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Negotiating, Communicating, Collaborating: A Sociocultural View of Online Program Development

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A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2016

Reading Committee:

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Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Education

University of Washington

Abstract

Negotiating, Communicating, Collaborating: A Sociocultural View of Online Program Development

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Online learning has brought about changes to nearly every sphere of the university from the definition of the student, to the curriculum, to the way we know and understand teaching and learning, to policies that govern our institutions. Because online learning is such a departure from the traditional 4-year university experience and from traditional ways of teaching and learning, it has continually struggled to be seen as a legitimate way to approach educating students. This is evidenced by how college and university leaders have approached the policies and practices that have surrounded online learning. As online, hybrid, and web-enhanced instruction become more pervasive in higher education, college and university administrators are challenged with the task of strategically creating online courses and programs. This qualitative case study attempted to close that gap by using a sociocultural methodology to examine how institutional leaders of a newly formed online program negotiate both main and branch campus policies and more specifically, by studying the consequences this negotiation had for online program development. Data collection strategies included semi-structured

interviews with program faculty and administrators, observation of departmental meetings, and document review of campus policies, faculty handbooks, meeting notes and the university website. This research has contributed to the literature by examining online program development from a sociocultural perspective that values the cultural and historical aspects of policy.

Keywords: Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), Relational Agency, Distance Education, Online Learning, eLearning, Organizational Policy, Policy Change, Higher Education

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Acknowledgements

This dissertation is not the work of one individual. It is the result of the many who came together so I could learn, grow, and achieve a dream.

In deepest appreciation to my committee:
Dr. Steve Kerr
Dr. Thomas Belamy
Dr. Matthew Sparke
Dr. Elizabeth West

With gratitude to all who participated in this research - this study would not have happened with you. I cannot thank you enough for the time you provided me and the information you shared with me. Thank you.

Thomas and Mr. Moo: For the laughter and love, time and understanding, inspiration and encouragement. For all you have given and given up. Without you, this would not have been possible.

Erik, Heidi, Maria, Patrick: Nothing is as strong as family. You've always had my back.***Ms. Linda:*** For the extra time and long days. For taking care of us all.
Jeanne and Lolly: For always believing. For always encouraging. For always caring.
Louise: For your eagle eyes and knowledge of APA.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Online, hybrid, and web-enhanced instruction have become a core mode of instruction for most colleges and universities in the United States (Allen & Seaman, 2011; Bichsel, 2013). In a 2012 report compiled by the EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research (ECAR), 74% of students surveyed indicated they had taken at least one course that required the use of an online component (Dalstrom, 2012). Additionally, the Online Learning Consortium (Allen & Seaman, 2015) contends that in 2014 over 6 million students in the U.S. took at least one of their courses online.

It is important to note that even as traditional on-campus enrollments have declined over the past decade, enrollments in online courses continue to grow (Bichsel, 2013). A recent report that focused on the online college student revealed that more than 90% of the respondents indicated that they were returning students who were looking to advance their careers (Aslanian & Clinefelter, 2012). Therefore, the argument can be made that online learning provides not just a new way of teaching and learning for the traditional student, it provides access to further education and advanced degrees for the non-traditional student (Aslanian & Clinefelter, 2012).

College and university administrators have been responding to this increase in online learning. In a 2013 report on the state of online learning in U.S. higher education compiled by the Online Learning Consortium and the Babson Survey Research Group, just over 70% of colleges and universities reported online learning was critical to their long-term institutional strategy; the highest percentage reported since the inception of the report in 2003 (Allen & Seaman, 2014). However, even with this acknowledgement of the importance online learning plays in long-term strategy, college and university leaders face the challenge of strategizing about how to create online courses and programs to meet the growing demand.

As noted by Chaloux (2003) addressing this challenge is not as easy as it may seem. Online learning is a different modality of teaching and learning and comes with a set of considerations that may disrupt traditional ways of teaching and learning. Take for example the notion of faculty load. In a traditional institutional context, faculty may have contracts or expectations for a set number of contact hours, time they will spend in the classroom teaching. Colleges and universities are now challenged with how to measure this aspect of faculty load in an asynchronous online context. This is just one example of many that institutions of higher education face and continue to struggle with.

At most colleges and universities, online learning is defined and limited by already existing policies and practices that, while arguably effective for traditional teaching and learning modalities, can pose barriers for the successful implementation of eLearning environments (Chaloux, 2003). These traditional policies span across the institution and can affect all areas including student support services, information technology, finance and budgeting, and of course, teaching and learning (Simonson & Bauck, 2003). A recent report compiled by the ECAR (Bichsel, 2013) revealed that more than half of the respondents do not have policies in place that would allow them to be able to make effective decisions regarding eLearning on their campuses. Additionally, only around 40% noted that they have "an established mechanism in place for e-learning governance" (Bichsel, 2013, p. 33).

Because of the impact online learning has across the institution and because so many students—both traditional and non-traditional—are taking online courses, it is imperative that the creation or revision of online courses and programs need to be looked at holistically; institutions need to begin to view them not as separate from current offerings, but as a core component. In

order to do this, colleges and universities must look internally at the institution's history, culture, finances, policies and practices, its faculty and of course its student body.

The purpose of this research was to employ a sociocultural approach in order to more fully understand the development of a new online program at a branch campus of a large research university. This dissertation study examined how institutional leaders at a branch campus of a large research university negotiated both main and branch campus policies and practices while visioning and creating a new Special Education (SPED) endorsement[1] for practicing teachers. This study specifically examined how new working arrangements and educational practices may have influenced existing academic policies at both branch and central campus levels.

The overarching research question guiding this study was: How can a sociocultural approach help us better understand the development of a new online program at a branch campus? The following set of research questions also guided this qualitative case study:

1. How do emergent online programs align or not align with existing campus policy and administrative structures?
2. How does the multi-campus structure affect existing policies and structures?
3. How do new working arrangements and educational practices affect existing academic policies at both branch and central campus levels?

Moving forward, it is important to note terminology. As can be found throughout the literature, distance learning, distance education, online education and online learning are often used synonymously. The field started out with distance learning and as the technologies became

[1] In this context, an educational endorsement is a specialized subject area that is listed on the recipients teaching certificate. An institution granting an educational endorsement must receive State approval from the State Professional Standards Board and must demonstrate how the endorsement curriculum meets specific competencies as outlined by the State.

more sophisticated and teaching and learning from a distance became a mostly online modality, the term online learning became more prevalent in the literature. Today, as new modalities of electronic teaching and learning are being explored, the term eLearning has started to make its way into the literature (Bichsel, 2013). However, the term eLearning is also fraught with ambiguities and lacks a clear definition. This makes it critical for those writing about teaching and learning with technology to define or operationalize their terms and definitions. Therefore, in this research, online learning will be the term used to describe teaching and learning that is conducted online, with minimal face-to-face interaction between students and faculty.

This dissertation is organized in six chapters. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will provide a brief history of change in higher education. By understanding this history, it allows one to construct a framework for understanding change in higher education; specifically the change online learning brings to higher education. The second chapter introduces the reader to the research problem and grounds the research problem in the current literature. Chapter 3 describes and justifies the research methodology used to explore the above research questions. Chapter 4 describes the case context, while Chapter 5 presents the case findings. This dissertation ends with Chapter 6 and a discussion of the case reflections and directions for future research.

Change in Higher Education: A Brief Historical View

While there are a number of ways to view and study contemporary change (1945 – present) in higher education, Cohen and Kisker (2010) have categorized the changes into three distinct eras: 1945 to 1975, the era of mass higher education; 1976 to 1993 has been labeled the era of consolidation; while 1994 to the present is the era of privatization, corporatization, and accountability. Within each of the eras are major reforms and inititiaves that have shaped the

higher education system as we know it today and can be used as an example of how higher education has continually adapted under conditions of social change.

Mass Higher Education Era: 1945 to 1975

This era has been called the golden age of education (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Thelin, 2004). In this era, everything in higher education expanded—enrollments, budgets, and the curriculum (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). New institutions were being built to support the burgeoning number of students attending colleges and universities after the Second World War, leading to the birth of the community college system (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Thelin, 2004). These changes led to more fiscal support from the federal government through increased federal research dollars and federal financial aid for students. For the first time, "higher education was now available to people living in every corner of the nation, regardless of their economic or social status" (Cohen & Kisker, 2010, p. 306).

Era of Consolidation: 1976 to 1993

The era of consolidation was marked with changes to higher education that were a direct result of societal changes. This era saw the end of the cold war, a rising national debt, a changing societal demographic and an increased call for equality (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). These societal trends challenged higher education in ways that it had not seen before. This era is critical as it is credited with being the foundation for many of the changes higher education would see in the following era. During the era of consolidation, the numbers of students attending college continued to increase. Tuition also continued to climb. Most notably, however, during this era, calls for equality began to challenge practices that excluded populations such as minorities, women, and those with physical challenges (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). This increased call for

equity led some colleges and universities to begin exploring the idea of distance education (Cohen & Kisker, 2010).

Era of Privatization, Corporatization, and Accountability: 1994 to the Present

The current era is as complicated and complex as any previous era (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Thelin, 2004). This era is distinct in that the gap between rich and poor is at an all-time high, the rate of technological change within our society is unprecedented, and as a nation, we are more diverse than any other era (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). The demand for college degrees is also at an all-time high, and this has led to a surge of for-profit and online institutions. At the same time, public colleges and universities have seen state and federal funding significantly diminish and are relying more and more on private funding and increased student tuition (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Lane & Johnstone, 2013; Thelin, 2011). In this era, many of the tenets of traditional higher have been challenged. Questions about what a college degree means, what it means to be educated, and how one obtains a college degree have been pushed to the forefront. In addition, questions of identity mark this era: the identity of the institution, of the faculty, and of the student. This era is not over. In fact, one could argue it has only just begun.

Online Learning: A Brief Historical View

One of the most defining characteristics of the current era is the expansion of teaching and learning to virtual spaces. Moore and Kearsley (2012) noted that there are five generations of distance learning, with the fifth and most recent generation being distance learning via the Internet or online learning. It can be argued that this generation is one that has brought about the most significant changes for institutions of higher education in the United States. In fact, online learning has brought about changes in nearly every sphere of the university, from the definition

of the student, to the curriculum, to the way we know and understand teaching and learning, to the policies that govern our institutions.

Online learning really started gaining ground in the late 1990s to the early 2000s (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Moore & Kearsley, 2012). Community colleges led the development of the first online courses and programs, while 4-year colleges and universities were slow to follow (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). Because online learning is such a departure from the traditional 4-year university experience and from traditional ways of teaching and learning, it has continually struggled to be seen as a legitimate way to educate students, let alone a way to earn a college degree. This is evidenced by how college and university leaders approach online learning, the policies and practices that surround it, and the resources that were allocated towards the creation of online programs and degrees. Colleges and universities, however, were not the only ones suspicious of online learning.

While community colleges and some universities were forging ahead creating online courses and degree programs, the federal government restricted federal funding for these programs (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). It was not until 2006 that federal financial aid was made available to students taking programs and courses that were offered completely online (Read, 2006). This ruling brought more legitimacy to the online learning modality and led to an even greater gain in online program enrollment (Allen & Seaman, 2007).

Today, colleges and universities are experimenting with a number of different online teaching and learning modalities including traditional online learning, hybrid or blended learning, the flipped classroom model, and maybe the most controversial, the offering of massive open online courses or MOOCs. No matter the modality, Allen and Seaman (2015) reported that

the number of academic leaders at our nation's colleges and universities who report that online learning is "critical to their long-term strategy is at an all-time high" (p. 4).

As indicated by Cohen and Kisker (2010), one feature of this era of privatization, corporatization, and accountability is the increased demand for a college degree. Online learning has allowed for the growth in the number of degrees offered and attained, increased access to a degree and in some cases made degrees more affordable. It allowed for the innovation of teaching and learning in new ways, beyond the traditional classroom. In many ways, online learning has become part of the core mission of most public colleges and universities in this era.

Pressures for Change: Higher Education

As evidenced in the previous section, substantive change in higher education is not new. What is different about the current era is the rate of change. Each of the previous two eras of change occurred over three decades. The current era is still developing, yet the total number of substantive changes exceeds other eras. In order to understand these changes, it is important to understand the current pressures for change and how they impact our institutions of higher education.

Several recent pieces of literature identify pressure points that have led to change in higher education (Altbach, Gumport & Berdahl, 2011; Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Lane & Johnstone, 2013; Siemens & Matheos, 2010; Thelin, 2011). After examining this literature, I have categorized the current points of pressure in higher education into six categories (in no particular order): teaching and learning, fiscal, global, political, societal, and technological.

Teaching and Learning

Change in teaching and learning are those pressure points that surround the policies and practices specific to teaching and learning in higher education. While there are many pressure

points for teaching and learning, there are overlapping themes in the literature. They center on new teaching and learning practices, changes in the curriculum to allow for more service learning, community based learning, and more global experiences (Altbach, Gumport, & Berdahl, 2011). There has also been tremendous pressure on colleges and universities to become more open, collaborative, and to share resources in order to become more integrated and inclusive (Siemens & Matheos, 2010). Finally, it is important to remember how the changing identity of the student and the changing identity and role of the faculty put pressures on our current educational system (Altbach, Gumport & Berdahl, 2011; Lane & Johnstone, 2013; Thelin, 2011).

Fiscal

As previously noted, there have been unprecedented decreases in federal and state funding for public higher education. These fiscal pressures have led to higher tuition costs for students, which have increased student debt (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Thelin, 2011). Fiscal pressures have also led institutions to examine their internal practices such as student to faculty ratios, employee positions and salaries and auxiliary services offered to students (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). As a response to these fiscal pressures, institutions have been forced to rely more on fund raising and endowments in order to fund new and existing endeavors (Thelin, 2011). Institutions of higher education have also started utilizing alternate funding models such as differentiated tuition and self-sustaining programs.

Global

As we live in an increasingly connected and global society, Siemens and Matheos (2010) note that while higher education does not have any power or influence over global trends, such as global warming or global economics, we must be in a position to respond to these trends. In

order to do this, colleges and universities have begun to establish online and branch campus partnerships with universities in other parts of the world. As noted by Siemens and Matheos (2010), this allows for universities to transition from a national perspective to a more globally connected perspective that is necessary in order to stay current and competitive in our contemporary culture.

Political

The political pressures on higher education are many. Most recently, leaders in our federal government set a new goal for our nation, that by the year 2020 we would have the "highest proportion of college graduates in the world" (The White House, n.d., para. 3). President Obama's statement went on to say that in order to achieve this goal, higher education would need to be made "more accessible, affordable, and attainable for all" (The White House, n.d., para. 4). While one would be hard pressed to argue with the core of this message, this edict, coupled with the fiscal pressures higher education is facing, puts even more pressure on a system already facing unprecedented change. Additionally, there is political pressure for colleges and universities to ensure that their students, after graduation, are able to obtain employment in their field. In 2014, the U.S. Department of Education announced "gainful employment" regulations for career training programs in order to ensure that "institutions improve their outcomes for students—or risk losing access to federal student aid" (para. 1). This puts additional pressure on institutions to meet federal demands.

Societal

Larger societal expectations for what a college degree means has shifted from previous eras, which has put pressure on our colleges and universities to change. More so than in previous eras, students in the current educational era believe a college degree is the pathway for achieving

at the minimum a middle class lifestyle (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). Students today have more options for the types of degrees they can earn, including many new professional preparation degrees and specialty degrees in areas such as healthcare, the sciences, and technology (Altbach, Gumport, & Berdahl, 2011, Cohen & Kisker, 2010).

In addition to the changing expectations of what a college degree means, there are changing societal expectations of what the college experience should entail. As with many other parts of the American culture, higher education is not free from commercialization and consumerism (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Thelin, 2011). This era of higher education has seen an increase in core services offered to students including fitness centers, upscale housing, campus restaurants, and coffee shops, in addition to the more academically focused services such as career placement offices and tutoring services.

Technological

As noted throughout this chapter, the technological forces impacting colleges and universities abound. Not only does technological change encompass online learning and its different modalities, technological advancements affect how we communicate internally and externally, how we market our institutions, how we design our classrooms, and the core services we offer our students (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Thelin, 2011). This force of technological change bleeds over into educational change in how we teach and learn and in the roles and identity of a student and of a faculty member.

It is important to note that the pressure points (educational, fiscal, global, political, societal, and technological) as defined above are fairly broad. As evidenced in the above examples, within each pressure point there are both internal and external pressures that help to influence change. Using the work of Altbach, Gumport, Berdahl (2011), these external pressures

can include "the federal government, state governments, the court system and nongovernmental elements" (p. 3). To this definition I also include external forces such as the local communities the institution serves and the larger communities the university engages with. Again, using the work of Altbach, Gumport, Berdahl (2011), internal pressures include "faculty, students, and the presidency" (p. 3). I would also argue that internal forces such as administrative and support staff also help to influence change.

Pressures for Change: Online Learning

Interestingly, the pressures for change in higher education mirror the pressures and challenges institutions face when designing and implementing online courses and programs. Much research has been conducted exploring the challenges institutions face when rolling out online programs. In this chapter, I have focused on recently published books and articles, dated between 2010 and 2015. Not surprising, there were many overlapping themes found in the literature. Using the above pressure points as a basis for change categories, this next section will examine the pressure points institutions face when implementing online learning courses and programs.

Teaching and Learning

The teaching and learning pressures for change in online learning abound. However, it can be argued that one of the biggest pressure points leading to change in higher education has been the evolution of new teaching and learning practices. More and more colleges and universities are being expected to be able to show what and how their students learn. This, in turn, has put pressure on faculty to rethink their traditional approaches to teaching and learning (Laurillard, 2013). Laurillard (2013) went on to acknowledge that faculty are not alone in this re-envisioning. Institutions must support faculty in this change; they must change their traditions,

values, and infrastructure. Finally, Laurillard (2013) noted that while institutions of higher education must respond to external pressures for change, she posited that for true change to happen "higher education should be reformed through pressures from within" (p. 3).

Fiscal

Colleges and universities are feeling political pressure to educate more students, while at the same time freezing or decreasing the overall costs to the students. This sums up the fiscal pressures colleges and universities are facing from the previous section. When online learning came to the forefront it promised to educate more students for less (Inglis, 2013). However, as more institutions have developed online programs, the real cost of what it takes to educate online became apparent. Today, there are many decisions that need to be considered, many of which influence the cost of online courses and programs. These include, but are not limited to, the learning management system an institution adopts (if it does adopt one), additional software, tools and or licenses needed for course development, the staffing to support online learning, how an institution embraces the use of open educational resources, and the incentives given for the development and or teaching of the online class (Inglis, 2013).

Finally, institutions must determine how these costs will be covered. Some institutions pass along the cost of the online courses or programs to the student via fees. Other institutions have built in the costs through a standard operating budget and some institutions have a system that utilizes both course or program fees and operating budget funds.

Global

As noted above, the current society is one that is increasingly connected and global, where the demand for higher education has increased. In many countries, the demand for higher education is so great that governments have turned to creating national open online universities

in order to meet this demand (Hanna, 2013). The Open University in the UK and the Indira Gandhi National Open University in India are just a few examples. As noted by Hanna (2013), the movement to create these national open online universities puts pressure on colleges and universities in the United States to keep up with the changing face of global higher education.

Political

Pressure for colleges and universities to move into online learning comes from both internal and external politics. Simonson and Schlosser (2013) noted that asking the simple question of whether the institution or program should move into the online space is fraught with internal politics. There are questions that surround all aspects of online learning, such as the identity of the institution, the motivation for moving into the online space, academic freedom, the identity and role of the faculty, questions of tenure and promotion, compensation, course and program quality, and the model of online learning being adopted to name a few.

Additionally, there is increasing external pressure for colleges and universities to move into the online space. As noted above, President Obama has challenged the country to produce the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. This challenge comes at a time when colleges and universities are facing an increasingly different demographic of student, one that is more likely to live off campus and work while attending college (Cohen & Kisker, 2010).

Societal

As briefly mentioned above, the demand for higher education is unprecedented. For-profit colleges and universities have seen an explosion in student enrollments over the past decade. This demand has led to a shift in the typical college student. In fact, it can be argued that there is no longer a typical college student. Today, colleges and universities are serving a unique student population: one that is increasingly diverse, more likely to live off campus and work

while attending college, and one that tends to be just a bit older than the previous generation of college student (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). This demand for higher education by those who may not fall within the traditional definition of a college student have helped for-profit colleges and universities to establish themselves by providing alternate pathways for students to obtain a college degree.

Technological

Online learning is, in and of itself, a technological pressure for change. Many colleges and universities are still trying to understand their role in this new teaching and learning modality and how they will create and maintain a new identity in this space. Schools and programs within the institution are wrestling with how best to determine what courses or programs should go online, how to support faculty and students in the online sphere, and what this means strategically for their future. Additionally, there are catalysts for technological change even within online learning. No longer does online learning mean a course mediated via the Internet using a learning management system. Online courses today are being held via a number of different online spaces and environments such as Facebook, Twitter, Skype, and Google's suite of tools (Hanna, 2013). With faculty experimenting with different tools for teaching and learning and students who come with their own online experiences and preferences, institutions in higher education are left grappling with which tools they will support and how they will support them.

A Framework for Understanding Change in Higher Education

We could visualize these interrelated changes and pressures as a framework with which to view historical change in higher education and online learning (Figure 1). This framework

highlights the intersections between change in higher education and the change in online learning.

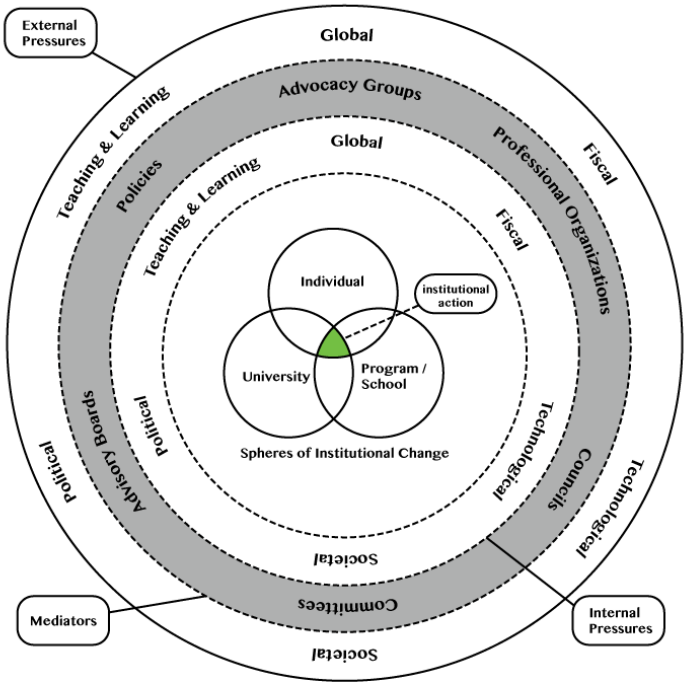

Figure 1. Framework for understanding change in higher education.

Before focusing on the details of the framework, it is important to note its purpose and what it affords. As noted by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) "frameworks are simply the researcher's current map of the territory being investigated" (p. 20). They went on to state that conceptual frames explain "the key factors, constructs, or variables – and the presumed relationships among them" (p. 20). The purpose of this framework (Figure 1) is to provide a structure from which to view change in higher education. While this frame can be used to understand any contemporary change, the focus here is to understand, in broad strokes, the change online learning is currently bringing to higher education today.

Institutional change, as represented in this framework takes place in three distinct yet overlapping spheres: at the individual level (student, faculty, or staff), at the program or school

level, and at the institutional level. Most importantly, institutional action leading to change occurs at the intersection of these spheres. As outlined previously, institutional action leading to change is influenced by both internal and external pressures for change. These pressures are educational, fiscal, global, political, societal and technological. It is important to note that while there are both internal and external pressures that lead to change, change cannot take place without the pressures being mediated. This mediation comes in many different forms including internal and external policies and practices, professional organizations, advocacy group, councils, committees, and advisory boards.

It is also important to recognize that this is an active and dynamic process. At any point in time, there are multiple internal and external pressures being put on the institution simultaneously. And as the pressure points for change ebb and flow with time and as institutions respond to change from one pressure point, it may influence change in another point. Change is a constant within higher education. There will always be a new idea, tool, or method that will promise to disrupt the system and make it better. In contemporary times, many of those tools are centered on online learning.

This framework can be put to work using the President's challenge to higher education as noted above. The President's challenge to the country was to produce the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. This challenge puts direct political, social, and educational pressure on our nations colleges and universities. However, just announcing this challenge is not enough to produce change. Since this announcement, there has been a broad range of discourse and policy discussions that have led colleges and universities to begin thinking about what this challenge means for their specific institutions. For example, several professional organizations, including the American Association of Community Colleges, the American Association of State

Colleges and Universities, and Educause, have produced blog posts and articles that outline this challenge and what it means for higher education (American Association of Community Colleges, 2012; Auguste, Cota, Jayaram, & Laboissière, 2010; Oblinger, 2010). Additionally, we have seen increased rhetoric calling for higher education institutions to begin preparing for this challenge, with online learning specifically being called out (Kanter, 2011).

These external pressures, coupled with the mediating influences, have put pressure on public colleges and universities to expand their online presence. As noted above, simply asking the question of whether the institution or program should move into the online space is fraught with internal pressures: educational, fiscal, political, societal, and technological. It is only once an institution has engaged in these discussions and has negotiated some of the pressure points that action leading to change within an institution can occur.

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a brief history of change in higher education, introduce a frame from which to understand change in higher education, specifically the change online learning brings to higher education and to introduce the purpose of this research. The next chapter further explores the research problem and grounds the problem within the current literature.

CHAPTER 2: FRAMING IDEAS AND INFORMING LITERATURE

Understanding change in higher education and its relationship to online learning is key to understanding contemporary views, policies, and practices prevalent in higher education today. This chapter first introduces contemporary approaches to policy and practice in higher education. Second, this chapter investigates contemporary views of online learning in higher education. This chapter ends with a discussion of the conceptual framework used in this study for understanding the change online learning brings to institutional policies and practices.

Contemporary Approaches to Policy and Practice in Higher Education

There is an extensive body of literature dedicated to the policy and practice of online learning in higher education. Several journals are devoted to these ideas (*Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, *American Journal of Distance Education*, *Journal of Online Learning Research*) while several books have been penned with this focus (Andrews & Haythornthwaite, 2007; Perraton & Lentell, 2004; Petrides, 2000).

As noted earlier, the progression from distance learning to online learning and most recently to eLearning has happened over the course of many years. In this time, there have been several studies that have examined issues surrounding academic policy and practices as they relate to eLearning courses. As indicated in the literature, traditional policies and practices that have governed higher education are no longer sufficient as colleges and universities continue to create more nontraditional academic courses and programs. Policies and practices that govern course and program approval, course evaluation, privacy, copyright, and instructor responsibilities and workload are just a few examples (Varvel, Montague, & Estabrook, 2007; Wallace, 2007; Wallace & Young, 2011). There are many ways these policies are being examined.

Saarinen and Ursin (2012) conducted a literature review and analysis that focused on policy change in higher education, focusing on policy change approaches and their effectiveness. They categorized the different policy change approaches into three categories, structural, actor, and agency.

Structural Approach to Policy Change

Saarinen and Ursin (2012) found that the structural category "was the most common way to analyze and look at higher education (policy) change" (p. 145). They defined the structural approach as one emphasizing that policy change occurs within the deep-rooted structures of higher education. They acknowledged that these structures are socially constructed and recognized the importance of actors within the structure. However, the actions taken by these actors are ultimately constrained by the structure.

To illustrate this approach, we can turn to the idea of tenure in institutions of higher education. Tenure is a deeply rooted tradition in traditional institutions of higher education. However, we are beginning to see challenges to the ideas of tenure, which may ultimately begin to change how institutions of higher education value the tenure process.

Actor Approach to Policy Change

This policy change approach defines the actor as either an individual or a collection of individuals at the institution. Saarinen and Ursin (2012) noted that the actors are "significant change agents in some higher education policy research" (p. 147). They went on to posit that actors and structures are interrelated, and that actors are dependent upon the structures. Saarinen and Ursin (2012) pointed out that this interrelatedness does not reduce the importance of the actors within the structure. Interestingly, they found that in many cases, policy change approaches combine the structure and actor categories depending upon the policy that was being

examined.

This approach adds a key element for policy change—the role of the actor. It acknowledges that actors can act outside the bounds of the structure and that the actor and the structure work dependently in order to create policy change. The actor approach recognizes the interrelatedness of the actors and the structure and gives a small nod to institutional history. It does not however, take into account the culture of the institution, or the actors and their networks.

The actor approach can be demonstrated by using the previously mentioned idea of tenure for faculty. The roles of faculty have been changing over time; with added responsibilities of advising, program development and program management. This changing role has led some faculty to call for a change in, not to tenure itself, but to how the tenure categories of research, service, and teaching are defined.

Agency Approach to Policy Change

This is the least represented view in the literature. The agency approach "highlights the interactive nature of policy change" (Saarinen & Ursin, 2012, p. 149). In this view, agency takes on dual meaning. Agency not only refers to an organization at the global, national, or local levels; it also refers to the collective action these different organizations enact. While it may seem this is a limited view of policy change, this view is key in understanding how global and national practices and positions can and do affect local policy and practice.

Interestingly, Saarinen and Ursin (2012) noted that this category can be the most holistic approach to understanding policy change in higher education as it attempts to "take into account both actors and structures which are constructed in interactions" Saarinen and Ursin (2012, p. 150). They went on to say however, that a holistic approach brings about "methodological

challenges" (p. 150), essentially recognizing the difficulty in studying the interconnectedness of structures and actors in the study of policy change in higher education.

The agency approach to policy change is elucidated in the previous example of the President's challenge to the country to produce the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. The Presidents' challenge to the nation had a direct influence on policies and practices of many local institutions of higher education. As a response to this challenge, 2 and 4-year colleges and universities have collectively increased their online program options for students (Kanter, 2011).

Saarinen and Ursin (2012) have laid strong groundwork for categorizing contemporary policy change approaches. For this research, the most interesting part of their findings is what was missing. None of the approaches, contemporary or emerging, look at policy change from a holistic perspective, that is, they do not look at the change from the full range of perspectives that might aid in analysis. One way to attain looking at policy change from a holistic perspective is by using a systems view.

Traditionally, the field of online learning has been guided by such a view. The following section presents a brief introduction to how a systems view has informed online learning in higher education.

Systems View of Online Learning in Higher Education

A systems view of online learning has been dominant in the online learning discourse. Moore and Kearsley's (2012) book, *Distance Education: A Systems View of Online Learning*, is looked upon as seminal reading for online course and program development and has gone through multiple editions. In their book, Moore and Kearsley (2012) effectively argued for the importance of developing online programs from a systems approach. They stated that "it is not

enough to know only the history, or the theory, or the principles of instructional design, or the organizational structures. None of these can be understood in isolation; it is necessary to understand *all of them*" (Moore & Kearsley, 2012, p. xvi). They posited that online learning is best viewed as a system in order to understand all the components, how they work together, what they have an impact on, and to what extent (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). Puzziferro and Shelton (2008) added that a systems view of online learning can offer a process that allows for the "scalable production" (p.119) process for course creation that can lead to "quality, efficiency, and productivity for the entire institution" (Puzziferro & Shelton, 2008, p. 119).

In a systems view of online learning, there are multiple subsystems that link together; and in order to understand and evaluate an online learning program, one must understand the interrelationships among the subsystems and how they relate to the larger system (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). Puzziferro and Shelton (2008) acknowledged the importance of these subsystems for not only understanding an online program as a whole, but also for understanding how individual online courses are developed.

Finally, Moore and Kearsley (2012) and Puzziferro and Shelton (2008) addressed how institutional philosophy aids in understanding a systems view of online learning course or development. It is sufficient to say that the systems view of online learning provides a model from which to study online learning, "a tool that not only helps us recognize many of the issues that separate distance education from conventional education, but also helps us distinguish good distance education from the bad" (Moore & Kearsley, p. 5, 1996). While the systems approach as laid out by both Moore and Kearsley (2012) and Puzziferro and Shelton (2008) is not specifically designed to address policy change, it can be used to more fully understand the parts and pieces of

the system, the actors and structures, how they function together. It allows for the ability to pinpoint what might need to be adjusted in order to move forward.

The need for a holistic approach to online course and program development has been suggested in earlier studies. There is an established base of literature that addresses organizational and policy change in higher education (Henkle, 2000; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Trowler, 2002) and online learning and organizational and policy change (Andrews & Haythornthwaite, 2007; de Freitas & Oliver, 2005; Moore & Kearsley, 2011; Smith, Lewis, & Massey, 2000). However, these approaches to organizational and policy change in the institution and especially for online learning take the form of a systems approach. A systems approach stems from industrial and military thinking and is associated more with a behavioral psychology perspective. Thus, leaving out the cultural and historical aspects of organizational and policy change. I argue that we need to look more towards a more holistic or sociocultural approach to organizational and policy change. By incorporating the cultural and historical aspects of organizational and policy change in a holistic approach to online learning, it can serve to strengthen any analysis of the system that is being explored.

There are two promising frameworks that take into account culture and history that can be used in conjunction with each other in order to understand and evaluate online program development: cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) and relational agency. CHAT is a framework based in work by Vygotsky and his colleagues (Engeström, 1999). It has been built upon by a number of successive thinkers. The CHAT framework is conceptualized in such a way that culture and history are seen as intertwined and provide necessary context for understanding how humans interact together. Vygotsky theorized that humans, from birth, participate in a certain culture and use such shared cultural and psychological tools as literacy and numeracy for

development (Wells & Edwards, 2013). This lead Vygotsky "to emphasize the importance of history for understanding development: not only do individuals develop over time, but so do cultures and the families, communities and institutions that constitute them" (Wells & Edwards, 2013, p. 7).

Relational agency—grounded in both sociocultural theory and activity theory—is a theory exploring how professionals work together towards a negotiated outcome. Relational agency recognizes that a professionals expertise and "practices are knowledge-laden, imbued with cultural values" (Edwards, 2010, p. 5). Additionally, the ideas behind relational agency recognize that historical institutional habits and practices can many times inhibit collaboration and can hinder the development and understanding of a common outcome.

When conceptualizing how to understand a sociocultural approach to organizational and policy change, it is important to keep the ideas of culture and history at the forefront. Employing both CHAT and relational agency will help to understand how institutional culture and the culture of the actors (faculty, staff, and administrators) may have helped shaped policies around online learning. Therefore, this research is situated within the sociocultural literature and also brings in literature addressing policy and practice and change in higher education. The following sections will discuss the above literatures and elucidate a gap in the current research.

Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)

At its core, CHAT centers on three main assumptions. First, humans think and act in a collective or group context and communicate through their actions. Second, humans make and/or adapt psychological tools for the purpose of learning and to communicate with one another. Finally, community is central to the making and understanding of meaning (Foot, 2014).

CHAT has gone through a number of elaborations and extensions over the years. Yrjö

Engeström has been credited with first describing the evolution of CHAT in terms of three distinct generations (Yamagata-Lynch, 2014). The first generation, developed by Vygotsky, focuses on the individual. The second generation of CHAT builds upon Vygotsky's work and brings in the ideas of the collective, while the third generation focuses on interacting activity systems. The following section briefly describes each generation of CHAT in more detail.

First Generation CHAT

Vygotsky was a Soviet psychologist and his research discoveries in activity theory took place during the 1920s and 1930s. Vygotsky (1978) proposed that human action was a function of mediation between "stimulus and response" (p.39) through tools and signs. To Vygotsky (1978), this structure of "mediated act" (p. 40) was the basis of all higher psychological processes (Figure 2). The mediated act, or mediated action comprises an interaction between an individual (subject) and a mediating artifact or tool for the purpose of finding new meanings in their world.

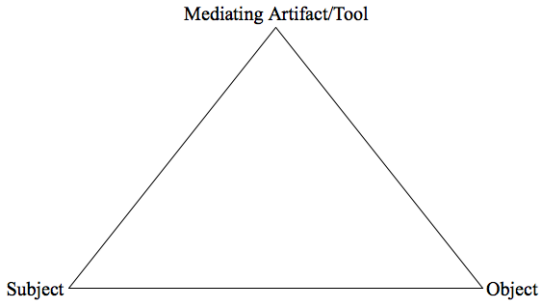

Figure 2. Vygotsky's mediated action triangle.

Vygotsky saw that understanding human behavior necessitated a historical perspective that required analysis at all levels, from the individual to the societal to the level of the species (Cole, 2005). In this first iteration or generation of CHAT, the emphasis is on the individual. Vygotsky's research centered on how the individual interprets their environment and what that

interpretation reveals about how one might interact within their community in order to find new meanings in their world.

Second Generation CHAT

Vygotsky's student, Leont'ev, took this innovation in the mediated psychology of the individual and posited that it functioned at the larger social scale of human activity. Leont'ev theorized that human action was a culturally-organized activity that took place collectively in a world constructed of social relations and does not exist separate from them (Cole, 2005). These interactions became known as activity systems.

Leont'ev and his team also provided a clear definition of object-oriented activity and goal-directed activity (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Leont'ev posited that object-oriented activity is the unit of analysis of an activity system. An object-oriented activity is mediated action, where groups of individuals participate in an activity driven by their personal goals and motives (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Goal-directed activities tend to be more individually focused and "are much more temporary in nature and may be a step that subjects take in the process of participating in an object-oriented activity" (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p. 21).

In the 1970's and 1980's, scholars in the west discovered the work of Vygotsky, Leont'ev, and others. Cole developed the term "cultural-historical activity theory" to delineate the process as a descriptive social psychology framework. There are a number of constructs developed by scholars that allow activity theory to be operationalized, which will be explored below.

While Leont'ev and his team built upon Vygotsky's ideas behind mediated action, he never built upon Vygotsky's mediated action triangle. Therefore, Engeström, building upon Leont'ev's work of object-oriented activity fleshed out a more complete triangular diagram based on Vygotsky's original mediated action triangle. Engeström (1987) added to Vygotsky's construct

of subject, instruments, and object, the notion of social dynamics rules, community, and division of labor (Figure 3). On the whole, Engeström's multi-level triangle is a heuristic device that allows an analytical frame to be developed from a specified set of relationships between the elements. Since, even in the simplest of human activities, there are many ways to describe these relationships, the process is qualitative and interpretive by its nature.

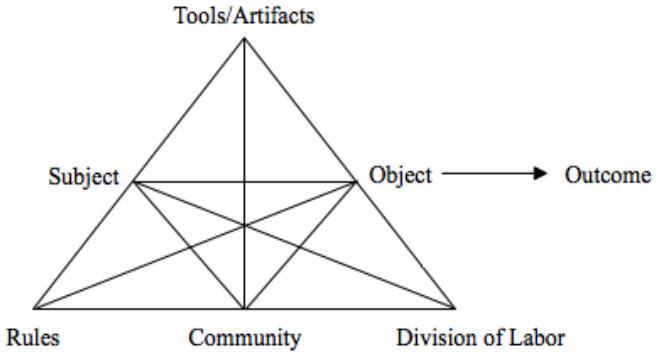

Figure 3. An activity system.(Engeström, 1987).

As shown in Figure 3, Engeström's representation of an activity system described how the action taken on an object is mediated by the aid of the instruments and relates to the larger system in which it occurs (Wells & Edwards, 2013). The larger activity system is represented by the rules, community, and division of labor. In this activity system, the subject refers to those involved in the activity. The tools in the activity signify the tools and/or artifacts that mediate the activity. Rules refer to formal and informal guidelines, policies, or procedures that affect the activity. The community represents the social group or groups the subject(s) participate in while engaged in the activity. The division of labor delineates the tasks and how they are shared among members of the community. The object is the goal of the activity system, while the outcome is the end result of the activity.

Third Generation CHAT

As CHAT gained popularity in the West, many CHAT scholars were challenged by CHAT's inability to represent "diversity and dialogue between different traditions or perspectives" (Engeström, 2001, p. 135). Therefore, Engeström, Cole, and other scholars began theorizing a third generation of CHAT (Figure 4). This third generation of CHAT focuses on the development of "conceptual tools to understand dialogue, multiple perspectives, and networks of interacting activity systems" (Engeström, 2001, p. 135).

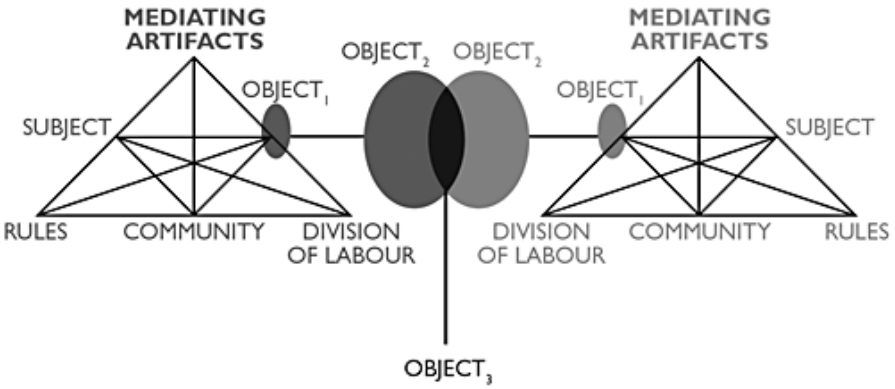

Figure 4. Third generation activity system (Engeström, 2001, p. 136).

In Engeström's representation of a third generation activity system, the object of each individual activity system (object 1) moves from being the single object of the individual activity system to one that is a "collectively meaningful object" (object 2) (Engeström, 2001, p. 136). These objects (object 3) can then become a "shared or jointly constructed object" (Engeström, 2001, p. 136). As noted by Engeström (2001), "the object of activity is a moving target, not reducible to conscious short-term goals" (p. 136).

Engeström (2001) uses an example of children's healthcare in Helsinki, Finland to illustrate this third iteration of CHAT. As Engeström (2001) explains, it is common in Helsinki for families of a sick child to use high-end services, such as Children's Hospital for routine

illnesses, instead of using a primary health provider. Due to rising costs of medical care, there is "political pressure to change the division of labor in favor of increased use of primary care services" (p. 139). This led to families being caught between medical services. Therefore, the challenge was to devise a new way of working that would satisfy families and medical practitioners at multiple healthcare facilities. Engeström and his team lead families and health care personnel through a collaborative process in which participants moved from individual objects for the healthcare faculties, Children's hospital, and child's family, to a shared object of "patients moving between primary care and hospital care" (p. 145).

Engeström (2001) described third generation CHAT using five principles. The first principle is that the unit of analysis for the activity system is the entire activity system. In this newest paradigm, Engeström envisioned the expansion of the "unit of analysis from a single activity system to multiple, minimally two, interacting activity systems" (Engeström & Glăveanu, 2012, p. 516). The second principle stated that all activity systems are "multi-voiced" (Engeström, 2001, p. 136), meaning that activity systems are always representations of multiple viewpoints from the community. These viewpoints stem from the community's differing culture, language, and history (Feldman & Weiss, 2010). The third principle centers on the historicity of the activity system, the importance of "local history of the activity and its objects" (Engeström, 2001, p. 136). Engeström (2001) noted that the contradictions found within an activity system can only be understood in the context of their own history. The fourth principle focused on these contradictions, and the role they play in the change and development of the activity system. Engeström (2001) made a clear distinction between problems and contradictions. Contradictions are deeply rooted within the activity system and "are historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems" (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). As an example, in the

preceding example of healthcare in Helsinki, a number of contradictions arose. Of note, there was a contradiction between how families historically were able to obtain medical care for their children, and the new rules for how families were to obtain this care.

The final principle left open the possibility of expansive transformations. This happens when the object and the motive of the activity system are re-conceptualized in such a way that there is now a wider array of possibilities than in the previous activity system (Engeström, 2001).

There are several ways in which researchers are theorizing and operationalizing this generation of CHAT. There are two of note, both of which have been theorized and researched by Engeström: expansive learning and the change laboratory. Engeström's theory of expansive learning is a process for transforming an activity system (Figure 5). According to Engeström (2001), the expansive learning process is initiated by individuals who are involved in a collective activity and want to take action to transform the activity. The expansive learning cycle is a cyclical construct of learning that always accompanies the contradictions and disturbances present in the activity system.

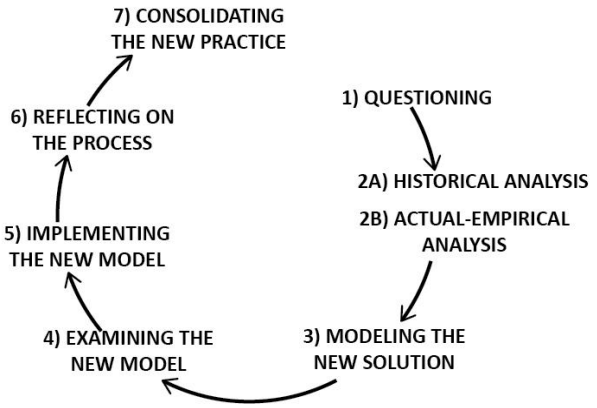

Figure 5. The cycle of expansive learning (Engeström, 2008, p. 132).

The change laboratory method was the direct result of Engeström's work with the expansive cycle. The change laboratory is a very prescribed method "for developing work

practices by the practitioners" (Engeström, et. al., 1996, para. 1). Grounded in Vygotsky's work of double simulation and Engeström's own work with the expansive cycle, the goal of the change laboratory is to help organizations bring about change by bringing together teams and/or collaborators from across the organization to envision and/or develop new work practices. A key aspect of the change laboratory method is that it "brings work redesign closer to the daily shopfloor practice while still keeping it analytical" (Engeström, et. al., 1996, para. 1). This change lab process is the process Engeström and his team employed when working with children's healthcare in Helsinki. Other researchers have used this methodology to bring about change in organic farming (Seppänen, 2004) and to develop teachers' intercultural competence (Teras & Lasonen, 2013).

Given this brief history of CHAT and what each generation affords, the initial question of what CHAT brings to the investigation of change in higher education can be explored, in addition to specifically pinpointing which generation of CHAT is most useful in answering the initial research questions.

CHAT and Change in Higher Education

The early roots of CHAT were grounded in Hegelian and Marxist theory, and so it is natural that the approach continues to have a strong focus on dynamic change as an inherent part of social systems. The CHAT framework is conceptualized in such a way that culture and history are intertwined with the structures, the actors, and the agency as an interacting whole. When one undertakes a CHAT analysis, the assumption can be made that the analysis will look at ideas such as power, identity and relationships. This seems most appropriate when looking at change in higher education.

Take, for example, the aforementioned challenges that online learning poses to the traditional assumptions of how higher education operates: the role and identity of the student, the role and identity of the faculty, the role and identity of the institution, what it means to be educated, and the value of a college degree. We can take any one of these and begin to theorize how the ideas of power, identity, and relationships play into the assumptions they are challenging. The role and identity of the faculty can be used as an example.

In traditional institutions of higher education, a faculty member is known for his or her content expertise. They are the experts in their field. In the eyes of traditional academia, their job is to instill their knowledge and expertise in those who sit in front of them in their courses. One could argue that this notion of a faculty member has been changing, even prior to the proliferation of online learning. And while that may be somewhat true, it could also be argued that the policies and structures of the institution that support faculty have not changed. The titles we have for faculty, the titles given to our classes and the names given to our classrooms can be used as an example. Many faculty are called lecturers, institutions have lab and lecture classes and hold our classes in lecture halls. The institution is holding on to traditions that privilege a specific teaching and learning modality.

Now enter a new modality for teaching and learning: online learning. Online learning requires faculty to break from their traditional roles and to embrace a new way of teaching, a new way being. While faculty may still be seen as the experts, the role of the student changes, thereby changing the role of the faculty member, which ultimately changes the faculty-student relationship. While these changes may be occurring in everyday interactions, change at the level of the whole institution is still slow to happen. Faculty members are still called lecturers, who teach lab or lecture classes. They just do so in an online classroom.

Additionally, change does not happen in a vacuum and typically is influenced at multiple levels and even within multiple institutions with rich histories. Moore and Kearsley's (2012) systems view of online/eLearning highlight the role of history; however, they do not necessarily take into account the history of the institution. According to Moore and Kearsley (2012), any individual charged with making decisions regarding distance education needs to understand the history of the field, as history shows that many challenges facing distance education are not new simply because the technology has evolved. While these are important aspects of history to be cognizant of, this definition of history is incomplete. It does not take into account the cultural history of the institution or the culture of the different campus groups, which is critical to developing a deep understanding of the system as a whole.

If one takes a closer look at the approaches using Saarinen and Ursin's (2012) categorization, the limitations of these theories become a bit more clear. The structural approach, while it aligns with some aspects of the CHAT framework, fails to take into account the variety of other forces and actors within the system. While it acknowledges the importance of the actors within the system, it does not use this lens to try and understand the policy change itself. Additionally, this approach does not take into account history; the history of the actors, or the history of the system itself.

The actor approach, while recognizing the interrelatedness of the actors and the structures, as with the structure view, does not take into account key perspectives, such as the historical view of the actors or the structure or the rules that bound them. And while the agency category is the most holistic, it, like the structural and actor perspectives does not take into account key perspectives, such as the historical view of the actors or the structure or the rules that bound them.

When conceptualizing how to use CHAT as a tool to approach organizational and policy change in a systematic way for online learning, it is important to keep the ideas of culture and history at the forefront. More specifically, there is a need to fully examine the institutional culture, the culture of the different campus groups, faculty, staff, students, and administrators and how they have developed their cultures and identities that surround online learning and faculty professional development over time. For example, faculty who teach in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields might believe that online learning is only for those who teach in the humanities. Or institutions of higher education might simply believe that their student population is not one that embrace online learning and thus create a culture that online learning is inferior to on-campus instruction.

CHAT is a unique approach in that it takes into account the structure, the actor, and the agency as an interacting whole, instead of looking at each entity individually. It is not a hierarchical systems perspective that privileges the system or the institution. It is important to note that while CHAT provides a unique and holistic approach to understanding change, activity systems are inherently bounded and they oftentimes leave out or overlook the contributions of individuals that act within the activity system. When conceptualizing the change online learning can bring to higher education, one would be amiss to not acknowledge the work of individuals, the campus leaders acting within the activity system who help to bring about change. Therefore, in order to understand change from a holistic perspective that also recognizes the contributions of individuals, this study also operationalized the ideas of relational agency.

Relational Agency

Relational agency is a relatively new concept theorized by sociocultural researcher Anne Edwards and is grounded in both sociocultural theory and activity theory. As noted by Edwards

(2010), the focus of CHAT is to understand the system and changes within the system, whereas the focus of relational agency is to understand practice, "how they are navigated and negotiated, questioned and developed; and with the expertise that is evident as people act in practices" (p. 5). Relational agency explores how professionals work together towards a negotiated outcome. It "involves working together purposefully towards goals that reflect the motives that shape the specialist expertise of each participant, and using the resources that each specialism can bring to bear" (Edwards, 2010, p. 61).

Edwards described relational agency as a competence that emerges from a dynamic two-phase process (Figure 6). The first phase emphasizes the building of common knowledge between professionals of the problem or issue and the second phase focuses on each professional's personal alignment and response to the commonly understood problem or issue.

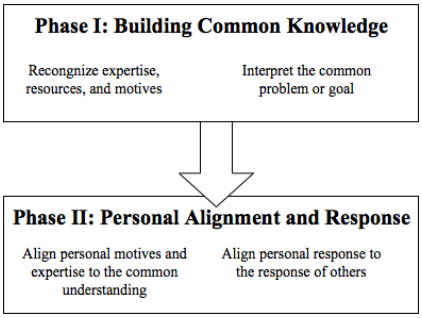

Figure 6. Relational agency, adapted from Edwards (2010).

In the first phase, work is done to build common knowledge between collaborating professionals. Common knowledge is the recognition of the expertise of each collaborating professional, their motives behind being involved in the work and resources that are available to them. Additionally, contributing to common knowledge is the negotiating and interpreting of the problem or common goal and finding a common definition of the problem or goal. Edwards stated that this step is "crucial to ensuring that when relational agency is needed in the heat of

collaborative action, there is no need for translation or transformation of knowledge in order to achieve understandings of purposes and resources" (2010, p. 66).

The second phase of relational agency requires each individual to align their responses to the newly established understanding of the problem or issue with the responses of the other collaborating professionals. No longer are professionals working or acting alone; therefore the actions they take must align with the mutually agreed outcomes. This shared action "can result in quick and purposeful action without lengthy negotiations" (Edwards, 2010, p. 66).

Conceptual Framework for Online Program Development

The question then becomes why should a sociocultural approach, employing both CHAT and relational agency be considered as a viable approach to understanding policy change in online learning in lieu of one of the aforementioned established or emerging theories? The conceptual framework for this study builds upon the framework for understanding institutional change as presented in chapter one (Figure 7). This study's conceptual frame zooms in on the intersection of the spheres of change: the individual, the program or school, and the institution and theorizes how institutional action can lead to change. This conceptual frame, which employs the ideas of both CHAT and relational agency, uses the development of an online program as an instance of action leading to change within the institution.

As previously noted, when operationalizing CHAT, the activity system is the unit of analysis. Therefore, in this conceptual frame, understanding the issue or problem as an activity system is fundamental. However, as previously mentioned, activity systems are bounded and can overlook the contributions of individuals that act within the activity system. Therefore, relational agency can act as a mediating element between the activity system and individual. Relational agency allows for the expertise of those working within the bounded activity system to be

recognized and valued, but also recognizes the expertise of those individuals who might act outside of the bounded activity system. This framework is dynamic in the sense that the activity system can change as relationships between individuals change or the shared object or outcome of the activity system changes. Figure 7 below illustrates this conceptual framework.

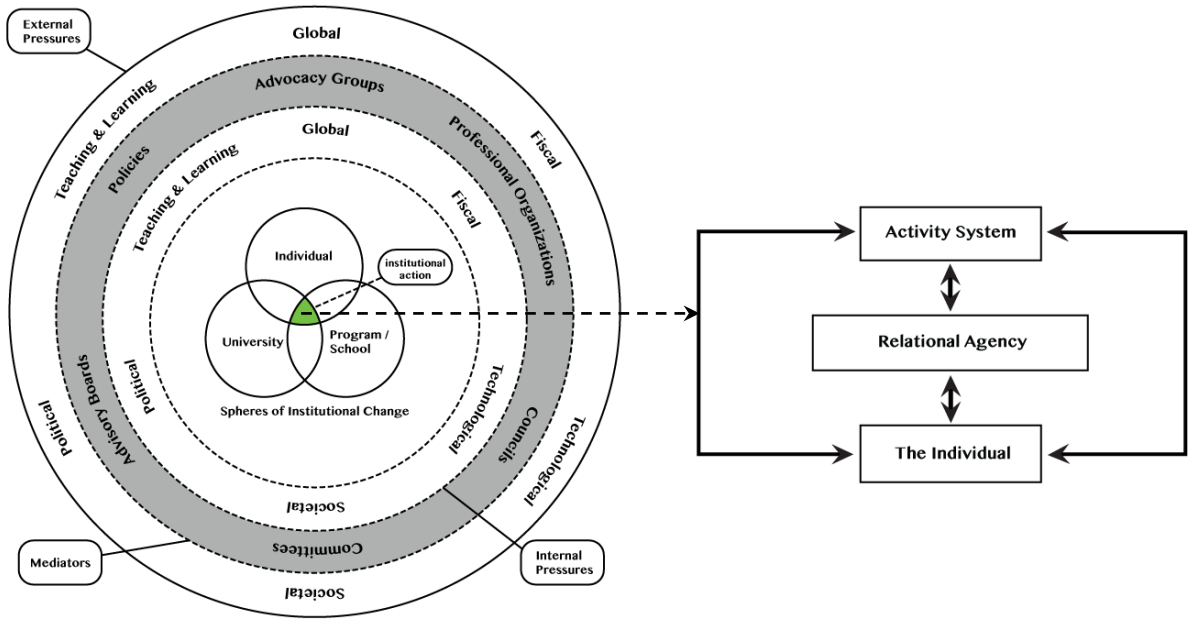

Figure 7. Conceptual framework for online program development.

Finally, it must be noted that while the framework for change includes both internal and external pressures for change that must be mediated, this research is focusing on only two of these mediators, policy and institutional action. The reason for this is twofold. First, although online learning has experienced huge growth over the past ten years, policy relating to online learning is still in its infancy and is still being negotiated (Chaloux, 2013). Secondly, policy is formed on multiple levels, federal, state, institutional, and on down. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the role policy plays as a mediator for change. As Chaloux (2013) noted, "if e-learning is to become truly seated in the mainstream of higher education, policy must be

developed or amended that supports and encourages this development and leadership must emerge to help facilitate these changes" (p. 178).

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce contemporary approaches to policy and practice in higher education and to investigate how these views intersect with online learning in higher education. This chapter concluded with the presentation of a conceptual framework that can be used for the purpose of understanding how the changes online learning can bring to an institutions policies and practices. The next chapter provides a detailed description of the research design and methodology used to explore the research questions.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This single descriptive qualitative case study analyzed a single bounded system (Merriam, 2009), an emergent online program, over a period of approximately 15 months. As noted by Yin (2002), case study methods allow for a researcher to deeply inquire about complex issues and "retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events" (p. 2). Therefore, employing the case study method with this research allowed me to deeply explore how emergent online programs may or may not have converged with existing campus policy and structures and how a multi-campus structure may have affected relationships, structures and policies at both central and branch campus institutions.

In qualitative research, the investigator is the human data collection instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Yamagata-Lynch (2010) wrote, "as the research instrument, investigators systematically address the research question and record information as it is collected in the field" (p. 69). For this study, data were collected using a variety of qualitative data collection techniques including interviews, observation, and document review. These data collection techniques helped to generate rich description of the phenomena and aided in producing knowledge that is concrete and contextual (Merriam, 2009). The following sections in this chapter summarizes the case selection criteria, describes the case context and participants, lays out the methodology for data collection and analysis, and ends with a statement about the researcher's positionality.

Case Selection

As noted by Patton (2002), the power of qualitative research lies in the selection of a case that is information-rich and that one can study in depth. These cases "are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of inquiry, thus the term

purposeful sampling" (Patton, 2002, p. 230). The site selected for this study, State University Branch Campus (SUBC[1]), is a branch campus of a large university in the Pacific Northwest. While the site was one of convenience (an institution that is in the same geographic region in which I live), it also was selected as a "critical case" (Patton, 2002, p. 174) as it afforded the unique opportunity to study an institution that is currently in the process of negotiating and navigating the policies and practices of a brand new online program, a special education (SPED) endorsement for practicing teachers.

In addition to being a branch campus, situating this research at SUBC afforded the distinct opportunity to examine an institution that is not only negotiating local campus policies and practices, but also has a parent institution, with its own policies and practices that must be negotiated. Finally, this site is unique as SUBC contracted out the design of the online courses that make up the SPED endorsement and management of the online endorsement to University Outreach (UO), a self-sustaining arm of the main university campus. This allowed for multiple layers of policy and practice to be investigated.

Setting and Participants

The following section provides a brief context of this study's setting and participants. Chapter 4 provides a more detailed description.

The setting. This research is situated within a large research university system. State University (SU)[2] is a large research university with sixteen individual colleges and schools. SU is primarily a nonresidential campus, with very high research activity, as categorized by The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, n.d.). As a whole, SU has been slow to adopt online learning.

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[2] All university, school district, and participant names are pseudonyms.

As of the 2014-2015 academic year it is unclear how many individual online courses were offered as there was no mechanism to track course modality. However, there were two undergraduate online degrees offered along with 68 graduate degrees and certificates (SU webpage).

Each online degree and certificate offered by SU has been designed and administered by UO (University Outreach), a fee-based, self-sustaining arm of SU. UO offers undergraduate and graduate degrees and certificates in both face-to-face and online modalities. These degrees and certificates are typically held in conjunction with one of SU's academic schools. During the 2014-2015 academic year, UO offered 50 online certificates, 18 master's degrees, and two bachelor's degrees (SU webpage).

The focal point of this research was centered on State University Branch Campus (SUBC). SUBC is one of two branch campuses in the SU system. It is the largest and fastest growing of the two branch campuses. Within SUBC there are five individual schools: Business, Educational Studies, Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences (IAS), Nursing and Health Studies, and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, which combined offer more than 45 undergraduate and graduate degrees (SU webpage). None of these degrees is offered online and only a few of the degrees are offered in a hybrid or blended modality.

This research focused on the development of one specific online program at SUBC, the Special Education (SPED) endorsement. The SPED endorsement is the only online credential at SUBC and was created out of a need from the School of Educational Studies (SES) at SUBC. Before Andrew, the lead SPED faculty member was hired, the SES offered a single 2-credit course in special education. As a new faculty member, Andrew was hired to explore ways in

which to increase the capacity of the SPED curriculum. His exploration eventually led him developing the online SPED endorsement.

Participants. There were two levels of participants in this study: primary and secondary. See Table 1 for an overview of study participants, their roles, and the number of times each was interviewed for this study. Primary participants were those identified as key leaders in the development and implementation of the SPED endorsement. These primary participants were campus leaders who were identified as having the most impact on changes to institutional policy and or practice as a result of the launch of the SPED endorsement. In this study, there were three primary participants: William, the Dean of the School of Educational Studies, Andrew, the lead SPED faculty member who proposed and developed the online endorsement as the primary participants, and Faye, the SUBC eLearning Strategist.

Secondary participants were those who were key in development, implementation, and or support of the SPED endorsement, but were participants who I identified as not having direct impact on changes to institutional policy and or practice as a result of the launch of the SPED endorsement, but who were instrumental in the endorsement's launch. There were five secondary participants including: Silas, the Director of Learning Technologies; Greg, the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer; Laura, the SES program manager; Eileen, the UO assistant director; and Margaret, the Instructional Designer for the SPED endorsement online courses.

Table 1

Overview of Study Participants

Primary Participants			
Participant Name	University Affiliation	Position within the University	No. of Interviews
William	SUBC	Dean, School of Educational Studies	4
Andrew	SUBC	Assistant Professor, School of Educational Studies	5
Faye	SUBC	eLearning Strategist	2
Secondary Participants			
Participant Name	University Affiliation	Position within the University	No. of Interviews
Greg	SUBC	Chief Information Officer	2
Silas	SUBC	Director, Learning Technologies	1
Margaret	UO	Instructional Designer	2
Eileen	UO	Assistant Director, Academic Programs	1
Laura	SUBC	Program Manager	2

Data Sources and Data Collection

This research study employed qualitative research methodologies including semi-structured interviews, observations and document review. See Table 2 for an overview of data collection strategies applied to each major research question.

Interviews. All interviews were semi-structured interviews guided by interview protocols (Appendix A). The semi-structured interview format allowed for the same basic set of interview

questions to asked to each interviewee, while allowing for flexibility while interviewing (Merriam, 2009). Each interview was approximately one hour in length and was audio recorded, with the permission of the interviewee, and then transcribed for analysis. In addition, notes were taken during the interview in order to signal items of importance and to record reactions (Merriam, 2009). Finally, post-interview notes were used to record the researcher's personal reflections from the interview (Merriam, 2009). Table 1 shows each participant and the number of interviews I was able to have with each.

Observation. This study design included five observations, described in more detail below. An observation guide was used to help focus each of the observations (see Appendix B). According to Merriam (2009), observations can be used "in conjunction with interviewing and document analysis to substantiate the findings" (p. 119). Therefore, the purpose of these observations was to help triangulate findings from the interviews that were concurrently being conducted. During each observation, I took highly descriptive notes as outlined in Merriam (2009) that included a description of the room set-up, behaviors of the participants, activities of the meeting etc. Immediately following the observations, I complemented the descriptive notes with reflective field notes. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) also outlined the importance of taking reflective field notes in order to capture my personal commentary, reflections, reactions, feelings, etc.

Observation One. I first observed a SPED advisory committee, held in the spring of 2015. This was a general advisory committee meeting where Andrew updated the committee on the progress of the endorsement, showed some of the promotional materials that were developed, and brainstormed ways in which the committee could help recruit the first cohort of students.

Observation Two. In the summer of 2015, I observed a meeting between Andrew and William and staff from UO. This meeting was observed as it had direct insight as to how School leaders, Andrew and William approached and negotiated policy. It was a meeting that was set up in response to issues that had surfaced in the development of the endorsement. Observing how the program was presented and being talked about by both participants at SUBC and UO was important to this study. This was evidenced by the meeting agenda and through conversations that occurred within the meeting.

Observation Three. I also had the opportunity to observe a daylong SES faculty retreat at the start of the 2015-2016 academic year. As with the previous observation, I paid special attention to if and how leaders within the school talked about the endorsement, how Andrew talked about the endorsement with his colleagues, and any reaction to the endorsement from SES faculty.

Observation Four. In the fall of 2016, I was fortunate to be asked to sit in on a SPED endorsement work session. Faye, the SUBC eLearning Strategist, led this work session and was attended by Andrew and Silas. I was not able to personally attend this work session, but was able to call in and observed via the telephone. The focus of this meeting was for Andrew to give a status report on the SPED endorsement, it allowed Faye to share with Andrew some research she had done on the endorsement, and for the three attendees to develop strategies for collaborating on ways to improve the endorsement.

Observation Five. Finally, I was able to attend two General Faculty Organization (GFO) meetings. The SUBC GFO is a faculty deliberation and decision-making body that provide guidance to SUBC's administration. In each of these GFO meetings the general topic of expanding online learning at the institution was an agenda item and I attended these meetings to

get a sense of how the faculty, in general, talked about online learning and what questions or beliefs they may or may not have had.

Document review. Document review helps a researcher gain insight into "things that cannot be observed, things that have taken place before the evaluation began" (Merriam, 2009, p. 141). In order to determine how SU, SUBC, and UO were structured in order to support online teaching and learning, I analyzed online documents such as the websites of SU, SUBC, and UO. I also analyzed physical documents, such as faculty handbooks for both SU and SUBC and the SPED program memorandum of agreement (MOA). Merriam (2009) recommended keeping a journal while conducting document analysis. Therefore, a detailed journal was kept, which recorded the documents analyzed, where and in what form they exist, how they were obtained, and findings from each document. All documents that were examined fall under the category of public records (Merriam, 2009).

Table 2

Overview of Data Collection Strategies

Research Question	Interview	Observation	Document Review
What, if any, local and main campus policies do program leaders negotiate when developing a new online program?	X	X	X
How do emergent online programs converge or not converge with existing campus policy and administrative structures?	X	X	X
How does the multi-campus structure affect those relationships and structures?	X	X	X
How do new working arrangements and educational practices affect existing academic policies at both branch and central campus levels?	X		X

Data Analysis

Using activity systems as an analytical tool can help to provide a descriptive analysis of a study's data (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). However, approaching and achieving this analysis can be complex. As Yamagata-Lynch noted, "there is not a consistent method for engaging in activity systems analysis; however researchers and practitioners can take a systematic approach for engaging in activity systems analysis" (2010, p. 62). Given this, data analysis for this study was informed by the work of Yamagata-Lynch (2010) and took place in three stages with each stage having multiple, well defined steps (Figure 8). The following sections will outline the stages of data analysis followed in this study.

At this point, it would be remiss not to acknowledge my position, the position of the researcher. As in all qualitative research, my position, the position of the researcher influenced how I analyzed the data and the initial findings of the study. I have worked as an administrator of online programs in higher education and I have aided faculty in the development of online courses. These experiences have naturally shaped my interactions with participants and how I interpreted the data. As evidenced below, I designed this study to triangulate the data by using multiple data gathering points such as interviews, observations, and document reviews in order to help mitigate any personal influences on the data. A full statement of my positionality as a researcher can be found below.

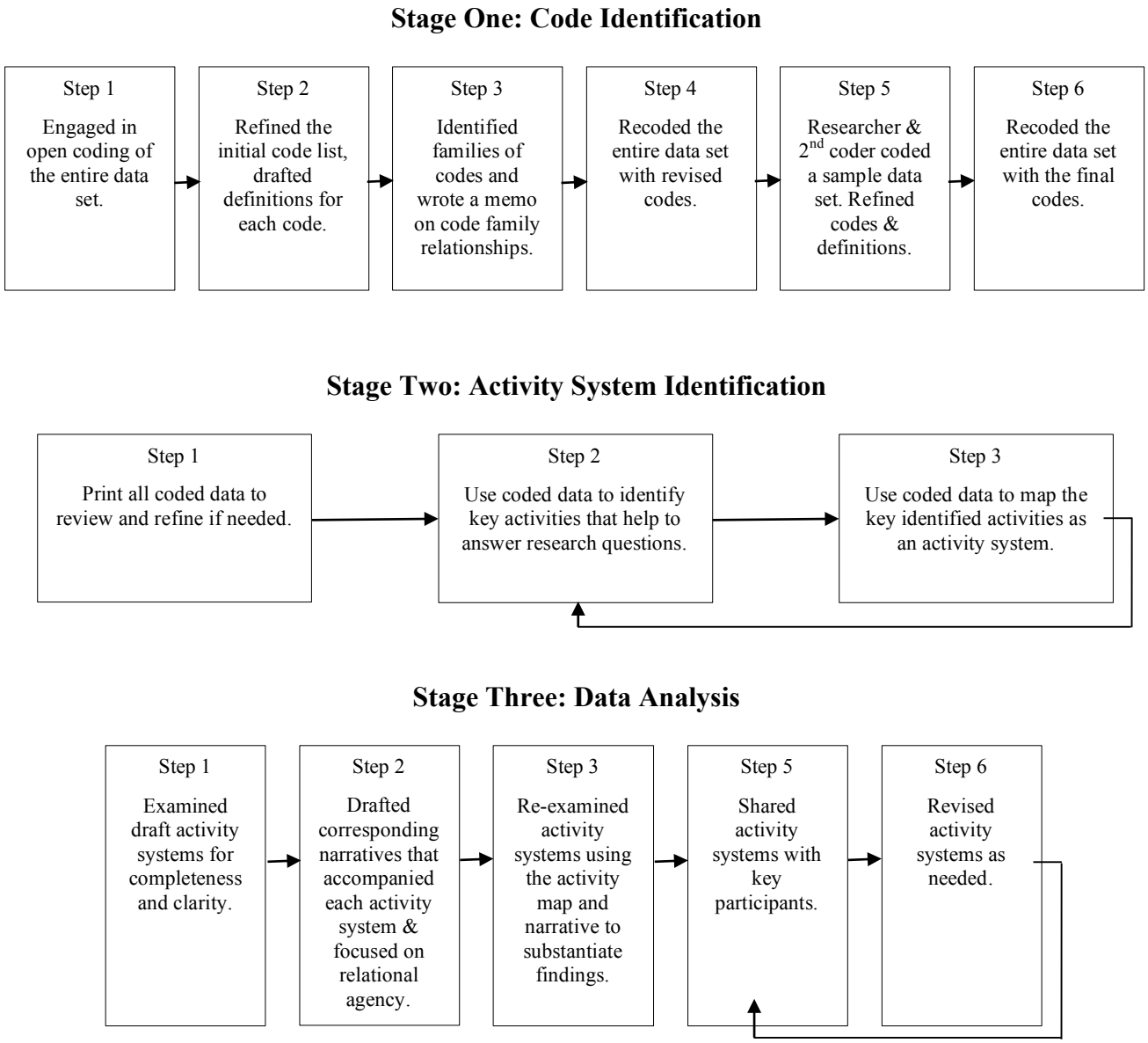

Figure 8. Steps to identify and analyze activity systems (adapted from Yamagata-Lynch, 2010)

Stage One: Code Identification

Coding is the important first step in the data analysis process. Codes are the concepts or ideas that link all of your data sources together for the purpose of making sense of your data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Coffey and Atkinson (1996) pointed out that "although coding may be part of the process of analysis it should not be thought of as the analysis itself" (p. 26).

Therefore, in this study, it is important to point out that coding is an iterative process. It occurred throughout the data analysis process. In this work, I did not rely on Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software. I personally coded all the data from this study.

In the first step of the code identification stage I engaged in open coding. After printing and reading through the transcribed interviews, documents, and reflective journals several times, a selection of interview transcripts were read and coded "line-by-line to identify and formulate any and all ideas, themes, or issues" (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 143). From there, I engaged in focused coding where I selected a random section of transcribed interviews and engaged in coding these selections based on the topics and themes identified in open coding (Emerson et al., 1995). I examined and refined the initial code list by combining similar codes and then drafted definitions of each remaining code. This was an iterative process. As I began defining each code, I was able to further refine the code list. Examples of the codes generated in this step include budget, program quality, SUBC existing policy, school district partnerships, and UO partnership.

During the third step in identifying codes I closely examined the defined codes and looked for relationships between them and began to develop families of related codes. Examples of these drafted code families include partnerships and internal support. Following the work of Yamagata-Lynch (2010), I looked not only at how the codes were similar, but also how they might be different from one another. If the codes were not explicitly different from one another the code definition was either modified, combined with another code, or eliminated. From here, I wrote an analytic memo where I explored the general themes and patterns that seemed to emerge from this coding process (Emerson et al., 1995; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). In addition, I began to raise questions, make claims and find evidence to support these claims (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Miles et al., 2014).

During the fourth step I was engaged in recoding the entire dataset with the revised codes and definitions. This allowed for me to more easily identify linkages or relationships between and among the codes. In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the codes that I developed and defined, I employed the help of a trusted colleague, who was not a study participant, but who had experience with coding qualitative data. I selected random sections of interviews from the three key participants and the second coder transcribed the interview selections using the same codebook I used to transcribe the data in Step 4. We then compared our coded data and further refined the codes and definitions to make them more clear and concise. After we finalized and agreed upon the codes and definitions, I again recoded the entire data with the final set of codes and definitions.

Stage Two: Activity System Identification

After I was confident of the trustworthiness of the codes and definitions, I then began to identify the key activity systems that would help to answer the initial research questions. It was my belief that before I would be able to understand more complex, multi-institutional activity systems, I needed to be able understand and analyze a single activity system. Therefore, I began by creating simple activity maps for each institution (SU, SUBC, and UO), focusing on the launching of an online program. From this understanding, I was then able to identify different key activities for further analysis.

The second stage in identifying activity systems occurred in three defined steps; reviewing the codes and definitions, identifying key activities, and finally mapping the activities to the activity systems maps. The first step in helping me to identify the key activity systems had me once again reading through the coded data set. I printed the entire data set and read it through

to ensure I had an understanding of the data. I made small coding adjustments in this step, but found the coding to be accurate after having completed a rigorous code identification process.

By revisiting the coded data, I was able to identify key activities that helped to answer the research questions. This was an iterative process with the activity mapping. I started by identifying possible activities that might relate to the research questions. I tried to investigate these activities, as they happened chronologically to begin to substantiate a narrative for examining the research questions. As I examined each activity, I used the coded data to begin mapping the different activities as an activity system. I found myself revisiting the coded data and the activity maps, ensuring that the activity systems I had identified were accurate. I also found I needed to confirm that the activities that I had selected as key activities were not a subset of a larger, more important activity or vice versa to ensure the activity was not one that should be broken down into smaller activities.

Stage Three: Data Analysis

As noted by Yamagata-Lynch (2010), activity systems analysis provides a systematic approach to understanding human activity systems and their interactions. She went on to explain that using activity systems analysis "can help researchers and practitioners understand individual activity in relation to its context and how the individual, his/her activities, and the context affect one another" (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p. 1).

In order to understand the phenomenon occurring in this case, there were multiple activity systems occurring at different institutions that needed to be analyzed. In order to be able to capture the complex nature of this case, I employed a third generation CHAT analysis. Before beginning analysis, I first reviewed all of the activity systems that were drafted in stage two using the coded data to double-check them for completeness and clarity.

After re-examining each activity system, I then began to draft the narratives that accompanied each system. In this narrative, I paid particular attention to the ideas of relational agency: building common knowledge, personal alignment to the object of the activity, and possible responses to changes within the activity system. Using this lens allowed me to more closely examine the motives of the actors in the activity systems and how they each contributed to and collaborated on the development of the online SPED endorsement.

After these narratives were constructed, I re-examined each activity system using both the activity map and narrative. As the activity systems became more refined, I found it useful in this step to begin to analyze the activity systems from multiple perspectives. In order to systematically do this, I used the work of Lewis (2000). Lewis (2000) noted that in addition to the ability to view activity as an integrated system, another powerful idea behind the CHAT framework is also the ability to look at the system from a variety of perspectives from within the framework. He wrote, "attempts to consider all the relationships influencing human learning activities are likely to fail due to the multitude of interdependent parameters, but it may be that the complexity can be constrained if various nodes are examined at one time" (Lewis, 2000, p. 5).

Therefore, for each activity system, I analyzed each system looking at the eight different triads found within an activity system. Examples of these triads include subject, community, division of labor and subject, rules, object. Examining these triads for each activity system helped to identify the tensions found within each system.

After completing these first three steps, I then met with each primary participant and two of the secondary participants Eileen and Margaret. In these meetings I shared with them the activity maps in which they were represented and provided them with the narrative that

accompanied each activity. I allowed them time to review each activity map and encouraged them to provide me with feedback and to offer corrections. After each of these meetings, I then revised each activity map and narrative as needed.

Data Quality and Limitations

This research took place over a period of approximately 15 months. One limitation of this study was the time frame. This setting provided me with the unique opportunity to study the first fully online degree program offered by this institution; however, as with any new program, the policies and practices were evolving and this time frame captures only a very small part of that evolution. Ideally, this study would follow the program through at least its first two years in order to study the change that might occur from year one to year two.

Additionally, this study proved to be more political than I had anticipated. Both SUBC and UO were invested in the SPED endorsement. The relationship between the two institutions was still developing, and there was some reluctance on the part of some of the participants to be interviewed. In one instance, one of the participants—who I had hoped to interview quarterly—only agreed to be interviewed twice and did not want to be recorded. This participant also did not respond to follow-up emails from me in which I asked for additional information. While I feel the data I have from this participant is accurate, I feel his/her story is not as represented as it could be, given the reluctance in participation.

Researcher's Po**sitionality**

Qualitative research "focuses on meaning in context, requires a data collection instrument that is sensitive to underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data" (Merriam, 2009, p. 2). When undergoing qualitative research, there is a series of assumptions that one makes: that the focus of the research is on understanding meaning, that the researcher is the primary

instrument, the research process is inductive, the design is "emergent and flexible" (Merriam, 2009, p. 16), and that the final product of the research is characterized by rich description (Merriam, 2009). These assumptions and the way a researcher approaches their research is influenced by the "culture, context, and the positionality of the researcher" (Banks, 2006, p. 780).

The positionality of the qualitative researcher has long been debated; as have the merits of the researcher taking an insider or an outsider position (Chavez, 2008). The purpose of this section is not to engage in the insider/outsider debate. Rather, it is to identify my position as the researcher. In a 2009 article, Dwyer and Buckle explored the ideas behind being a researcher from both an insider and outsider perspective, what they call the space between. They argued that we, as researchers, may only occupy this space; that we may find that we align ourselves closer to one position or the other. However, "we cannot fully occupy one or the other of those positions" (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009, p. 61). I find this resonating with this research and my position within this research.

I am employed by the branch campus that I am studying. I work closely with many of those that were interviewed. I have inside knowledge of how online learning has been conceptualized and operationalized at the institution. I have worked with campus leaders on developing this vision. Therefore, I am an insider. However, I do not have insider knowledge of the conceptualization of the online Special Education endorsement. I have not worked specifically with this program, the faculty or others involved in its launch. Therefore, I am an outsider. Additionally, while I have some knowledge of online learning at the main campus and in the course of my employment have done some research into the structure and offerings of UO, I have not had any direct working relationships with this organization. Therefore, I would

consider myself an outsider. Given this research and my background, I would position myself in "the space between" (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009), not identifying myself as either an insider or an outsider. So the question becomes what did this positionality afford? What did it constrain? And how have I acknowledged these affordances and constraints in my research?

This position afforded me the ability to easily access participants and attend meetings and conversations that I may otherwise not have had access. In addition, the time I may have needed to take for building rapport and gaining trust of participants may have been shortened. Finally—and possibly the most critical affordance—was how my insider perspective allowed for knowledge of the cultural, historical, and practical happenings within and among the institutions. However, with these affordances came constraints.

While I may or may not have direct experience working with a participant, my interactions may have been influenced by secondary information, things I may have heard or read or been told. Additionally, my lens for looking at the research may have been clouded by the insider knowledge I may have had about the cultural, historical, and practical happenings within and among the institutions. Finally, participants, knowing my functional position in the organization and background, may not have been as forthcoming with what they shared. They may not have felt free to or comfortable sharing things that could have been vital to the study.

In an attempt to mitigate these concerns, I designed this study to triangulate the data by using multiple data gathering points such as interviews, observations, and document reviews (Miles et al., 2014). Additionally, in each follow-up interview, I built in space for member checking, allowing the interviewee to gain an insight into my findings and respond to those insights (Miles et al., 2014). Finally, I kept a reflective journal in which I engaged in critical self-

reflection on my biases, assumptions, and my relationships to those involved in the study (Merriam, 2009).

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a detailed description of the research design and methodology for this qualitative case study. The next chapter provides an introduction to the case, including an introduction to the context and the participants.

CHAPTER 4: INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE

Case study research is important when one wants to study in-depth a phenomenon occurring in a small setting or small number of settings that are located in a real world context (Yin, 2002). Therefore, providing the reader a complete description of the case, including the participants, the setting(s), the context, and all the "complex conditions related to the case(s) being studied are integral to understanding the case(s)" (Yin, 2003, p. 4).

In studies that employ CHAT, there are two types of settings that need to be acknowledged: the overall setting and the activity setting (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). As Yamagata-Lynch (2010) explained, the overall setting is typically the physical location where the study occurs while activity setting is the location where the participants' activities transpire. She went on to note that the "activity settings can cut across multiple organizational boundaries that encapsulate … activities under investigation" (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, p. 69). In this study, the overall setting was State University, specifically, the SU main campus, State University Branch Campus, and University Outreach. The activity settings occurred primarily at SUBC and UO. The following chapter provides the context for this case, including a detailed description of the overall setting, which will also provide context for the activity settings.

This chapter was written with information gathered via a review of SU and SUBC's websites in addition to UO's website. Information was also collected via an observation of a meeting where the SPED endorsement was the focus of conversation. Finally, this chapter was also informed by several of the interviews conducted throughout this study. The following sections will first lay out the relationship between SU, SUBC, and UO, and will give a brief description of each institution. I will then provide descriptions of the primary participants and

brief descriptions of the secondary participants and will end with the context from which the SPED endorsement was designed and developed.

State University, State University Branch Campus, and University Outreach

As noted in Chapter 3, SU is a large four-year research university with two branch campuses. A Board of Regents, made up of 10 governor appointed members (one is a current student), governs all three of SU's campuses. Reporting to the Board of Regents is the university president. Each branch campus is governed by a chancellor, who has a shared reporting status to both the university president and the university provost via the Board for Deans and Chancellors (see Figure 9). The board is responsible for policy matters relating to education and administration. It also considers governance matters, including faculty code and conduct, and student governance. Additionally, the university also governs a self-sustaining arm called University Outreach. University Outreach is led by a vice provost and reports to the university provost.

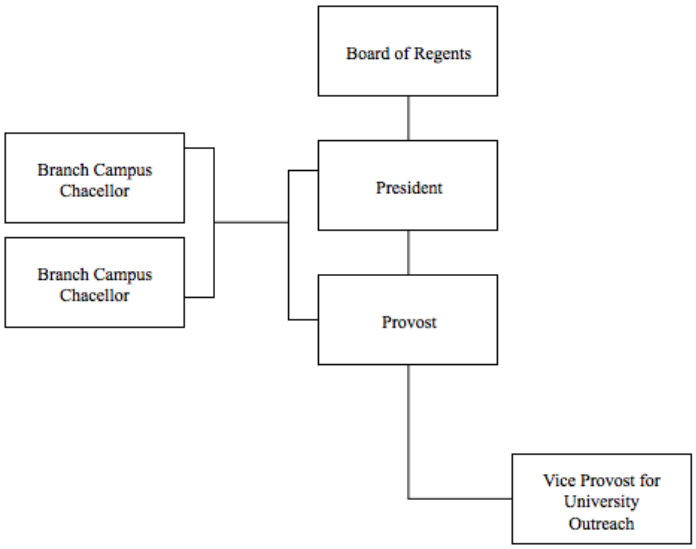

Figure 9. Simplified leadership organizational chart for SU.

State University

State University is a public four-year institution that was founded in the late 1800s. It is situated within a fast growing metropolitan area and prides itself on being a high achieving research university that attracts high caliber students, including Fulbright and Rhodes Scholars. The SU campus is home to over 45,000 undergraduate and graduate students and has repeatedly received honors for being a top ranked university by both national and international publications (State University Office of Planning and Budgeting, 2015). Due to this notoriety, undergraduate admission to SU has become more competitive than in past years, with only 55% of its applicants being admitted (State University Office of Planning and Budgeting, 2015).

Over the past 10 years, as the region has become more diverse, so has the campus. According to a 2015 diversity report, the number of underrepresented students enrolled at SU has steadily increased. As of 2015, 40% of its undergraduate students identify as Asian or as an underrepresented minority (State University Office of Diversity, 2015). Even with over 45,000 students, SU is still considered a primarily nonresidential campus. Just over 80% of SU undergraduates are state residents (State University Office of Planning and Budgeting, 2015).

State University Branch Campus

SUBC was founded in 1990 with the purpose of providing access to higher education to those in more remote parts of the county where SU is located and those in other surrounding counties. The campus has more than exceeded this expectation, as it is currently the fastest-growing four-year public university in the state with more than 5,000 undergraduate and graduate students (SU webpage). For the past two years SUBC has received accolades from nationally published magazines for being a top ranked college (SU webpage). SUBC considers itself a commuter campus, with 90% of its student population coming from within the

geographic region. However, it is important to note that half of SUBC's first time college students are first generation college students. In addition, just over 50% of SUBC students identified as being racially or ethnically diverse.

With this growing student population, SUBC has experienced unprecedented growth on campus. Within the past three years SUBC has added one new academic building and a student funded recreation center. In order to build additional classroom space, the central administrative units have been moved off campus to a nearby leased office building and the former office space was converted to classrooms. Additionally, in order to serve more students, SUBC purchased an apartment complex near the campus in order to provide on campus housing options for students. SUBC is near capacity with its classroom space. On campus programs have begun to look at online and hybrid course options in order to meet this growing demand.

University Outreach

UO services over 49,000 students annually. These students range from high school students, to university students, to professionals, to retirees. UO offers a range of courses and programs including credit and noncredit courses, summer, evening, and weekend programs in addition to online degrees and certificates (SU webpage). Since 2013 SU has created two online bachelor degree completion programs and has seen a significant increase in the number of graduate level degrees and certificates.

UO, as an organization, is self-sustaining. Therefore, all courses, degrees, and certificates are fee-based. At SU, fee-based or self-sustaining programs are those that are funded entirely from the fees paid by students. Fee-based programs do not receive funding from state dollars (State University Graduate School, 2014). As a result, these "fee-based programs generally cost more, and state financial aid and state tuition exemption are generally not available to students"

(State University Graduate School, 2014). The fees for UO's programs vary depending on a number of factors including estimated expenses for program development, tuition rates at peer institutions, and the market demand for the program (State University Graduate School, 2014). In 2014, UO's program costs ranged from $335 to $925 per credit (State University Graduate School, 2014).

All fee-based programs are charged an overhead fee and programs that are fully administered by UO also pay a program and infrastructure fee. In addition to the fees programs are charged, students are charged a registration fee and technology fee. All program fees are increased over time to support rises in instructional and administrative costs. However, it is important to note that while UO is self-sustaining and run as a for-profit entity, it does try to divert as much money as possible to its different programs. As part of its financial model, as a program is able to pay for its expenses and sees a net revenue, this revenue is returned to the program on a yearly basis.

The self-sustaining fee-based structure allows academic units with the University the means to offer to programs that would not be able to be developed via state funds, thus permitting the programs to be responsive to the changing demands of markets and communities they serve. However, there are also challenges in developing and offering fee-based programs. As noted by UO in a recent report on fee-based graduate program (State University Graduate School, 2014), there are concerns from all three campuses surrounding the differences of fee-based versus tuition-based students when it comes to the systems and processes for things such as registration, tuition payment, library services, and student support services. Even while these challenges exist, new fee-based programs, certificates, and endorsements are being created and offered via UO.

Participants

As laid out in Chapter 3, two levels of participants emerged in this study: primary and secondary (see Table 1). This section provides descriptions of the primary participants and brief descriptions of the secondary participants.

Primary Participants

For this study, the primary participants are those that I identified as key leaders in the development and implementation of the SPED endorsement, those that were in positions to make programmatic decisions and changes. Therefore, there were three primary participants, Andrew, William, and Faye.

Andrew. Andrew has been a full time tenure track faculty member in the School of Educational Studies since 2012. He is the school's only special education faculty member and he also directs the online special education endorsement. Andrew is a former secondary public school teacher, teaching in both general and special education classrooms. It was while he was teaching in the public schools that his passion for special education really took off.

Andrew is passionate about special education, especially inclusion, educating special education students in general education classrooms. As Andrew explained, general education teachers are being asked to provide special education accommodations and services in their classrooms, however very few teachers have any training in special education. Because general education teachers lack formal training in providing accommodations for students with disabilities, they are not able to fully maximize the learning opportunities for these students (interview, October 20, 2015). Preparing teachers to better meet the academic and social-emotional learning needs of all students in inclusive classrooms served as one of key motivators for this project. The SPED endorsement is a direct result of Andrew's dedication and passion.

William. William, Dean of the School of Educational Studies at SUBC, was instrumental in helping move the SPED endorsement from idea to reality. As a former program director at the university level, William was familiar with the scope and sequence of program development. He helped Andrew make critical connections on the SUBC campus, and made resources available to support Andrew in his work. Additionally, William played a key role in developing community partnerships for the endorsement. He met with leaders at local school districts to gain district support for the endorsement, and met with officials at the State Office for Public Instruction (SOPI) in order to gain state approval for the endorsement. William also helped to develop and maintain internal relationships with the SUBC administration and with UO.

Before becoming Dean of the School of Educational Studies at SUBC in 2009, William was a tenured faculty member in the College of Education at SU. As a former public school principal, William has maintained his passion for supporting public K-12 education, public school teachers and principals. He keeps in close contact with former colleagues and students who are in K-12 leadership positions and he has used these connections to create partnerships between the K-12 schools and SUBC's School of Educational studies. The SPED endorsement is one such partnership.

Faye. As the new eLearning Strategist, Faye is in a strategic leadership position at SUBC. The eLearning Strategist position is situated within the IT unit at SUBC. As more programs at SUBC began exploring the possibility of expanding their online course and program presence, it became clear to the SUBC IT team that SUBC did not have the internal capacity to support new programs moving online. Therefore, with a recently vacated position that had not been filled, the new eLearning Strategist position was created. The position was filled in July of

2015, after the start of this study and after the MoA for the online SPED endorsement was signed.

As a former tenured faculty member and College of Education dean, Faye comes to SUBC with a deep knowledge of and experience in online learning. She has launched fully online graduate degrees, as well as online professional development for faculty. Faye has experience working with regional and national accreditation bodies and has served as a Quality Matters online course master reviewer, a certification that allowed her to coach colleagues and lead national teams in a structured review process for online course improvement. In addition, Faye is widely published in national and international journals in the areas of family studies, learning technologies, and online learning.

Secondary Participants

In addition to the three primary participants, this study was also informed by five secondary participants. As previously noted, secondary participants were those who were key in development, implementation, and or support of the SPED endorsement, but were not leaders who I identified as having direct impact on changes to institutional policy and or practice as a result of the launch of the SPED endorsement. This section provides a brief description of each of the secondary participants.

Greg. Greg, the CIO of Information Technologies at SUBC, has only been in his position for two years. However, he has been at the University for more than 11 years. Greg is a SUBC alum and prior to becoming CIO, he held several different positions within SUBC IT. Under Greg's leadership, one of the central goals for IT was to be able to support the growth of online and hybrid courses. He dedicated funds to the learning technologies team to run online and

hybrid course development institutes for faculty, and created the new eLearning strategist position from a vacant position.

Silas. Silas has been the Director for Learning Technologies at SUBC for 15 years. The learning technologies (LT) team at SUBC "provides support for the integration of technology in teaching and learning for faculty and staff" (SUBC webpage). The LT team developed and led the online and hybrid course development institutes for faculty. Silas was involved in the initial conversations with Andrew about developing the SPED endorsement as an online credential and he sits on the SPED endorsement advisory committee.

Margaret. Margaret is the lead instructional designer for the online SPED endorsement. She has been with UO for 20 years and is considered a senior instructional designer. In addition to creating courses for the online SPED endorsement, Margaret is the designer for seven UO sponsored certificates and degrees, and at times she is building up to 10 courses concurrently from different programs. Margaret earned her doctorate in sociology and is currently working on a Masters in Divinity from a local private university.

Eileen. As an assistant director at UO, Eileen was assigned to manage the online SPED endorsement. Her position is the bridge that connects UO to SUBC. Eileen is responsible for getting the programs set-up and off the ground. She oversees the budgets for the SPED endorsement, registration, ensuring courses are created and finished by program launch, and also sits on the SPED advisory committee. In addition to the online SPED endorsement, Eileen manages six education related endorsements and certificates that are offered by UO.

Laura. Laura serves as the School of Educational Studies (SES) program manager. She has been in the position for two years and supports the school in a multitude of areas including human resources and budget management. Laura works closely with Eileen in managing the

SPED endorsement. She also serves as a liaison to the SES programs advisory boards, including the SPED advisory board.

The SPED Endorsement

The SPED endorsement at BCSU was developed as a response to an identified need—a national and regional need to prepare general classroom teachers to better meet the academic and social-emotional learning needs of all students in inclusive K-12 classrooms. In the state where this research was conducted, the U.S. Department of Education cited that nearly every school district has demonstrated a need for special education teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Given this, K-12 school districts within the state "are seeking to hire, retain, and promote teachers who are certified in both general and special education due to their ability to create inclusive classrooms and schools" (Naranjo, Duesbery, Frizelle, Early, & Fraczek, 2016).

The School of Educational Studies (SES) at SUBC was aware of this growing need within their region and state, but lacked the capacity to address the need. Therefore, in 2012, Andrew was hired as the school's first—and only—full time tenure track faculty in special education. Before Andrew was hired, the SES offered a single two-credit course in special education. As Andrew explained, "from the beginning I was charged with conceptualizing what our curriculum would look like and how we would approach the work…we wanted to think about the work in terms of multiple pathways" (interview, January 28, 2015). The single two-credit course was expanded into a five-credit course and from there a 26-credit online endorsement was built, creating "a pathway for people towards endorsement, state endorsement in the area" of special education (interview, January 28, 2015).

Andrew's work was driven by issues of access, access to high quality higher education that would fit within the hectic lives of the endorsement's target audience of practicing K-12

teachers. From past experience, Andrew noted that he understood that practicing teachers have "significant barriers to their education" (interview, January 28, 2015). Therefore, he started to question how best to serve these teachers and how to meet their needs. Initially Andrew's vision did not include offering the endorsement online. However, after many conversations with his department, and William, the School dean, it was William who finally asked Andrew about putting the endorsement online. Having no prior online teaching or learning experience, Andrew was hesitant, but agreed it was the best way to serve the targeted student population.

From there both Andrew and William began to conceptualize what this endorsement would look like for the K-12 classroom teachers who would enroll in the program. Andrew began diving into the online learning literature, looking for models and learning all he could about building online programs. He also spent a significant amount of time reading the literature on creating quality online programs for working professionals who have bachelors or even a master's degree. William began approaching local school districts seeking out partners for the endorsement. He realized that in order for the endorsement to be successful, many of the teachers would need financial support from their districts. Additionally, the school districts would be needed to market the endorsement to district teachers. William also began making connections at the state level, as the endorsement needed state approval before it could be offered as a state endorsement.

Andrew and William quickly realized that while they had a strong footing on the SPED content and curriculum knowledge, they were going to need much more support. In order to build a quality online endorsement, they would need a significant amount of financial support, technology support, administrative support, and marketing support. Therefore, Andrew and William, with support from a research center affiliated with the SES at SUBC, began running

financial models for what it might cost to build out the online endorsement. With these financial models in hand, they began seeking out support options from within the SUBC community.

They found that for the most part, SUBC was highly supportive of this effort. They had the support of SUBC's chief academic officer, other SES faculty, and various teaching and learning support teams on campus. However, the one barrier they kept bumping into was resources. As Andrew noted:

> It became fairly clear that we needed resources that were going to be beyond what the institution had available and not just the capital, the financial capital, but the human capital to move it forward. And so the decision was made to start exploring a relationship with UO. (interview, January 28, 2015)

In late January to early February of 2014, William and Andrew proposed the SPED endorsement to UO. UO agreed to undertake project and dedicate financial resources, staffing, marketing, and administrative support to the development of the endorsement. As Andrew explained, "UO makes the initial investment in faculty and program lift financially and with human capital—the human resources they throw at it. So, the program has to pay for itself" (interview, January 28, 2015). Therefore, before a MoA could be signed, there was much negotiation between the SES and UO to determine program size, faculty compensation for both course content development and teaching the courses, library resources, and total program cost to the student. Additionally, both Andrew and William wanted to ensure that they maintained shared control of the program, including curriculum development, course structure, and student academic support and advising. Finally, Andrew and William wanted to ensure that at the end of their contract, they would have the option of retaining all of their courses and content for the

purpose of offering the endorsement solely from SUBC. On July 1, 2014, a MoA was signed between SUBC and OU for a 26-credit endorsement program in special education.

Even while the MoA was being negotiated, Andrew was developing the course sequence and curriculum. Each course that is taught at SUBC must be approved, and achieving this approval is a multistep process that requires three separate curriculum reviews. At SUBC, a school specific curriculum committee must first approve all new courses. Once approved by the school, courses are then submitted to the SUBC campus wide curriculum committee. After gaining approval from the SUBC curriculum committee, the courses are finally submitted to the SU tri-campus curriculum committee for final approval. Once gaining this approval, the courses are listed as official and approved SU courses. Because the endorsement was not a degree program, the courses had to be approved as a course bundle, meaning the curriculum for each course needed to be developed before being reviewed by the curriculum committees.

The entire SPED endorsement is 26 graduate credits, and is a fee-based program. The endorsement runs as a one-year cohort, which follows the university's academic quarter system. Students who complete the entire endorsement will hold a K-12 state endorsement in special education. For the first cohort, the total cost of the endorsement, including the application and registration fees is $10,400. Students pay on a course-by-course basis, and therefore the costs are spread out over the entire year. This cost could increase, depending upon enrollment numbers and ongoing program development costs.

All courses are taught by either Andrew or Dylan, one of Andrew's close colleagues who was hired by the SES to help teach in the endorsement program. Coursework is completed primarily online, with a face-to-face summer institute kicking off and ending the endorsement. The curriculum for the endorsement aligns with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

Initial Level Special Educator Preparation in addition to the State Special Education Core Competencies for special education teachers. Students experience a mix of theory and practice, with a focus on the foundations and history of special education in the United States, the design and implementation of assessment practices in the classroom, and instructional practices for helping special education students in a general classroom setting (see Table 3 for the course sequence). The last two courses in the endorsement are paired with a practicum, which the students are able to complete in their own general education classrooms and are mentored by a special education teacher professional within their own district.

Table 3

Scope and Sequence of the SPED Endorsement

Course	Quarter
Special Education Orientation Institute	Summer Quarter I
Foundations of Exceptionality & Special Education	Summer Quarter
Assessment in Special & Inclusive Education	Fall Quarter
Planning for Student Success in Inclusive Settings	Winter Quarter
Secondary Special Education & Transition	Winter Quarter
Instruction in Inclusive Settings	Spring Quarter
Summer Institute II	Summer Quarter II

The Special Education for General Educators endorsement was launched in June of 2015 with 10 students. The students in this inaugural cohort were from four different local public school districts and one private elementary school. The teachers had taught at a variety of K-12 grade levels and content areas, and interestingly, some students were full time teachers within their district, others were long-term substitute teachers, while one student was working as an on-call substitute teacher.

The purpose of this chapter was to an introduction to the case, including the overall setting, the activity setting, the participants and an introduction to the SPED endorsement. The next chapter presents the data and findings of this case study using the CHAT framework.

CHAPTER 5: CASE FINDINGS

In many ways the online special education endorsement at SUBC was able to launch due to the work of individuals, as well as a strong outside community that supported the work. As laid out in Chapter 2, the conceptual frame for this study (Figure 7) paid particular attention to the changes online learning brought to the institution by examining the broader system and its policies and practices in addition to the work of individuals. This was done in order to gain a more comprehensive and holistic view of these institutional changes, and not to privilege the system over the individual. The ideas of both CHAT and relational agency were instrumental in understanding this case.

This chapter explores what happened when SUBC developed and launched an online special education endorsement; what changes to policies, practices, and structures occurred; and what effect the newly established policies, practices, and structures had on the institution. It considers the following research questions:

1. How do emergent online programs align or not align with existing campus policy and administrative structures?
2. How does the multi-campus structure affect existing policies and structures?
3. How do new working arrangements and educational practices affect existing academic policies at both branch and central campus levels?

This chapter begins with an examination of the roles and responsibilities each primary participant had in the development of the online SPED endorsement. From there, I will present activity systems that showcase the relevant activities to the development and ongoing support of the online SPED endorsement. I will conclude with a presentation of the overall assertions that

aid in understanding the primary research questions concerning the development of a new online program at a branch campus of a large research university.

Primary Participant Roles in the Development of the Online SPED Endorsement

As previously noted, an "activity system contains and generates a variety of different viewpoints or 'voices', as well as layers of historically accumulated artifacts, rules, and patterns of division of labor" (Engeström, 2008, p. 27). Kinti and Hayward (2013) added that at the beginning of a project, actors come together from their different "parent activity systems" (p. 186) to engage in collaboration. Therefore, in order to fully understand the changes to policies, structures, and the effects of these changes, it is important to understand both the individual activities of the primary participants and the institutional relationships in the development of the online SPED endorsement.

Andrew: Lead SPED Faculty

As the lead SPED faculty member, Andrew was the most deeply involved participant in this study. His role in the development of the online SPED program was much greater than simply the lead faculty member. In addition to the more traditional lead faculty activities such as curriculum development, creating and teaching courses and working on his tenure portfolio, Andrew took on project management, budget management, marketing and outreach, as well as leading the community advisory committee. The advisory committee was made up of community members, parents, school district administrators and SUBC staff. The purpose of the committee was to provide feedback and guidance about program curriculum, program growth and marketing strategies (Andrew, interview, January 28, 2015).

For example, when I first met with Andrew in January of 2015, the program was still in its formative stages, with curriculum being established, courses had not been built in the learning

management system (LMS) and state approval for the program was still pending. When I asked Andrew to give me an update on what he had been working on, he sighed and launched in,

> So, um…we've been working on the build and that's like the curricular build, but then also the work with the State has been happening in earnest since last summer, which is now on its way to the board for clearance. (interview, January 28, 2015)

In order to better understand Andrew's role in the development of the SPED endorsement, it is helpful to use Engeström's (1997) heuristic representation of an activity system to view Andrew's activities (Figure 10).

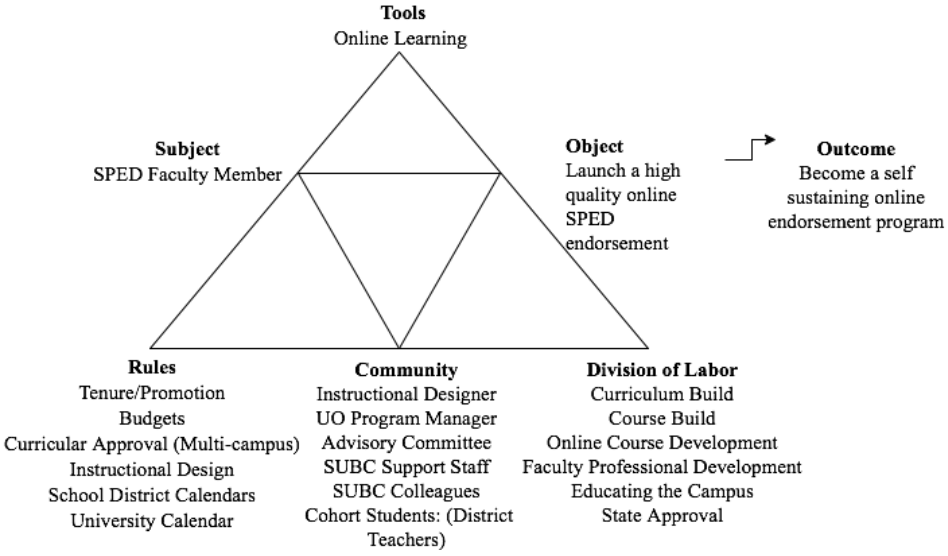

Figure 10. Summary of Andrew's activities.

All of the activities that Andrew undertook were for the purpose of launching a high quality online SPED endorsement for practicing teachers. This is the *object*, or goal of the activity system, with the *outcome* of becoming a self-sustaining online endorsement program. The designated *tool* in this activity system is online learning, as this is the primary tool mediating the action in this activity system. The *subject* is Andrew, the lead SPED faculty, as he is the focus of this activity system. For Andrew, the *rules* are the institutional policies and practices of

online learning at SUBC at the main university campus and at UO—things such as promotion and tenure, compensation, evaluation, and course load. In addition, the rules also include the policies and practices of the partner school districts. In this activity, there were different *communities* Andrew needed to attend to. SUBC and main campus communities were involved, including support staff, instructional designers and all those working for and with the online endorsement. In addition, Andrew needed to attend to community partners, such as the advisory committee. In this activity system, the *division of labor* is made up of institutional structures that support the development of the online endorsement such as faculty professional development, online course development and the task of educating the campus about online learning and online program development.

If we focus in on Andrew's activities, the level at which he was involved in the development of the SPED endorsement becomes clear. As shown below, Andrew's activities were prominent within four different activity triads: (a) the community, subject, rules triad; (b) the community, subject, division of labor triad; (c) the rules, community, object triad; (d) the community, subject, object.

Community, subject, rules triad. Each triad provides focus for the individual activities and allows us to view how a collection of activities can aid in the attainment of the outcome. For example, the community, subject, rules triad (Figure 11) "centres on the protocols of interaction" (Lewis, 2000, p. 33) and helps examine how the subject establishes or interacts with rules and how these rules relate to those in the community (Lewis, 2000).

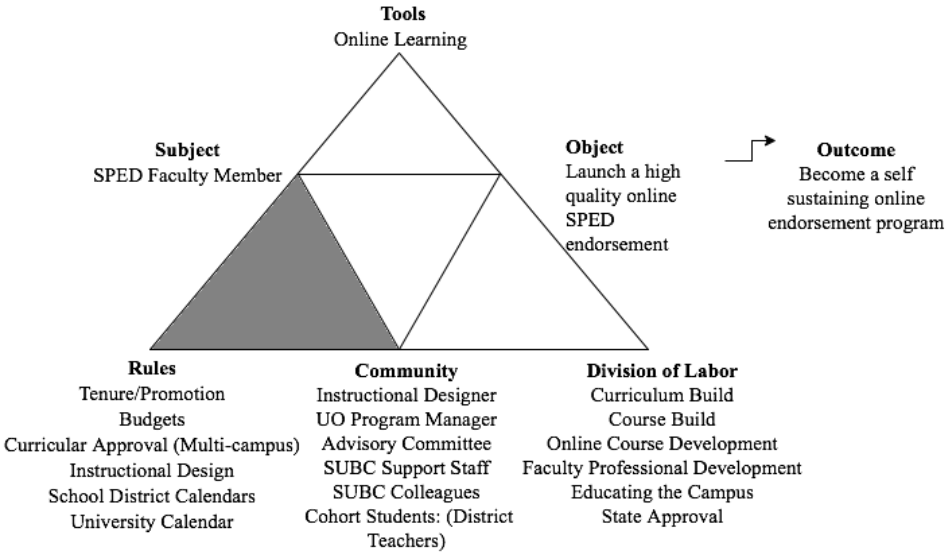

Figure 11. Community, subject, rules triad, Andrew.

This is evidenced in several of Andrew's activities including his working with school staff to get the SPED endorsement curriculum approved at both the multi-campus and state levels. While Andrew was writing the curriculum, he had help from those within the community in order to ensure all the rules for approval were being met. As Andrew explained, "this is my first trip to the rodeo with something of this size at this institution. And this program is a fairly significant culture shift for us. So, this is something I am learning about" (interview, March 17, 2015).

When reflecting on his journey, Andrew noted that "it was not a consolidated effort or a focused effort on our campus to say we're doing this and this is how we support faculty in doing this" (interview, March 17, 2015). In addition to finding ways to support faculty doing this work at the institution level, Andrew also talked about how the work also needed to be supported at the school level, "It's a conversation we have to have as a school…I can't sustain an effort around managing a program and build, manage all of those things and do the other work that I need to do and do it well" (interview, March 17, 2015). He added that it was especially difficult when

"the institution is learning at the same the time the faculty is learning" (interview, March 17, 2015). As evidenced by Andrew's activities, in addition to the more traditional activities that faculty take on, he also took on the role of a project manager and negotiator between the SES and UO.

Subject, community, division of labor triad. Much of Andrew's work was also evidenced in the subject, community, division of labor triad (Figure 12).

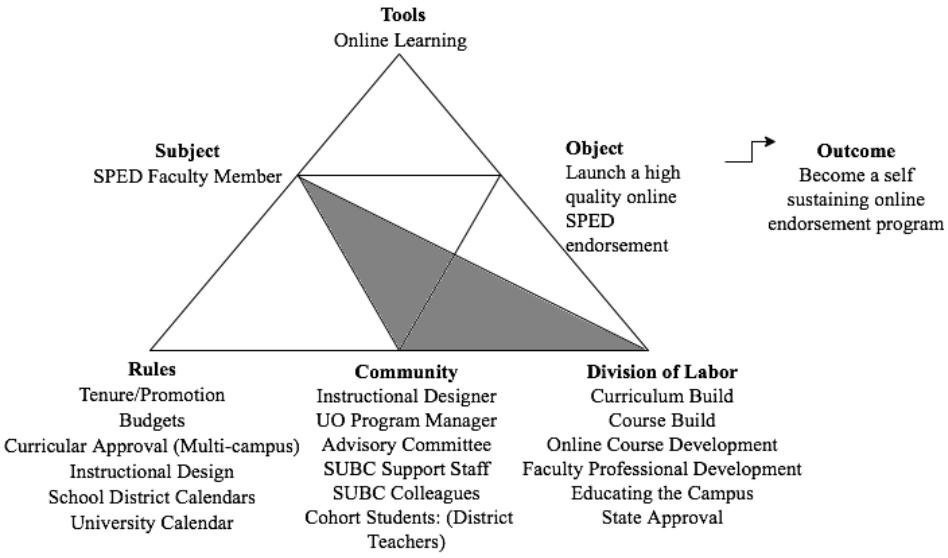

Figure 12. Subject, community, division of labor triad, Andrew.

This triad allows us to focus on how a subject can interact with a community in order to facilitate the goals (*object*) of the activity through the tasks in the division of labor (Lewis, 2000). As the lead faculty member in the development of this program, Andrew (*subject*) worked closely with Margaret, the UO instructional designer (*community*) when building the online courses (division of labor). As Margaret explains, her most important job in the instructional design process is to be the faculty member's

> …first student. And not a very smart student because I don't know their topic. I ask all the questions that students raise their hands in class and ask like is this going to be on the

test? Does it need to be double spaced? That is my main function—to be the first student. And to make sure that everything makes sense to me. That all the parts work. (interview, Margaret, November 17, 2015)

When things didn't make sense, or needed further clarification, Margaret would reach out to Andrew for clarification.

Rules, community, object triad. This triad highlights "how rules (protocols) support the community to meet their common goal" (p. 35). In Andrew's activities this is evidenced in a few different ways. First, the rules for gaining State approval in order to advertise the SPED endorsement put strain on the advisory committee (*community*), which led to tensions in launching the SPED endorsement (*object*) (Figure 13).

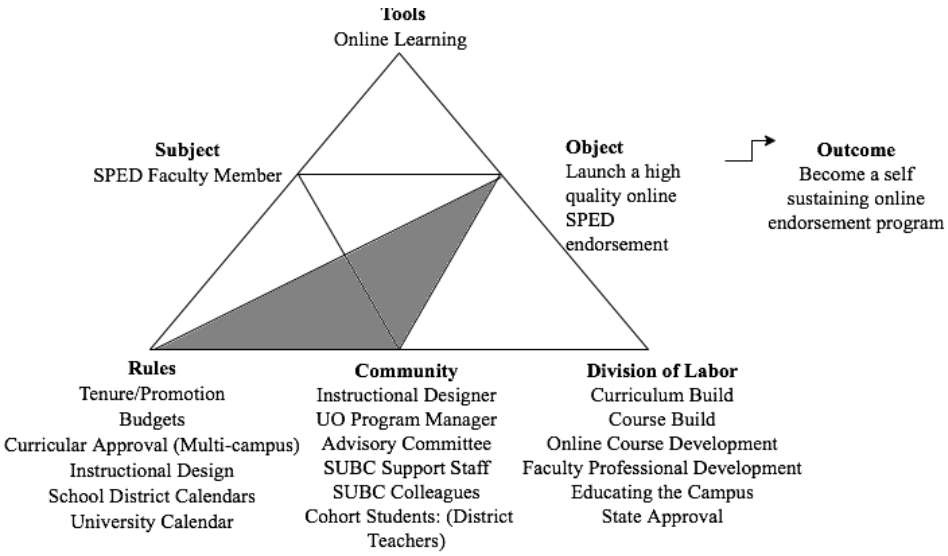

Figure 13. Rules, community, object triad, Andrew.

As Andrew, who led the advisory board noted, the board was made up of community members, parents, SUBC staff, and partner K-12 school administrators. These K-12 administrators were unable to recruit teachers, or set aside funds for teachers who were interested

in earning the endorsement because it had not yet been approved and they needed to approve their budgets for the upcoming school year.

In addition to the forthcoming State approval for the endorsement putting tensions on the launch of the program, there were other rules that also put tensions on the outcome. In this case, the instructional design process that the UO instructional designer adhered to led to significant tensions, and put strain on the object of launching a high quality SPED endorsement. This tension will become much more evident in the upcoming activity systems presentation section of this document.

Community, subject, object. Interestingly, this triad aims to help achieve some of the ideas of relational agency, although Lewis never writes about it in those terms. He writes, “This triad focuses on how 'subjects' reconcile personal goals so that these lead to actions to support a community” (Lewis, 2000, p. 32). As previously evidenced, Andrew served much more than simply a faculty member in the development of this online endorsement. His passion and personal goal of helping general classroom teachers (*community*) obtain an endorsement in SPED is highly visible in this triad (Figure 14).

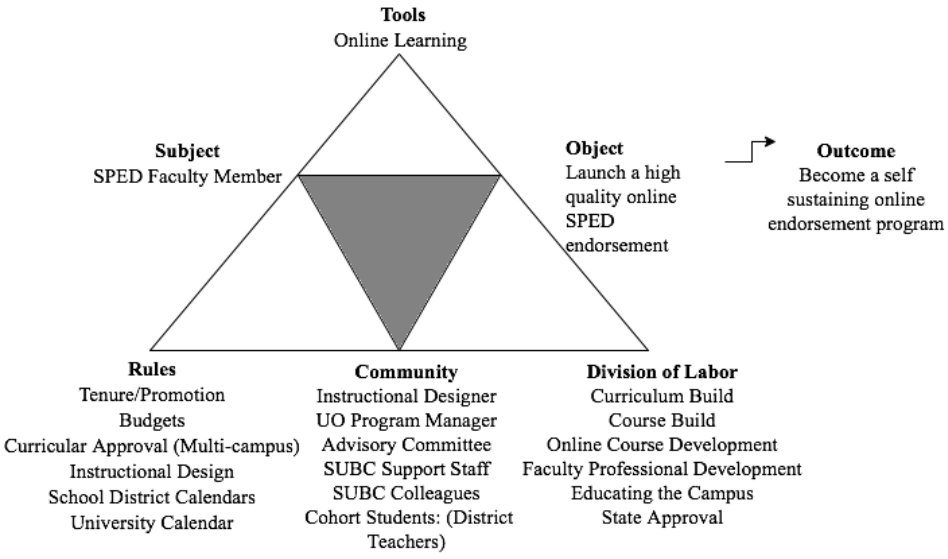

Figure 14. Community, subject, object triad, Andrew.

Two of Andrew's activities that elucidate this triad are those of recruiting and external marketing to students. As soon as he was able, Andrew was spending time in the K-12 schools talking to school building leaders and teachers about the SPED endorsement. He and William spent time in local school districts doing three-hour professional development sessions, which focused on helping teachers connect the challenges they might be facing in their general classrooms to how they might also meet the needs of their students who qualified for special education. In developing the sessions, Andrew made sure that the sessions matched district goals.

In addition to these activities, the point could be made that all of Andrew's activities, as previously touched upon, were centered on the *object* of launching a high quality online SPED endorsement. By accomplishing this object, he would achieve his personal goal.

William: School of Education Studies Dean

William has a very defined role in the development of the SPED endorsement, to support Andrew and to foster community relationships. From the start William was clear that he believed

the SPED endorsement was a service to the community and that his main role was to continue to build the relationships with the partner school districts. As he explained in our first interview,

> I think a lot of my work and Andrew's work is building this in a partnership structure with the district—so it's part of their plan. So, we're not just an external provider. We're doing this because it's something the districts are trying to accomplish. (interview, March 19, 2015)

As with Andrew's activities, it is helpful to look at William's activities using Engeström's (1997) CHAT heuristic tool. The activity system for William's activities (Figure 15) is similar to Andrew, with some key differences in the areas of rules, community, and division of labor. For William, his work was bound by similar *rules* as Andrew, however without the faculty pressures of tenure and promotion. His *community* was more external, focusing on relationships with the partner school districts, the State Office for Public Instruction (SOPI) and some internal negotiating with the SUBC leadership. With Andrew leading the curricular build of the program and carrying out the responsibilities for building the courses, William's shared tasks, *the division of labor*, again focused outward with the partner school districts.

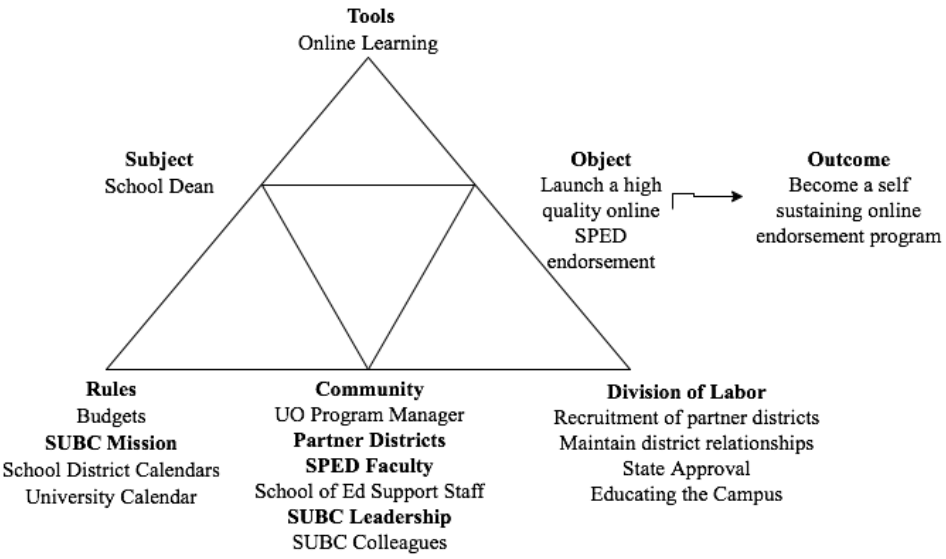

Figure 15. Summary of William's activities.

In order to better understand William's role in the development of the online SPED endorsement, it is helpful to carefully examine the subject, community, division of labor triad of William's summary of activities (Figure 16). As mentioned previously, this triad focuses on how a subject interacts with a community in order to facilitate the goals (object) of the activity via tasks in the division of labor (Lewis, 2000).

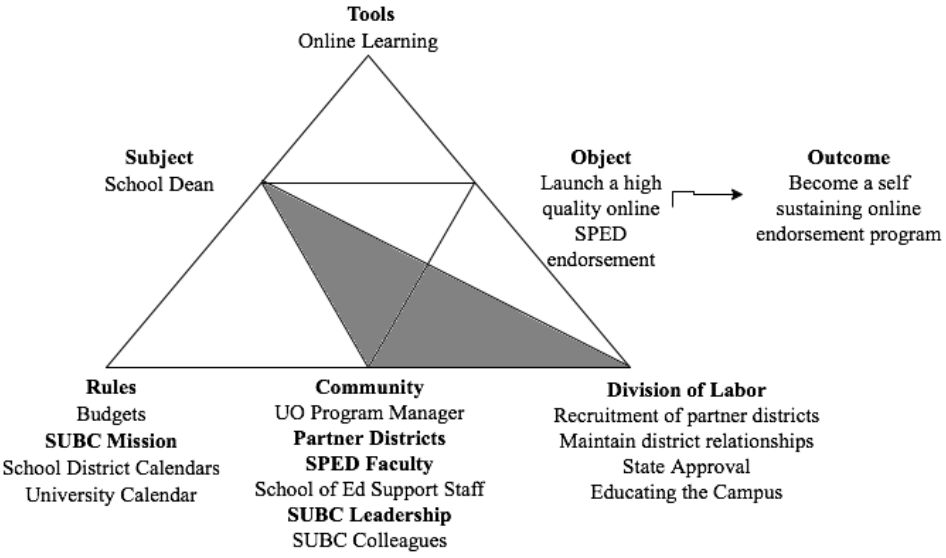

Figure 16. Subject, community, division of labor triad, William.

William was not new to fostering district partnerships, having helped to create two on-campus master's degree programs in conjunction with K-12 school districts that have been running for several years (interview, February 2, 2015). He saw the work of building partnerships as an integral part of his role as school dean. When talking about his role and the modeling for partnering and recruitment he indicated "I've been working the partnerships since I arrived online [as dean] years ago" (interview, February 2, 2015).

Partnerships with the school districts are not just centered on recruiting teachers to take courses. The SPED endorsement includes a supervised practicum component. William worked closely with the school districts to negotiate field supervision with "each district's special education department to provide this supervision" (interview, March 19, 2015). In addition to the supervision, William was also working with the district's administrators in order to recruit district staff members to participate in the SPED endorsement advisory board.

While most of William's time was spent building partnerships with this external community, he also spent time interacting within internal communities at SUBC, specifically the leadership on campus and with the faculty and staff within his school. William indicated that the leadership was very supportive of him and this endeavor as were the faculty. However, questions about long-term program growth and being able to successfully support and sustain an online program given the already stretched current campus resources and infrastructure.

William felt the campus was "in an incredibly formative position" (interview, February 2, 2015) with eLearning starting up on campus and the formation of an eLearning committee to begin exploring campus needs. However, as William noted, there were things the leadership needed to put in place in order for eLearning to take hold,

> I think there is a want. It's just we have to, we need to have the people who know and can . . . help us identify a learning plan for our own professional growth. We would need expertise at the campus level who would—I'm not trying to pass the buck—but to initiate that conversation with us (interview, February 2, 2015).

William described his activities as being typical of a dean at SUBC. In this case, William's role was not to manage the day-to-day activities of the SPED endorsement. Rather, it was to foster the relationships between the K-12 school districts and always looking externally for additional partners.

Faye: eLearning Strategist

The hiring of Faye in July of 2015 proved that the leadership at SUBC was listening to its deans and faculty leaders. With bringing Faye onboard, SUBC now had a dedicated person whose role it was to support the growth of eLearning. While the online SPED endorsement is managed through UO and therefore, not technically a SUBC sponsored degree, Faye took it upon herself to work closely with Andrew and William to ensure their SPED programmatic needs were getting met. As Faye explained:

> My role for SPED is an interesting one because SPED is already in a contract with a supplier. We would expect SPED to not be satisfied with everything they are getting from their supplier. We would also expect to be able to fill in when we can. And to help them as a consultant basis to be able to make decisions that either may or may not affect that contract, but that certainly affects how they run their program. (Faye, personal communication, January 21, 2015)

A summary of the activities Faye has been involved is below.

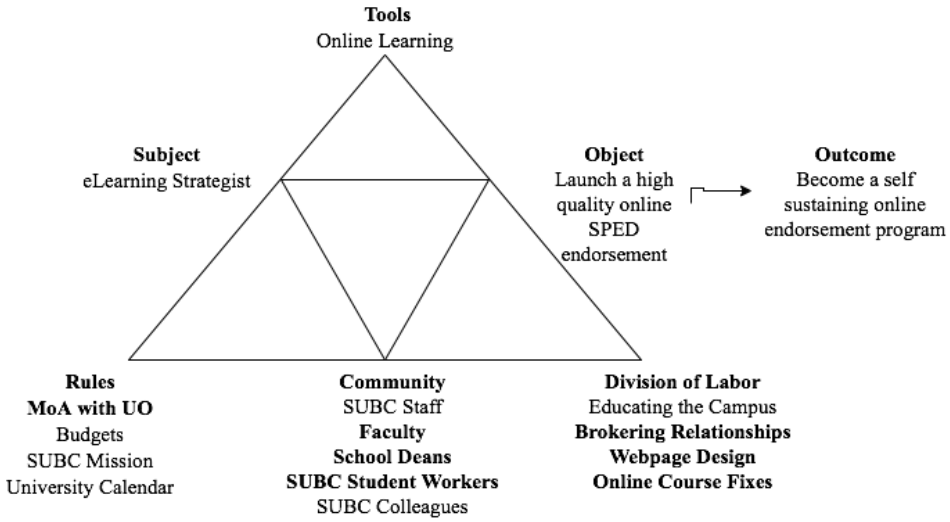

Figure 17. Summary of Faye's activities.

As with both Andrew and William's activities, the *tools*, *object,* and *outcome* are the same. The differences lie in the areas of rules, community, and division of labor. The contract or MoA that was signed with UO (*rules*) bound much of the work that Faye was brokering for the online SPED endorsement. She was also working with other similar rules as Andrew and William, including the budgets, SUBC's mission, and the university calendar. Unlike Andrew and William, Faye's *community* was formed from internal relationships she had made across the SUBC campus. These are the individuals or groups of individuals that she was able to contact for help with tasks we find in the division of labor. Faye's activities are interesting, in that the rules she must abide by (MoA with UO) strictly affect the shared tasks or *division of labor*. Therefore, the division of labor activities can be classified as support tasks.

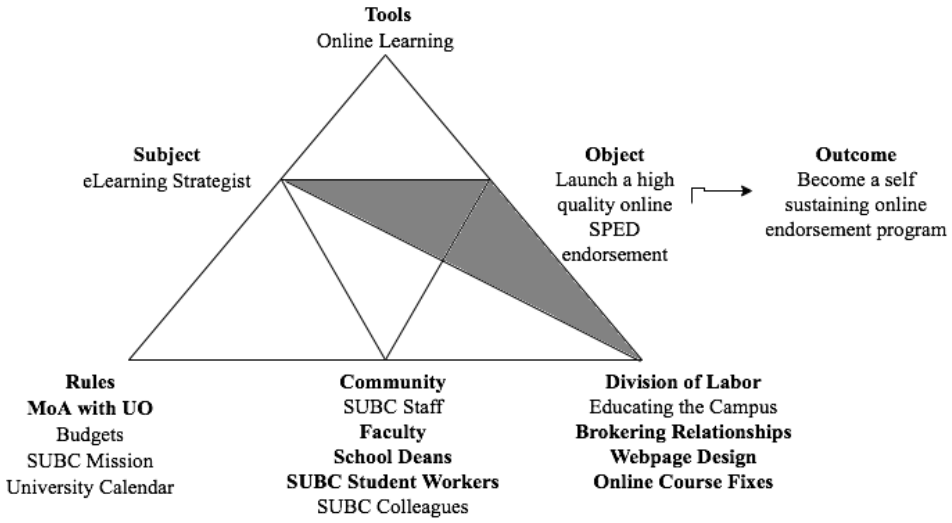

Figure 18. Subject, division of labor, object triad.

Faye's belief about leadership was one that values the small wins, rather than looking for the one big initiative. Therefore, her motto was to "say yes as often as I can, to as much as I can" (Faye, interview, January 21, 2015). She added, "that's how you get a momentum growing across a campus" (Faye, interview, January 21, 2015). She gained these small wins, by using a consultant frame as her support structure, by providing expert advice, not promising too much or too little and by reminding those she worked with that they ultimately owned their programs, she was simply there to help guide them and provide support they might need.

For the SPED endorsement, Faye had worked as a broker to bring people and resources together who could work with Andrew to support the work he was doing. However, Faye indicated that the work she was brokering in support of the SPED endorsement was

> absolutely not going to . . . interrupt SPED with UO. Absolutely not. A contract is a contract for one thing. It does mean—that it's like ah, we're the second consultant and we can either do a favor here and there or simply be the people they come to, to talk something out, get some feedback before they go back to talk to UO as their vendor (Faye, interview, January 21, 2015).

The first time I interviewed Faye, she had only been in her position for five months. However, in that short time, she had brought in SUBC's web director and web designer who worked with Andrew to evaluate the program's web presence to make sure it was meeting his recruiting needs. The result of this was an updated webpage that provided students with more clarity about the SPED endorsement, including program costs, face-to-face meeting dates and times, and how students might be able to apply this work toward a Master's of Education Degree. In addition, she worked with SUBC's learning technologies group to design ePortfolio resources for the SPED endorsement students, and she allocated student employee time to help fix typographical errors that were showing up in some of the online courses (Faye, interview, January 21, 2015).

Faye's activities point to her role as a broker, bringing in the experts and resources when needed. Faye sums up her role on campus as this, "I'm here to help organize. I'm here to help consult" (Faye, interview, January 21, 2015).

Activity Systems Presentation

From the data presented in the previous section, the key activities that led to the development and ongoing support of the online SPED endorsement were identified. These activities were identified by based upon the number of times each was mentioned by the participants and by my perceived weight that the participants attached to them. They include, (1) attaining promotion and tenure, (2) partnering and designing courses with University Outreach, (3) partnering with K-12 School Districts, and (4) addressing changes in faculty and staff roles. These four key activities help to shed light on the research questions.

Attaining Promotion and Tenure

Andrew would be the first to admit that the work he was engaged in developing the

online SPED endorsement had an effect on his relationship with his colleagues and his career advancement. Andrew mentioned on several occasions that he felt supported and his "colleagues are roundly behind the work" (interview, January 28, 2015). He also talked candidly about how the work he is doing was not supported within the current university culture and certainly not within the current policies for tenure and promotion. This activity is captured in Figure 19. The dotted lines represent the tensions that can be found in the activity system.

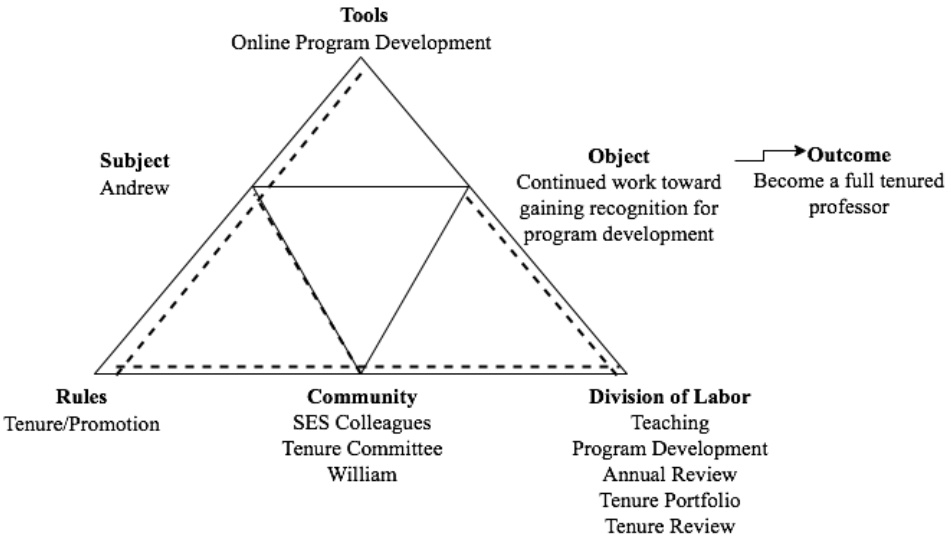

Figure 19. Activity system for attaining tenure and promotion.

In this activity system for attaining tenure and promotion, the *object* or goal is to gain recognition for program development as a vital part of Andrew's case for promotion and tenure. The *outcome* of this object is to gain tenure and become a full tenured professor at SUBC. In this system, the *tool* is online program development with Andrew as the *subject*. In order to reach the outcome, Andrew must negotiate between the *rules* for tenure and promotion, and what his *community*, his colleagues, tenure committee, and William value in the tenure and promotion process and how they evaluate his work, the activities that can be found in the *division of labor*.

Partnering and designing courses with University Outreach

When talking to Andrew about the endorsement, his passion for students and providing

affordable and accessible options for education became clear. It was this understanding of student needs and his willingness to undertake something new and different that led to the creation of the SPED endorsement in an online format. Andrew admitted he had a lot of reservations and questions about creating the endorsement as an online credential. However, he said he needed to do what made sense for the target students.

Through conversations with SUBC administrators, it was quickly realized that the development of the endorsement was going to "need resources that were going be beyond what the institution had available and not just the capital, the financial capital, but the human capital to move it" (Andrew, interview, January 28, 2015). This was echoed by William who noted,

> One of the advantages UO offers is that they pay for the development costs, so for us, budgetarily, it was advantageous to have the upfront money to pay all the costs associated to build this. The other was instructional design expertise. We just don't have a deep enough pool of instructional design. (interview, February 2, 2015)

Therefore, in order to make the online SPED endorsement a reality, Andrew and William decided to partner with UO (Figure 20). The dotted lines represent the tensions that can be found in the activity system.

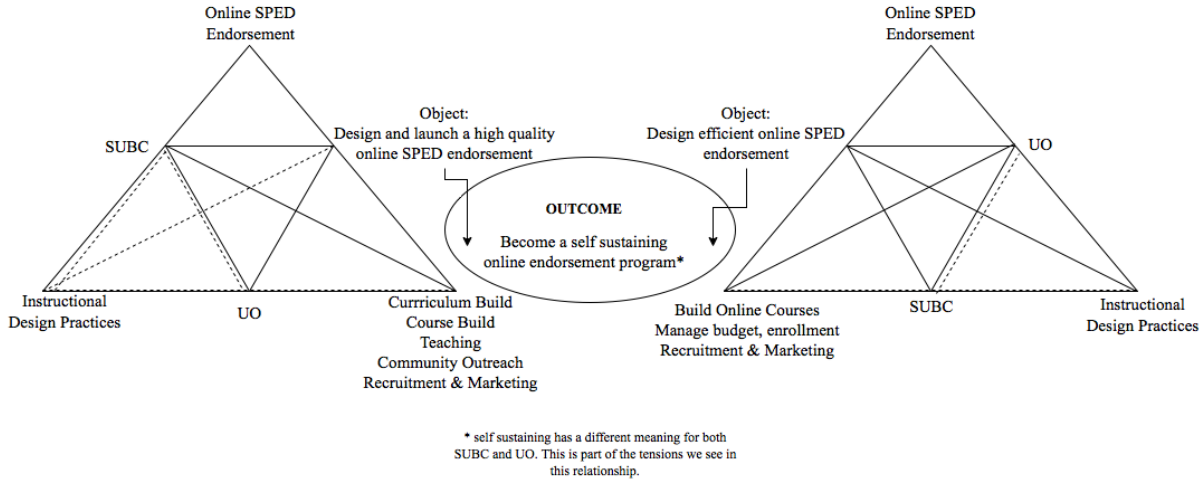

Figure 20. Activity system for partnering and designing courses with University Outreach.

Instructional Design Tensions. This partnership was the first of its kind for SUBC, and there were many unknowns, many questions, and many negotiations to be carried out. Fundamentally UO is run like a for-profit business. Therefore, there were layers of policy, procedure, and ways of doing that had to be negotiated. One of the most telling of these negotiations was the instructional design process (*rules*) that occurred with UO (*community*) in order to get the courses created for the online environment (*division of labor*). Andrew admits that his research and scholarship is not centered on online learning and he did not "keep abreast with what current practices are" (interview, March 17, 2015). Therefore, he relied on the instructional design expertise offered by UO. However, as noted in the activity system, this reliance on UO for instructional design expertise led to tensions between UO and SUBC.

From the start, Andrew experienced pedagogical differences with the model that UO follows for instructional design and UO's inflexible nature around the course design process. As Andrew explained, "I've run up against certain barriers working with UO. They do things in a certain way when it comes to course design" (interview, January 28, 2015). And when trying to find other ways of designing a course that better matched his beliefs about teaching and learning,

he was met with resistance, and was told “this isn't the way that we do things and this is our model” (interview, March 17, 2015). Andrew felt that this mismatch in instructional design might have been mitigated from the start if he had been able to interview and select his own instructional designer, but “these aren’t things you know to ask. You don’t know to ask those things going through the first time” (interview, March 17, 2015).

Margaret, the UO instructional designer that worked most closely with Andrew when developing the online SPED program, also acknowledged the tensions in the instructional design process. She explained that historically, the courses UO develops might not be taught by the faculty they are collaborating with to develop the course. Therefore, the online courses are developed in such a way that any faculty member might be able to step in and teach the course. As noted by Margaret, both Andrew and his colleague Dylan “were competent enough—and hip enough that they wanted to design their own thing” (interview, November 17, 2015).

This difference in ways of doing or creating a course led to frustrations that eventually led to a breakdown in the communication and collaboration between Margaret and Andrew and Dylan. Margaret acknowledged that she was mystified by the breakdown in communication with Andrew and Dylan. She admitted,

> I don’t know how to solve it. Andrew and Dylan talk mainly to Eileen They don’t much talk to me. That has been a frustration for me. When I write to either of them, it takes them sometimes weeks to get back to me. I’m frustrated. (interview, November 17, 2015)

In fact, during winter quarter, 2016, Andrew decided to forgo working with Margaret. He explained that he decided to

> take the time to build the course myself. I felt more comfortable taking my own time over the winter break to get the course built than I did trusting that they [UO] were going to do

what they were supposed to do. (interview, March 8, 2016)

Andrew described the tensions as being a "relational fit. The model or approach they use is not ideal" (interview, March 17, 2015). While Margaret summed it up as a difference in culture. She noted, "we are dealing with a very different culture on campus than what we have here [in UO]. Their projects are often proprietary, and ours require us to collaborate. It's challenging." (interview, November 17, 2015).

Program Quality Concerns. While it is difficult to pinpoint if the communication breakdown between Andrew and Dylan and Margaret was due to quality concerns of the online courses, or if the quality of the online courses suffered due to the breakdown in communication. In either circumstance, the quality of the online courses was perhaps the leading contributor to the tensions between SUBC and UO. Each organization had a different *object* thus contributing to the *outcome* differently.

Issues of course quality started to surface as soon as the first course was launched in June of 2015. In the first face to face kick off session, Andrew starting noticing glitches with the course. As I observed at this first session, students were unable to access the course, they were not able to access certain content from the library and some links to assignments and other content were either missing or did not connect to the correct content. Similar issues plagued the endorsement courses for the entire first cohort.

After the summer quarter ended and before Fall quarter began, Andrew, William, Eileen and Laura held a meeting to discuss the launch of the program and what to pay attention to as the program progressed. In addition to enrollment, budget, and marketing the issue of quality was addressed. In this meeting Andrew called for quality standards to be reexamined and "honored" (observation, July 8, 2015). Andrew explained that he did not believe the courses were

“anywhere close to the level of quality that we should be. The quality of the online course I developed at SUBC far surpasses the UO course” (Andrew, observation, July 8, 2015). As a solution, Andrew suggested the use of Quality Matters (QM), a nationally recognized quality assurance program that certifies the quality of online courses. This was met with little interest from Eileen who simply stated that they would take a look at the standards. No action was taken.

After this meeting, Eileen reached to out to Andrew a number of times to meet and discuss the course quality issues, but as Andrew told me, he declined, saying "the work needed to be done on their end. I needed them to do it. So, I strategically set them aside as long as I could” (interview, March 8, 2016). Finally, leaders from SUBC and UO met to specifically discuss the quality concerns of the SPED endorsement. At this meeting, an intermediary from UO was introduced. He would work to support the program, and serve as a quality control liaison. He introduced a collaborative process to ensure quality control. Dylan agreed to try out the process. Andrew did not.

At the close of this study, Dylan was still experiencing issues with broken links and missing course content. Andrew developed his courses on his own, and he indicated “I had one issue in the course and it was due to content that was linked to the library - it was an easy fix. I had it fixed in 5 minutes” (interview, March 8, 2016).

It must be noted that UO does have a Quality Assurance process in place. As Margaret explained to me,

> There’s an entire program with a checklist for quality assurance on courses…it starts with are the learning objectives good. And goes all the way down. So we run it through that process as well. And once we offer a course, we run it through a QA again… I usually ask instructors to do a final check, just to be sure that I've gotten the right links in and be

> sure the links are still live, things like that. Very often instructors do not do that. And then they will find little bits of things that are not quite perfect in the process. And so, I often keep hands on it until almost the end of the course. (interview, November 17, 2015)

As noted earlier, the issue of course quality is difficult to pinpoint. Was it an issue in communication? A relational issue? An organizational issue? Or perhaps a combination of issues? To be fair, when I asked Margaret about this issue, she did not deny there had been quality issues with the courses. She did explain that the demand for services offered by UO had dramatically increased over the past few years and that the average project load had also increased significantly. When I interviewed her in November of 2015, Margaret indicated she had 10 projects she was currently working on. In addition to the increased project load, the turn around time for projects decreased. Previously UO instructional designers "had a 6-month lead time on a project. These days we are working on a 3-month schedule. Which is pretty much impossible" (interview, November 17, 2015).

William, with his organization research frame, sees the tensions as an organizational challenge. He explained,

> If I face an organizational challenge as a dean, with program quality, I usually have some degrees of freedom to say OK. Let's work the problem. What are the other resources we need…but because it's so owned by UO, I felt like my hands were tied in addressing the problem. The organizational structure isn't set up that we can approach problem solving in that way together. (interview, April 7, 2016).

Partnering with K-12 School Districts

William's activities in partnering with K-12 districts proved to be a crucial activity in the launch and ongoing support of the online SPED endorsement (Figure 21). Not only did the

districts allow William and Andrew (*community*) to come into their districts to provide professional development activities (*division of labor*) to promote the SPED endorsement, one of the districts provided space in their district's professional development building for the face-to-face sessions that occurred at the beginning and end of the endorsement.

In addition, the SES partnered with each school district that had a teacher enrolled in the program (*community*) to provide a supervisory teacher (*community*) for the practicum portion of the program. As William explained, "Let's say there are five teachers in the Northbrook School District that are working on this endorsement. The plan is that we would work with Northbrook's special education department to provide the field supervision" (interview, March 19, 2015). These supervisory teachers are compensated for their time and this was built into the SPED program budget (*rules*).

While there was a strong relationship with two of the partnering districts, there were still conflicts that arose between the working timelines of SUBC and the school districts budgeting cycle. The State approval for the SPED endorsement was not handed down until March of 2015. The launch of the endorsement was set for the end of June 2015. SUBC was not allowed to publically advertise the endorsement until receiving State approval. This essentially gave SUBC approximately 3 months to advertise and recruit teachers for the first cohort. This tight recruitment model may have led to the low number of total enrollments, and very low enrollments from within the partner districts. The dotted lines in Figure 21 represent the tensions that can be found in the activity system.

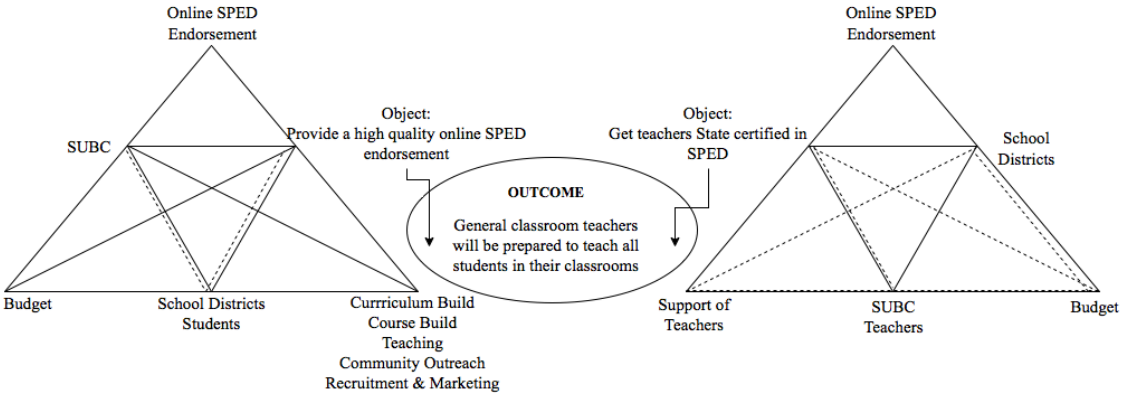

Figure 21. Activity system for partnering with K-12 school districts.

Addressing Changes in Faculty and Staff Roles

While all of the above activities underwent changes throughout the 15 months I was studying the development and support of the online SPED endorsement, the staffing support that was dedicated to supporting the online SPED endorsement experienced the greatest amount of change. One of the critiques of using Engeström's CHAT heuristic is its limited ability to show the changes that occur over time (Edwards, 2009). The series of activity systems found in figures 22 - 25 attempts to show this change over time. The dotted lines in Figures 22 - 25 represent the tensions that can be found in the activity system.

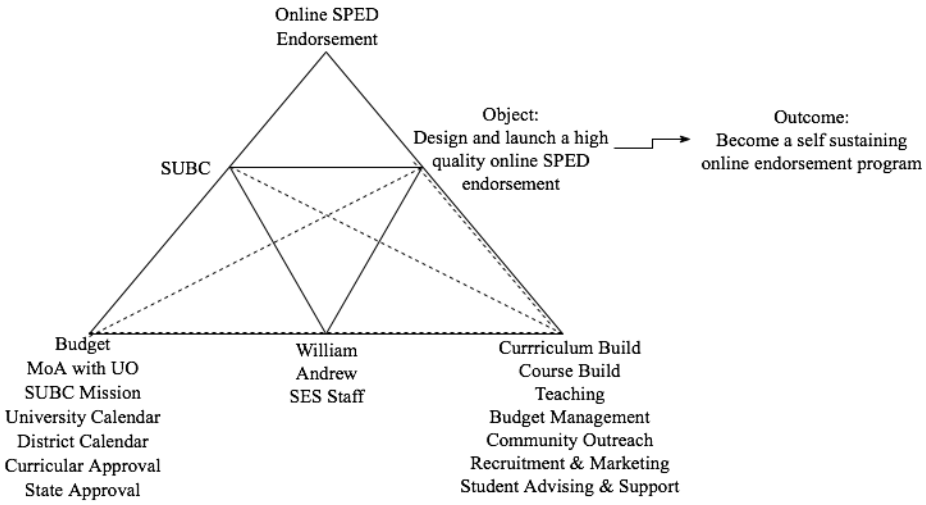

Figure 22. Development of SPED endorsement, winter 2015.

When I first met with William and Andrew in February of 2015, all program development fell to William and Andrew, with some support for budgeting and financing, submitting documents for curriculum approval and student support coming from SES staff. This workload (*division of labor*) was split between members of the SUBC community, namely those in the School of Educational Studies (*community*). The increased workload that was experienced by members of the community led to tensions throughout the activity system. For example, when talking with Andrew, he admitted:

> Everything is new to me. There are a set of skills that I need to have . . . we need to have a whole suite of tools to draw from and people to engage with, and if the university doesn't get some of this figured out we're going to lose students. I think it will evolve and it will grow. We will learn from it. (interview, March 17, 2015)

By summer of 2015—five months after meeting with Andrew and William for the first time—two significant hires had been made. Dylan, a trusted colleague of Andrew's had been hired to help with curriculum development, and Faye had been hired as SUBC's first eLearning Strategist (Figure 23). These two hires had a significant impact on the workload (*division of labor*) of those in the *community*. Andrew had a colleague to help with the curriculum build and teaching load and both Andrew and William had a colleague, Faye, an expert in online program design and development, whom they could tap into for programmatic consulting and helping them to navigate the build of a new online program.

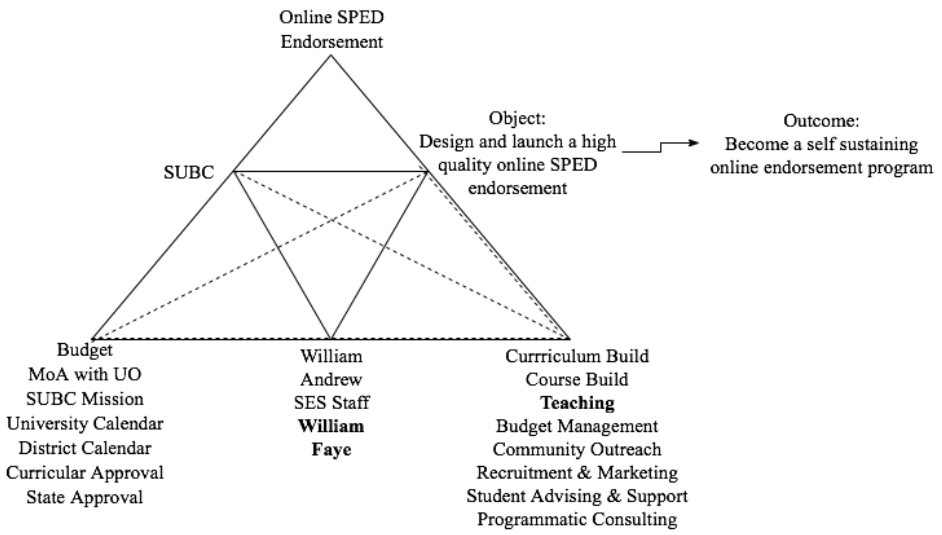

Figure 23. Development of SPED endorsement, summer 2015.

Even with these hires, as we can see in Figure 23, there were still tensions that arose. While the workload shifted a bit from Andrew and William's plate, the staff in the School of Educational Studies were still taking on a lot of additional work in order to support the program. As Laura assured me, while it's still a lot of additional work,

> we support each other. Our mission as a school is to be responsive to our partners needs, and when you hear there is a great need out there for general education teachers to have special training and skill development . . . around Special Ed, and we can provide it . . . then let's do it! (interview, March 10, 2015)

Even with the positive support the SPED endorsement was getting from the SES staff, Andrew still had a lot of responsibilities that kept him pulled in many directions. Andrew still took lead in the program coordination, course and program design, liaison with UO, teaching not only for the online endorsement, but undergraduate SPED classes as well, in addition to his activities related to tenure and promotion. On top of this, the SES was in the process of developing a new B.A. in Educational Studies. The aim of this new degree was to produce certified K-8 teachers who would graduate with an endorsement in either SPED or English to

Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Because of the prominence SPED was now taking on in the school, Andrew finally saw some relief. In winter of 2016, the SES hired a SPED program manager (Figure 24). While the new program manager was just starting her work, it was the hope that she would be able to take over the "day to day operations of the online SPED endorsement" (Andrew, interview, March 8, 2016).

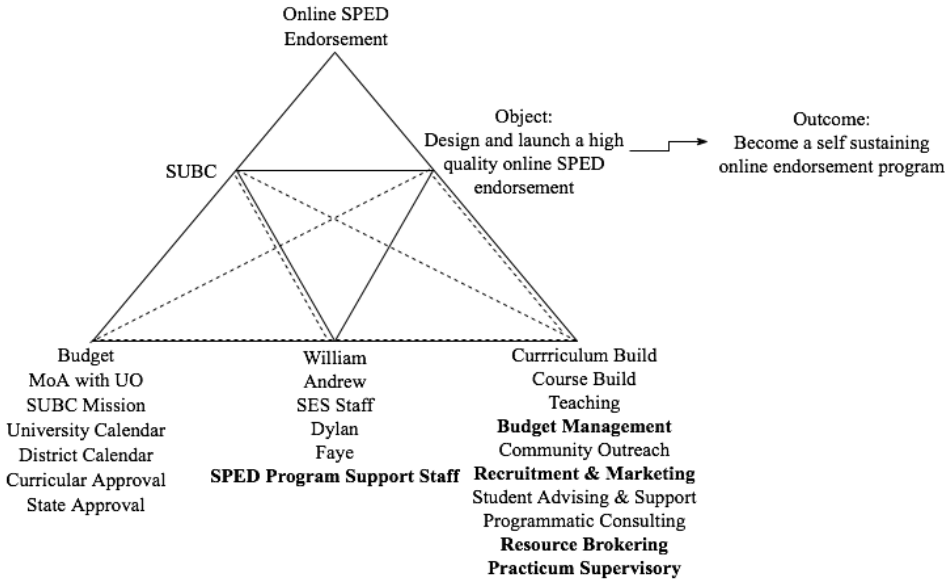

Figure 24. Development of SPED endorsement, winter 2016.

Since its inception, the online SPED endorsement had garnered support that helped to more evenly distribute the workload (*division of labor*) among members of the *community*. This redistribution of labor helped to resolve many of the tensions within the activity system. The tensions that remain in the activity system are directly related to the course build of the SPED classes. As previously outlined, there were tensions in the relationship between SUBC and UO. These tensions lie mainly with course design and build of the online classes.

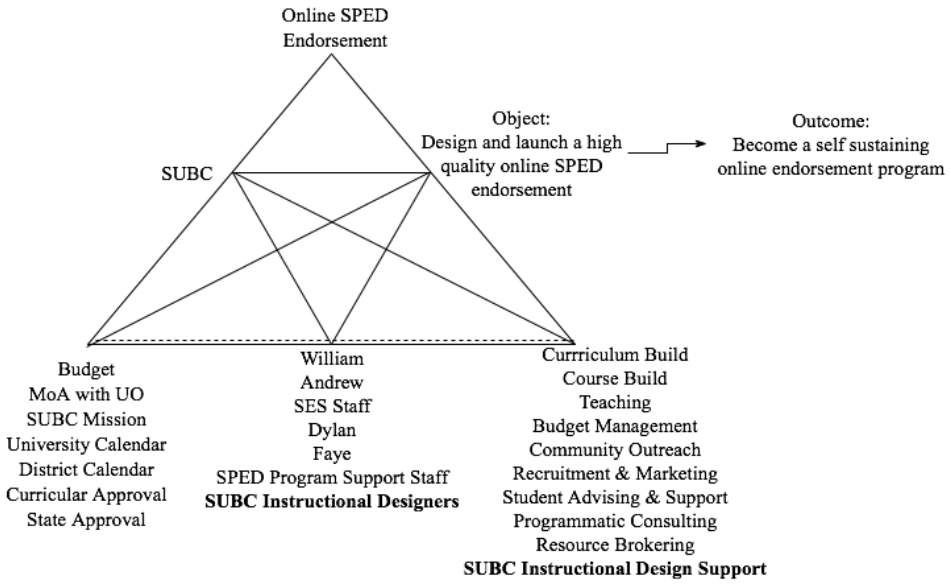

Figure 25. Development of SPED endorsement, spring 2016.

Key Findings

After identifying and analyzing the most relevant activities related to the development of the online SPED endorsement, key assertions or findings about the changing nature of policies and structures and new working arrangements and practices emerged. The following section will present each of the assertions and will provide the context and supporting data for each assertion that ground the assertion in the research data. A summary of the five key findings include:

- A siloed approach to program development;
- SU not a barrier to online program development at SUBC;
- Internal cultural and historical institutional policies and practices impact relationships;
- External cultural and historical institutional policies and practices affect program success and growth; and
- Relational agency provides a strong framework for understanding the relational aspects of online program creation.

A Siloed Approach to Program Development

For the most part, the SPED endorsement was created in a siloed environment, with each individual contributing his or her specific piece to the project. There was no strong sense of collaboration in the creation of the endorsement. The sociocultural analysis indicated that each of the participants had a different expertise that they were bringing to the program, informed by different practices, different histories, and different cultures. Yet there was no defined process or place for them to collaborate or work together across their boundaries. As a result, critical needs were overlooked or unattended to.

As evidenced in the previous section, the activity systems of Andrew and William (Figures 10 and 15) shared the same outcome and the same goals for the online SPED endorsement. However, the ways in which they approached attaining this outcome were drastically different. While Andrew's time was focused on the curriculum, creating and teaching courses, budget management, marketing and outreach, and leading the community advisory committee, William focused on establishing and maintaining relationships with the partner school districts and in some manner working internally with campus leadership to ensure the program had the "institutional rhetorical support from the Chancellor on down" (interview, March 19, 2015).

It is important to note that the roles Andrew and William assumed were understood between them, and neither Andrew nor William indicated that they felt their roles were unbalanced or inappropriate for their role in the development of the endorsement. As William explained, "Andrew works with UO and all the curriculum development and with his advisory board . . . but my job has been to nurture the district partnerships" (interview, February 2, 2015).

This divide and conquer approach—while it helped to get the program built and off the ground very quickly—also resulted in compartmentalized development of the SPED endorsement. My analysis indicated that this compartmentalized approach led to three critical needs being overlooked or unattended to: student support services, the roles of the support staff, and faculty professional development.

Student support services. Interestingly, given Andrew's passion for his students and his desire to provide an affordable and accessible option for the online SPED endorsement, providing support for the online students was not at the forefront of his program build. When I asked Andrew about policies or alternate support structures that might have been created to support their online students, Andrew admitted that:

> There hasn't been a lot of policy around how we do this work. It's new. I guess most clearly we've been thinking about how you support students in their field placements once they are out doing the work and how do you admit students. (interview, January 28, 2015)

After saying this, Andrew thought for a moment and added, "We know how to do those things because essentially we're just going to be translating in-house policies to fit a new program because it's very similar to our other work" (interview, January 28, 2015).

William, while agreeing there was work left to do when thinking about student support, also indicated it was a complex issue, as some support falls to UO and other support would fall to the SES. William also indicated he believed some of that work fell directly to Andrew,

> "academic issues would be funneled first to Andrew . . . and the other one, which I've not had a chance to talk to Andrew about, which is, what's going to be the learning ramp up to an online environment" (interview, February 2, 2015).

He went on to say that "we have certainly addressed how we will support them [students] in their academics and practice, but in terms of what that means from a whole student experience? No" (interview, February 2, 2015).

Support staff roles. In addition to student support services not being included in the initial build out of the online endorsement, thought as to how the addition of the online endorsement would affect the roles and responsibilities of the school support staff were also omitted. This is not to say the work the staff was doing was not recognized nor appreciated. On the contrary, both Andrew and William talked about the role of Laura, the school program manager, as being integral in the launch of the endorsement. This is to say, however, that the changing roles and or needs of the school staff were not initially considered. It was the expectation that the staff would find ways to support the program, in addition to the support they were already providing to other programs.

This was first evidenced when talking with both William and Andrew about student support. William admitted he believed Andrew would be the front person for many student support issues "until we identify and articulate what the staff roles are going to be. Frankly, that's not a part that's been built out for us yet" (interview, February 2, 2015). Interestingly, in my time with Andrew, outside of talking about the role Laura played in the development of the program, he did not specifically mention their changing roles in the program.

Most telling is hearing Laura talk about the impact on staff. She admitted the work to get the SPED endorsement up and running had "just been an add on" (interview, March 10, 2015). She likened the addition of the endorsement to a spider web,

> Anytime we add 20 or more students . . . it's a spider web. The spider is at the center of the web and you know all the outlying threads vibrate with the work you need to support

> that. And it does mean adding. It means adding additional staff or adding responsibilities to staff. The reality is what it takes to serve 20 additional students . . . means academic advising impact, faculty time . . . it means admissions pieces and registration pieces. It has an impact on financial aid. (interview, March 10, 2015)

Faculty professional development. Perhaps one of the most surprising findings is that Andrew received virtually no formal professional development when creating the online endorsement. In order to learn about online learning and online course development, Andrew talked about how he did "a lot of self-education. I started reading" (interview, January 28, 2015) and then he reached out to colleagues who had experience with online learning. He also was selected to participate in the SUBC eFellows program, an inaugural professional development program offering mentoring for faculty who were willing to develop and teach an online course for a minimal stipend (Silas, interview, March 17, 2015). However, the eFellows program started after the start of the first SPED cohort; therefore, Andrew did not use this experience to design a SPED endorsement course, but rather a similar course he would be teaching to undergraduates (interview, March 17, 2015).

William was not surprised at Andrew's journey and indicated that the school does not require specific training or development for its faculty and that the self-education process that Andrew went through is fairly typical of a faculty member launching a new program in the school. In fact, it models what has been done in the past. He noted, "the general architecture is really the same . . . rethinking curricular models, rethinking knowledge and skills, what does a graduate from this program need to be able to do " (interview, February 2, 2015). William failed to note that the modality of the endorsement was different than other endorsements or degrees that have been developed or that the online modality was something new to the school.

Finally, it must be noted that UO, whom the school partnered with to develop the online endorsement, did not offer Andrew any professional development opportunities. Andrew noted that "nothing has been available to me. Like no one said here are these things," (interview, March 17, 2015). He continued to explain that much of the professional development he received was sought out from within the SUBC community,

> I'm learning a great deal as I am doing. The one on one that I've got with Silas here with another course that I'm developing has been greatly helpful. But there haven't been those kinds of resources or one on one kinds of things for me from them. (interview, March 17, 2015)

SU Not a Barrier to Online Program Development at SUBC

Surprisingly, SU, the main campus of the SU system, was not a major factor in the development of the online SPED endorsement. In fact, the main campus was rarely mentioned by either the primary or secondary participants. This is not to say the policies and practices of the SU were not important or did not contribute to the SPED development. It simply indicated that the polices and practices that were in place were not a significant barrier or source of tension for program development.

SU had a comprehensive process for course and academic program approvals. The process starts with a review at the academic unit (school) level, then moves to an approval committee at SUBC. Once approved at SUBC, it moves on to a tri-campus review process, managed by a faculty council, where once approved it is given its appropriate course designation. While this process is lengthy and can be cumbersome, none of the participants in this study pointed it out as a barrier or source of tension for the approval of the SPED endorsement.

When talking with Faye about her role in the development and support of the SPED

endorsement, she talked about the importance of SUBC being aligned with a prominent university such as SU. As she noted, “We are lucky to have an R1 campus attached to us. That gives us tons of opportunity” (interview, January 21, 2016). She went on to explain that as a branch campus, SUBC is able to leverage SU running technical systems that SUBC does not have available on its own, such as the learning management system. This allowed SUBC to focus its innovations and budgeting towards other resources that can best support its programs, such as SPED. With that however, comes a tradeoff. It means that decisions

> are made on a very different scale and they are not looking to do any experimentation of anything. They are looking to be stable. For us that leads to frustration because that means no creativity decisions can be made [at SUBC], (Faye, interview, January 21, 2016)

This has an indirect impact on the SPED program. First, it meant that the courses developed using the LMS were basic and did not integrate outside tools. On the other hand, because learning technologies staff at SUBC did not have to spend its time managing an online learning management system, time could be devoted to more creative work, such as helping Andrew envision and build an ePortfolio course for the online SPED students, which was integrated with the LMS.

Internal Cultural and Historical Institutional Policies and Practices Impact Relationships

At SUBC, the development and support of online programs was emerging. Significant progress has been made toward developing infrastructure and hiring additional staff, such as Faye. However, as SUBC moves forward with developing additional online programs, it needs to begin to address its own cultural and historical policies and processes in order to find ways to fully support online programs and the faculty who are developing them. When investigating the

online SPED endorsement, it became clear that there were two cultural and historical policies and practices that had an effect on the relationships of those working to develop and support the program, tenure and promotion and program development practices.

Tenure and promotion. While Andrew was negotiating with UO's approach to instructional design he was concurrently trying to negotiate university policies (rules) that had a profound effect on his relationship with his colleagues and his career advancement. While Andrew believed his colleagues were supportive of him and the work he was doing to launch the SPED endorsement, he also talked about how his colleagues were bound by cultural and institutional polices and practices that sometimes conflicted with their personal beliefs. Andrew mentioned on several occasions that he felt supported and his "colleagues are roundly behind the work" (interview, January 28, 2015). Yet he also talked candidly about how the work he is doing is not supported within the current university culture and certainly not within the current policies for tenure and promotion.

At SU, the faculty are currently developing new faculty pay structures. In an open meeting of the executive team from the Faculty Council (FC), there was much talk about these new pay structures and how they may or may not support tenure-track faculty. One council member was adamant that assistant or non-tenure faculty "are potentially not being promoted because of their work in program development and new course creation activities" (Faculty Council Meeting, December 15, 2015). However, the conversation did not turn to how non-tenured faculty might be awarded tenure and promotion through the current processes, the conversation turned to how non-tenured faculty should not be creating new courses and programs (Faculty Council Meeting, December 15, 2015).

When envisioning and developing the online SPED endorsement, Andrew was bound by

a set of long established rules for tenure and promotion. These rules were established by the university and supported by members of the faculty in the School of Education. This tension between the work Andrew was in engaged in and the established rules for tenure and promotion that were supported by his colleagues with the School of Education, and others from across campus, weighed on Andrew. He explained,

> doing this work does come at a cost. I'm not as productive in a traditional scholarly way if I—I'm less productive right now in a traditional scholarly way than I would be if I wasn't leading this kind of effort. And so it doesn't mean I don't do the scholarship—but it means that there's costs. (interview, January 28, 2015)

This tension stayed with Andrew throughout my time with him. In a second interview, he again reflected on his work and the impact it had on his relationship with his colleagues. The interview was scheduled when the launch of the endorsement was only a few weeks away. When reflecting on his journey he stated that "in the end, I think it's going to be a series of negotiations that happen from now until the time of tenure for me—with my colleagues and my dean around the work" (interview, March 17, 2015).

Andrew is not one to just sit on the sidelines and wait for changes to happen. Therefore, he joined the SES personnel committee. During the 2014-2015 academic year, the SES personnel committee reviewed the guidelines for faculty annual review. Andrew indicated that the committee had "agreed to some change in language around what exemplary performance is in the area of teaching" (interview, March 17, 2015).

After reviewing and comparing the previous guidelines and the new guidelines for faculty annual review in the School of Educational Studies, I found the updates that Andrew mentioned. In the section that outlines what constitutes exemplary teaching, line items were added that

included innovative changes and program design. In full, the section now reads,

> Some indication that teaching is noteworthy and evidence of innovative changes or creation of innovative classes in educational experiences, special contributions to overall program design and implementation or course and assessments that demonstrate contributions to design, or continuous improvement of programs in schools. (SUBC, School of Educational Studies Exemplary Teaching Guidelines)

Andrew recognized that he is calling for a change to the rules, the established ways of building a program within the school:

> I think my colleagues are having to wrestle with what this means. Right? Right now they're like, ugh. We've asked him to do all this stuff and he's done it. But then he's not as productive in other ways. What does that mean? (interview, October 20, 2015)

But in the end, he notes, "I think it will be alright. I am pleased with how the program is being perceived on campus. I think that was a piece that was strategically important. (interview, October 20, 2015)

Program development practices. While the relationship with SU was not a factor in the development of the SPED endorsement, there were several tensions between SUBC and UO as evidenced in Figure 20. The crux of the tensions lies in the differences in the core visions and missions of the SES and UO. While both the SES and UO have educationally focused missions, with the SES mission stating, "the School of Educational Studies exists to develop and support educators who have the commitments and capabilities to promote the learning of all students in diverse contexts" (SES Webpage, 2016) and UO asserting that they "expand the educational impact of the University, breaking down barriers so learners of all types can access quality

opportunities that fit their lives" (UO Webpage, 2016), they are very different institutions with different policies and practices.

The SES is an academic school that confers degrees and relies mainly on allocations from tuition and state dollars from which to operate, which is in line with any not-for-profit educational institution. In stark contrast, UO does not confer its own degrees. The degrees they offer are in partnership with an academic unit on one of the three campuses in the SU system. As UO is run like a for-profit arm of the University, the programs it offers are fee-based, meaning they do not receive funding from state dollars and they must generate their own revenue to be sustained. According to Eileen, assistant director at UO, UO programs "charge what they need to charge" (interview, November 12, 2015) in order to be profitable. Given these core differences, the SES and UO operate differently; with the SES operating as a not for profit business and UO operating as if it were a for-profit business.

In my final interview with William, we chatted about this difference in mission. William also recognized that these differences contributed to the difficulties in the relationship between SUBC and UO. He explained,

> We have very different missions. Sometimes we [SUBC SES] do things that don't turn us a profit. Sometimes we do pro-bono work in school districts because it's the right thing to do. Because we have a shared mission with our K-12 partners to support their systems and to educate kids and support teachers. (interview, April 7, 2016)

This difference in how each organization must fundamentally operate brought about tensions in practices and policies. These tensions had an impact on the relationship between the SES and UO. With UO being the financial backer of the SPED endorsement, or as William noted, "contractor and owner" (interview, April 7, 2016), SES staff were now bound by a new

set of policies and practices that they might not have had to negotiate prior to this partnership. For example, a week prior to the program launch, Andrew received a call from Eileen informing him that UO was going to cancel the SPED endorsement due to low enrollment. As noted by Eileen, according to the MoA, the SPED endorsement was not to launch with less than 20 students. And with the low enrollment in this first year, it might be four or five years before the program would break financially even. However, William and Andrew were operating under a completely different set of cultural norms and practices. As William recalled, he got on the phone with Eileen for the purpose of helping "them understand what the implications of what that decision would be politically for our partnership work" (interview, August 13, 2015). After a series of phone calls between leaders at UO and with Andrew and William, the decision was made to let the endorsement program run, with the understanding it might extend the MoA from three years to five years in order to recoup the costs.

In this example, UO was operating using its cultural norm, and thinking about the bottom line, the money the program might make or lose. With only half of the needed students enrolled, it would take years for the program to be profitable. For them, the best decision would be to cut its losses instead of continuing the program, which was not guaranteed to make money in the near future.

Andrew and William were operating under a very different cultural norm. As is typical in not for profit program building, the cultural norm was to run a program with low numbers for a few years, with the understanding that partnerships and relationships would continually build over time and the enrollment gap would be overcome. Andrew and William were both stunned by UO's suggestion that the program be cut a week from the launch; but for UO, it was simply a business decision. Once the two organizations were able to speak to one another, William

indicated, “I found UO’s response to be very supportive once they understood the nature of how we had built the launch of this program around our partnership activities with school districts” (interview, August 13, 2015).

External Cultural and Historical Institutional Policies and Practices Affect Program Success and Growth

Interestingly, but not surprisingly, the success and growth of the SPED endorsement was not only bound by the policies and practices of the university system; it was also bound by the policies and practices of the partnering school districts and those of the state. Even with approval from the UO curriculum committee, the SPED endorsement could not launch and enroll students without receiving permission from the Professional Educator Standards Board. The approval would allow teachers with current certification to earn a K-12 state endorsement in special education. Getting state approval was no easy task, with much work from both Andrew and William going into the documentation and paperwork that needed to be filed.

Before advertising the SPED endorsement to their teachers, the school districts needed confirmation of the state approval. The approval came in on March 19, 2015 and applications for the endorsement opened on April 1, 2015 with a cohort start date of June 26. Due to this late notice and short turnaround time, the two partner districts had no ability to build funding for the endorsement into their budgets for the school year. The program for the initial cohort held a price tag of just over $10,000 per student. As William noted, “that’s about a quarter of a starting teacher’s salary. That’s a big hit” (interview, March 19, 2015).

Both Andrew and William were passionate about this endorsement and were able to articulate the clear need for the endorsement in the state. William had been working with two key partner districts to “work on the details like who are teachers that would be best to recruit for

this, and exploring things like what the district will do to support the teachers involved" (interview, February 2, 2015). Northbrook, one of the partner districts, committed to providing space in their new professional development building for the two-day cohort kick off at no charge, and in return William agreed to hold 10 of the 20 available seats in the endorsement cohort for Northbrook district teachers.

With these relationships formed, and with interest from the two partner districts, both Andrew and William expected there to be 20 to 30 students in the first SPED cohort. In my first interviews with them, both indicated that they did not expect enrollment to be an issue. However, at the program launch in June, there were only 10 students enrolled in the endorsement program. When I met with William in August, he mentioned that while the number of enrolled students was lower than they had anticipated, it did not mean all was a loss or a disappointment. He attributed the low enrollment to the short turnaround time from state approval to launch and mismatch in timing with district budget cycles.

William was also quick to point out that while the actual enrollments were low, the fact that the program launched at a local school with local teachers has kept it on the radar of the districts for the next budget cycle. William indicated that there had been

> lots of good feedback from the districts that are hearing about the program. So, even though Northbrook and Sunny Creek don't have a big group of people in it, because they've hosted it, they have this sense of ownership of it. Which is a good, natural consequence of holding the institute in Northbrook. Even though it wasn't serving all Northbrook teachers, it's on their radar. (interview, August 13, 2015)

William recognized that in order for the program to grow, it was critical that teachers know their district supported the endorsement. Therefore, he and Andrew have continued

spending time "building this partnership structure with the district, so it's part of their plan. So we're not just an external provider. We're doing this because it's something the districts are trying to accomplish. They support it" (interview, March 19, 2015).

Relational agency provides a strong framework for understanding the relational aspects of online program creation

A central idea behind relational agency, as theorized by Edwards (2010), "involves working together purposefully towards goals that reflect the motives that shape the specialist expertise of each participant, and using the resources that each specialism can bring to bear" (p. 61). Examining an activity system with the ideas of relational agency at the forefront, allows one to look at the successes and challenges of the activity and theorize how the practice, the actions and the expertise of an individual or individuals, may or may not have affected the object of the activity system. To do this, one can examine how the object of the activity system was navigated, negotiated, questioned, and/or developed. In this case, where we find success in the development of the online SPED endorsement is where the norms that are highlighted by the theory of relational agency were adhered. Challenges appear where the norms of relational agency seem to be absent.

Program challenges. As explored earlier, perhaps one of the biggest problems in the design and launch of the online SPED endorsement was simply the differences in the core mission and values of the two organizations. This led to challenges in areas such as communication between the two organizations, understanding and respecting programmatic decisions, and course quality. In my second and final interview with Margaret, I shared with her my initial findings and talked with her about the ideas of relational agency. When talking with

her about building common knowledge she paused and said, “Yes. We were never about to communicate. It’s like we were always speaking a different language” (interview, April 5, 2016).

William also noted the difficulty in the two organizations communicating and understanding one another,

> I don't think they [UO] ever really understood [SUBC]. Their perspective—and understandably so—is around this specific program. And for us, this is part of a larger engagement strategy. So, their analysis for example in the whole potential scrubbing it—scrubbing the launch last year—was all through the lens of program viability. And for us, the challenge was to say no, we understand that is one lens but this is also part of an engagement strategy of a school with its constituents. (interview, April 5, 2016)

To elucidate the breakdown in relational agency further, we can turn to perhaps the biggest challenges in the development of the online SPED endorsement; the physical creation of the online courses and course quality. Because both Andrew and William had limited knowledge of online course development and instructional design, they recognized and valued the expertise that their partner, UO, had in order to help them launch a high quality online SPED endorsement. However, as Andrew noted there were “certain barriers working with UO. They do things a certain way when it comes to course design. The [designer] we are working with—I wouldn’t say she’s not flexible, but she’s becoming more flexible.” (interview, January 28, 2015).

With this specific challenge, neither phase of relational agency (Figure 6) was adhered to when working with UO in order to design the online courses for the endorsement. The first phase of relational agency emphasizes the building of common knowledge between professionals of the problem or issue. In this case, Margaret, the instructional designer, was assigned to the program. UO has a set format for the design of the courses; therefore, this was already established prior to

Andrew or Margaret ever meeting. Additionally, Andrew noted he was not sure if UO would have allowed SUBC to interview designers, but he would have liked the opportunity in order to ensure there was a match, or at least be able to talk about the goals of the project.

> Do we have the opportunity to interview instructional designers? Like the same way that I think about if I was to do a large remodel at my house? And I'm interviewing architects. And you sit down and you work with somebody or a design team right? This is the vision for the project. This is what we expect for process and outcome. (interview, March 17, 2015)

As the first phase of relational agency (building common knowledge) was not met, it was to be expected the second phase of relational agency (the professional's personal alignment and response to the commonly understood problem or issue) was also not met. Andrew noted that when he would approach the designer, looking for options or what he felt would be a better way of presenting course content, he was met with resistance, and was told "this isn't the way we do things. This is our model" (interview, March 17, 2015).

When I asked Margaret about her approach to instructional design for the SPED program specifically, she stated, "so, generally the format we use is narrated PowerPoint's . . . and we're forcing SUBC to that format. We're encouraging SUBC to use that format" (interview, November 17, 2015). There was no conversation or collaboration around the issue, or possible solutions that would recognize each person's set of expertise.

Similarly, when Andrew was meeting with leaders from UO about the quality of the online SPED courses, he was pushing them to develop a common definition for quality. As he reflected, UO had their quality assurance process and Andrew was working from the Quality Matters standards. What they didn't have was "a common understanding of what quality is—an

operational definition of quality. What I would really like to have is a shared definition of quality that is based on a shared metric and an industry standard" (Andrew, interview, March 8, 2016).

As with the instructional design process, having a conversation about the definition of quality, the building of common knowledge around quality, and agreeing on a metric from which to measure quality could have helped to mitigate the issues that surrounded online course quality. Additionally, by defining quality and the metric used to measure, the professionals or subjects in this activity would have been better able to align their personal response to the quality issue and worked collaboratively to work on the problem, as William previously noted.

Program success. As both Andrew and William would attest, one of the biggest successes was the program launching with a cohort of students in an incredibly short amount of time. And not just launching with one or two courses created, but with the whole curriculum mapped out and the State approving the endorsement. As Andrew explained, this "program is a fairly significant shift of culture for us . . . in that the program will be built and operational before it goes into practice. Many programs are built along the way" (interview, March 17, 2015).

So, what allowed this to happen? While the norms of relational agency fell short between UO and Andrew, both phases of relational agency were adhered to in significant ways between Andrew and William. While they each had differing roles in the development of the program, they not only shared the same object and outcome, they took the time to dialogue with each other about the goals of the program. Early on they established what they were trying to do, the target audience they needed to reach, and the modality that would allow them to most likely be successful. As Andrew remembered, "William and I started having a series of conversations over the summer . . . and he said how do you feel about exploring this and I said, well let's explore it"

(interview, January 28, 2015). He also noted, "we had conversations [about] what my experience was and what he [William] sees and what's in the environment" (interview, January 28, 2015).

In addition to the open dialogue about the program and building the common knowledge needed to operationalize the program goals, Andrew and William aligned their personal roles in the development of the endorsement to respond to problems that arose, thus fulfilling the second phase of relational agency. As evidenced in preceding sections, there were concerns over the enrollment for the first SPED cohort. When UO was ready to cancel the program, Andrew knew he needed to elevate the issues, and reached out to William for help. William in turn reached out to UO and tapped into his internal community networks in order to bring about a higher-level meeting that would discuss the consequences of terminating the program. The result was William was able to present to UO leaders what the implications of cancelling the program would be. UO leadership listened and understood the implications and were willing to work with the SES to give them the time they needed to build their program enrollment.

All and all, Andrew was satisfied with the outcome and was positive about continuing to work with UO,

> I'm largely supportive of continued work with them and in the future. I mean, I would even launch another project with them . . . knowing what this looks like and how this works, doing things and asking different questions in the beginning. (interview, March 17, 2015).

In this chapter, individual activities as well as key activities in the development and ongoing support of the online SPED endorsement were investigated. The close examination of these activities allowed for the emergence of the key findings that helped to answer the initial research questions. This study of the development of an online special education endorsement for

practicing teachers at a branch campus of a major university provides evidence that online program development is still evolving at SUBC and there are still many institutional, cultural and historical policies and practices that need to be negotiated.

Finally, as evidenced in the examination of the activity systems, the work in the creation of the online SPED endorsement fell on the shoulders of a few individuals. These contributions can get lost or minimized when examining activities across systems, such as the development of the SPED endorsement. Therefore, by employing a relational lens, we were able to gain insight into the contributions and expertise these individuals brought to the development of the online SPED endorsement.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This qualitative case study set out to investigate the development of a new online program at a branch campus of a large research university. It contributes to the field's understanding by using a sociocultural methodology to examine how institutional leaders at a branch campus of a large research university negotiated both main and branch campus policies and practices, while visioning and creating a new special education endorsement for practicing teachers. This study specifically examined how new working arrangements and educational practices may have affected existing academic policies at both branch and central campus levels. By employing the CHAT framework, this research contributed to our understanding of policy negotiation and institutional change from a holistic approach, while the ideas of relational agency helped to identify the contributions of individuals who acted within the activity systems. This holistic approach allowed for challenges and successes to be called out and explored, and these suggest ideas for program improvement.

In this final chapter, I present some reflections drawn from this study, and explore its contributions to research and practice as well as its limitations. I will start with an exploration of the sociocultural lens that was used to frame this research, including its affordances and limitations. I will then discuss directions for future research, and will conclude with some final reflections from this case study.

Affordances and Limitations to the Study's Framing

As with every research study, there are affordances and limitations. This research is no different. This case study employed two sociocultural lenses, CHAT and relational agency. The following section explores the affordances and limitations of employing a sociocultural lens in order to examine how institutional leaders of a newly formed online program negotiate both

main and branch campus policies and the consequences this negotiation had for online program development.

Affordances of CHAT and Relational Agency

CHAT has its roots in Marxist theory, therefore by its very nature the focus of an activity system is on change. The CHAT framework is conceptualized in such a way that culture and history are intertwined with the structures, creating a holistic view of policy formation and implementation. When one undertakes a CHAT analysis, it is assumed that the analysis will look at such ideas as identity and relationships. As established in Chapter 2, this level of analysis is often excluded in studies related to change in higher education and online program development. This level of analysis using CHAT was fruitful when looking at the change online program development brings to institution of higher education.

For example, take the aforementioned challenges that the development of the online SPED endorsement posed to such aspects of higher education as traditional assumptions of how SUBC operated, the role and identity of the faculty, the role and identity of the institution, and how a new program is developed. Let us briefly take a closer look at the role and identity of the faculty.

In traditional institutions of higher education, such as SUBC, a faculty member is known for his or her content expertise. They are the experts in their field. Their job, in the eyes of traditional academia, is to instill their knowledge and expertise upon those who sit in front of them in their courses. William supported this notion when he talked about the possibility of hiring an additional SPED faculty member, “the primary characteristic is the expertise, content expertise” (interview, February 2, 2015).

One could argue that this notion of a faculty member has been evolving, even prior to the proliferation of online learning. And while that may be somewhat true, it could also be argued that the policies and structures of the institution that support faculty have not changed. For example Andrew's angst over gaining tenure. While Andrew was deeply embedded in academic work while developing this endorsement, the traditional path for tenure does not count program development as research, although as both Andrew and William would say, it could be considered applied research. However, faculty have not typically assessed program development that way when evaluating tenure portfolios. It might be fair to say that the institution is holding on to traditions that privilege a specific path to tenure, where traditional "scholarship is going to take pride of place" (William, February 2, 2015) leaving those who are operating under new or changing roles to challenge these traditions. The CHAT frame allowed us to gain valuable insight into the complexity of tenure and promotion at SUBC as it related to online program development. I was able to analyze this tension from multiple vantage points that embraced culture and history. From this view, I was able to gain a more comprehensive look at the issue of tenure and promotion.

In this research, pairing CHAT with relational agency was necessary as CHAT allowed for to the study of the system and how it changed, while relational agency allowed me to study how individuals aligned (or not aligned) their expertise in order to accomplish or work towards the stated goals of the activity. As explored in Chapter 5, programs are typically built on the backs of individuals, those who shoulder most of the work. In some instances, individuals were able to work together towards the goals and outcomes of the activity, and thus experienced successes. There were also instances where this did not happen. Employing relational agency allowed for a deeper interrogation of the individual's motives, their actions, and their responses

to others actions.

As evidenced in Chapter 5, there were challenges in the relationship between SUBC and UO. This was mainly due to the individuals not being able to build common practice, common language from which to work from. Because of this, they were not able to appropriately align their responses in order work on the object and outcome of the activity. Margaret, when sharing with me that they had recently had a speaker come and talk about different campus cultures, admitted the differences in philosophies between herself and the faculty she regularly worked with "was a real revelation. It helped me understand why we've had this challenge as long as I've ever been here" (Margaret, November 17, 2015). This speaks to the importance of actors within an activity to take the time to build common practice and language in order to achieve the outcome of the activity.

Limitations of CHAT and Relational Agency

While these lenses proved to be extremely useful in analyzing the policies and practices of an emerging online program, it did come with its limitations. First, CHAT is considered to be in its third generation. When one talks about conducting a CHAT analysis, they may be using any one of the three generations. There is no standard generation of CHAT, it is being used and applied in a variety of different ways. To complicate matters, CHAT is continually being built upon and expanded. As a result, it is not a standard or set theory. As noted by Yamagata-Lynch (2010), when employing the CHAT frame in research, one must be careful to specifically state which generation of CHAT their research is subscribing to.

Researchers using CHAT are also up against an interpretation issue. Vygotsky, his colleagues, and their students theorized the underpinnings of CHAT. These writings were all in Russian, and therefore, had to be translated into English. This translation question has led to

considerable debate among theorists about CHAT's intended purpose. As noted by Yamagata-Lynch (2010), critics of CHAT argue "that activity theory as it is practiced in North America is an inadequate framework for identifying and understanding cultural and psychological phenomena because it did not follow Vygotsky's cultural-historical approach" (p. 28).

Finally, because of this deviation, it has caused some to call CHAT an unacceptable framework for understanding sociocultural research. Toomela, a scholar at the University of Tallinn in Estonia, is perhaps one of the most vocal critics of the modern day use of CHAT. In a series of articles published in *Culture and Psychology,* Toomela (2000, 2008) has argued that current uses of CHAT overly focus on the activity, thus leaving out or overlooking how activity relations to "psychological operations" (2000, p. 356). Toomela (2000) claims that modern activity theorists "claim that their approach is directly based on Vygotsky's theory. Vygotsky, however, would probably disagree with them because he clearly viewed activity and the individual mind as mutually constituting parts of a complex functional system…" (p. 356).

In addition, Toomela takes issue with how the tools have been defined in an activity system. In Toomela's interpretation of Vygotsky, the unit of analysis in an activity system should be the sign or tool, not the activity itself. He went on to state that the types of tools that are used in activity systems analysis are not the same type of tools Vygotsky had theorized. In Vygotsky's theory, signs (tools) were those that were used to "share information socially" (Toomela, 2000, p. 358), not signs that mediate an activity. Finally, Toomela took issue with what an activity system reveals. While using the framework can help reveal tensions and contradictions, it fails to "tell us, for example why and how a person is engaged in some specific sort of activity" (Toomela, 2000, p. 357).

Additionally, with CHAT's Marxist roots, its premise really comes back to the idea of moving the activity beyond the individual to the group. Therefore, one might question the pairing of CHAT with relational agency. However, when operationalizing CHAT in a real life context, such as online program development, I believe it would be remiss not to acknowledge or examine the activities of an individual. The framework I have used allows relational agency to mediate the activity system and the individual, thus allowing for the expertise of those working within the bounded activity system to be recognized and valued, but also allows for the expertise of those individuals who might be acting act outside of the bounded activity system to be recognized. Therefore, the work of the individual always contributes back to the collective activity.

Future Research

There are numerous ways this research can be extended. Online learning is emerging. In addition to SU, many institutions nationwide are still struggling to build and legitimatize online programs on their campuses (Allen & Seaman, 2015). Therefore, this research can be expanded to benefit researchers and online program developers at both local and national levels.

Expanding the Local Context

As previously noted, the policies and practices of online learning and online program development are emerging at SUBC. At the close of this study, there were several initiatives that will reshape online program development within the next six months to a year. These included the hiring of new positions, a new campus initiative to grow online learning, new committees to aid in the growth of online learning, and new professional development opportunities being developed for faculty interested in learning more about online learning.

The hiring of Faye, eLearning strategist was the first big hire SUBC initiated in order to support its goal of growing online learning. In the short time Faye has been at SUBC, she has been able to garner interest in online or hybrid learning from leaders and faculty in most of the five schools. In addition to adding Faye to the team, SUBC was in the process of hiring two new instructional design positions. These positions will be charged with supporting the new online and hybrid programs that will be developed in collaboration with the academic units at SUBC.

While Faye was working to grow online and hybrid programs at SUBC, she also co-chaired an eLearning Steering Committee, with the charge of launching a 20% by 2025 eLearning campus initiative, meaning that by 2025, 20% of all campus curricular activities will be available online (SUBC eLearning Steering Committee Charge, 2016). At the same time, the General Faculty Organization (GFO) identified four of its councils that will work with the eLearning Steering Committee on issues relating from policy, to assessment, to budget and financing to promotion and tenure. This work was just getting underway at the conclusion of the study.

With all of this movement and work being done to expand online or eLearning at SUBC, the opportunity exists to continue research on the development of policies and practices for online learning. SUBC is in a unique position from which to study the growth and development of new online programs. According to the 2015 Babson Survey Research Group report, there was the "largest-ever drop in the proportion of institutions reporting that online education is critical to their long-term strategy: from 70.8% in 2014, to 63.3% in 2015" (Allen & Seaman, 2016, p. 21). More telling is that they report this drop comes mainly from institutions with no online learning offerings. While SUBC has few online options for students, it is interesting that SUBC, as a

small institution, is bucking the current national trend and looking to expand its online course and program presence.

Any new research at SUBC would need to expand the scope, or the object of the activities from the SPED program to the SUBC campus. It can be assumed that as the SUBC campus begins to create or change policies campus wide, there will be more interaction and possibly tensions with SU and UO. Additionally, it would be fruitful to study a new program being developed after these committees have convened and begun their work to see what, if any, changes there might be in the policies and practices of online course development at both the main and branch campus levels.

In addition to researching the local context at SUBC, there are opportunities to research the SU system as well. Interestingly, both of SU's branch campuses launched their first online degrees within a year of each other. However, both campuses went about program creation very differently. One campus decided to partner with UO for the risk benefits and instructional design support. The other campus chose to keep the program local and develop, design, and manage the online program all in house.

As evidenced in this research, the biggest tensions in policy and practice did not come from SU; rather it came from the partnership with UO. In order to investigate this further, it would be helpful to also study the design, development, and launch of the online program at SUBC's sister branch campus. One could then embark on a cross case analysis to compare where the successes and points of tension lie. This research would be helpful to program developers, faculty, school or college deans, and university leaders who are leading the conversations that center around what online learning means at the university.

Creating A Sociocultural Tool for Program Development

Even with its limitations, the sociocultural lens used in this study appears to be an important lens from which to study online program development and policy change. In addition, it might also be a useful lens to use when considering building a new online program. There are a plethora of project management frameworks and tools that can be used to build an online program, with Moore and Kearsley (2012) and Puzziferro and Shelton (2008) being just a few. However, these frameworks are linear in nature. Additionally, they are unable to capture the complex and every changing nature of emerging online programs. In order to be able to approach online program design from a more holistic understanding, we need tools and frameworks that are more dynamic in nature, a tool or framework that takes into account the dynamic and ever changing nature of emerging program development. And second, we need an exploration and planning tool, a tool that could be used to help explore and plan for online program development, one that explicitly explores the cultural and historical aspects of the institution.

Following the lead of Engeström, who has used CHAT principles in his work on Developmental Work Research, and the change laboratory (Figure 5), I envision creating an exploration and planning tool based on the sociocultural principles used in this study, CHAT and relational agency. This exploration and planning tool could be used by program developers and partners as a means to identify relevant major activities in program development, identify the rules the activities might be bounded by, the communities from which they will need support and how the division of labor will be distributed. This tool could also help program developers identify their goals and outcomes for the activities in addition to aiding in identifying tensions within the activities. Finally, an important component of this tool would be help program developers work through the ideas of relational agency. This tool would help program developers

in facilitating meetings where partners can focus on building common knowledge and aligning their personal motives and responses in order to achieve the stated goals and outcomes of the program.

As found in this research, program developers tend to focus on their own individual roles, or on specific aspects of the program such as budgeting and financing. A tool such as this may help program developers become more aware, more early on in the development of a program, of the cultural, historical, and political aspects of online program development, helping to create a more holistic approach to online program and policy creation.

Final Reflections

This qualitative case study utilized a sociocultural lens from which to examine how institutional leaders of a newly formed online program negotiated both main and branch campus policies and the consequences this negotiation had for online program development. The online SPED endorsement at SUBC was the first online credential offered at SUBC, and there were many negotiations on many levels that the program leads had to engage in. The development of this online endorsement challenged established rules, forged new relationships with communities, and highlighted tensions between the rules and division of labor. It can be said with some confidence that the development of the SPED endorsement disrupted policies and practices at SUBC and SUBC will be looking to learn from the development and ongoing management of this program.

This case was incredibly complex, with three related yet different organizations being studied, in addition to paying attention to activities of the primary and secondary participants. The use of Engeström's heuristic CHAT tool helped to present these complex activity systems in ways that illuminated the data. It provided a way for me to physically engage in the data and

allowed for me to visually see the relationships and tensions between the different factions of the activity being studied. These are all items that traditional ways of studying online program develop or policy change cannot offer.

It is the hope that this dissertation might be able contribute to the ongoing dialog that surrounds online learning and its policies and practices and that it might be able to help faculty and administrators developing online programs understand the complexity of developing online programs, and provide them with a framework from which to approach, analyze, and understand their work.

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GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
CHAT	Cultural Historical Activity Theory
Community	The social group or groups the subject(s) participate in while engaged in the activity.
Division of Labor	Delineates the tasks and how they are shared among members of the community.
ESOL	English to Speakers of Other Languages
Learning Management System	Software used for the online delivery, communication, and administration of course materials, content and grades.
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOOCs	Massive Open Online Courses. Free online courses offered in a variety of subjects.
Object	The goal of an activity system.
Open Educational Resources (OER)	Educational materials that are used in teaching and learning that can be obtained at low or no cost.
Open University	A public, online learning and research university.
Outcome	The end result of an activity.
Quality Matters (QM)	A nationally recognized quality assurance program that certifies the quality of online courses.
Relational Agency	A sociocultural theory that explores how professionals work together towards a negotiated outcome.

Rules	Formal and informal guidelines, policies, practices, or procedures that affect the activity.
SES	School of Educational Studies at SUBC
SPED	Special Education
SU	State University
SUBC	State University Branch Campus
Subject	Individuals or groups involved in an activity.
Tools	Artifacts that mediate an activity.
UO	University Outreach

APPENDIX A: EXAMPLE OF INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

A-1: Interview Guide for the program manager at UWEO/PCE, First Interview

Preamble: Thank you so much for meeting with me. As you know, I am a doctoral student in Learning Sciences in the College of Education at UW Seattle. I have an interest in organizational policies and practices, specifically as they relate to online programs at institutions of higher education. I know you have had a strong leadership role in the development of this program and I would like to learn more about the program and your leadership role.

Just a reminder that participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason, you would like to stop the interview, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether.

1. Let's start off with you telling me your name, your position and about your role in the development of the online SPED endorsement. [Listen for specific role(s), where they are positioned.]

2. Can you describe the UWEO/PCE model and what your relationship is to the main Seattle campus? [Listen for governance, finances, policy, procedure, etc].

3. What is your approach to working with clients from a different institution or organization like UW Bothell? [Probe: Are you governed by any policies for how to work with clients? Does your approach change depending upon the client? How? Why? Flexibility.]

4. How would you describe your relationship with UWB and the development of the online SPED endorsement? [Listen for key players or those not mentioned, roles, descriptions used]

I'd like to focus our discussion on policy and negotiating policy between the two organizations.

5. Describe your involvement in developing or updating policy or ways of doing things as you are working with the online SPED endorsement. [Probe: Can you give an example of a policy or procedure that you helped to develop or change?] [Listen for new or exiting policy, collaborators, type of relationship with collaborators, successes, struggles and with whom or what]

6. Given that you are working with a branch campus, how do you feel this positions you to make decisions about this policy or procedures? [Probe: Who do you feel are the key policy decision makers are for the program and why?]

7. Can you give an example of a policy or procedure that you helped to develop or change? [Probe: Why those changes? How did you approach these change/update? Who was involved in these changes/update? What, if any, were the tensions in this change/update? What is the current status?]

8. How are policy and procedure decisions typically made for UWEO/PCE programs? Is this different? [Listen for: roles of main campus, local campus.] [Probe: To what extent is local campus policy directed by main campus or UWEO/PCE policy? Can you provide me with an example?]

9. Is there anything else that you feel is important for me to know about the changes or updates to policies or practices that came into the forefront as the online endorsement was being developed?

Finally, I'd like to explore the role of the faculty in the development of the endorsement.

10. How would you describe faculty roles in the new online program? What roles do faculty play exactly? Give some examples?

11. How, if at all, will the program approach faculty professional development in the development of the online endorsement? [Listen for mandatory, compensation]

12. Are there other issues or concerns related to the development of the online SPED endorsement that need to be addressed?

A-2: Interview Guide for the program manager at UWEO/PCE, Second Interview

Preamble: Hello. Today I'd like to share with you where I am with my analysis, show you how I have conceptualized it and get your feedback.

Just a reminder that participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason, you would like to stop the interview, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether.

1. I've spent time analyzing our interviews and trying to map out the themes in what we have talked about. This is where I have landed. {Show the graphical analysis and explain.} Talk to me a bit about how close have I have come and let me know if I missed anything or left anything out? Are there any inaccuracies? Is there anything you could contribute to make it a more complete?

A-3: Interview Guide for the School of Educational Studies Dean, First Interview

Preamble: Thank you so much for meeting with me. As you know, I am a doctoral student in Learning Sciences in the College of Education at UW Seattle. I have an interest in organizational policies and practices, specifically as they relate to online programs at institutions of higher education. I know you have had a strong leadership role in the development of this program and I would like to learn more about the program and your leadership role.

Just a reminder that participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason, you would like to stop the interview, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether.

1. Let's start off with you telling me your name, your position and about your role in the development of the online SPED endorsement. [Listen for specific role(s), where they are positioned.]

2. Describe for me the UWEO/PCE model for supporting and creating the online endorsement?

3. What your relationship is to the main Seattle campus? [Listen for governance, finances, policy, procedure, etc].

4. Describe for me the working relationship between UW Seattle, PCE/UWEO and UWB. [Listen for governance, finances, policy, procedure, etc].

5. What has been your approach to working with PCE/UWEO? Probe: What things have you managed, what has the faculty managed, what role has the VCAA played?]

6. How would you describe your relationship with PCE/UWEO and the development of the online SPED endorsement? [Listen for key players or those not mentioned, roles, descriptions used]

I'd like to focus our discussion on policy and negotiating policy between the two organizations.

7. Describe your involvement in developing or updating policy or ways of doing things as you are working with the online SPED endorsement. [Probe: Can you give an example of a policy or procedure that you helped to develop or change?] [Listen for new or exiting policy, collaborators, type of relationship with collaborators, successes, struggles and with whom or what]

8. Given that you are working with an outreach of the main campus, how do you feel this positions you to make decisions about local policy or procedures? [Probe: Who do you feel are the key policy decision makers are for the endorsement and why?] {Follow-up: How do you feel it positions you to make decisions about policy or procedures at UWEO/PCE?}

9. Can you give an example of a policy or procedure that you helped to develop or change? [Probe: Why those changes? How did you approach these change/update? Who was involved in these changes/update? What, if any, were the tensions in this change/update? What is the current status?]

10. How are policy and procedure decisions typically made for SES programs? Has this been different for the SPED endorsement? How so? Why? [Listen for: roles of main campus, local campus.] [Probe: To what extent is local campus policy directed by main campus or UWEO/PCE policy? Can you provide me with an example?]

11. Is there anything else that you feel is important for me to know about the changes or updates to policies or practices that came into the forefront as the online endorsement was being developed?

Finally, I'd like to explore the role of the faculty in the development of the endorsement.

12. How would you describe faculty roles in the new online endorsement? What roles do faculty play exactly? Give some examples?

13. How, if at all, will the endorsement approach faculty professional development in the development of the online endorsement? [Listen for mandatory, compensation]

14. Are there other issues or concerns related to the development of the SPED online endorsement that need to be addressed?

A-4: Interview Guide for the School of Educational Studies Dean, Second Interview

Preamble: Hi and thanks for meeting with me again. Today, I just want to follow up with you on some things we talked about last time and gain some insight into some new ideas and thoughts you may have around the policies and practices of the online SPED endorsement.

Just a reminder that participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason, you would like to stop the interview, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether.

1. It's been awhile since we chatted last. Let's just start by having you fill me in on the successes and frustrations you experienced this quarter with the SPED endorsement. [Listen for any policy or procedure related frustrations or successes, surprises, contributions, collaborations, struggles and successes with whom and/or what.] [Probe: Can you give me specific examples.]

2. Navigating the polices, the practices and the support structures of 3 different institutions can be difficult. How do you approach this? [Follow Up: Have you experienced or had to negotiate or navigate any issues this quarter?]

3. I've spent some time trying to map out the relationships between UWB, UWEO/PCE and the main Seattle campus. This is where I have landed. Talk to me a bit about how close have I have come. [Probe: Did I miss anything or leave anything out? Are there any inaccuracies? Is there anything you could contribute to make it a more complete map?]

Thanks for your input on this.

4. When we met last time, you indicated that _____ policy or practice was being reviewed and/or updated. What is the current status of this decision? [Probe: How did you approach these changes/updates? Who was involved in these changes/updates? What, if any, were the tensions in these changes/updates? Who led the charge?]

5. Now that you have ___ quarters of the program under your belt, talk to me about how you feel the structures are set up to support the online program? Give me specific examples. [Probe: Do you feel you have the necessary support to make or change decisions about the endorsement? About policies? About faculty and staff support? Student support and services?]

6. Is there anything else that you feel is important for me to know about the changes or updates to policies or practices that came into the forefront this quarter?

7. Is there anything else you feel that is important for me to know about that I have not asked you about?

A-5: Interview Guide for the School of Educational Studies Dean, Third Interview

Preamble: Hello. This is our last interview! Today I'd like to share with you where I am with my analysis, show you how I have conceptualized it and get your feedback.

Just a reminder that participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason, you would like to stop the interview, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether.

1. Let's start off by having you update me on the SPED endorsement.

2. I've spent time analyzing our interviews and trying to map out the themes in what we have talked about. This is where I have landed. {Show the graphical analysis and explain.} Talk to me a bit about how close have I have come and let me know if I missed anything or left anything out? Are there any inaccuracies? Is there anything you could contribute to make it a more complete?

3. Is there anything else that you feel is important for me to know about the program that came into the forefront this quarter? [Listen for changes or updates to policies, practices, relationships.]

A-6: Interview Guide for lead SPED Faculty, First Interview

Preamble: Thank you so much for meeting with me. As you know, I am a doctoral student in Learning Sciences in the College of Education at UW Seattle. I have an interest in organizational policies and practices, specifically as they relate to online programs at institutions of higher education. I know you have had a strong leadership role in the development of this program and I would like to learn more about the program and your leadership role.

Just a reminder that participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason, you would like to stop the interview, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether.

1. Let's start off with you telling me your name, your position and about your role in the development of the online SPED endorsement. [Listen for specific role(s), where they are positioned.]

2. What has been your approach to working with PCE/UWEO? [Probe: What things have you managed, what has the dean managed, what role has the VCAA played?]

3. Describe for me the working relationship between UW Seattle, PCE/UWEO and UWB. [Listen for governance, finances, policy, procedure, etc].

4. How would you describe your relationship with PCE/UWEO and the development of the online SPED endorsement? [Listen for key players or those not mentioned, roles, descriptions used]

I'd like to focus our discussion on policy a bit – to thinking about policies as they specifically relate to faculty professional development or faculty learning.

5. How would you describe faculty roles in the new online program? What role(s) do you play exactly? Give some examples? [Probe: Are these roles different than what is required/expected from those who do not teach online?] [Listen for specific policies (formal or informal)] [Probe: Do faculty have a role in policy creation?]

6. How, if at all, has the program approach faculty professional development in the development of the online program? [Listen for mandatory, compensation] [Probe: Is this different than the approach when developing on campus courses? In what ways?]

7. Are there other issues or concerns related to the development of the SPED online endorsement that need to be addressed?

8. Is there anything else you feel is important for me to know about that would help in understanding the program, policies, development or relationships?

A-7: Interview Guide for lead SPED Faculty, Second Interview

Preamble: Hi and thanks for meeting with me again. I hope your quarter went well and that things are wrapping up nicely. Today, I just want to follow up with you on some things we talked about last time and gain some insight into some new ideas and thoughts you may have around the policies and practices of the online criminal justice program.

Just a reminder that participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason, you would like to stop the interview, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether.

1. It's been awhile since we chatted last. Let's just start by having you fill me in on the successes and frustrations you experienced this quarter with the online SPED endorsement? [Listen for any policy or procedure related frustrations or successes, surprises, contributions, collaborations, struggles and successes with whom and/or what.] [Probe: Can you give me specific examples.]

2. Now that you have two quarters of the program under your belt, talk to me about how you feel the structures are set up to support online programs? Give me specific examples. [Probe: Do you feel you have the necessary support to make or change decisions about the program? About policies? About faculty and staff support? Student support and services?]

3. I've spent some time trying to map out the relationships between UWB, UWEO/PCE and the main Seattle campus. This is where I have landed. Talk to me a bit about how close have I have come. [Probe: Did I miss anything or leave anything out? Are there any inaccuracies? Is there anything you could contribute to make it a more complete map?]

Let's focus in a bit on faculty professional development or faculty learning for the online program.

4. In our last interview you indicated that faculty professional development was currently structured _____ and support by _____. How do you feel this model is working? Please give me some examples. [Probe: Are there specific things working well? Things that you would like to change? Would you say faculty feel supported, why or why not?

5. How prepared to do you feel as a faculty member teaching in the online program? [Probe: Give me some examples? How might things be improved?]

6. How supported do you feel as a faculty member teaching in the online program? [Probe: Give me some examples? How might things be improved?]

7. What is the process for your being able to offer this feedback about the program? [Probe: How well do you feel your concerns will be addressed? Why do you feel this way? Can you give me examples? How representative do you feel your views are? Talk to me a bit about

what you are basing your conclusions on?]

8. What specific issues were there to navigate and which issues, if any, would you like to see changed/updated?

9. Policies that surround faculty professional development can be difficult to navigate. How have you negotiated or navigated these issues?

10. Is there anything else that you feel is important for me to know about the changes or updates to policies or practices that came into the forefront this quarter?

11. Is there anything else you feel that is important for me to know about that I have not asked you about?

A-8: Interview Guide for lead SPED Faculty, Third Interview

Preamble: Hi and thanks for meeting with me again. I'm excited to talk to you about the program and where you have come in these last few quarters. We'll just take some time to follow up with you on some things we talked about last time and talk about what's changed and what's coming up.

Just a reminder that participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason, you would like to stop the interview, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether.

1. Let's start off by having you update me on the SPED endorsement. [Listen for any policy or procedure related frustrations or successes, surprises, contributions, collaborations, struggles and successes with whom and/or what.] [Probe: Can you give me specific examples.]

2. Now that you have ___ quarters of the program under your belt, talk to me about how supported you feel in teaching and managing the online endorsement? Give me specific examples. [Probe: Do you feel you have the necessary support to make or change decisions about the program? About policies? About faculty and staff support? Student support and services?]

3. Is there anything else that you feel is important for me to know about the program that came into the forefront this quarter? [Listen for changes or updates to policies, practices, relationships.]

A-9: Interview Guide for lead SPED Faculty, Fourth Interview

Preamble: Hello. This is our last interview! Today I'd like to share with you where I am with my analysis, show you how I have conceptualized it and get your feedback.

Just a reminder that participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason, you would like to stop the interview, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether.

1. Let's start off by having you update me on the SPED endorsement. [Listen for any policy or procedure related frustrations or successes, surprises, contributions, collaborations, struggles and successes with whom and/or what.] [Probe: Can you give me specific examples.]

2. Now that you have ___ quarters of the program under your belt, talk to me about how supported you feel in teaching and managing the online endorsement? Give me specific examples. [Probe: Do you feel you have the necessary support to make or change decisions about the program? About policies? About faculty and staff support? Student support and services?]

3. I've spent time analyzing our interviews and trying to map out the themes in what we have talked about. This is where I have landed. {Show the graphical analysis and explain.} Talk to me a bit about how close have I have come and let me know if I missed anything or left anything out? Are there any inaccuracies? Is there anything you could contribute to make it a more complete?

4. Is there anything else that you feel is important for me to know about the program that came into the forefront this quarter? [Listen for changes or updates to policies, practices, relationships.]

A-10: Interview Guide for PCE/UWEO Instructional Designer, First Interview

Preamble: Thank you so much for meeting with me. As you know, I am a doctoral student in Learning Sciences in the College of Education at UW Seattle. I have an interest in organizational policies and practices, specifically as they relate to online programs at institutions of higher education. I know you have had a strong leadership role in the development of this program and I would like to learn more about the program and your leadership role.

Just a reminder that participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason, you would like to stop the interview, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether.

1. Let's start off with you telling me your name, your position and about your role in the development of the online SPED endorsement. [Listen for specific role(s), where they are positioned.]

2. Describe for me the UWEO/PCE model. [Listen for governance, finances, policy, procedure, etc].

3. Describe for me the working relationship between UW Seattle, PCE/UWEO and UWB. [Listen for governance, finances, policy, procedure, etc].

4. How would you describe your relationship with UWB and the development of the online SPED endorsement? [Listen for key players or those not mentioned, roles, descriptions used]

5. How would you describe your relationship with UWB and the development of the online SPED endorsement? [Listen for key players or those not mentioned, roles, descriptions used]

I'd like to focus our discussion on policy a bit – to thinking about online courses and design.

6. What is your approach to instructional design?

7. What is your approach to working with clients from a different institution or organization like UW Bothell? [Probe: Are you governed by any policies for how to work with clients? Does your approach change depending upon the client? How? Why? Flexibility.]

8. How is the SPED endorsement similar or different to other programs or endorsements you have previously worked with?

9. How are policy and procedure decisions typically made for UWEO/PCE programs? Is this endorsement any different? [Listen for: roles of main campus, local campus.] [Probe: To what extent is local campus policy directed by main campus or UWEO/PCE policy? Can you provide me with an example?]

10. Are there other issues or concerns related to the development of the SPED online endorsement that need to be addressed?

11. Is there anything else you feel is important for me to know about that would help in understanding the program, policies, development or relationships?

A-11: Interview Guide for PCE/UWEO Instructional Designer, Second Interview

Preamble: Hello. This is our last interview! Today I'd like to share with you where I am with my analysis, show you how I have conceptualized it and get your feedback.

Just a reminder that participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason, you would like to stop the interview, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether.

1. Let's start off by having you update me on the SPED endorsement. [Listen for any policy or procedure related frustrations or successes, surprises, contributions, collaborations, struggles and successes with whom and/or what.] [Probe: Can you give me specific examples.]

2. Now that you have ___ quarters of the program under your belt, talk to me about how supported you feel in teaching and managing the online endorsement? Give me specific examples. [Probe: Do you feel you have the necessary support to make or change decisions about the program? About policies? About faculty and staff support? Student support and services?]

3. I've spent time analyzing our interviews and trying to map out the themes in what we have talked about. This is where I have landed. {Show the graphical analysis and explain.} Talk to me a bit about how close have I have come and let me know if I missed anything or left anything out? Are there any inaccuracies? Is there anything you could contribute to make it a more complete?

4. Is there anything else that you feel is important for me to know about the program that came into the forefront this quarter? [Listen for changes or updates to policies, practices, relationships.]

A-12: Interview Guide for Key Leaders

Preamble: Thank you so much for meeting with me. As you know, I am a doctoral student in Learning Sciences in the College of Education at UW Seattle. I have an interest in organizational policies and practices, specifically as they relate to online programs at institutions of higher education. I know you have had a strong leadership role in the development and or support of this program and I would like to learn more about your leadership role.

Just a reminder that participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason, you would like to stop the interview, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether.

1. Let's start off with you telling me your name, your position and about your role in the development and or support of the online SPED endorsement. [Listen for specific role(s), where they are positioned.]

2. Describe for me philosophy, mission or plan for moving UWB forward with online learning? What was your role in the development of this vision? [Listen for specific role(s), where they are positioned.]

3. What role do you feel school deans have in this vision? [Follow up with asking about IT, Learning Technologies and Faculty].

4. Describe for me the working relationship between UWB and UW Seattle. [Listen for governance, finances, policy, procedure, etc].

5. Describe for me the working relationship between UWB and PCE/UWEO. [Listen for governance, finances, policy, procedure, etc].

6. What has been your approach to working with the development of the SPED endorsement? [Probe: What things have you managed, what has the faculty managed, what role has the school dean played?]

7. Describe your involvement in developing or updating policy or ways of doing things as the online SPED endorsement was and is currently still being developed. [Probe: Can you give an example of a policy or procedure that you helped to develop or change?] [Listen for new or exiting policy, collaborators, type of relationship with collaborators, successes, struggles and with whom or what]

8. Given that you are working with an outreach of the main campus, how do you feel this positions you to make decisions about local policy or procedures? [Probe: Who do you feel are the key policy decision makers are for the endorsement and why?] [Follow-up: How do you feel it positions you to make decisions about policy or procedures at UWEO/PCE?]

9. Can you give an example of a policy or procedure that you helped to develop or change? [Probe: Why those changes? How did you approach these change/update? Who was involved in these changes/update? What, if any, were the tensions in this change/update? What is the current status?]

10. How are policy and procedure decisions typically made for individual school programs? Has this been different for the SPED endorsement? How so? Why? [Listen for: roles of main campus, local campus.] [Probe: To what extent is local campus policy directed by main campus or UWEO/PCE policy? Can you provide me with an example?]

11. Is there anything else that you feel is important for me to know about the changes or updates to policies or practices that came into the forefront as the online endorsement was being developed?

12. Are there other issues or concerns related to the development of the online SPED endorsement that need to be addressed?

APPENDIX B: OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR SPED RELATED MEETINGS AND ORIENTATION SESSION

Field notes will be recorded during the departmental meeting observation. This guide is to focus observations on three central items: settings & interactions, online endorsement leaders, and the meeting conversations. I will be observing for evidence of how (1) the effect of where online learning is situated and how it may/may not affect policies and practices of the program (2) leaders talk, or don't talk about policy or policy related issues.

Setting & Interactions

- Where is the meeting taking place?
- How is the room set up?
- Where do participants sit?
- Who has been invited to the meeting?
- Who takes the lead in meeting facilitation?
- What is overall feel/tone of those in the room (friendly, stressed, collegial?)
- How engaged are the participants?
- What is the process for how decisions are made?
- Do people arrive on time/leave early?
- Is the agenda followed? Strictly or casually?

Online Endorsement Leaders

- How is the meeting structured? (agenda, formal, informal?)
- What role does he/she assume? (leader, expert, colleague, listener?)
- How does he/she interact with those in attendance?
- How does he/she they talk about policy and practices for the online program?
- How does he/she react to faculty feedback?

Conversations

- Who leads the conversations? In what ways?
- What is the flow of conversation [who directs conversation, who participates, is it open conversation?]
- What are the topics and how much time is given to each – and how much time is actually taken?
- Is everyone who the topic 'touches' in the room?
- Is the conversations dominated by a certain individual(s)?
- What positions do participants take with respect to the conversation?

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE CODES AND CODE DEFINITIONS

Parent Code: Partnerships

Sub Code	Definition
Alternative Model	Theorizing different ways to partner with UO and use their services
Community Relationships	Serving the greater communities within the SUBC geographic region
External Partner	Partners from outside the UO System that were integral in the development and launch of the SPED endorsement
Instructional Design Issues	Conflicts that arose in the instructional design process of the SPED Endorsement
Key Partners	People identified by all participants as being integral in the creation of the SPED Endorsement
Partnership: SUBC & School Districts	Collaborations, communications and general support received from the partnering K-12 school districts
Partnership: SUBC & SU	Collaborations, communications, funds, marketing and general support received from SU
Partnership: SUBC & UO	Collaborations, communications, funds, marketing and general support received from UO, either as part of or in addition to the established MoA
Tension b/t SU and SUBC	An event that caused strain in the partnership between SU and SUBC
Tension b/t SUBC and UO	An event that caused strain in the partnership between SU and UO

Parent Code: Participant Information

Definition of eLearning	How different participants and institutions define eLearning
Philosophy of Leadership and Change	The personal leadership and change philosophies that leaders at SUBC subscribe to
Philosophy of OL Learning	Participants philosophy of teaching online
Teaching Philosophy	The general teaching philosophy of the participants

Parent Code: School of Educational Studies (SES) Information

Faculty Perception of OL	SES faculty's perception about online learning in general
Faculty Perspective of SPED	SES faculty's perspective about the development of the SPED program
History of SPED	The background and history of how the SPED endorsement came to be
SES Culture	The knowledge, beliefs, values, behaviors surrounding teaching and learning that exist with the SES at SUBC
SES Staff Roles	The specific roles and responsibilities that SES staff took on to support the development and management of the SPED Endorsement

Parent Code: State University Branch Campus (SUBC) Information

Institutional Culture	The knowledge, beliefs, values, behaviors surrounding teaching and learning that exist at SUBC
Institutional History with OL Learning	Previous attempts at and philosophy of online learning at SUBC

Institutional Infrastructure	Physical and organizational structures and systems that are in place at SUBC to support the SPED endorsement
SUBC Tech Infrastructure	Technological structures, software and subscriptions that are negotiated and supported by SU IT and made available to SUBC
Lack of OL Expertise	The lack of online learning expertise at SUBC.
OL Strategy for Growth	The current strategies in place for growing the online program presence at SUBC
SUBC Campus Organization	How the campus is organized in terms of units, schools, department

Parent Code: University Outreach (UO) Information

UO Hierarchy	How UO is organized in terms of units and reporting structure
UO Role and Responsibility	The specific role and responsibilities UO undertook in the development and management of the SPED Endorsement
UO Challenge	The challenges UO faces including staffing and workload

Parent Code: State University (SU) Information

SU Tech Infrastructure	Technological structures, software and subscriptions that are negotiated and supported by SU IT and made available to SUBC

Parent Code: SPED Endorsement Development

Access	One of the main stated reasons for creating the endorsement as an online credential

Budget	The budget specifically as it relates to the development, launch, and ongoing costs of the SPED Endorsement
Curriculum Development	The build out of the SPED curriculum
Curriculum Approval	The build processes that were followed in order to gain approval at all campus levels (SES, SUBC, SU)
District Budget	School districts budgets play a role in what they are able to contribute to the partnership with SUBC
Enrollment	Enrollment numbers for the SPED Endorsement
External Influences on Program	External Influences, policies, practices that may have had an effect on the SPED endorsement
Instructional Design	The process in the design, development and delivery of instructional materials for the SPED curriculum
Marketing and Recruitment	Activities, processes undergone to promote the SPED Endorsement to practicing teachers
Program Approval	The different approval processes the SPED endorsement had to undergo in order to launch - at all levels, school, university and state
Program Build	The plans and processes that were completed in order to create the SPED Endorsement
Program Evaluation	How the SPED endorsement is being evaluated for student learning success
Program Growth	Growing the SPED endorsement to a point where it is self-sustaining and scalable
Program Need	Resources needed as identified through program planning research

Program Quality	How the SPED endorsement is being evaluated for quality in design and delivery
Program Support & Expertise	Expertise, collaborations, communications, professional development, technical support, mentorship, and general support received from SES Staff and from within the SUBC community
Student Support	Practices, policies, resources that support the online student
Web Presence	The online presence the SPED Endorsement had on both the UO website and the SUBC SES website

Parent Code: Individual Activities and Relationships

Andrew's Role & Responsibilities	The specific role and responsibilities Andrew undertook in the design, development, and management of the SPED Endorsement
Fac Dev	The faculty development activities that Andrew participated in to gain skill and knowledge about online learning
Role as ID	The specific role and responsibilities the ID undertook with the development of the SPED program
William's Role and Responsibility	The specific role and responsibilities William undertook in the development and management of the SPED Endorsement

Parent Code: Change and Considerations For Policy and Practice

Change in Admin Structure	Changes that occurred in the how units were organized based upon lessons learned from the SPED endorsement

Change in Process/Practice	A change in existing processes or practices that occurred from lessons learned through the development of the SPED endorsement
Policy and Practice	How existing policies are being used or repurposed for the online SPED Endorsement
Policy Change	A change to an existing policy that affects an aspect of the SPED Endorsement
Tenure and Promotion	How the development and management of an emergent program affect tenure & promotion at SUBC