Results	89
Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature.....	93
Adult Learning Theory	93
Educational Change Theory.....	94
Social Learning Theory.....	95
Professional Learning Communities.....	95
Leadership Theories.....	96
Mentoring.....	97
Limitations	97
Implication of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory	98
Recommendations for Further Research.....	99
Conclusion	100
References.....	103
Appendix A: Interview Questions	111
Appendix B: Research Questions and Descriptors	113
Appendix C: Themes and Attributes.....	114

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The use of technology is on the rise globally in the 21st century (Tipple, 2009). This increase has resulted in a growing demand for universities to offer online courses to students rather than in a typical brick and mortar, on ground setting (Jameson, 2013; Tipple, 2009; Williams, Layne, & Ice, 2014). To meet demand, higher education administrators must grapple with the increase in the number of online adjunct faculty—faculty that differ from instructors teaching in a physical classroom on ground. By the fall of 2013, 49% of faculty teaching in higher education was part-time (National Center for Education, 2015).

Due to increased dependence upon online part-time faculty, higher education leaders must seek new leadership strategies to create environments where online adjunct faculty feels a sense of belonging universities and its mission. There is a need for online education leaders that are visionary, motivational, and supportive of their online adjunct faculty in order to create collaborative teams (Tipple, 2009). Although online distance learning is rapidly growing, little research has focused on what types of leadership styles are required to lead and build communities based on relationships of trust and respect. Online learning has become a robust growth area for many higher education institutions, yet research on the type of leadership required in online learning communities is scarce (Jameson, 2013; Nworie, 2012; Tipple, 2009).

To address and maximize the educational quality and effectiveness of the adjunct faculty teaching online rather than on ground, online higher education faculty leaders must embrace a leadership approach that will tap into the skills of this workforce (Tipple, 2009). Online higher education faculty leaders must provide faculty with a sense of professional belonging along with offering them a collaborative level of support and mentoring (Bateh, 2013). Research in an

online higher education setting based within the Pacific Northwest may expose the perceptions of the online higher education faculty leaders (title is known as core faculty at this university) of professional learning communities (PLCs) in what they identify as an important leadership style that will create a collaborative online community.

This chapter includes the conceptual framework for the problem, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, the definitions of terms, the rationale, relevance and significance of the study, assumptions, and delimitations and limitations. A summary concludes the chapter.

Conceptual Framework for the Problem

This study examined which perceived leadership styles implemented by core faculty ensures online faculty interaction within professional learning communities. With the increase of online adjunct faculty in higher education, cultivating a sense of belonging to an institution is becoming more critical. Core faculty need the skills necessary to lead, mentor, and support online adjunct faculty to provide professional development that aligns with and reflects the university's mission and its public persona. The creation and implementation of PLCs with collaborative leaders will provide the support that online adjunct faculty requires for collaboration, communication, and team organization (Parchoma, 2005).

Human beings are social but interact in different ways. How adults learn and interact plays a role in how core faculty lead online adjunct faculty in a distance higher education program. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) asserted that adult learning is “the process of adults gaining knowledge and expertise” (p. 175). However, online adjunct faculty may not enter the distance education environment with the necessary skills to collaborate. Therefore,

core faculty need to understand how adults learn to provide the necessary training, support, and mentoring to implement a collaborative online learning environment.

Fullan (2011) proposed that educational leaders must change how they work in the online higher education environment of the 21st century. Fullan (2011) challenges education leaders to tackle complex changes and become leaders who will bring about change by understanding human self-motivation. Different leadership styles exist, but in the ever-evolving online distance environment, leaders need to support a setting where collaboration, communication, and team building occur for online adjunct faculty (Macquire, 2008; Parchoma, 2006; Vesely, Bloom, & Sherlock, 2007).

The social learning theory associated with Bandura (1991) suggests that all learning is cognitive yet takes place in a social setting. Through observation, modeling, and communication, people learn from each other. When people collaborate, knowledge and learning take place.

Lave and Wenger (1991) proposed that in situated learning and communities of practice, people gain knowledge and learning to process information more cognitively. These theories strongly suggest that the implementation of PLCs in online higher education environments encourage team building and collaboration among leaders and faculty.

Statement of the Problem

According to the National Center for Education (2015), there has been a significant rise in higher education institutions employing part-time faculty over full-time faculty. This dramatic difference in employment status in higher education (49% part-time to 51%) has created two challenges: a rise and growth in online education, which has led to an increase in online adjunct faculty. Universities are working with online adjunct faculty members to fulfill the goals, vision,

and mission of the university to address these challenges and meet the increasing needs of students globally. This change has led university administrators to examine different leadership approaches for their leaders in working with online adjunct faculty (Eib & Miller, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Mackey & Evans, 2011; Parchoma, 2005; Tipple, 2009).

There is a lack of research on what leaders perceive to be the leadership style/approach that matters to online adjunct faculty (Jameson, 2013). Research also proposes that barriers exist in administrative support and leadership; however, research does not definitively state what leadership style is important in online learning communities to create a personal sense of belonging and professionalism for online adjunct faculty (Macquire, 2008; Tipple, 2009). The specific problem that prompted this study is the lack of collaboration in online higher education PLCs between core faculty and online adjunct faculty.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose and intent of this study was to explore core faculty perceptions on different leadership styles in the areas of collaboration and team building in PLCs and which leadership styles core faculty believe online adjunct faculty prefers to work with collaboratively. This study examined what core faculty believes can be done to improve collaboration in PLCs and their beliefs on how to move forward productively. The goal of this is to study assist leaders of online learning communities in gaining a better understanding of leadership styles that promote online adjunct faculty collaboration in online programs.

The qualitative research design utilizes a phenomenological interview approach. It was used in this study to examine the perception of what leader/leadership style matters to core faculty in working collaboratively with online adjunct faculty.

This study interviewed 16 core faculty members working in an online higher education setting where each leader mentors and supports online adjunct faculty. The interview questions (see Appendix A) were used to provide information on the perceptions of core faculty on what type of leadership style creates a more collaborative professional learning community to provide answers to the research questions.

Research Questions

The study was conducted to examine the answer to the following question and sub-questions:

How do core faculty experience collaboration when working with online adjunct faculty in a professional learning community (PLC)?

- How do core faculty describe their role in working collaboratively with online adjunct faculty in PLCs?
- How do core faculty describe the online adjunct faculty's role in working collaboratively with PLCs?

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Proposed Study

There is a lack of collaboration in online higher education PLCs between core faculty and online adjunct faculty. PLCs are beneficial in creating collaboration, sharing ideas, and improving trust, teaching, and learning within online higher education institutions. If online higher education is to improve, then there needs to be an increase in collaboration in online PLCs to improve online adjunct faculty's experiences in online teaching.

It is important to recognize the different leadership styles that core faculty believe will increase actual collaboration in working with online adjunct faculty in learning communities. If online higher education institutions do not want to improve collaboration between higher

education leaders and online adjunct faculty, then faculty's experiences may not be rewarding, leading them to feel disconnected from a university's community (Frankel, 2015; Ganza, 2012; Laughlin & Moore, 2012).

The potential benefits and significance of this study provides research on which leadership style(s) are advantageous in providing online adjunct faculty a sense of community and belonging in a virtual higher education environment. In understanding the leadership styles necessary for online leaders of professional learning communities, universities must hire leaders who will be successful in leading online adjunct faculty in environments where they will not feel isolated and disconnected. Therefore, it is proposed that higher education institutions must hire leaders with collaborative leadership styles to effectively lead online adjunct faculty to feel an integral part of the online community and environment. The results of this study are beneficial to administrators of higher education institutions when hiring leaders with skills to lead online adjunct faculty into the twenty-first century online learning environment.

Definition of Terms

The following list defines key terms that were used in this study:

Collaborative leadership. Collaborative leadership portrays a leader that focuses on collaboration, communication, and team organization.

Distributive leadership. Distributive leadership represents a leader that manages down, across, and through the organization leading to more teamwork and engages in relationships with his or her team. Leadership is distributed among members of a group to achieve organizational goals in a collaborative manner (Holt, Palmer, Gosper, Sankey, & Allan, 2014).

PLCs. PLCs are communities where participants can build a sense of purpose and communication and have a practical use in creating collaboration, sharing ideas, and improving trust, teaching, and learning (Macquire, 2008; Parchoma, 2006; Vesely et al. 20007).

Professional development. Professional development is provided by leaders of a group and offers quality training, mentoring, and support to individuals leaving them feeling more supported and valued in their positions (Frankel, 2015; Ganza, 2012; Laughlin & Moore, 2012).

Servant leadership. Servant leadership differs from other theories, as the premise behind servant leadership is not to control or oversee others, but rather to occupy an equal position within the organization. The servant leader does not command, but rather nurtures and serves (Greenleaf, 2014).

Transformational leadership. Transformational leadership's focus is on a commitment toward stated objectives and the impact that it must help others see a shared vision. This leadership style does not depend primarily on the individual and heroic actions, but more on a collaborative methodology where all work together (Burns, 1978; Klenke, 2007; Mezirow, 1991).

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

It was expected that all participants in this study answered the interview questions honestly and factually. It was also assumed that the population within this online higher education setting located in a university in the Pacific Northwest is similar to other online higher education settings in the area of perceptions regarding which leadership style will create a collaborative community.

A limitation in this study could have been the lack of participants willing to participate in it. As the original pool consisted of only 18 participants, if only five had completed the

interview process, the data may not represent true findings. Another limitation could have been that one of the participants left the university before the entire interview process was completed.

The study sample focused on 16 core faculty members who support and mentor online adjunct faculty in an online higher education setting but based out of a single private institution. This study did not take into consideration other higher education institutions offering online higher education courses, so the results may not be transferrable.

A delimitation that exists is that only using core faculty from one university may benefit this study. Additionally, the core faculty members interviewed for this study are colleagues. They may have been more inclined to participate in the study, as the results will help them in working more collaboratively with their online adjunct faculty.

Although there were only 18 core faculty members to invite to participate in this study, the results may assist the university in working with core faculty in helping them to work more collaboratively with their online adjunct faculty so that there is a sense of belonging to the university and its mission.

Chapter 1 Summary

The increase of online higher education is not going to disappear, but rather continue to rise (Jameson, 2013; Tipple, 2009; Williams et al., 2014). This surge creates a challenge for higher education administrators in providing the necessary training, mentoring, and support for the number of online adjunct faculty required to teach the continual growth in online courses. This increase in online adjunct faculty establishes a concern for administrators to hire leaders that promote motivational guidance and support for team building and collaboration in online higher education professional communities to guide student instruction.

Online higher education leaders must possess the capacity to motivate and inspire others while stimulating innovation and creativity (Tipple, 2009). Online higher education leaders require the skills to lead, mentor, and support. Online higher education leaders require the leadership skills to ensure online faculty succeeds in teaching in an online environment. “Educational leaders who can lead their workforce in embracing educational technologies to provide a superior learning environment for students will lead the way in education” (Tipple, 2009, p. 15). In chapter 2, the literature reviewed for this study is discussed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction to the Literature Review

For effective leaders to become future-focused in higher education, they must understand what changes are occurring and begin to lead their faculty and staff, focusing on the twenty-first century. In his book, *Future-Focused Leadership: Preparing Schools, Students, and Communities for Tomorrow's Realities*, Marx (2006) discussed the need for twenty-first century leaders to prepare for the future and asserted they are “duty bound to constantly encourage the creation of a future for the education system” (p. 13). Fullan and Scott (2009) suggested that the world of an academic leader is extremely challenging, as there are a variety of external change forces that leaders must address.

Higher education has become a part of the global knowledge economy (Duderstadt, 2009; Jameson, 2013; Tipple, 2009). According to Duderstadt (2009), in America “there is increasing government and stakeholder pressure for capable governance, leadership, and accountability of higher education, particularly in view of the expansion of participation and the increasing importance of education to prospering in the global knowledge economy” (pp. 14–15). Administrators and leaders must address the challenges presented by this trend in education to move their personnel forward and encourage twenty-first century learning. In 1999, Rhodes stated, “But, just as it has in earlier times, the university will have to transform itself once again to serve a radically changing world if it is to sustain these important values and roles” (as cited in Duderstadt, 2009, p. 35).

Universities play a powerful role in educating students for employment in society. Research provides strong indicators that successful institutions embrace future trends to ensure that their higher education institutions are serving the needs of their students, faculty, and

personnel by hiring effective leaders who will build online communities of practice where team building, communication, and collaboration occur (Eib & Miller, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Mackey & Evans, 2011; Parchoma, 2005; Tipple, 2009). Globalization and the digital age are not going to go away, but rather increase. Many traditional and prestigious higher education institutions are now offering online programs in addition to the traditional on campus learning environment. Oakley (2010) proposed that “online institutions define the future of education” (para. 11), since society will continue to rely on technology.

The reliance on technology and the Internet has led educators and administrators to face two new challenges: a growth in online education, which then increases the need for additional online adjunct faculty. This increase in online adjunct faculty has caused higher education administrators to redefine their management strategies to engage and motivate staff who have a physical separation from the University (Tipple, 2009). To address these challenges, leaders must also understand the characteristics of an online teaching community to motivate, support, and mentor adjunct faculty for personal satisfaction (Eib & Miller, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Mackey & Evans, 2011; Parchoma, 2005; Tipple, 2009).

Although the overall attitudes of the online adjunct faculty are positive, barriers do exist (Macquire, 2005). Macquire (2005) said, “Even with the growth of distance education offerings and enrollments, many faculty members are still hesitant to teach online” (p. 1). Identified intrinsic motivators for online adjunct faculty include the joy of teaching in a higher education environment, personal satisfaction, and the flexibility of the work schedule. However, feelings of isolation, lower pay, and the lack of recognition often contribute to the barriers in online teaching. In several surveys, online adjunct faculty has strongly indicated that the main barriers are the lack of technical and administrative support (Macquire, 2005; Tipple, 2009).

Professional development and building a strong foundation for the implementation of PLCs can break down potential barriers for online adjunct faculty teaching in virtual environments (Macquire, 2008; Parchoma, 2006; Vesely et al., 2007). The formation of a learning community allows knowledge to be shared with participants, therefore meaning is derived from this knowledge (Palloff & Pratt, 2007). However, just the implementation of the PLC program alone, without collaborative leaders in place, will not facilitate a community where online faculty feel valued and achieve personal satisfaction in their teaching and learning (Jameson, 2013; Tipple, 2009).

The purpose of this study was to explore online higher education faculty leaders' (core faculty) perceptions on different leadership styles in the areas of collaboration and team building in PLCs and which leadership styles core faculty believe online adjunct faculty prefer to work with collaboratively. A clear identification of which leadership skills best fosters professional development that promotes student learning and a sense of belonging in a virtual environment is not evident to online higher education faculty leaders mentoring and advising online faculty (Jameson, 2013; Tipple, 2009).

The potential benefits of this study might provide research on which leadership style(s) are advantageous in providing online adjunct faculty a sense of community and belonging in a virtual higher education environment. In understanding the leadership skills necessary for online leaders of professional learning communities, universities must hire leaders who will be successful in leading online adjunct faculty in environments where faculty may feel isolated and disconnected. Therefore, it is proposed that higher education institutions hire leaders with collaborative leadership styles to effectively lead online adjunct faculty to feel as though they are an integral part of the online community and environment.

This chapter includes the conceptual framework for this study and a review of the research literature and methodological literature. Topics highlighted in the review of the research were faculty support, professional learning communities, building community, professional development, leadership theories, and leadership styles. A review of the methodological issues is included, as well as a synthesis of research findings and a critique of previous literature. A summary concludes the chapter.

Conceptual Framework

This study examined which perceived leadership styles implemented by online higher education leaders ensures online faculty interaction, collaboration, and a sense of belonging within PLCs in higher education. With the increase of online adjunct faculty in higher education, cultivating a sense of belonging to an institution is becoming more critical. Administrators and leaders of online higher educational institutions must acknowledge that including online adjunct faculty within the campus community is vital for faculty satisfaction and a sense of belonging (Frankel, 2015; Jewell, 2007).

Parchoma (2005) suggested that the creation and implementation of PLCs with collaborative leaders may provide the support that online adjunct faculty require for effective collaboration, communication, and team organization. Humans are social beings (Wenger, 1998). Although humankind is social and collaborative, to flourish, these skills need to continually be developed (Bandura, 1971). If this is true, then building communities, where leaders collaborate and work together with online adjunct faculty, seems to be second nature. However, this is not always the case. Many online leaders fail to engage in building community (Wenger, 1998).

Wenger (1998) also pointed out that collaborative leaders need to “value the work of community building and make sure that participants have access to the resources necessary to learn what they need to learn in order to take actions and make decisions that fully engage their own knowledgeability” (Introduction). The temptation to reduce interaction online is greater than in a traditional face-to-face higher education campus setting. Understanding which leadership style creates a collaborative environment and provides online adjunct faculty members with moral and educational support is critical as the need for online personnel continues to grow. The intent of this study is to identify the leadership style that influences collaboration amongst online adjunct faculty in a professional learning community.

Worldviews, also called paradigms, epistemologies, and ontologies, guides the research study (Creswell, 2014). Guba suggested that a worldview is “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (as cited in Creswell, 2014, p. 17). The problem for this study is derived from real world practice in online higher education institutions.

Online higher education faculty leaders need the skills necessary to lead, mentor, and support online adjunct faculty and the leadership skills to provide professional development that aligns with and reflects the university’s mission and its public persona. There is also a gap in the literature regarding which leadership styles promote motivational guidance to online adjunct faculty for team building and collaboration in online higher education professional communities to guide student instruction.

One approach to supporting adjunct faculty online is through PLCs with core faculty and online adjunct faculty who will follow the mission of the university, but also feel like they are an integral part of the university. These leaders are likely to be most successful if they have collaborative leadership skills to lead online adjunct faculty in PLCs. Adult learner, educational

change, and social learning theories assisted this researcher in examining prior studies on collaborative leadership styles in online professional learning communities.

Adult learning theory, coined by Knowles in the 1970s, furthered his theory of andragogy based on the “psychological definition of adult learning, which states that people become adults psychologically when they arrive at a self-concept of being responsible for their own lives, of being self-directing: andragogy” (as cited in Caruso, 2010, para. 2). For online higher education faculty leaders to lead online adjunct faculty in a distance higher education program, they need an understanding of how adults learn. Adult learning plays a definite role in higher education professional development.

Knowles et al. (2005) argued that adult learning is “the process of adults gaining knowledge and expertise” (p. 175). Online higher education faculty leaders need to recognize that online adjunct faculty are adult learners who are goal-oriented, problem solvers, and self-directed. Online adjunct faculty may enter the distance education environment with various skills or without the skills to understand how to collaborate in virtual environments. Additionally, as adult learners, online adjunct faculty require acknowledgment from online higher education faculty leaders and the university that they are valued for their individuality and creativity. Creation and implementation of a PLC where online higher education faculty leaders clearly promote the goals and commitment levels for online adjunct faculty will allow for collaboration and communication. Collaborative online higher education faculty leaders for online adjunct faculty will facilitate successful learning communities.

Educational change theory proposed by Fullan (2011) challenges educational leaders to tackle complex changes and become leaders who will bring about change by understanding human self-motivation. Combined with Mezirow’s (1991) transformative learning theory,

Greenleaf's (n.d.) servant leadership theory, and various research on situational and distributive leadership (Holt et al., 2014; Parchoma, 2005; Tipple, 2009), leaders must learn to grapple with which leadership style enables them to bring faculty into a setting where collaboration, communication, and team building occur. Different leadership styles do affect the effectiveness of online adjunct faculty organization skills and collaboration in professional learning communities in online higher education.

An examination of the different types of leadership styles will determine which one is more collaborative in nature. Collaborative leadership styles are instrumental in promoting team organizational skills and collaboration in online higher education professional communities. Without collaborative PLC leadership support, change will not occur.

Social learning theory, proposed by Albert Bandura (1971), suggested that all learning takes place in a social setting and is cognitive in nature. People learn from one another through observation, modeling, or imitation and process the information cognitively to determine what to do. This theory applies to the creation and utilization of a PLC where faculty would interact and collaborate to learn from each other. Combined with social theory of learning (situated learning and communities of practice), proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991), is where humans develop cognitively in social situations and communities of practice to allow for knowledge and learning to take place. Implementation of PLCs will allow for social learning and communities of practice to flourish encouraging team building and collaboration among online higher education faculty leaders and online adjunct faculty in online higher education teaching. However, educational leadership must change to meet the needs of having a PLC where faculty will be collaborating, communicating, and community building.

Review of the Research Literature and Methodological Literature

Leaders are the motivators, role models, and guides who convey their beliefs, morals, values, integrity, and character in their leadership styles. Leaders must inspire people to follow their goals and visions, motivate followers to achieve their full potential, and aspire to treat their followers as individuals.

“Employers say they want people who can think creatively, who can innovate, who can communicate well, work in teams, and are adaptable and self-confident” (Robinson, 2011, p. 69). However, leaders are not always employers, but are in situations where they are strictly supporters and mentors. Some employers are not leaders and care about revenue, product, and the bottom line, not employees. True leaders encourage, support, and mentor people to work collaboratively in teams and to foster open communication, trust, and respect (Frankel, 2015; Ganza, 2012; Laughlin & Moore, 2012; Macquire, 2008; Parchoma, 2006; Vesely et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2014). For purposes of this study, leadership was defined as moving followers to achieve their full individual potential through support, mentoring, and creation of a positive and collaborative environment.

Creating a culture of creativity and innovation is essential to collaborative leadership in online higher education communities. Robinson (2011) said, “Creating a culture of innovation will only work if the initiative is led from the top of the organization. The endorsement and involvement of leaders mean everything if the environment is to change” (p. 219). To create a culture of innovation, leaders must also cultivate imagination and creativity in personnel. Leaders cannot do this alone; it must be a team effort. “Building consensus, building shared purpose and confidence are the building blocks of a collaborative leader” (McChrystal, 2011).

Although there have been many studies researching different leadership styles, there is a gap in the literature about leadership styles that promote team organizational skills and collaboration in online higher education PLCs (Henkel, 2012; Jameson, 2013; Tipple, 2009). Online higher education faculty leaders need to possess the necessary skills to effectively mentor and support online adjunct faculty within learning communities. To support this study, a thorough understanding of leadership in online communities, PLCs, and faculty professional development were examined to learn about core faculty beliefs and experiences with collaboration with online adjunct faculty in a PLC and to explore the connections between different leadership styles.

Faculty support. Support for online faculty through quality training and mentoring provides more connection and assistance, thus leading online adjunct faculty members to feel valued by the greater campus community (Grinnell, Sauers, Appunn, & Mack, 2012; Williams et al., 2014). For this study, feeling valued was used to describe how higher education faculty feels when their institutions and leaders acknowledge their contribution to student learning and achievement. Without mentoring and training, online adjunct faculty may feel disconnected from the university's community, ultimately leading to a poor experience and perhaps promoting them to leave the online teaching profession (Frankel, 2015; Ganza, 2012; Laughlin & Moore, 2012). However, further research will help universities understand what online adjunct faculty members need, feel, and want in their leader's mentoring and training (Williams et al., 2014).

Professional learning communities. Learning communities are effective to collaboration (Macquire, 2008; Parchoma, 2006; Vesely et al., 2007). Hillard (2012) and Glazer, Breslin and Wanstreet (2013) supported the notion that professional learning communities are beneficial, and they have a practical use in creating collaboration, sharing ideas, and improving

trust, teaching, and learning within online higher education institutions. Strong leadership, collaboration, communication, and team organizations produce effective online faculty PLCs. Without teambuilding, communication, and collaboration, professional learning communities are not valuable, and their leaders are not respected (Macquire, 2008; Parchoma, 2006; Vesely et al., 2007).

Collaborative online adjunct faculty development and participation leads to a sense of greater connectedness to a community of practice that encourages, engages, and supports them in their teaching practice (Eib & Miller, 2006). The PLCs' community of practice increases interaction with other instructors furthering their own professional development. Nonetheless, barriers do exist, and leaders need to be aware of the challenges in working with online adjunct faculty to understand which specific motivators will successfully influence online teaching motivation, methods, and delivery (Macquire, 2008).

To provide support in online PLCs, online higher education faculty leaders need to be highly motivated, visionary, supportive of their online faculty, and have foundational technology skills (Tipple, 2009). The research points to different leadership styles, which may play a role in creating professional learning communities where collaboration, team organization, and communication lead to increased online adjunct faculty job satisfaction (Jameson, 2013; Tipple, 2009).

Building community. Community building in a PLC is critical in online higher education environments. Glazer et al. (2013) conducted a qualitative research approach using focus group participants ($n = 18$) to determine the effects and importance of the creation and implementation of community building. Three themes emerged from their study: a respectful learning culture, respectful interaction, and positive interdependence. The study's findings

revealed that the faculty feels it is the institution's responsibility to create a community where these three themes could co-exist. The researchers suggested that higher education institutions should change their approach to leading online adjunct faculty and implementing learning communities.

Mackey and Evans (2011) conducted holistic research with teachers ($n = 15$) to explore connections between communities of practice and the ways in which individuals orchestrate their engagement with others to further their professional learning. Their findings indicated that building education communities would increase social interaction and enhance a teacher's experience; however, they also found that strong connections between the teachers do not exist after the study was completed. The researchers noted that building communities of practice or learning communities is not enough. Higher education institutions and online higher education faculty leaders must continue to guide their learning communities, even after a study is completed.

Similarly, in a program design study, Eib and Miller (2006) explained, "A core criterion for an effective faculty development process is that through the act of participating, faculty perceive greater connectedness to a community of practice that encourages, engages, and supports them in their teaching practice" (p. 13). However, the limitations of their study suggested that there was not a full-time coordinator or administrator; therefore, the practice of community facilitation floundered.

Social interaction is a critical component of being a part of an effective community, but it is something that is taught; it is not innate (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Learning takes place in a social setting and through social interaction (Bandura, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Successful online learning follows these same social learning principles. PLCs provide

online faculty with a place to build teams, socially interact, and collaborate. However, without training, mentoring, and team building guidance, PLCs may not be effective (Macquire, 2008; Parchoma, 2006; Vesely et al., 2007).

Macquire (2008) conducted a literature review and a survey of faculty ($n = 13$) to examine what is required in a collaborative learning community. The results of the survey supported the premise that team-building and collaboration are necessary for effective learning communities. However, the study points out that barriers and motivators exist, which may influence how successful these online teaching experiences are for faculty. Leaders must be aware of these barriers and ways to motivate faculty when establishing effective online communities. Challenges exist for many online higher education faculty leaders when they are involved in establishing online communities for online adjunct faculty.

In 2005, Parchoma conducted a literature review and interviewed two administrators of virtual higher education organizations. The review suggests that challenges do exist for leaders in virtual environments, such as a lack of shared physical space, social interaction, and the need for learning and collaboration amongst the faculty. Being able to inspire and motivate online adjunct faculty from a distance also creates challenges for online higher education faculty leaders in online higher education environments. Parchoma noted that the review suggests institutions adapt change to existing structures and methodology in virtual learning communities. To overcome these challenges, virtual learning environments “may require acquisition and use of a combination of productive and collaborative pedagogical power” (Parchoma, 2005, p. 483). The author asserted that key findings are communication, collaboration, and support as paramount in building and supporting effective learning communities.

To support the idea of collaborative learning communities, Veseley, Bloom, and Sherlock (2007) surveyed faculty ($n = 14$) and students ($n = 48$) enrolled in 14 online courses. The purpose of the study was to determine if building an online collaborative community is important and necessary for online adjunct faculty. The study's results indicated learning communities contain a structured, supportive environment when there is purposeful, intentional interaction among members of the group. A striking difference in this study between student and faculty results indicate that "students ranked instructor modeling as the most important factor in building community in online courses, and instructors ranked it as fourth in importance" (para. 29). Participants in the study agreed that being a part of a learning community leads to success in both teaching and learning, but it is challenging to implement effectively. To have a successful learning community where online adjunct faculty feels supported and valued, professional development from collaborative leaders is required.

Professional development. The research supports the need for PLCs in online higher education; however, implementation should promote quality training, mentoring, and professional development by qualified leaders. Quality training and mentoring provides more connection and support for online adjunct faculty members leaving them feeling more valued and less likely to leave their teaching positions. As online education opportunities increase, so will the need for additional online adjunct faculty. To support new online adjunct faculty, quality training, mentoring, and professional development is a high priority for leaders of online higher education (Frankel, 2015; Ganza, 2012; Laughlin & Moore, 2012).

Williams et al. (2014) claimed that mentoring online higher education faculty members provides them with more connection and support. Without effective online adjunct faculty mentoring in place, they will feel disconnected and unsupported. Effective online adjunct

faculty mentoring provides social support and a training system for faculty, so they do not feel isolated.

To support their claims, Williams et al. (2014) conducted a study with online adjunct faculty members ($n = 35$), primarily teaching at for-profit and non-profit online higher education institutions. Research questions developed by Williams et al. were the context of the primary survey instrument. “The survey items were employed to delineate and extract important information with regard to the specific mentoring practices experienced and reported by faculty member” (Williams et al., 2014, p. 6). The findings revealed four main themes by online adjunct faculty: 1) communication, 2) continuing education, 3) feedback, and 4) access to provisions such as technology are helpful for their online teaching experience. The study’s online adjunct faculty believed that consistent and regular “communication and interaction between mentor and mentee as vital to the mentoring relationship” (p. 14).

The fundamental idea of mentoring of online higher education faculty members is that this connection and support allows faculty members to feel valued. Developing an online higher education faculty-mentoring program takes time, effort, communication, and cooperation. However, to continue to employ superior online adjunct faculty members, there is a need for quality training and constructive feedback through mentoring programs. Providing quality training and mentoring to online adjunct faculty facilitates better online instruction for students and will assist university administration to train future leaders. Additionally, providing online adjunct faculty mentoring will ultimately lead to higher overall satisfaction in online instruction for both students and faculty (Williams et al. 2014).

Lastly, Williams et al. (2014) suggested that administrators must have consistent and regular communication, engagement, and involvement with their online adjunct faculty members

so that they feel valued and supported. To add to institutional understanding regarding exactly what types of mentoring and training will be the most effective for online adjunct faculty members, additional research is required.

Similarly, Frankel (2015) conducted a quantitative survey with online adjunct faculty ($n = 4,000$) to determine what types of professional development or mentoring would have a positive effect on faculty effectiveness. The selected target population consisted of online adjunct faculty from both private and public higher education institutions. The study was voluntary and consisted of survey questions using a Likert scale survey instrument. The study's findings indicated that high-quality professional development and mentoring for online adjunct faculty is urgently needed and essential for educational institutions.

In a mixed study research design, Ganza (2012) conducted a study on the influence and effectiveness of professional development in online higher education. Using asynchronous discussion boards, questionnaires, and interviews in the study, the author opted to use the case study strategy based on the research question. The study's findings indicated professional development helps online adjunct faculty feel more engaged in their classes and in the online university setting. However, online adjunct faculty knowledge and skill levels vary, which was a limitation in the study.

A thorough examination of the literature on PLCs and professional development in online higher education suggests a significant need for effective, collaborative leadership styles (Frankel, 2015; Ganza, 2012; Laughlin & Moore, 2012; Macquire, 2008; Parchoma, 2006; Vesely et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2014). Online adjunct faculty members perceive their leaders and their leadership style based on their own learning styles. Finding the leadership style

to form a relationship with online adjunct faculty within the formation of PLCs is linked (Jewell, 2007).

The increase of online adjunct faculty will create the need for understanding complex relationships between leaders and faculty to create a positive effect on team building and faculty satisfaction (Bateh, 2013; Delotell, 2014; Henkel, 2012). Without the correct leadership style in place, collaborate teams will not exist. A counterargument suggests there is a lack of research on leadership styles that are effective in online learning environments and that more research and development into e-leadership requires more attention (Jameson, 2013).

Leadership theories. Leadership theories have existed since companies and organizations formed in the industrial age (Zayani, 2008). In the 20th century, however, “the importance of people in creating innovation and change in an organization that sustained its long-term viability was emphasized” (p. 30). Leadership should never be a top-down act, but rather a gathering of ideas. Open communication and trust are crucial to having a successful organization and relationships with others. In 2009, Stewart (as cited in Fullan, 2011) said:

A good manager is someone ... with a wide knowledge of the world and an even better knowledge of the way people work; someone who knows how to treat people with respect; someone with honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, and other things that make up character; someone in short who understands oneself and the world around us well enough to make it better. (p. 21)

The influence of advances in technology and an increase of a global workplace heighten the awareness of effective leadership styles required that are innovative and create leaders who can inspire workers. Caught up in this rapidly changing technological age, higher education leaders must look to new approaches and strategies to work with online adjunct faculty to “harness

[their] motivation and [their] specialized skills ... while addressing their concerns in order to maximize both educational quality to students, and institutional effectiveness” (Tipple, 2009, p. 15). Leaders need to be aware of these changes to institute change on their campuses.

Educational leaders, acting as role models, who inspire and lead their online adjunct faculty to be innovative and creative, will provide a learning environment where faculty and students succeed (Tipple, 2009). Different theories on leadership styles have surfaced during the past decades to encourage higher education leaders (and leaders in general) to change the way that they approach leadership (Burns, 1978; Fullan, 2011; Greenleaf, n.d.; Meizrow, 1991).

Transformational leadership. The transformational leadership theory arose from the work of Burns (1978) in his book titled *Leadership*. His transforming theory focused on the ideal that leaders and co-workers motivated and inspired each other to reach shared goals. However, development of this theory has changed since Burns (1978) first introduced it (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Sashkin, 1990; Sun, 2010). In 1994, Bass and Avolio changed the term transforming to transformational, emphasized the leadership practices characteristics, and developed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (as cited in Sun, 2010).

In 1995, Kouzes and Posner developed the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) to measure specific leadership behaviors (as cited in Sun, 2010). The focus of this leadership model is on the group’s objectives first while transforming the views and personal values of people by creating an environment where trust develops so that all share the vision of the organization. These changes in the theories concept have resulted in the characteristics of transformational leadership today.

Servant leadership. Greenleaf's (n.d.) servant leadership theory suggested "the servant-leader *is* servant first ... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*" (para. 3). This theory is quite different from other theories, as the premise behind servant leadership is not to control or oversee others, but rather to occupy an equal position within the organization. The servant leader does not command, but rather nurtures and serves (Greenleaf, 2014). "The servant leader is in contact with all aspects of the organization and the individuals within it as opposed to interacting with a few high-level managers who also occupy positions in the upper strata of the hierarchy" (Marzano, Water & McNulty, 2005, p. 17). It is through collaboration, cohesiveness, and teamwork that servant leaders accomplish change.

Although the transformative leadership model is very similar to that of a servant leadership model, the primary difference between the two is the focus of the leader. In a transformational leadership model, the leader's focus is on the objectives of the organization first by creating an environment of trust, whereas in a servant leadership model, the leader's focus is on the people or followers and having the objectives as secondary (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Sashkin, 1990; Sun, 2010).

Change leaders. A more recent wave of thought revolves around Fullan's (2011) idea of the change leader theory. Here, Fullan suggested that a change leader has "the capacity to generate energy and passion in others through action, and you must act with empathy and purpose" (p. 23). The author asserted that this theory proposes that to live in this complex and challenging world, change must occur. This change must come, so leaders need to understand what motivates human beings to be innovative, creative, and self-motivating to assist their personnel to make positive changes for the organization. As Fullan said, "The collective

capacity building ‘democratizes’ the change process by extending power to other members of the organization” (p. 92).

These theories reveal different leadership styles that could be effective for leaders of online higher education institutions to create learning environments where adjunct faculties feel a sense of community. “Examining various leadership theories provides a theoretical framework for current and prospective distance education leaders” (Nworie, 2012, para. 1).

Online leadership styles. Leaders inspire people to follow their beliefs, motivate them to aspire to their full potential, and treat and consider them as individuals. Online higher education faculty leaders and administrators must face these challenges by understanding what strategies need to be in place for collaborative leadership of their online adjunct faculty. Understanding which leadership style is the most effective in providing online adjunct faculty members with moral, educational, and technical support is critical as online training and instruction continues to grow (Tipple, 2009).

Different leadership styles exist in the realm of higher education. However, there is a gap in the literature about which leadership styles promote motivational guidance to online adjunct faculty for team building and collaboration in online higher education professional communities to guide better instruction for students. Different theories exist on what makes an effective leader in an online or on campus setting (Fullan, 2011; Greenleaf, n.d.; Holt et al., 2014; Meizrow, 1991; Parchoma, 2005; Tipple, 2009).

To inspire online adjunct faculty, it is critical that highly visionary and motivational leaders are in place in higher education to provide a superior learning environment for students (Tipple, 2009). Online higher education faculty leaders must seek new strategies to engage online adjunct faculty to “maximize institutional effectiveness” (para. 2). Jameson (2013)

contended that online educational leaders must address the “increasing changes occurring in education as a result of educational technology advancements” (p. 889). Collaborative leadership styles are critical to the success of online learning for higher education (Tipple, 2009).

Collaborative leadership styles. Collaborative leadership styles are instrumental in promoting online team organizational skills and collaboration in virtual higher education professional communities. Different types of leadership styles exist in both the leaders and in the faculty of professional communities. As in other organizations, collaborative leadership styles will have a positive effect on team building and faculty satisfaction in online professional learning communities. Instituting collaborative leadership styles and mentoring in online PLCs will assist faculty to feel valued and supported (Eib & Miller, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Mackey & Evans, 2011).

Support for online adjunct faculty through effective leadership in online higher education PLC’s will increase collaboration, communication, and team organization. Positive relationships do exist between online adjunct faculty work engagement and different leadership styles (Batel, 2013; Delotell, 2014; Frankel, 2015; Williams et al., 2014).

Four different leadership styles emerged from this researcher’s literature review: transformational, servant, situational, and distributive. However, this study focused on two leadership styles, transformational and distributive, but also drew on the similarities of servant and collaborative leadership styles to compare findings.

Transformational leadership style. Leadership effectiveness does not depend primarily on the individual and heroic actions, but more on a collaborative methodology where all work together (Klenke, 2007). Mezirow (1991) explained, “Transformative learning involves reflectively transforming the beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and emotional reactions that constitute

our meaning schemes or transforming our meaning perspectives” (Chapter 7). Transformational leadership follows four principles: individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence (Marzano et al., 2005). Through the application of the behaviors of these four principles, this leadership style enables a leader to produce results and change within an organization.

Transformational leaders motivate others to do more than they thought possible by behaving as role models, inspiring those around them, stimulating innovation and creativity, and being supportive through encouragement and coaching faculty. The transformational leader’s focus is on a commitment toward stated objectives and the impact that it has on higher education institutions while helping others to see a shared vision. Thus, motivation and inspiration for faculty to achieve the institutional vision and mission will lead to higher satisfaction in teaching and provide exceptional learning experiences for their students (Ruggieri, Bocca, & Garro, 2013; Tipple, 2009).

Conducting a quantitative correlation study, Henkel (2012) sought to determine if transformational leadership styles influence faculty engagement and perceptions in teaching online higher education courses. The participants were online adjunct faculty members from a variety of campuses ($n = 30$). Participants answered questions from “two reliable survey instruments: the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17)” (p. iv). Results of the study revealed five transformational leadership styles are effective in promoting faculty engagement and increasing positive perceptions of online learning. The study also indicated that inspirational motivation by transformative leaders is the most effective for work engagement.

In a similar study, Zayani (2008) explored the effect of transformational leadership on the success of global, virtual teams. The quantitative cross-sectional study used the survey research method to collect data administered to members ($n = 100$) of global virtual teams employed in the business processing industry. The survey instrument used for the survey was the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The study's findings revealed that transformational leadership was positively correlated; however, components of transactional leadership combined with transformational elements proved to be more effective.

Servant leadership style is like a transformational style, but the focus is on the person not the organization. Servant leadership is a theory and philosophy that an effective leader develops from a desire to help and serve others. "The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first, and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible" (Greenleaf, n.d., para. 4). Marzano et al. (2005) said, "The servant leader is in contact with all aspects of the organization and the individuals within it as opposed to interacting with a few high-level managers who also occupy positions in the upper strata of the hierarchy" (p. 17). While not considered a theory that is as comprehensive as the others mentioned, it has become key to the thinking of many collaborative leaders.

Russell (2012) conducted a literature review to determine how an online academic administrator would utilize the practice of leadership to improve the overall online academic experience. The author identified a correlation between online adjunct faculty professional development programs focusing on the practice characteristics of servant leadership and the notion of building community within online higher education. Russell also identified three key pieces of literature as a basis of discussion for the infusion of servant leadership but concluded that further research is required.

Although the Russell (2012) study identified characteristics of servant leadership, it was not conclusive that this type of leadership style was most effective. As transformational and servant leadership are similar, further research could determine that transformational leadership is more applicable.

Nworie (2012) examined different leadership theories which when adopted, would influence distance education leadership. An analysis of these theories was incorporated to determine which leadership style would benefit online education to meet the challenges of the ever-changing and challenging online higher education environment. Although an examination of transformational leadership styles was conducted in the study, the author argued that the characteristics of a situational style better fit a leader working in a distance education environment. Nworie indicated that the “strengths of situational leadership are that it is directive and flexible in nature, as it informs the leader how to respond in different situations” (para. 21). However, the author also pointed out that an effective leader needs to “understand, engage, and care for followers and to enable those followers to maximize their contributions” (para. 29). Since the online higher education environment is continually changing, virtual leaders require the skills to adapt quickly to change and acquire a repertoire of styles to provide leadership that will be more conducive in working with online faculty.

Similarly, Harrison (2011) determined in a study of four different leadership styles that transformational and situational leadership styles were most effective in working with online adjunct faculty. The author argued, “Leaders of higher education must be armed with the appropriate strategies that will reduce faculty resistance to online instruction, and, as a result, push beyond institutional resistances for online instruction” (p.7). As online education continues

to be on the increase, online higher education faculty leaders must understand which styles work best for online adjunct faculty collaboration and retention.

Distributive leadership. Popular during the last decade, distributive leadership refers to situations when leadership is distributed among members of a group to achieve organizational goals. Distributive leadership has become more relevant in higher education online environments due to the globalization of online learning. This leadership style portrays a leader that manages down, across, and through the organization leading to more teamwork among faculty (Holt et al., 2014). Distributive leadership, or also defined as collaborative leadership, allows a leader to get faculty cooperation to support the facility of teams. This leadership style engages in developing relationships with team members and assisting them in achieving institutional goals (Parchoma, 2005).

Jones, Lefoe, Harvey, and Ryland (2012) argued in their study that universities must build a more collaborative and participatory approach (distributive) to leadership for their faculty in higher education. The purpose for this study was that researchers in the United Kingdom were unable to identify a single successful approach for leaders to utilize in working with faculty in higher education. Conducted over an 18-month period, the project used a participatory and inquiry-based action research methodology of reflexive inquiry-action research methodology utilizing “plan, act, observe, and reflect” (p. 71).

Project team leaders ($n = 4$) identified a set of questions to pinpoint the feedback from participants of the four projects. The participants and team leaders then met at a community of practice workshop to discuss the responses and determine what leadership skills are required for a distributive leadership approach. The team leaders used the knowledge gained from the community of practice workshop to build the Action Self Enabling Reflective Tool (ASERT) to

identify actions in potentially adopting a distributive leadership approach. The findings indicated a need for an inclusive participative approach by which leaders and faculty collaborate to build systematic, multi-faceted leadership (Jones et al., 2012).

Jones et al.'s (2012) findings promoted researchers to explore the similarities of transformational and servant leadership styles, which may exist in this study. Both transformational and servant leadership styles place the leader in a collaborative role. Although transformational leaders look at the organizational objectives first, their goal is to motivate others to be creative and innovative to accomplish the objectives of the organization. Servant leaders want to serve people first by not taking command, but rather by allowing individuals to work collaboratively. Both leadership approaches are comparable to a distributive style.

Through a qualitative study of senior leaders ($n = 12$) in online higher education, Holt et al. (2014) examined the effectiveness of distributive leadership on creating collaborative online learning environments. In the study's interviews, senior leaders were supportive of the idea of distributive leadership for leaders in an online learning environment; however, the need for training was necessary. Therefore, the study concluded that building distributed leadership must start through deliberative formal leadership commitment and action starting at the highest levels of the institution. As in the study by Jones et al. (2012), similar findings were observed by Holt et al. (2014) regarding a commitment by not only leaders to engage in the leadership style, but for the university to support and encourage its online leaders.

As the online higher education learning environments continue to grow, so will the number of online adjunct faculty. This creates a greater need for effective online higher education faculty leaders who can create a vision for the future while providing direction in the use of technology, staff supervision, managing change, and guiding and leading online adjunct

faculty in a distance education environment (Nworie, 2012). This study attempted to close the gap in the literature as to which leadership style is most valuable in an online education environment.

Review of Methodological Issues

Researchers use different methodologies to discover data. Each methodology has specific instruments and methods that researchers use for gathering data and making arguments. A strong conceptual framework allows the researcher the opportunity to analyze the different findings in the literature, which acts as a guide for further research on the topic. Ravitch and Riggan (2012) reported that the research study's conceptual framework "serves to situate the research questions and the methods for exploring them within the broader context of existing knowledge about a topic even as the researcher seeks to generate new knowledge about that topic" (p. 136). The methodology of this research study reflects the concepts presented in its conceptual framework.

As previously mentioned, although there have been many articles written about different leadership styles, there is a gap in the literature about the leadership styles that promote team organizational skills and collaboration in online higher education professional communities (Jameson, 2013). Collaborative leadership styles are instrumental in promoting team organizational skills and teamwork in online higher education PLCs. A thorough understanding and examination of leadership styles that are effective in promoting faculty collaboration in online programs support this study.

During this researcher's review of the literature, several issues surfaced. Jameson (2013) completed a literature review on effective leadership styles in e-learning or online learning and found that there is a lack of research. The study indicated incomplete data and different

variables, which were not explained. This incomplete data prompted this researcher to conduct this study to determine what leadership styles need to be in place for higher education virtual environments.

Jameson's (2013) findings revealed that with the increase of online learning, more exhaustive research must be done to ensure the development of more critical, selective, and strategic e-leadership approaches to educational technology learning. These findings identify implications for research and for the practice of e-leadership in educational technology of which inspired this researcher to further explore this topic.

Additionally, two researchers, Bateh (2013) and Jewell (2007), used quantitative methods to examine the relationship between leadership styles and faculty perceptions but failed to determine which leadership styles are most effective. The studies determined that online leadership styles and online adjunct faculty job satisfaction are linked, but they were unsuccessful in identifying a leadership style that online higher education faculty leaders should embrace. This affected the researchers' findings.

Eib and Miller (2006) used a program design model to understand how to decrease feelings of isolation among online adjunct faculty and to begin to build a community of learners. Although the study was not conducted with online adjunct faculty, it was suggested that the program design could be altered and applied to other higher education settings. The results of the study indicated that participation among faculty is high when leaders are fully invested in the professional development and mentoring; however, when the program ended, there was not a leader to continue to coordinate and support the community of learning. The importance of having a continuous collaborative leadership always to lead online adjunct faculty in a

community of learning is significant. The role of an effective online higher education faculty leader needs to be examined in further studies.

Another researcher, Ganza (2012), used a mixed methods case study design to determine the effect that professional development has on online adjunct faculty attitudes and behavior. The findings indicated that professional development is beneficial for online adjunct faculty, and online higher education faculty leaders need to support professional development and mentoring as online learning enrollment continues to grow. Although Ganza (2012) triangulated the findings, the author did not generalize the study's findings to other populations.

When researchers examine a topic, there is bound to be bias. Uncovering areas of bias will help researchers be more open and honest in striving for objectivity. Addressing personal and professional background biases will help to alleviate any potential problems in the research (Mcquire, 2014). In the online environment where this study occurred, personal and professional bias may affect the research in this study. This researcher's personal beliefs and opinions regarding this study is that the implementation of PLCs and professional development are that collaborative leadership does increase teacher efficacy thus creating higher student achievement. Additionally, collaborative leadership styles increase faculty collaboration, communication, and team building.

Machi and McEvoy (2012) stated, "By rationally identifying and confronting these views, the researcher can control personal bias and opinion, committing to being open-minded, skeptical, and considerate of research data" (p. 19). During this study, the research obtained was analyzed with an open mind so that personal biases do not interfere with a deeper understanding of the results.

Some limitations this researcher may have encountered included low respondent rate, incomplete interview data, or participants who declined or dropped out of the study. This researcher could have encountered resistance from the university leaders on gathering data or participant contact information. This researcher could encounter resistance from university administration in obtaining information on interview procedures regarding hiring practices. This study's data was kept confidential, and pseudonyms were used to protect the participants.

Synthesis of Research Findings

Several themes emerged in the literature reviewed that interconnected many of the studies with each other. First, online higher education institutions require collaborative online higher education faculty leaders to guide the increasing number of online adjunct faculty (Fullan, 2011; Greenleaf, n.d.; Holt et al., 2014; Meizrow, 1991; Parchoma, 2005; Tipple, 2009). However, the literature is not inclusive as to which type of leadership is perceived by online adjunct faculty to be collaborative in nature. The increase of online adjunct faculty creates the need for understanding relationships between leaders and faculty (Bateh, 2013; Frankel, 2015; Henkel, 2012; Jewel, 2007). This need for collaborative relationships and strong leadership skills creates questions on what types of online higher education faculty leaders are most effective. The literature suggests that online higher education faculty leaders must create environments where online adjunct faculty feels valued and supportive in their teaching (Bateh, 2013; Delotell, 2014; Frankel; Henkel, 2012; Jewel, 2007).

Second, the implementation of PLCs provide online adjunct faculty and online higher education faculty leaders with an environment which helps to reduce feelings of isolation among faculty while building a community of learners, improving teaching, and building organizational capacity (Ebi & Miller, 2006; Glazer et al., 2013; Hillard, 2012; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Mackey

& Evans, 2007; Macquire, 2008; Parchoma, 2006; Veseley et al., 2007). Online learning communities comprise a structured, supportive environment in which there is purposeful, intentional interaction among members of the group. Additionally, there must be a level of trust, respect, and support present among virtual community members (Vesely et al., 2007).

Interaction with other online instructors through communities of practice will further their professional learning (Mackey & Evans, 2011). In building communities of practice, online higher education faculty leaders can provide mentoring, training, and professional development opportunities to online adjunct faculty.

The need for quality training of both online adjunct faculty and online higher education faculty leaders within the online community is essential (Frankel, 2015; Ganza, 2012; Williams et al., 2014). To support online adjunct faculty, online higher education faculty leaders must be able to provide quality professional development, training, and mentoring. However, online faculty leaders in higher education must first have the necessary training to support and mentor their online adjunct faculty.

Critique of Previous Research

The review revealed discrepancies and issues that existed in studies regarding online leadership and PLCs. Although the literature was explored on collaborative online leadership styles, a clear style preference is not evident in the research for online learning environments as asserted by Bateh (2013) and Jewell (2007). Jameson (2013) suggested that research of e-leadership has been overlooked, even with the increasing technology changes in the higher education learning environments. Critical research on effective online higher education faculty leadership should accompany the rise of technological innovations so that online higher education faculty leaders can provide the support for online adjunct faculty. Due to the nature of

the online higher education environment, a prerequisite for online higher education faculty leaders would be a demonstrative collaborative leadership style that builds upon faculty trust, support, and communication. This leadership style also needs to meet the demands of the increasing number of online adjunct faculty (Parchoma, 2005). Leaders in online higher education organizations require new knowledge and skills to lead effectively. Nonetheless, both Jameson (2013) and Tipple (2009) asserted that only a small amount of research exists on effective leadership styles for online higher education faculty leaders. This researcher's review of the literature concurs with the assertion.

The review of literature also reveals there is a need for online higher education faculty leaders to build communities of learning with online adjunct faculty. Online higher education does not have the same physical attributes of traditional higher education environments. A virtual environment relies on trust, communication, support, and fundamental online technology skills (Eib & Miller, 2006; Glazer et al., 2013; Hillard, 2013; Parchoma, 2005; Vesely et al., 2007). PLCs provide environments for effective online higher education faculty leaders to build high levels of trust, communication, and support for online adjunct faculty.

This researcher's review of the literature suggests that learning communities are beneficial for reducing feelings of isolation and may increase feelings of support for online adjunct faculty, but it is not clear which type of leadership styles are preferred as also noted by Eib and Miller (2006), Glazer et al. (2013), Hillard (2013), Parchoma (2005), and Vesely et al. (2007).

Chapter 2 Summary

The future calls for a global society where everyone is interconnected through technology. Higher education institutions need to embrace this new global digital community—

one where interconnection exists through various forms of technology. To maintain stability and growth, higher education institutions must support the digital technology revolution that is occurring and will continue to escalate in the future. To move forward, online higher education faculty leaders must have a collaborative leadership style to facilitate and guide online adjunct faculty to work together in building learning communities. Collaborative online higher education faculty leaders must have the knowledge, skills, and motivation to behave as role models to bridge the distance barrier between themselves and online adjunct faculty (Tipple, 2009).

To become future-focused leaders in online higher education, online higher education faculty leaders must understand that change is ongoing and dynamic. Reisman (2010) said, “Leadership is like the process of being in school permanently because in the end leadership is about inspiring others towards some shared vision and inspiring others to fulfill their dreams ... it is a balance.” Online higher education faculty leaders should engage others in a shared vision to shape learning communities focused on change to fulfill the guiding mission of the higher education institution. Online higher education faculty leaders must create a positive culture while promoting others to accept change. While this may be difficult at first for online higher education staff and administration to become collaborative leaders, it is a necessary transition for twenty-first century education.

Tipple (2009) hinted that “this is an exciting time in education; the rapid growth in technology is making it possible for people from all corners of the globe to readily access educational opportunities” (p. 15). The creation and implementation of PLCs with collaborative leaders provides the support that online adjunct faculty require to encourage effective collaboration, communication, and team organization (Eib & Miller, 2006; Glazer et al., 2013;

Hillard, 2013; Parchoma, 2005; Vesely et al., 2007). This study examined different leadership styles to determine which professional skills core faculty perceives are necessary to lead a PLC where online adjunct faculties work in collaborative organizations. The research design and methodology are explained in Chapter 3 including details on the research population, data collection, and the data analysis procedure along with expected findings and the researcher's position.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Technology has played an increasing role in the transformation of higher education institution's operations (Nworie, 2012). With the increase of technology in higher education settings, online courses are becoming more popular. Due to the increase in online distance learning, higher education institutions are hiring more adjunct faculty. The rise in part-time faculty creates challenges for administrators of higher education institutions to hire leaders that promote collaboration and build teams that feel connected to the university and its mission.

Nworie (2012) said, "It is obvious that online distance learning is an evolving learning environment that requires leaders of traditional learning environments to acquire new skills and assume new roles" (para. 1). Online adjunct faculty tends to be less committed to a higher education institution's mission and vision than traditional full-time faculty. This lack of commitment can lead to reduced effectiveness in online adjunct faculty classrooms resulting in lower faculty morale and student success. The author also posited that online higher education faculty leaders of PLCs must embrace these challenges to ensure that online adjunct faculty feels connected to the university and to build a collaborative online environment.

A collaborative leadership style can play an important role in creating an online environment where online adjunct faculty members feel a connection and commitment to the university. Online higher education faculty leaders of an online learning community that exhibit a leadership style of collaboration and team building help to build relationships with online adjunct faculty who are geographically separated, have little chance of tenure, and have less commitment to a university's mission (Delotell, 2014). To address these challenges, online higher education faculty leaders must also understand the characteristics of online teaching

communities to motivate, support, and mentor online adjunct faculty for personal satisfaction (Eib & Miller, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Mackey & Evans, 2011; Parchoma, 2005; Tipple, 2009).

What attributes and skills in leadership styles do online adjunct faculty perceive are the most effective for building online communities and leading online adjunct faculty to feel valued as an integral part of a university? Although online distance learning is rapidly growing, little research has focused on what types of leadership styles are required to lead and build strong communities based on relationships of trust and respect. Online learning has become a strong growth area for many higher education institutions, yet research on the effective leadership of online learning communities is scarce (Jameson, 2013; Nworie, 2012; Tipple, 2009). Online higher education faculty leaders whose goals and commitments are to build a team of online adjunct faculty that communicate and collaborate facilitates successful learning communities (Hillard, 2012). This study assists leaders of online learning communities in gaining a better understanding of leadership styles that promote online adjunct faculty collaboration in online programs.

This chapter includes the overarching research question, sub-questions, and the purpose and design of the study. The research design and methodology are explained, along with details on the research population and sampling method, instrumentation, how data is collected, identification of attributes, and the data analysis procedure. Limitations of the research design are offered. Also discussed in this chapter are the expected findings and the ethical issues such as conflict of interest assessment and researcher's position revealed in the study. A summary concludes the chapter.

Research Questions

The data from this study examined the answer to the following question and sub-questions:

How do core faculty experience collaboration when working with online adjunct faculty in a Professional Learning Community (PLC)?

- How do core faculty describe their role in working collaboratively with their online adjunct faculty in PLCs?
- How do core faculty describe the online adjunct faculty's role in working collaboratively with PLCs?

Purpose and Design of the Study

The purpose and intent of this study was to explore, identify, and determine core faculty perceptions on different leadership styles in the areas of collaboration and team building in PLCs and which leadership styles core faculty believe online adjunct faculty prefer to work with collaboratively. The study examined what core faculty believes can be done to improve collaboration in PLCs and their beliefs on how to move forward productively. With the increase of online learning within higher education institutions, the need for online higher education faculty leaders with the effective leadership styles to lead, mentor, and support online adjunct faculty is critical. The leadership styles to promote and lead professional development that aligns with a university's mission and public persona is becoming more important for administrators of higher education institutions to address when hiring virtual leaders. It is critical to have online higher education faculty leaders with leadership styles that will promote moral and educational support as online learning and faculty increase.

The intent of the study was to learn what qualities and characteristics of leaders are perceived by online adjunct faculty and online core faculty to promote collaboration; specifically, in creating an online learning environment where online adjunct faculty feels a sense of belonging to the university and its mission. In understanding the leadership style necessary for online higher education faculty leaders of PLCs, universities must hire leaders who will be successful in leading online adjunct faculty in environments where faculty may feel isolated and disconnected. Therefore, it is proposed that higher education institutions must hire online higher education faculty leaders with collaborative leadership styles to lead online adjunct faculty to feel an integral part of the online community and environment. This study assists administrators of higher education institutions when hiring online higher education faculty leaders with skills to lead online adjunct faculty into the twenty-first century online learning environment.

The research design for this study was qualitative utilizing a phenomenological interview method. According to Waters (2016), “The goal of qualitative phenomenological research is to describe a ‘lived experience’ of a phenomenon” (para. 1). The use of a qualitative phenomenological design was to determine the lived experience of core faculty working closely with online adjunct faculty to extrapolate the rationality of having leaders lead part time faculty in a virtual environment. The purpose of using this type of research is to determine through interviews the lived experience of core faculty working with online adjunct instructors and their beliefs and experiences regarding collaboration. Interview participants were asked to answer questions that described their experience in working with their online adjunct faculty within PLCs.

The design for this study was an appropriate choice as the researcher delved into discussions with core faculty to hear their lived experience in working with online adjunct faculty. To get to the heart of their lived experience, I asked interview questions that sought to dig deep into core faculty's experiences in working with online adjunct faculty, providing a rich description of their experiences. This rich and thick description provided a more meaningful picture of the lived experience of the core faculty in working with online adjunct faculty in a PLC setting. The interviews provided not only answers to the questions asked, but core faculty went beyond the scope of the questions by providing scenarios and stories of their lived experiences in working with online adjunct faculty. The creation and implementation of PLCs with collaborative leaders may provide the support that online adjunct faculty require for effective collaboration, communication, and team organization (Parchoma, 2005). Core faculty who were interviewed, were leaders collaborating with online adjunct faculty in a setting where collaboration, communication, and team organization existed. As the goal of qualitative phenomenological research is to delve deep into a lived experience of a phenomenon, the choice of interviewing core faculty who worked closely with online adjunct faculty in a PLC was an appropriate design choice for this study.

Research Population and Sampling Method

This study's phenomenological approach examined the perception of leadership styles by online core faculty leading online adjunct faculty in PLCs. In the university selected for the study, there were 18 core faculty members, which included 9 males and 9 females. Each participant had 2–5 years' experience in their position mentoring up to 27 online adjunct faculty members. This researcher asked all core faculty members to participate in this study. However, because participation in this study was voluntary, this researcher was able to obtain 16

participants who wished to partake in the interviews. This number provided a representative sample of the population asked to participate due to the nature of the core faculty's position in working closely with online adjunct faculty in a PLC setting. This is important in a phenomenological study because I was trying to determine the lived experience of core faculty working with online adjunct faculty in collaboration in a PLC setting.

Instrumentation

This study used qualitative instrumentation. Through interviews conducted with core faculty, questions were utilized to delve into their experience in working with online adjunct faculty in PLCs. The interview questions (see appendix A) contained 15 questions that sought information pertinent to answer the research questions and were administered to the core faculty that oversee professional learning communities for online adjunct faculty members. The questions were designed to examine a core faculty's experiences in working with their online adjunct faculty in terms of collaboration and what perceived leadership skills emerge through the analysis of their experiences. The construction of the interview questions revolved around key terms such as collaboration, team building, and leadership qualities to provide answers to the research questions. During the interviews, core faculty not only answered the interview questions, but described stories and different scenarios of their lived experiences in working collaboratively with online adjunct faculty. This is addition to the interview questions provided a rich and thick description of core faculty lived experience.

Data Collection

This study consisted of one phase for data collection. Data from open-ended interview questions were given to core faculty at an online university. As core faculty is scattered throughout the United States from coast to coast, the interview questions were administered

through Webex. Webex is an online meeting system that allowed face-to-face interviews with the selected participants, which provided a rich source of data. The interviews were recorded, and participants were informed of such.

Immediately after each individual interview, the recordings were downloaded to the researcher's computer and deleted from Webex. The interviews were approximately 30-45 minutes in length, however many took more than the allotted time. Each individual recording was transcribed and sent back to the appropriate core faculty for verification of accuracy. They were also asked to provide any additional information that they wanted to share that may have been missed in the interview. A detailed letter inviting core faculty was sent before the interview to inform the purpose of the study, time limit, the value of their input, and that their answers will remain anonymous.

Data stored on the computer was downloaded to a flash drive and will be stored in a sealed envelope in a locked filed cabinet for 3 years after the study is completed and then the flash drive will be destroyed. The data that is hand written will also be stored in a sealed envelope in a locked file cabinet for 3 years after the study is completed and then the interview data will be shredded. Only this researcher will have access to it.

Identification of Attributes

The attributes in this study were the different leadership styles discussed: transformative, servant, collaborative, and distributive, as perceived by core faculty as to which style that online adjunct faculty believe matters in terms of collaboration and team building and the professional skills that core faculty believe are important in building a collaborative learning community. These attributes were examined through a thorough analysis of the interview data for different themes.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis procedure used for the interview portion of the qualitative study was a careful analysis of the themes that emerged from the interview (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). This careful reading of the interview notes helped me identify and categorize major themes to answer the research questions for this study. The authors suggested that “the researcher’s task then is to determine how to identify what is important, why it is important, and what it indicates about the participants and context studied” (p. 476). The use of coding to categorically mark different portions of the text was useful to sort through the interview data and to help describe, classify, and interpret (Creswell, 2013).

To obtain the essences of the experiences of the core faculty, the interview transcripts were reviewed in their entirety the first time to get more of a global sense of the whole experience. Then the transcripts were reviewed a second time to divide the data into different concepts and themes. After dividing the data, a careful look was taken to determine similar findings or focus. Lastly, a third reading provided an opportunity to sort the data into a collectible database, which allowed this researcher to sort the data into different patterns and themes related to the research questions. “Themes in qualitative research (also called categories) are broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea” (Creswell, 2013, p. 186).

The original raw data descriptions were then revisited to ensure that interpretations and essential meanings were justified. Member checking was used to “solicit participants’ views of the credibility [and dependability] of the findings and interpretations” (Creswell, 2013, p. 252). The interview data was taken back to participants of the study to determine that what they said was accurately identified and described (Gay et al., 2012).

To assist in the identification of the themes and the coding process, this researcher intended to use ATLAS Ti, a software program designed to help organize and structure data. This program can be used to conceptualize the different themes and codes that emerge from the data from the interview questions to organize the concepts to structure overall analysis. However, upon initiation of this study, I determined that the use of this software program was not advantageous, and a manual review was completed, as it provided a richer analysis of the lived experiences of the participants.

Limitations and Delimitations of Research Design

Some limitations this researcher could have encountered included a low respondent rate incomplete interview data, or participants who declined to participate or dropped out of this study. This researcher could have encountered reticence from the university leaders on gathering data or participant contact information. The researcher could have encountered resistance from university administration in obtaining information on interview procedures regarding hiring practices. As this study only used core faculty from only one private university, this could have limited the findings. An additional limitation may be that the results from this qualitative study may require further quantitative studies with larger groups for them to be made transferrable.

Delimitations consisted of the characteristics that describe the boundary choices of the study. The delimitation that may occur in this study was only using core faculty from one university. Due to the nature of the proposed study on collaborative leadership styles in an online environment, on-ground faculty were not interviewed or surveyed. However, as the core faculty invited to participate in this study are colleagues, they were likely to have more interest in participating. Additionally, due to the nature of the study, the results may benefit in the core

faculty's work with their online adjunct faculty in their PLCs. Moreover, the results may be beneficial for the university when deciding to hire further core faculty.

Validation

Credibility and dependability. Unless proper steps are taken, research has the tendency to not be credible or dependable. For this study to be credible and dependable, this researcher used extreme caution in collecting the data and reporting it. When asking the interview questions, this researcher was careful to only record what the interviewee stated and not infuse any/or this researcher's opinions into the data. This use of descriptive validity contributes to the trustworthiness of the research (Gay et al., 2012).

The use of thick description was used to transfer the findings between this researcher and the participants in the study as suggested by Creswell (2013). This rich description allowed me to delve deep into their described lived experiences in working collaboratively with online adjunct faculty. Data from the interviews were triangulated with member-checked transcripts and with different theories introduced in Chapter 2 to provide corroborating evidence. The triangulation allowed this researcher to cross check the findings to ensure credibility.

Member checking was used to "solicit participants' views of the credibility [and dependability] of the findings and interpretations" (Creswell, 2013, p. 252). The interview data was taken back to participants of the study to determine that what they said was accurately identified and described (Gay et al., 2012). Using these methods ensured the credibility and dependability of this study.

Expected Findings

This researcher expected to find the answers to the research question and sub-questions from the interviews with the participants. The expectation was that online adjunct faculty

provided answers that identify the skills and characteristics in a leader that make them feel a part of the university and its mission. It was also expected that a leadership style that online adjunct faculty prefer is collaborative. These expected findings will help to lessen the gap in research on collaborative leadership styles in online higher education settings. The findings also will allow administrators to determine which leadership style to look for when hiring leaders who mentor and support online adjunct faculty in higher education.

The results of this study will determine which leadership style is required to ensure that online adjunct faculty feels supported and a part of the university missions and goals. These findings will help leaders refine their management styles to engage and motivate online adjunct faculty who have a physical separation from the university. Understanding what leadership style will motivate online adjunct faculty will help leaders create a cohesive and collaborative team. This collaborative style of leadership will ensure online adjunct faculty to feel personal satisfaction in their teaching and learning.

Ethical Issues

Conflict of interest assessment. Having the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approve a research study is a federal guideline for all research conducted to ensure that no conflicts of interest are violated with respect to the protection of the participants (University of Minnesota, 2010). This researcher completed an application form outlining the study with the research question, proposed study, proposed participants, and answered any questions regarding conflicts of interest. This study was not conducted until granted permission by the IRB. This researcher does not suspect that a conflict of interest took place in this study.

Researcher's position. When researchers examine a topic, there is bound to be bias. Uncovering areas of bias will help researchers be more open and honest in striving for

objectivity. Addressing personal and professional background biases help to alleviate any potential problems in the research (Mcquire, 2014). In the online environment, where this study occurred, personal and professional bias could have affected the research in this study. Machi and McEvoy (2012) wrote, “By rationally identifying and confronting these views, the researcher can control personal bias and opinion, committing to being open-minded, skeptical, and considerate of research data” (p. 19). Because the sample population used for this study was only from core faculty from one university, the relationship between the sample of respondents and of the larger population may be bias (Fowler, 2014). The sample frame left out other online adjunct faculty and administrators from other public and private online higher education institutions. Additionally, due to the nature of employment in education, typically there are more females than males, which may have skewed the sample.

Another bias from this researcher’s opinion was that it is expected that a leadership style that online adjunct faculty prefer is collaborative. To ensure that bias did not interfere with the interview results, bracketing was used to suspend judgment of personal beliefs on which leadership style may prevail before completing the interviews of the core faculty. According to Tufford and Newman (2010) “Bracketing is a method used in qualitative research to mitigate the potentially deleterious effects of preconceptions that may taint the research process” (Abstract). Putting aside any preconceptions of what was discovered in this study allowed this researcher to focus on core faculty’s lived experiences.

Ethical issues. Consideration of ethical issues plays a role in all research studies, and researchers must pay special attention to their responsibility in maintaining the well-being of their study participants (Gay et al., 2012). Ethical issues can occur throughout the research process, and researchers must be aware of a plan to address these issues. Researchers must

examine various possibilities of ethical issues throughout the phases of the research process to be sensitive to the needs of the participants, sites, stakeholders, and publishers of research (Creswell, 2013). For this to happen, researchers must consider “our roles as insiders/outsideers to the participants, [and] assessing issues that we may be fearful of disclosing” (p. 56).

This researcher conformed to all ethical standards when conducting this study. Throughout the process, participants freely agreed to participate. This was obtained by informed consent in that research participants understand the nature of the study and they have complete anonymity. This study was approved by the university’s IRB. The IRB ensured that the research study has merit allowing it to be justified for completion and that the study “follows the ethical standards of the federal Common rule” (Adams & Lawrence, 2015, p. 22).

Ethical issues may exist when collecting the qualitative research. As the research was conducted through the one-on-one interviews, this researcher remained objective on data interpretation. Often, due to the closeness of the participants and the researcher, participants may want to see the information from the researcher. It is important for the researcher to remain objective and impartial. Participants were informed about the nature of the study and the researcher limited disruptions in regular workday routines by asking participants to select date and times for the interview process. As Creswell (2013) suggested “participants should not be deceived about the nature of the research, and, in the process of priding data (e.g., through interviews, documents, and so forth), should be appraised on the general nature of the inquiry” (p. 60).

Chapter 3 Summary

Online learning continues to increase in higher education environments. Due to this continual increase, a rise in online adjunct faculty will continue. Online higher education leaders

with collaborative leadership styles will need to guide online adjunct faculty in their teaching and interaction with other instructors and the university. However, research that confirms which leadership style is most collaborative in providing an online environment where online adjunct faculty feel valued and a part of a learning community is limited (Jameson, 2013; Nworie, 2012; Tipple, 2009).

The literature reviewed for this study does not clearly indicate which leadership style is most effective for online higher education faculty leaders of online professional learning communities to effectively mentor online adjunct faculty to work collaboratively. The purpose and intent of this study was to explore core faculty perceptions on different leadership styles in the areas of collaboration and team building in PLCs and which leadership styles core faculty believe online adjunct faculty prefers to work with collaboratively.

This study may provide higher education institutions the opportunity to use the research on collaborative leadership styles to provide training and professional development for their leaders to create a collaborative team setting in an online environment. The findings of this study are discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

The purpose and intent of this study was to explore core faculty perceptions on different leadership styles in the areas of collaboration and team building in PLCs and which leadership styles core faculty believe online adjunct faculty prefers to work with collaboratively. This study examined what core faculty believes can be done to improve collaboration in PLCs and their beliefs on how to move forward productively. The potential benefit of this study is to help leaders of online learning communities gain a better understanding of leadership styles that promote online adjunct faculty collaboration in online programs.

A qualitative research design and phenomenological interview approach to examine the perception of what leader/leadership style matters to core faculty in working collaboratively with online adjunct faculty ensured that thick, rich data was obtained. A collection of data from interview questions (See Appendix A) was gathered to provide information on the perceptions of core faculty as to what leadership style creates a more collaborative professional learning community. The data collected from the interviews informed this researcher of the experiences of the interviewees in attempting to answer the research questions.

The main research question for this study was How do core faculty experience collaboration when working with online adjunct faculty in a Professional Learning Community (PLC)?

- How do core faculty describe their role in working collaboratively with their online adjunct faculty in PLCs?
- How do core faculty describe the online adjunct faculty's role in working collaboratively with PLCs?

The data analysis process consisted of transcribing all individual interview recordings that were taped during each interview. These transcriptions were reviewed the first time to determine any emerging categories and themes as they related to the research questions. A second reading of the individual transcripts provided the opportunity to record notes to confirm categories, sub-categories, and themes. A third reading provided an opportunity to sort the data into a collectible database. This analysis process allowed this researcher to sort the data into different patterns and themes related to the research questions.

The results of the data analysis indicated several overall themes. Participants in this study suggested that their role is to be a support system for online adjunct faculty while a strong emphasis is placed on treating online adjunct faculty as professionals. Building relationships/community and a collaborative climate when working with online adjunct faculty emerged as a consistent theme from the data analyzed. The leadership values/qualities and professional skills that emerged from the analysis include being open, a communicator, and a listener who is trustworthy and supportive. Additionally, there were indicators in the comments from that suggested there are challenges to collaboration due to the nature of working in a virtual environment.

In this study, participants expressed their experiences in collaborating with online adjunct faculty in a PLC by describing their role, but also their perception of relating what their online adjunct faculty's role is in working collaboratively with a PLC. The data that transpired from the interview questions readdressed the concepts of leadership, collaboration, and PLCs that aligned with the research questions and the purpose of the study.

The methodological approach of utilizing a phenomenological research design was to determine the lived experiences of core faculty in working with online adjunct faculty in a PLC.

The purpose of utilizing a phenomenological research approach was to thoroughly understand core faculty's perceptions and experiences. The use of interview questions allowed this researcher to delve deep into core faculty experiences. This methodological approach allowed for a rich and detailed analysis of the interview data to understand the lived experiences and beliefs of the participants.

The motivation of this researcher stems from the current employment position in working in a higher education online setting. When completing this study, this researcher was also in the position of core faculty working with online adjunct faculty in a PLC setting. This position involves not only teaching online Master of Education courses, but also supporting and mentoring online adjunct instructors who are teaching at the same university. Within a PLC setting that includes weekly calls and emails, online adjunct instructors are provided support and mentoring to gain a feeling and sense of belonging to the university vision and mission.

This researcher's role in this study was to select the population to interview to answer the research questions. After determining which questions would be asked, invitations were sent out to potential participants. Individual interviews were arranged with each participant who agreed to participate in the study. The individually recorded interviews were transcribed and coded into different categories, patterns, and themes.

This chapter includes the description of the sample, research methodology and analysis, the conceptual framework and methodology, the phenomenological research design and the summary of findings. The presentation of the data and results section is examined by discussing the different themes that emerged. A summary concludes the chapter.

Description of the Sample

The study site was at a non-profit private university located in the Pacific Northwest. In the university selected for the study, there are 18 core faculty members of which 9 are male and 9 are female. As the core faculty works in PLCs with online adjunct faculty, their lived experiences around the concepts of leadership and collaboration aligned with the purpose of this study. The numbers of both male and female are similar, so this researcher asked all core faculty members to participate in the proposed study.

The consent form for the participants was approved by IRB. Each participant received an invitation and consent form individually via email. Sixteen responded to participate in the study. Of the 16 participants, 10 were female and 6 were male. All participants have either a M.Ed., or an Ed.D. or Ph.D. The core faculty who participated are scattered throughout the United States, and all work in their position online. Participants' experience in working with online adjunct faculty ranged from 2–5 years of mentoring typically 25 to 27 instructors. Working in a virtual online environment also coincided with the purpose of this study.

These participants were chosen because they oversee PLCs where they mentor and support online adjunct faculty. The core faculty serves to lead the faculty and therefore it was expected that certain leadership styles would emerge from the interview data that would answer the research questions. Due to this expectation, the pool of participants was able to help with this study, making them a good choice for data.

Research Methodology and Analysis

The chosen research approach for this study was looking at the lived experience of core faculty at a university in the Pacific Northwest. To determine the lived experience of the participants, a qualitative phenomenological approach was conducted using interview questions

and member checking. To support this study, 15 interview questions (see appendix A) were asked of participants to gain a thorough examination and understanding of leadership in online communities, PLCs, and faculty professional development. The interview questions were developed around the research questions and the terms of collaboration, team building, and leadership. The use of interview questions allowed for a more thorough understanding of what participants experience when working with online adjunct faculty in a virtual environment.

Conceptual framework and methodology. Utilizing the conceptual framework in the data analysis process is at the center of managing and reducing the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). With the increase of online programs provided by higher education institutions, cultivating that sense of belonging for online adjunct instructors is critical. Administrators must acknowledge the need for collaboration within this virtual environment and train leaders who will work with online adjunct faculty to create effective collaboration, community, and team organization (Parchoma, 2005).

Because humans are social beings, there is the need to build communities with collaborative leaders by creating an online environment where adult learners are recognized as learners who are goal oriented, problem solvers, and self-directed (Frankel, 2015; Jewell, 2007; Wenger, 1998). Communities are environments where leaders are trained to understand human self-motivation and collaboration when working with a population of online adjunct faculty in a PLC. Bandura (1971) suggested that all learning is cognitive but takes place in a social setting where adult learners learn through observation, modeling, or imitation to process information. The creation of PLCs in an online environment would be beneficial to learning and a sense of belonging for online adjunct faculty.

In managing and reducing the analysis data from the interviews, open coding was used. This concept of coding allows the researcher to comb through the data in the transcripts to look for terms based on the actual language of the participant's interviews allowing descriptors to emerge (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). As this chosen research approach is from a phenomenological design to learn about the participant's lived experience pertaining to the research questions, this process allowed for deep inquiry into their experience and to understand it from their perspective.

Initially the idea of using Atlas Ti, a computer software system, was going to be implemented to help organize and structure the data from the transcripts; however, a manual system of the data analysis process was used instead. Although using computer software for data analysis can be more advantageous for some researchers, the coding process still must be done manually. Additionally, "software cannot interpret the emotional tone that is often critical to understanding the findings and therefore neglects to take into account the contextual basis of the information" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, para. 4). Computer software was not used because the emotional tone for the lived experience of the participants was required for a richer analysis.

Interview process. This study was completed using one phase of interview questions. Individual emails were sent out to all the possible participants. As each participant accepted to participate, an individual call time and date was set up. Participants were notified of the call times through an individual invitation to a Webex call.

As the interviews took place, each participant was asked the same questions, but also each was asked to share any additional information at the end of the call. Each individual participant received a copy of his or her recorded call and his or her individual transcript to check for accuracy.

The data analysis procedure used in this study for the interview portion was a careful analysis of the themes that emerged from the interview transcripts and the coding. Each participant was asked to verify his or her transcript for accuracy and any additions required. Member checking was used to “solicit participants’ views of the credibility [and dependability] of the findings and interpretations” (Creswell, 2013, p. 252). Once each of the participants verified the authenticity of his or her transcript, the analysis of the data started.

After about 12 to 13 interviews, the themes were comparable and frequent, indicating an attainment of a point of saturation; however, the interviews of all 16 participants were completed since they had volunteered. Through the interviews and transcriptions, consistent themes emerged. Due to this saturation and similar themes from both the interviews and transcribing the interviews, the determination was made that there was enough data and information to start the analysis portion of the study.

To obtain the essences of the experiences of the participants, the interview transcripts were reviewed in entirety the first time to get more of a global sense of the whole experience. Initial thoughts and themes that had started to emerge from transcribing the interviews were noted. The transcripts were then read a second time, and the use of coding was employed.

The use of coding to categorically mark different portions of the text was beneficial to sort through the interview data and to help describe, classify, and interpret all the interview transcriptions (Creswell, 2013). Coding was used to gather “interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code” (Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 2010, p.233). After the coding was complete, the transcripts were read a third time, with this researching taking notes of the different themes and concepts that emerged throughout the data while considering the research questions applied in this study. Memoing, a

concept used to record and write down different sentences, phrases, and words and the relationship to the research questions, was also used (Strauss, 1987).

The themes were defined and named to provide clear definitions relating the “analysis back to the research question and literature” (Blaxter et al., 2010, p. 233). This information was also put into table format to see the consistent themes and concepts. The evident themes and concepts were then divided into major categories for further analysis.

Phenomenological research design. The research design consisted of a qualitative phenomenological approach using individual interviews. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) stated, “The qualitative research interview is an attempt to understand the world from the subject’s point of view, to unfold the meaning of the subject’s experiences, to uncover their lived world” (p. 1). This research methodology focused on examining the lived experience of core faculty working with online adjunct instructors and their beliefs and experiences regarding collaboration. Core faculty who volunteered participated in interviews to answer questions that describe their experiences in working with their online adjunct faculty within PLCs. According to Waters (2016), “The goal of qualitative phenomenological research is to describe a ‘lived experience’ of a phenomenon” (para. 1). The phenomenon under investigation in this study was what core faculty’s lived experience is described as when working in collaboration with online adjunct faculty in a PLC.

Summary of the Findings

The initial general impressions of the transcripts were that the participants in this study express a desire to treat online adjunct faculty as professionals and as leaders to create a community of support, collaboration, and a place where they feel connected to not only the PLC, but also the university as well. This was supported by participants’ perception that online

adjunct faculty is looking for support, accessibility, and availability from them to make that bridge to the university's mission, values, and goals. Further impressions were that core faculty describes their role in working with online adjunct faculty as leaders who build relationships/trust, share experiences, and listen to promote collaboration.

Nonetheless, there were concerns expressed from participants that finding the time to increase collaboration can be challenging and motivation can be difficult. The impression surfaced throughout the interview that working collaboratively with online adjunct faculty is more effective when the adjunct is intrinsically motivated rather than when the core faculty attempts to motivate the adjunct extrinsically. The perception from the participants in this study is that the intrinsic motivation originates from encouragement, communication, listening, and treating online adjunct faculty as professionals. Additionally, the role of a leader that is a mentor, supportive, and who builds relationships/trust is positive in creating collaboration with online adjunct faculty in a PLC.

In the initial review of the interview transcripts, words and phrases were underlined that aligned with the research questions. Words and phrases were repeated across the three research questions: support, being treated as professionals, community, communication, building capacity and relationships, and feeling appreciated and connected to the university. With these clusters noted, in the second review of the transcripts, this researcher looked for the repetitive categories and themes that were starting to emerge. These emergent codes helped locate the different ideas, concepts, relationships, and meanings that participants described about lived experiences during the interviews.

Clusters of ideas around leader values and professional skills for what type of online leader should work in an online setting appeared, as core faculty described their role in working

collaboratively with online adjunct faculty. Participants expressed that as a leader working collaboratively with online adjunct faculty one must be a mentor and provide a support system to create collaboration. It was also noted that online adjunct faculty needed to be treated as professionals.

Another cluster was that of community. To be able to work collaboratively with online adjunct faculty, participants expressed that connections are made through building relationships, sharing experiences, and providing support. Participants also communicated that timely and positive feedback to online adjunct faculty allows them to feel connected, supported, and part of the university. All participants agree that to create collaboration and community, online adjunct faculty must be as treated as professionals and with respect.

In the third review of the transcripts, more organization was placed on categorizing the different clusters of information into themes. As part of this process, categories were written down and ideas, reactions, and words were noted under these categories. This process helped to make connections and interpretations of how the data was aligning with the research questions and the prominent themes that emerged. Table 1 (see Appendix B) summarizes the research questions with the descriptors identified in the transcripts amid outlining the themes and clusters of patterns that emerged.

The first research question addressed in this study was to determine how core faculty experience collaboration with working with online adjunct faculty in a PLC. Participants identified key words as the need to build capacity through participation and working together. They suggested that the weekly meetings held with online adjunct faculty allow the opportunity and time to share information and experiences and provides a sense of belonging within the university setting. Faculty support is crucial in an online setting to ensure online adjunct faculty

feel a connection to the university and acknowledgement for the work that they are doing (Grinnell et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2014).

This support furthered the theme of core faculty treating faculty as professionals. Eib and Miller (2006) explained, “A core criterion for an effective faculty development process is that, through the act of participating, faculty perceive greater connectedness to a community of practice that encourages, engages, and supports them in their teaching practice” (p. 13). Acknowledging and addressing the expertise that each online adjunct faculty member brings to the PLC and to student learning increases the value of being a part of the university. Through mentoring, support, and cooperation by core faculty, this enables online adjunct faculty to feel valued and supported in their teaching.

Being a facilitator came across as important to participants when describing how they experience collaboration when working with online adjunct faculty. To be an effective facilitator, participants reported that they must be communicators, accessible, open, and honest. They need to be mentors and encourage collaboration but not dictate to online adjunct faculty. Without this, online adjunct faculty may feel a lack of connection to the university, leading to a poor experience and decrease student learning and achievement (Frankel, 2015; Ganza, 2012; Laughlin & Moore, 2012).

The participants acknowledged that building relationships and feeling a sense of community are key in how core faculty experience collaboration when working with online adjunct faculty. By building trust and community, online adjunct faculty feels like a part not only of their PLC and the university. This sense of community provides a greater connectedness to a community of practice that encourages, engages, and supports them in their teaching practice (Eib & Miller, 2006).

The participants in this study explained about building community when they described their experience in leading a PLC with online adjunct faculty. Some reported on how they are excited to encourage collaboration on the calls by “constantly trying to engage them in the conversation and to share ideas with one another,” to come across as “encouraging and passionate,” and “they appreciate my availability and willingness to go the extra mile.” Another participant posited that it is exciting to “build friendships” with one another during the PLC meeting and working together. Through this lived experience, participants expressed that they have created relationships within the PLC and that the online adjunct faculty they serve are more like family than just a team that get together weekly. Additionally, participants acknowledged feeling that online adjunct faculty are more colleagues and friends that get together as a group to collaborate not only about university prescribed topics but to “banter” about what is happening in their personal lives.

The first sub-question of the study asked participants to describe their role in working collaboratively with online adjunct faculty in a PLC. This sub-question allowed participants to delve further into their lived experiences in working collaboratively and to describe in detail their role.

The most prominent theme was to support, mentor, and facilitate online adjunct faculty by treating them as professionals. Participants expressed that this happens by building relationships, being open, listening to online adjunct faculty’s ideas and concerns, and building a community of respect and trust. Their role in working collaboratively with online adjunct faculty creates the need to build complex relationships and a sense of community to create a positive effect on team building and faculty satisfaction as was noted in the Bateh (2013), Delotell (2014), and Henkel (2012) studies.

The second sub-question asked participants to describe the online adjunct faculty's role in working collaboratively in a PLC. This question was more difficult for participants to answer because they expressed that it is based on their perceptions of how online adjunct faculty may describe their role.

Several participants expressed that they based their answers on verbal and written feedback by online adjunct faculty in their PLCs as all interaction is completed in a virtual environment. They reported that online adjunct faculty members describe their role as wanting to be treated professionally, to be supported, and to be heard. The role of the online adjunct faculty to work collaboratively in a PLC would be to feel connected and appreciated, know that their ideas are valued, and having consistent support.

Presentation of the Data and Results

Several themes emerged from the analysis of the interviews with the participants. The themes aligned with the research questions regarding collaboration and core faculty's experience with collaboration when working with online adjunct faculty in a PLC. Participants' perceptions of what the role of leaders and/or what leadership style prevails when working with their online adjunct faculty emerged through the analysis of the interviews as well. Participants described their roles as leaders to encourage collaboration and team building within their PLCs. Table 2 (see Appendix C) outlines the themes, as well as the attributes that emerged from the interview data.

During the interviews, participants were asked to answer the interview questions as openly and honestly about their perceptions in experiencing collaboration when working with their online adjunct faculty in a PLC setting. In communicating their answers, the most prevalent themes that emerged were treating online adjunct faculty as professionals and building

a support system. Building relationships/community, leader's value/qualities, and leader's professional skills/styles surfaced often in the interviews as being important to ensure that collaboration exists. Additionally, the concept of a collaborative climate emerged as an area that requires core faculty to ensure that online adjunct faculty feels connected and appreciated in an online setting. Moreover, challenges for collaboration emerged as participants answered questions about different ways to collaborate and team building. As they described their lived experience in working with online adjunct faculty, the themes that emerged aligned with the research questions.

Online faculty as professionals. The indication that all online adjunct faculty members should be treated as professionals was a consistent theme. The overall assertion from the participants was that online adjunct faculty members are professionals. They want to make sure that they are treating them with respect.

As a leader who creates collaboration with their online adjunct faculty, it was mentioned that it is important to build respect, trust, and positive relationships. One participant said:

I have to have open listening to their feedback and if my leadership style is not working for them, then I have to be open to listen to what I can do to strengthen ... ensure that their professional needs are met.

Another participant shared, "Being respectful in that they are professionals ...we are all professionals and we all have a lot to offer." Participants asserted that their online adjunct faculty are professionals; however, they also acknowledged that they must remember that as a leader, they must provide support by being open, listening to online adjunct faculty's ideas, and being accessible. Another participant added:

PLC group expects their leader to take the responsibility to be the leader and at the same time to allow them to be independent—all professionals ... Not stepping on toes and making them feel like they are colleagues, we are not supervisors, we are mentors to support them and we are working right alongside them.

This type of leadership will validate the professionalism of the online adjunct faculty by building trust and community.

Participants talked about how online adjunct faculty members are professionals and need to be treated with respect so that collaboration can occur in their PLCs. One participant explained, “There are all kinds of examples that instructors bring to the meeting ... high level of professional dialogue.” For collaboration to occur within core faculty’s PLCs, open communication and trust are crucial to build relationships. Participants also shared that as professionals working with online adjunct faculty who are professionals in their field their ideas need to be valued through encouragement, inspiration, and communication. This will build confidence in online adjunct faculty’s abilities to work with students to increase learning and achievement.

Support system. Through the analysis of the transcripts, the perception of having a support system emerged. The support system among the participants consists of weekly PLC meetings where instructors can collaborate with each other through emails and one-on-one calls with core faculty. Having a system in place that provides support through quality training and mentoring allows online adjunct faculty to feel valued for their work online and more connected to the university.

Online adjunct faculty members are adult learners who may enter this higher education field without the skills required to collaborate in virtual environments. Participants expressed

that their role is a mentor and supporter who creates a sense of community and support within their PLC. “I think that they are looking for support—my instructors say thanks for the support, you are always there for me. They do not have to guess in my consistency in my support for them and my help for them,” said one participant.

The theme of a support system for their online adjunct faculty was consistent throughout the transcripts of the interviews of the participants. They continually acknowledged that their role is not that of supervisor, but as a mentor and guide to support the adjunct faculty member’s work as instructors for the university. “We are not supervisors, we are mentors to support them, and we are working right alongside them,” said one participant. Another participant shared, “Being able to rely on me and each other, foster each other.” They expressed that online adjunct faculty believe core faculty roles consist of support, accessibility, availability, and making them feel connected and appreciated for their work. Another participant asserted that to build the support system, online adjunct faculty must be “able to rely on me and each other—foster each other.”

This system of support aligns with the concept of social learning and how adult learners (online adjunct faculty) require encouragement and acknowledgement for their contribution to student learning and achievement (Grinnell et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2014). One participant reported that to provide encouragement and acknowledgement to online adjunct faculty is to “spend a great deal of time focusing on the positive” and asking what support they require. “They are appreciative of it, because everyone wants positive feedback,” explained another participant. Another statement focused on the idea of intrinsic motivation by creating open lines of communication and listening to what online adjunct faculty members have to share. Another

participant added, “I try to inspire them ... leads to a feeling of not only being a part of a PLC, but family.”

Having a support system in place through the creation of PLCs allows core faculty to provide the mentoring, training, and support required to help online adjunct faculty feel a valuable part of the community. One participant stated, “Instructors need to feel that they meet expectations and exceed expectations and that they are valued ... I think that is very important that they feel valued what they bring individually and as a community.” The support system is a way for core faculty to not only encourage and acknowledge, but to motivate online adjunct faculty as well. Another participant said, “When you have PLC instructors understand that you are there for them and will do everything in your power to help them, that is very motivating; it is the way that you communicate and collaborate with your PLC members.” Another suggested:

Most of the motivation is to live up to the university’s expectations, mission, and goals.

Be there as a support and mentor, and always remind them that I want to support them in any way that I can and direct them in what they are doing, when needed.

Core faculty focus on providing the support system is to build the collaboration that is crucial for online adjunct faculty to build relationships and community.

Building relationships/community. Build relationships and communities where people interact with one another, make connections, and collaborate requires support and communication. Building relationships and communities where trust, credibility, and support exist emerged as an important theme when participants described experience in their role in working collaboratively with their online adjunct faculty in PLCs. One participant explained, “It is not competition but a cooperative effort.” Another stated, “Collaboration is key—it is the way

of the world, we no longer work in isolation, we work in teams to build relationships—when you work in a team, together everyone achieves more.”

Connecting online adjunct instructors to what is happening within the university allows them to feel connected, valued, and appreciated rather than an environment where one can feel isolated and disconnected. “Our role is to support faculty ... fundamentally key to connecting our community to the university,” explained one participant. They described their leadership style for building and maintaining relationships is to treat online adjunct faculty as the professionals that they are by providing required support. Another participant said:

Building relationships, connecting them to what is going on at the university ... helping them thinking through processes and always having a plan, always being able to talk about next steps from good to great, from great to maintaining excellence. I think that my professional motto is we are a team serving the community and we must deliver excellence without excuses.

This community building through the establishment of having online adjunct faculty in PLCs provides a community of practice that is supportive (Eib & Miller, 2006).

Building a community where relationships flourish consists of a respectful learning culture, respectful interaction, and positive interdependence (Glazer et al., 2013). One participant shared, “Collaboration is key—it is the way of the world, we no longer work in isolation, we work in teams to build relationships—when you work in a team, together everyone achieves more.” However, each online adjunct instructor has different needs and motivators in working collaboratively within his or her PLC. A different participant said:

In terms of what we do in our work of building communities and relationships, take different routes to meet different needs and different motivators ... building relationships

... that is what we try to do, but understanding that there is a wide array of building relationships.”

Building relationships within online communities will increase social interaction and enhance a teacher’s experience in working in an online higher education setting (Mackey & Evans, 2011).

To build relationships and communities where core faculty have consistent and regular communication and involvement with online adjunct faculty, providing support and mentoring is required. This support and mentoring imparts the feeling of trust, respect, and value as professionals by online adjunct faculty. One participant added:

I think that to describe it collaboratively, we have worked hard to build relationships ... would be comfortable in contacting me with any issues that they have had ... that is maintaining open lines of communication and trust ... valuing and respecting them as professionals.

Participants also expressed the idea that in building and maintaining relationships with online adjunct faculty, their role is not that of boss, but a leader that provides support and mentoring to allow for collaboration. One participant suggested that a leader provides support “coming from a position of master rather than expert.” The themes of leadership values/qualities and leadership skills/styles linked to the theme of building relationships and community. Participants identified attributes of which leadership style is the most advantageous in creating an environment of connections, support, and community.

Leader’s values/qualities. Although the role of core faculty at this university is not that of a supervisor, but rather the role of a support and mentor, the concept of leadership exists. Participants were asked during the interviews to describe the most important values and qualities that a leader must have to work collaboratively with online adjunct faculty in a PLC and to

describe their perceptions of what type of leader they believed themselves to be. Values and qualities mentioned were being communicators and listeners, which emerged as the most important; however, relationships, trust, honesty, transparency, and being a professional were also asserted as participants described experiences in their role. Additionally, some thoughts included “to be open and listening,” “are a genuine listener ... all about listening to others first,” and “the ability to collaborative and listen.” Other expressions included “I think that the most important values are my support of each person, where they are, their own level, their own experience,” “being trustworthy, integrity, honesty,” and “it is a two-way street—not that you are on the top or they are at the bottom.”

When asked to describe the most important values that they demonstrate as a leader, one participant described it as “an attribute that a leader should have ... building positive relations with any age group...strong positive relationships.” Another view expressed was to allow “communication to happen is so important ... as a leader we do not have all the answers.”

Another shared:

I think that one of the biggest values is I value the people I work with and their professionalism and integrity. “It is important for me to value them as educators and experts in their own right; that is to say that while I recognize my role as group leader and coordinator, it’s important for me to recognize them as educators.

Although there were similar answers to what values and qualities a leader should have, there were slight differences as well. Different leadership qualities exist in both the leaders and in the faculty of professional learning communities, as do different theories on what makes an effective leader in an online higher education setting (Fullan, 2011; Greenleaf, n.d.; Holt et al., 2014; Meizrow, 1991; Parchoma, 2005; Tipple, 2009).

Some participants expressed that empathy, understanding, and communication are important values, while others noted that respect, trust, honesty, professionalism, and integrity are equally important. “Most important that as a leader is respect. I respect them as persons, experiences, knowledge base—just everything about them,” mentioned one participant. Another said:

I value the people that I work with and their professionalism and integrity to keep it real and let them sort of lead the conversation but be open to the fact that I have been where they are in regards to being an instructor.

One more participant added, “Showing that I am there for them and we are a community, empower them that what they are doing is important and what we do is important.” Another participant concluded, “High levels of trust between the whole PLC ... member to member as well as me ... integrity and honesty.”

Leader’s skills/styles. When asked to describe what professional skills are important in leading your PLC team in a collaborative way, the ideas of being supportive, a communicator, one who listens, and treats online adjunct faculty as professionals materialized throughout all participant’s answers. One participant articulated thoughts as “to really hear what our PLC members are sharing, may transform their way of thinking or transform my way of thinking and do not come across as authoritative.” Another specified, “Communication is the number one strategy.” The belief is that accessibility and availability of core faculty are also key skills that a leader should possess to ensure that online adjunct faculty felt appreciated and connected. To have a sense of collaboration and belonging, the participants argued that instructors should share their knowledge as well, not just have it come from the leader. However, different leadership styles do exist as described by the participants.

To treat online adjunct faculty as professionals, two leadership styles emerged. First, being a servant leader: one who allows and encourages participation and collaboration, and second, a transformative leader: one who works closely with people, creating a vision for change but empowering others to be involved. The leadership style of servant leadership stems from Greenleaf (n.d.) where the focus of leadership is on the person, not the organization. The servant leader puts his or her followers first, shares power, and does not lead from the top down. Several participants expressed the concept of servant leadership when asked what type of online leader they perceived themselves in leading their online community. One participant explained, “The leadership that I try to emulate is servant leadership and finding out the needs of others and how I can meet them.” Another said, “I think it can be summed in the phrase of servant leadership ... love, kindness, empathy, a duty of motivation to go the extra mile to ensure that people are understanding.” Additionally, a different participant shared:

Servant leadership. I feel that I truly serve the people I lead, make their lives and jobs easier so that if I can help in some way ... important. I value the input of all my instructors, and I wouldn't ask anything of them that I wouldn't do in an online setting.

The concept of being a transformative leader is to be a leader who encourages collaboration. The four principles of this leadership style are individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influences (Marzano et al., 2005). A transformational leader wants to inspire others to do more than they thought possible and stimulating individuality and creativity. One participant proposed, “As a transformational leader you have to trust and employ the principles of distributive leadership and you have to trust that they will get it done. I believe in empowering.” Another stated, “They would say that I am a transformational leader. I believe in empowering.”

Terms such as accessibility, openness, honesty, trust, integrity, organization, communication, and building capacity were expressed by more than half of the comments by participants when asked if professional skills are important in leading a PLC team in a collaborative way. One said, “I think that we look at leadership. I think that is really ... I think more participant ... a balanced approach ... receiving input from the group and meeting the needs of the instructors...collaborative on different issues.” Another described leadership in the following way:

Leaders in the online environment are at heart, much like leadership in any other kind of environment. The environment and medium are different, and our interaction is largely through email and rarely is it face-to-face. The principles are the same, but I think that we have to be more intentional about our leadership in that medium and maybe express it in somewhat different ways given the medium through which we work.

In all, the participants asserted that leaders must motivate and inspire online adjunct faculty to increase teaching and student learning.

Collaborative climate. According to the participants, to create a collaborative climate within the PLC setting, teams must share experiences, build relationships, and treat each other as professionals. “Let everyone know we are a team ... sharing different struggles ... personal or academic ... adds to team atmosphere,” exclaimed one participant. They talked about how the weekly meeting for online adjunct instructors allows for sharing, listening, and relevant information from the university to be distributed and discussed. “Being organized, having a clear agenda and information on it includes relevant information,” said another participant. Another suggested it is important “to create that environment where everyone feels comfortable, safe and create an environment that is positive, upbeat, and happy.” These meetings allow for

online adjunct instructors an opportunity to get to know one another better, form groups where instructors teach the same courses or are in the same course program, and provide an environment where all can share ideas, thoughts, and ask questions. A different participant expressed that the “consistency of having the calls and having the same PLC members builds trust and community... share our personal and professional lives ... those support a positive climate ... every member feels valued.”

Calibration and validating online adjunct instructors’ ideas and suggestions also emerged as important when trying to create a collaborative climate. One participant stated: “I think part of a supportive and collaborative climate is calibration. It is hard to have collaborative without calibration, reaching deeper, getting into faculty course ... validating them for what they are doing.” Working in an online setting does not allow for face-to-face interaction, which can make online adjunct faculty feeling isolated and not connected to the university’s mission and goals.

Macquire (2008) suggested in her literature review that team building and collaboration are necessary to collaborative learning communities. The need for social interaction and learning are critical to inspire and motivate online adjunct faculty in an online higher education setting. The participants in this study shared that involving instructors and asking them to share their ideas encourages collaboration. When asked to describe ways that allow for team collaborating in the PLC setting, the participants proposed that supporting and mentoring instructors while building trust, building relationships, and sharing experiences are important. “Timely communication, supportive specific answers, and always available by email and phone when needed,” said one participant, are ways reported to allow for team collaboration. However, it was also mentioned that there is a challenge to creating ways to collaborate.

Challenges to collaboration. Throughout the interview questions, participants described how they experience or create collaboration with their online adjunct faculty in a PLC and on a day-to-day basis. Although many described a positive experience in working collaboratively with their online adjunct instructors, some expressed concerns. Humans are social beings and tend to adapt to group settings and work in collaboration.

In the context of this study, collaboration occurs in a virtual setting. Online adjunct instructors are working in a virtual environment as are the core faculty. This can create some challenges such as time constraints and online adjunct faculty participation. “As we know that we have some time difficulties because we are so far apart from each other, that is the reality,” said a participant. Another expressed:

I think that I need to work with that. If I asked them ... I am not sure we do any team building, online is a new frontier for all of us. I think a lot if it has to do with time frame, and we meet in such a short amount of time and so many of them.

When asked about ways that core faculty allows for team collaboration in their PLC, some acknowledged this to be hard or a challenge. One participant shared:

That is really hard. I don't know. The only way that I have been able to accomplish this is if I have some folks that are eager to try to collaborate. However, there is really not a time to have team activities with them ... really not a strong point ...with a 30-minute call once a week and a topic to go over, we typically do not do a lot of team-work on our calls.

Another challenge that expressed by participants when asked about creating collaboration in PLCs in an online setting was based on the information supplied by the university that had to be shared in the weekly meetings. With meetings already scripted and scheduled, some participants

shared that there is not a lot of time for collaboration. One participant stated: “I do a lot of talking, as we have to feed information, and there is not a lot of time for collaboration.” Another added, “One of the things ... 30 minutes ... and you want to fill it up, so you have the tendency to become a talking head.” However, the participant did express that despite these challenges, being part of a learning community can lead to success in teaching and learning.

The interview questions examined the participants’ lived experience when working collaboratively with online adjunct faculty in a PLC. They were eager to share their experiences when answering the questions, and in-depth stories developed as they explained and described their experiences in working with online adjunct faculty. Although the interview questions were not provided before the individual interviews, each participant was enthusiastic about sharing information about working with their online adjunct faculty in a PLC setting and how their experiences confirmed the type of leader they presumed they were. The data that transpired from the interview questions readdressed the concepts of leadership, collaboration, and PLCs that align with the research questions and the purpose of the study.

Chapter 4 Summary

The purpose and intent of this study was to explore core faculty perceptions on different leadership styles in the areas of collaboration and team building in PLCs and which leadership styles core faculty believe online adjunct faculty prefers to work with collaboratively. Participants in this study described their experiences of collaborating and working with online adjunct faculty, which allowed for the development of themes of treating online adjunct faculty as professionals, having a support system in place, building relationships and community, examining leader’s values and qualities and professional skills/styles, and having an environment that has a collaborative climate. Participants’ lived experiences of working in a PLC setting with

online adjunct faculty provided the data, which emerged from the interview questions and allowed for a rich discussion of the overall themes. This discussion provided an overall understanding of the phenomena surrounding the lived experiences of core faculty and their perceptions when working with online adjunct faculty in a PLC setting.

The overall analysis of the data and the themes that emerged from the interview questions and how they aligned with the research questions were presented in this. Chapter 5 provides a summary and discussion of the results, a discussion of the results in relation to the literature, limitations, implications of the results for practice, policy, and theory, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

Through a qualitative phenomenological research approach, this study consisted of interviewing 16 core faculty members (leaders working with online adjunct faculty in a professional learning community) and learning about their perceptions on different leadership styles in the areas of collaboration and team building in PLCs. Core faculty participants, through 15 interview questions, described their lived experience in their role in working collaboratively with online adjunct faculty in PLCs. The purpose and intent of this study was to explore core faculty perceptions on different leadership styles in the areas of collaboration and team building in PLCs and which leadership styles core faculty believe online adjunct faculty prefers to work with collaboratively.

This chapter presents, explains, and answers what the results of this study mean with relation to the research questions posed. Personal interpretation and insight of the results of the study provide confirmation of the existing literature as well as form suggestions for further research. This chapter also summarizes the study by reviewing the results in relation to the research questions and themes discovered from the analysis of the data. Within the discussion of the results section, conclusions are explored in relation to adult learning, social learning, and education learning. In the discussion of the results of the study in relation to the literature, conclusions are made in relation to adult learning theory, social learning theory, educational change theory, professional learning communities, leadership theories, and mentoring. The limitations that existed in this study are discussed as well as the implication of the results for practice, policy, and theory. Recommendations for further research are explored and a conclusion of the study is provided.

Summary of the Results

Utilizing a qualitative phenomenological research design approach, this researcher sought to examine the lived experiences of core faculty when working collaboratively with online adjunct faculty. The phenomenon of collaboration for adult learners in a PLC was explored by having core faculty participants describe collaboration when working with online adjunct faculty, their role in working collaboratively with their online adjunct faculty, and how they would describe the online adjunct faculty's role in working collaboratively. A collection of data from 15 questions (see Appendix A) was analyzed from the phone interviews of 16 core faculty members working at a non-profit private university in the Pacific Northwest. Through these interviews, core faculty described their lived experiences to provide answers to the research questions and sub-questions:

Research question: How do core faculty experience collaboration when working with online adjunct faculty in a Professional Learning Community (PLC)?

- How do core faculty describe their role in working collaboratively with their online adjunct faculty in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)?
- How do core faculty describe the online adjunct faculty's role in working collaboratively with Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)?

Various theories, adult learning theory, educational change theory, and social learning theory, were explored throughout the analysis of the data to examine collaborative leadership styles in online learning communities. These theories supported the guiding principles of this study to determine the answers to the research questions. As online higher education faculty requires the leadership skills to lead, support, and mentor online adjunct faculty in an online community, this alignment supports certain conclusions.

Bandura (1971) and Knowles (1970) (as cited in Caruso, 2010) contended that adult learners require a self-concept of being responsible for their lives to learn. Online higher education faculty leaders require an understanding of how adults learn to provide the necessary support, training, and mentoring skills to ensure that online adjunct faculty feel supported and accepted in an online higher education learning environment. For this to occur, online higher education faculty leaders must understand that adult learners are problem solvers, goal oriented, provide a wealth of experience, and have internal motivators such as self-esteem and self-actualization (Caruso, 2010).

Fullan (2011) contends that for leaders to be successful and able to lead through change, the understanding of human self-motivation plays a key role. This aligns with transformative learning theory, servant leadership theory, and other research on situational and distributive leadership (Greenleaf, n.d.; Holt et al., 2014; Mezirow, 1991; Parchoma, 2005; Tipple, 2009). For collaboration to occur, leaders must grapple with the leadership skills and styles that will enable them to facilitate collaboration in professional learning communities in online higher education. Analysis of the data from this study revealed that leadership skills and styles that lend themselves to a collaborative approach are most effective in leading online higher education faculty.

Bandura (1971) and Lave and Wenger (1991) suggested that all learning takes place in a social setting. For adults to learn from one another, modeling and observation is required to process information being conveyed. Therefore, social learning theory aligns with the idea of creating and implementing online PLCs to create an environment where learning, team building, and collaboration exist. With PLCs established, online higher education faculty leaders can

create environments where knowledge and learning take place to ensure social learning and collaboration.

The findings in this study support the literature review regarding adult learning theory, educational change theory, social learning theory, professional development, leadership theories, and mentoring. Faculty support, PLCs used to build community, and professional development were the outcomes of this study, which was to determine whether collaboration exists when core faculty work with online adjunct faculty in a PLC. For online higher education faculty leaders to provide collaboration with online adjunct faculty, a thorough understanding of the results of the study related to leadership, PLCs, and faculty professional development is warranted.

Grinnell et al. (2012) concluded in their study that faculty support and the concept of feeling valued lead to a connection to the university and promoting a more positive experience. To achieve this, implementation of learning communities must be achieved for online higher education adjunct faculty to feel a sense of belonging and to create collaboration and trust within online higher education institutions (Glazer et al., 2013; Hillard, 2012). However, challenges exist, so online higher education faculty leaders need to be aware of what motivators influence collaboration amongst online higher education adjunct faculty to ensure a feeling of a greater connectedness to a community of practice (Eib & Miller, 2006).

To achieve a goal of collaboration, online higher education faculty leaders need to have the training to support and mentor online higher education adjunct faculty (Frankel, 2015; Ganza, 2012; Laughlin & Moore, 2012). Quality professional development by trained leaders will guarantee more connection with online adjunct faculty, creating an environment of collaboration and trust. Williams et al. (2014) argued that for online adjunct faculty to have a feeling of connection to the university, ongoing communication, continuing education, and

feedback are crucial. Online higher education faculty leaders provide this ongoing communication and engagement with their online adjunct faculty members so that they feel valued and supported.

Different leadership theories and styles exist in creating collaboration with online adjunct faculty in an online environment. Although research suggests different theories—transformative theory, servant leadership theory, and change leadership theory—studies have not been conclusive regarding which theory produces collaboration in a virtual environment (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Burns, 1978; Greenleaf, n.d.; Fullan, 2011). Leaders need to provide the moral, educational, and technological support to online adjunct faculty. However, prior research is not conclusive on which leadership styles promote the motivational guidance for online adjunct faculty (Tipple, 2009). This study used these theories and literature to triangulate the data to determine the prominent themes that exist to make conclusions.

Themes in this study were categorized and labeled after three different reviews of the interview data. The themes identified were online adjunct faculty as professionals, support system, building relationships/community, leader's values/qualities, leader's professional skills/style, collaborative climate, and challenges to collaboration. Providing a support system, building relationships/community, and establishing a collaborative climate were mentioned frequently by participants as factors that are important for collaboration and working collaboratively in a PLC.

To determine which leadership theories are most effective in creating collaboration, core faculty participants in this study identified different leaders' values/qualities and professional skills/style. Terms used to describe collaborative leaders were facilitators and communicators, who treat faculty as professionals through mentoring, support, and cooperation to build

relationships and create a sense of community. Additionally, collaborative leaders were described as people that build respect and trust and ensure that online adjunct faculty not only feel connected and supported to their PLC, but also to the university as well.

Collaboration was described often through these themes; however, there were challenges to create a place of collaboration due to time constraints and online adjunct participation in PLC weekly meetings. In this study, collaboration between core faculty and online adjunct faculty occurs in a virtual environment and rarely face-to-face. Although some core faculty participants in this study expressed that using the camera on their computers allows a visual for their meetings, the time allotted for meetings and participation from online adjunct faculty is short.

The conclusion drawn from the data in this study shows that the lived experience of core faculty view collaboration and leadership as necessary components in working with online adjunct faculty in PLCs. The idea of building trust and respect when working with online adjunct faculty is crucial to experiencing a sense of collaboration. As leaders, the desire to build teams, relationships, and communities of practice are factors associated with experiencing the essence of collaboration through a support system of mentoring, communicating, and treating faculty as professionals. Providing support for online adjunct faculty by working collaboratively in PLCs creates a sense of belonging, value, and appreciation. Challenges such as time limits of meetings and online adjunct participation hinders the ability to create effective teams and work collaboratively.

Discussion of the Results

The results of this study support the theories of adult learning, social learning, and education learning. The results suggest that there is a sense that collaboration and building relationships within the PLC setting is critical. As adult learners are goal oriented and problem

solvers, they require a social setting in which to be successful. Therefore, educational leaders must understand the values/qualities and skills required to encourage collaboration and community as asserted by Bandura (1971), Fullan (2011), and Lave and Wenger, (1991).

Core faculty members in this study were asked to determine how they experience collaboration in working with online adjunct faculty in a PLC. They described personal lived experiences in working collaboratively with online adjunct faculty, and the majority agrees that collaboration exists when supported by their leadership. Results indicate that core faculty members want to treat online adjunct faculty as professionals while also providing a bridge to the university's mission and vision. Using PLCs to build trust, relationships, and share experiences with one another helps to promote the concept of collaboration. Nonetheless, there are challenges that emerged such as finding the time to collaborate and to provide team building in a virtual environment to encourage a high participation rate in collaboration for all online adjunct faculty.

Core faculty members assert that the idea of a virtual environment is one that allows for participants to gather from different time zones using a PLC setting. However, time factors come into play as a challenge in creating an environment where collaboration exists rather than just a setting of one where information is disseminated. Creating an environment where online adjunct faculty feel support from their mentors, a place where they feel connected to others in their PLC, and the university became a constant theme throughout the answering of interview questions.

According to Venables (2018), "Facilitating our fellow teachers is an essentially human endeavor" (part 1, para. 1). The idea of creating a PLC is to create an environment where a facilitator's effectiveness relies on the relationship building that occurs within this setting.

Although the idea of a weekly meeting, emails, and one-on-one phone calls allows core faculty to establish an environment of collaboration, the results of this study show that the time allowed for the meetings and the interaction within the meetings is not enough to create the collaboration that is required to have an effective PLC.

Core faculty expressed the need for online adjunct faculty to be treated as professionals, which should be accomplished through a facilitator and mentor, not a supervisor. However, to be a facilitator and mentor, one must also be a leader. The results of this study suggest that the leader must not be one who dictates, but a leader who not only communicates effectively but also is open, honest, and listens. Being a leader who builds complex relationships and a sense of community allows online adjunct faculty to be treated as professionals, create an environment of collaboration, thus creating a positive team who feels connected to the university.

Eib and Miller (2006) posited that allowing faculty to gain a sense of community through practices of encouragement, engagement, and support increases their feeling of self-worth while increasing their connection with the university. Without mentoring and support in a PLC setting, the results suggest that faculty will not feel valued and respected in their work nor a part of an environment where they experience connection and acknowledgement for their teaching as was also concluded by Grinnell et al. (2012) and Williams et al. (2014).

The first sub-question of this study involved the core faculty participants in this study describing their role in working collaboratively with online adjunct faculty in a PLC. Results show that to work collaboratively, they must build relationships, listen, support, mentor, and facilitate online adjunct faculty to provide a sense of community. Venables (2018) argued that to create environments of community and collaboration, one must build social capital of the participants. “Social capital refers to the quality of interactions among teachers ... which shows

significantly higher gains in student learning” (Chapter 1, para. 2). This need to build social capital is reflected in the results of this study. Core faculty express the need to provide communities where relationships are built, maintained, and nurtured.

The second sub-question involved core faculty participants in this study describing online adjunct faculty members’ role in working collaboratively in a PLC. When examining this question, only core faculty participant perceptions were provided, as online adjunct faculty were not involved in this study. The interview questions requested that core faculty answer them as they *thought* online adjunct faculty may answer the same question. This was a challenge for some to answer, as they were not sure how their perceptions may line up with online adjunct faculty. However, the results indicated that core faculty feel that online adjunct faculty *would* describe their role as one where they would collaborate during weekly calls so that they could share ideas, feel connected, and appreciated in their work.

Other themes emerged throughout this study that are also important to note. Online adjunct faculty as professionals, having a support system, building relationships/community, collaborative climate, and challenges to collaboration are important factors when core faculty participants in this study described their roles as leaders to encourage collaboration and team building. To provide the leadership they feel is required to create a sense of a community of collaboration, various values/qualities and professional skills/style emerged in working with online adjunct faculty. When discussing leadership, core faculty participants expressed that they are not supervisors. Rather, they serve in a role of facilitator where they support and mentor online adjunct faculty. A leader is one who maintains relationships with online adjunct faculty, not as being an expert in the field, but provides support to allow for collaboration and community.

Building positive relationships also was mentioned as being an important value that should be demonstrated as a leader through open, honest communication. However, the results were not conclusive. Not all core faculty participants in this study agree with the values and qualities that a leader should possess.

For a leader's skills/styles, core faculty participants in this study agree that to lead a PLC in a collaborative way, leaders must be supportive, communicate ideas, and listen to all points of view while treating online adjunct faculty as professionals. They assert that online adjunct faculty should share their knowledge to feel appreciated and connected. Accessibility and availability are results that core faculty participants in this study agree on, so that online adjunct faculty members have a sense of belonging not only in the PLC setting, but also in the university's missions and goals.

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

It is important to discuss the results from this study related to the literature reviewed in the areas of adult learning theory, educational change theory, social learning theory, professional learning communities, leadership theories, and mentoring.

Adult learning theory. Andragogy (Knowles, 1970) is significant when analyzing the data in this study. This theory examines the art and science of helping adults in the learning process. "Learning theories and models, such as andragogy, are important for instructors to understand as they work with adults in an online or distance learning environment" (Cercone, 2008, p. 138). As core faculty lead online adjunct faculty in their role, an understanding of how adults learn is crucial.

To work collaboratively in a virtual environment, leaders must understand that online adjunct faculty members are adult learners who are goal-oriented, problem solvers, and self-

directed but may lack the necessary skills to be successful. Adult learners seek to learn not based on external motivation but on internal motivation (i.e., a better quality of life). When learning, adult learners need to understand why they are learning the content to problem solve and share their experiences with others (Caruso, 2016). Online higher education faculty leaders must appreciate what adult learners have to offer in a social setting to create and implement a sense of belonging and being valued for their ideas. Creating and implementing a PLC where ideas and thoughts can be shared will encourage adult learners to participate and collaborate, leading to successful learning communities.

Educational change theory. Fullan (2011) suggested that educational leaders should be individuals who envision change by understanding human self-motivation. This theory, combined with Greenleaf's (n.d.) servant leadership theory and other leadership theories (Holt et al., 2014; Parchoma, 2005; Tipple, 2009), prompts leaders to recognize which style works the best in working with faculty to encourage collaboration, communication, and team building. Without collaboration leadership styles in place, change will not happen.

Fullan (2011) said, "Realized effectiveness is what motivates people to do more" (p. 52). In working with adult learners, although extrinsic motivation exists with pay and time, intrinsic motivation is equally important. The author added, "Extrinsic motivators have limited effectiveness" (p. 54). Leaders must be willing to provide a leadership style that embraces change and "build collaborative structures so that collaboration and team building are present" (p. 75).

Although results of this study were not conclusive in which leadership style prevails, core faculty participants concluded that leaders should encourage collaboration, communication, and team building to ensure online adjunct faculty feel appreciated and a part of the university.

Social learning theory. Bandura (1971) suggested that although all learning is considered cognitive in nature, it does all take place in a social setting. Learning is conducted through observation, modeling, or imitation creating the need for learning to take place where others interact and collaborate. This theory combined with situated learning and communities of practice or the *Social Theory of Learning* (Lave & Wenger, 1991) allows for learning to take place in communities where knowledge is shared. This cognitive learning is shared through communities where adults collaborate and communicate to build teams of learning.

Providing an environment where socialization and learning can happen is beneficial for online adjunct faculty, as it creates a place where there is a sense of belonging. Core faculty participants in this study express that the desire for learning within their online environments is collaborative and creates a sense of community. In a virtual environment, the results show that this type of setting is conducive to building communities where collaboration occurs.

Professional learning communities. According to Macquire (2008), the implementation of learning communities is effective and beneficial in creating collaboration with adults. The implementation of PLCs helps leaders to incorporate team building and collaboration so that online adjunct faculty will feel a sense of value and belonging. Collaboration increases interaction between online adjunct faculty and leaders. which creates a community of practice that supports them in their teaching practice (Eib & Miller, 2006).

Mackey and Evans (2011) found from their study that building educational communities will help to increase social interaction but must be maintained over time to be effective. However, PLCs must have strong leadership to be effective in a virtual environment. Online higher education leaders must possess the necessary skills to be a community where online adjunct faculty members feel supported and encouraged. To have effective support, online

higher education leaders must create learning communities where collaboration, team building, and communication exist (Jameson, 2013; Tipple, 2009). The results of this study support the theories of how adults learn, the need for communities to build social interaction and learning, and the need to increase interaction with other instructors.

Leadership theories. Zavani (2008) reported that leadership theories have existed since the industrial age when organizations were first created. Also, due to the increase of technology, organizations such as higher education institutions have seen a dramatic increase in the use of online courses being offered, thus creating a significant increase in online adjunct faculty. Tipple (2009) contended that “post-secondary education leaders and administrators are currently facing two separate but inter-related trends: the growth in online education, and the significant increase in adjunct (part-time) faculty” (p. 1). This increased dependence on online adjunct faculty has created the need for administrators to determine which leadership theories/styles may be advantageous in virtual environments.

Administrators must determine which leadership approach will develop the skills of the ever increasingly pool of online adjunct faculty. Although not conclusive, the results of this study indicate that two leadership theories would be most effective in allowing leaders to be facilitators and mentors in an online environment rather than supervisors. Core faculty members as leaders encourage, support, and mentor online adjunct faculty members to create an environment where the leader’s focus is on implementing a place of trust, collaboration, and teamwork. Transformative leadership and servant leadership are two theories that lend themselves to harnessing the innovation and creativity required to have online adjunct faculty work collaboratively and feel a part of the university’s mission and goals.

Transformative leadership is like that of servant leadership; however, the primary difference is the leader's focus. In servant leadership, the focus is on people first, while the focus of transformative leadership is on the objectives of the organization. Both theories lend themselves to the concept of working with online adjunct faculty in a PLC setting. Study findings suggest that core faculty express that educational leaders need to be role models who inspire online adjunct faculty and encourage innovation and collaboration.

Mentoring. According to Williams et al. (2014), online higher education leaders who mentor online adjunct faculty provide them with a sense of belonging, a feeling of being valued, and being appreciated in their teaching positions. Mentoring also provides online adjunct faculty constructive and continuing feedback creating interaction and support. This sense of feeling valued and appreciated by core faculty allows for online adjunct faculty to feel connectedness to the university's mission and vision.

Quality mentoring provides leaders the opportunity to facilitate quality training and a support system for online adjunct faculty. Core faculty participants in this study express that mentoring is critical when working with online adjunct faculty. There is a need for mentoring to ensure that online adjunct faculty members feel connected, valued, and appreciated.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study is that only core faculty, all adult learners from one private university, were asked to participate. This study examined the lived experiences of the core faculty in relation to their perceptions and perspectives on working collaboratively with online adjunct faculty in a PLC setting. Although this study findings align with the research questions, there are still limiting factors regarding the experiences of the online adjunct faculty.

Although this study aligns with relevant theories, the scope of the study was limited in the number of participants and the use of only one university, which could reduce its overall significance. Additionally, data interpretation by this researcher could have contained minor preconceptions, which could have influenced this study's findings. However, when analyzing the data, this researcher employed the use of bracketing and epoche to ensure that the conclusions were logical based on the data (Tufford & Newman, 2010).

Careful attention was placed on direct analysis of the data from the interviews to focus only on the lived experiences of the participants. However, honesty and accuracy from the answers to the interview questions are dependent on the reliability of the study findings.

Implication of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory

As the online education world continues to expand, so will the rise of online adjunct faculty. With the expansion creates the need for virtual environments where online adjunct faculty can feel appreciated, treated as professionals, and a part of the university. Administrators of higher education institutions must acknowledge the need for hiring leaders that will be able to train online adjunct faculty in an environment that embraces collaboration and team building (Parchoma, 2005). Online adjunct faculty are adult learners that are problem solvers, goal oriented, and self-directed (Frankel, 2015; Jewell, 2007; Wenger, 1998).

Results of this study confirm that a social network is required for collaboration to occur, but it must be one where leaders have the skill set to not only work collaboratively with online adjunct faculty, but also possess the knowledge to train, support, and mentor them. Additionally, the results indicate that the implementation of an environment where collaboration takes place and online adjunct faculty can interact and connect provides the feeling of belonging to the higher education institution. For this to be effective, proper professional development must be in

place to guarantee online higher education faculty leaders are confident in supporting and mentoring online adjunct faculty. This quality training and mentoring provides online adjunct faculty with the support required to be part of the university (Frankel, 2015; Ganza, 2012; Laughlin & Moore, 2012). It is recommended that the practice of professional development through training and mentoring be provided for leaders leading online adjunct faculty in PLC settings so that support is provided for this faculty.

Although the study findings do not suggest a clear leadership theory that would be the most advantageous in creating an environment of collaboration and community, it was verified through the interview data that the role of a leader in working with online adjunct faculty is one who supports and mentors. The concept of leadership exists within the lived experience of core faculty working with online adjunct faculty. The two leadership theories that are predominant in the findings of this study are transformative leadership and servant leadership. This finding would be instrumental for online higher education institutions to consider when hiring leaders to lead an online virtual environment.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study provides data from interview questions of the lived experiences of 16 core faculty member participants from a private university in the Pacific Northwest; however, the results do not account for the perceptions or perspectives of the online adjunct faculty. As the lived experience of online adjunct faculty is different than the lived experience of core faculty, it is recommended that a further study be conducted on the perspectives of the online adjunct faculty. Additionally, as online learning continues to expand and grow globally, it is important that the experiences of online adjunct faculty be examined. Although core faculty participants in this study mentioned that there is a feeling of a sense of belonging and being a part of a team in

the PLC setting, there is not any feedback from online adjunct faculty describing their lived experience in working with core faculty to confirm this assertion.

Due to the narrow scope of this study in only using participants from one university, a recommendation for further study is to enhance the research by gathering participants from more than one university using a broader audience. Locating universities who follow similar structures in working with online adjunct faculty and conducting a comparable study would enhance the research in lived experiences of all faculty working in an online setting, specifically a PLC setting.

A final recommendation is to continue to research the concept of implementing a PLC with online adjunct faculty. The concept of PLC is one that is used loosely in the educational world only *suggesting* team members work together in an environment where collaboration occurs. As Venables (2018) suggested, a PLC should be more than “an ill-led collection of individuals...but a well-facilitated team ready to collaborate” (Chapter 1, para.3). This study’s findings suggest that collaboration exists within the PLC, but inadequate time prevents the true nature of team building. Further research is required to determine the scope of what an effective PLC environment looks like to ensure effective collaboration among team members.

Conclusion

The use of online learning environments in online higher education is becoming more prevalent, creating a larger demand for online adjunct faculty. This change is prompting online higher education administrators to take a closer look at how leadership plays a role in creating an environment where online adjunct faculty feel supported, acknowledged, and a part of the university’s mission and goals. The challenge presented to educational leaders is to create this virtual environment, one where online adjunct faculty members feel a part of a community that is

collaborative in nature. “Leaders who behave like role models, inspire those around them, and stimulate innovation and creativity, as well as providing for individualized considerations all help to bridge the distance barrier between the educational leaders and online adjunct faculty” (Tipple, 2015, p. 15). This distance barrier can be alleviated using PLCs to work collaboratively with online adjunct faculty.

The results of this qualitative phenomenological study are based on the lived experiences of 16 core faculty members from a private Pacific Northwest university with online adjunct faculty working collaboratively in a PLC setting. This study identifies several different themes and attributes that align with the research questions. The themes consist of treating online adjunct faculty as professionals, having a support system, building relationships and community, a leader’s values/qualities, a leader’s professional skills/styles, collaborative climate, and challenges to collaboration.

The first theme identified in this study is the indication that all online adjunct faculty should be treated as the professionals. To create collaboration, leaders must build respect with online adjunct faculty. The second theme of having a support system leads itself to the idea of connectedness to the leader, other instructors, and the university. Weekly meetings, email, and one-on-one calls with online adjunct faculty provide a system of support in an environment where social interaction does not take place face-to-face. Through this support system, core faculty could fulfill their role as a mentor. The theme of building relationships, community, and a collaborative climate is also embraced through the support system concept.

The themes of a leader’s values/qualities and professional skills/style examine the requirements for a leader to work collaboratively with online adjunct faculty in a PLC. The findings convey that leaders should build relationships based on trust, honesty, transparency,

support, and communication. Although two different leadership theories are alluded to in this study—transformative and servant—the findings overwhelmingly conclude that a collaborative style of leadership is required to create an environment where online adjunct faculty feel inspired, motivated, and acknowledged for their work. Lastly, the theme of challenges to collaboration does exist and it is a work in progress. However, the overall findings support that the concept of collaboration is required to ensure online adjunct faculty feel supported.

Overall, the conclusions produced from this study support the idea of collaboration and its effectiveness in allowing online adjunct faculty to feel supported within a virtual environment. The experience of having a PLC to meet with online adjunct instructors provides a social setting for connectedness and collaboration to occur. Although there is not a clear projection of which leadership theory would serve the best for leaders in an online higher education setting when working in collaboration with online adjunct faculty, the consensus is that leaders are collaborative in nature. Leaders in this type of environment should be supporters and mentors, not supervisors.

References

- Adams, K. A., & Lawrence, E. K. (2015). *Research methods, statistics, and applications*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Bandura, A. (1971). Social learning theory. *General Learning Press*. Retrieved from http://www.jku.at/org/content/e54521/e54528/e54529/e178059/Bandura_SocialLearning_Theory_ger.pdf
- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bateh, J. T. (2013). *Leadership styles and faculty satisfaction in the state university system in Florida* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.862.7925&rep=rep1&type=p>
- Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Tight, M. (2010). *How to research* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Open University Press.
- Bloomberg, L. D., & Volpe, M. (2016). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A road map from beginning to end*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Caruso, S. J. (2010). *Malcolm Knowles: The six assumptions underlying andragogy*. Retrieved from <http://www.eadulthoodeducation.org/adult-learning/malcolm-knowles-and-the-six-assumptions-underlying-andragogy/>
- Cercone, K. (2008). Characteristics of adult learners with implications for online learning design. *AACE Journal*, 16(2), 137–159. Retrieved from <http://www.aace.org/pubs/aacej>.

- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. [Kindle Edition]. Retrieved from www.amazon.com
- Delotell, P. J. (2014). *Examining the relationship between department chair leadership style and organizational commitment of online adjunct faculty* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/products-services/dissertations/Find-a-Dissertation.html>
- Duderstadt, J. J. (2009). *Current global trends in higher education and research: Their impact on Europe*. Retrieved from <http://www.aplu.org/document.doc?id=1969>
- Ebi, B. J., & Miller, P. (2006). Faculty development as community building. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 7(2), 1–15. Retrieved from http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/299/639?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter
- Fowler, F.J. (2014). *Survey research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Frankel, C. E. (2015). *Online teaching: Professional development for online faculty* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/products-services/dissertations/Find-a-Dissertation.html>
- Fullan, M. (2011). *Change leader*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Fullan, M., & Scott, G. (2009). *Turnaround leadership for higher education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ganza, W. J. (2012). *The impact of online professional development on online teaching in higher education* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/etd/345>
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. (2012). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (10th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

- Glazer, H. R., Breslin, M., & Wanstreet, C. E. (2013). Online professional and academic learning communities. *The Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 14(3), 123–130. Retrieved from <http://www.infoagepub.com/quarterly-review-of-distance-education.html>
- Greenleaf, R. (2014, March). *Ten principles of servant leadership*. Retrieved from <https://www.butler.edu/volunteer/resources/principles-of-servant-leadership/>
- Greenleaf, R. K. (n.d.) *The Servant as Leader*. Retrieved from <https://www.greenleaf.org/what-is-servant-leadership/>
- Grinnell, L., Sauers, A., Appunn, F., & Mack, L. (2012). Virtual teams in higher education: The light and the dark side. *Journal of College Teaching and Learning*, 9(1), 65–77. Retrieved from <http://www.cluteinstitute.com/ojs/index.php/TLC/article/view/6716>
- Harrison, A. J. (2011). *Identify leadership styles that influence the willingness of community college faculty to teach online courses* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/products-services/dissertations/Find-a-Dissertation.html>
- Henkel, T. G. (2012). *The relationship between transformational leadership styles and university adjunct faculty work engagement*. Retrieved from <https://commons.erau.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1175&context=bollinger-rosado>
- Hilliard, A.T. (2012). Practices and value of a professional learning community in higher education. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, 5(2), 71–73. Retrieved from <http://www.cluteinstitute.com/journals/contemporary-issues-in-education-research-cier/>
- Holt, D., Palmer, S., Gosper, M., Sankey, M., & Allan, G. (2014). Framing and enhancing distributed leadership in the quality management of online learning environments in higher education. *Distance Education*, 35(3), 382–399. doi.10.1080/01587919.2015.955261

- Jameson, J. (2013). E-leadership for higher education: The fifth age of educational technology research. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 44(6), 889–915.
doi.10.1111/bjet.12103
- Jewell, M. (2007). *A study of leadership frame use and online distant faculty job satisfaction* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from
<https://www.proquest.com/products-services/dissertations/Find-a-Dissertation.html>
- Jones, S., Lefoe, G., Harvey, M., & Ryland, K. (2012). Distributed leadership: A collaborative framework for academics, executives and professionals in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 34(1), 67–78. Retrieved from
<https://www.tandfonline.com>
- Klenke, K. (2007). Authentic leadership: A self, leader, and spiritual identify perspective. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 3, 68–97. Retrieved from
https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/ijls/new/vol3iss1/klenke/Klenke_IJLS_V3Is1.pdf
- Knowles, M.S. (1970). *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Knowles, M.S., Holton III, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2005). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development* (6th ed.). Burlington, MA: Elsevier.
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (1995). *The leadership challenge: How to keep getting extraordinary things done in organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Laughlin, K., & Moore, H. (2012). Mentoring and leadership: A practical application for one's career path. *Journal of Adult Education*. 41(1), 34–40. Retrieved from

<http://cupdx.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.cupdx.idm.oclc.org/docview/1268835336?accountid=10248>

- Lave, E. & Wenger, J. (1991). *Situated learning legitimate peripheral participation* [Kindle Edition]. Retrieved from www.amazon.com
- Machi, L. A., & McEvoy, B. T. (2012). *The literature review: Six steps to success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Mackey, J., & Evans, T. (2011). Interconnecting networks of practice for professional learning. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 12(3), 1–17. Retrieved from <http://www.irrodl.org>
- Macquire, L. L. (2008). *Literature review: Faculty in online distance education: Barriers and motivators*. Retrieved from http://www.bu.edu/ssw/files/pdf/Literature-Review-Faculty-Participation-in-Online-Distance-Education_-Barr2.pdf
- Marx, G. (2006). *Future-focused leadership: Preparing schools, students, and communities for tomorrow's realities*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Development.
- Marzano, R. J., Water, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- McChrystal, S. (2011). *Listen, learn ... then lead* [Video]. Retrieved from <http://blog.ted.com/2012/11/26/8-talks-on-the-importance-of-listening-and-how-to-do-a-much-better-job-of-it/>
- Mcquire, J. (2014). *Researcher bias* [PDF]. Retrieved from <https://cupo.blackboard.com/bbcswebdav/pid-124286-dt-content-rid>

1227249_1/courses/20161010324cup/resources/week1/w1%20Researcher%20Bias,%20
McGuire.pdf

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning* [Kindle edition]. Retrieved
from www.amazon.com

National Center for Education. (2015). *The condition of education 2015*. Retrieved from
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015144.pdf>

Nworie, J. (2012). Applying leadership theories to distance education leadership. *Online Journal
of Distance Learning Administration, 15*(5). Retrieved from www.icde.org

Oakley, C. (2010). *10 reasons to abolish brick and mortar colleges*. Retrieved from
<http://www.missiontolearn.com/2010/09/abolish-colleges/>

Palloff, R. M., & Pratt, K. (2007). *Building online learning communities: Effective strategies for
the virtual classroom*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Parchoma, G. (2005). Roles and relationships in virtual environments: A model for adult distance
educators extrapolated from leadership in experiences in virtual organizations.
International Journal on Elearning, 4(4), 463–487. Retrieved from
<http://www.aace.org/pubs/ijel/>

Ravitch, S. M., & Riggan, M. (2012). *Reason & rigor: How conceptual frameworks guide
research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Reisman, H. (2010). *Thoughts on leadership* [MOV]. Canadian Business. Retrieved from
https://cupo.blackboard.com/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_group=courses&url=%2Fwebapps%2Fblackboard%2Fexecute%2Fcontent%2Ffile%3Fcmd%3Dview%26content_id%3D_2032_1%26course_id%3D_375_1%26framesetWrapped%3Dtrue

- Robinson, K. (2011). *Out of our minds: Learning to be creative*. Westford, MA: Courier Westford.
- Ruggieri, S., Bocca, S., & Garro, M. (2013). Leadership styles in synchronous and asynchronous virtual learning environments. *TOJET: Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 12(4), 96–102. Retrieved from tojet.net
- Russell, E. J. (2012). The role of servant leadership in faculty development programs: A review of the literature. *TOJET: Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 13(3), 15–19. Retrieved from tojet.net
- Sashkin, M. (1990). *The visionary leader: Leadership behavior questionnaire*. Amherst, MA: Human Resource Development Press.
- Strauss, A.L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Sun, J. (2010). *A review of transformational leadership research: A meta-analytic approach* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/products-services/dissertations/Find-a-Dissertation.html>
- Tipple, R. (2009). Effective leadership of online faculty. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 12(4), 1–20. Retrieved from <http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/spring131/tipple131.html>
- Tufford, L., & Newman, P. (2010). Bracketing in qualitative research. *Qualitative Social Work*, 11(1), 80-96. doi:10.1177/1473325010368316
- University of Minnesota. (2010). *Conflict of interest*. Institutional review board. Retrieved from <http://www.irb.umn.edu/guidance/coi.html>

- Venables, D. R. (2018). *Facilitating teacher teams and authentic PLCs: The human side of leading people, protocols, and practices* [Kindle Edition]. Retrieved from www.amazon.com
- Veseley, P., Bloom, L., & Sherlock, J. (2007). Key elements of building online community: Comparing faculty and student perceptions. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 3(3). Retrieved from www.jolt.merlot.org
- Waters, J. (2016). *Phenomenological research practices*. Retrieved from <https://www.capilanou.ca/programs-courses/psychology/student-resources/research-guidelines/Phenomenological%20Research%20Guidelines/>
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity* [Kindle Edition]. Retrieved from www.amazon.com
- Williams, T., Layne, M., & Ice, P. (2014). Online faculty perceptions on effective faculty mentoring: A qualitative study. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administrators*, 17(2), 1–18. Retrieved from http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/summer172/Williams_Layne_Ice172.html
- Zayani, F. (2008). *The impact of transformational leadership on the success of global, virtual teams* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/products-services/dissertations/Find-a-Dissertation.html>

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What are the most important values that you demonstrate as a leader?
2. What professional skills are important in leading your PLC team in a collaborative way?
3. What do you think that your online adjunct faculty is looking for in a leader in an online learning community?
4. Describe what type of online leader you perceive yourself to be in leading your online community?
5. Describe how your leadership style affects your role in working collaboratively with your online adjunct faculty.
6. Describe ways that you allow for team collaboration in your PLC.
7. Describe how you motivate your online instructors for success in an online higher education setting.
8. What qualities do you believe makes a collaborative leader in an online higher education PLC setting?
9. Why are the qualities that you mentioned associated with leadership in an online setting?
10. Describe how you influence and maintain a supportive and collaborative climate in your PLC.
11. How would your Professional Learning Community (PLC) instructors describe your leadership style about collaboration?
12. How would your Professional Learning Community (PLC) instructors describe your leadership style about team building?
13. Why do you think that they would describe you this way?
14. Can you provide any examples as to why they would describe you this way?

15. How would your Professional Learning Community (PLC) instructors describe your leadership style for building and maintaining relationships?

Appendix B: Research Questions and Descriptors

Table 1

Research Questions and Descriptors

Research Questions	Descriptors
<p>How does core faculty experience collaboration when working with online adjunct faculty in a Professional Learning Community (PLC)?</p>	<p>Participation/build capacity Treat faculty as professionals Mentor/support/cooperation Communication Facilitator Sense of community</p>
<p>How does core faculty describe their role in working collaboratively with their online adjunct faculty in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)?</p>	<p>Support/mentor/facilitator Treat faculty as professionals Build relationships Participate Openness/listener Respect/trust</p>
<p>How does core faculty describe the online adjunct faculty's role in working collaboratively with Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)?</p>	<p>Communicators To be treated as professionals Want support/to be heard Timely, positive feedback Effective and consistent support Feeling connected and appreciated</p>

Appendix C: Themes and Attributes

Table 2

Themes and Attributes

Themes	Attributes
Online adjunct faculty as professionals	Respect, listen, support, mentor, sense of belonging, sense of feeling valued and appreciated
Support system	Organization, relevance, openness, listening, sharing, mentor, facilitator, accessibility, availability, sympathetic
Building relationships/community	Trust, credibility, communication, support, accessibility, availability, sharing, listening, encouraging, positive feedback, confidence, empowerment, sense of feeling valued and appreciated, collaboration builds community
Leader's values/qualities	Communicator, caring, honest, integrity, respect, trust, love, compassion, builds relationships, sharing, support, listener, consistency, confident, credible, decision maker
Leader's professional skills/style	Communicator, organized, accessible, caring, trustworthy, supportive, open, listens, positive, timely
Collaborative climate	Organized, relevant, validation, positive, sharing, openness, listening
Challenges to collaboration	Length of time to meet, online adjunct participation

Appendix A: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously-researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

What does “fraudulent” mean?

“Fraudulent” work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one’s own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate’s final work without full and complete documentation.

What is “unauthorized” assistance?

“Unauthorized assistance” refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another’s work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

Statement of Original Work (Continued)

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University- Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.
2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*

Cathy Louise Busay

Digital Signature

Cathy Louise Busay

Name (Typed)

6/8/18

Date