Understanding the Socialization Experiences of New Technical Faculty: A Transition from Industry to the Technical College

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Understanding the Socialization Experiences of New Technical Faculty:  
A Transition from Industry to the Technical College

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy  
In  
Education Administration  
The Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling, and Foundations

by

Annette Bordelon Thornton

B. A., University of New Orleans, 1995  
M. Ed., University of New Orleans, 2001

May 2010
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This journey has not been without its challenges. It is through perseverance, love, and encouragement of my family and friends that I have succeeded. Special thanks to my husband Michael who has always stood by me and shared my vision of life. To my mother who taught me the value of love, education, hard work, and the ability to think for myself. To my brother Charlie who devoted many nights to help me format my manuscript. To my dear friend Barbara Johnson, Ph.D. who encouraged me to be a Ph.D. when I didn’t think I could.

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The University of New Orleans has been my academic home for thirty years. I was awarded a Bachelor’s of Art in Psychology (1995), a Master’s Degree in Higher Education Administration (2001) and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Education Administration (2010). It was here that Barbara Johnson, Ph.D. and Mike Paulsen, Ph.D. taught me the importance of leaving a positive legacy.
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This phenomenological qualitative research study sought to gain insight into the socialization experiences of new vocational technical faculty. Ten Louisiana vocational technical faculty members were interviewed face-to-face. The interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, and analyzed to discover how these new vocational technical faculty members transitioned from industry to academe. Data analysis revealed that participants in the study experienced a similar transitional process into the technical college as two-year and four-year faculty into community colleges and universities.

Like their two-year and four-year counterparts, the participants experienced similar challenges related to their new teaching positions, such as balancing heavy workloads, maintaining industry contacts, and interacting with administration, faculty and students. Similarly, they tended to value teaching, collegial relationships with other faculty and their interactions with students. However, some of the challenges were unique to their new positions as Louisiana vocational technical instructors. These faculty members experienced an anticipatory phase that prepared them for the workplace rather than academe. Many of the participants experienced notable levels of stress as they transitioned from industry to the technical college. The stress seemed to be related to their lack of pedagogical knowledge of teaching and the issues of forging a new academic persona. This research found that new vocational technical faculty members enjoyed formal professional development activities that were discipline specific and advanced their knowledge of their craft.

The study also explored the use of Menges’ (1999) Model of Faculty Academic Life as it related to the new vocational technical instructor experiences, role
conceptualization, and resources that would help the faculty grow and develop as instructors. Through their shared experiences and stories the researcher identified the needs of this subpopulation and made recommendations for future studies.

Keywords: Faculty socialization, vocation technical faculty, two-year faculty.
CHAPTER I

Introduction

The context of the two-year college has changed dramatically in recent years with reductions in funding, increased emphasis on technology, internationalization of curriculum, and greater competition for students (Sanford & McCaslin, 2004). The range of courses offered by two-year colleges, and employer expectations of new graduates have also changed, with higher education being asked to produce a more flexible and higher qualified workforce to respond to changing needs in industry (Watters & Wecks, 1999). Technical colleges focus on maintaining industry-relevant training programs in technology driven climates of new and emerging occupational areas. Faculty members at technical colleges are now expected to strengthen occupational and technical programs of the institution with applications of “real world” perspective. Although these industry-based teachers have the technical skills required in the workplace of their particular disciplines, many lack the instructional background and experience that enable them to manage the college classroom and inspire teaching (Brown, 2000). For the purpose of this research study, new vocational technical faculty members are defined by those in their first academic appointment, with zero to three years of teaching experience and at least three years of industry experience.

Many research studies examined the work experiences and concerns of new faculty (Boice, 1992; Fink, 1984; Olsen & Sorcinelli, 1992; Whitt, 1991). These studies have broadly defined the term as those in a new academic appointment, while others (Lucas & Murray, 2002) are very specific and define new faculty as a recent graduate, “with an advanced degree now employed for the first time in a regular academic
position” (p. xviii) in a postsecondary setting. Further, longitudinal studies by Boice (1992), Menges and Associates (1999), and Olsen and Sorcinelli (1992) tracked new faculty experiences over the first three years of their academic position.

Many individuals who become vocational technical faculty have been educated and trained to be successful in their respective fields and have experienced lengthy tenures in industry. A pilot study (Thornton, 2006) revealed that those who were recruited and hired as vocational technical faculty faced personal and professional challenges in transitioning from industry to the technical college. Individuals in industry have been indoctrinated to focus on product-driven outcomes and profits. However, new instructors found it difficult to switch from productivity-driven industry models to the learning-centered values of the technical college. Thus, it is important to understand and make distinctions in the differences between industry and academe that present the most challenges for vocational technical faculty specifically the modes of operation, systems of accountability, products, resources, compensation, and rewards. Table 1 presents data that was collected during the pre-dissertation on various aspects relative to differences between industry and academe.
### Table 1

**Industry Verses Academe**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Academe</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mode of Operation</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Governance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Systems of Accountability</td>
<td>Profits</td>
<td>Students with Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>Good or Service</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Money + Equipment</td>
<td>Faculty w/ Industry Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>Salary + Benefits</td>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards</td>
<td>Money + Title</td>
<td>Tenure + Title</td>
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As shown in Table 1, industry and academe are vastly different. Keller (1983) argued that colleges and universities are, “one of the largest industries in the nation but among the least businesslike and well managed of all organizations” (p. 5). The term, “governance” is a broad concept that reflects the most controversial difference between industry and academe for vocational technical faculty. Birnbuam (1988) defined governance as “structures and processes through which institutional participants interact and influence each other and communicate with large environments” (p. 4). Management versus governance is a new way of thinking for the newly hired vocational technical faculty. For example, industry manages their employees, while technical colleges allow vocational technical faculty to share and participate in their governance structure. Del Favero’s (2006) commentary on the transition from administrator to scholar explains the tension new instructors experience as they shift their attention from organizational effectiveness to a scholarly persona.
Understanding systems of accountability presents the next obstacle for vocational technical faculty. Industry and academe track different performance-based outcomes. Besse (1973) explained, “In a business corporation there is always one quantifiable measure of performance ... the rate of earnings on the capital invested” (p. 110). In contrast, Louisiana vocational technical college faculty measure performance by the quantifiable number of students who graduate and the percentage of students who get job related placement (http://www.council.org). Performance outcomes, though not easily measured, depend on training individuals who will be competent enough to secure employment after completion of the technical program. Products of industry result in either a good or a service, whereas products of the technical college can be vague and intangible.

Rice (2001) spoke about the measurable outcomes of a college education. He stated, “Knowledge and understanding are not things we can hold in our hands or observe in its entirety; knowledge and understanding are difficult to measure and even more difficult to put a price tag on” (p. 9). By comparison, business and industry supply a good or services that can be measured, inventoried, and sold for a profit and thus create additional financial resources.

A lack of funding and decreased financial resources in two-year colleges have placed a strain on the resources available to vocational technical programs, which are costly to operate. For example, equipment and software for a drafting class is approximately $3,000.00 per student with an average of 15 students per program (Thornton, 2006). Without outside funding sources such as grants and industry donations, the drafting class would not have industry-relevant equipment or technology.
Industry usually provides the necessary resources and materials to produce desired products, whereas vocational technical programs depend on tuition dollars, government subsidy, and outside resources.

Industry compensation far outweighs that of academe. Boice (1992) indicated an intense competition over new hires between academe and the corporate world to recruit qualified employees. Careers outside of academe are becoming increasingly more attractive to potential faculty because academe often cannot compete with the monetary compensation and benefits packages offered by industry. Schuster (1990a) suggested that critical faculty shortages should bring an increase of faculty power for newcomers; as campuses compete for faculty, administrators will inevitably offer concessions, including reduced teaching loads. While Thornton’s (2006) pilot study revealed that vocational technical faculty wanted to be compensated for their time and efforts, monetary rewards were not their primary reason for securing a teaching career. Participants in the pilot study expected that their new career would afford them more job flexibility and personal free time.

The workload of vocational technical faculty is very different from their work in industry. While the vocational technical faculty envisioned more job flexibility and personal time, the 1999 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, published by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics, found that fulltime faculty members work about 55 hours a week and part-time faculty work nearly 40 hours a week. As new Louisiana vocational technical faculty, 70% of their 40 hour work week is spent engaged in teaching activities such as delivering high quality, industry-relevant instruction, and experiences that will enable students to enter the local workforce with
marketable skills (http://www.ltc.edu). The remaining 30% of vocational technical faculty time is allocated toward teaching related activities such as course preparation, academic advising, grading, industry visits, committee assignments, and credentialing. Often, these other duties spill over into the personal time of the vocational technical faculty creating frustration and a source of stress over their academic work (Boice, 1992; Menges, 1999).

Most new Louisiana vocational technical faculty hold appropriate industry-based certifications, though some lack the academic credentials needed to be instructors at the technical college and, as a condition of employment, understand that they must obtain an associate’s degree in technical education. In addition to the associate degree, new Louisiana vocational technical faculty must pass the National Occupation Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) test in their craft or trade, and obtain industry based certification (LTC 145.10.2.2). While some of the courses offered through the associate degree could be an invaluable resource full of teaching strategies and course preparation information to help new instructors cope with their new positions, many of the courses are poorly attended (Thornton, 2006).

The difference between industry and academe is further complicated by the transition of new vocational technical faculty as evidenced in the literature on new faculty relative to the difficulties they face in learning their roles as instructors. Boice (1992) suggested that the challenges faced by new faculty are not unexpected. Reports by new faculty of feeling overloaded, unsupported, and uninformed may be as old as academe itself (Fink, 1991). According to Wallin and Smith (2005), faculty life in community and technical colleges is characterized by heavy teaching loads, close
relationships with business and industry, and community involvement. Like all new
college faculty, (Boice, 1992; Menges, 1999) the transition of new vocational technical
faculty from industry to academe is marked by a period of adjustment and socialization.

The socialization literature has been key to understanding the transition of faculty
for example, the way in which new Louisiana vocational technical faculty adjust to their
academic roles. Scholars have defined socialization in a variety of contexts. Merton
(1957) defined socialization as a process through which individuals conform to the norms
and values needed to function in a given society. Austin (2002) defined socialization as,
“a process through which an individual becomes part of a group, organization, or
community” (p. 96). Tierney and Bensimon (1996) described faculty socialization as a
“rite of passage” (p. 77) where instructors become inclusionary members of the post
secondary institution. Brim (1966) suggested that socialization is more than the
acquisition of skills, values, and knowledge, but rather a process that incorporates both
cognitive and affective maturation that results in “the developments of commitment to
and identification with a particular profession” (p. 5). Cohen and Brawer (1972) defined
the transition to the role of instructor as one where the individual must be able to identify
as a human being and to define his/her position in terms of the educational system.

The literature on role identity is key to our understanding of the transition of new
faculty, that is, how new Louisiana vocational technical faculty adjust to their new roles
as instructors. For clarity, it is important to view the new role specifically in terms of,
“the teacher as a person and the teacher as a practitioner in the discipline of instruction”
(Cohen & Brawer, 1972, p. 3). Reynolds (1969) suggested that the instructor’s self
image is the aggregate of three value systems – students, faculty, and administration.
Colbeck (2008) speculated that when two or more contrasting identities try to make meaning of their new environments, an individual is likely to experience stress. The role identity literature implied that adaptation to one’s sense of self is more likely to occur when one is transitioning to a new role (Cast, 2003; Ibarra, 1999). Furthermore, literature suggests that the instructor’s “teaching self” evolves and is shaped by the cultural and institutional environments in which that individual teaches. In turn, socialization into academe will establish the norms and expectations for future professional behavior.

For vocational technical faculty, the transition from industry to academe may be more challenging than that of other higher education faculty. Graduate training, while inadequate in many ways and absent in most vocational technical faculty, does allow students to anticipate what the life and work of a faculty member is about. Some studies (Austin, 2002; Tierney, 1997; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Tierney & Rhoads, 1994) have examined the graduate school experience as a key part of the socialization process. For four-year faculty, the anticipatory socialization phase begins to prepare students to acquire the norms and culture associated with their disciplines and career expectations (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994). Murray and Cunningham (2002) argued that graduate preparation for most faculty members is inadequate for teaching in the community and technical college system. Murray and Cunningham’s argument suggested that graduate schools train researchers, not teachers. They also asserted that, “Effective teaching requires sufficient knowledge of both the discipline and pedagogy” (p. 252). Thornton (2006) found that this subpopulation of faculty had a dissimilar anticipatory phase than what may be experienced by students who attend graduate school before entering the academy.
When one thinks about the anticipatory stage in its broadest sense, it is usually in terms of job expectations and perceptions formed before an individual takes the teaching position. For the purpose of this research, the anticipatory phase considered that new Louisiana vocational technical faculty form their expectations and perceptions about their new teaching career from their own student experiences, through mentorship from their instructors, and the new hire interview experience. Though pedagogical training may be limited, new vocational technical faculty members continue to emerge from their industrial backgrounds and find their way to the technical college. Their initial faculty experiences begin to define expectations and provide understanding of their new roles as instructors.

Discussions specific to socialization rarely deal with the development of diverse faculty roles. As I drew on personal observations, many newcomers who began their teaching careers at a technical college became instructors, while others floundered and misunderstood the complexities of their new roles as faculty members. Many experience lengthy tenures as instructors, while others return to industry. Olsen and Einwohner (2001) suggested that, “A teacher’s sense of effectiveness, satisfaction, and commitment are all elements of his or her teaching identity” (p. 404). The identity and socialization literature stress the importance of understanding how faculty view their respective roles and responsibilities in order to meet their own needs and the needs of the college. Murray and Cunningham (2002) asserted that individuals whose expectations are met tend to have higher job satisfaction. Furthermore, those with higher job satisfaction are judged by administration as being better performers (Bertz & Judge, 1994), are more
committed to the organization, and have longer tenures (Blau, 1987; Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1989; Schneider, 1987; Smart, Elton, & McLaughlin, 1986).

Many researchers and practitioners (Baldwin, 1979; Boice, 1992; Feldman, 1981) have asserted that if colleges are serious about retaining faculty, administrators and policymakers must develop an understanding of how new faculty members conceptualize their new roles, how faculty are socialized into the profession, and how faculty develop professionally over the course of their careers. Organizational theorists have shown evidence that positive faculty socialization experiences are directly related to long-term job satisfaction and productivity (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

This study sought to understand the socialization experiences, role conceptualization, and resources that would benefit the new Louisiana vocational technical instructors as they transitioned from industry to technical college. Two-year postsecondary institutions strive to meet high accountability standards, maintain teaching standards, meet the diverse student needs, and adapt to the economic workforce demands of the future.

The Problem Statement

Generally, vocational technical faculty have the technical expertise required to be successful in industry, but past industry experiences have not prepared them for the job responsibilities as vocational technical college instructors. The non-degreed vocational technical faculty members are particularly unique in that the majority of these individuals are recruited directly from business and industry with generally little or no formal pedagogical preparation and often without the benefit of a formal college education (NCRVE, 1991). Cross and Angelo (1989) asserted that faculty need to be skilled in
pedagogical aspects of teaching and student learning as they are in their own disciplines. In contrast, Olsen (1991) stated, “Industrial/business experience continues to be seen as essential, whereas knowledge of teaching is seen only as desirable” (p. 341). Thornton’s (2006) pilot study revealed that many new vocational technical faculty experience notable levels of stress as they try to learn their new roles as instructor.

Some researchers have noted other sources of stress for new faculty; these include poorly prepared students, cumbersome bureaucratic rules, high self-expectations, unclear expectations, and inadequate salaries (Brown et al., 1986; Gmelch, Lovrich, & Wilke, 1984; Smith, Anderson, & Lovrich, 1995). Olsen and Sorcinelli (1992) confirmed that teaching is conflict ridden and time consuming. Thornton (2006) found some of the new instructors in her study felt inadequate as teachers and consequently planned to leave their teaching positions to return to industry.

Issues of faculty recruitment and retention are major concerns for technical colleges. Berry, Hammons, and Denny (2001) found that 51% of the Chief Academic Officers queried expressed difficulties in recruiting fully prepared faculty members. The ability to offer and deliver high quality instructional programs is directly related to locating and recruiting talented individuals to fill vacant faculty positions. New vocational technical faculty represent an important population whose transitional experiences should be understood so the administration can assist them in adapting to their new roles as instructors.

If new Louisiana vocational technical faculty members are to find a balance between industry experience and academia, it is important to identify the experiences necessary to successfully transition from industry to the technical college. More
information is needed on the socialization experience of vocational technical faculty in order to understand how these instructors make the transition from industry to educators, how they conceptualize their roles as instructors, and what resources and strategies simultaneously interact to explain the socialization of new vocational technical instructors.

**Purpose Statement**

This study provided insight on the transition of vocational technical faculty by enhancing our understanding of influences on their socialization process. The study examined new vocational technical faculty members perceptions of their socialization experience and what is needed for an effective transition from industry to academe. Findings provided contributions to both theory and practice within vocational technical education. This research study focused on the new vocational technical faculty members’ interpretations of meaning of their teaching roles and the experiences that facilitated their transition from industry to technical college.

**Research Questions**

The primary research question guiding this research study was:

1.) What experiences do vocational technical faculty members perceive are important to their transition from industry to the technical college?

This study also addressed the following secondary research questions:

2.) How do vocational technical faculty members conceptualize their roles as instructors?

3.) What experiences do vocational technical faculty members perceive will allow them to develop the skills to be competent instructors?
Significance of the Study

A recent search of educational databases yielded little research specific to vocational technical faculty. Thus, this research study sought to address this void in the literature and provide insight into the socialization experiences of the new faculty members in the technical college system.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006), there are 109,360 individuals who teach at technical colleges throughout the United States. Vocational technical faculty members represent 40% of all two-year college faculty. While new vocational technical faculty encountered challenges adapting to their new roles as educators, most instructors found teaching diverse student populations who attend technical colleges as the most challenging issue (Waiwaiole & Noonan-Terry, 2008). Furthermore, the nontraditional two-year college student is older, has other responsibilities, and may experience academic learning challenges (Van Ast, 1992). Thirty-seven percent of college students will enroll in technical colleges to complete the occupational technical certificate, diploma, or associate degrees, while 36% of vocational technical students simply want to take a course that will increase their career opportunities (Brown, 1999). According to Tinto (1993), some students are more likely to be in school because of employer inducements and contractual agreements between institutions and employers. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) claims that 11.5% of the students in postsecondary vocational programs held baccalaureate degrees or higher (Vocational Education in the United States: Toward the Year 2000, 2000). With varied interests in technical education, vocational technical faculty members are still responsible for preparing and educating students for a dynamic workforce. The increase in the number
of ill-prepared and diverse academic levels of students made it more difficult for instructors to find satisfaction in effecting student achievement (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

The importance of vocational technical faculty must not be underestimated. The benefits of a college education are clear. Technical colleges need competent vocational technical faculty members who are able to teach diverse student populations in a complex college environment. By understanding which environmental experiences are pivotal in shaping new faculty members’ views, orientation programs could be created that enable them to have successful careers and thereby remain with these colleges (Baldwin & Blackburn, 1981). Cross and Angelo (1989) believed the most direct and promising way to improve learning is to improve teaching.

This study sought to provide a contribution to both literature and practice in vocational technical education. Findings of the study identified important elements of the socialization needs of new vocational technical faculty as they transitioned from industry to the technical college. Through an understanding of how vocational technical faculty conceptualized their roles as faculty and become competent instructors, orientation programs can be designed and implemented.

This research inquiry provided guidance to technical college administration in the establishment of practices and procedures for incorporating new vocational technical faculty members into the academic community. Procedures based on a better understanding of the socialization needs of this unique subgroup of faculty could be a first step toward improving job satisfaction and retention issues faced by vocational technical institutions. Investing in research-driven practices narrows the possibilities of socialization “failures.” Findings from this study may offer new vocational technical
faculty members strategies for transitioning from industry to technical college. If the faculty members experience a smoother transition from industry to their new academic roles, they could experience higher levels of job satisfaction and increased levels of productivity.

Definition of Terms

Anticipatory Phase – to acquire the norms and culture associated with their disciplines and career expectations (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994).


Louisiana Community and Technical College System – two-year postsecondary institutions of higher education in Louisiana focusing on vocational technical education.

New Vocational Technical Faculty – A faculty member who has four or more years of industry experience, has transitioned from industry to technical college, and has zero to three years of teaching experience at a vocational technical institution or community college.

Organizational Socialization – is more than the acquisition of skills, values and knowledge, but rather a process that incorporates both cognitive and affective maturation that results in “the developments of commitment to and identification with a particular profession” (Brim, 1966, p. 5).


Overview of Methodology

This research study focused on new Louisiana vocational technical college faculty and what they perceived as needed for their effective transition from industry to teaching in a technical college setting. A phenomenological, qualitative study was used to gain an understanding of their transitional experiences. The data collection process involved 10 face-to-face interviews. Participants were selected using a purposive method and identified based on the years of industry experience and zero to three years of teaching experience. Interviews were audio-tape recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for emerging themes.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I provided an overview of the study, including defining the basic differences between industry and academe. Chapter II identifies literature on organizational socialization, college teaching, role identity, and new faculty. The conceptual framework presented in this chapter provides a graphic representation of the socialization process of new vocational technical faculty using a combination of literature and faculty experiences. Chapter III describes the qualitative phenomenology research method used to investigate the focus of the study. Specifically, a brief background of the researcher’s role, the setting of the institution, and participant selection are presented. The focus of chapter IV is the presentation and analysis of the findings. Data was transcribed, analyzed, and coded for major themes. Chapter V includes a summary of the
results of the research and presents implications for policy and practice as well as recommendations for future research.

**Conclusion**

It is through the socialization process that new vocational technical faculty members learn the expectations of their new teaching roles and discover what it means to teach in their respective academic disciplines at two-year postsecondary technical colleges. An understanding of the socialization process can inform administrators and senior faculty how to implement programming that will allow new vocational technical faculty to adopt and adjust to their multi-faceted roles in their academic organizations. This research study contributed to the scholarly knowledge base on faculty. The study also explored the experiences new vocational technical faculty perceived to be important to help ease their transition from industry to technical college. Moreover, this inquiry provided understanding of how new Louisiana vocational technical faculty conceptualize their roles as instructors. The study provided strategies and or resources needed to help facilitate the transition process for new vocational technical faculty.
CHAPTER II

A Review of Literature

National trends have indicated that states vary in the structure of governance of two-year postsecondary institutions. According to Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana (2009) there are three types of systems commonly used to classify higher education governance structures are consolidated, coordinating, and planning (p. 4). Louisiana is classified as a coordinating governance structure where vocational technical education is within the community college system; other states have separate vocational technical institutions responsible for remediation and trades. For the purpose of this study, the literature on community and technical college faculty provided the foundational knowledge on this population.

The chapter begins with a historical overview of vocational technical education, the history of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, and a national profile of this professoriate. This chapter provides an examination of organizational socialization literature as it applies to new college faculty. Operational definitions of socialization with theoretical assumptions of socialization lay the foundation for this research study. Examinations of the socialization process revealed the influences on the new college faculty role identity.

History of Vocational Education

Community and technical colleges have served the nation for more than 100 years and carried out a number of complex and competing focuses. Two-year institutions have been responsible for missions that center on the needs of transfer, vocational, developmental, continuing, and community-based education (Bragg, 2001). Over the
course of their history, two-year institutions have become increasingly diverse in the
students they serve and the programs offered (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). The history of
vocational education is important to this research as it helps form an understanding of
why there is little literature specifically centered on the vocational technical education or
the vocational technical faculty that serve these postsecondary institutions. Vocational
education was always a component of the community college until recent times.
Therefore, it is important to look at the origin of vocational education in conjunction with
community colleges.

Joliet Community College in Illinois, founded in 1901, is the oldest existing
public two-year college in the United States. According to the American Association of
Community Colleges (1995) a lack of academic preparation of many university students
forced William Harper, president of the University of Chicago, and other educational
leaders to advocate for a separate two-year institution. During the early years, the two-
year institutions focused on a transfer mission, which emphasized a responsibly to bridge
the local high school with the university (http://www.jjc.ccil.us/admin/history.htm).

Gradually, as economic and political circumstances exerted greater influence,
vocational education emerged. Crosby Eells (1931) and Leonard Koos (1924) were
adamant supporters of the vocational mission, which took two-year postsecondary
institutions beyond their transfer education mission. They suggested that vocational
education should prepare young adults for immediate employment in semiprofessional
occupations. In 1948, the United States President’s Commission on Higher Education
published the network of public community colleges that would charge little or no tuition
and offer comprehensive educational programs that would serve the local economy.
What became known as “The Truman Commission Report” popularized the term “community college.” The report made bold statements in support of vocational education in junior colleges as a means of expanding educational access. From 1901 to 2001, more than 100 million people have been educated by community colleges in the United States (AACC, 2001b). “The community college movement began the great transformation into a learning society in which each person who wishes to do so can study almost any subject in almost any geographical community” (Deegan, 1985, p. vii).

The importance of community colleges rose drastically after World War II. Jesse Bogue (1950) advocated an extension of education to address the requirements of life and work through vocational education. Bogue introduced the continuing education component, offering students the opportunity for part-time education as the need arose for possible job advancement and technological developments.


**History of the Louisiana Technical College System**

The history of the technical colleges was deeply rooted in “trade schools” concepts. Louisiana’s present day Technical College System began with the establishment of the first campus in Bogalusa, in November 1930. Local citizens raised monies in response to the demand of surrounding industries to expand the vocational
system’s course offerings to include training in automotive mechanics and woodworking (http://www.ltc.edu/technical_education.asp).

In 1936, a second trade school was built in Shreveport, Louisiana. When the Louisiana Legislative Act 14 was passed in 1938, five schools were constructed in Winnfield, Crowley, Lake Charles, Opelousas, and Natchitoches. The War Production Training Program of 1940 provided funding for two more schools to be erected in Monroe. Louisiana Legislative Act 109, passed in 1942, authorizing a tenth school in the statewide system to be built in Cottonport; it was completed after World War II, in 1947 (http://www.ltc.edu/technical_education.asp).

The system expanded in the early 1950s, after the Vocational Education Act of 1946 was passed. From 1950 to 1957, another 17 schools were constructed (including the Teche Area Campus), bringing the cumulative total of state operated post-secondary technical schools to 27 (http://www.ltc.edu/technical_education.asp).

Between 1958 and 1973, system expansion slowed considerably with only six additional schools constructed. However, expansion increased with the passage of Acts 208 and 209 of the Louisiana Legislature in 1973. Act 208 provided for a comprehensive statewide system of career education from elementary through post-secondary levels of education. From 1974 to 1987, an additional 22 campuses (including Lafayette Campus, Charles B. Coreil Campus, Evangeline Campus, and Gulf Area Campus) were added to the system. This legislation also led to consolidation of historically black technical schools with other technical institutions in Opelousas, Monroe, and Natchitoches. The net effect of changes was a statewide system of post-secondary technical training involving 53 campuses (http://www.ltc.edu/technical_education.asp).
Act 506 of the 1998 Legislative session required a reorganization of the Louisiana Community and Technical College Systems (LCTCS). The Board of Supervisors was created in 1998 by Section 7 of Act 170, which is regulated by the Louisiana Board of Regents for Higher Education. The 38 campuses were placed under a regional management system.

Since the late 1980s, there has been a decrease in the number of post-secondary state-operated technical institutions; currently there are 38 campuses in the system. The number of occupational program offerings grew from 10 in the 1940s, to approximately 88 today. Enrollment statewide grew from 60 students in 1931, to 932 students in 1943. By 1973, enrollment had increased to 12,543 for the 23 schools built between 1950 and 1973, with an estimated total enrollment for the 33 schools in the system of 15,000. In the Fall 2008, Louisiana Community and Technical College System served over 59,430 daytime, extension (evening), and industry students (Louisiana Board of Regents- Fall 1999 to Fall 2008 Statewide Student Profile System). From 1999 to 2008, The Louisiana Community and Technical College System awarded 42,516 certificates, technical diplomas, and associate degrees (Louisiana Board of Regents – Statewide Completer System).

Technical education is distinguished from other forms of postsecondary education by its emphasis on occupational skills training and employability. Technical education programs are usually offered as a sequence of courses supplemented by work-based training, such as internships or apprenticeships. According to the U. S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education (2007) there are 16 career clusters being taught in two-year colleges. The program clusters are as follows:

Based on popular industry trends and current job markets, many of the highly sought after educational programs of the Louisiana College System include Accounting Technology, Culinary Arts, Carpentry, Early Childhood Development, Industrial Instrumentation, Industrial Maintenance, Medical Office Systems, Patient Care Technology, Process Technology, Practical Nursing, and Welding. (http://www.ltc.edu/curriculum/ProgramDirectory.asp).

The two-year college system has experienced a 16.3% increase in enrollment during spring 2010 semester; up from 58,454 students in the spring of 2009 to 67,862 students in the spring 2010 (http://www.businessreport.com/news/2010/feb/12/la-community-and-technical.html). Today, the Technical College System of Louisiana is a statewide technical education system consisting of multicultural population encompassing much diversification in the way of ideas, traditions, values, skills, and arts (http://www.ltc.edu).

Mission of the Vocational Technical College

Wonacott (2003) delineated how vocational technical education has evolved over the last 100 years from its origin of transfer mission to a mission responsive to the changes in society, technology, remediation and the workplace. Wonacott (2003)
elaborated that vocational education has expanded to an education that encompasses technical preparation as well as academics. “Since the 1990’s, the community college curriculum has become more complex, outcome based, and articulated internally with high school’s and four year colleges and required the integration of workplace basics with competitive academic preparation” (Sanford & McCaslin, 2004, p. 11). Thus, the mission of the technical colleges is education that emphasizes lifelong learning offering career paths that extend from entry-level jobs to professional employment (Bragg, 2001).

According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2000) “Community colleges – broadly based and interwoven with community networks – have the opportunity and the obligation to lead transformation that will meet the requirements of a citizenry engaged in lifelong learning” (p. 35). Louisiana’s technical colleges and their vocational technical faculty are vital to the economy of the state. Vocational technical faculty members teach in complex postsecondary institutions with missions that respond to local industry needs and an open admission policy that invites diverse students to seek technical education.

**Vocational Technical Faculty Who Teach at Technical Colleges**

Vocational technical faculty perform many of the same responsibilities that other college and university faculty must perform. During the 2006-2007 academic year, the National Center for Education Statistics study reported 1,045 two-year institutions nationwide which hire more than a quarter million faculty members to teach 6.2 million students each year (http://www.nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2008/analysis/sa_tables.asp). In order to understand the vocational technical faculty population, it is important to
describe the demographics of faculty members who teach in two-year technical institutions.

Profile of National Two-Year Faculty

According to the Digest for Education Statistics, in 2008, out of 1,371,390 postsecondary faculty members, 358,925 were two-year faculty members. This group represents 26% of the total instructional faculty employed by colleges and universities nationwide. The demographic breakdown of the 358,925 instructional faculty and staff in public two-year colleges are as follows: 31% were employed as fulltime faculty and 69% were employed part-time (Table 2); there were equal representations of male (47%) and female (53 %) faculty teaching at the community colleges (Table 3). The 2007 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty found that 78% of the professorate nationwide were White/Caucasian, 8% were African American, 5% were Hispanic/Latino, 3% were Asian American, 0.6 % were American Indian/Alaska Native, 0.4% identified themselves as nonresident alien, and less than 5% identified themselves as other (Table 4).

Table 2

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<th>National Employment Status of Two-Year College Faculty</th>
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<td>Population</td>
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Table 3

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<th>National Gender Statistics of Two-Year College Faculty</th>
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Table 4

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<th>National Demographic Statistics of Two-Year College Faculty</th>
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<td>Caucasian</td>
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<td>78 %</td>
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Profile of the Louisiana Technical College Faculty

According to the Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Human Resources Spring 2006 Report, there are 623 vocational technical faculty members teaching for the two-year vocational technical colleges in Louisiana. The IPEDS data on vocational technical faculty for the state of Louisiana generally mirrored the national two-year faculty population and of the 623 faculty members listed on the report, 61% were employed as fulltime faculty and 39% were employed part-time (Table 5). Similar to the national average at the time, Louisiana faculty had equal representation of males (316) and females (307) teaching at the vocational technical colleges (Table 6).

IPEDS reported 75% of the vocational technical faculty were White/Caucasian, 20% were African American, 1% were Hispanic, 1% were Asian American, 1% were American Indian, and 2% identified themselves as other (Table 7).

Table 5

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<th>Louisiana Employment Status of Vocational Technical Faculty (n=623)</th>
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<td>Louisiana Faculty</td>
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Table 6

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<th>Louisiana Gender Statistics of Vocational Technical Faculty (n=623)</th>
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<td>Male</td>
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Table 7

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<th>Louisiana Demographic Breakdown of Vocational Technical Faculty (n=623)</th>
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<td>Caucasian</td>
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<td>75%</td>
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Louisiana Vocational Technical Faculty Credentialing

The new Louisiana vocational technical faculty are given the rank of instructor and generally have minimal credentials of a high school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED), and technical diploma (LTC policy 145.3.1), or the equivalent of four years full-time work experience in the field (LTC policy 145.3.3.3), qualifications for mandatory program accreditation (LTC policy 145.3.3.4), and licensure or certification for the program area (LTC policy 145.3.3.5). An instructor hired with a high school diploma, is responsible for developing a professional development plan that includes an Associate Degree from a nationally accredited college or university (LTC policy 145.3.3.2). The primary duties of a vocational technical instructor include teaching performance (LTC policy 145.41), instructional development (LTC policy 145.4.2), instructional management (LTC policy 145.4.3), classroom management (LTC policy 145.4.4), student guidance and advising activities (LTC policy 145.4.5), college and/or community service (LTC policy 145.4.6) and professional activities, leadership and service (LTC policy 145.4.7) (http://www.ltc.edu).

Teaching Performance

Teaching performance can be one of the most complex aspects of a vocational technical faculty career (LTC 145.4.1). These highly trained industry experts provide students with the instruction necessary to be successful in the workforce. Most vocational faculty members are well versed in their discipline, but often lack the pedagogical skills that characterize effective teaching performance. Vocational technical faculty members spend many hours preparing instructional materials. Student instruction is divided between classroom presentation of theory and practical lab applications that
focus on job skills. Each program utilizes those methods with resources that the
instructor finds effective, appropriate, and relevant to industry standards. Instructors
supplement instruction with video, overhead projectors, computerized training devices,
training software, mockups and demonstration models, on-campus live-work projects,
and computer assisted instruction. The emphasis in all programs is the development of
the skills needed to perform the task assigned. As such, the majority of instructional time
in the technical programs is spent in job-skill development and work ethics.

Instructional Development

Vocational technical faculty are also responsible for developing instructional
approaches to course content which is developed through statewide curriculum
committee meetings (LTC 145.4.2). Curriculum guides offer vocational technical
instructors course content and course objectives. McQuary (2001) explained that
curriculum guides provide a basis for “competency-based applied learning which
contributes to an individual’s academic knowledge, problem-solving skills and
occupational specific skills necessary for economic independence” (p. 1). While
McQuary (2001) found curriculum guides a necessity in occupational education, Clark
(1987) expressed concern that two-year faculty members have little autonomy over their
work. Cohen and Brawer (2003) and Grubb (1999) agreed that community and technical
faculty have little control over the selection of courses they teach.

The two-year college prides itself on being community-centered and adapting its
course offerings to the changing needs of the area in which it is located. “Local
industries are frequently involved in planning and developing curricula – especially in the
trades programs – and community advisory boards influence junior college programs to a
greater extent than they do programs offered in the university” (Cohen & Brawer, 1972, p. 21). Gleazer (1980) suggested that two-year colleges symbolize what the community wants to become.

**Instructional Management**

Instructional management (LTC 145.4.3) is another aspect of technical faculty work. The vocational technical college accountability system states that all faculty members must maintain an active occupational advisory committee (http://www.council.org). Industry is responsible for reviewing the program content, cost, equipment, and current salaries for entry level positions. Curriculum can change based on advise contributions of the occupational advisory committee. Participating in curriculum changes may be seen as an academic freedom experienced by faculty of four-year institutions. The accountability also includes the maintenance of student records such as grades, attendance, placement, completion, internships, and licensure statistics. Programs are required to have 55% student completion rate and 75% student graduation rate. If a program falls below these standards for three consecutive years the program is in danger of closure.

**Classroom Management**

Classroom management (LTC 145.4.3) is crucial to the technical classroom. Classrooms and laboratories are setup up to exhibit industry-like environments. Students are expected to dress as they would in industry, and conduct themselves professionally as they would experience in today’s workplace. Vocational technical faculty members are required to instruct students on the safety regulations, teamwork, and work ethics. In a research study performed by Kozeracki (2002), faculty indicated that helping students learn course content was just one goal of teaching at two-year colleges. Faculty felt like
they also played an important role in contributing to the students’ personal growth and moral development.

**Student Guidance and Advising Activities**

Another time-consuming aspect of the vocational technical faculty involves student advising activities (LTC 145.4.5). Vocational technical faculty make student schedules, track progress, and advise students on professional career attainment. Career preparation and academic counseling are imperative to student success. “Faculty members act as students’ mentors, tutors, academic advisors, personal counselors, and occasionally, personal friends” (Olsen & Einwohner, 2001, p. 413). Even after a student has been placed in industry, vocational technical faculty members are responsible for follow-up employee evaluations. Every effort is made to ensure employer satisfaction.

Vocational technical faculty members are also required to maintain student enrollment numbers. Therefore, vocational technical faculty members participate in college and/or community service activities such as student recruitment, career fairs, college nights, and articulation agreements with local high schools. It is not uncommon for the vocational technical faculty to facilitate workshops and engage in customized industry training courses.

**College and/or Community Service**

One important type of faculty service is “internal,” that is, responsibilities carried out within the sphere of the institution’s own campus operations and activities, including the counseling and advising of students, serving as an advisor to student organizations, and participating in institutional governance (Lucas & Murray, 2002). Fugate and Amey (2000) suggested that faculty in technical vocational programs felt community service
was just as important as teaching. New Louisiana vocational technical faculty believe that networking with community and industry members keep them familiar with industry knowledge, which in turn helps them to better prepare students for the workplace.

New vocational technical faculty members are also expected to help students develop, not only academically, but to also develop potential leadership qualities that will be an asset to industry. Therefore, as advisors to student organizations, vocational technical faculty help students plan activities that focus on community service and job fairs.

Professional Activities, Leadership and Service

Professional development activities (LTC 145.4.7) help establish credibility in technical programs (Sanford & McCaslin, 2004). Professional development activities “enable faculty members to obtain and enhance job-related skills, knowledge, and awareness” (Alstete, 2000, p. iii). Membership in professional organizations helps establish and maintain the college-industry link. Industry visits establish rapport and develop relationships that will support programs with student placements and possible industry donations. Accreditation standards also mandate that programs have student graduates and job placements in the 60th percentile (http://www.council.org).

The Committee on Occupational Education, the accrediting agency for the vocational technical college system, and the Louisiana Legislature rely on the college to maintain strong relations with industry. Industry contacts are crucial to the survival of a vocation technical program. Vocational technical faculty members are responsible for teaching current industry standards; therefore, they must establish an advisory board composed of local industry advisors. These industry advisors inform instructors of the
latest technology, current standards, and updated practices. Vocational technical faculty programs are reviewed and evaluated annually by industry.

Vocational technical faculty members arrange student internships and job placements upon graduation. The Committee on Occupational Education also believes that for students to be successful in industry, each semester students attend field trips to local businesses. Field trips are part of the students’ socialization process to their discipline. Industry representatives inform the students of what traits and skills are considered assets to their company.

**Vocational Technical Faculty and Academic Work**

Vocational technical faculty members perform many of the same responsibilities of other college and university faculty. Baker, Roueche, and Gillet-Koram (1990) pointed out that two-year faculty are charged with student recruiting, orienting, assessing, advising, placing, managing, tutoring, counseling, graduating, and job placing. According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook 2006-2007, two-year faculty must prepare lessons, grade papers, attend faculty meetings, and keep abreast of the developments in their field of expertise. At community and technical colleges, there are no expectations of scholarly publication, but the amount of time spent teaching averaged about 70% of their work week, in both year one and year three of the new faculty member’s appointment (Menges, 1999). New Louisiana full-time vocational technical faculty members are responsible for 30 contact hours of classroom teaching per week at the technical college. This concept is difficult for other higher education institutions to comprehend because faculty workload is usually defined by credit hours and course work, not classroom contact hours. In the technical college, instructors are seen as
facilitators of learning. Courses are taught to mastery levels of learning, as students need them, regardless of where they are in the curriculum. Faculty members allocate 10 hours a week to office hours that may be used for advising students or course preparation (LTC IS100.50).

**College Teaching**

College teaching has been the topic of research interests for the past decade (Boyer, 1990). While some researchers focused their attention to the definitions of college teaching others researched the practices that promoted learning (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Gamson, 1999; Pascarelli & Terenzini, 1991; Knowles, 1980). Effective teaching involves bridging the gap between theory and practice, using effective communication skills, and utilizing prior experiences of one’s field of expertise and knowledge (Wentworth, Pinnegar, & Coombs, 1997; Sanford, 1999). For the purpose of this research study, good teaching is defined by constructs that create meaning through student learning and the goal of instruction is taught to a mastery level for each course objective (Feldmen & McPhee, 2008). As instructors begin to teach, they develop enduring sets of assumptions, attitudes, values, and behavioral patterns that constitute their own teaching style.

**Skills Required for College Teaching**

The teaching role is the primary educational mission of the technical colleges. “Those entering the teaching profession without prior instructional experience, had immediate needs for the development of teaching skills” (Fugate & Amey, 2000, p. 7). One of the faculty participants from Fugate and Amey’s (2000) study stated,
Here, you have to have the expertise to make sure students do not leave the classroom until they get it… You have to understand [the student] social background, their psychological background and all that, and deal with it differently than just meeting a whole bunch of people and assuming that they are all the same (p. 7).

New approaches to effective teaching include emphasis on pedagogy and the learning needs of the students.

**Teaching Effectiveness Practices**

The literature on effective college teaching is vast. For the purpose of this research study, I addressed the constructs of adult learning theories and the implications of pedagogical processes that identify instructional dimensions important to effective teaching as presented in the vocational technical classroom.

Knowles (1980) coined the term “andragogy” and conceptualized the thinking of adult learning, curricula, and teaching methods that distinguished adult education from that of the education of children. Knowles introduced four assumptions of andragogy and as an individual matures:

1) Their self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward being a self directed learner; 2) They accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning; 3) Their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles; and 4) Their time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly their
orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of performance-centeredness (p. 45).

Knowles’ framework allowed instructors to create classroom environments that were conducive to adult learning.

In 1987 Arthur Chickering and Zelda Gamson introduced, “seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education.” Good practices encouraged: (1) student-faculty contact, (2) cooperation among students, (3) active learning, (4) prompt feedback, (5) emphasized time on task, (6) high expectations, and (7) respects for diverse talents and ways of learning. These principles were drawn from broad review of the higher education literature and were an attempt to provide guidelines about effective teaching practices.

McKeachie (1986) believed two principles of learning held consistently. Active participation is better than passive learning and meaningful learning is more effective than rote memorization.

Cross (1976) suggested that self-pacing, active participation, clear and explicit goals, small lessons, and feedback are basic principles upon which all individualized education is based. Cross believed that mastery of learning depended on the ordering of learning sequences so that students master each step as they proceed.

Glaser (1982) suggested (a) knowledge may be specific to the field of study where knowledge is acquired and (b) domain specific knowledge we have acquired may influence appreciably the way in which we acquire new knowledge, solve problems and comprehend or process information (p. 64).
Pratt and Paterson (2007) categorized teaching into five perspectives: (1) transmission, (2) apprenticeship, (3) developmental, (4) nurturing, and (5) social reform. Pratt and Paterson believed that the apprenticeship is one familiar to those working in skilled-based learning programs. The goal of the instruction is to help the learner develop a new identity by becoming a proficient member of a professional community.

While the above mentioned theorists suggested practices that would be conducive to student learning environments, the faculty socialization literature would suggest that college teaching is still a considerable challenge for many new faculty members. College teaching is highly challenging, intellectually demanding, and emotionally rewarding. In most teaching positions, one misconception that affects new vocational technical faculty is the idea that most of their time will be spent teaching. The reality of this profession is that many new faculty members find much of their time is spent on course preparation, college paperwork, grading school work, administrative duties, and committee assignments.

One of the most challenging aspects of technical education is directly related to diverse student populations. According to Brawer and Cohen (1972), two-year college students vary in age, life experiences, college expectations, and degrees of academic preparation. While this diversity adds to the richness of the learning experience in the college classroom, many new vocational technical faculty members find it a demanding teaching environment and find it difficult to meet the learning needs of their students.

In the broadest sense of diversity, the two-year students are more likely to need remediation. While nearly 50% of two-year students are considered “under-prepared,”
research shows that these students tend to be goal oriented and serious about their education (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

Another challenge for the vocational technical faculty is the use of technology in the college classroom. Vocational technical faculty members are expected to be proficient in the use of instructional technologies such as PowerPoint. The Louisiana Community and Technical College System put forth a concerted effort to expand course offerings through online learning opportunities that include compressed video and Blackboard. While technology is transforming how higher education delivers courses or reaches students, these demands further complicate the new faculty experience.

According to Boice (1992), inexperienced faculty members were not confident that they knew how to teach. Teaching is conflict ridden and time consuming, frequently goes unrewarded by the institution, and occurs without feedback needed for improvement (Olsen & Sorcinelli, 1992). Gates (2000) hypothesized, “Improving one’s teaching skills and increasing one’s understanding of teaching and learning processes seems like the logical way of coping with teaching related stress” (p. 420).

Role Identity

“A discipline, is the first mark of identity a professor receives” (Ruscio, 1987, p. 332). Cohen and Brawer (1972) defined identity in terms of “awareness of self, of personality, and of individuality” (p. 1). They believed that the socialization process involves “resynthesizing past experiences with those of the present and those yet to come” (p. 1) and over time results in a maturity known as “integrated functioning within a social content” (p. 3). Cohen and Brawer (1972) suggested that instructors who understand themselves and their work can choose appropriate roles and can function with
greater satisfaction. Bruss and Kopala (1993) defined professional identity as the formation of an “attitude of personal responsibility regarding one’s role in the profession” (p. 686). Becher and Trowler (2001) explained that identity affects every aspect of the faculty member’s academic life; what they read, their research, the conferences they attend – and the what, where, when, how, and why of their teaching. Olsen and Einwohner (2001) suggested that a teacher’s sense of effectiveness, satisfaction, and commitment are all elements of his or her teaching identity. They also believed another component of the teaching self is the ability to develop a rapport with students.

Parker Palmer (1998) explored the concept of the teaching persona and personal teaching philosophy that he believes comprise good teaching and learning. Feldmen and McPhee (2008) defined personal teaching philosophy as, “a set of beliefs, values, intentions and attitudes about learning, teaching, the nature of knowledge, and the role of the students and teachers in the classroom” (p. 21). Furthermore, Feldmen and McPhee believed that our personal teaching paradigm “determines our perception of ourselves as teachers and expectation of our students” (p. 21). Thus, the most common and influential source of what we believe about teaching and learning is our own personal educational experiences as students (Feldmen & McPhee, 2008). Kuh and Whitt (1988) investigated the academic profession in terms of culture that exists through a collective identity for all faculty members, regardless of disciplinary affiliation. The components of the identity include three basic values shared by all faculty members: (1) the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge as a purpose of higher education, (2) autonomy in the conduct of academic work, and (3) collegiality (Bowen & Schuster, 1986). The new vocational technical faculty identify with the dissemination of knowledge for the purpose
of workforce skills. Autonomy and collegiality allow new vocational technical faculty to choose the best way to educate students for the workplace.

Bowen and Schuster (1986) suggested that each discipline attracts individuals of particular talents and interests, and the experiences of working in each field places its mark on their personalities. Tierney and Rhoads (1994) explained that as students learn their disciplines, they master language specific to their field. The culture of the discipline is the primary source of faculty identity and expertise and typically endangers stronger bonds than those developed with the institution of employment, particularly in large universities (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). The pilot study (Thornton, 2006) for this research study revealed that new vocational technical faculty members have strong identities with their disciplines. Many still consider themselves nurses or carpenters rather than instructors.

In reviewing the literature, role identification and socialization seem to be interrelated when investigating new recruit experiences as they take on new career paths and new job responsibilities. Definitions of terms are similar in nature, thus role identification appears to be a result of one’s socialization experiences. Colbeck (2008) explained, “Once an individual has accepted and internalized expectations for a role as part of his or her identity, that identity becomes a cognitive framework for interpreting new experiences” (p. 10). Pratt (1998) suggested that identity is a process of either affinity (beliefs that the organization has values similar to one’s own) or emulation (adjusting one’s own values to match those of the organization). Consequently, vocational technical faculty members begin to develop their “teaching identities” as they are socialized in the context of their postsecondary institutions.
Socialization

Two bodies of literature were used to inform this research: organizational socialization literature and new faculty socialization literature. Organizational socialization theories examine the processes which occur in organizations to socialize new members while new faculty theories investigated how new faculty experienced the stages of socialization.

Faculty Socialization


Anticipatory Socialization

Merton (1957) defined anticipatory socialization as the process through which individuals learn to conform to the norms of a given society in order to seek a positive frame of reference. Schein (1968) noted the primary function of socialization was to build commitment to the institution while integrating the new member to their new environment. Many of the experts (Austin, 2002; Bess, 1978; Feldmen, 1976, and Tierney & Rhoads, 1994) who studied the graduate school experience believed that students anticipate their faculty role. Their college experiences shape their professional behaviors and help them succeed in their new academic communities. When examining the anticipatory phase of the vocational technical faculty, I believe new vocational technical faculty members are socialize and anticipate their new industry workplaces.
rather than academe. DelFavero argued that vocational technical faculty would still have some expectations of a faculty role from simply being in the classroom. While DelFavero may be right, I believe that there is still a disconnect from a socialization experience that prepares an individual for the workplace as opposed to a socialization experience that prepares one for the college classroom.

Organizational Socialization

Many researchers (Schein, 1968; Van Maanen, & Schein, 1979; Tierney & Rhoads, 1993) define socialization as a set of experiences in which an individual becomes accepted as part of a group, organization, and community, or as in the context of this research study, part of an educational institution such as a vocational technical college. Van Maanen (1976) defined organizational socialization as the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role. Organizational socialization is the process of “learning the ropes,” being trained and taught about what is important in an organization (Schein, 1968). Tierney (1997) defined socialization as successful understanding and incorporation of those activities by the new members of the organization.

Most experts agree that socialization is an ongoing and dynamic process that is initially more dramatic when new recruits enter an organization (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979; Tierney & Rhoads, 1994). As Tierney (1997) pointed out, socialization tends to proceed not through direct didactic instruction, but more often, through the “ordinary daily occurrences” that transpire as the newcomer sets about the task of taking on the professional role. According to Austin (2002), socialization is not a static process in which the newcomer only receives the imprint of the organization. It is a dynamic
process in which the individual newcomer brings experiences, values, and ideas into the organization. According to Lenze (1999), socialization is a two-way street where faculty welfare is in the hands of both the institution and the new faculty. Therefore, socialization is a process of diverse experiences that allows the new instructor to transition and adapt to their new environment. As the socialization process takes place, new instructors begin to integrate their own needs and goals with the needs of the institution (Bess, 1978; Van Maanen, 1976).

Comparison of the Theoretical Models of Organizational Socialization

Many socialization experts have described socialization as a process that occurs in stages (Clark & Corcoran, 1986; Feldmen, 1976; Buchanan, 1974; Porter, Lawler & Hackman, 1975; Schein, 1978; Wanous, 1980; Rosch & Riech, 1996). The first stage is usually identified as the anticipatory or pre-arrival stage. The “anticipatory” (Merton, 1957) or “pre-arrival” acknowledges the influence of preexisting values, attitudes, and expectations. During this stage, the individual develops expectations about the career and institution, and begins to learn the norms associated with being a faculty member.

Graduate school is an example of the anticipatory stage. The information gained through the pilot study revealed evidence that many of the faculty members who teach at the vocational technical college have different anticipatory experiences than those faculty members trained in graduate programs (Thornton, 2006). Most vocational technical faculty members were once students within the technical college where there was no prior training or influence to become faculty members. The values and expectations were fully determined as they were socialized to their disciplines and the industrial workplace.
The predetermined perceptions are altered as new vocational technical faculty members undergo the next three stages of socialization.

The second stage of socialization is usually marked by entry into the institution and defined as induction (Corcoran & Clark, 1984), first year (Buchanan, 1974), encounter (Van Maanen, 1975; Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975; Rosch and Reich, 1966), accommodation (Feldman, 1976) entry (Schein, 1978), and confronting and accepting organizational reality (Wanous, 1980). The second stage of socialization begins when a candidate begins to form an impression of the institution that is seeking to recruit him or her for a faculty position (Rosch and Reich, 1996). During the entry stage, new faculty members begin to understand their roles as instructors, network to build and establish new relationships, and understand the history and culture of the institution. Role clarity becomes more apparent as pre-existing attitudes are used as the foundational fabric, which forms the initial impression.

It then becomes the work of the final two stages to modify and meld the belief system into the reality of the new workplace, the vocational technical college. As new vocational technical instructors begin their teaching careers, they experience similar new faculty experiences. The new Louisiana vocational technical faculty members begin to adapt and understand their roles as instructors; they also enjoy the collegiality of other faculty and administration. Through their early faculty experiences they are immersed in the history and culture of the technical college.

The third stage of faculty socialization is a form of adaptation to the institution. Many of the experts in the filed of socialization have referred to the role management stage “settling in” (Feldmen, 1976), performance (Buchanan, 1974), change and
acquisition (Porter, Lawler & Hackman, 1975), socialization (Schein, 1978), and achieving role clarity (Wanous, 1980). Adaptation occurs as the newcomer works to reconcile any contradictions that may arise between early expectations and subsequent on-the-job experiences. During this stage, skills are mastered, roles are achieved, adjustments to work group values develop, and a commitment to the organization is made (Corcoran & Clark, 1984; Feldmen, 1981). This has been noted as the most stressful stage of the socialization process (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The faculty member seeks to find a comfort zone with teaching work, to establish relations with superiors, colleagues and students, and to understand the institutional climate. As the transition into the new role, an instructor begins, each individual establishes a “comfort zone” which allows them to adapt to the workload and institutional climate and form collegial relationships.

The fourth stage of the socialization process refers to the “commitment or metamorphosis” of the newcomer as he or she becomes one with the institution. Organizational dependability (Buchanan, 1974), mutual acceptance (Schein, 1978), and locating oneself in the organizational context and detecting signposts of successful socialization (Wanous, 1980) is the stage when the newcomer shifts focus and begins to settle in and become a part of the institution. The faculty member starts to internalize the values, beliefs, and norms of the institution while maturing in the role of instructor. Commitment to the postsecondary institution and the teaching profession are finalized during this stage. New vocational technical faculty members begin to form a commitment to the technical college and the teaching profession.
Institutions choose many ways to actively socialize their junior faculty. Some colleges have established formal orientation programs while others have chosen informal methods of orienting faculty members to their culture. Some colleges believe that the socialization process will occur through a more lengthy mentoring process with varied outcomes.

**Basic Socialization Assumptions**

Many challenges occur when individuals move from one work culture to another. The more difficult the new environment, the more stressful the adaptation experience. Van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) assumptions were important to this research because they have provided the basis for which new recruits are socialized to their new environments and their new professional role identities. Their six basic assumptions of organization socialization are:

1.) “Individuals undergoing any organizational transition are in an anxiety-producing situation.” (p. 6)

2.) “Colleagues, superiors, subordinates, clients, and other associates support and guide the individual in learning the new roles.” (p. 9)

3.) “The stability and productivity of any organization depends upon the ways newcomers to various positions come to eventually carry out their tasks.” (p. 9)

4.) “Individuals adjust to novel circumstances through great variation in the particular content and the type of adjustments achieved or not achieved.” (p. 9)
5.) “Newcomers reject any implicit or explicit notions that certain organizationally relevant rules, people must internalize values, or motivations as “blueprints for behavior” if they are to participate and contribute to the organization’s continued survival.” (p.10)

6.) “For the theory of organizational socialization to be useful to researchers and laymen, the theory must be general and typical.” (p. 11)

The new faculty literature suggests most new faculty feel isolated, unsupported, and uninformed (Boice, 1992; Menges, 1999; Fink, 1991; Tierney & Rhoads, 1994). Consequently, Van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) assumptions of organization socialization lead one to believe that new vocational technical faculty may experience stress during their initial transitional phase of becoming instructors. Thus, new vocational technical faculty find themselves in an anxiety producing situation, left to their own devices to learn their new roles as instructors, without proper tools to be effective teachers.

**Socialization Tactics**

The work of Van Maanen and Schein (1979) developed taxonomy of socialization, which defines the tactics that allow new recruits to transition to their new environment and influence role identification. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) believed that individuals experience socialization rituals as they pass from one boundary to another, such as the boundary from industry expert to teacher. The process of socialization can occur through many activities including orientation, new instructor workshops, mentoring relationships, and networking with senior faculty and administration. Professional organizations and professional development activities may
also help new instructors adapt to their new environments. It is important to identify the
socialization tactics that are inherent in the process. The framework of Van Maanen and
Schein (1979) analyzed six tactics of socialization experiences for that of a newcomer:

1.) Collective verses Individual Socialization
2.) Formal verses Informal Socialization
3.) Sequential verses Random Steps in the Socialization
4.) Fixed verses Variable Socialization
5.) Serial verses Disjunctive Socialization
6.) Investiture verses Divesture Socialization

Because of the foundational importance, the six tactics will be analyzed as they relate to
the socialization of new instructors within the technical college system.

Collective verses Individual Socialization

The first dimension compares group experiences to that of the individual
socialization process. The collective socialization process allows a group to share a
common set of experiences, whereas the individual socialization process is very unique to
that individual. The formal socialization process occurs when the newcomer is isolated
from the organization and experiences a specific set of experience, informal socialization
the newcomer is interwoven into the organizational structure and the process happens
more through casual circumstances.

New Louisiana vocational technical faculty may experience components of both
collective, as well as individual, socialization processes. Although it is rare that faculty
begin their tenure at the same time as starting their new academic positions, the new
vocational technical faculty would initially experience the effects of individual
socialization. As opportunities are presented, new instructors could attend the New Instructors Workshop, which would provide a collective socialization experience. It is at that time that they would begin to experience collegiality and share similar experiences with other new instructors.

Formal verses Informal Socialization

The process of socialization occurs through formal or informal means. Tierney (1997) defined formal socialization as explicit socialization programs that clearly delineate cultural structures such as faculty development programs, orientation, or mentoring programs. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) found that formal socialization is associated with hierarchical and exclusionary passages where the newcomer is expected to assume a new position and attitude. The more formal the process, the more concern is likely shown for the recruit’s absorption of the appropriate behavior associated with the target role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Lucas and Murray (2002) defined the formal means of orientation by explicit rules, regulations, procedures, and organizational structures. Handbooks outline rules concerning teaching workloads and other faculty responsibilities, position descriptions, criteria governing promotion and tenure, office hours, governance structures, and so forth. While formal socialization is based upon structured procedures, practices and policies, informal socialization is broad and encompasses that which is not institutionally formatted. Informal processes of socialization take ordinary workplace experiences and intuitively enculturate new faculty into their new postsecondary institutions.

New Louisiana vocational technical faculty also experience both formal and informal socialization processes. The New Instructor’s Workshop would be considered
an example of formal socialization. All of the new hires experience the same information and network other new instructors. Faculty members are encouraged to dine together and to socialize during breaks. Informal socialization may be varied depending on the campus culture.

Johnson (2001) concluded that new faculty members become socialized through informal contacts and associations, by merely being immersed in the existing culture. New faculty indicated that senior faculty informed them of the values and expectations of the institution through informal methods such as casual conversations and discussions unrelated to faculty socialization, tenure, or the department (Johnson, 2001). Both Fink (1991) and Sorcinelli (1988) held similar views as they centered in formal socialization at the core of continuing orientation meetings and around casual or social events such as lunch. Both formal and informal socialization processes are of value to the formation of new vocational technical faculty. New vocational technical faculty experience the effects of informal socialization more profoundly in that they begin to network and form collegial relationships that are important to their success. Thornton’s (2006) pilot study revealed that new vocational technical faculty enjoyed the casual conversation and collegiality of other faculty and administrators.

**Sequential verses Random Steps in the Socialization**

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) identified that the sequential verses random dimension indicates how an individual progresses from one boundary passage to the next. Sequential socialization refers to the existence of explicit steps that must be followed sequentially to achieve the target goal or role, which allows an individual to progress through the organizational boundaries. Random socialization pertains to a progression
through organizational boundaries that involve ambiguous and unclear ordering of steps to the target goal or role. Based on Van Maanen and Schein’ theories (1979), random socialization produces more stress because the individual is never really sure he/she has done enough work to progress from one boundary passage to another (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). In the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, each campus has a unique culture based on the location within the state. The only formal orientation course is the New Instructor’s Workshop, which is attended by new recruits within the first three years of their academic appointments. Therefore, new Louisiana vocational technical faculty members are more likely to experience random socialization processes than sequential steps. Consequently, based on Van Maanen and Schein’s assumptions the new vocational technical faculty experience more stress than those new recruits who go through a more sequential process.

**Fixed verses Variable Socialization**

Fixed verses variable socialization refers to the existence of a timetable related to moving from organizational boundary roles. Fixed socialization has a specified time frame associated with progression of organizational roles, while variable socialization gives no clear guidelines about the boundary passage or if the boundary actually exists. The Louisiana Technical College System approved a process for Rank and Promotion in 2008. In the past, new Louisiana vocational technical faculty were hired with the rank of instructor and remained an instructor throughout their teaching careers. There were instances where instructors who held Masters Degrees crossed organizational boundaries by changing roles from instructors to administrators. Therefore, most instructors did not experience what Van Maanen and Schein refer to as fixed or variable socialization.
Serial verses Disjunctive Socialization

Serial verses disjunctive socialization distinguishes the degree to which a newcomer is expected to identify his/her role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Serial socialization is a process that involves senior members of the organization training or grooming the newcomer to assume a similar role or organizational position; mentoring is an example of this process. Disjunctive socialization occurs when the newcomer has no role model and the organizational role is developed by a method of trial and error (Van Maanen, 1979). Organizations create new roles to experience disjunctive socialization for the purpose of changing the culture or breaking away from past stigmas. New vocational technical faculty experience a disjunctive socialization experience. They may socialize with senior faculty, even if there is no official mentoring program. Many new instructors are expected to work independently of other faculty members.

Investiture verses Divesture Socialization

The final tactic relates to investiture verses divestiture socialization processes. These socialization dimensions refer to the degree in which a newcomer is welcomed into the organizational culture with the attribute he or she already possesses or whether the individual is pressured to change to the norms of the present organizational culture. Investiture socialization affirms the individual’s characteristics, such as skills and values, are welcome and lays a foundation on which the organization will build; divestiture socialization, on the other hand, will transform the newcomer into a desired organizational asset. The concept of investiture verses divestiture socialization is most apparent with the new Louisiana vocational technical instructors. While many new vocational technical faculty are valued for their industry expertise and their industry
contacts, many experience job related stress and pressure to transform from industry expert to a vocational technical instructor.

The socialization tactics described by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) are comprehensive in nature for those who teach in postsecondary institution where hierarchical systems exits. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) suggested that various tactics may influence faculty in different ways and experiencing combinations of the tactics may produce certain outcomes. Based on the Van Maanen and Schein tactics socialization processes, new vocational technical faculty may experience noted levels of stress as they transition from industry to academe. Isolation and lack of collegial support may result in an informal socialization process.

Research Studies on Socialization Process

This section documents the research on socialization as it relates to new faculty experiences. The research studies conducted on four-year faculty were quantitative in nature and investigated large populations through longitudinal frameworks (Menges, 1999; Boice, 1991; Fink, 1973). Much of the new faculty literature highlights the challenges faced by these new recruits, which includes unmet expectations (Menges, 1999), isolation (Boice, 1991; Fink, 1973) and job related stress (Olsen & Sorcinelli, 1986; Sorcinelli, 1992).

Research Studies Conducted on Four-Year Faculty

Menges and Associates

The New Faculty Project, a longitudinal study, was conducted by the National Center of Post-secondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. Menges and Associates (1999) explored the first three years and how faculty and institutions can work together to
ease the transition to a new faculty appointment and facilitate the process of mastering academic work. Surveys were sent out to 225 faculty participants who were classified as individuals hired into new fulltime tenured track positions. The research used new faculty from community colleges, comprehensive universities, residential universities, rural liberal arts institutions, and urban liberal arts institutions. Rich data was collected through an hour interview with a subset of population hired in 1991, 1992, and 1993. Menges and Associates (1999) reported the findings in the book Faculty in New Jobs: A Guide to Settling In, Becoming Established, and Building Institutional Support. The research revealed four topics that centered on the lives of new faculty: stress, time allocation, job expectations, and the performance evaluations.

Stress was divided into two categories: work related stress and non-work related stress. Work related stress included committee participation, faculty meetings, teaching loads, research and publishing demands, and the review and promotion process. Non-work related stress including personal responsibilities such as managing one’s household and lack of personal time. The community college faculty reported less work related stress than those new faculty members at four-year institutions. Faculty who taught at research universities and urban liberal arts institutions reported more stress related to research and publication demands, while faculty who taught at comprehensive university experienced higher levels of stress from all sources.

According to Menges’ (1999) research, time allocation is divided into four domains: teaching, profession growth, research and publication, and service. Teaching accounted for two-thirds of the new faculty members’ time, except at research universities where research and teaching competed for the faculty members’ time.
Community college faculty members reported teaching 70% of the time while their counterparts in four-year institutions reported teaching 60% of the time. Professional development averaged 10% of faculty time allocation across institutions. Research and publication time allocation was highest at research-based institution and urban liberal arts institutions. Community college faculty had no real expectation of publications.

The faculty participants in the New Faculty Project reported that expectations were no clearer in year three than they were in year two. Most faculty members seemed to be clear on their teaching expectations. Research and publications were vaguer for faculty required to publish. Community college faculty experienced the highest job satisfaction with the lowest stress level and the clearest expectations. Urban liberal arts institutions experienced the highest stress level, lowest job satisfaction, and unclear expectations.

Performance evaluations held mixed emotions for some faculty. Some new faculty members found confirmation that they were doing a good job, while others received vague feedback that neither provided positive comments nor clarified areas requiring improvement.

Boice

Boice (1991) conducted a longitudinal, mixed method study of new tenured track faculty at two universities between the years of 1985 and 1990. The data collected identified new faculty challenges, which included: (1) experienced problems and supports as teachers, (2) showed ready promise as successes or as failures, and (3) responded to opportunities for help as teachers (Boice, 1991). Participants were classified as inexperienced (with less than two years beyond the doctorate), returning (from career
outside academe and or teaching), and experienced (included fulltime teaching at another institution) (Boice, 1991). Boice’s results showed evidence that less than 5% of new faculty could identify any type of social network. New faculty reported a lack of effective support from senior faculty and unclear job expectations. Boice found that new faculty had a tendency to over prepare lecture content material, which left less time and energy to pursue research interest.

In 1992, Boice reported the results of a longitudinal study of new faculty with varied disciplines at a large regional university. The qualitative interview questions centered on new faculty experiences, including collegial interaction, academic philosophies, and career plans. The study revealed new faculty had accentuated feelings of loneliness, low levels of collegiality, and intellectual under-stimulation. New faculty’s perceptions of senior faculty were generally regarded as tired, unproductive, inconsistent, cynical, and embarrassing. New faculty members also felt like senior faculty were unsupportive of their research.

Fink

In 1973, several academicians launched a nationwide project called Project on Teaching and Learning in Graduate Geography. The study compared 97 new faculty members who participated in preparatory teaching programs against those who did not participate in a preparatory program. Sources of information were gathered from new faculty, their students, three colleagues, and the research director. The vast majority of respondents reported feeling overwhelmed and overloaded due to heavy teaching loads. In spite of the heavy loads, most felt pressured to do research and publish.
Fink’s research revealed that many new faculty members were responsible for teaching between four and eight different subjects during their first academic year. About 40% of the participants reported modeling their teaching style primarily on one or two of their professors. Many new faculty members reported a lack of familiarity with teaching techniques and available resources.

This study highlighted that most four-year faculty feel overwhelmed by their workload of preparing four to eight different subjects. Most vocational technical instructors in Louisiana are responsible for teaching the entire curriculum, which may include course preparation for 40 different classes. Like the faculty in Fink’s study, many new vocational technical faculty lack familiarity with teaching techniques and available resources.

_Olsen and Sorcinelli_

In 1986, Olsen and Sorcinelli conducted a longitudinal mixed method study on a cohort of 54 new faculty members. The goal of the study was to understand faculty development during the pretenure years. Each participant interviewed was asked to complete a career development questionnaire. The interviews and questionnaires sought to understand what changes took place over time on career choice, roles and responsibilities, opportunities and constraints, as well as life away from work satisfactions. As faculty progressed from years one to five (1) time spent on teaching preparation declined, (2) teaching was more satisfying and less stressful than research, (3) time spent on research steadily increased, and (4) stress about research productivity and support heightened. The implications of Olsen and Sorcinelli’s research, leads one to believe that if new faculty had adequate orientation programs and proper support
systems, new recruits would experience smoother transitions and experience lengthier tenures. “The greatest declines in satisfaction were with support and recognition for both teaching and scholarship by both colleagues and administration. The faculty felt more satisfied with the recognition they received from their discipline than from their campus” (p. 21).

*Sorcinelli*

Sorcinelli (1992) addressed new and junior faculty stress as one of the outcomes of the longitudinal study mentioned above. While nearly all newcomers reported high levels of satisfaction with their careers, the new faculty identified five stress points that included time management, inadequate feedback and recognition, unrealistic expectations, lack of collegiality, and problems balancing work, and life outside of work.

The research studies mentioned above highlight and emphasize the challenges met by new four-year faculty. Four-year faculty have undergone graduate and doctoral programs and still found challenges adjusting to their new roles as college professors. The implications of the research suggest vocational technical faculty socialization experiences seem to be compounded by their lack of postsecondary education.

*Research Studies on Two-year Faculty Research*

Much of the two-year postsecondary research is focused on the career stages, professional development needs, and job satisfaction on community and technical faculty. The quantitative research studies focused on large populations of community college faculty.
Wallin and Smith

Wallin and Smith (2005) surveyed 714 technical college faculty members about their developmental needs, preferred mode of delivery, and potential obstacles. The survey instrument included 50 professional development activities with a Likert Scale. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the professional development activity to successful teaching (low, moderate, high, very high) and self assess their competence in that particular activity using the same scale. Faculty prioritized their needs based on course preparation, knowledge of learning styles, curriculum modification, academic advising, instructional techniques, and work with advisory committees.

Wallin

Wallin (2004) wrote an article on the value of community and technical adjunct faculty. Using the 1999 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, Wallin discovered that two-thirds of the faculty members who teach at community and technical colleges are part time. Her article investigated the “four important issues related to understanding adjunct faculty: (1) the growth and increasing use of adjunct faculty, (2) reasons people teach part-time, (3) competency and compensation issues, and (4) professional development opportunities” (p. 374). The article concluded that adjunct faculty members are committed to their classes and their students, bring a wealth of practical knowledge to the classroom, and allow community and technical colleges to meet their educational needs.

Fugate and Amey

Fugate and Amey (2000) examined the career stages of the community college faculty. Their qualitative research study allowed them to interview 22 community
college faculty members to understand the circumstances, which lead to the employment as a faculty member, conceptualization of the early career stages, and the potential impact of professional development opportunities. The results of the study revealed no real career path to their current teaching positions. Most of the faculty focused their efforts on teaching, but were also involved in their communities, their institutions, and in research.

Townsend and LaPaglia

Townsend and LaPaglia (2000) researched the ratings of community college faculty statements about four-year faculty attitudes toward two-year college faculty. According to Barry and Barry (1992) community colleges are “prisoners of elitism with little chance of escape.” (p. 43). The quantitative study received a 44% response from 311 faculty members and the majority of instructors agreed that four-year faculty considered them to be “on the margins of higher education.” In spite of this belief, findings show that community college faculty performed their jobs with a deep commitment to teaching in their postsecondary institutions.

The research on two-year faculty seems limited and scarce. While little is known about the vocational technical faculty, it would appear the two-year faculty members undergo similar socialization experiences as do other post secondary faculty.

Implications of the Socialization Literature

When reviewing the research studies on the socialization of new faculty, it would appear that most new faculty experience varying degrees of stress, isolation, and lack of collegiality (Boice, 1992; Menges, 1999; and Fink, 1991). The literature informs us that new faculty may benefit and experience a smoother transition to their academic roles
when there is (a) increase contact among all faculty, (b) clear job expectations, (c) professional development activities that increase knowledge of the institution and the teaching field and (d) formal socialization activities such as an orientation.

**Job Related Stress**

Generally, the most frustrating aspect of being a new faculty member is that although a new faculty member is a specialist in a discipline and has been hired for expertise in a specialization, that very same newcomer is also a rank amateur on the new campus (Menges, 1999). For the new vocational technical faculty, becoming a faculty member constitutes a career change from industry expert to technical college instructor and this can be a source of stress.

Menges (1999) identifies five stressors for new faculty. First, anxiety is high for junior faculty. Career changes for this new vocational faculty member put this instructor in uncharted teaching territory. Most new vocational technical faculty members have no teaching experience and little understanding of public postsecondary institutions. Second, junior faculty members feel tremendous pressure from obligations that compete for their time and energy. New vocational faculty members have numerous responsibilities, including heavy teaching loads, faculty industry liaison, student advisor, and various committee assignments. Third, junior faculty report a sense of isolation. While many new vocational technical faculty members seem to be a welcomed asset to the campus, many report a sense of isolation. Explanations of this isolation range from not knowing anyone on the campus to the fact that more experienced faculty have established duties and predetermined committee assignments that do not include mentoring new faculty. Fourth, stress from professional matters overflows into non-work
areas, creating tension in families and in other personal relationships. One of the most
tedious tasks for new vocational technical faculty is the aspect of course preparation and
time management. As a single shop instructor, vocational technical faculty members are
solely responsible for teaching the entire curriculum. This is also contributes to junior
faculty experiencing dissonance about what is valued in the institutional reward system
(Menges, 1999).

The Louisiana Technical College System does not have a tenure policy in place. New
vocational technical college faculty are evaluated through teacher observations,
student evaluation, industry input of the program content, field trips, and industry visits.
Value is also placed on monies secured from grants and industry donations. While the
career choice of becoming a new vocational technical faculty member will offer potential
rewards, the transition from industry for this group of faculty may also be a time of
adjustment where the newcomer is isolated, anxious, and confused.

Isolation

According to Boice (1992), loneliness was new faculty members’ most salient
complaint, one with clear precedence over the next most common types of concerns - of
workload and busyness. Most instructors speak of their lives and work as individual,
isolated, and lonely. According to Grubb (1999), some faculty view isolation as an
inherent part of teaching. The most distressed new faculty members were women and
members of minority groups (Boice, 1992). If a new vocational technical faculty
member feels isolated, it may take a longer period of time to “fit in” at the institutional or
the faculty member may decide to leave.
Time Management

The most difficult part of being a new or junior faculty member is trying to balance the competing responsibilities of academic life. Successful life as a new faculty member depends on effective time allocation and management (Menges, 1999). Teaching must be done on schedule. Service responsibilities come with their own timetables and deadlines (Lucas & Murray, 2002). Many new faculty members at the technical college feel overwhelmed by their various work responsibilities. Initially, the time devoted to course preparation and teaching leaves little time for anything else. Many new vocational technical faculty members are responsible for the course preparation for their entire curriculum; this could mean course preparation of 40 separate classes (Thornton, 2006). When a faculty member teaches 30 hours a week, the course preparation time spills over into personal time. Student advising and service obligations take up spare time that could be used for course preparation.

Teaching loads are, no doubt, the toughest part of this teaching career. After initial course preparation, new vocational technical faculty find the workload more manageable because each semester, the bulk of the material presentation has been done, and it is only a matter of updating the course information (Olsen & Sorcinelli, 1992). Therefore, as new vocational technical faculty members become more experienced instructors the time allocated to course preparation will be devoted to other committee duties.
Coping With Stress

Orientation

An orientation program is the community college’s opportunity to welcome new faculty into its community, provide faculty with basic institutional and employment information, and begin the process of socializing, inducting, and initiating (Tucker, 1993) the faculty into the organization. Boice (1992) described three forms that orientation programs are known to have: (1) brief meetings about benefits and policies, (2) a faculty reception (3) a meeting where faculty are exposed to a series of brief talks by administrators and service providers. Noonan (1980) described a three-day retreat involving new faculty from four colleges in traditional instructional development. Boice (1992) suggested a sensible practice of following initial orientations with periodic meetings or mentoring sessions. Orientation programs offer support for the success of new faculty member. Such programs often serve as a vehicle for reducing anxiety experienced by new vocational technical faculty. This is also true of mentoring programs that are usually more personal and relationship intensive.

Mentoring

Kartje (1996) defined the mentor as a senior person who oversees and promotes the career and professional development of another person, usually a junior, through teaching, coaching, and counseling. Anderson and Shannon (1988) believed mentoring is,

“a nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s
professional and/or personal development … within the context of an outgoing, caring relationship between the mentor and protégé” (p. 40).

A mentor offers “effective strategies, useful knowledge, and proven application that would otherwise be learned through trial and error” (Harnish & Wild, 1993, p. 22). Mentoring can make a positive difference beginning with institution-wide programs aimed at making newcomers feel welcome and connected. Support programs succeed when they make novices feel valued, when they convey the message that initiations rituals are fair and explicit (Boyle & Boice, 1998).

Even though these formal vehicles of socialization can be effective, they are not without negative features. For example, well intentioned institutional efforts such as new faculty orientations or mentoring programs divert from the immediate demands of course preparation and collegial consultation (Menges, 1999). In many cases, both experienced and new faculty members tend to view formal mentoring programs with suspicion and distrust because they associate them with “remediation.” For some, program participation serves as a possible indicator of professional deficiency, as something that will hinder, not help, one’s future career (Lucas & Murray, 2002). Critics of formal mentoring programs claim they actually do a disservice to new faculty and may be indicative of a basic systematic weakness (Lucas & Murray, 2002).

**Satisfaction in the Teaching Profession**

Many higher education professionals would consider personal satisfaction and advancement to be the rewards of the professoriate. Many community college and vocational technical college faculty members expressed job satisfaction in terms of teaching and student success (Truell, Price, Joyner, 1998). Research on community
college faculty job satisfaction consistently indicated that satisfaction with work itself (such as teaching and working directly with students) is the strongest variable in determining overall job satisfaction (Hill, 1986; Hutton and Jobe, 1985; Riday, Bingham, & Harvey, 1985; Truell, Price, & Joyner 1998). Vocational technical faculty members have very specific job responsibilities that are evaluated at the discretion of the administrator. The pilot study (Thornton, 2006) revealed that evaluations of the vocational technical faculty are left to the discretion of the administration; many faculty members feel their performance reviews are inequitable and see no connection between their performance and their rewards. This process often leads to complacency among certain vocational technical faculty.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework used for this research study is Menges’ (1994) Model of Faculty Academic Life. This model was developed through the research of the New Faculty Project, which illustrates three concentric circles of the faculty academic life. The concept illustrates the faculty academic life from the concerns of the individual to the larger concerns of work and places these ideals in the context of the institution.

As shown in Figure 1, Menges (1994) placed the individual at the core of the model. The individual’s characteristics included demographics, experiences, beliefs, knowledge, and traits. In short, faculty bring to a new academic position predetermined characteristics and preexisting experiences and traits as well as evolving beliefs and knowledge (Menges, 1994). Vocational technical faculty members also bring an overwhelming presence of industry with values placed on production and the bottom-line.
Figure 1: New Vocational Technical Faculty Socialization

Motivation for Leaving Industry

Context

Domains of Work

Faculty

New vocational technical Faculty experience

Role Conceptualization

Strategies help develop teaching skills

Socialization Experiences of New Vocational Technical Faculty

Acquisition of the appropriate role behaviors
Development of work skills and abilities
Adjustment to the work skills, norms, values and expectations

- Leave Technical College

+ Productive Vocational Technical Faculty

Industry Skills
Expert Status
Certified Licensed

Return to Industry
The second circle depicts Domains of Work, which encompasses teaching, professional growth, service, and research/creative activity. First, Menges (1994) believed teaching not only includes instruction of students in the traditional classroom setting, but also time spent preparing for instruction, such as crafting meaningful laboratory experiences. Teaching also includes reviewing students’ work, counseling students, meeting with advisees, and working with other faculty to support teaching. For the vocational technical faculty member, the premise of teaching is built on a hands-on component to learning. Hours are spent trying to create and simulate the types of experiences a student might encounter in industry.

Second, Menges (1994) defined professional growth by those efforts made to enhance knowledge and skills in ways that do not necessarily result in a concrete product but are still essential to academic vitality. Vocational technical faculty usually meet at least once a year to discuss curriculum issues, current technology, industry needs, and to network with other instructors in their fields of expertise. There are two regional professional development activities planned annually and one major conference.

Third, Menges (1999) explained that service includes the application of scholarly expertise to community problems and faculty participation in the academic community through college or university committees and professional associations. Vocational technical faculty members hold advisory committee meetings once a semester. During these meetings, industry reviews the content of the curriculum and specifically states current technology needs. Industry can also make recommendations for curriculum changes, equipment needs, and new forms of teaching. The vocational technical faculty members are encouraged to hold membership in industry specific organizations. It is not
uncommon for the vocational technical faculty to be certified or licensed in their field of expertise. Finally, Menges included research/creative activities for the faculty surveyed in the New Faculty Project. For the purpose of this study, research was excluded because the vocational technical faculty were not required or expected to research or publish scholarly works.

The outer circle of the model represents the environmental context of the academic life (Menges, 1999). This circle includes institutional characteristics such as quality of the students, faculty relations with colleagues, facilities for teaching, institutional programs for faculty nurturance, and the institution’s norms and values. The quality of the vocational technical students includes those individuals who seek educational preparation strictly to secure employment. The facilities for teaching must be current with industry needs. Therefore, many classrooms and laboratory areas are equipped with the most current technology. Vocational technical faculty relations are formed with colleagues outside of classroom time. As for institutional programs designing faculty nurturance, this seems to be missing from the campus repertoire. New vocational technical faculty members do not participate in an orientation: many do not even take a campus tour.

The New Vocational Technical Faculty Socialization Model shows the individual as a certified industry expert with master level skills. As the individual has a personal shift in priorities, the individual experiences motivations for leaving industry. After a career change, the individual must try to identify with his or her new teaching appointment. The three circles are within the context of the institution but the new faculty member is not aligned with his or her new domains of work. As the new
vocational technical faculty members begin to navigate their new environment, they
begin to have experiences that will allow them to conceptualize their roles as instructors
and form strategies that will help them grow and develop as educators. Feldman’s (1981)
comprehensive view of the changes that occur during the organizational socialization
process best describe vocational technical faculty transitional experiences: (1)
socialization as the acquisition of a set of appropriate role behavior, (2) socialization as
the development of work skills and abilities, and (3) socialization as adjustment to the
work group’s norms and values. In Feldman’s (1981) view of organizational
socialization, in order for an individual to acquire the appropriate set of role behaviors, it
is important for organizational members to have a realistic and accurate job description,
congruence of skills and abilities, and a congruence of needs and values. In the
development of work skills and abilities, Feldman stressed realistic selection devices to
fill vacant positions within the institution and to guard against economic conditions that
will force institutions to settle for matches that are far from ideal for both parties.
Feldman also believes it is important to develop work groups, which can serve as a
source of emotional support with positive problem solutions to for work group
participants.

Feldman’s (1981) organizational socialization views are relevant to the concept of
socialization of new vocational technical faculty. Most often, the transition from industry
to higher education is seen as a career change by the new instructor. The new vocational
technical faculty members usually do not have a frame of reference for all that is
involved in a teaching career. Many vocational technical faculty members believe that
teaching is simply imparting the industry knowledge to a select group of students each semester, when in fact the job involves so much more.

As new instructors undergo their transition and socialization process, they begin to acquire the appropriate role behaviors, develop work skills and abilities necessary to become a teacher, and adjust to the work norms, values, and expectations. For the purpose of this study, the display of the three concentric circles leads to a socialization process where the instructor is at the core of the institution with an understanding of the domains of work. Thus, the new vocational technical faculty has an increased likelihood of being productive in the new work environment.

This research sought to understand what experiences, role conceptualization, resources, and strategies were important to the transition from industry to technical college. If a new vocational technical faculty member experiences a positive socialization process, the three circles become aligned over time. The productive vocational technical faculty member understands the context of the institution and learns to master the domains of work. On the other hand, if a new vocational faculty member experiences a negative socialization process he or she is likely to return to industry.

Conclusion

Two-year faculty members stand out from their postsecondary colleagues, not only because of their quantity and diversity, but because they are responsible for preparing large numbers of students for the workforce. This study aimed to document the transitional experiences of new Louisiana vocational technical faculty as they were socialized to their new academic communities.
The literature review provided an overview of the historical aspects of the two year post-secondary system and the Louisiana Technical College System. With scant research available on this population, it was important to detail the workload and responsibilities of the vocational technical faculty. With a lack of pedagogical knowledge it was important to explain aspects of college teaching as it relates to the vocational classroom and to examine how it plays a part in the development of their academic personae.

The socialization literature illuminated how new Louisiana vocational technical faculty adjust and became acculturated to their new roles as instructors.
CHAPTER III
Methodology

The purpose of this study was to understand the socialization experiences of vocational technical faculty, specifically the phenomena of transitioning from industry to the technical college. In this chapter, I provide the rationale for utilizing the phenomenological tradition within the qualitative methodology. This chapter summarizes the role of the researcher, strategies to address researcher bias, data collection approach, ethical considerations, and the limitations of the study.

Research Questions

Three main focal points were investigated in this research study. The first point focused on new vocational technical faculty members’ perceptions of their socialization processes during the transition from industry to the technical college. The second point examined how new vocational technical faculty conceptualize their roles as instructors. The third point sought to understand the processes that equip new faculty with strategies to successfully transition as new vocational technical instructors. Hence, the primary question guiding this research was:

1.) What experiences do vocational technical faculty members perceive are important to their transition from industry to the technical college?

This study also addressed the following secondary research questions:

2.) How do vocational technical faculty members conceptualize their roles as instructors?

3.) What experiences do vocational technical faculty members perceive will allow them to develop the skills to be competent instructors?
Rationale for Selecting a Phenomenological Qualitative Approach

A phenomenological qualitative research design was utilized to address the research questions for this study. Creswell (2003) defined a phenomenological qualitative research study as an inquiry process that captures the “essence” of human “lived” experiences as they relate to the participants of the study. The researcher builds a complex and holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. Maxwell (1996) explained how the qualitative research design is interactive, flexible, and evolves over the course of the research; this allows the researcher to fully examine the socialization experiences of the vocational technical faculty. Weiss (1994) asserted that we can learn about the work of occupations, and how people fashion careers, about cultures and the values they sponsor, and about the challenges people confront as they lead their lives. The intent of this phenomenological study was to gain insight into the socialization experiences of new vocational technical faculty.

The purpose of this research study was not only to understand the socialization experiences of the new vocational technical faculty members but to also understand how the new faculty conceptualized their roles as instructors. The conceptual framework for the research suggests that as the socialization process takes place, new vocational technical faculty members will become aligned with the values of the technical college. Creswell (1994) explained that knowledge is within the participants’ interpretation of their environment: the meaning that emerges and is inextricably tied to the context in
which it is studied. Thus, it is important to hear the voices of new faculty in the context of the technical college relative to their transition from industry.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) asserted that a phenomenological study can use a variety of empirical materials such as personal experiences, introspective reflections, interviews, observations, historical data, interactive and visual texts to describe routine and problematic moments and give meaning to an individual’s life. Relative to this study, each participant was unique and had a different experience transitioning from industry to technical college. Integrating the perspectives of new vocational technical faculty provided rich data in understanding their socialization experience. During the interviews, the new vocational technical faculty members had an opportunity to give voice to their transitional experiences.

Weiss (1994) explained that qualitative researchers are not necessarily concerned with the event but with how participants interpret the experiences that shape the event. The qualitative interview provided insight and identified the challenges encountered in the socialization process for faculty at vocational technical institutions. The qualitative research method offered the flexibility to refine questions and research strategies as events and information developed over the course of the study. The qualitative interviews allowed the faculty members to reflect on experiences and events associated with their transition to academe and interpret their meanings.

Weiss (1994) emphasized the importance of bridging inter-subjectivities so the researcher’s report enables readers to grasp a situation from the inside, as a participant might. Once the new vocational technical faculty socialization experiences are interpreted by the researcher, it is only then that a report can begin to bridge the
information so that others grasp the situation. Understanding the participants’ challenges can lead to the formation of a productive and meaningful socialization process for the new vocational technical faculty members.

Morse (1991) asserted that qualitative research is exploratory and is useful when the researcher does not know the important variables to examine. This type of approach was necessary because this topic has not been addressed with a certain sample or group of people. Relative to this study, new vocational technical faculty are a subpopulation of higher education teachers that has been under-explored. Thus, a qualitative study provided further insight on their experiences.

The Role of the Researcher

According to Creswell (1999), “Qualitative research is where the researcher is an instrument of data collection who gathers words or pictures, analyzes them inductively, focuses on the meaning of participants, and describes a process that is expressive and persuasive in language” (p. 14). Since the investigator is seen as a research instrument, it is important to monitor one’s subjectivity or “bracket” one’s own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study (Nieswiadomy, 1993). According to Glesne (1999), subjectivity, once recognized, can be monitored for more trustworthy research and subjectivity, in itself, can contribute to the research. My biases or subjectivities about the socialization process of the new vocational technical faculty, my role as a researcher, and the strategies and resources for a positive socialization experience were addressed in an attempt to lend trustworthiness to the study.

Based on pervious research (Thornton, 2006) on the socialization experiences of the new vocational technical faculty, my biases centered around the assumptions that
socialization is more difficult for a new vocational technical faculty member if they have experienced a long tenure in industry or if the faculty member came from a very structured environment in industry. From my own transitional experience, I often felt empathic to the challenges faced by the new vocational technical faculty but had to refrain from sharing similar experiences during the interview.

Another concern or possible bias was my role as a researcher, in addition to being a faculty member within the education system, as well as my relationship to other faculty members. To address this bias, I chose to conduct this research outside of the southern region where I work in an attempt to reach participants that would view me as a student conducting doctoral research rather than a colleague. However, building rapport with new vocational technical faculty members was not easy. These new faculty did not want to appear as they did not understand their new positions at the college, and yet they desperately needed help. In order to build rapport, I assured the participants the data collected was confidential to the research. In keeping with qualitative research protocol (Patton, 2002), pseudonyms were used for the names of the institutions and participants in order to maintain anonymity.

The importance of a formal orientation process for new faculty focused on the college, its history, its value, and strong standing traditions may be considered a bias I bring to the study. For socialization to be effective, it is important for new vocational technical faculty to understand the expectations of this career. Moreover, this new position is in a different context for their field of expertise, so mentoring would ease their transition from industry to technical college. It would be impossible for me to eliminate my bias on the importance of a formal orientation, but as Hammersley and Atkinson
77

(1983) explained, the goal of a qualitative researcher is not to eliminate this influence but to understand it and use it productively.

Pilot Study

The purpose of the pilot study (Thornton, 2006) was to understand the pivotal experiences new Louisiana vocational technical faculty had as they transitioned from industry to the technical college. Three new vocational technical faculty members were interviewed face to face. The interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, and analyzed to discover how the faculty made sense of their new academic environments. The data revealed the new vocational technical faculty underwent a similar transition process into the academy as their counterparts at two-year and four-year institutions.

The three participants’ experiences and concerns were similar to those in the new faculty literature and included feelings of isolation, balancing heavy workloads, and interacting with students. The participants also valued teaching, collegial relationships with other faculty and administrators, and their interactions with students. However, some of their challenges were unique to being vocational technical faculty. All three participants experienced notable levels of stress during their initial entry stage. The stress seemed to be related to the lack of pedagogical knowledge and forging a new academic persona.

The socialization process seemed to be further complicated by very structured industry environments and lengthy tenures in industry. It was also evident that the participants had difficulty identifying with their new academic roles as instructors. The participants openly admitted that their lack of pedagogical knowledge was a hindrance in teaching under-prepared students. Of the participants in the pilot study, one had a
technical diploma, one had an associate’s degree, and one had a bachelor’s degree.
While advanced degrees do not necessarily prepare instructors for the classroom, there is
some expectation of what the teaching field may involve. Much of the anticipatory phase
that would take place during graduate school took place in an industry setting rather than
academe. The participants of the pilot study were prepared to enter the industry-based
workforce rather than the technical college.

Data Collection

In a phenomenological research study, the most important aspect of the data
collection process was to find participants who had experienced the same phenomena
being explored. The interview process allowed 10 participants to articulate their
socialization experiences. Creswell explained that most qualitative researchers who
conduct phenomenological studies use a “narrow range of sampling strategies” (p. 118).
Furthermore, Creswell (2003) confirmed the importance of “data saturation” where the
data repeats itself or no new data is presented through the investigative process.

Site Selection

This research study was conducted at three of the 38 campus locations of the
technical college system in Louisiana. These campuses were selected due to
overwhelming student growth in certain program areas and faculty retirements, which
would have led to new faculty being hired.

Gaining Access

Gaining access to a site is one of the most important undertakings of the research
study. According to Glesne (1999), access refers to the researcher’s acquisition of
consent to go where he or she wants, observe what he or she wants, talk to whomever he
or she wants, obtain and read whatever documents he or she requires, and do all of this for whatever period of time needed to satisfy the research purposes. Glesne (1999) also emphasized the importance to first make contact with “gatekeepers,” the person or persons who must give consent before the researcher enters a research setting, and with whom the researcher must negotiate the conditions of access.

Most postsecondary institutions that conduct research have an Institutional Review Board to ensure that research is being performed ethically. This particular technical college is regarded, as a vocational technical college and faculty are not required to perform research, so there is no formal board that oversees this kind of activity. Therefore, to gain access to these sites, a formal written request was submitted to the regional directors for approval (Appendix C).

Selection of Participants

The selection of participants is critical to the qualitative research methodology. Creswell (1999) asserted that the selection of participants in a phenomenological study employs “maximum variation” as a strategy to represent diverse experiences and display multiple perspectives about the cases. He further (1999) explained the importance in selecting individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being explored. Maxwell (1996) suggested that a small sample size “provides far more confidence that the conclusions adequately represent the average members of the population” (p.71). He outlined four goals for purposive sampling: (1) achieve representativeness or typicality of the setting or individuals, (2) capture the heterogeneity in the population, (3) include cases or individuals that are critical to the review of the study, and (4) establish comparisons to illuminate the reasons for differences or variance between settings or
individuals. A purposeful sample of 10 new vocational technical faculty members was chosen from three of the Louisiana Technical College Campuses to share their socialization experiences.

For this study participants met the following criteria:

1.) Fulltime faculty must work at a vocational technical college.
2.) Fulltime faculty must have worked in industry a minimum of four years before teaching.
3.) Fulltime faculty must have 0 to 3 years of teaching experience to qualify as a new vocational technical faculty member. (Transfer instructors were omitted from the study.)

Identifying Study Participants

The first step in participant identification was to make sure the participants met the three requirements mentioned above. The regional directors were contacted through written correspondence (Appendix C) and asked to identify participants who met the research requirements. If the regional director identified more than five participants who met the specified requirements, I chose the participants who had greater years of teaching service. The participants with more teaching experience would provide richer source of data through their lived experiences.

Participant selection began with an initial verbal communication (telephone call) to determine if the individual was interested in making a commitment to provide feedback on his or her new vocational technical faculty transitional experiences. Once the participant agreed to participate in the research study, written correspondence that outlined the terms of the interview was sent via email (Appendix D). After the
participant identification took place, each participant was asked to give information regarding the most convenient time and place for the interview to take place. A written confirmation letter informed and served as a reminder for date, time, and location of the interview (Appendix E).

The Rationale for Selecting the Interview Data Collection Method

To gain insight through data collection, qualitative research uses two methods: interviews and documents. During the data collection process, I utilized interviews. Weiss (1994) suggested that interviewing gives the researcher access to the observations of others. I made extensive field notes during the participant interviews about the environments in which vocational technical faculty perform their academic work. The participants’ interviews allowed me to document their lived experiences. The qualitative interview sacrifices uniformity of questioning to achieve fuller development of information (Weiss, 1994). Glesne (1999) explained that researchers ask questions in the context of purposes generally known fully only to themselves.

“The way a question is worded: is one of the most important elements determining how the interviewee will respond” (Patton, 1990, p. 295). Research questions formulate what one wants to understand, while the interview questions are posed to participants in order to gain that understanding (Maxwell, 1996). I used open-ended interview questions to translate and investigate new vocational technical faculty socialization experiences. The open-ended questions allowed an exploration of the participants’ feelings and experiences.
Interview Guide

An interview guide lists areas to be covered in the interview along with the topics or questions that, together, will suggest lines of inquiry (Weiss, 1994). The interview guide (Appendix B) was structured around the objectives of the study. The first component of the guide served to introduce the topic of the interview. The second component identified the demographics of the participants, including name, age, area of teaching specialization, and level of educational credential. The third component identified the interview questions that focused on the new vocational technical faculty socialization experiences. The interview concluded with closing remarks and reminded all participants of the importance of the confidentiality of the study. Thank you cards were sent to each participant for their participation in the study.

The Interview

Interviews were conducted on the campus where each new vocational technical faculty member worked at a mutually convenient time and place. The interviews averaged 45 to 60 minutes in duration.

Using my interview guide (Appendix B), each interview began with a welcome, introduction, and a description of the purpose of the research. During the introduction, each participant was told that the interview would be tape recorded for quality assurance and transcribing purposes. Prior to the start of the interview, each participant was asked to sign the consent form and if they had any questions or concerns (Appendix A). Each participant received a letter of confidentiality and anonymity from the University of New Orleans in accordance with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) research protocol. After each participant’s interview, closing remarks and gratitude for their participation
was conveyed. Once the participant left the interview location, I made field notes about the atmosphere and general feel of the interview. I compiled notes about facial expressions, body language, and difference in the pitch or tone of the participant’s voice. As a researcher, I was trying to document and understand these phenomena, compiling field notes allowed me to seek further clarification from the participant and accurately portray his or her transitional process.

**Tape Recording**

Glesne (1999) explained the tape recorder provides a nearly complete record of what has been said and permits easy attention to the interview. I used a tape recorder for the interview. I also hand-wrote main topics and kept notes of the interview process in case of a failure with the tape recorder. After tape-recording each interview, I transcribed all of the information.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis involves organizing what has been seen, heard, and read so that one can make sense of what he or she has learned (Glesne, 1999). The idea behind coding is to link what the respondent says in his or her interview to the concepts and categories that will appear in the report (Weiss, 1994). Glesne (1999) stated that qualitative researchers use many techniques (such as coding, data displays, and computer programs) to help organize, classify, and find themes in their data, but they still must find ways to make connections that are ultimately meaningful to themselves and the reader.

Codes and themes were identified by reading the transcriptions of the audio-taped interviews. These codes were organized in a matrix according to themes that appear in industry and those themes that appear to relate to the technical college. As a visual
display, the matrices serve as a database and also helped reveal gaps or areas where qualitative data are needed (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Links were established among the literature, the conceptual framework, and the response of the new vocational technical faculty. The new vocational technical faculty members’ stories were relayed through direct quotations and metaphors. The perceptions of the new vocational technical faculties’ socialization experiences were described through direct quotes.

**Ethical Considerations**

Guidelines for ethical conduct grew out of medical and intrusive research, which led to an emphasis on informed consent, avoidance of harm, and confidentiality (Glesne, 1999). Therefore, it is important for any researcher to respect and protect the rights, beliefs, values, and needs of a research participant. Interviews can be viewed as an obtrusive act, since they pose sensitive research questions to each participant.

Special care was taken to protect and document the participants’ perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and experiences. Approval was sought to conduct this study in compliance with the standards of the Institutional Review Board of the University of New Orleans where the researcher is enrolled as a doctoral student. Access was gained to the research site through formal written consent of the directors for the two regions where the sites were located. The participants were informed of the objectives of the study, verbally and through written communication prior to data collection. Participants signed consent forms to participate in the interview. Faculty members and the sites were assigned a pseudonym. As suggested by Creswell (1999), researchers must protect the anonymity of the informants by assigning numbers or aliases to the participants. Each faculty member was assigned a descriptor, the institution was called the Louisiana
Technical College, and the campuses were assigned an alias. The researcher tape-recorded each interview and provided each participant with documentation of the procedures for analyzing and reporting the findings of the study. The data collected was stored in a locked file cabinet and will be destroyed in three years.

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness, a qualitative term used to support your research findings, is “worth paying attention to” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). In qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified four criteria of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility is an evaluation of whether or not your research findings represent an accurate interpretation of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To address credibility, I used multiple data collection procedures, specifically interviews and documents. Inferences were drawn from the participant transcript, field notes, acknowledgment of my biases, and feedback from a peer debriefer.

Transferability is the degree to which the findings of this inquiry can be applied beyond the bounds of the research project (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). I tried to enhance the transferability by linking my findings to the literature and my conceptual framework, while representing the participants’ perspectives and socialization experiences. Participants were interviewed from three technical colleges within the state of Louisiana. The transferability was limited to the vocational technical institutions within the state of Louisiana. National statistics were used to inform the socialization literature on faculty at similar institutions.
Dependability is an assessment of the quality of integrated processes of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The conceptual framework, interview protocol, data collection, and data analysis facilitated the dependability of this project. The conceptual framework informed this inquiry by guiding my research questions. The pilot study allowed me to revise the methodology and research questions in order to strengthen the data collection process and focus on participants’ transitional experiences.

Confirmability is a measure of how well the inquiry’s findings are supported by the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In an effort to increase the confirmability, I addressed my biases and judgments that emerged during the data collection process. I kept a reflective journal to record my thoughts and feelings. Lastly, I transcribed the recorded interviews, coded the data, and analyzed the data.

Every effort was made to ensure the trustworthiness of this research study. Themes were reflective of data collected and analyzed to accurately portray the socialization experiences of Louisiana vocational technical faculty as they transitioned from industry to the technical college.

**Delimitations and Limitations**

The parameters for a research study establish boundaries, exceptions, reservations, and qualifications inherent in every study: delimitations and limitations (Castetter & Heisler, 1977). The delimitation of this research study was that this research is confined to interviewing new vocational technical faculty in three postsecondary institution located in a southern state. This research may only be reflective of faculty within that state. The limitations of this study are linked to the purposive sample size and
the respondents are from only three campus sites in the vocational technical college system. Therefore, the generalizability may not apply to all vocational technical college institutions. Nonetheless, insights gained from this study contribute to the literature on this phenomenon.
CHAPTER IV  

Results  

This study was conducted to examine new Louisiana vocational technical instructors’ perceptions and experiences as they transitioned from industry to the technical college. Included in this study is an exploration of how vocational technical instructors adapted to their new roles as educators and what resources helped them grow and develop as instructors.  

Research Questions  

The primary research question guiding this research study was, “What experiences do vocational technical faculty members perceive are important to their transition from industry to the technical college?”  

This secondary research questions were:  

2.) How do vocational technical faculty members conceptualize their roles as instructors?  

3.) What experiences do vocational technical faculty members perceive will allow them to develop the skills to be competent instructors? 

Data analysis focused on themes that emerged from participant interviews, reflective journaling, memos, and peer debriefing. Results of the data analysis are presented in three sections. The first section provides demographic and descriptive information related to the institutions and the participants for the study. The second section describes the faculty interview process and presents participants’ responses including experiences they felt contributed to their transition from industry to the technical college, how they conceptualized their roles as instructors, and the experiences that allowed them to grow
and develop as instructors. The last section discusses the major themes that emerged during data analysis.

Data was obtained from 10 vocational technical faculty members employed at three technical colleges. The participants, six female instructors and four male instructors, were interviewed during the 2007-2008 academic year. All participants held the rank of instructor and were in their first full-time teaching position. Participants had zero to three years of teaching experience and four or more years of industry experience. The participants’ average age was 44.

Throughout the analysis, I referred to each participant by a pseudonym. It is appropriate to provide a brief introduction to each of the three campuses and a short character sketch of each participant.

**Mid State Technical College Institutional Description**

Mid State Technical College, located in Region 4, is situated on 39 acres of land. The school was initially established in 1950, and was governed by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. In 1999, Mid State Technical College was placed under the governance of the Louisiana Community and Technical College Board of Supervisors. The college is accredited by the Council on Occupational Education and allowed to award associate degrees, technical diplomas, and certificates. This campus prides itself on its modern facilities, community outreach, and industry contacts.

This campus has 24 full time faculty members and four adjunct faculty members who serve approximately 500 students. Some of the programs offered at Mid State Technical College include Accounting Technology, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Care and Development of Young Children, Carpentry, Drafting and Design Technology,

Mid State Technical College Study Participants

The composition of the participants of Mid State Technical College included five faculty members: four females and one male. The participants had 1 to 3 years of teaching experience and 7 to 30 years of industry experience.

“Sarah” has taught in the Patient Care Technician program for the last three years. Upon completing her Bachelor’s degree in Nursing from a local four-year institution, Sarah spent 13 years in industry as a registered nurse at a public hospital.

“Jerry,” a carpentry instructor, has one year of teaching in the field carpentry with 30 years of industry experience. He started working in the family business after graduating from high school and learned everything he knows about carpentry from his father, a master carpenter. Jerry’s enthusiasm for learning gives him the energy to pursue his associate’s degree in Technical Education.

“Maggie” holds a master’s degree in Early Childhood Education. She has one year of teaching experience and holds the rank of department head and instructor. Prior to coming to the technical college, she owned a women’s boutique for five years.

“Donna” teaches in the Patient Care Technician department with Sarah. She also started three years ago. Sarah and Donna rely heavily on each other for moral support. Donna holds a technical diploma and credentialed as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). Prior to teaching, Donna worked in a doctor’s office as a patient care technician.
“Christine,” a certified public accountant, is an accounting instructor by day and tax preparer by night. With only two years of teaching experience, she relies on the knowledge gained from her bachelor’s degree in accounting and 14 years as an accountant.

Table 8

*Mid State Technical College Vocational Technical Instructors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Teaching Discipline</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Years of Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Years of Industry Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Patient Care Technician</td>
<td>Bachelor’s in Nursing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Carpentry</td>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maggie</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Patient Care Technician</td>
<td>Technical Diploma</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Accounting Technology</td>
<td>Bachelor’s in Accounting</td>
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Table 8 presents a graphic display of the demographic information of the participants at Mid State Technical College Campus. The table presents each participant’s age, teaching discipline, levels of education, years of teaching experience, and years of industry experience.

Southwest Technical College Institutional Description

The Southwest Technical College was established in 1974; the campus is located in one of the coastal parishes. As part of Region 4, this campus is also accredited by the Council on Occupational Education. With a Carnegie Foundation Classification of
Associate’s Public Rural-serving Multi-campus institution, this college is allowed to award associate degrees, technical diplomas, and certificates.

There are 21 fulltime faculty members who teach 425 students. The institutional mission focuses on career and technical education. According to the recruitment literature, Southwest Technical College has a strong commitment to its students and the community it serves. The programs of study on this campus include but are not limited to Accounting Technology, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Computer Electronics, Collision Repair, Cosmetology, Office Systems Technology, Diesel Powered Equipment Technology, Drafting and Design Technology, Electrician Program, Nurse Assistant, Patient Care Technician, Practical Nursing, and Welding. According to the recruitment literature, Southwest Technical College has a strong commitment to its students and the community it serves.

Southwest Technical College Study Participants

The participants of Southwest Technical College included three faculty members: one female and two males. The participants had one to three years of teaching experience and their industry experience ranged from 15 to 25 years.

“Tom” is an accounting instructor in the Business Department. He began teaching a year ago when he was laid off from his job at a rice milling company. His interest in education developed as a result of teaching an accounting course for his company.

“Margie” has been teaching Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) for the two years. She said the technical college recruited her away from her well-established and successful air conditioning company. Margie is currently working on
obtaining her associate’s degree in Technical Education and completing her HVAC Excellence Certification.

“Vincent” experienced a change of career after 25 years in industry as a television and VCR repair man. The industry and new forms of technology forced him to seek a new career as an electrician instructor. He has finally settled in as a vocational technical instructor after three years and is working on his associate’s degree in Technical Education.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Teaching Discipline</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Years of Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Years of Industry Experience</th>
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<td>Electrician</td>
<td>Technical Diploma</td>
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<td>25</td>
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</table>

Table 9 presents a graphic display of the demographic information of the participants at Southwest Technical College Campus. The table presents each participant’s age, teaching discipline, and level of education, years of teaching experience, and years of industry experience.

Northern Technical College Institutional Description

Northern Technical College was established in 1973, and is located in Region 2. This campus was recently praised for its substantial increase in student enrollment. The college is located between the local community college and a land grant university.
There are 42 full time faculty members who serve 2,000 students. This college prides itself on a 46% rate of student retention. The programs of interest include Accounting Technology, Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, Automotive Mechanics, Barbering, Child Care Provider, Computer Systems Networking, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Drafting and Design Technology, Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Licensed Practical Nurse, Machine Tool Technology, Medical Assistant, Printing Press Operator, Systems Administration, and Welding Technology.

Northern Technical College Study Participants

The composition of the participants at Northern Technical College included two faculty members: one female and one male. The female participant had six months of teaching experience while the male faculty member had three years. They had a range of 8 to 17 years of industry experience.

“Kyle” has been teaching Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning for three years at Northern Technical College while working on his associate’s degree in Technical Education. When Kyle reflected on his industry experiences, he said he should have been a teacher from the very beginning of this career. His dream came true when his instructor and mentor retired from the technical college system and encouraged him to apply for the teaching position.

“Missy,” a practical nursing instructor, is the newest member of the faculty at the Northern Technical College Campus. After eight years at Charity Hospital and a knee injury, Missy made the necessary adjustments and began teaching six months ago.
Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Teaching Discipline</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Years of Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Years of Industry Experience</th>
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<td>Practical Nursing</td>
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Table 10 presents a graphic display of the demographic information of the participants at Northern Technical College Campus. The table presents each participant’s age, teaching discipline, levels of education, years of teaching experience, and years of industry experience.

Participant Interviews and the Context of Their Work Environments

Mid State Technical College Campus is more than three hours from my home. I woke early, dressed, and started on my journey with coffee in one hand and the car key in the other. It was still dark outside as I drove down the interstate. Normally, I listen to the radio, but on this morning, I focused on the participant interviews that would begin mid-morning. I reflected on my own experiences as a new vocational technical faculty member 13 years prior.

The drive was mundane and the rainy weather was gloomy. The scenery was scattered with marsh and sugar cane crops. The new growth of the sugar cane seemed somewhat symbolic of the new vocational technical faculty, as the weight of the pelting rain made it vulnerable to the weather.

Participant 1 - “Margie”

After three and a half hours of driving, I recognized the familiar sight of a state building off in the distance. The lack of architectural detail reminded me that both
technical colleges and prisons were designed by the same architect; the white cinder block design with maroon trim was a familiar highlight. I pulled into the guest parking and gathered my things. As I entered the front door, the administrative office was to my right. I checked in with the office and the administrative assistant called the instructor I would interview first. The instructor arrived within five minutes, welcomed me, and introduced herself.

I followed Margie to her shop area. As we entered her shop, she announced to her students that she would be interviewed for the next hour and everyone was to work on the group project. We proceeded to her office, a small space cluttered with books and air conditioning parts and she offered me a seat as I prepared for the interview. I took out my digital recorder and field note pad. I handed Margie an informed consent form and we reviewed the terms of the consent. She signed the two informed consent forms; I filed one in a folder for my records and gave the other to Margie for her own records.

Margie confided that she was feeling ill due to an elevated blood pressure and she only came to work today because of the interview. She seemed concerned that her answers would be inadequate for my research; I assured her that there was no right or wrong answers to the interview protocol. Margie rubbed her head and I questioned whether or not she was well enough to participate in the interview, she assured me she was.

When I asked how she wound up in the technical college setting, Margie proudly stated, “The technical college recruited me.” She explained that she owned her own business and was doing quite well before changing careers. She acknowledged that
teaching is quite different from running one’s own business and admitted that when she first started teaching she found herself, “treating the students like her employees.”

Margie attended the New Instructors Workshop and thought it gave her some of “the skills needed to effectively communicate with her students.” She said one of the most helpful things she learned was how to make her class more interesting by “playing games and having group projects.”

**Participant 2 - “Tom”**

My next interview was scheduled after lunch, so I returned to the administrative office to see if I could get a tour of the campus. The assistant dean welcomed me with the southern hospitality one would expect in a small Louisiana town. She introduced herself and asked about my research. We began the tour on the first floor of the building. I already knew the layout of the building; the similarities were uncanny to my own campus. As we passed each classroom or shop area the assistant dean introduced me to the instructor. After the tour, I asked her to show me where the business classroom was located so I would know where to go for my next interview.

I waited by the door of Tom’s classroom watching as the class ended and students filed out. After the last student meandered out of the classroom on her cell phone, I poked my head through the door ensuring the classroom was free of students.

Tom invited me in and I was surprised to discover that he had no office. His desk was located in the right corner of his classroom. The room and desk were both orderly; his desk did not have a paper out of place. A family photo and a computer sat on opposite sides of the desk. Tom instructed me to pull up a chair to setup for the interview. I handed Tom two consent forms. He read every word of the document and
attended to every detail. Tom’s accounting background seemed to dominate every part of his personality. Our conversation revealed that Tom was laid off from his previous job shaking the foundations of “structure and stability” that are so important to him. In fact, two of the things he focused on during the interview were the benefits of this job such as his teacher’s retirement fund and the flexibility of the work day. Tom is supposed to attend the New Instructors Workshop this summer. He said he waited because he really wanted to, “focus on course development rather then spend a week in an orientation.”

**Participant 3 - “Vincent”**

After the interview with Tom, I returned to the administrative office to find out how to locate Vincent’s shop area. Upon hearing the question, Vincent appeared from the corner of an administrative office. I introduced myself and we shook hands. Vincent offered me a seat in the front office. He signed the consent forms and we started the interview. He was very straightforward and did not elaborate on any question. He was also forced into a career change by a company closure and new technology. He said, “It was well over a year before I felt more comfortable with my teaching position.”

Vincent attended the New Instructors Workshop but could not tell if it played an important part in his transition. “I am so busy, a lot times, I don’t know if I am coming or going! When I’m not teaching, I’m in class myself working on my associate’s degree.” Vincent was very explicit, “I think the knowledge that other instructors share with me is more meaningful.” I thanked Vincent for taking the time to interview and packed up my things again.

I spent the next three hours driving back home and reflecting on the participant interviews. Each participant faced many challenges in becoming a vocational technical
instructor. In spite of the difficulties with their career changes, each hoped he or she would have a lengthy tenure with the technical college.

The next day, I traveled to a campus located in the middle of the state and interviewed five more participants. The campus was two and a half hours away from my home. I spaced the interviews every hour starting at 10:00 a.m. While I was driving, I pondered the effectiveness of the interview protocol and contemplated whether changes were necessary for the upcoming interviews. The data collection process was very interesting; some of the interviews had already revealed trends that the pre-dissertation interviews had not.

**Participant 4 - “Maggie”**

The administrative assistant led me to my next interviewee’s office. Maggie walked out from what appeared to be a cluttered office and greeted me. We shook hands and she offered me a seat at a child’s activity table in the middle of the classroom. The table was so small that I could not get my legs underneath it and as I sat in the chair my knees nearly touched my chest. I felt as though I had just entered the story book version of “Alice in Wonderland.” The room was painted with bold primary colors. There were brightly colored finger paintings dispersed among the walls. I fumbled to get my things together and gain composure in this awkward setting. Maggie seemed right at home and commented on the weather.

I reviewed the consent form with Maggie. She glanced briefly at the paper and signed the form. Maggie’s accent was similar to mine; “Where are you from, Maggie?” I asked. After revealing she was from New Orleans, I asked how she wound up in the middle of the state. Maggie replied simply, “Katrina!” Hurricane Katrina was a natural
and man-made disaster that devastated the city of New Orleans. Subsequently, many people did not return to their homes, they simply relocated.

Maggie holds dual positions within the technical college. She is a department head, as well as an instructor. She admitted that it was a “blessing” that the person who left this position was still with the college. “I bother the former department head a lot,” she confessed. Maggie confided, “The responsibilities are overwhelming. It was a year before I went to the New Instructors Workshop, a lot of bells and whistles would have gone off if I would have had those experiences right off the bat.” Maggie also pointed out that, “As a department head, the other instructors look to me for guidance.” In spite of Maggie’s challenges to get her department off the ground, she hopes to someday advance into administration with her credentials.

Participant 5 - “Donna”

After the interview with Maggie, I asked for directions to the Nursing Department. As I walked into the room, Donna was conducting a test review. I excused myself, Donna blurted out, “I have been waiting for you, Ms. Thornton,” as she dismissed the students.

The classroom was amazing. There were many props to assist students with learning. There was a skeleton in one corner wearing a baseball cap, the walls were lined with medical posters, models of the brain and other body parts lined the shelves, and there were even synthetic arms laid out on the table where students could practice giving injections.

I was still looking around as Donna pointed to her office in the back of the classroom. She motioned for me to sit at the front desk. I took out the informed consent
form and went over the terms. Donna quickly signed the document and laughed nervously. I asked if she was all right. She replied that she had been there for three years and was still not settled. She admitted that after the first semester, “I had no experience, no clue, and everything here was foreign to me.” Donna’s honesty was refreshing. At one point in the interview Donna said, “I have often contemplated calling my first group of students and apologizing to them for teaching so badly.” Donna sighed as she admitted, “there is a level of relief when I do clinical rotations and I see those students working in the field.” Of all the participants interviewed thus far, Donna seemed to be the most concerned about her transition from industry to technical college. She revealed that had it not been for her colleagues, she probably would have returned to the hospital. As the interview ended, I felt as though Donna was still playing the contents of the interview in her head. As Donna prepared to leave, Sarah rushed in from the rain. Donna and Sarah share an office with another instructor.

**Participant 6 - “Sarah”**

Sarah propped her umbrella in the corner and brushed the rain away from her clothing. She looked over a few notes on her desk and sat down. We reviewed the informed consent forms and Sarah signed both copies. Her mannerisms seemed very confident compared to Donna. Sarah became an instructor because she felt it was important to “give back to the community.” In the next breath, she confided, “I don’t know if you can be prepared for this job.” Sarah had different concerns about being a new instructor, as opposed to the other participants. Sarah was challenged by her student-teacher relationships. She explained
The different presentations of attitudes and people’s personalities and demeanors seem to be the biggest issue that I was not prepared for. I was raised in a very conservative household. The students are different today from when I was growing up.

From the interview, I suspected that Sarah conducts a very traditional classroom atmosphere.

Sarah’s resourcefulness allowed her to transition to her new position as an instructor. While other vocational technical faculty seemed to struggle with course preparation and professional development, Sarah sought out resource books and took classes on teaching and learning styles. Last year, she attended a conference through the Mosley Faculty Development program. The technical college only paid a small portion of the bill, but Sarah thought it was worth the money and paid the rest from her personal funds. She noted, “The seminars I attended showed me how to develop rapport with my students, communication tactics, and the best way to disseminate knowledge. The conference was great and worth every penny I paid.” As the interview came to a close, I was confident that Sarah’s transition seemed to be progressing more smoothly compared to some of her counterparts.

I was excited after the interview with Sarah; her enthusiasm and confidence was refreshing. I had scheduled a short lunch break before the afternoon interviews.

**Participant 7 - “Jerry”**

As I walked into the carpentry shop, I noticed students building a shed inside the shop area. The noise was deafening as hammers pounded nails into the 2 X 4’s. Jerry appeared from the roof of the shed, saying, “Hello, Ms. Thornton. I will be down on the
ground in a minute.” He gave the students some directive and climbed down the ladder to greet me. He signaled me to follow him into his office and closed the door. I reviewed the informed consent form with Jerry and he signed both copies saying, “I am so glad that you want to know what I think about being an instructor.”

Jerry’s passion for his craft, the students, and his new position was overwhelming. He had been a carpentry apprentice under his father’s guidance since he was a boy and had taught many individuals the tools of the trade as they drifted through his father’s company. Jerry explained, “I thought maybe if I could get in a school system, I could catch a few of the youngsters and teach them the professionalism and craftsmanship so that we could start the next generation of ‘true’ carpenters.”

It was obvious that Jerry truly enjoyed what he was doing, but there were still challenges. Jerry was working on his associate’s degree in technical education and many of the new technologies frustrated him on a daily basis. He was not accustomed to using computers, much less Blackboard and completing the online paperwork required for this job. However, Jerry did not let these obstacles get him down; he felt like this was just the next set of his personal accomplishments. As the interview came to a close, Jerry thanked me for interviewing him and I expressed appreciation for his valuable input.

**Participant 8 - “Christine”**

I asked Jerry for directions to the accounting classroom. Jerry was still interested in talking, so he walked me over. My interview with Jerry lasted a longer than anticipated, so I was a bit late for my meeting with Christine. She was waiting by the door of her classroom. Jerry thanked me again and left. I apologized for my lateness as Christine showed me where I could setup for the interview. She seemed a bit nervous.
As I took out my recorder, I handed her a copy of the informed consent form. She briefly looked over the document and signed it. I did not have a lot of time to notice her shop area because she seemed distracted. Throughout the interview, she kept checking her watch and looking around the room. Christine paused with long silences before each answer. She reflected on her earlier experiences as a new faculty member and said, “I remember doing a lot of homework those first two semesters. In fact, I did just as much homework as the students did.” Christine was a corporate trainer for a local tax firm and really enjoyed teaching tax classes. She could not isolate an experience or a set of experiences that helped her transition to her new role as a vocational technical faculty but said, “I was just committed to making this work. I was going to do what it took to succeed.” Christine considered her greatest resource her colleagues and books. She took pride in the way she trained her students and hoped more people and businesses would learn more about the technical college system. After the interview, Christine and I walked out together. It was a long day and after five interviews, I still had a two and a half hour drive home.

**Participant 9 - “Missy”**

The next sets of interviews were not scheduled until the first week of May. They took place at a campus west of my home. This campus had experienced a terrible incident in the latter part of February. One student shot two other students and then committed suicide. I doubted that anyone would respond to my request for new vocational technical faculty interviews, but two instructors committed to participate.
My mind raced as I drove to the interviews. I wasn’t sure what to expect. I played the horrible tragedy over and over in my head. I personally did not think anything could have prevented the shooting, even if there had been a guard near.

As I drove to the visitor parking area, I noticed two armed guards. I had to show my identification card to get on the campus grounds. As I approached the administrative office, a sign was posted that read, “STOP. All visitors and guests must check in with the administrative office.” Upon checking in, another guard searched my satchel and asked for my identification card. I was then given directions to Missy’s nursing lab. As I walked passed a sparsely populated QUAD area, I noticed a memorial to the students killed in the incident.

I arrived at the nursing lab. “Are you Annette?” Missy questioned. We walked into to her small but neat office. I asked how she was coping with the incident. She was a soft spoken person and responded, “It is just going to take time to heal.” I asked if she felt up to the interview and she replied, “I think it is something I need to do.”

I set up my recorder and reviewed the consent form. Missy signed both copies and we began the interview. With only six months of teaching experience, she was the newest vocational technical faculty member that I interviewed. She took the teaching position because of health problems and was completely overwhelmed by her first semester with the technical college. “Teaching is a lot harder than I thought it would be.” she confided. I probed deeper and she continued to explain, “I had challenges knowing how to approach the students. It really plagued me. How would they best get the information I was trying to give.”
Missy was scheduled to attend the New Instructors Workshop over the summer and was hoping to learn teaching strategies that would help her communicate with the students. She said, “I really don’t have the time to go to the workshop, I should be planning the new courses that I have to teach this fall.” Missy was confident that she would make teaching work as a career path. I was a bit surprised that nothing came up in the interview about the tragedy. As the interview came to a close, Missy said to me, “You know, you just have to be patient in this field.”

**Participant 10 - “Kyle”**

As I walked through the halls, I came upon grey double doors with a sign that read, “Safety glasses required beyond this point.” I opened the door and called out for Kyle. He peeked his head through a door on the side of his shop, “Come on in Ms. Thornton,” he called. I followed him through a short hall lined with computers. He offered a chair as I stepped into his office. I set up for the interview as Kyle plopped down in his chair and threw his feet on his desk. I reviewed the informed consent and handed him the form. “I’m sure everything is in order,” he said as he signed the paper.

“What are we going to talk about today, Ms. Thornton?” he asked. His enthusiasm spilled over as he talked about teaching, “I left industry because teaching was a life long dream of mine.” He continued, “If I would have had the opportunity to go to college, I would have been a teacher from the beginning.” Kyle believed his transition would have been more proactive had he attended the New Instructor’s Workshop earlier in his tenure. During his first semester as an instructor, he relied heavily on his own student experiences and the teaching techniques of his instructor/mentor. Kyle openly admitted that his colleagues helped him through the “rough patches.” Now, after three
years of teaching, Kyle’s focus is reflected in his words, “It is amazing, year after year; we take students and transform their lives.”

Emergent Themes

Glesne (1999) stated that data analysis is a process of organizing and storing data that leads to “meaning-finding interpretations” that shape the study. Patton (1990) explained that making sense of the massive amounts of data is the real challenge of qualitative inquiry. The emergent themes elicited from the transitional experiences of the new vocational technical faculty seemed to fall into several overarching themes that included collegial relationships, teaching, role identity, communication, stress, and formal socialization techniques. Within each theme, there were sub-themes that further identified important aspects of the new vocational technical instructors’ academic work. Table 11: Emergent Themes presents data that was analyzed and coded into themes and sub-themes.
Table 11:
Emergent Themes

<table>
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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
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<td>Collegial Relationships</td>
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<td>Faculty Relationships</td>
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<td>New Instructor’s Workshop</td>
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<td>Professional Development Activities</td>
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Collegial Relationships

In Webster’s Collegial Dictionary, collegial is defined by characteristics of “equal sharing.” Some practitioners suggest that collegiality is a professional relationship that fosters genuine collaboration and mutual respect (Balsmeyer, Haubrick & Quinn, 1966; Bode, 1999). Seldin (1991) believed that collegial relationships build a sense of identity and personal commitment to the institution. The data collected during this research study showed that new vocational technical instructors valued two very important collegial relationships: administrative and other faculty relationships.

Administrative Relationships

Cohen and Brawer (2003) defined administrative relationships by the leadership displayed within the college. They suggested institutions that have scholarly individuals
who view leadership as an interactive process, usually have “buy-in” from the faculty. Wheatley (1992) defined organizational power in terms of the capacity to generate positive relationships between faculty and administration. All 10 participants said their success as instructors was largely due to support and encouragement of administrative relationships. In addition, each participant identified an “open door administrative policy,” where they could approach members of the administration at any time. Sarah reflected on her relationship with the administration,

Our administration has an open door policy. The administration was involved in my transition. They were open to all things that were going on, whether the happenings were good or bad. My administrator made the time to sit down with me and conversed. A lot times they [administrators] would give me a different take on things; for example this is what should have taken place or this is how I would have handled it.

Christine was very comfortable with her relationship with the administration. She explained, “The administration is very relaxed here. They don’t put a lot of pressure on you. If I had a question, I would just march down to the office and ask my question. I never had a problem getting my questions answered.”

Missy, Maggie, Tom and Margie, had very similar answers when they responded, “I interact with my administration just fine.” When asked to elaborate on their responses, these participants were reluctant to provide any additional information positive or negative.
While Kyle and Vincent were at different sites, they shared common experiences as they relayed how the administration at their institutions was very supportive of their success as instructors. For example, Kyle explained,

"Initially, I was very closed-lipped about my experiences and everything that was happening. I did not want the administration to know that I just didn’t know what I was doing. I really put a lot of pressure on myself. I had never had a job that I didn’t know how to do. I later found out that everyone has a similar experience. The administrator was very supportive; they just didn’t think I needed any help."

Vincent saw the administration as management unit. He explained,

"I thought the administration was there to fill out the forms and make sure everything was running smoothly. It wasn’t until I sat down with the administrator one day that I found out she was an instructor before advancing to an administration position. She has been a valuable resource to me as an administrator and a faculty mentor."

Relationships with administration appeared to be a positive source of collegiality for the new vocational technical faculty in the study. The administration also encouraged new faculty to network with other faculty to become more comfortable with their new academic positions.

Faculty Relationships

Boice (1992) asserted that new faculty relied on the relationships of their colleagues to help them become successful teachers. Relationships with other faculty were invaluable to new vocational technical faculty. Boice (1992) confirmed that new faculty who built social networks were often more satisfied with their job and
experienced a greater level of personal success. Furthermore, Tierney and Rhoads (1993) explained that senior faculty who share their own experiences and knowledge give meaning to events that new faculty may find confusing. Most of the participants felt they had joined a “family” when they accepted their new academic positions. For instance, Jerry elaborated that his new academic position was like finding a new family,

> Everyone is wonderful here. It is very family oriented and laid back. I know what my capabilities are and I know what my limitations are. When I don’t know how to do something I just ask for guidance and it is always there.

Kyle went on to explain the support he received from colleagues,

> Some of the instructors took me under their wings. It really is a family atmosphere here and I now see they are an exceptional group of talented individuals. I now know why we come here every day; year after year, we take students and transform their lives.

Bode’s (1999) research found that new faculty defined collegiality by intellectual support systems, whereas other new faculty defined collegiality as a sense of community with common interests. Tom provided examples of the type of support his network provided to help him until he got acclimated. He reflected,

> I have great guidance from the people around me. Having experienced individuals to go to when you need them is a real blessing. I was not hand fed per sae, but the guidance was there. Someone would say, ‘Tom you need to be heading in this direction;’ or ‘here is an example of a good syllabus;’ or ‘follow this format until you can personalize your courses.’ These little gestures mean something big in the scheme of things.”
Another faculty member, Missy relayed a sense of community as she talked about the assistance faculty provided with completing paperwork. She stated,

> The nurse department was very supportive. The instructors kept checking up on me just to see if I was o.k. and to make sure I did not fall behind on the paperwork. I felt like the other instructors wanted me here and included me in different activities. Just being invited to lunch, is nice.

The new vocational technical faculty members who established collegial relationships seemed to be more satisfied with their teaching positions. Sarah shared the advice given from her colleagues,

> Some days are going to be good, some bad. My colleagues that I work with are awesome. You just need to learn from your mistakes and laugh about your experiences and come back tomorrow so you can do it again!

The collegial relationships helped the new vocational technical faculty adjust to their new academic position and begin to establish their new faculty identities.

**Role Identity**

Feldman and McPhee (2008) defined role identity as one’s personal teaching paradigm, which translates into how one views the world of teaching and preferred teaching style. New vocational technical faculty members initially had difficulty in identifying with their roles as instructors as many continued to identify with their industry identity. Eight participants admitted that they were not prepared to be instructors and recounted their challenges with their new teaching role. Vincent noted, “It was almost a year before I felt like an instructor.” Missy, an instructor with only six months of teaching experience, expressed a sentiment that other participants shared as
she remarked, “Teaching is a lot harder than people think it is.” Likewise, Sarah exclaimed that she thought she understood teaching, but realized how unprepared she was:

I was not prepared at all. Looking back on my experience, I don’t know if you can be prepared for this job. When I accepted the position, I thought I knew what teaching was all about. I went to college but not for teaching. I found out quickly that I knew nothing about teaching field or the students.

Donna was still struggling with her teaching role and commented on her discomfort with teaching,

I still don’t know if I am a good instructor. It is very difficult to get my point across. I am repeating information for the third time in hopes that the light bulb will go off in the students’ brains.

In contrast, Kyle and Jerry easily identified with their roles as instructors’ due to prior work experiences and a passion for teaching. Jerry was responsible for apprenticing young people through his father’s construction business explained, “I know I just started teaching for the technical college, but I considered myself a teacher every single day on the job site in industry. I just moved my teaching from the job site to the classroom.”

Kyle, a former technical college student, felt as if he was born to teach and related, “I think my instructor must have seen something special in me when I was a student. When my instructor retired, he called me and asked if I wanted to be an instructor. I came right over and interviewed for the job. The rest is history.”
Many of the new vocational technical faculty felt they experienced degrees of
difficulty transitioning from industry to their new academic roles. Two of the
participants felt like they were living their dreams.

**Anticipatory Phase**

The analysis of data indicated that vocational technical faculty underwent similar
socialization experiences as their two-year and four-year counterparts as they settled into
their new jobs and conceptualized their new roles as instructors. Weidman, Twale and
Stein (2001) defined anticipatory phase as the initial awareness of professional norms
associated with one’s emerging role. Generally, the new vocational technical instructors’
industry experiences were similar to individuals who underwent intensive graduate
school programs. Vocational technical faculty are engaged and immersed in their
technical fields and are considered experts in their craft. However, vocational technical
faculty experiences differed in their understanding of higher education bureaucracy and
how they adapted to their roles as instructors.

Industry experiences of the vocational technical faculty influenced their
socialization process. There were positive and negative experiences that took place
through the anticipatory socialization phase. Positive aspects of their industry
experiences were reflected in what they taught, whereas negative experiences could be
seen in how they interpreted the context of the institution. In particular, industry
experiences influenced their interactions with colleagues as well as students.

Donna, Kyle, Vincent, and Margie attended technical colleges as students. Donna
reflected on her student experiences, “Because I sat where they [students] sit, it helped
me to get through it. I know what I learned to be successful in industry.” Kyle
remembered his student experiences, “I knew the curriculum because I was a student byproduct of this educational system and I had the technical background and years of industry experience to draw from.” Margie expressed concern when she noticed that she was “treating her students as her employees.” Thus, their industry experiences influenced how they interpreted experiences in their new postsecondary environment.

The participants of this study have 7 to 30 years of industry experience. The years of industry experience helped forge their professional identities and later became an asset to the participants when they entered the classroom.

Faculty Identities

Many of the participants admitted a faculty mentor guided them in their transition to instructor and in learning their new responsibilities. Missy, Tom, Margie, and Maggie had the benefit of a faculty mentor. Even after their predecessors retired or moved into other positions, these four faculty members still had access to their mentors’ knowledge and years of teaching experience. New vocational technical faculty looked to other faculty for instructional expertise and support. Maggie shared some of the advice her mentor gave her,

I have a great mentor. She was once the director here and moved into different position at the campus. Her advice to me was, ‘Every instructor has his or her own style. You need to be yourself. Read your books. Be knowledgeable and know the subject you are teaching. Oh and by the way, have fun!’

Margie felt like teaching was a way for her to share her knowledge with others. She explained,
This job is an opportunity to teach others what I have learned. As my mentor and my instructor would say, ‘You can’t take it with when you die, so you might as well share it [craft] with someone who will use it.’

While the relationships with their mentors were respected and valued, many participants felt they would find their own ways of teaching and leave their own marks of distinction on the technical college. For example, Jerry, Vincent, and Donna, believed that their industry experiences made them better instructors. Donna explained, “My years of professional nursing are a definite plus in this job. I know how things are done in the real world.” Jerry’s 30 years of carpentry experience inspired him to be an instructor. He elaborated, “I have been in the construction business for 30 years. I am always called in to fix someone else’s bad work. I really want to teach the students how to do things right.”

All of the participants claimed that they would help other new faculty “learn the ropes,” but admitted they did not want the responsibility of being a faculty mentor at this time. Most participants were unwilling to expand their feelings on mentoring, but perhaps this was because they still felt uncomfortable with their new academic roles.

**Student Industry Identities**

Pratt and Patterson (2007) believed that the goal of instruction is to help the learner develop a new identity by becoming a member of a professional community. He further contended that it is not enough to just have knowledge of one’s craft but it is essential to internalize the core values and beliefs of that vocation. The development of student industry identities was very important to the new vocational technical faculty in two ways: formation of a discipline identity and a workforce identity. Because new
vocational technical faculty identified with their industry identities, they were concerned about students making the same connection to their discipline and to the workplace.

Jerry wanted to instill the same respect of carpentry that he had. He explained, “I want to give the students the love of the trade and the knowledge of the craft. Carpentry is a form of art to me. I want the students to fully understand what it means to be a carpenter.”

The new vocational technical faculty members were also committed to providing activities and learning experiences that could help these identities form. Christine believes that her students are well trained,

I don’t think industry or the community understands how well trained our students are. We provide the students with relevant industry experiences. By the time a student completes my program, he or she is an accountant.

Johnsrud (1990) contends that relationships between faculty and students are significant means for identifying and developing the potential of the student as well as perpetuating the traditional norms of the discipline. It quickly became evident to the new vocational technical faculty that these students were to be the next generation of practitioners, and thus, their connections to the industry. Jerry elaborated, “I teach the professionalism and craftsmanship so that these students will be the next generation of true carpenters.” Margie explained the importance of vocational programs and how it changed the life of an individual. Margie said, “Keep it real for the students. Let them [students] know they can have a better life through this program. Maybe one day they [students] will own their own business.”

Fugate and Amey’s (2000) research established the importance of ties to industry and the community in the vocational-technical programs. With so much emphasis placed
on student employment, it is important to establish and maintain strong industry ties. Sarah was proud to see her students working in industry. She explained,

   When you go to graduation and then you see the student in industry, I know that I did something right. You also realize this student is now your new connection to that industry and they will represent the success of your program.

Donna mentioned, “I like when I get positive feedback from industry about one of my students. It is a plus for me.”

   The new vocational technical faculty felt it was important for the students to build discipline-specific identities and industry identities. The participants were proud to see their students’ success in industry and felt it reflected on their teaching abilities and the success of their program.

   **Teaching**

Clark’s (1987) research focused on the fundamental belief that the purpose of a teaching profession is to deliver new knowledge with academic integrity. Cox’s (2003) research suggested two crucial aspects of teaching: instructional approaches that enhanced student learning and pedagogical knowledge that informed those approaches. The teaching theme was an overwhelming concern for new vocational technical faculty. Sub-themes that evolved out of teaching were how to communicate the discipline being taught, teaching influences, and the student learning.

   **Communication of the Discipline**

Feldmen and McPhee (2008) referred to the elements of the teaching/learning transition as, “what we are to teach and how to best go about it” (p. 20). All of the participants said they understood what they would teach but later realized they did not
understand how to communicate those ideas to the students, that is, how to explain the curriculum in terms the students would understand. Many participants seemed burdened by the responsibility to communicate the craft as accurately as possible. Donna was concerned about student learning when she realized she had no real teaching experience. She reflected on her early experiences,

When I first started teaching, I realized that I had no real teaching experience.

Just to get my points across to the students seemed very difficult. What I thought was easy; the student had no clue. I had to learn how to come down to their level.

Sarah wanted to make sure the students had the right knowledge to be successful in industry. She seemed challenged as she explained that it was difficult, “trying to convey the knowledge with what we have learned in industry and what the students need to learn.”

Some instructors have the added worry of the safety of the student they are sending into industry, as well as the customers on the receiving end of the service. Vincent stressed safety as part of every class. He explained, “Communication skills are my biggest problem! My biggest obstacle is getting the point across about residential wiring. I really have to make sure the students know what they are doing otherwise someone could get hurt.”

Kyle tried to ensure that the student had current information and were well prepared when they entered industry. He stated,

I have a new appreciation for teaching. I had no idea what went into the preparation of a classroom lecture. I read the book chapter that I assigned the students. Then I also included the industry standard and then I went on the web to
research the most current methods of Air Conditioning. It’s mind boggling. You can’t provide enough information.

The participants of this study found communication of the information of the discipline to be very challenging. The participants worried whether the information presented in the classroom would allow students to be safe and knowledgeable workers. Their industry identities and knowledge of the discipline influenced their teaching style.

Teaching Influences

Feldman and McPhee (2008) believed the most influential source of teaching and learning is our own personal educational experience. Tierney and Rhoads (1993) believed the kinds of experiences that new faculty had prior to becoming teachers shaped the kinds of approaches one would take to teaching. Many participants reflected on their own experiences as students they tried to be like those instructors who influenced them. Christine stated,

I don’t think anyone told me how to be an instructor. When I think about my learning experiences, I know what I liked from an instructor. I liked instructors who kept things interesting and yet you still learned what you needed to know. I want to make learning fun!

Donna reflected on her student experiences and said, “I can still hear the lectures from my instructor and try to convey the same information. I am still evolving as an instructor and try to learn from my mistakes.”

On the other hand, Kyle observed other teachers. He compared some shop areas to “boot camp,” while others were too laid back. After months of trying to model other
faculty, Kyle realized, “What worked in other shops was not going to work for me. I just decided to be myself.”

Tom, Margie, and Vincent stressed how important it was to manage the classroom like industry. Tom explained, “I was on the accounting advisory committee. I believe that it is important to provide the students with an industry environment. I try to manage my classroom like you would see in industry.” Likewise Margie related, “I like to keep it real. The students need to know about the real world. This program can help them [students] have a better life.”

Each participant felt like their student experiences shaped their faculty roles. All of the participants in this study were concerned that good teaching would result in student learning.

Concern for Student Learning

As part of the accreditation of the technical college, the Committee on Occupational Education requires a minimum of 55% student placement from each program. Many new vocational technical faculty viewed student success as the mission of the technical college. New vocational technical faculty members were most concerned that their teaching style would result in student learning and, ultimately, workforce skills.

Student success is challenging when students who enroll at technical institutions are more likely to need remediation, enroll part-time, be single parents, have children, and work more than 30 hours a week (http://www.mla.org/commcollege_teachcar). Missy noted the student’s personal responsibilities,

It is a different type of student than what you would expect. They are not your typical college students that would go a four year university. These students have
families, houses, and jobs besides coming to college. It is not like a typical college student who gets out of high school and goes to college without all of those other responsibilities. I really don’t know how some of them manage.

Cohen and Brawer (1972) explained how the student-faculty relationships affect not only students but faculty as well. Cohen and Brawer (1972) elaborated by saying, “The students’ behavior, their diligence, and their levels of intelligence influence the instructor’s behaviors in the classroom” (p. 113). Sarah found challenges with the student-instructor relationships, “I realize that everybody is different. It is challenging building rapport with the students.”

Fugate and Amey (2003) indicated that teaching in technical colleges goes beyond the subject matter. They explained that teaching must result in learning that prepares the students for their careers. Donna modified her teaching style after she talked with some of the students who were working in the hospital, “I learned from my mistakes. I talked with the students who were in industry and found out what worked for them and what didn’t. I was so proud to see those students making it in industry.” While some participants felt challenged by the diverse student populations, Missy was challenged by her own teaching style, “They [students] all had different learning styles, different aptitudes. The students really need to know this information to be a success in the workplace.”

**Communication**

Lack of communication complicated the transition of the new vocational technical faculty. Communication was then sub coded to job expectations and institutional knowledge.
Job Expectations

Tierney and Rhoads (1993) believed that new faculty experienced greater levels of success when they were given clear job expectations. Menges (1999) believed new faculty time management problems were compounded when one was unsure of the job requirements. Even after years of teaching, there were still communication concerns when it came to the expectations of the new faculty position. None of the participants recalled receiving a written job description or formal expectations of their teaching position. Sarah noted, “I don’t think that I ever got a written job description.” Margie stressed the importance of knowing the policy and procedures of the technical college:

I thought I was prepared to be an instructor… but I was not prepared as a program director. I’m just doing what the last person did. But if I had the guidelines, I could use the policies to be forward thinking and proactive in my approach to running the Early Childhood Center.

Menges’ (1999) believed success of the newcomer required seeking, “information necessary for understanding, negotiating, monitoring, and meeting the institution’s expectations” (p. 5). Tom described his disappointment with the “lack of human resources and policy review.” He stated,

I thought I knew what the expectations were but I really didn’t. There is still so much for me to know. It’s not always about teaching classes; there are still a lot of things to know about accountability and other aspects of the technical college.

Kyle said,

I’m sure someone told me what I was supposed to do, but I didn’t have a frame of reference for the duties I had to perform as a teacher. It would have been really
nice to know more about my employer and what was expected of me and what were some of the benefits were afforded to me. I really felt like I had to learn everything off the cuff.

Missy felt like she was still trying to figure out the job expectation while Donna thought she had misinterpreted the job responsibilities. Missy noted, “It must be a learn-as-you-go practice.” Donna chuckled when she said, “I don’t know if I misinterpreted the expectations of this job or if I didn’t understand the expectations of this job.” Some of the confusion could have been eliminated if the participants had the institutional knowledge needed to be successful.

**Institutional Knowledge**

Institutional knowledge was defined by policies, procedures, and accountability and were lacking from the repertoire of the new vocational technical faculty. Most new vocational technical faculty did not understand the best practices that established the working code of ethics for postsecondary institutions. Some participants had to learn the higher education vocabulary in order to communicate with the administration. Vincent, Christine, and Kyle were committed to their new academic appointments and made a point to find out the best practices. Vincent investigated the website,

I read the LTC policies on the website. I also went out to our Accreditation Board website and read about our responsibilities of accountability. After a couple of days I read everything again. When I didn’t understand something, I asked questions.

Christine remembers,
I think I was just committed to making this job work. I was going to do what it took to succeed. I went on the website and read every policy. I attended every faculty meeting where new information was disseminated for all faculty members. I networked with everyone.

Kyle admitted it is important to be proactive. He explained, “This is something I really wanted to do so I made a point to find the information hoping it would make my job easier.” Margie was still comparing her academic appointment to industry.

I thought I knew what everything meant but I realize, even now that I am still learning. This is different from industry; if it were like any other job, the company would make sure that you know the rules. This is higher education; I guess they [administration] think we [instructors] will figure it out.

**Stress**

According to the new faculty literature, many newcomers identified work related stress by heavy teaching loads (Menges, 1999), isolation (Boice, 1992), and time management (Boice, 1992; Sorcinelli; 1988; Whitt, 1991). Stress was high for the new vocational technical instructors in the first year of their new academic positions. Sarah said, this was the most stressful job she had and elaborated by saying, “I was a critical care nurse and this job is actually more stressful than a hospital emergency room.” New vocational technical faculty identified different elements of their new academic position that caused them stress in particularly, academic work, isolation, and time management.

**Academic Work**

Academic work involves more than just college teaching. Bess (2000) identified seven teacher sub-roles, which included content research, instructional design,
instructional delivery, creative discussions, activity integration, assessment, and mentoring. Arreola (2000) further delineated that faculty are responsible for student advising and recruiting, curriculum development, service, administration, leadership team membership, communication, and entrepreneurship. New vocational technical faculty have many of the same responsibilities as other college faculty; they must prepare lessons, grade papers, prepare assessments, attend faculty meetings, and keep abreast of industry developments (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2006-2007). Baker, Roueche, and Gillett-Koram (1990) explained that two-year faculty were charged with student recruiting, orienting, assessing, advising, placing, managing, tutoring, counseling, graduating, and job placing. As Tom elaborated on his multiple duties,

> It is not only what you’re going to teach, it’s also everything else that goes along with that. I had to develop a spreadsheet to track the students’ grades. I had to develop three new courses. I had to teach myself some of the accounting all over again. After the first week, I asked myself, ‘What did I get myself into?’

Before an instructor can step before a classroom filled with students, there is much preparation that goes into a class lecture. The teaching profession involves much more than maintaining one’s disciplinary expertise and delivering lectures; the ultimate goal is to train students for the workplace. Christine explained, “It didn’t take me long to figure out that I was going to be doing homework every night just to be prepared for that one hour the next day.” Donna was challenged by the academic work, “It is not just one thing that I can put my finger on; it’s not just the teaching, it’s not just the lesson plans or the grading. When you put it all together, your head spins.
Jerry was overwhelmed by the technology part of the job and the paperwork needed to track students. He explained, “I really don’t have any experience with technology. The technical parts of this job that involves computers give me the most grief. I had to learn how to use the computer, email, and Blackboard.”

The new vocational technical participants noted the job requirements included more than just their teaching responsibilities. Many participants identified challenges with other academic paperwork and the technology part of the job.

Isolation

Boice (1992) explained that new faculty often complained of feeling lonely. There are two types of instructional departments within the technical college: single instructor shop areas and instructors who are part of a department. While most of the participants complained about isolation issues, isolation was compounded for those instructors who worked independently. Table 12: Department Structures identifies which instructors worked in departments or single instructor shop areas.

Table 12:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Department Structure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Instructor Shop Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerry – Carpentry Instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margie – HVAC Instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vincent – Electrician Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyle – HVAC Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom – Business Instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missy – Practical Nursing Instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple Instructor Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sarah – Patient Care Instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maggie – Early Childhood Education Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna – Patient Care Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine – Accounting Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom – Business Instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missy – Practical Nursing Instructor</td>
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Tom realized the value of being part of a department. He expressed concern for those individuals working in single instructor shop areas: “I can see where a new
instructor preparing five or six courses would be really stressed. I know I was overwhelmed just working on three courses.” Kyle and Christine had experiences where senior faculty members were too busy to assist them. Christine reflected on her experiences, “The first semester is the hardest. When I first got here it was hard to get help from other instructors because they seemed too busy trying to organize their own classes.” Kyle expected other faculty or administration to check with him to make sure everything was going smoothly. Kyle noted, “At some point, I thought some one might check up on me. Eventually, I figured out no one was going to do that. If you are not proactive, you could be here for two years still trying to figure out how to grow as an instructor.” Christine and Kyle had similar experiences and felt isolated from other faculty.

Time Management

New faculty members were frustrated by the lack of time to prepare (Boice, 1992; Sorcinelli; 1988; Whitt, 1991). According to Boice (1992), many new faculty members over-prepared teaching materials. All of the participants believed this job would afford them more personal free time and flexibility, but instead the faculty found themselves putting forth more time in to prepare for their classes. Christine explained,

I was hired a week before the semester started: I didn’t have a whole lot of preparation time to get my classes in order. I was literally doing homework every night and on the weekends just to keep up my daily classes.

Kyle was still relating to industry concepts when he replied, “There is no over time like there is in industry. You find yourself working many more hours than you anticipated and not being compensated.”
Jerry spoke of spacing the information he was relaying, “I was probably over-preparing my course work but it was difficult to know how to pace myself. Sometimes I would finish my lecture early, other times I didn’t have enough time to finish my lecture.” Margie’s greatest fear was not being able to answer a student’s questions, “I would spend hours looking up information until I finally realized, I am the expert here, and the students are apprentices.”

Kyle, Margie, Vincent, and Jerry also felt the pressures of time constraints. As a condition of employment, the above mentioned faculty had to pursue their Associates of Applied Science Degree in Occupational Education. Jerry felt like pursuing his associates degree was both a blessing and a curse. He explained,

This is an educational opportunity that I was never given until now. I’m broadening myself as an individual and an instructor. On this flip side of the coin, I really don’t have the time for this right now. I’m still trying to develop courses that I have not taught and I am going to school myself. It is a tough load. Margie’s personal goal was to finish her associate’s degree as well.

Cohen and Brawer (2003) believed that faculty often feel threatened when enrollment declines. Donna was worried about her student population, “I’m always concerned that if I slip below a student enrollment of 10, that I will be laid off. So I am trying to make myself more valuable by teaching 550 clock hours this semester.”

Course loads in the technical college are measured by contact hours. Some courses have upwards of 120 to 190 ‘hands on’ laboratory contact hours. Teaching 550 clock hours is a heavy load for even the most experienced instructor. In comparison to a community college faculty member teaching 15 credit hours, the credit hour equivalent
would be 225 contact hours. Thus, single shop instructors pursuing an associate’s degree in occupational education experienced the greatest levels of stress and would have benefited from early formal socialization techniques.

**Faculty Socialization Techniques**

Tierney’s (1997) post-modern perspective of socialization pertains to the successful understanding and incorporation of activities by new members of an organization. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) expressed the importance of formal socialization and the organization’s concern shown for the “recruit’s absorption of the appropriate behavior associated with the target role” (p. 237). The Louisiana Technical College provides a system-wide orientation course called the New Instructor’s Workshop and an annual professional development activity. Faculty socialization techniques were appreciated by new vocational technical faculty members because it gave them a chance to network with other faculty away from the campus and learn new things about teaching. Faculty socialization techniques were coded into two categories: New Instructor’s Workshop and professional development activities. While the New Instructor’s Workshop and professional development may be considered formal socialization techniques, collegial relationship may be considered sources of informal socialization techniques.

**New Instructor’s Workshop**

The New Instructor’s Workshop provides a formal socialization experience where new faculty members learn about institutional knowledge and other topics that apply to new recruits. Eight of the participants attended the workshop in their second year of teaching and two of the participants had not attended at the time of this interview. Most
of the participants felt the New Instructor’s Workshop was a good source of information.

Sarah spoke highly of her experiences at the New Instructor’s Workshop:

I participated in the orientation approximately two years after my hire date. The orientation was awesome! I learned a lot. The orientation was a week long. There were different presenters that lectured on topics such as teaching, what to expect, how to prepare lesson plans, and how to handle students. It teaches you a lot… [pause] it would have been perfect the very first semester that I started.

Kyle had a similar experience to Sarah,

I did participate in the New Instructor’s Workshop after two years of being an instructor. I thought it was very helpful. I just think that new instructors need to attend the Workshop earlier in their tenure to avoid some of the frustrations that I experienced.

Maggie explained that she also attended two years after her hire date,

I should have attended the orientation right after I started. A lot of bells and whistles would have gone off if I would have had those experiences right off the bat. After the Workshop, I now have a better understanding of why we do what we do.

Menges (1999) contends that even well intentioned orientations and mentoring programs may steal time from the immediate needs of course preparation. In contrast to the participants that attended the orientation, Tom and Missy were planning to take the orientation course in the future. Tom explained,

I didn’t attend the orientation right away. I was so new at the time; I was more worried about preparing my summer and fall course load. I had to prepare my
Missy had a similar experience to Tom. Missy’s eyes widen as she answered,

There was no time to attend an orientation! I was hired two weeks before the semester started. I got thrown into the semester. I had a new book. I had to prepare all new lessons. I had to learn what to pull out of the chapters to make sure the students got the information they needed to know. It was terrible.

After Missy blurted that out, she smiled and said in a calm voice, “I’m scheduled to attend the orientation this summer in July.”

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) believed orientation is a process to begin establishing roles and a way for new recruits to begin to understand the institution. Wallin and Smith’s (2005) research showed the importance of continued improvement at the individual, collegial, and institutional level through professional development.

**Professional Development**

Stern (1989) viewed professional development as a lifelong process with the purpose of improving instruction, professional skills, and personal growth. Professional development activities seemed to be of particular interest to the new vocational technical faculty members especially activities that help them grow and develop as instructors. Fugate and Amey (2000) believed that those entering the teaching with no prior teaching experience had immediate needs for the development of instructional skills and pedagogical knowledge. Donna wanted experiences to help her grow as instructor. She elaborated,
I guess I would value experiences that would help me interact, understand, and teach the students better. I really need a course or courses in [pause] adult learners, special needs, learning styles, and pedagogy. I was trying to do some of it but I really don’t know enough about these topics to be effective.

Wallin and Smith (2005) believed that professional development should strike a balance between meeting the needs of an individual and the organization. Sarah paid out of pocket expenses to attend a conference, “I like activities that help me be a better teacher. I attended a conference in California: some of the topics covered included, Building Rapport with the Students, Communication Tactics, and Current Books on Teaching.”

Christine explained the need for professional development that would help her develop as a teacher,

My bachelor’s degree is in accounting. I’ve never taken any education courses. I would like to see professional development in areas that help me with teaching techniques. One of my students asked, ‘Why don’t you do little games like the other instructor?’ I’m not exactly sure what she does, but the students seem to think her class is more interesting because of her teaching techniques.

Missy concurred with Sarah as she stated, “There needs to be more activities like the New Instructor’s Workshop. Every year or every six months we need to have classes that focus on how to improve your classes and improve yourself as an instructor.”

Tom on the other hand, felt like he had been out of the college classroom for such a long time:
I think it would be nice to do more course-specific professional development activities. I would have jumped at a chance to go back and do a refresher course in accounting basics. T-accounts, Power Point,… it [information] all comes back fairly easy but it would have been nice to have a course on these topics rather than sit there with a book trying to learn every thing in a weekend.

Wallin and Smith (2005) asserted, “Changing demands of employers and emerging technologies place additional stress on faculty” (p. 88). For instance, Jerry was struggling with the use of technology in the classroom. He explained in more depth:

For me, personally, getting on board with the technology side of everything is important. I need help with the computer, different software, Power Point, and Blackboard. The classroom is so automated now that technology professional developments would benefit me the most.

Data Analysis as It Relates to the Conceptual Framework

In order to analyze the data, it was necessary to refer back to the conceptual framework used in this research study, Menges’ Model of Academic Life (1999) and Feldman’s Socialization Concepts (1981). I provided a brief review of reasons why participants were motivated to leave their industry jobs, the accuracy of the conceptual framework, and future of the participants.

Motivations for Leaving Industry

Motivations for leaving industry were varied. Company closures, new technology, desire for career change, and giving back to the community were reasons participants gave in response to forging a new career in the teaching field.
Three of the participants left industry jobs due to economic conditions. Consequently, company closures and advancement in technology forced Tom and Vincent into their current teaching positions. Tom explained his situation, “The job ended. I worked for a rice milling company here in southern Louisiana and we were sold to a Spanish company several years ago and they closed all of the facilities in Louisiana.” Vincent’s experiences were similar to Tom’s circumstances. Vincent said, “The (company) I was working for closed the doors … nobody really gets their TV or VCR repaired anymore, they just buy another one.”

Three other participants (Jerry, Christine, and Sarah) were looking for a change of career. These vocational technical faculty members believed teaching was a reflective and meaningful way to advance the profession, previously held in industry. Jerry said he would be happy, “if I could get along in the school system and maybe catch a few of the youngsters and teach them the professionalism and craftsmanship needed to make the next generation of “true carpenters.” Christine explained, “Last year, the firm asked me to teach a class for them in tax preparation. I found that I really enjoyed teaching.” Sarah stated, “I have been on the floors of the hospital for over 10 years, I wanted a job that I could give back to the community as well as give back to myself.”

While Kyle and Missy knew that they also wanted to be teachers. Donna and Kyle were encouraged to pursue this path from their instructor mentors. Missy started out the interview with, “I have always wanted to be a teacher.” Kyle admitted it was his life long dream. Donna said her instructor told her to teach just for the summer, to see if she liked it.
Margie on the other hand was recruited by the technical college for her knowledge and skills. Margie explained, “The technical college came looking for me.” The technical college recruited her away from her successful air conditioning business.

The Conceptual Framework

Menges’ Model of Faculty Academic Life (1999) and Feldman’s Socialization Theory (1981) laid the ground work for the conceptual framework. After reviewing all of the data collected during this research study, I believe the conceptual framework proved to be accurate.

As the participants moved through the different phases of their socialization process, it became evident that most, if not all, participants found themselves misaligned within the context of the institution. It is only through positive teaching experiences, collegial relationships, and accurate institutional knowledge that participants began to align themselves within the context of the institution and understand the faculty roles. All of the participants believed their transition from industry to the technical college would have been easier if they had an orientation upon initial employment and professional development activities that showed them how to be better instructors. While the participants were in various stages of transition, those with more years of teaching experience seemed to be more adjusted to the work skills, norms, values, and expectations of the technical college. All of the participants believed that they would have a lengthy employment with the technical college.

In my formation of the conceptual framework, I speculated that if new vocational technical faculty did not feel productive they would eventually return to industry. After careful follow up in the 2009-2010 academic year with the participants, Kyle returned to
industry for one month and reapplied for his instructor’s position. He was re-hired to his academic position and enjoys teaching Air Conditioning and Refrigeration. Missy took a school nursing position so she could be off with her son during the summer months. Maggie’s program was closed by the state due to budget cuts and she returned to industry. The other participants continue to make strides and align themselves within their institution.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I introduced each participant through their “lived experiences.” That data revealed that new Louisiana vocational technical faculty members experienced a similar socialization process into the academy as do most new faculty at two-year and four-year institutions. Those participants who sought out resources early in their technical college transition seemed to learn the values, norms, and culture of the teaching profession sooner than their counterparts.

The new vocational technical faculty experienced similar challenges related to teaching such as isolation, balancing heavy workloads, and interacting with students. Similarly, the participants valued teaching and interactions with students. However, some of their challenges were unique to being a vocational technical faculty member. Vocational technical faculty relied heavily on their industry expertise and student experiences to expand their teaching methods. The participants’ industry experience allowed the new vocational technical faculty members to draw on their expertise and inform their classroom lectures. The vocational technical faculty learned about their job expectations through collegial relationships with other faculty and administration. Their socialization process occurred through both informal, casual conversations as well as
formal orientation programs such as the New Instructor’s Workshop. All of the participants agreed it would have been beneficial to have a mentor program, but felt they were too busy to participate.

Many of the participants made comparisons between industry and the technical college. Their industry identities were still very much present in their teaching role. All of the participants were committed to making the teaching career work.
CHAPTER V

Discussion

This research study investigated the perceptions and experiences of vocational technical faculty from three technical colleges in Louisiana. Using the phenomenological qualitative tradition, I described the “lived experiences” of 10 Louisiana vocational technical faculty members in an attempt to understand how they were socialized to their faculty role. The findings suggested that vocational technical faculty experience a similar socialization process as most new faculty in post secondary institutions.

This study sought to gain insight into the transitional experiences of new Louisiana vocational technical faculty members. The primary research question guiding this research study was, “What experiences do vocational technical faculty members perceive are important to their transition from industry to the technical college?”

This secondary research questions were:

2.) How do vocational technical faculty members conceptualize their roles as instructors?

3.) What experiences do vocational technical faculty members perceive will allow them to develop the skills to be competent instructors?

The data collected was utilized to answer the research questions and lessen the knowledge gap on vocational technical faculty. Chapter V outlines the socialization experiences and adjustments required for vocational technical faculty to identify with their new teaching positions. Interactions with the students and collegial relationships of their colleagues were helpful in lessening the stress and isolation experienced during their transition to the technical college.
Assessing Research Questions

The primary goal of this research was to understand the process by which vocational technical faculty make sense of their new higher education environments and transition from industry to the technical college. As expected, their industry backgrounds influenced their socialization process as the vocational technical faculty filtered their technical college experiences through their industry perspectives.

A secondary goal of the study was to understand how vocational technical faculty conceptualized their roles as instructors and to discover the resources that helped them grow and develop as educators. In the paragraphs which follow, I summarize the findings with respect to each of the research questions which guided the study.

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<tr>
<th>Primary Research Question</th>
<th>Findings</th>
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<td>1. What experiences do vocational technical faculty members perceive are important to their transition from industry to the technical college?</td>
<td>• Collegial Relationships</td>
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<td>• Adjustments to the College</td>
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<td>• Interaction With Students</td>
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The Socialization of the Vocational Technical Faculty

New vocational technical faculty perceived three experiences to be important to their transitions from industry to the technical college: collegial relationships, adjustments to the technical college, and interaction with students. Collegial relationships were viewed as informal socialization techniques and were deemed invaluable by the new vocational technical faculty. As the new faculty members made adjustments to their new academic appointments, they began to internalize the normative differences between industry and academe. Interactions with students in industry settings helped new vocational technical instructors to hone their teaching skills.
**Collegial Relationships**

Austin (1990) defined collegiality as an environment that fosters respect and support among colleagues. Vocational technical faculty appreciated the opportunity to work in a collegial environment. Many vocational technical faculty members came from industrial settings where status meetings were part of the weekly ritual. They felt like faculty meetings of such nature would foster what Bode (1999) referred to as intellectual and social collegiality. Thus, in the absence of such meetings, the vocational technical faculty members experienced a sense of isolation similar to other new faculty (Boice, 1992; Menges, 1999a; Sorcinelli, 1992). Collegial relationships with other faculty were viewed as most beneficial to new instructors. Support and encouragement given from senior faculty assisted new vocational technical faculty through difficult adjustment periods.

**Internalizing Normative Differences between Industry and Academe**

Adjustments to the technical colleges involved integrating a new set of standards and rules for these instructors. Vocational technical faculty who received technical diplomas from a two-year institution learned the norms of the technical colleges during their own enrollment as students. Those faculty members adapted and transitioned their behaviors accordingly. Kyle is an example of this is; he knew he always wanted to be a teacher; he just did not have a formal college education. Other faculty who had opportunities to teach in corporate settings seemed to transition but not without challenges. For this group, student-instructor relationships posed the greatest obstacles. Christine realized she had to start from the beginning in training her vocational technical students instead of assuming they had foundational knowledge.
The vocational technical faculty faced many tasks that competed for their time. Learning the curriculum and preparing course materials for a 30 hour teaching week was overwhelming for the vocational technical faculty. The first year seemed to be the most difficult for all of the participants. Some of the vocational technical faculty members were in the credentialing stages of their career, which forced them back into the classroom. The new vocational technical faculty members were most concerned about teaching that resulted in student learning.

Vocational technical faculty learned the scope of their new responsibilities as instructors through a variety of formal and informal means. They often sought advice from senior faculty and administrators. In some cases, they learned about the college expectations through the website, Faculty and Staff Handbook, and the New Instructor’s Workshop. Two participants referred to the “Journal of Teaching and Learning,” and/or took courses on learning styles. One instructor said she likes to contact students in industry and find out what course content she needs to focus on.

Interactions with Students

For many of the participants, their industry backgrounds influenced their interactions with their students. With students from diverse academic levels, some vocational technical faculty members were challenged to “bring it (information) down to their level.” One participant said she found herself treating the students as her employees. Others complained about the lack of motivation from the students. In spite of the “generation gap” between faculty and students, many of the participants realized they were developing the next generation of practitioners and colleagues.
Other Research Questions

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<tr>
<td>2. How do vocational technical faculty members conceptualize their roles as instructors?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Industry Identity</td>
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<td>• Faculty Identity</td>
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**Industry Identity**

Most of the participants indicated that their industry backgrounds influenced their transition from industry to the technical college. They perceived that their industry backgrounds influenced their interactions and relationship with students. Moreover, their industry identity influenced their expectations of how students should behave in industry and how students needed to be trained in order to gain access to industry.

Communication issues were also concerns for some of the participants. The vocational technical faculty members were explicit about the trade terminology and industry expectations. Therefore, it was important to communicate as one would in industry and demand the same work ethic that would be expected in the field.

**Faculty Identity**

Initially, new vocational technical faculty had difficulty conceptualizing their roles as instructors. All of the participants identified heavily with their industry identities. Changes in role conceptualization appeared to be greatest between the first and second year of employment, where changes occurred both in the individual approach to teaching and additional assignments.

All of the participants articulated that teaching involved much more than disseminating knowledge of the discipline. Many of the participants saw themselves as “facilitators” of learning and as student mentors. As faculty became more comfortable with their teaching personas, the technical college seemed to demand more participation in committee assignments and community service to the institution.
The participants of this study viewed their industry connections important to their teaching role, and viewed themselves as advocates for technical education. Industry connections helped the new vocational technical faculty bring relevant information back to the student and ultimately prepare them for the workplace.

The new vocational technical participants believed that service to the institution helped them understand the types of things that were important to the institution but still placed a priority in their teaching.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Other Research Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
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</table>
| 3. What experiences do vocational technical faculty perceive will allow them to develop the skills need to be competent instructors? | • New Instructor’s Workshop  
• Professional Development |

**New Instructor’s Workshop**

The research of Fugate and Amey (2000) stressed the importance of orientation where new faculty members could learn about the institution. All of the participants who attended the New Instructor’s Workshop, enjoyed it, and believed they benefited from it. The Workshop introduced the new instructors to the technical college and allowed the new instructors to network with other faculty from other technical colleges. The shared experience helped new faculty to understand and make sense of their new academic environments.

Many participants voiced concern over the lack of knowledge that they were given about the technical college, specifically job expectations and human resource information. The new instructors suggested a brown bag lunch and learn session where more information could be disseminated about accountability, college policies, and procedures.
Professional Development

Menges (1999) believed that professional growth enhanced knowledge and skills that were essential for maintaining academic vitality. The most significant contribution to the literature is how new vocational technical faculty members prefer to be socialized to their new academic roles. New vocational technical instructors prefer formal, fixed, and sequential (Van Maanen, 1979) professional development activities. The research indicates new vocational technical faculty members anticipate industry-like activities that are discipline-specific and focus on advancing their knowledge of their craft. They also want professional development activities that can help them improve their teaching performance. They enjoyed topics that focused on instructional methods, learning styles, diverse student populations, technological skills, classroom management, and opportunities to network with other faculty within and across disciplines. It is only through these types of socialization techniques that new vocational technical instructor begin to transition to their new academic roles and identify with their new faculty identities.

The Unique Experiences of New Vocational Technical Faculty

This research informed the literature in several ways. New vocational technical faculty members are socialized using similar formal and informal methods as other two-year and four-year faculty. They experience similar types of stress related to academic work such as heavy work loads, time management issues, and isolation (Boice, 1992; Menges, 1999). At the same time however, the findings from the presented here suggest that there are indeed unique aspects to the technical college faculty experience that
should be understood. These similarities and differences are depicted in Figure 2 and discussed in the following paragraphs.

Figure 2: Venn Diagram of New Faculty Experiences

The common experiences shared by all faculty members new to their academic role have been well documented. Figure 2 defines these commonalities as related to lack of pedagogical knowledge upon assumption of their teaching role; heavy workloads largely related to the numerous roles characterizing the academic role: isolation, stress, and frustration as they learn to function within the organization and learn the expectations of their roles: and managing the time required to successfully performing their various roles. This study has uncovered at the same time, a variety of experiences unique to new vocational technical faculty, which are largely related to their self-identification with industry, and the characteristics of technical colleges as a unique kind of institution.
Ruscio (1987) suggested institution types impact the socialization of faculty in a variety of ways. He contended student populations, federal and state governments, and business and industry present demands that require faculty members to respond differently to institution types and organizational cultures. New vocational technical faculty differed from other higher education faculty in various experiences, which are shaped by their post-secondary institution type. An example of this would be department structure, focus on teaching, diverse student populations, and their role as an industry liaison.

The department structure in the technical colleges differs from other institutions of higher education. There are two types of department structures, programs with multiple instructors and single instructor shop areas. Departments with multiple instructors would be similar to other post-secondary institutions. Each instructor in a department may specialize on certain topics within that program. Whereas, single instructors shop areas are run by a single individual, who is responsible for teaching the entire curriculum. While it was evident from the data that most new vocational technical instructors experienced notable stress levels, the stress, isolation, time management, and academic work was greater for single instructor shop areas.

Many times vocational instructors are hired for their industry expertise. Their lack of formal education places them at a disadvantage in the college classroom. Seven participants had the proper credentials and three participants were working on their Associate of Applied Science Degrees in Occupational Education. The additional responsibility of going to school seemed overwhelming to these faculty, even though three participants confided that they liked the idea of going back to college. Some of the
faculty members were still working on their degrees three years into their employment with the technical college.

As industry experts, new vocational technical faculty expected to focus their efforts on teaching courses through a combination of theory and practical application. The vocational technical courses are based on contact hours and the instructor and student may spend anywhere from 45 contact hours to 190 hours trying to master a single application. The course competencies are better defined than other college courses and are usually specified by industry standards. The practical applications and hands on demonstrations are imperative to training students for the workforce.

Open admissions allowed students of diverse academic levels to seek technical education and workforce preparation. Ruscio (1987) explained there are great demands placed on two-year faculty that focused on the overwhelming complex instructional burden in order to teach under prepared students. New vocational technical instructors have a greater need to understand how to teach and prepare diverse students for the workplace. In addition, keeping up with industry knowledge and new developments are crucial to staying current in your field of expertise. New vocational technical instructors also act as industry liaisons in order to bring students new innovations. As such, industry often drives the changes to the curriculum. The requirement of the technical college instructors to build and maintain industry connections in order to meet these pressing industry related demands adds additional significant responsibility over and above their already heavy teaching related work.
Confirming Commitment as a Product of Socialization

Additionally, this research study revealed that new vocational technical faculty members who experienced a positive socialization process were more likely to build commitment to the teaching profession as well as the technical college and ultimately increase faculty retention. Collegial relationships helped the new vocational technical faculty understand their new academic environments and form their faculty identities. Organizational commitment is based on the premise that faculty whose expectations of the job (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993) are aligned with the institution (Menges, 1999) will experience greater job satisfaction.

Implications for Policy and Practices

Academic leaders and policy makers must be made aware of the critical shortages of vocational technical faculty they may face in the near future. In order for new Louisiana vocational technical faculty to transition from industry to the technical college, it is important for them to understand the expectations of the technical college. New vocational technical faculty felt it was imperative to have an orientation to their new position when first hired. It is through the orientation that new vocational technical faculty will be socialized to the values, attitudes, and rules of their new roles as instructors.

According to new vocational technical faculty, the orientation to the technical college should explain all aspects of their job descriptions including the rules and expectations of the post secondary institution. New vocational technical faculty also believed it would be beneficial to have short courses on strategies that foster
communication skills between faculty and students, understanding of pedagogical practices, and the system processes.

New Louisiana vocational technical faculty would appreciate professional development activities that would allow them to interact with other faculty of similar crafts and industry backgrounds. Collegiality of this nature would allow vocational technical faculty to network as they share ideas and experiences that would possibly lessen the feeling of isolation and frustration while building invaluable resources in other faculty.

Administrators should be sensitive to the fact that many new vocational technical faculty members will experience a lengthy adjustment period when transitioning to their new roles as instructors. All of the participants indicated the first year of employment was the most challenging. Many participants indicated an appreciation for the relationships they had with formal or informal mentors. Therefore, administrators could foster a sense of collegiality by providing a social support network; that is, pairing new vocational technical faculty with senior faculty members or junior faculty members who have a minimum of two years experience.

**Topics for Future Research**

It is important to continue to study the needs of the vocational technical faculty as this population will be critical to the education and training of a future workforce.

Similar studies could be expanded to include perspectives from the vocational technical faculty after attending an orientation or to assess the faculty mentoring system that is currently in place at several of the campus sites. The importance of collegiality and the relationships between faculty and administrators could be explained.
This study did not address racial or gender influences on the socialization process. Additional research could examine how the socialization experiences may differ based on ethnicity and gender. Future research could investigate the socialization process to see how it varies by different disciplines.

While this study sought to gain insight into the experiences of the new vocational technical faculty, other research could investigate the specific challenges encountered by these instructors and how they overcame these issues.

Future studies could examine new legislative policies such as the “One Day Guarantee,” and how it will affect the vocational technical faculty. The “One Day Guarantee,” is a policy that states if students are not adequately prepared on the first day of work; the technical college will retrain them free of charge. This kind of accountability measure undoubtedly puts pressure on the vocational technical faculty to go above and beyond their normal expected teaching responsibilities.

A quantitative tool could be developed from this study, which would allow for a greater sampling size of vocational technical faculty throughout the United States. A larger sample size would allow an investigator to see if other vocational technical faculty experience similar socialization processes or role conceptualization.

**Conclusion**

This research study was conducted to gain knowledge and understanding about the Louisiana vocational technical instructors as they transitioned from industry to the technical college. Ten participants were interviewed face-to-face from three technical colleges across the state of Louisiana. The composition of the participants was six females and four males. The average age of the participants was 43. There was diversity
of degree attainment; one participant had a high school diploma, three participants held technical diplomas, one participant held an associate’s of applied science degree, four participants had been awarded bachelor degrees, and one participant held a master’s degree. The vocational technical faculty had zero to three years of teaching experience while their industry experience ranged from seven to 30 years.

The research questions focused on the experiences that vocational technical faculty perceived were important to the transition from industry to the technical college. Secondary questions involved role conceptualization and the perceived experiences that would help the vocational technical instructor grow and develop as educators.

The new vocational technical faculty valued collegial relationships with administrators, other faculty, and students. These relationships eased their transition by helping them to understand the college, become better instructors, and communicate with the students.

The new vocational technical faculty felt like their industry identities were essential to their communication of their discipline. Faculty identities were conceptualized by their student experiences, the influences of other faculty, and faculty mentor relationships. Their faculty identities developed over time as they learned more about teaching, the institution, and the students. Teaching was seen as the focus of their faculty role and it involved much more than disseminating the craft. Teaching was seen as a process of facilitation to help the students learn their trade, to develop industry identities, to develop a good work ethic, and enter the workforce.

Orientation and professional development activities were linked to learning their roles as instructors and succeeding in the teaching profession. Orientation provided
institutional knowledge such as policy and procedures, philosophy and mission of the college, and the traditions of the college. Professional development activities most valued were those activities that allowed the instructors to develop as educators and networking with other faculty.

This group of professionals did experience noted levels of stress as they were socialized to their new academic environments. Most of the new vocational technical faculty experienced feelings of frustration resulting from a lack of knowledge about teaching, isolation, and time management. Those instructors who had more than two years of teaching experience seemed to be more resourceful in applying coping strategies to handle their stress.

This research was an initial exploration of the new vocational technical faculty and their experiences as they are socialized to their new academic environment. New Louisiana vocational technical college faculty members play a vital role in technical education and the economic impact of the state. Their numbers continue to grow as evidenced by data from the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty. Vocational technical faculty members fulfill the workforce development needs of the state by educating and training individuals to work in their chosen craft. Thus understanding their transitional experiences will be of use to other faculty, administrators, and policy makers.
REFERENCES


Louisiana Technical College (http://www.ltc.edu).


Menges, R. J. & Associates. (1999). Faculty in New Jobs: A Guide to Settling In,


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
INFORMED CONSENT

Project: New Vocational Technical Faculty Socialization: A Transition from Industry to the Technical College

1. Annette Bordelon Thornton (504-451-1607; athornto@uno.edu) doctoral student at University of New Orleans, under the supervision of Marietta DelFavero, Ph.D (504-280-6446; mdelfave@uno.edu) associate professor at the University of New Orleans, are requesting your participation in a research study entitled New Vocational Technical Faculty Socialization: A Transition From Industry to the Technical College. The purpose of the research is to gain insight into the experience vocational technical faculty members perceive are important to their transition from industry to technical college. Ten vocational technical faculty members from one of thirty-eight technical colleges in Louisiana will be interviewed. Your participation will involve an interview of about 30 – 45 minutes during which you will be asked questions about your work.

2. The study is designed to minimize any risk to you, however if you are uncomfortable answering any of the questions you are free to decline to respond.

3. The benefits accruing to you personally from your participation are minimal; however, you will be making possible contributions to the scholarly research about new vocational technical faculty and their transitions from industry to the technical.

4. There are no feasible alternatives to the interview for this study.

5. The results of the study will be documented in my dissertation but your identity will not be revealed. You will be assigned an alias and that alias will be used in any reporting of your comments. Only the researcher will know your name and any transcriptions of this interview will be kept in a locked cabinet accessible only to the researcher in number 1 above.

6. Participants may become tired or have some discomfort talking about their transitional experiences. As such, you are free to request a break as needed or decline to respond to any question.

7. Any questions you have about the study should be addressed to the researcher in number 1. Any other questions regarding research subjects’ rights should be addressed to Dr. Laura Scaramella at (504) 280-7481.

8. Your participation is voluntary and will not be compensated. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty. You may discontinue participation at any time.

Participant: ____________________________  Researchers: ____________________________

Marietta Del Favero, Ph.D

Annette Bordelon Thornton
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Hello, my name is Annette Thornton. I am a doctoral student at the University of New Orleans. I will be asking you questions in today’s interview about your experiences as a vocational technical faculty member, specifically about your transition from industry to the technical college. The research shows that new faculty may experience challenges when transition from industry to academe. However, there is limited research on how vocational technical perceive their transitional experiences and how they conceptual their roles as instructors. The purpose of this research is to gain insight and understanding of the vocational technical faculty transitional experiences.

Do you have any questions?

Let’s begin the interview.

1. Tell about yourself, specifically you name, age, teaching discipline, and level of credential.

2. Why did you leave your industry job and pursue a career as a vocational technical instructor?
3. Describe your transition from industry to the technical college.

4. What specific elements of the transition stand out for you and why?

5. What experiences or events do you think were important to your transition from industry to the technical college?

6. What experiences do you feel should have been included in your transition from industry to the technical college?

7. What resources would have helped you transition from industry to technical college?

8. What experiences prepared you for teaching at a technical college?

9. What experiences prepared you for your role as a faculty member?

10. What advice would you give a new vocational technical faculty that might ease their transition from industry to technical college?

11. Would you be willing to mentor a new vocational technical faculty?
The interview will end with closing remarks and remind participants of the importance of the confidentiality aspect of the study. Thank you cards will be sent to each participant for their participation in the study.
APPENDIX C: REQUEST FOR PARTICIPANT LETTER TO THE REGIONAL DIRECTORS
December 2, 2007

University of New Orleans
Lakefront Campus
New Orleans, LA 700

Regional Director Phyllis Dupuis
Louisiana Technical College Lafayette Campus
Address

Dear Mrs. Phyllis Dupuis,

My name is Annette Thornton and I am a doctoral student at the University of New Orleans working toward a Ph. D in Higher Education Administration. Dr. Marietta DellFavero is the chair of my committee and is supportive of my efforts to contact you for assistance. I am writing to request your assistance in establishing a purposive sample for my research study.

As a faculty member in Region 3, my observations of the many challenges encountered by new vocational technical faculty have lead me with great passion to pursue this research topic. As you may well be aware of, in the near future the technical colleges may experience a shortage of qualified faculty members. The purpose of my research inquiry is to document the perceptions of the vocational technical faculty as they transition from industry to the technical college.

Studies have shown that as individuals begin their teaching careers, established orientation programs may be beneficial to the faculty member’s professional growth therefore shortening their transitional period. It is my belief that the same may hold true for the vocational technical faculty as they begin their new careers as instructors.

I am asking for your assistance by providing the names and email contact information of the individuals who meet the following criteria:

1. Fulltime faculty who work at a technical or community college,
2. Fulltime faculty who have 4 or more years of industry experience
3. Fulltime faculty who have 1 to 3 years of teaching service vocational technical instructor. (Transfer instructors will be excluded from this study.)

To facilitate my efforts to contact these instructors, receiving your written approval would be most helpful. If I need to contact someone on a campus level please include that information in your response.

Complete confidentiality will be provided to all participants. I have enclosed a copy of my interview protocol so that you may view the types of questions a participant may be asked to respond to.

Please return this information to me by January 2, 2008. Enclosed is a pre-addressed envelope for your convenience. If you have any questions about this research study you
may contact me at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or Dr. DelFavero at (XXX) XXX-XXXX. Thank you for your assistance in my doctoral research.

Sincerely,

Annette Bordelon Thornton
(Drafting and Design Technology Instructor Region 3)

Enclosures: stamped, pre-addressed envelope
APPENDIX D: LETTER TO PARTICIPANT
December 2, 2007

University of New Orleans
Lakefront Campus
New Orleans, LA 7000

Dear Vocational Technical Faculty,

I am a doctoral student at the University of New Orleans working toward a Ph.D in Higher Education Administration. The purpose of my research is to document the perceive experiences of vocational technical faculty as they transition form industry to the technical college.

You have been identified as a potential participant for my research study. Your name and email address were supplied to me by either the regional director or your campus administrator. Of primary interest to me is the experiences you had as you transitioned from industry to educator. The results of this study may serve to inform administrator and policy makers about the experiences of new vocational technical faculty.

I am inviting you to participate in this study, which will consist of a taped recorded face to face interview. The interview should take about 30 to 45 minutes and will be located at a convenient time and place. Please indicate if you would be willing to participate in the study by simply emailing at the following address (athornton@ltc.edu) no later than December 20, 2007.

Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary. All information provided during the interview will be confidential. Your name will not even appear in the final manuscript. Responding by email will constitute your informed consent to participate in the study; however, you do have the right to change your mind regarding the interview.

If you have any questions about this research study or would like to discuss this experience, please contact me at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or email at athornton@ltc.edu, or contact my committee chair, Dr. Marietta DelFavero, at (XXX) XXX-XXXX. Thank you for your time and consideration. As a vocational technical college faculty member, your input and transitional experiences will be very valuable.

Sincerely,

Annette Bordelon Thornton
(Drafting and Design Technology Instructor, Region 3)
APPENDIX E: CONFIRMATION LETTER FOR PARTICIPANT SCHEDULED INTERVIEW
Dear Vocational Technical Faculty Member,

I am a doctoral student at the University of New Orleans working toward a Ph.D in Higher Education Administration. A few weeks ago, I sent you a letter asking for your participation in my research study. Your regional director or your campus administrator identified you as a potential participant for this study.

The purpose of my research is to understand the experiences of new vocational technical faculty as they transition from industry to the technical college. The results of this study may serve to inform administrator and policy makers about the professional and instructional needs of the vocational technical faculty.

Your email response has been noted and I look forward to meeting through the interview process. The taped recorded interview will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes. All information that you will provide for the interview will be held in confidence. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

This letter is to confirmation your interview date and time. Below are some choices that may offer some convenience:

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<th>Dates</th>
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<td>Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 4</td>
<td>p.m.</td>
<td>Other</td>
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Please email this confirmation letter back through an email attachment with your choices above highlighted.

If you have any questions about this research project or would like to discuss this experience, please contact me at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or athornton@ltc.edu or may contact the committee chair, Dr. Del Favero at (XXX) XXX-XXXX. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Annette Bordelon Thornton  
(Drafting & Design Technology Instructor, Region 3)
APPENDIX F: HUMAN SUBJECT CERTIFICATE
Completion Certificate

This is to certify that

Annette Thornton

has completed the Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams online course, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), on 10/29/2006.

This course included the following:

- key historical events and current issues that impact guidelines and legislation on human participant protection in research.
- ethical principles and guidelines that should assist in resolving the ethical issues inherent in the conduct of research with human participants.
- the use of key ethical principles and federal regulations to protect human participants at various stages in the research process.
- a description of guidelines for the protection of special populations in research.
- a definition of informed consent and components necessary for a valid consent.
- a description of the role of the IRB in the research process.
- the roles, responsibilities, and interactions of federal agencies, institutions, and researchers in conducting research with human participants.

National Institutes of Health
http://www.nih.gov
APPENDIX G: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research
University of New Orleans

Campus Correspondence

Principal Investigator: Marietta Del Favero
Co-Investigator: Annette Bordelon Thornton
Date: February 8, 2008
Protocol Title: "New Louisiana Vocational Technical Faculty Socialization: A Transition from Industry to the Technical College"
IRB#: 02MAR08

I have reviewed your application for conducting research involving human subjects. Your application was approved following an expedited review under 45CFR 46.110(1) categories 6 & 7.

Please remember that approval is only valid for one year from the approval date. Any changes to the procedures or protocols must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. Use the IRB number listed on this letter in all future correspondence regarding this proposal.

If an adverse, unforeseen event occurs (e.g., physical, social, or emotional harm), you are required to inform the IRB as soon as possible after the event.

Best of luck with your project!
Sincerely,

[Signature]

Robert D. Laird, Ph.D., Chair
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research
VITA
The author was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. She was enrolled as a student of the University of New Orleans for thirty years. She obtained her Bachelor’s degree in psychology in 1995, her Master’s degree in Education Administration in 2001 and her Doctor of Philosophy in Education Administration in 2010. The author currently teaches Drafting and Design Technology at South Central Louisiana Technical College. She plans to remain in Louisiana and provide quality education to the citizen of that state.