Today’s community colleges are challenged to respond to rapidly changing internal and external environments. Their responses must promote highly responsive and relevant programs and services, while keeping intact the strengths of community colleges—access, student success, and a focus on teaching and learning. Further, these responses must occur in the context of rising costs, decreasing revenues, and increased accountability. Accrediting agencies are requiring colleges to more effectively respond to change by implementing improved planning processes. The research literature on higher education planning suggests faculty are a key constituency to engage in planning efforts. However, little is written about actual faculty experiences in planning.

This qualitative study was conducted to provide increased understanding of how faculty at a large, suburban California community college experienced developing discipline specific educational master plans (EMPs) in Spring 2001. Using interactive qualitative analysis methodology, a seven-member faculty focus group first identified the affinities (or themes) of their planning experience. These affinities were used to develop interview questions for another 14 faculty members. The 21 faculty participants were from a total of nine different instructional areas, and had been identified as lead EMP contacts for their disciplines. Following its collection, the data was analyzed to generate grounded theory about the faculty EMP experience.
The “Faculty EMP Experience Systems Theory” revealed the primary driver of the faculty experience was their belief eligibility for future resources for their disciplines was tied directly to their EMPs. This was followed by secondary drivers of their past experiences with planning at the college, and the resources they were given, or accessed, to complete their plans. Together, these three drivers directly influenced how the planning work was done. The secondary outcomes of the faculty experience developing EMPs included interpersonal effects of engaging in the EMP process, and unanswered questions about what the administration would actually do with their EMP work. Finally, the primary outcomes of the faculty experience were their evaluation of the EMP processes and products (plans), and the frustrations, if any, they experienced. This new theory suggests implications for practice and further research.
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Experiences of Community College Faculty in Developing Discipline Specific Educational Master Plans at American River College

by

Susan L. Lorimer

A DISSERTATION

submitted to

Oregon State University

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APPROVED:

Redacted for privacy

Major Professor, representing Education

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Dean of the School of Education

Redacted for privacy

Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

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Susan L. Lorimer, Author
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Experiences of Community College Faculty in Developing Discipline Specific Educational Master Plans at American River College

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Overview

Community colleges across the nation are confronting rapidly changing internal and external environments. Learning to live and prosper in those environments is quickly becoming a necessity. Indeed, the challenges are immense. The escalating demands to improve educational opportunities for an increasingly diverse student body, and prepare them for swiftly evolving careers, means mere cosmetic adjustments will not be enough (Alfred, 1998; Alfred & Carter, 2000; Carter, 1998b). Transformative, thoughtful change is required (Carter, 1998b). Change is needed to promote highly responsive and relevant programs and services. At the same time, colleges must keep intact the strengths of community colleges—access, student success, and a focus on teaching and learning. Further, all this must be accomplished in the context of rising costs and decreasing revenues.

One clear way to effect positive, sustainable change is through planning. Therefore, many colleges and their accrediting agencies are increasing their emphasis on comprehensive educational planning. To support needed change, colleges are attempting to engage all members of their institutions in effective planning processes (Carter, 1998a). A key constituency within community colleges, who need to be involved in planning, are the faculty (Alfred, 1998). Faculty are responsible for designing the relevant, high quality curricula and programs demanded by students and employers (Alfred, 1998; Carter, 1998b).
Many colleges are still uncertain about the best way to engage this powerful and knowledgeable constituency in planning. A review of the literature suggests not enough is known about how community college faculty actually do participate in planning. Therefore, this qualitative study seeks to increase knowledge in this area by generating grounded theory regarding community college faculty experiences in educational master planning. Grounded theory is a specific approach to qualitative research intended to induce an understanding of (or generate a theory about) a phenomenon, without imposing pre-existing expectations on the phenomenon under study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Creswell, 1998). The theory generated by this approach is considered low-level theory, and is applicable only to immediate situations. The participants in this study were community college faculty, who served as lead contacts for their disciplines, when discipline specific educational master plans were developed at American River College in Spring 2001.

Changing Community College Environments

Today’s community colleges face a rapidly changing environment, including students with new needs and expectations; greater market competition; distance education; proliferating technology; increasing performance and accountability demands; and insufficient resources to even continue business as usual. In short, if community colleges are to meet their mission and flourish, they must respond proactively to their shifting environments (Alfred & Carter, 2000).

In California, community college student demographics are changing with increasing speed (Little Hoover Commission, 2000). There is greater diversity in ethnicity, culture, age, socio-economic status, and academic preparedness. In many areas of the state, the number of students needing access to community colleges is increasing dramatically, while the resources to provide access are not forthcoming (Hayward, Breneman & Estrada, 1998). Workforce needs are also changing at increased rates, with business and industry requiring skilled workers in a number of
new and changing fields. Finding skilled workers (faculty) is also a challenge for many community colleges in California. Colleges are experiencing large numbers of retirements within the faculty ranks, and dramatic student growth simultaneously. Colleges are having difficulty finding discipline-qualified faculty, who also have the required skills to teach students with diverse learning styles and needs. Technology is altering how content is delivered and how communication between teachers and students, and teachers and the college community occurs. This same technology poses huge resource allocation demands for financially beleaguered colleges (Alfred, 1998). All these issues must be addressed, as increased accountability measures are imposed from a variety of sources, including state and federal legislatures, student consumers, accrediting bodies, and business and industry leaders.

Using Planning to Transform Organizations

How should community colleges respond? One answer to the question is to look for appropriate change models within the business and political sectors, which have had to respond to changes within their own environments in order to succeed. To do this, a number of their leaders have focused on strategic planning as a means of predicting and responding to change. Scholars of corporate and political organizations believe planning is a key component needed to position organizations for the future (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Burns, 1978; Kanter, 1997; Sanders, 1998). Planning strategies have been promoted to help organizations understand and strengthen their missions. Use of internal and external scans creates data to inform leaders if threats and/or opportunities are on the horizon.

This emphasis on strategic planning is becoming more accepted in the world of education (Peterson, 1997). Community college leaders are beginning to see the threats from competitors, and are searching for successful ways to respond.
Accreditation Agencies Require Planning

To assist colleges in moving beyond the traditional ways of viewing and reacting to the world, accrediting agencies are purposefully requiring colleges to address issues of institutional mission, planning, effectiveness, and continuous program improvement to maintain their coveted accreditation status (Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 1994; New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, 2001; North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, 2001; Northwest Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities, 1999; Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2001; Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges [ACCJC WASC], 1996). The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), which accredits 140 institutions in California, Hawai‘i, and the western Pacific, significantly changed its accreditation standards in 1996 to include greater emphasis on planning, accountability, and program improvement. Every six years ACCJC institutions must address these issues in their institutional self-studies, and are evaluated on their progress during evaluation team visits. The transition has not been easy for most institutions. Colleges struggle with ways to collect and use appropriate effectiveness data, how to connect data to planning, planning to budgeting, and then evaluate and further improve their performances.

Since 1997, planning and research have been the issues drawing the greatest number of recommendations from ACCJC evaluation teams (ACCJC WASC, 2000a, 2001a). In 1999-2000, over five times as many recommendations were made in these areas than for any other standard (ACCJC WASC, 2000a). The recommendations suggest that colleges are still challenged with developing and executing processes to successfully integrate planning, research, evaluation, budgeting, and program improvement.
Roles and Responsibilities of Faculty in Planning

In community colleges, the relationship between failing to prepare for the future and having institutions and students suffer negative consequences may not be obvious, at least not to many within the system (Carter, 1998a). Higher education is steeped in tradition, and community colleges often strive to imitate the traditional four-year institutions to increase their own academic legitimacy (Tillery & Deegan, 1985). This focus on past traditions is comfortable for faculty and institutions. Unfortunately, it also creates little urgency for change. Many faculty are isolated in their classrooms, and may simply not see why conducting business as usual is risky. Conversely, some faculty may be well in tune with changes occurring in their disciplines and the skills required by their students to transition to the workforce, but have difficulty convincing either their colleagues or administration of the need to change.

True transformation of community colleges can only be accomplished when those responsible for developing and delivering relevant, high quality curricula to students with diverse abilities and needs, partner with the rest of the institution to create positive change. College leaders need to know the best ways to engage faculty in contributing to institutional transformation. Indeed, if planning is a key component in effective change, how do colleges involve faculty in college planning efforts? What skills, data, and support do they need to enable them to contribute their essential expertise to college planning efforts? What do the faculty need to learn from their peers, and others in the college and community, to foster change?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

If community colleges are to respond effectively to their changing internal and external environments, they need to develop and implement better planning strategies. Faculty need to be involved in planning in a meaningful way to facilitate creation of relevant, high quality curricula, and appropriate delivery
methods. Further, planning outcomes will need to ensure support for faculty to stay current in discipline related skills, technology, and teaching methodologies for diverse student populations. Colleges need assistance to effectively engage their faculty in the planning processes needed to transform their institutions.

FOCUS OF THE STUDY

The College

American River College is a large, suburban, comprehensive community college in northern California. The college was selected for this study because it has developed and is using a faculty focused educational master planning model to address its rapidly changing internal and external environments. The college is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Located in the northeast section of the greater Sacramento area, American River College enrolled 29,125 students in credit courses in Fall 2000, making it the largest institution of higher education in the Sacramento region. The main college campus is located on a 153-acre site of a former ranch. The college opened its doors in 1955. In 1965, it became part of the Los Rios Community College District, which was just being formed (American River College, 2001). Since most of the buildings were built in the late 1950s and early 1960s, many of the facilities are outdated, and are in need of modernization or replacement.

The college has experienced steady campus enrollment growth since 1996, and rapid enrollment growth in public safety training, an off-campus program added in 1998. The college and district are located in a five county region. The region is experiencing significant population growth. To meet the continued anticipated growth in students (Beachler, 1999) and to bring needed updates to
college facilities, the Los Rios Community College District placed facility bond measures on the last two local election ballots. Both measures received over 60% voter support, but failed to meet the then required 66.67% support.

Student demographics at the college have continued to change over the last five years (Barr & Scott, 2000). Students aged under 18, and 18 to 29, have declined in the percentage of overall students, while students over 40 years of age have increased eight percent. At the same time, the college has experienced a four percent increase in non-white students, and a surge in demand for English as a second language (ESL) courses. Students from the former Soviet Union form the largest group of new immigrants requiring ESL courses.

In Spring 2001, American River College employed 335 full-time faculty, 545 part-time faculty, 299 classified staff, and 25 managers. Due to growth in student population and numerous retirements, the college has hired over 120 new tenure-track faculty in the last seven semesters. The instructional programs are grouped into eleven major areas: behavioral and social sciences, business, English, fine and applied arts, humanities, learning resources, mathematics/engineering/design technology, physical education and athletics, public safety training, science and allied health, and technical education. The areas support 65 academic disciplines.

The greater Sacramento region, home of California’s state capitol, is expected to continue employment growth through 2004. According to labor market information from the California Employment Development Department, the area is one of the fastest growing in the United States. The area has transitioned from a government, trade, and agriculture center to a more diverse economy. The region boasts a growing high technology research and manufacturing base. It has also become a western hub for data processing; customer call centers; and office support for trade, finance, insurance, and real estate (California Employment Development Department, 2000). These new and growing business and industry centers require
skilled workers, and have requested local community colleges offer appropriate programs to train their workers.

Thus, American River College faces issues of aging facilities, anticipated student population growth, changing student demographics, many new faculty hires, and new training needs for business and industry. Together, these issues challenge the college to find ways to meet all of its demands.

Educational Master Planning

American River College began a serious effort in early August 2000 to redesign and revitalize its educational master planning process. In past years, instructional disciplines were tasked to create, or update, their master plans twice during their six-year program review cycles. In Spring 2000, as the college prepared its accreditation self-study for an evaluation visit in October 2000, it became apparent a number of disciplines had fallen behind in their planning cycles. Plan formats and the information contained in the plans had little consistency. Most discouraging, many areas believed the plans sat on administrators’ shelves, and were not used to inform college decisions. In addition, student services and administrative services had no consistent program review, or planning cycles in place. Therefore, the college planning council set a goal for the college to redesign its entire educational master plan (EMP) process in 2000-2001 (American River College, 2000a). This goal was strongly affirmed by the accreditation evaluation team, during their visit in October (ACCJC WASC, 2000b).

The college began its educational master planning by appointing an EMP process task force. The task force was charged to draft a plan development process for review and revision by the college at large. As an academic and professional matter outlined in California Assembly Bill 1725 (1988), developing processes for institutional planning and budgeting must undergo collegial consultation between governing boards (often represented by the college president) and academic
senates. Therefore, the academic senate and the college president consulted together to create the task force and its charge. In addition, they requested the dean of planning, research and development facilitate the task force.

The EMP process task force, composed of 13 members appointed by their appropriate governance leaders, met for a single day retreat on August 25, 2000. They drafted a proposal (American River College, 2000a) for a planning process that included:

- A definition of an educational master plan
- Areas of the college required to create EMPs
- Identification of those responsible for developing discipline and service area plans
- Training requirements for plan developers
- Data to be used to develop plans
- Information each plan would give about a discipline or area
- Format of the plan document and how the overall college EMP would be compiled from the discipline and area plans
- Description of how the plans would inform college decisions, and
- A timeline for creating the plans.

In late Fall 2000, following review and some revisions, the proposed planning process received the support of the academic senate and management, and was approved by the president. The dean of planning, research and development was tasked to facilitate the implementation of the EMP process. The college research and professional development personnel were assigned to assist the dean. Together, they determined the information to be provided to the planners, developed the electronic EMP template, and developed and held training sessions for those creating plans.
The academic senate leaders were responsible for working with discipline faculty to ensure faculty EMP contacts were appointed for all the instructional disciplines. At the same time, management and classified staff worked to appoint EMP contacts for all the non-faculty areas.

A two-hour workshop, facilitated by the dean of planning, research and development and the college’s faculty researcher, was held on January 12, 2001 to train discipline faculty contacts. Eighty-four percent of the 74 discipline contacts (some disciplines selected more than one EMP contact) attended, as well as 20 other faculty and mangers. Attendees were provided with an overview of the planning process, the data needed to create their plans, instructions in how to use the EMP template, and information on how to access research and technology support resources for technical help in creating their plans. Data given to the contacts included five-year trends of discipline term enrollments—by day, afternoon, and evening; student demographics; student success rates; productivity rates; degree and certificate awards; college and district mission and goal statements; and district environmental scan information. A web site with supporting information was also made available.

The process required discipline EMPs then be compiled into area EMPs. Area plans were submitted to the office of planning, research and development by March 9, 2001.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this qualitative study was to generate grounded theory about faculty experiences in developing discipline specific educational master plans at American River College in Spring 2001. The generated theory contributes to the understanding of faculty experiences in planning. In turn, this understanding of faculty planning experiences may be used to improve the processes and tools
faculty use to create their educational master plans, thus improving future planning efforts and results.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was guided by two primary research questions. Using a grounded theory approach, the first question was designed to be as open ended as possible to allow the study participants a great breadth of answers. The second question was designed to discover the relationships among the faculty experiences identified from answers to the first question. The research questions were:

**Research Question One:** What were the experiences of American River College faculty in developing discipline specific educational master plans in Spring 2001?

All the faculty answers to this first research question were grouped into similar themes, or *affinities*. Each affinity identified a separate category (set of like experiences) of the faculty experience in developing educational master plans.

**Research Question Two:** How were each of the faculty planning experiences related to one another?

Responses to this question identified the relationships among the affinities, which were named as a result of the answers to the first research question. The relationships were used to determine which affinities were most powerful in the overall educational master planning experience. This was done by identifying 1) which affinities of the faculty planning experiences *influenced* other affinities, 2) which affinities were *influenced by* other affinities, or 3) which affinities were *not related* at all, since they neither *influenced* nor were *influenced by* each other. By identifying the relationships among the different affinities, as voiced by the faculty, the researcher was able to generate grounded theory regarding faculty experiences of participating in educational master planning.
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Community colleges exist in rapidly changing internal and external environments. Responding appropriately to those changes through effective planning processes is not only required by accrediting agencies, but is vital to successful mission accomplishment, and in some cases survival itself. To be helpful, planning must truly lead to major improvements in college programs, services, and accountability. Since teaching and learning are at the heart of what community colleges do, it is critical instructional faculty be highly involved in college planning. By developing grounded theory regarding the experiences of faculty creating discipline specific educational master plans, this study provides insights into what one community college’s faculty found worked effectively, and what did not, in educational master planning. In so far as the college’s challenges to improve planning reflect those of other community colleges, and the college’s internal and external environments are similar to other colleges, this study may assist other institutions in improving their own planning processes.

Furthermore, since this study describes an educational master planning process collaboratively developed and implemented by the college itself, it contributes to the literature that examines educational master planning in community colleges.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study focused on a single educational master planning process model developed and implemented at American River College. The study confined itself to creating substantive, grounded theory from the experiences of faculty in instructional disciplines who were actively engaged in the planning process, although, all areas of the college—administrative services, instruction, student services, and president’s services—developed their own educational master plans during the same time the instructional disciplines were developing their plans.
The study was conducted at a large, suburban, comprehensive California community college. The college is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. In addition, the college operates under the legal requirements of California's Assembly Bill 1725 (1988), which requires college governing boards (or their administrative representatives) to consult collegially with academic senates on ten areas of academic and professional matters. One area requiring consultation is the development of processes for institutional planning and budgeting.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The sample used in this study was composed of instructional faculty at American River College. The faculty served in nine major instructional areas (behavioral and social sciences, business, fine and applied arts, humanities, learning resources, mathematics/engineering/design technology, physical education and athletics, public safety training, and science and allied health). They were responsible for developing educational master plans for their disciplines. Faculty from two instructional areas, who were eligible to participate in the study, declined invitations to do so.

The sample was limited to purposefully selected instructional faculty. The faculty participants were chosen based on three major criteria. First, their discipline peers selected them to lead the EMP efforts for their disciplines. Second, they had to have attended an EMP training session in January 2001. Finally, they volunteered their time to participate in a focus group or interview session with the researcher, eight to twelve months following their initial plan development. The faculty were full-time employees at a large, suburban California community college of 29,125 students.
Since the sample only included faculty actively engaged in the educational master planning process, the study’s findings may not reflect the thoughts or feelings of the faculty at large. Also, this study’s findings may not be applicable to small institutions, institutions with very different support services for planning and research, baccalaureate institutions, and/or institutions whose administrations are not required to consult collegially with academic senates on institutional planning and budgeting processes.

This study assumed the faculty focus group members and interviewees gave truthful and accurate responses, and fully understood the questions.

RESEARCHER DISCLOSURE

The researcher in this study has been an employee of the college since August 1987. She has served in the faculty positions of counselor, matriculation coordinator, and interim extended opportunity program and services coordinator. Since 1998, she has served as the dean of planning, research and development. As part of her assignment, the researcher has administrative responsibility for planning and research activities at the college. She supervises the college’s faculty researcher, research analyst, and research office clerk. She served as primary facilitator for developing and implementing the college’s educational master plan process. In addition, she is the accreditation liaison officer for the college, and chairs the 20-member college planning council. The researcher does not have any direct supervision responsibilities for the instructional faculty participating in this study. She did supervise the dean of learning resources during the time the educational master plan process was developed. However, she did not participate in creation of the discipline plans for that area.
DEFINITIONS

The following terms are used in this study:

EMP: An educational master plan (EMP) is a college-wide plan, which projects the anticipated internal and external demands on the college's services, including growth, decline, and new programs. Projections are based on data, including program enrollment trends, transfer numbers, and business and industry needs. The EMP addresses the resources required to make those changes, including personnel, facilities, equipment, instructional support, and professional development. Information from the plan is used to improve decision-making in prioritizing personnel hires, facilities renovation and acquisition, equipment, and professional development. The educational plan is detailed and concrete, specifying the objectives, activities, and timelines for the programmatic changes. The plan is also dynamic, and fluid. It can be easily updated, as new information and needs arise. Such plans are required by California's education code (American River College adaptation of the definition used in the Planning Resource Guide of the Research and Planning Group of California Community Colleges, September 1997).

WASC: The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) is one of six regional accrediting associations in the United States. WASC evaluates and accredits schools, colleges, and universities in California, Hawai'i, Guam, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. WASC has a Board of Directors and three Accrediting Commissions, including the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). California community colleges are accredited by ACCJC (ACCJC WASC, 1996).

Grounded Theory: Grounded theory is a specific approach to qualitative research intended to induce understanding of (or generate theory about) a
phenomenon, without imposing pre-existing expectations on the phenomenon under study. This strategy of inductive design allows the important analysis dimensions to emerge from the patterns found in the study, without presupposing what the important dimensions will be (Patton, 1990, p. 44). As described by its developers, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967), the data gathered about a phenomenon “grounds” a new theory, rather than supporting a prior theory. The theory generated by this approach is termed substantive, or low-level, theory. The theory is applicable only to immediate situations, or one specific situational context (Creswell, 1998, p. 243).

IQA: Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) is a research methodology. IQA uses group process methods adapted from the Total Quality Management movement to produce and analyze data to create grounded theory (Northcutt, Miles, Robins, & Ellis, 1998). Its authors believe using a focus group to create a description of a phenomenon, its components and their relationships to one another, allows participants to lead theory discovery, rather than the external researcher. Therefore, this methodology attempts to better honor the voices of those who directly experienced the phenomenon. In addition to use of focus groups, IQA uses individual interviews, field observations, and document review as part of its overall research methodology.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Responding to changing environments has always been a reality of community colleges. Today, however, change is accelerating so rapidly that many believe community colleges must actually transform themselves in order to thrive, or in some cases even survive. Accrediting agencies and others are encouraging colleges to implement better planning strategies to respond more effectively to their changing internal and external environments. The planning strategies require active involvement of college faculty. Since relatively little is known about
community college faculty experiences in planning, this study focuses on the experiences of faculty in a large, suburban, California community college, who were lead contacts in creating educational master plans in their own disciplines. This chapter also addressed the study’s problem statement, focus, purpose, research questions, significance, delimitations, limitations, researcher disclosure, and defined key words and concepts. Chapter Two provides a preliminary review of the literature to show why this study is needed.
CHAPTER TWO
PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

Since this study was a grounded theory study, which by definition collects data about a phenomenon first, and then creates theory “grounded” in the data collected (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), this chapter is intended only as a preliminary review of the literature. As such, the purpose of this review is to document the rationale for why the phenomenon of faculty experiences developing educational master plans was worthy of study. Once the themes and theory emerged from the study’s data, a return to the literature to learn more about the findings was required. The additional literature is discussed in Chapter Five.

This preliminary review of the literature explores the following: The perception community colleges need to change, in order to respond effectively to their rapidly changing external and internal environments; planning is an accepted method in community colleges for creating needed change; accreditation requires college planning; faculty are a key component to successful planning; and not enough is known about how faculty perceive and engage in college-wide planning efforts.

CHANGE IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Responding to change has been a constant factor in the development of two-year colleges. When two-year colleges were first established in the early 1900s, they were primarily viewed as extensions of high schools. Over time, they evolved into the junior colleges of the 1930s-1940s, followed by the fast growing community colleges of the 1950s-1960s, and the comprehensive community colleges of the 1970s-mid 1980s. The progression of the original two-year colleges into the contemporary, comprehensive community colleges of today has been
marked by more rapid adaptation to change, than any other segment of American higher education (Tillery & Deegan, 1985). This extraordinary evolvement has been attributed to a lack of academic traditions during two-year colleges’ formative years; their close relationships to the diverse communities which supported them; and the influences of local, state, and national advocates in shaping their development (Tillery & Deegan). Successive generations of colleges benefited from increased numbers of students completing secondary schools; students’ needs to prepare for hard-to-find work following economic depression and periods of war; business and industry needs for a trained workforce in increasingly complex jobs; and the push to educate those traditionally excluded from higher education—women, ethnic minorities, economically disadvantaged, and mature adults—so they, too, could pursue the American dream of economic prosperity (Cohen & Brawer, 1989; Tillery & Deegan).

Thus, change is not a new phenomenon for community colleges. Indeed, responding to changing environments through innovation has served the community colleges well throughout their history (Cohen & Brawer, 1989; Carter, 1998b; Tillery & Deegan, 1985; McClenney, 1998). What is new, and is creating the renewed emphasis on change issues, is the speed and magnitude of today’s changes—in student demographics, high technology business/industry needs, performance and accountability measurements, and completely new competition (Alfred, 1998; Alfred & Carter, 2000; Carter, 1998b; McClenney, 1998; Roueche, J. & Roueche, S., 1998).

Just how community colleges should approach change depends on one’s viewpoint of the community college mission. If one views the community college mission as improving the social condition of students, then colleges have fallen short of the mark because they tend to reflect the status quo of society, rather than radically seeking to transform it (Townsend & Twombly, 1998). However, if one accepts the mission of the community college as serving local communities, then
colleges will be expected to be more “a mirror of society, than a lamp that illuminates the way” (Levin, 1998, p. 3). In this view, colleges do not transform society. Rather, they respond to changes in society (external environment), and incorporate those changes into their identities. Levin contends community colleges are untraditional, social and educational institutions, whose primary attributes are adaptability and dynamism.

Still others (Alfred, 1998; Alfred & Carter, 2000; Carter, 1998b; Dolence & Norris, 1995; McClennen, 1998; Roueche, J. & Roueche, S., 1998) argue change in today’s external environments is occurring so rapidly community colleges must move from adaptation and innovation to actual transformation in order to survive. This viewpoint supports the premise community colleges are not just challenged to respond appropriately to changing demographics, accountability requirements, and dwindling traditional resources, but must do so in an environment where completely new competition threatens actual survival. Thus, colleges do not have the luxury of changing at a leisurely pace, if they are to avoid loss of market share, or elimination, by new and aggressive competitors.

The assumption advanced adult learning is mainly the purview of higher education, is now widely disputed. Today, learning can occur anywhere, including places external to accredited institutions (Alfred, 1998; Dolence & Norris, 1995). Technology, especially the World Wide Web, has provided vast amounts of information for those seekers who want only to improve their competency for personal satisfaction, or career advancement. Increasingly, these goals are no longer dependent on earning traditional academic units or credentials (Brown, 2000). Indeed, many employers are more interested in applicants’ skills, than in their educational credentials.

The new competitors (Alfred, 1998) market ‘education services’ which focus on students as customers. They strive to deliver superior services of which under funded public institutions can only dream. Unhampered by the accreditation
and accountability requirements of public institutions, the competitors are free to deliver the just-in-time, up-to-date training desired by students. All this is done in a superbly customer focused environment. Students are consumers, and will vote with their feet if their expectations are not met (Alfred, 1998).

Patricia Carter (1998b) lists five competitors community colleges are now facing:

- Companies/corporations providing on-site programs for current and future workers
- Corporate communications giants with a capability for distance delivery
- Supplementary education providers (e.g. private tutoring companies)
- K-12 schools partnering with business and industry to prepare work ready youth, and
- Temporary service agencies providing training programs to prepare flexible workers for a variety of jobs.

Responding to these competitors requires a new vision. The vision shifts the emphasis from teaching to learning, and from curriculum centered programs to those designed for the learners. Responsiveness and customer service must become priorities (Carter, 1998b).

USING PLANNING TO CREATE CHANGE

The Evolution of Planning in Four-Year Institutions and Universities

In addition to the day-to-day short-range, or operational planning, used to run institutions, Peterson (1997) proposes two major types of planning, long-range and strategic, have been used in American higher education. He further states a third type, contextual planning, is emerging. All of the types of planning identified
by Peterson originated in the business, industry, and/or military sectors. They were later adopted by higher education institutions, as their changing external and internal environments required.

The first type of planning to become popular in higher education was long-range planning. American institutions of higher education experienced tremendous growth after World War II and through the 1960s. In order to maintain good public support, their leaders worked to provide a sense of direction for their growing institutions, and to demonstrate positive accountability for their use of resources (human, financial, and physical). This long-range planning focused on formal institutional master plans to guide development and justify resources. Peterson (1997) asserts long-range planning is most appropriate in relatively stable environments where competition is limited, external changes can be predicted, and the goal is to respond rationally to forecasted changes. A variation of long-range planning—contingency planning—is appropriate for responding to short-term threats. Institutions frequently used forms of contingency planning to respond to problems and discontent as the 1960s came to a close, and the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War challenged the country, including higher education.

The second type of planning to be used by institutions was strategic planning (Peterson, 1997). In the early 1970s, economic recession, the end of the post war baby boom, and increased pressure for accountability by external agencies forced higher education's leaders to take planning more seriously, as they sought to improve internal efficiency and increase enrollments. As the economic constraints and declines in enrollment continued on through the 1980s, institutions began to use strategic planning to address their issues. Unlike long-range planning, strategic planning is designed to be adaptive, rather than just responsive. Strategic planning is most appropriate to use in less predictive and more complex environments. In these types of environments, the goal is to adapt the institutional mission, image,
and resource strategies to position the institution to use its strengths to be competitive in a suitable market niche. Strategic planning also assumes once an institution decides its appropriate market direction, it can successfully adapt its internal environment to meet its newly refocused mission and goals. Strategic planning requires organizations and individuals to be flexible.

Now, however, some argue strategic planning for higher education is insufficient. Indeed, the higher education environment is increasing in complexity and competition so rapidly transformation is needed. For this new environment Peterson (1997) argues for contextual planning. Contextual planning was advocated by Cope (1985, as cited in Peterson, 1997, p. 136), who believed institutions of higher education differ significantly from other complex organizations, because they are so influenced by expectations of their external communities (Carter, 1998a). Contextual planning is built on the understanding of systems theory. It assumes institutions are capable of influencing their external environments, not merely responding or adapting to them. Institutions are encouraged to “focus on creating or shaping the external contexts most favorable to their missions” (Peterson, p. 136). Successful contextual planning focuses on the organizational culture (direction, values, and meaning), and motivates others by themes and visions of how the improved institution will appear. It also requires many individuals within the organization to have a shared sense of direction, involvement, and ownership in the planning process. Thus, the goals of contextual planning are to empower organizations to influence the external environments, as well as improve their internal environments. Peterson calls this being proactive, as opposed to being responsive (long-range planning), or adaptive (strategic planning).

Finally, using a systems theory viewpoint, which maintains systems exist within systems, Peterson (1997) advocates institutions today are multi-faceted, complex organizations. He, therefore, contends all three types of planning may be
appropriate at different times and places within an organization. If, for example, an academic program has been relatively stable over time, long-range planning may be the most appropriate approach to use within that program. Using a strategic or contextual planning approach may better serve another part of the institution, if it is experiencing more rapid change. The key to selecting the right approach is an accurate assessment of the external and internal environments involved.

The Evolution of Planning in Community Colleges

Community college management literature has long recognized that day-to-day operational planning, or short-range planning, is an essential part of good community college administration (Cohen & Brawer, 1994; Fryer, Jr. & Lovas, 1991, pp. 43-59; Haire & Russell, 1995). This operational planning has emphasized making good resource decisions, and demonstrating accountability for carrying out the mission of community colleges.

More recently, like their colleagues in four-year institutions and universities, community colleges leaders have emphasized strategic planning, in addition to operational planning, as a way to better identify and adapt to their external opportunities and threats (Richardson, Jr. & Rhodes, 1985). Indeed, quicker responses to more rapidly changing environments benefit both the institutions and the communities they serve (Haire & Russell, 1995). Planning, based on a clear vision and legal mandates, requires colleges to develop strategic goals. The goals, in turn, help the institutions adapt well to changes in both their internal and external environments (de los Santos, Jr. & Finger, 1994).

Now, as community colleges are recognizing the acceleration of complexity and competitiveness in their environments, they are exploring more proactive approaches. Even those institutions currently well positioned and healthy are looking to planning as a means of maintaining their health and preparing for their future (Alfred, 1998; Alfred & Carter, 2000; Carter, 1998a; Harris, 1998). Those
arguing community colleges must transform themselves in order to meet the challenges of the future support the creation of more radical planning processes (Carter, 1998a; Dolence & Norris, 1995).

Carter (1998a), a community college scholar, acknowledges Peterson’s (1997) belief in the advancement of contextual planning over strategic and long-range planning for higher education, but argues it is still not enough when transformation is required. Carter supports, instead, the concept of impact planning. Impact planning requires matching the right process with the right methodology, thus allowing planners to mix and match to achieve needed results. Impact planning insists on organizational fit, demands wide-spread communication about information used in making decisions, and requires broad input resulting in clear, agreed upon goals. Impact planning also requires links among the college’s ongoing organizational systems, and values substance over style. Planning must result in significant, positive change. Impact planning is fluid. Rather than waiting for adoption of the entire plan, action is encouraged as soon as there is agreement among the planners and those required to implement the plan such action would be beneficial. Impact planning values consistent responsiveness to emerging knowledge, broad-based contact with the external environments, and participation and accountability across the college. How many community colleges will adopt more radical planning approaches, such as impact planning, as catalysts for transformation has yet to be determined.

ACCREDITATION MANDATES PLANNING

Accreditation of community colleges, as well as other institutions of higher education, is a process of external quality review. Accreditation assures students and the public of the academic quality of the institution, provides access to federal funds (e.g. student grants and loans), eases transfer of courses and programs among colleges and universities, and creates employer confidence when evaluating
credentials of job applicants, and/or providing employer funds to employees to pursue additional education (Council for Higher Education Accreditation [CHEA], 2001). In essence, one major role of accreditation is to help detect, eliminate, and prevent fraud and abuse of students and the public. The second role is to assure adequate standardization of academic credit to facilitate transfer among institutions (Glidden, 1998).

Community colleges are accredited by independent, non-profit, regional accrediting organizations. The agencies, in turn, must be recognized by the United States Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, as meeting appropriate quality and effectiveness standards (CHEA, 2001). Within the last two decades, there have been ever increasing pressures on the regional accrediting agencies to move from periodic external reviews, focused on capacity and process of institutions, to more stringent and multifaceted reviews, focused on public accountability. Thus, while accreditation visits in the past typically resulted in general suggestions for improvements; today’s visits can require specific actions for improvement, complete with deadlines and timetables for demonstrating progress (El-Khawas, 1997). New emphasis is also being placed on accountability for student outcome measures, as institutions are being directed to focus on student learning, rather than instructor teaching methods (Ewell, 1998).

One result of the emphasis on accountability is all of the regional accrediting agencies have accreditation standards for community colleges which include emphasis on planning and institutional effectiveness (Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 1994; New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, 2001; North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, 2001; Northwest Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities, 1999; Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2001; ACCJC WASC, 1996). Colleges must demonstrate planning for
improvement leads to actions, actions lead to results, and results are evaluated for
effectiveness. Then, the cycle of planning for further improvement begins again.

In California, community colleges are accredited by the Accrediting
Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of
Schools and Colleges (ACCJC WASC), which accredits 140 two-year institutions
in California, Hawai`i, and the western Pacific. The commission (ACCJC WASC,
2001b) states its two primary purposes are:

1. To assure quality by determining that standards are met,
2. To promote the ongoing pursuit of excellence by emphasizing institutional improvement.

Standard Three, the standard on institutional effectiveness, is one of the ten
accreditation standards adopted by ACCJC WASC in 1996. In Standard Three, the
commission describes its requirements for community colleges to engage in
institutional planning in order to ensure institutional effectiveness. The
commission does not focus on change, merely for the sake of change. Rather, it
expects evaluation to lead to plans for improvement, and colleges to provide
evidence those plans are implemented. Community colleges accredited by the
commission must address Standard Three in their self-studies, which occur every
six years, and expect accreditation evaluators to assess their achievements in this
area (ACCJC WASC, 1996).

Institutions have had difficulty adequately responding to Standard Three.
Since 1997, planning and research have been the issues drawing by far the greatest
number of recommendations from ACCJC evaluation teams (ACCJC WASC,
2000a). In 1999-2000, over five times as many recommendations were cited in
these areas, than for any other standard (ACCJC WASC). The recommendations
suggest colleges are still struggling with developing and executing planning
processes to successfully integrate planning, research, evaluation, budgeting, and
program improvement. Thus, accreditation mandates make increased devotion to planning a required college practice, even for those institutions reluctant to engage in planning, despite changing external and internal environments (Carter, 1998a).

FACULTY PARTICIPATION IS NEEDED FOR SUCCESSFUL CHANGE

If changing external and internal environments are requiring colleges to adapt and/or transform themselves, do faculty need to be involved? Yes. In five higher education case studies regarding planning, Schmidtlein (1990, p. 85) illustrates developing “a culture of faculty initiative is an important condition for timely response to academic opportunities and threats.” Alfred (1998) and Carter (1998b) argue an environment of turbulent change requires not only designing new administrative structures and systems, but also ensuring faculty and staff are involved and support the changes. Indeed, their lack of involvement would be a recipe for failure (Alfred, 1998).

When colleges trying to change to meet opportunities in the external environment have met formidable resistance from faculty, some have turned to part-time faculty and support staff to initiate the required changes. Such actions isolate full-time faculty from the center of college decision-making and decrease the likelihood of positive, sustained change (Richardson, Jr. & Rhodes, 1985). Faculty acceptance, support, and adaptation to change are critical if change is to be implemented, with or without added resources (Richardson, Jr. & Rhodes).

In colleges across the country, decisions on academic matters are usually the responsibility of the faculty, while administrators have primary responsibility for compliance with legal and managerial requirements, and for responding to external demands. Thus, institution-wide planning leading to implementation of academic decisions requires varying consultation and consensus among faculty, administrators, and staff at all levels (Schmidtlein, 1990). In California, faculty involvement was made mandatory by Assembly Bill 1725 (1988), which provides
statutory requirements for administration to consult with faculty on institutional planning.

Seen from a broader perspective, inclusiveness in planning activities supports “the dynamic expression of important organizational processes, elements, and relationships” (emphasis added) (Fryer, Jr. & Lovas, 1991, p. 43). Planning processes allow relationships to build over time, by having planners engage in common work, learn to share a common vocabulary, and establish a sense of order in the institution (Brandt, 1982, p. 98 as cited in Fryer, Jr. & Lovas, p. 43). Further, when people across the institution genuinely engage in “activities to invent the institution’s future, they feel empowered, committed to make that future work. Those feelings translate into a better working climate in the organization” (Fryer, Jr. & Lovas, p. 45).

FACULTY INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING

So how do faculty perceive their involvement in college planning? Recent studies of community college planning practices (Inge, 1992; McCarthy, 1991; Nelson, 1990; Schwab, 1997; Spencer, 1995; Valadez-Ortiz, 1994; Williams, 1998) have frequently emphasized perceptions of community college managers or systems leaders, rather than faculty perceptions. Other studies (McDermott, 1998; McGill-Rudolph, 1993; Smith, 1999) have included faculty perceptions about institution-wide planning as part of overall employee perceptions. Only one study (Duncan-Hall, 1993) focused exclusively on faculty participation in institutional planning. That study, which explored community college practices in California, indicated 75% of California community colleges have institution-wide participatory planning committees, which are comprised of faculty, administrators, and classified staff. It also identified factors impeding or supporting faculty involvement in planning. However, even this study focused on college leaders’ (college presidents and academic senate presidents) perceptions, rather than general faculty
perceptions. No studies, focusing exclusively on the planning participation experiences of non-leadership faculty, were found.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Through a preliminary review of the literature, this chapter provided a brief overview of the history of change in community colleges, as well as assertions change is now accelerating so rapidly new responses in the form of better planning are required. Short-range, long-range, strategic, contextual, and impact planning were discussed. In addition, the role accrediting agencies have in encouraging institutional improvement and accountability, through improved planning processes, was presented. The critical need for faculty to be involved in institutional planning was noted, as were the very limited number of studies discussing the experiences of faculty in educational planning. This preliminary review of the literature documented the need for a study, such as this one, to focus on community college faculty experiences in educational master planning. Chapter Three will describe the methodology selected for this study, and explain why it was an appropriate choice.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This qualitative study used interactive qualitative analysis (IQA) to develop grounded theory about the experiences of community college faculty in creating discipline specific educational master plans at American River College, in Spring 2001. IQA uses group process methods adapted from the Total Quality Management movement, individual interviews, and document analysis to both produce and analyze qualitative data (Northcutt, Miles, Robins, & Ellis, 1998). In turn, the data is used to generate grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) by analyzing the relationships among the faculty experiences. The group process methods of IQA allow focus group members to participate in analyzing their own data, thus participating in developing grounded theory about their own experiences.

The IQA methodological approach was used to address the two main research questions of this study. They were:

Research Question One: What were the experiences of American River College faculty in developing discipline specific educational master plans in Spring 2001?

Research Question Two: How were each of the faculty planning experiences related to one another?

This methodology chapter provides an overview of IQA processes; the rationale for selecting IQA as a methodology for this study; the study design, including data collection, data analysis, and sample selection processes; standards for research; and methodological limitations.
OVERVIEW OF INTERACTIVE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Interactive qualitative analysis (IQA) was developed by faculty and students at the University of Texas in Austin as a systems approach to qualitative grounded theory research (Northcutt et al., 1998). IQA systematically attempts to capture the reality of people's experiences, and uses focus groups to support the concept reality is socially constructed. The IQA developers believe it is possible to abstract a high level system of constructs from the stories given by individuals and their interactions within a group. They further believe it is possible and helpful to identify the relationships among these constructs in such a way as to induce theory from the data. The development of IQA was inspired by grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

IQA combines the group processes borrowed from the Total Quality Management (Brassard, M., 1989, as cited in Northcutt et al.) movement and market research with the more traditional grounded theory tools of interviews and field observations to provide a clearer picture of how individuals construct their reality in a social setting. IQA depends on research participants to determine the meaning of their stories, rather than having the researcher define their meanings. The tools used in the IQA data collection process include the researcher as focus group facilitator, and as individual interviewer. Field observations and document review, where applicable, further inform the findings.

The data gathered from the focus group processes are analyzed in a specific way so the participants themselves conduct the preliminary analysis, while the researcher facilitates. The researcher then uses affinity diagrams, graphical and tabular interrelationship digraphs (IRDs), and an unrationlized systems influence diagram (SID) to represent the preliminary analysis of the faculty focus group. Finally, the results of the interviews are represented in a rationalized SID. The rationalized SID is created when the researcher compares the focus group's preliminary analysis with the analysis results of the interviews coded by the
researcher. (Sample illustrations of these visual displays appear later in this chapter.) The visual displays are systematically created through levels of coding, which were inspired by grounded theory.

The coding used in IQA includes inductive or emergent coding; axial or deductive coding; and theoretical coding. Inductive coding seeks to understand how the data form into categories, or affinities, of meaning to the participants. Axial coding names each affinity, and its range of meaning. Theoretical coding tells how the affinities are related in a system of cause and effect.

RATIONALE FOR SELECTING METHODOLOGY

The selection of a research methodology for this study followed Patton’s three criteria for methodological appropriateness: purpose of the study, research questions to be investigated, and available resources (1990, p. 39). Consideration of these criteria supports the use of interactive qualitative analysis (IQA) as an appropriate methodology.

Purpose

Patton (1990, p. 150) identifies five alternative purposes for conducting a research study. The purposes include basic research, applied research, summative evaluation, formative evaluation, and action research. In this study, a preliminary review of the literature about the experiences of community college faculty involved in institution-wide educational master planning revealed little documentation on this phenomenon, thus indicating a need for “basic research to contribute to fundamental knowledge and theory” (Patton, p. 150). Since IQA results in the generation of grounded theory about a phenomenon, it is an appropriate methodology to use.

Developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967), grounded theory is now considered an approach to qualitative inquiry with a distinguished tradition
in the social sciences, particularly the disciplines of sociology and nursing (Creswell, 1998, pp. 6, 256). Grounded theory is intended to induce understanding (or theory) of a phenomenon, without imposing pre-existing expectations on the phenomenon under study (Patton, 1990, p. 44). Typically, grounded theory is considered substantive, or low-level theory. Grounded theory is only applicable to immediate situations, or one specific situational context; and thus is differentiated from mid-level, grand, or formal theories (Creswell, p. 243).

Research Questions

The research questions in this study, “What were the experiences of American River College faculty in developing discipline specific educational master plans in Spring 2001?” and “How were each of the faculty planning experiences related to one another?” are best answered using a research methodology resulting in the creation of knowledge about a set of experiences, and an analysis of the relationships among those experiences. IQA is a particularly effective methodology because participation of community college faculty in educational master planning is both an individual experience of the person writing the plan, and an interactive experience where the plan authors must collaborate with other faculty in their disciplines and areas to write their plans. They, then, interact with the college community, as a whole, to implement their plans. Thus, while the individual faculty interviews capture some of the personal experiences, the focus group work created an opportunity for faculty members to discover shared meaning and new perceptions of their experiences. Additionally, focus group members were able to construct a preliminary theory on how their experiences were related to one another. The preliminary theory added the collective perceptions of faculty participants’ experiences to the researcher’s analysis of their reported experiences.
Another important reason IQA is an appropriate methodology for this study is the researcher conducting the study is directly involved in the EMP process at American River College. Creswell (1998) cites Glesne & Peshkin (1992) in noting although implementing a study in one’s own work place may have the advantages of providing easy access to participants at minimal cost, and intimate knowledge of the setting, it also has many negative risks. Those risks include being influenced by institutional requirements for data collection over the study’s requirements, which might severely compromise the research value of the data; participant withholding of negative information, or slanting of information to politically influence, or avoid embarrassing the researcher; and/or providing the researcher with politically risky knowledge for an insider to hear. IQA helps to minimize these risks by starting with a focus group process using the silent nominal technique. This technique requires participants to silently write down responses to identify and name their affinities. Thus, although the researcher is present as facilitator, individual statements—made silently on paper, and mixed with other written comments from focus group members—provide some anonymity for participants, as well as multiple perspectives to share in the process. This allows faculty within the focus group setting to voice negative experiences about the EMP process without being personally identified by the researcher or their colleagues. Likewise, since the work of the focus group generates the questions to be asked in the individual interviews, interviewees can confirm or reject experiences of other faculty without having to directly raise negative experiences to their colleagues or the researcher.

Available Resources

As a methodology, grounded theory requires the researcher to spend “time in the field to discover what is really going on” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The researcher in this study had extensive access to knowledge about the development
of the EMP process at American River College and its implementation, through her direct involvement in the process. This ensured the researcher had substantial time in the field for observations, access to necessary support documents, and knowledge of faculty eligible to participate in the study. The researcher was also able to schedule meetings and interviews at convenient times and locations for participants to attend.

STUDY DESIGN: DATA COLLECTION

The IQA approach used to answer the study’s two central research questions, “What were the experiences of American River College faculty in developing discipline specific educational master plans in Spring 2001?” and “How were each of the faculty planning experiences related to one another?” is described in detail below. First, the focus group identified preliminary affinities (or themes) and relationships in their EMP development experiences. Second, the interviewees confirmed, rejected, and/or modified those preliminary affinities and relationships.

Focus Group

1. From a list of faculty discipline EMP contacts, one faculty contact person from each of the college’s eleven instructional areas was purposefully selected and invited to participate in the EMP focus group. All selected faculty had to meet three criteria. They were designated by faculty within their disciplines as the lead contact persons in developing their disciplines’ EMPs in Spring 2001, attended the required EMP training, and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Each participant had to sign an informed consent form, and be available at the time when the majority of the selected faculty could attend the focus group. The researcher facilitated the entire focus group process. Following introductions and a brief overview of the purpose of the study, the researcher began the process by requesting the
focus group use the silent nominal process to answer the question, "What were your experiences as faculty participating in developing your discipline EMPs?" The silent nominal process, frequently used in Total Quality Management processes, required focus group members to silently write down their thoughts and/or feelings about their EMP experiences on large index cards; one thought/feeling per card. Once all the participants indicated they had completed their cards, they were asked to silently tape their cards to the wall. Then, the members silently read all the cards. Next, they were instructed to silently group the cards on the wall in like categories, or affinities (known as inductive or emergent coding in grounded theory processes).

2. Once the cards had been grouped in such a way to meet the participants' satisfaction, the facilitator asked the group to name each affinity through group discussion and consensus. Following this task, the participants were asked to identify the major components of each affinity (deductive or axial coding). This final statement of affinities and subaffinities was then represented in a list called an affinity diagram. As required by the IQA process, the facilitator maintained the role of helping the focus group to understand and complete the required tasks, but did not assist the group to determine card content, affinity groupings, or names of affinities.

Figure 1: Illustration for Single Hypothetical Affinity Diagram
3. New cards were created with the names of the identified affinities, one card for each affinity, and were arranged into the form of a large wheel on the wall. Selecting an affinity card at random to start, the facilitator asked the participants to come to a consensus on the nature of the relationship between the selected affinity and each of the others in the wheel. Each selected affinity can relate to each of the others in one of three ways. For example, comparing affinity 1 with affinity 2, the first affinity will influence the second, the second will influence the first, or there will be no apparent pattern of influence between the two. To help participants decide the relationships, the facilitator encouraged them to construct hypothetical statements such as, “If (statement about the affinity), then (statement about the other affinity).” When a relationship was discovered, an arrow was drawn from the cause to the effect on the wheel. The participants then proceeded to analyze the relationship between affinities 1 and 3, affinities 1 and 4, and so on, until they went around the wheel once. Then, they began again with analyzing affinities 2 and 3, affinities 2 and 4, etc. until the wheel was completed.

Figure 2: Illustration for Hypothetical Affinity Wheel

AF = Affinity
4. When the wheel was completed, the group had completed the theoretical coding of the affinities. Finally, the researcher translated the wheel information into a preliminary interrelationship diagraph (IRD). An example of an IRD is shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Illustration of IRD for Six Hypothetical Affinities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AF #</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>IN</th>
<th>OUT</th>
<th>Δ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>←</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>←</td>
<td>←</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>←</td>
<td></td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>←</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>←</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>←</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Δ = Difference between IN and OUT Values

For example, by reading row 1 across in the IRD illustration above, one sees affinity 1 cannot influence itself (thus the dark block), affinity 1 is influenced by affinity 2 (arrow from 2 points to 1), affinity 1 influences both affinities 3 and 4 (arrow from 1 points up to 3 and 4), and there is no relationship between either affinities 1 and 5, or 1 and 6 (blank blocks). Referring back to the affinity wheel, one can see this is just another way of expressing the information from the wheel. The value of the diagraph is the ability to add up the total values in the row. Affinity 1 is influenced by affinity 2, resulting in a -1 in the IN column. Affinity 1 also influences affinities 3 and 4, resulting in a +2 in the OUT column. The difference or Δ between the two columns is a +1, which in IQA methodology is interpreted as a moderate +Δ, or secondary driver.
Using the IRD, the affinities were sorted by size and connectiveness within the system into two major levels. The levels are named drivers (high + Δ) and outcomes (high − Δ). The drivers and outcomes were further sorted into primary and secondary levels. Drivers are those categories, or affinities, which influence other affinities. In other words, if one were to do something to change a driver, it should cause a change to the outcome(s) it influences. This new information was then represented in a system influence diagram (SID). An example of an SID is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Illustration of SID for Six Hypothetical Affinities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Drivers</th>
<th>Secondary Drivers</th>
<th>Secondary Outcomes</th>
<th>Primary Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AF #1</td>
<td></td>
<td>AF #3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF #2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF #5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF #4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF #6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AF = Affinity

The hypothetical SID illustration shows affinity 2 influences affinities 1, 5, and 3, while no affinities influence it. Thus, it is the primary driver in the illustration. Affinity 1 is influenced by affinity 2, but also influences affinities 3 and 4. Altogether, affinity 1 is more influencing, than influenced by other affinities. Therefore, it is considered a secondary driver. Affinity 3 influences no other affinities, but is influenced by affinities 1, 2, and 4. Therefore, it is considered a primary outcome.
Individual Interviews

6. Applying the same criteria used to purposefully select faculty members for the focus group session, the researcher selected and invited additional EMP faculty contacts from each instructional area to participate in individual interviews with the researcher. The interviewees were asked a set of questions the researcher had created from the affinities identified by the focus group. The purpose of the questions was to see if the interviewees agreed with the affinities and their relationships identified by the focus group. The questions allowed the interviewees to confirm, reject, and/or refine the preliminary theory of the focus group. The researcher audio taped each interview, and created transcripts from the audiotapes. She, then, applied deductive (axial) and theoretical coding techniques, in preparation for analyzing the interview responses into a summary interrelationship diagraph (IRD), and a rationalized system influence diagram SID. Using questions resulting from the affinities and analysis of the faculty focus group enhances the researcher’s ability to construct interview questions that are of meaning to the faculty, thus respecting the knowledge of the participants over the preconceptions of the researcher.

STUDY DESIGN: DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of the focus group’s inductive and deductive coding data shows the major affinities, or categories, the focus group identified regarding their experiences in developing discipline specific EMPs. The affinity wheel created by the focus group demonstrates their analysis of their experiences, and provides the required data for the researcher to create a preliminary (unrationalized) faculty system influence diagram (SID), developed from the tabulated summary interrelationship diagraph (IRD).
In turn, this preliminary SID is compared with the data gathered in the individual interviews. Since the interview questions are based on the affinities identified by the focus group, those being interviewed confirm, reject, and/or refine the preliminary relationships identified among the affinities. This final, or in IQA terms, rationalized SID is analyzed to determine what new theories about faculty participation in educational master planning can be proposed, and/or what other theories in the related literature can be confirmed. As the identified affinities and their relationships emerge from the data, the researcher can return to the literature to seek confirming information and studies.

STUDY DESIGN: SAMPLE SELECTION

In grounded theory studies, upon which IQA is based, participants are purposefully selected to represent people who have participated in the phenomenon being studied, and who have an ability to contribute to an evolving theory (Creswell, 1998).

For this study, potential participants were selected because they met all of the eligibility requirements for invitation and participation. Potential participants became participants when they completed all the steps listed below.

Eligible for invitation

- Employed as instructional faculty at American River College in Spring 2001
- Participated in EMP development training in January 2001
- Acted as the lead EMP contact for own discipline in Spring 2001
- Continued employment at ARC in 2001-2002 academic year while the study was being conducted

Eligible for participation

- Received invitation based on eligibility and actual selection
- Accepted invitation
Signed informed consent form approved by the Human Subjects Committee of Oregon State University

Confirmed availability to attend focus group or interview session

Participated

Attended and completed focus group or interview session

Since the college is divided into eleven major instructional areas (behavioral and social sciences, business, English, fine and applied arts, humanities, learning resources, mathematics/engineering/design technology, physical education and athletics, public safety training, science and allied health, and technical education), it was the researcher's general sample goal to have one eligible faculty from each area participate in the focus group, and two additional eligible faculty from each area participate in individual interviews. However, it was known this would not be entirely possible, since some areas consist of only one or two disciplines—such as physical education and athletics, and English—and, thus, would likely not have three eligible lead EMP contact faculty to invite. In fact, three instructional areas had only two faculty eligible for invitations, and one had one faculty member eligible for invitation. If invited faculty declined or were unable to participate, alternate faculty members eligible for invitation from the same area (if they existed) were then invited. In the end, seven faculty members from the areas of behavioral and social sciences, fine and applied arts, humanities, learning resources, mathematics/engineering/design technology, and science and allied health participated in the focus group. Fourteen faculty from the areas of behavioral and social sciences, business, fine and applied arts, humanities, learning resources, mathematics/engineering/design technology, physical education and athletics, public safety training, and science and allied health participated in the individual interviews. Every participant who started either the focus group or interview process completed it.
Study participants were required to sign an informed consent form approved by the Human Subjects Committee of Oregon State University. Information collected during the study is not attributed to any specific faculty members, although comments may be attributed to faculty from a specific instructional area (not discipline), if that faculty member agreed to that condition in writing during the consent form process.

STANDARDS FOR RESEARCH

Qualitative researchers are often confronted with the task of showing legitimacy for their research in positivist/post-positivist (quantitative) terms, while at the same time demonstrating support of the qualitative, holistic goals of creating understanding (Patton, 1990; Creswell, 1998). Creswell (p. 193) believes “qualitative researchers strive for “understanding,” that deep structure of knowledge that comes from visiting personally with informants, spending extensive time in the field, and probing to obtain detailed meanings.” The question then for the reader is “Did the researcher get it right, so the study is believable and accurate?”

Patton (1990, p. 461) is more specific in setting research standards. He believes credibility for qualitative research rests on three elements:

1. Scrupulous techniques and methods for collecting data which is thoroughly analyzed and addresses validity, reliability and triangulation;
2. Researcher credibility—training, experience, past studies, status and personal presentation; and
3. Personal belief and appreciation in the qualitative paradigm, including naturalistic inquiry, qualitative methodology, inductive analysis, and holistic thinking.
Validity, Reliability, and Triangulation

In this study, the researcher carefully followed the systematic IQA techniques for collecting and analyzing data described earlier in this chapter. In addition, the researcher strictly complied with Oregon State University Human Subjects Committee's rules for recruiting potential participants, and then conducting the research with the selected study participants. The issues of validity and reliability are addressed within the IQA process. First, the focus group members are asked to identify, and then collaboratively analyze, their own experience affinities. This helps ensure the participants' voices are honored (validity). Next, the researcher uses the focus group's affinities to generate the questions for the individual interviews. Finally, the individual interviews help check the validity and reliability of the focus group's findings, and further refine the overall research findings. The 2001 Educational Master Plan documents created by the faculty participants, along with the college materials documenting the creation of the EMP process, including the January 2001 faculty training sessions, are combined with the focus group and interview data to meet the triangulation requirement of using multiple and different sources.

Researcher’s Credibility

The researcher’s credibility in this study is enhanced by prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field (Creswell, 1998, p. 201 cites Ely et al., 1991; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988). The researcher has 14 years of experience at American River College in faculty and administrative positions. As dean of planning, research and development, she facilitated the development of the EMP process at the college, and had access to needed EMP documents. She has observed and been involved in the implementation of the EMP planning process over a two-year period. Further, she has extensive group facilitation and
interviewing skills, based on her professional background as a college nurse, counselor, and administrator. The researcher’s credibility is, however, limited by her lack of formal research experience. This is her first major research study, and she is new to IQA methodology. Thus, she has carefully followed all the methodological steps required by IQA, as well using feedback and directions provided by Oregon State University advisors, to maximize her research credibility.

Researcher’s Belief in the Qualitative Paradigm

IQA methodology was purposefully selected for this qualitative study because it matched the researcher’s beliefs in the value of using a systematic and inclusive qualitative research methodology to enhance understanding of an important area of knowledge. IQA has special appeal because it allows participants to assist in creating substantive theory about their own experiences. The understanding comes from analysis of the data, and allows the researcher to identify the specific experience affinities most important to the faculty participants.

IQA methodology also supports the researcher’s belief in using holistic, systems thinking (Wheatley, 1992; Capra, 1996). The analysis of data resulting in the development of a rationalized systems influence diagram allows the researcher and other readers to begin to identify which portions of a given system could be influenced in order to alter the outcomes of the overall system.

Finally, the focus group and interview experiences create opportunities for faculty participants to reflect on their EMP experiences, and learn from those reflections. This matches the researcher’s values by creating an opportunity for the faculty participants, as well as the researcher, to benefit from engaging in the research process.
METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

In addition to the research limitations noted in Chapter One, several other specific limitations are discussed below:

1. Due to the time period in which faculty were available to participate in the study, the focus group meeting and four of the fourteen interviews were conducted at the end of the Fall 2001 semester. These activities were at least nine months removed from when the initial EMP planning process took place. The remaining ten individual interviews took place in early Spring 2002, when all disciplines were required to document the accomplishments of their 2001 EMPs, and then update their EMPs for 2002. These last ten faculty were once again intimately involved in the EMP process, and as a result of their updates had new experiences to add when answering the interview questions. The researcher requested faculty interviewed in the spring to identify experiences resulting from the Spring 2002 updates, as opposed to those from their initial planning experiences in Spring 2001. How accurately this was done is unknown.

2. As previously discussed in Chapter One, the researcher has been fully involved in the EMP development and implementation processes at American River College. Her experiences inevitably affect the entire research study. Further, she is in a position which may have been perceived by potential participants as having power over their employment status at the college, although she was not a direct supervisor of any of the faculty invited to participate in the study. The researcher carefully followed the Human Subject Committee’s requirement of allowing faculty to decline invitations to participate, without requesting them to give specific reasons for their decisions. Therefore, the researcher cannot assess if those faculty who declined to participate did so for purely personal reasons, or if they declined due to issues they had with the EMP process, or the researcher.
Thus, important faculty experiences were possibly missed, particularly from the two instructional areas, whose eligible faculty all declined to participate.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The IQA methodology used in this study emphasizes systematic data collection and analysis processes. This chapter detailed how the study applied IQA methodology to facilitate a faculty focus group and interview individual faculty to generate substantive, grounded theory about the experiences of community college faculty in leading their disciplines to create educational master plans, in Spring 2001, at American River College. A description of the sampling process was included.

The chapter also described the rationale for selecting IQA as an appropriate methodology for this study using Patton’s (1990, p. 39) criteria for methodological appropriateness, including purpose of the study, research questions to be investigated, and available resources. Explanations of how the study met acceptable standards for qualitative research were given, followed by methodological limitations specific to this particular study.

Chapter Four, which follows, details the findings of the study. The findings include both the preliminary theory developed by the faculty focus group and the rationalized theory developed by the researcher based on additional information from the faculty interviews.
CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS OF FACULTY PLANNING EXPERIENCES

INTRODUCTION
This chapter presents the findings from the EMP faculty focus group meeting, and the individual faculty interviews. The findings address the two primary research questions:

**Research Question One:** What were the experiences of American River College faculty in developing discipline specific educational master plans in Spring 2001?

**Research Question Two:** How were each of the faculty planning experiences related to one another?

The focus group meeting findings are described first. The findings generate the preliminary faculty system influence diagram (SID), and are used to develop the questions for the individual faculty interviews. Next, the findings of the interviews, based on the researcher’s deductive coding of the transcripts, are described. Then, following further analysis of the interview transcripts using theoretical coding techniques, the rationalized SID is created and described. Finally, the preliminary SID, developed by the faculty focus group, is compared to the rationalized SID.

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS
Seven faculty focus group members from the areas of behavioral and social sciences, fine and applied arts, humanities, learning resources, mathematics/engineering/design technology, and science and allied health met in a three-hour session facilitated by the researcher. The group members identified and named seven overall affinities, or themes, about their experiences developing discipline specific EMPs at American River College in Spring 2001. Two of the affinities also had subaffinities identified. The names of the affinities and subaffinities
follow. Each affinity was randomly assigned a number during the focus group meeting. The numbers are used consistently throughout the study to identify the affinities.

Affinity One: Resources Used to Create the EMPs
Affinity Two: Interpersonal Effects of Engaging in the EMP Process
Affinity Three: Influence of Past Planning Failures
Affinity Four: Getting the EMP Work Done
  Subaffinity One: Who Was in Charge?
  Subaffinity Two: How Was the Work Distributed?
  Subaffinity Three: Why We Played the EMP Game—GREED!
Affinity Five: Evaluation of the EMP Process and Product
Affinity Six: Results of the EMP Process
  Subaffinity One: Unanswered Questions
  Subaffinity Two: Unexpected Results
Affinity Seven: Frustrations

A description of each of the affinities and subaffinities follows in the next sections. When direct quotations are used, they are taken from the individual comment cards written by participants to describe their EMP experiences.

Affinity One: Resources Used to Create the EMPs

In this affinity, faculty members identified the resources they used to complete their EMPs. The main resources were research data, information from advisory committees and local transfer institutions, discipline colleagues, and the college’s faculty researcher. In describing the research data used, they listed data provided by the college research office as part of the EMP process, data from previous discipline specific surveys or studies they had done themselves, state-wide statistical reports, and data from professional organizations related to their disciplines. Advisory committees and contacts with four-year transfer institutions
also provided EMP resource information for some faculty members. Discipline colleagues were seen as important resources used to complete the plan. Colleagues provided information about the discipline and/or instructional area, and in some cases shared knowledge gained doing master planning at other institutions. Finally, the college’s faculty researcher was mentioned repeatedly as a critical resource for completing the plan. The faculty researcher had formal responsibility for meeting with any department requesting assistance. She provided interpretation of research data from the college research office, assistance in writing objectives, and demonstrated how to use the EMP template.

Affinity Two: Interpersonal Effects of Engaging in the EMP Process

In this affinity, the faculty focus group members described the interpersonal effects they experienced within their disciplines, and sometimes their instructional areas, as a result of leading their discipline EMP process. Although the group did not create subaffinities for this affinity, their remarks fell into positive and negative categories. Those having positive experiences wrote about how the process brought members of the department together in a shared task. One individual wrote, “I found the process highly useful not only for clarifying goals, but also for personally linking colleagues.” Another wrote, “[There was] group building within [the] department as well as [the] division.” Yet another wrote about discipline conversations and how “most people wanted to contribute in [the] department.”

A few negative comments were also expressed in this affinity, particularly regarding discipline colleagues who did not participate in the EMP process. “Not all of [the] department participated, worker bees mostly,” wrote one person. Someone else seemed curious about his/her colleagues, “Ownership—not all gave voice, too busy? Not interested?” Another summed it up, “Non participants = Non ownership.”
Affinity Three: Influence of Past Planning Failures

As with many institutions, American River College has developed numerous types of plans over the years. In the view of the focus group, these past planning endeavors resulted in failure, largely because the plans were not seen to influence decision-making, particularly resource allocations. Thus, for some, the new EMP process was likely to be “Busy work, [an] empty process,” or more bluntly, “Bureaucratic BS.” These perceived past failures created “Resistance at first” to engaging in the new EMP process.

Affinity Four: Getting the EMP Work Done

The focus group divided “Affinity Four: Getting the EMP Work Done” into three separate subaffinities. The three subaffinities were: “Who Was in Charge?” “How Was the Work Distributed?” and “Why We Played the EMP Game—GREED!”

The first subaffinity, “Who was in charge?” was further subdivided into “Leadership by Default” and “Leadership by Interest.” In “Leadership by Default,” several faculty members indicated they were selected based on their positions as department spokespersons. At American River College, department spokespersons are faculty, selected by their discipline peers. Spokespersons receive a modest stipend each semester to assist their area deans to schedule course sections, assign faculty to each section, and to coordinate curriculum reviews and proposals. One faculty member wrote, “Department spokespersons feel responsibility to [the] unit, [and are] in position to know needs and the relationship of having an EMP.” In another case it was for a simpler reason, “Because no one else would take the lead.”

In “Leadership by Interest,” some participants indicated they had requested to lead the EMP development for their disciplines. Wrote one, “[I] wanted to have a role in [the] future of [the] department and campus.” Another wrote, “[I] wanted to be a part of [the] decision-making process.”
In the second subaffinity, "How Was the Work Distributed?" the members identified a variety of processes used in the different disciplines. The processes included assigning parts of the plan to small work groups, and then soliciting feedback from their remaining colleagues; using technology to communicate with other discipline faculty via email, listservs, and posting draft plans in online folders; and consulting the area dean for input. One individual wrote, "Following the [morning] training and at a department meeting that day the whole department brainstormed on [the] five areas of [the] EMP—[the area] secretary took notes."

In the third and final subaffinity, "Why We Played the EMP Game—GREED!" group members appeared to acknowledge the clearly written and stated messages from the college president declaring departments could not request additional resources (e.g. staff, major equipment, and new or updated facilities) outside their normal operating budgets, if their needs were not documented in their EMPs. Comments included, "[My discipline] is a resource demanding program—if we were going to get support I needed to do the EMP," "We wanted resources," and "Make sure needs get addressed." One person wrote, "Department wanted a plan anyway."

Affinity Five: Evaluation of the EMP Process and Product

In this affinity, faculty focus group members evaluated their overall experiences in using the EMP process to create their plans. They also expressed relief when the task was done. One individual wrote, "[I] learned a lot [about] where our programs stood relative to [the] college, and even the state, from the research office’s information." Another wrote, "Felt like it [the EMP] was a good starting point, and we were told we could update it later." Still another wrote, "[I had] feelings of completion—felt everyone had really tried hard to give relevant input to the plan, felt glad to get it done, [and] felt proud of the agreement and input given." Another observed, "Our department (more recently hired faculty and
rapidly growing program) had an easy time compared to other departments.” Comments about completing the task included, “It’s done!” and “Incredible relief! And pride!”

Affinity Six: Results of the EMP Process

The focus group divided “Affinity Six: Results of the EMP Process” into two subaffinities, which they named “Unanswered Questions” and “Unexpected Results.” “Unanswered Questions” mainly addressed uncertainties about how the institution would actually use the EMPs, and if all the faculty’s work would be meaningful to the institution. One member referred to the EMPs as a “learning opportunity” for the college and asked, “How does the feedback affect the organization?” Another expressed concern discipline EMPs, merged into area wide EMPs, might somehow get lost, “How will this be used—will the core of what I wanted to communicate—hold up through the filtering process?”

Under “Unexpected Results,” faculty members identified unexpected things they had learned, or had happened, as a result of engaging in the EMP process. Most of the comments were positive, “It gave the department direction,” “[I gained] a better understanding of student support services,” “Format turned out to be user friendly,” “It merged well with the area plan,” “Appreciation of the campus as a whole,” and, finally, “I became more interested in the process through the enthusiasm of a colleague—especially student data.” Negative comments included, “Lack of understanding of area/discipline budget requirements,” and “Frustration with lack of flexibility of [the] campus organization.”

Affinity Seven: Frustrations

In “Affinity Seven: Frustrations,” focus group members wrote about the various frustrations they experienced in completing their EMPs. Frustrations included lack of assistance from colleagues, amount of work involved, using the
EMP template for the first time, and the short timeline for completing the plan. One faculty member wrote, "Overview in January [training] was pretty good, but the department meeting was that afternoon—not enough time (no lunch for me that day!)" Another observed, "Lots of late nights and weekend work." Still another wrote, "Initially—overwhelmed. Finally—useful information. Still doesn’t feel like a living document, i.e. needed to revise for [a] hiring request." Regarding the template, one person wrote, "The template was good but frustrating at the same time. It definitely seemed like a work in progress."

Relationships Among the Focus Group’s Affinities

After the focus group members had completed grouping their written comments into affinities (inductive coding) and then naming the affinities and subaffinities (deductive coding), they were asked to identify the relationships among the affinities (theoretical coding) using an affinity wheel. This was also the first time the focus group members had an opportunity to verbally exchange observations and opinions about the affinities they had created using the silent nominal techniques. Some of their observations, which will be described later in this section, created new areas for the researcher to explore.

When the affinity wheel was finished and the results verified with the participants, the findings resulted in the preliminary systems influence diagram (SID) shown in Figure 5. The preliminary IRD is shown in Appendix A.
"Affinity Three: Influence of Past Planning Failures" and "Affinity One: Resources Used to Create the EMPs" were the primary drivers of the faculty experience. This meant that the focus group identified these two affinities as having the most influence on the other affinities. "Affinity Four: Getting the EMP Work Done" and "Affinity Two: Interpersonal Effects of Engaging in the EMP Process" were secondary drivers of the faculty experience. Overall, these affinities influenced more affinities than they were influenced. However, they were not as strongly influential as Affinities Three and One. There were no neutral position or secondary outcome affinities identified by the faculty focus group members.

"Affinity Five: Evaluation of the EMP Process and Product," "Affinity Six: Results of the EMP Process" (Questions and Surprises), and "Affinity Seven: Frustrations" were all primary outcomes of the faculty experience. These three affinities were identified as being influenced by the other affinities, and not influencing any other affinity.
When the researcher was verifying the results of the affinity wheel with the faculty in the focus group, she made the observation “Affinity Three: Past Planning Failures” had by far the fewest comment cards of any of the affinities, and yet was being identified as having the strongest influence on the faculty EMP experience. This led to a lively discussion within the group. In the end, consensus was reached on the following conclusions. Disciplines, whose faculty members had been employed by the college for a long time, were very likely influenced by the past planning failures. They were more cynical about the EMP process, less likely to participate with colleagues in developing their discipline’s EMP, less likely to evaluate the EMP process or product favorably, and expressed greater suspicion about how the plan would be used. These senior faculty were also more likely to create frustrations for the lead EMP contacts, who were trying to get the EMP work accomplished. In contrast, disciplines whose faculty members were mainly new did not have the negative past history to influence their work. Thus, they proceeded more quickly and enthusiastically to finish their plans. Either way, the focus group concluded past planning failures were a major influence on faculty experiences.

Based on this conversation, the researcher decided to include exploration of the length of time a discipline’s faculty members had been at the college, when interviewing lead EMP faculty contacts in the second part of the study.

Another observation the researcher made to the faculty focus group regarded “Affinity One: Resources Used to Create the EMP.” She noted she had heard very little mention of support from area deans. The members confirmed this was their experience—developing the discipline EMPs was a faculty driven process. If deans were involved, it was primarily when the discipline EMPs were compiled into area EMPs.
INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Fourteen faculty from the areas of behavior and social sciences, business, fine and applied arts, humanities, learning resources, mathematics/engineering/design technology, physical education and athletics, public safety training, and science and allied health participated in individual interviews. Eight of the faculty interviewed were from disciplines primarily responsible for providing basic skills, general education, and/or transfer courses. The remaining six faculty were from disciplines primarily responsible for providing vocational courses, certificates, and/or vocational associate degrees. Interviews were generally 50 minutes in length, and centered on questions generated from the focus group findings (See Appendix B). Interviewees were expected to confirm or discount each of the seven affinities identified by the focus group, as well as to add new observations, possibly leading to the identification of additional affinities. Faculty were also expected to identify relationships among the various affinities during the course of their interviews, although no direct questions were asked about relationships.

Once all the interviews were completed and transcribed, the researcher systematically coded each interview transcript using the deductive and theoretical coding techniques required by IQA methodology. The results are reported first by individual affinities (deductive coding results), and then by identified relationships among the affinities (theoretical coding results). A final, rationalized systems influence diagram is then provided in Figure 6, on page 70, as a visual aid to understanding the substantive theory resulting from the analysis.

Affinity One: Resources Used to Create the EMPs

All of the faculty interviewed were able to discuss the resources they used to complete their discipline EMPs. The resources most frequently mentioned were discipline faculty colleagues, discipline specific advisory boards, college research data, and college personnel assigned to support the EMP process. Faculty
colleagues were valued for their knowledge of local department history and curriculum. Some also contributed to the EMP process, based on their past planning efforts at other institutions.

Not surprisingly, interviewees working in vocational disciplines were most likely to consult with industry and advisory boards. In one-person vocational departments, the boards were sometimes the only resource used. Several vocational faculty pointed out changes in their industries, the local community, and the legislature were better predictors of future enrollment, than general college trends.

As one vocational faculty member observed,

> It is more important for us to keep our thumb on what’s coming into us from community needs, because that is where it [enrollment] is generated. Now and then a student will come in to us from general counseling [career advisement]. That’s a rare student.

Data from the college research office was frequently cited as an important resource, especially the five-year enrollment trend data and three-year productivity data. Some faculty also described using program review data. Program review data contain student success rates over five-year periods. Several faculty collected their own data through discipline developed student satisfaction surveys. Two of the newer faculty noted working on their discipline EMPs resulted in their first serious look at college research data. A newer faculty member explained,

> [T]he student data as far as enrollment and productivity...was extremely helpful...I didn’t have any history, so I didn’t know what programs were strong or weak, what the enrollments were like. So, that [data] was extremely critical.

Some faculty also described research data they wished were available, such as student’s unmet course needs, and discipline specific graduate employment rates.

Five interviewees mentioned college personnel as resources. In particular, the faculty researcher, who was assigned to meet with any faculty requesting help with their EMPs, was commended. American River College requires the college’s
faculty researcher to carry a 40% teaching load, and a 60% research load. This requirement resulted from a request by the academic senate, and was reaffirmed during subsequent hiring opportunities, as the best way to ensure the research office (also staffed by a research analyst and clerk) remains focused on faculty and student issues. The faculty researcher’s assistance was lauded as making the EMP data more understandable, and the EMP tasks easier to complete.

Affinity Two: Interpersonal Effects of Engaging in the EMP Process

Descriptions of the interpersonal effects of engaging in the EMP process varied by size of department, and past working styles of those within each discipline. Twelve of the interviewees reported the EMP work was done using interaction styles routinely used among discipline faculty. These ways of working together were largely reported as positive. Stated one faculty member, “It’s always a collaborative thing [in our discipline] as far as discussions.” Another person in a two-person department emphatically declared, “[We] have an exemplary working relationship… We want a team approach.” However, status quo communications were not always reported as ideal. One faculty member reflected,

It seems like we latched onto existing interpersonal conflicts and then that expanded into the new [EMP] information we brought in… This process seemed to exaggerate those problems; so did not alleviate or change things in any way.

Faculty in one-person disciplines were most likely to minimize the interpersonal effects of the EMP process, since they felt they were on their own to get the work done.

Faculty EMP leads from the business area, and the physical education and athletics area, all commented that the EMP process resulted in more meaningful conversations among typically isolated faculty members. The new ways of interacting were described as “a big accomplishment” by the business area faculty
member. In addition, physical education and athletics EMP contacts used the EMP process as an opportunity to develop leadership opportunities for newer faculty.

Finally, several faculty commented on the interpersonal interactions that occurred at the area level, when the discipline EMPs were being combined into area EMPs. Said one EMP lead from the science and allied health area,

[B]y far the most valuable interpersonal experience was within our division. That was, I think everybody agreed, a real outstanding opportunity to pursue a guiding purpose amongst the people in the science area—lots of discussion about how we work together on various projects, field studies, lots of discussion about creating a science skills center, and putting our collective resources toward eventual planning for a building for our program...That for me was really exciting.

Another’s experience at the area level was less collaborative,

The main thing I saw was the different approaches my colleagues, who were [spokespersons] or EMP planners, took and the degree to which they saw competition between the EMPs...It was almost like kids fighting. The dean is mediating like dad, and the kids are fighting for who will get the most Christmas presents...[T]here was a sense of competition that some people weren’t doing it “right,” or not following the rules, and that somehow all these EMPs would get compared, and some would come up lacking. It would reflect badly on you.

Affinity Three: Influence of Past Planning Failures

The 14 faculty interviewees varied in their evaluation of past college planning efforts. Six faculty agreed with the focus group’s description of the past planning efforts as failures, based on their own experiences, or the comments of colleagues. Three of the six indicated the history of failures led to resistance in their disciplines’ EMP efforts. Others indicated they and their colleagues thought it was time to move on. A newer faculty member stated,
I think your comment about people feeling that past planning efforts were failures is probably accurate. I've heard the same thing, especially when I'm the one trying to gather the info without a lot of history...I think there was resistance and people saying, “Oh no, not again”... So, I did a lot of explaining, as I understood what we were doing with the EMP... People came along, but there was a little resistance at first.

Two interviewees thought the former plans were simply outgrown, and were irrelevant to the Spring 2001 EMP process. Three faculty stated the past plans were successful, although now outdated. In their view, it was simply time to create new plans. Noted one,

[My area] has always done a three-year plan, and we update it every year... I don’t think [past planning] is a failure, because I’ve always used this whenever I’ve made a request for budgets, so it’s something we’ve been doing.

Finally, three other faculty could find no past planning documents for their disciplines. Each of the three faculty was in a one-person department. Two of the three resented the lack of prior planning documentation, which they believed hindered their ability to know what had worked, or had not worked in the past. One faculty member said, “I couldn’t find any records in a coherent format.”

Interestingly, the three faculty who felt past planning efforts at the college were successful were all long-time college employees. This finding is in contrast to what the focus group faculty predicted. They thought the disciplines with a greater number of new faculty would be less likely to be cynical about planning efforts, since they would not have experienced the past failures. Instead, it appears that faculty perceptions of past planning efforts were based on their individual experiences within their disciplines, rather than the length of time they had worked at the college.
Affinity Four: Getting the EMP Work Done

When the faculty interviewees described how they accomplished the EMP work, they were able to respond to the focus group’s three subaffinities of “Who Was in Charge?” “How Was the Work Distributed?” and “Why We Played the EMP Game—GREED!” The humorous term “greed” used by the focus group faculty was readily accepted by the interviewees, who appeared to enjoy the wittiness of their colleagues who named the subaffinity.

Seven of the 14 faculty interviewees were department spokespersons in Spring 2001, and felt that leading the EMP work was a natural part of their jobs. Another three were also spokespersons. However, since they were in one-person departments, they felt they did not have an option of declining the work. Laughed one, “I didn’t realize I had a choice! I did it because it was me, myself, and I on the team.” One faculty member in a two-person department reported that his colleague had handled the specialized accreditation work for their discipline and it was only fair he do this. “It was the short straw effect. It was my turn.” Finally, there were three faculty who volunteered to do the work, due to their interest and availability. One senior faculty member, with 33 years tenure at the college, felt he could add some perspective to four “younger ones,” who also volunteered to do the work in his large department.

Most lead EMP faculty members stated they were the ones who actually wrote the plans. Typically, the leads held discipline-wide discussions during department meetings, or through electronic conversations. Then, the lead would gather the remaining information, draft the plan, and return it to colleagues for further input. Once everyone was satisfied the plan contained the appropriate information, the plan would be submitted to the area dean. The public safety center faculty member worked directly with his two industry advisory boards on the plan. Similar to his lead EMP colleagues, he drafted his plan and then revised it based on feedback from his advisory boards. When one discipline EMP group had difficulty
meeting to do the work they finally “locked [them]selves in a room” until they got it done. Another discipline arranged for a four-hour, on-campus retreat in order to secure everyone’s input.

Reasons for actually doing the EMP work varied, although the majority cited the message from the president. The message, frequently reinforced by their area deans, declared failure to complete their EMPs would prevent disciplines from being considered for any new college-wide resource allocations. Two other contributing factors cited for completing the EMP work were lack of other faculty in the department to do the planning, and the belief planning made good sense, particularly in times of large college enrollment growth, and high rate of new faculty hires.

Affinity Five: Evaluation of the EMP Process and Product

Faculty interviewees had a variety of reactions to the EMP process and product. Four faculty described the process as bringing their disciplines, or areas, closer together to form a more effective working unit. One interviewee stated,

[We are a] large faculty group of 50, and I think a lot of times you do things that just pertain to your little class situation. By doing this planning, it really forced us into talking to other faculty members as far as their needs and wants.

Six others felt that the EMP process merely formalized planning they were already doing in their disciplines, although most acknowledged creating formal written plans was a positive thing. Three faculty felt the process was not helpful, or meaningful. Stated one, “[I]t seemed to me busy work. We got it done, and turned it in. It wasn’t a very personal experience.” Finally, two others stated they thought the EMP planning process was more important than the actual EMP product. As one EMP lead from physical education and athletics said,
I don’t think the product is nearly as important as the process of making people think about what they are doing. I think it helped us gain a picture of where we were, and potentially where we might go.

Most of the interviewees echoed their focus group colleagues in remembering feelings of relief when their plans were submitted. One stated, "It was a great relief to get it done. It really felt like, hey, here’s sort of a benchmark.” Many also stated they were proud of their plans, and the collaborative work that had helped create them. "It was a great exercise. It was a great plan. I felt really proud of what we did,” a faculty member said.

Eleven of the faculty interviewed reported their EMPs contained new directions their departments wanted to move toward. Some of the planned activities included consolidating similar industry advisory boards for similar majors, pursuing the development of new degree majors and certificates, entering established college processes to obtain additional faculty positions, increasing technical staff for improved weekend lab support, and increasing solicitations for equipment donations from industry. Other changes resulting from the EMP process were more cross-discipline work groups, and a greater effort to include part-time faculty in planning processes. Three of the 14 faculty saw no benefits to creating their EMPs, other than meeting a college requirement.

Affinity Six: Results of the EMP Process

“Affinity Six: Results of the EMP Process” was divided into two subaffinities, “Unanswered Questions” and “Unexpected Results,” by the faculty focus group. Of the eight interviewees who responded they had unanswered questions, six were concerned with how administrators were really going to use their EMPs. One person was unclear how faculty in different disciplines could see and discuss each other’s plans, so he could understand how college resource allocations would be made. Another was concerned with how to successfully learn...
the bureaucratic tasks to access department and college resources to implement her EMP.

Eleven faculty indicated they had experienced unexpected results from engaging in the EMP process. Positive surprises included how well the disciplines within an area worked together, how the EMP process provided a leadership opportunity for newer faculty, and the ease of using the EMP template. Three faculty recognized new things about their disciplines, including true urgency about replacing outdated equipment; the need in a two-person department to plan for the probable, simultaneous retirement of both faculty members within 10 years; and critical unmet technical support needs for weekend labs. Less positive were realizations a discipline had serious disagreements about an impending major curriculum revision, and one area’s high level of competition among different disciplines about their EMPs. Finally, as a result of the timing of ten of the faculty interviews in Spring 2002, some of the ten were able to add insights on the progress they had made in implementing their 2001 EMPs. Three expressed surprise about how much of their 2001 plans they had already accomplished. A faculty member from the area of fine and applied arts proudly and ruefully reflected,

[S]uddenly the year was over. I looked at last year’s EMP, and I went through the list [of objectives] and thought “Wow! I did everything on the list, and now I have to write a whole new damn plan!”

Affinity Seven: Frustrations

Faculty interviewees did identify a variety of frustrations in completing their EMPs. However, only six faculty identified issues the researcher considered resulted in medium to high levels of frustration. Five faculty indicated minor frustrations about learning to use the EMP template, or dealing with peers who were less willing to engage in the EMP process. Three denied having any frustrations at all with the process.
The faculty with medium frustration levels expressed desires for additional research data, were suspicious of the data provided, or felt the workload requirement was somewhat heavy. Said one individual from behavioral and social sciences,

I think that what statistics does, is it tends to make you think of the finite solution. This is it—BOOM. It’s in here, or not in here—the box is filled, or not filled. Certainly a lot of instructors thought that that was one of those scary things. Why does it have to be either or?

The faculty expressing major frustrations were from very small, or one-person, vocational disciplines. The majority of resentment occurred due to workload demands. Said one irritated interviewee,

I’m a program coordinator. I teach full-time. I have a [college] program review to do every four years. I’ve got [a special accreditation] evaluation to do, and now this [EMP]...I really can’t put all my efforts to working toward some of these things, in part because I am teaching, which I still feel is my primary responsibility. But the program, the future of it, is also very, very important to me, and being able to do what should be done.

Another of the three faculty, most frustrated by the EMP process, had the added challenge of being new to the college in Spring 2001. She expressed feeling too new to adequately write a plan,

I pretty much walked up to my dean and said, “I have no idea why you would trust anything I’m saying.” I thought it was a little foolish for them to trust me, but they figured because it is more of a vocational or skills oriented department that I would know what people would need. It was really daunting. It was very frustrating...I was glad [my plan] was acceptable, and I felt like a fraud.

Summary of Affinity Confirmations by Faculty Interviewees

All of the faculty interviewees were able to understand and respond to the questions generated from the focus group’s identified affinities. In their responses,
several interviewees indicated they had not had a similar experience to the named affinity. Examples included “Influence of Past Planning Failures,” “Unanswered Questions,” “Unexpected Results,” and “Frustrations.” Several even noted they had heard from non-discipline colleagues of such experiences, and readily had explanations for why their discipline experiences might have been different. However, in the case of “Influence of Past Planning Failures,” some faculty genuinely disagreed “failure” was a correct term to use for past college planning endeavors. Therefore, for the rationalized SID, the researcher renamed this affinity “Influence of Past Planning Efforts.” The modified name encompasses and honors the differing perceptions of failure and success, while still recognizing past college planning efforts as impacting the Spring 2001 EMP process.

Relationships Among the Interviewees’ Affinities

Once the researcher confirmed the focus group’s affinities through deductive coding and analysis of the faculty interviewee’s transcripts, the same transcripts were re-coded using IQA theoretical coding techniques. As the theoretical coding progressed, the researcher observed subaffinities within two of the affinities, Affinity Four and Affinity Six, created coding complications. The complications occurred because the subaffinities had very different relationships with other affinities, when compared to the other subaffinities within their main affinities. Therefore, the two problematic subaffinities were separated from their main affinities, and the theoretical coding was redone.

In “Affinity Four: Getting the EMP Work Done,” the third subaffinity “Why We Played the EMP Game—GREED!” was removed. It became a separate affinity. Returning to the comment cards of the focus group and the transcripts of the faculty interviewees revealed to the researcher many faculty had acknowledged and believed the message from the college president. The message was failure to complete a discipline EMP would prevent disciplines from being considered for any
future college-wide resources (e.g. staffing, equipment, and new or remodeled facilities). This affinity was renamed “Affinity Eight: Why We Played the EMP Game—GREED!”

Likewise, in “Affinity Six: Results of the EMP Process” the two subaffinities, “Unanswered Questions” and “Unexpected Results” created very different theoretical coding results. In this case, transcript comments in support of the subaffinity “Unexpected Results” were moved to “Affinity Five: Evaluation of the EMP Process and Product.” Then Affinity Six was renamed, “Affinity Six: Unanswered Questions.” Again, the comment cards of the focus group and the transcripts of the interviewees were re-examined. The most frequently asked question was what the college, in particular the administration, would do with the EMP work of the faculty.

Using the changes noted in Affinity Eight and Affinity Six, as well as the change to the name of Affinity Three, the researcher revised, or in IQA terminology, “refined” the affinity list as follows:

Affinity One: Resources Used to Create the EMPs
Affinity Two: Interpersonal Effects of Engaging in the EMP Process
Affinity Three: Influence of Past Planning Efforts
Affinity Four: Getting the EMP Work Done
  Subaffinity One: Who Was in Charge?
  Subaffinity Two: How Was the Work Distributed?
Affinity Five: Evaluation of the EMP Process and Product
Affinity Six: Unanswered Questions
Affinity Seven: Frustrations
Affinity Eight: Why We Played the EMP Game—GREED!

Once the refinements to the affinity list were made, the transcripts were recoded using the same IQA theoretical coding techniques. A summary interrelationship digraph (IRD) for the eight affinities was produced. The
summary IRD is shown in Appendix C. Using the IRD information, the final, rationalized systems influence diagram (SID) was created. It is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Rationalized SID of Faculty EMP Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Driver</th>
<th>Secondary Driver</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Secondary Outcome</th>
<th>Primary Outcome</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Past Planning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Frustrations</td>
<td>6. Questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Affinity Eight: Why We Played the EMP Game—GREED!” is shown as the primary driver of the faculty experience in creating educational master plans. In the focus group’s preliminary SID, Affinity Eight was part of Affinity Four, which was a secondary driver. Once this subaffinity was removed from Affinity Four to become its own affinity, it became a primary driver in the rationalized SID. The refined Affinity Four then dropped into a neutral position in the rationalized SID. Affinity Eight influenced four other affinities: “Affinity Four: Getting the EMP Work Done,” “Affinity Two: Interpersonal Effects of Engaging in the EMP Process,” “Affinity Six: Unanswered Questions,” and “Affinity Five: Evaluation of the EMP Process and Product.” Affinity Eight was not influenced by any other affinity.
The secondary drivers of the faculty experience were “Affinity Three: Influence of Past Planning Efforts,” and “Affinity One: Resources Used to Create the EMPs.” These two affinities moved from their former preliminary SID positions as primary drivers into secondary driver positions. Affinity Three influenced three affinities: “Affinity Four: Getting the EMP Work Done,” “Affinity Two: Interpersonal Effects of Engaging in the EMP Process,” and “Affinity Six: Unanswered Questions.” Affinity Three was not influenced by any other affinities. Affinity One also influenced three affinities: “Affinity Four: Getting the EMP Work Done,” “Affinity Five: Evaluation of the EMP Process and Product,” and “Affinity Seven: Frustrations.” It, too, was not influenced by any other affinities.

“Affinity Four: Getting the EMP Work Done” is in neutral position. This means it was influenced by the same number of affinities as it, in turn, influenced. In the preliminary focus group SID, this affinity was in a secondary driver position. Affinity Four influenced three affinities: “Affinity Two: Interpersonal Effects of Engaging in the EMP Process,” “Affinity Five: Evaluation of the EMP Process and Product,” and “Affinity Seven: Frustrations.” In turn, Affinity Four was influenced by three other affinities: “Affinity Eight: Why We Played the EMP Game—GREED!” “Affinity Three: Influence of Past Planning Efforts,” and “Affinity One: Resources Used to Create the EMPs.”

“Affinity Two: Interpersonal Effects of Engaging in the EMP Process,” and “Affinity Six: Unanswered Questions” are secondary outcomes. This means these affinities were influenced by more affinities, than they influenced. In the preliminary focus group SID, Affinity Two was a secondary driver, while Affinity Six (which at that time included “Subaffinity Two: Unexpected Results”) was a primary outcome. Affinity Two influenced two affinities: “Affinity Five: Evaluation of the EMP Process and Product,” and “Affinity Seven: Frustrations.” Affinity Two was influenced by four affinities: “Affinity Eight: Why We Played the EMP Game—GREED!” “Affinity Three: Influence of Past Planning Efforts,”

The primary outcomes of the rationalized SID are “Affinity Five: Evaluation of the EMP Process and Product,” and “Affinity Seven: Frustrations.” Both affinities were also primary outcomes in the preliminary SID. Affinity Five influenced only one affinity: “Affinity Six: Unanswered Questions.” It was influenced by four affinities: “Affinity Eight: Why We Played the EMP Game—GREED!” “Affinity One: Resources Used to Create the EMPs,” “Affinity Four: Getting the EMP Work Done,” and “Affinity Two: Interpersonal Effects of Engaging in the EMP Process.” The other primary outcome, Affinity Seven, did not influence any affinities. Instead, it was influenced by four affinities: “Affinity One: Resources Used to Create the EMPs,” “Affinity Four: Getting the EMP Work Done,” “Affinity Two: Interpersonal Effects of Engaging in the EMP Process,” and “Affinity Six: Unanswered Questions.”

A short overview of this final, rationalized SID shows the experiences of lead faculty responsible for creating educational master plans at American River College in Spring 2001. The faculty were motivated primarily by trying to ensure their disciplines would be eligible to access needed resource allocations in the future (or “greed” as the faculty humorously named the affinity). They engaged in the work of creating the EMPs. This work was influenced by the history of past planning efforts at the college, and by the resources they were given, or accessed on their own, to write their plans. Their EMP work resulted primarily in both products (plans), and experiences in the college EMP processes; as well as opportunities for different types of frustration. Secondary outcomes of the faculty experiences were
interpersonal effects from interacting with discipline and area faculty, and unanswered questions about how the plans would really be used by administration.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter detailed the findings of the experiences of American River College lead EMP faculty, who engaged in developing educational master plans for their disciplines in Spring 2001. First, a focus group of seven faculty met and identified seven affinities, or themes, about their EMP experiences. Then, they developed a preliminary theory about the relationships among the seven affinities. Next, the researcher, using questions generated from the affinities named by the focus group, interviewed 14 additional faculty discipline EMP leads. The results of the researcher's analysis of those interviews refined the affinities identified by the focus group. Two of the focus group subaffinities became their own affinities. Another subaffinity became part of an existing affinity, resulting in a total of eight affinities. Finally, the relationships among the refined affinities were analyzed, and a rationalized system influence diagram was created to illustrate the relationships.

In Chapter Five, further discussion of the findings takes place, including presentation of additional literature to support, or refute, the study's findings. In addition, the researcher explores a systems view of the final, rationalized SId. The exploration promotes contemplation of how one could enhance the faculty's overall experiences by changing the impact of the individual affinities within the system.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION OF FACULTY PLANNING EXPERIENCE
AS SUBSTANTIVE, GROUNDED THEORY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to generate substantive, grounded theory regarding community college faculty participation in educational master planning at American River College in Spring 2001. The theory was developed using IQA methodology (Northcutt et al., 1998). It provides a dynamic, systems framework for better understanding how American River College faculty experienced their educational master planning process. The systems framework also suggests opportunities for intervention to improve faculty planning experiences, processes, and products.

This chapter begins by naming the new theory. It then follows with a discussion of each affinity in the new theory, the relationships among the affinities, and an overview of how the theory operates as a dynamic open system. The chapter ends with a return to the related literature to show whether other research supports the study’s findings.

THE NEW THEORY

As detailed in Chapter Four, data gathered from a seven-member faculty focus group meeting and 14 individual faculty interviews were analyzed to produce substantive, grounded theory about the faculty experience developing discipline specific educational master plans. The new theory is named the “Faculty EMP Experience Systems Theory.” The theory first identifies the eight major affinities, or themes, used to describe the faculty experience. It then models the relationships among the eight affinities. Based on their ability to either influence or be influenced by the other affinities, each affinity was assigned a position in the
Primary Drivers

Primary drivers exert the most powerful influence on a system, and are key to understanding how a system works. In this study, the most influential factor for faculty participation in the educational master planning process was their belief access to future college resources for their disciplines would be directly related to their EMPs. This belief provided strong motivation for discipline faculty to participate in the EMP effort. The faculty focus group used a humorous label, "Why We Played the EMP Game—GREED!" to name this affinity. However, the faculty clearly understood they worked in a community college environment challenged to provide adequate staffing, equipment, and facilities for a growing, diverse student population. Thus, the faculty knew participating in the EMP process increased their potential to choose a future where their programs could thrive, rather than merely struggle to survive.

This "greed" affinity, representing faculty desires to access future college resources, directly influenced four other affinities. First, it influenced the affinity describing how the EMP work was done, by providing faculty with a clear motivation to have their disciplines complete viable EMPs. Next, it influenced interpersonal relationships. This was particularly noted at the area level where some faculty pursued collaboration to increase their disciplines' potential for future resources, while others engaged in competition to secure higher priority for potential resources. Then, this "greed" affinity influenced faculty as to what to include in their plans. Faculty knew they were required to specify all the resources they anticipated needing over the next three years, in order to be eligible to request these same resources when, or if, they became available. Lastly, this affinity
influenced the creation of questions among the faculty about how their plans would really be used. Would the college administration truly use their EMP work to help determine future resource allocations? This primary driver was not influenced by any other affinity in the “Faculty EMP Experience Systems Theory.”

Secondary Drivers

Secondary drivers are also important influencers in a systems theory model. In this study, the secondary drivers helped create an environment, which either facilitated the faculty EMP work or created barriers. Barriers resulted in more difficult working circumstances, and/or inferior plans. Two affinities were recognized as secondary drivers. One described the history of past planning efforts at the college, while the other described the types of resources faculty used to complete their EMP work.

Faculty differed in their perceptions of past planning efforts by the college. Some felt the college’s past efforts had resulted in failure, where plans just sat on shelves, and were not used to make resource allocation decisions. This “planning history” affinity influenced how the EMP work was done, since those who believed past planning had ended in failure were reluctant to participate. This, in turn, created more work for their colleagues, who did participate. Past planning efforts influenced interpersonal relationships among faculty by creating negative feelings between those who did the EMP work, and those who sat on the sidelines. This affinity also influenced the affinity concerning unanswered questions. Faculty, who perceived their plans had not been used in the past, were doubtful their new plans would be used. Their doubt was repeatedly expressed as unanswered questions the administration would need to address. No other affinities influenced this affinity. It is important to note this secondary driver of past planning history also speaks to the strength of the primary driver. Despite their apparent concerns, all college disciplines completed and submitted EMPs.
The other secondary driver in the “Faculty EMP Experience Systems Theory” was the affinity describing the resources faculty used to complete their plans. The resources included research data, faculty colleagues, industry advisory boards, community agencies, transfer institutions, and college planning support personnel. These resources influenced how the EMP work was accomplished; how faculty evaluated the EMP process, and the quality of their final plans; and what frustrations they experienced. This was an important driver because faculty who felt they received the resources they needed were more likely to be pleased with the process and their EMPs. This resource affinity was not influenced by any other affinities.

Neutral Position

Affinities in the neutral position influence, and are influenced by, other affinities, in equal number. The “Faculty EMP Experience Systems Theory” proposes the work of the EMP faculty was influenced by motivation to obtain future resources for their disciplines, past college planning efforts, and the resources they were given and/or accessed to assist them in developing their plans. Thus, all three of the system’s drivers influenced how the EMP work was done. This affinity, in turn, influenced three outcomes of the faculty’s EMP experiences. First, how the EMP work was done influenced interpersonal relationships. If the discipline or area processes were inclusive and collaborative, faculty reported feeling good about their colleagues, and excited about prospects for implementing their plans. In contrast, if discipline or area processes were isolating, or overly competitive, faculty reported feeling overworked, defensive, and/or resentful. How the work was done also influenced the faculty evaluation of the EMP process and final product. Again, when the work went well, faculty described having feelings of pride, and believed they had a plan to help them progress. When the work went poorly, faculty described the process as too labor intensive, busy work, and/or a
waste of their time. Finally, how the work was done influenced if faculty experienced frustrations, and what those frustrations were.

Secondary Outcomes

Secondary outcomes include those affinities whose attributes mainly result from the influence of other affinities. However, secondary outcomes still exert some influence of their own on other affinities. In the “Faculty EMP Experience Systems Theory,” interpersonal effects and unanswered questions were secondary outcomes of the faculty EMP experiences.

The interpersonal experiences of faculty engaged in the EMP process were influenced by four affinities: the motivation to be eligible for future resources, past planning efforts at the college, how the EMP work was done, and unanswered questions. In turn, interpersonal experiences influenced how faculty evaluated the EMP process, including unexpected results; and any frustrations they experienced. Positive interpersonal experiences created greater satisfaction with the EMP process, because faculty had the opportunity to work closely with colleagues, discover each other’s unexpected talents, mentor newer people in their departments, and collaborate on creating a shared vision for their disciplines and/or areas. Negative interpersonal experiences among faculty created resentment about unequal workloads, resistance to collaboration, and/or a lack of satisfaction in their final plans. Negative interpersonal experiences also created frustrations in trying to decide what to include in plans, and how to get them completed in a timely manner.

The affinity describing unanswered questions, the other secondary outcome of the “Faculty EMP Experience Systems Theory,” was influenced by the desire to be eligible for future resources, past planning efforts, and the faculty evaluation of the overall EMP process and their final plans. In turn, unanswered questions influenced interpersonal relationships, and frustration experiences. Uncertainty about how the administration would really use the EMP plans influenced trust
levels within interpersonal relationships—among faculty, and between faculty and administration. Among faculty, uncertainty about future resources created opportunities for collaboration and competition. Both collaboration and competition influenced interpersonal relationships, although in different ways. The interpersonal relationships between faculty and administration will be influenced by the eventual answers to questions about the fate of the EMPs, particularly with regards to future resource allocations. This “unanswered questions” affinity has the likely potential to become a strong feedback loop for this theory. If the faculty perceive their EMPs are appropriately used to influence future resource allocations, the theory’s primary driver will be strengthened, and its secondary driver of past planning efforts will decrease in importance. However, if the faculty perceive their EMP work does not adequately influence future resource allocations, the primary driver will lose strength, and the secondary driver of past planning efforts will gain in strength. Thus, if this proposed theory is valid, either of those events should impact the strength of one of two important drivers. Depending on how much the drivers are affected, they may cause the system to change.

Primary Outcomes

The primary outcomes in a system are almost, or entirely, influenced by the other affinities within the system. The two primary outcomes of the “Faculty EMP Experience Systems Theory” are the faculty’s evaluation of the overall EMP process and their plans; and their experiences with frustrations.

The evaluation of the EMP process and final product (plans) is influenced by the desire to be eligible for future resource allocations, resources used to complete the plans, the EMP work, and interpersonal relationships. This affinity does influence the affinity describing unanswered questions. As the faculty shifted their attention from all the work required to complete their plans to evaluating their final product, they voiced a greater concern about how their efforts would be used
by the college. This is the only affinity in the rationalized SiD which shows a "backward" arrow of influence from a less influential affinity (primary outcome) to a more influential affinity (secondary outcome). This is likely due to the temporary nature of the affinity regarding unanswered questions.

The affinity of frustrations is the other primary outcome of the "Faculty EMP Experience Systems Theory." It is influenced by affinities representing the resources used to complete the EMP, how the EMP work was completed, interpersonal relationships, and unanswered questions. It does not influence any other affinity. While this primary outcome lacks influence, it does provide critical information for anyone wishing to change the faculty experience in developing educational master plans, since it provides key information on how to intervene and strengthen the theory's driver and neutral position affinities.

Systems Framework

To fully appreciate theories developed using IQA methodology (Northcutt et al., 1998), one needs to have a basic understanding of systems theory (Capra, 1996; Sanders, 1998; Wheatley, 1992). Systems theory advocates that all phenomena occur in relationship to one another. Thus, changing the properties, or actions, of one phenomenon will change its relationships to other phenomena. That, in turn, causes the other phenomena to change. Feedback loops often help modify this process, so that a system may stabilize, or return to a state of relative equilibrium for a time. However, systems are also open, which means phenomena from outside the immediate system being observed can impact it and create changes.

IQA analysis tries to describe relationships among phenomena (build a theory about a larger phenomenon) within a limited framework of selected phenomena, and within a specific time frame. Then, if the theory is accurate, and once it is understood, strategies can be developed to impact important drivers of the
system. The drivers, in turn, can then create desired changes in the system’s outcomes. However, it is important to note no matter how accurate a specific theory may be at a given time, the system it describes is always vulnerable to being changed by phenomena outside the system. Ideally, a theory will describe a system accurately enough to allow strategic interventions to result in desired outcomes, for at least a short period of time. It should be anticipated the desired outcomes would likely create feedback loops, which again may modify the system. The modifications to the system may, in turn, cause the theory describing the system to be less precise. Even if the system’s outcomes are determined to be desirable the way they are, and no interventions are implemented, over time the system will still change due to outside influences.

If the “Faculty EMP Experience Systems Theory” developed in this study is accurate, one could best endeavor to improve the outcomes of the faculty experience by influencing the theory’s primary or secondary drivers, since their overall influence within the system is more powerful than the remaining affinities. One could never guarantee, however, specific strategies to influence the drivers would have the desired effects on system outcomes, the new outcomes would last, or phenomena outside the system’s framework would not change the system, possibly weakening the influence of the drivers.

The inability to guarantee specific interventions, even in the best of circumstances, will result in improved outcomes is not to say targeted, informed interventions are useless. We can increase our ability to influence positive outcomes, within and without our immediate college environments, by better understanding key phenomena that potentially impact our community colleges (Carter, 1998a; Peterson, 1997).

One specific example of how an “outside” phenomenon can influence a system is the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. That unforeseen event, which occurred far from American River College, caused
immediate changes to some curriculum processes in the college’s public safety training area. One of this study’s participants reported new curriculum, which had been designed based on input from an industry advisory board during the Spring 2001 EMP processes, was implemented under a greatly accelerated timeline due to the terrorist attacks. Thus, the college’s internal planning system was influenced by an outside phenomenon.

RETURN TO THE LITERATURE

Reflecting on the “Faculty EMP Experience Systems Theory” generated by this study, it is informative to return to the literature to see if the study’s findings are consistent with other literature about community college and/or higher education planning experiences. Therefore, this final literature review explores the faculty identified affinities of motivations to plan (greed); impact of past planning efforts; perceived values of various planning resources; interpersonal effects of engaging in the EMP process; unanswered questions about how the EMPs will be used; and the surprises resulting from the EMP process and product.

Motivations to Plan

The faculty in this study repeatedly expressed they were motivated to complete their EMPs in order to become eligible to access future college-wide resources for their disciplines. In contrast, when the administration actively promoted the development of the EMP process, senior administrators were primarily motivated to achieve two different outcomes. Their first desired outcome was to further improve the college’s responsiveness to community needs for up-to-date, relevant, educational programs and services. Their second desired outcome was to meet institution-wide accountability requirements by implementing the recommendations of the October 2000 accreditation visiting team. Two of the team’s recommendations regarded planning processes. The first recommendation
encouraged the college to quickly implement its new educational master planning process, as a required standard of good practice for accreditation. The second recommendation requested the college to better demonstrate the linkage between its planning and resource allocation processes. Thus, institutional responsiveness to the community and accountability were the main motivators for the administration’s support of the EMP process, while individual discipline gains were the main motivators for faculty.

Chaffee and Jacobson (1997) contend faculty and administration each have a distinctive subculture within the overarching academic culture of higher education institutions. In the faculty culture, emphasis is placed primarily on producing and conveying knowledge about individual disciplines to students. Even when faculty collaborate, according to this viewpoint, they do so from the perspective of equal representation by the experts in the disciplines. Typically, faculty are most concerned their disciplines perform successfully, and are well treated by their institutions. Thus, although faculty do care about the general performance and welfare of their institutions, their institutions are of much less immediate concern than the welfare of their individual disciplines. Administrators, on the other hand, feel primary responsibility for the overall health and vitality of their institutions. They tend to evaluate disciplines and faculty by how well they contribute to the general academic reputation and fiscal wellbeing of their institutions. Administrators are much more willing than faculty to explore adding, modifying, or deleting disciplines to satisfy external demands.

Peterson (1997) notes that academic professionals respond to a variety of incentives (in this case eligibility for access to future resources). The incentives may include financial support, paid reassigned time, and public acknowledgement of outstanding efforts or ideas.

By identifying specific discipline resources (e.g. new faculty positions, major equipment acquisition) and linking them directly to completing EMPs, the
president provided a strong motivator for discipline focused faculty to participate in an institution-wide planning process. This study’s finding on motivation is consistent with the literature.

Impact of Past Planning Efforts

References to past planning documents merely collecting dust on shelves, instead of being used to inform decisions, are numerous (Carter, 1998a). Reasons for failing to implement educational plans may include lack of resources, changes in administrative leadership, and reluctance by academic leaders to make difficult choices about funding, or de-funding, specific programs and services (Chaffee & Jacobson, 1997). In this study, participants disagreed whether past planning efforts of the college had been failures. While the study did not attempt to confirm or refute the faculty statements regarding failure and success, the literature does suggest several challenges exist for successful plan implementation.

Creating a planning process, writing a plan, implementing it, and then monitoring the plan’s accomplishments are lengthy processes. It is not unusual for years to pass between the launching of a planning initiative and full realization of the plan’s implementation. As Keller (1997) observes, seeing a planning process through from beginning to end requires dedicating “focused attention” over a long period of time. Typically faculty, whose primary job is not planning, soon have their attention diverted elsewhere to more pressing matters. Thus, they are apt to lose track of a plan’s progress. Keller also proposes this lack of sustained attention by faculty is often unintentionally supported by the reality even large changes happen in small steps over long periods of time. Sustained attention can be further frustrated by administration’s poor communication with faculty about their plan’s accomplishments.

In addition to the possibility past planning accomplishments went unrecognized by some faculty in this study, the very real possibility is some plans
actually did fail. Failure may happen for numerous reasons. Reasons may include the planning effort is not seen to be relevant, appropriate, or worthy of the investment of time and energy (Carter, 1998a). Another contributor to planning failures in the academic world is the difficulty leaders have implementing unpopular decisions about programs and services. Faculty culture is often focused internally on protecting disciplines, regardless of whether a particular discipline is productive for the institution, or whether its graduates are in demand by external employers (Chaffee & Jacobson, 1997). Thus, the faculty culture itself may challenge successful plan implementation. Overall, the study’s findings in this area are supported by the literature.

Planning Resources

The faculty in this study identified two major resources as important to their planning efforts. The resource most frequently named as useful by faculty in large disciplines was their fellow faculty members. This finding is consistent with the observation consultation among colleagues is one of the most “pervasive norms in higher education” (Chaffee & Jacobson, 1997, p. 242). Further, seeking involvement of fellow faculty increases the chances of the planning process being successful, because it builds upon existing foundations within the discipline and creates greater ownership of the final plan (Chaffee & Jacobson).

Faculty also used data provided by the college research office, outside agencies, advisory boards, and transfer institutions as resources in their planning efforts. In some cases, study participants noted this was the first time they had seen the college data for their own disciplines. Appropriate data is important in planning processes. It allows faculty to see new information, which may change their perceptions of their disciplines’ value in the institutional and external environments. Faculty use of data also contributes to planning activities by quickly focusing conversations on important issues, rather than endless discussion about
unusual exceptions (Chaffee & Jacobson, 1997). Likewise, some faculty participants contributed new data from their contacts with outside agencies, advisory boards, and transfer institutions to enhance the knowledge base of the institution. This willingness of faculty to contribute new data to their institutions increases their involvement in planning efforts, and their ownership of the planning process and outcomes (Carter, 1998a; Chaffee & Jacobson). This study’s findings concerning faculty use of resources to complete their EMPs are consistent with the literature.

Interpersonal Effects

Participants in the study reported the interpersonal communication styles they used when working with their colleagues on their EMPs basically reflected how they worked together on a regular basis. Many reported engaging in the EMP process strengthened their interpersonal communication. The most frequent interpersonal styles noted were collaboration and competition. While one might wonder why a single college would have groups of faculty engaging in two very different styles of interpersonal interaction, this too is supported by the literature. Chaffee and Jacobson (1997) observe academic institutions have many subcultures operating within the faculty culture. A group’s interpersonal communication style may reflect those attracted to a specific discipline, as well as the discipline’s history of experiences at its institution, and who its faculty and administrative leaders have been over the years. Also, faculty who perceive their disciplines’ futures to be in jeopardy may be more defensive and competitive, than those who perceive they are important contributors to the institution, and see collaboration as beneficial. It is interesting to note many planning scholars see good communication and collaboration as critical for transforming institutions (Alfred, 1998; Carter, 1998b; Harris, 1998; Chaffee & Jacobson, 1997; Keller, 1997; Schmidtlein, 1990; Fryer,
Jr. & Lovas, 1991). Here again, this study’s findings are consistent with the literature.

Unanswered Questions

The faculty who participated in this study repeatedly questioned whether the administration would actually use their EMPs to make resource allocation decisions. Carter (1998b) notes when plans are not implemented as expected, those who engaged in the planning process can lose trust and confidence in the planning initiators. In one study (Schwab, 1997), the best predictor of whether study participants felt a planning process was successful was the level of trust they had in the plan’s implementers. These findings in the literature support the study’s findings. Future faculty perceptions of how supportive and consistent the administration was in implementing their EMPs will be important, and will likely either strengthen or impair trust between faculty and administration.

Surprises Created by the EMP Process

A number of the faculty in the study reported some surprising results of participating in the EMP process. Most surprises revolved around learning more about their colleagues, or disciplines. In the case of colleagues, the surprises were the result of having greater interaction while engaged in a new activity. In the case of disciplines, it was often the access to new data that created the surprises. Robinson and Stern (1997) propose diverse stimuli and increased within-company communication provide opportunities for individuals and companies to be more creative. This would suggest the interaction of faculty, particularly at the area level where less day-to-day contact among those from different disciplines occurs, and the assignment of working on a new task with new data provided, might increase the likelihood faculty will find new and creative ways to address the needs of their disciplines.
Carter (1998a) notes faculty, who fully immerse themselves in a planning process are exposed to new data and viewpoints. This exposure may help them to learn to think beyond the current viewpoints of their disciplines, and even their institutions. Just how innovative American River College faculty will be in promoting positive changes in their disciplines, as a result of participating in the EMP process, is still unknown. However, the finding of faculty surprises while doing the EMP work is consistent with the literature.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter began by naming the new, grounded theory created by this study the “Faculty EMP Experience Systems Theory.” It discussed how the new theory works within a systems framework. Further, methods to change the theory either through strategic interventions within the system, or entrance of unexpected phenomena from outside the system, were explored. The chapter ended by comparing the new theory’s findings to academic planning and change research available in the literature. Chapter Six will present the conclusions of the study, and will provide recommendations for practice and further research.
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This qualitative study developed substantive, grounded theory about the phenomenon of faculty experiences developing discipline specific educational master plans at American River College in Spring 2001. The study addressed two main research questions:

**Research Question One:** What were the experiences of American River College faculty in developing discipline specific educational master plans in Spring 2001?

**Research Question Two:** How were each of the faculty planning experiences related to one another?

This chapter will provide the overall conclusions to the study, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for further research.

CONCLUSIONS

The “Faculty EMP Experience Systems Theory,” generated by this study, is best understood within the context of a systems framework. The primary driver of the faculty experience was their belief eligibility for future resources for their disciplines was tied directly to their EMPs. This was followed by secondary drivers of their past experiences with planning at the college, and the resources they were given, or accessed, to complete their plans. Together, these three drivers directly influenced how the planning work was done. The secondary outcomes of the faculty experience developing EMPs included interpersonal effects of engaging in the EMP process, and unanswered questions about what the administration would actually do with their EMP work. Finally, the primary outcomes of the
faculty experience were their evaluation of the EMP processes and products (plans), and the frustrations, if any, they experienced.

Viewing this new theory from within a systems framework suggests the following conclusions:

1. The faculty needed to have a strong understanding of purpose before seriously undertaking the planning work. The clearly and frequently stated requirement for disciplines to have EMPs in place, before they would be eligible for future resource consideration, was very effective in motivating the faculty to do the EMP work.

2. The past planning history of the college influenced the willingness of some faculty to work on their disciplines' plans. While college administration could not change the past, it needed to understand how faculty felt about it, and to explain how the new planning process would be different. Faculty perceptions of past planning efforts varied by discipline, based on discipline experiences during those efforts. Some newer faculty were less aware of past planning history, and less influenced by it.

3. Faculty needed and accessed a variety of resources to complete their plans.
   a. One of the most frequently mentioned resources was faculty colleagues. Information about the purpose and processes of the EMP endeavor, therefore, needed to be well communicated to all faculty, not just the lead EMP contact faculty.
   b. College research data was also important. Vocational disciplines tended to be more focused on the industry, business, and community environments, than on the general college environment. They may need access to different data, than their non-vocational peers.
   c. College support personnel, assigned to assist faculty with their plans, were very important. Support personnel need to actively
extend assistance to all discipline faculty who appear to be at risk for not completing their plans successfully.

4. Individual faculty EMP workload varied by size of department, and willingness and availability of discipline colleagues to assist. Small departments may need extra assistance to complete their EMPs in a timely manner.

5. Faculty from disciplines and areas, which used collaborative processes to complete their EMPs, seemed to derive greater satisfaction from the overall process, and to take more pride in their final plans. These faculty are potential resources for helping less collaborative disciplines and areas to better work together.

6. Future faculty perceptions of how their EMPs are actually used by administration for allocating resources are critical to the credibility of the entire EMP process. The faculty perceptions will eventually become part of the college’s history, and will impact future trust levels between faculty and administration.

7. Linking planning to eligibility for future resources may create unrealistic expectations by faculty, if they believe eligibility is synonymous with guaranteeing future resources. Administration will need to clearly communicate the differences between the two, particularly during times of stagnant or declining resources.

8. EMP processes and plans can be used for a variety of purposes.

   a. Not all future resources need to come directly from the college. Some faculty have excellent records of obtaining resources through grants, donations, and partnerships. Their knowledge could serve as a resource to faculty colleagues.

   b. Faculty who discovered unexpected and beneficial outcomes from their processes (e.g. identifying and cultivating new leaders within a
Discipline), could share their information with faculty from other disciplines and areas.

c. Evaluations of the EMP processes and plans can be used to create improvements to the college planning processes.

9. The types of frustrations experienced by faculty can provide important feedback for creating future improvements to the college’s EMP processes, as well as other organizational processes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following actions are recommended for consideration by institutions requesting faculty to become actively involved in educational master planning.

1. Make the planning process and expected results meaningful for faculty. Ensure the purposes for doing planning are clearly communicated and understood.

2. Pay attention to the history of past planning endeavors at the institution. Use the history to support the current process, if the history is positive. If the history is negative, explain what makes the new process more likely to succeed, and reinforce its purpose.

3. Provide comprehensive training for faculty on how to successfully complete the planning process. Ensure knowledgeable support personnel are readily available to assist faculty in completing their plans.

4. Encourage faculty to add discipline specific resource information to their plans. Acknowledge faculty who contribute outside data to their plans, as contributing to the overall use of planning data by the institution.

5. Create an easy-to-use, standardized format for the plans, but allow faculty the flexibility to add other pages for discipline specific information.
6. Assign support people to actively check in with faculty who may have greater challenges completing their plans (e.g. faculty from small disciplines, very new faculty, and faculty from disciplines experiencing interpersonal conflict) to offer assistance and encouragement.

7. Encourage faculty, who have information on how to successfully use the planning processes, and/or good plan implementation strategies (including finding resources), to share that information with other faculty. Acknowledge their contributions to college planning and implementation efforts.

8. Create regular, consistent feedback processes to the college community on how faculty plans are used to inform college decision-making processes, particularly the allocation of resources. Provide regular information on how plan implementation is progressing.

9. Collect and use faculty evaluations of the planning processes to improve future college planning processes. Publicly credit faculty by communicating with the institution how their input is creating improvements.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings from this study about faculty participation in educational master planning at American River College in Spring 2001 suggest further research studies in several areas:

1. Study is needed to gain a better understanding of why certain community college faculty groups use collaborative styles of interaction, while others choose overly competitive styles of interaction. This understanding could suggest ways to promote more collaboration among faculty, and among faculty and other groups.
2. Study is needed to determine the best ways of effectively communicating with faculty, and other community college staff, the information about changing internal and external environments, and how those changes might impact the work of those in the college.

3. Study is needed to gain a better understanding of why some faculty are so successful at being entrepreneurial and responsive to the needs of students, as well as outside agencies, businesses, and industry. This understanding could lead to further exploration of ways to increase cross-discipline mentoring by these innovative faculty to their less entrepreneurial and responsive colleagues.

4. Community colleges, which have successfully used planning to transform their institutions, need to be studied to suggest best planning practices for other institutions.

5. Study is needed to develop more effective methodologies for collecting data on discipline specific employment rates of those who complete certificates, or graduate with majors in specific disciplines. Once collected, the data can be used to improve program review and planning efforts.

6. A follow-up study on American River College’s EMP implementation is needed to observe how the college uses its discipline EMPs, and how that use is interpreted by the faculty. Further, it would be helpful to observe how the relationship between administration and faculty is affected by the college’s use of the EMP in future decision-making processes.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This qualitative study generated grounded theory about the phenomenon of community college faculty developing discipline specific educational master plans at American River College in Spring 2001. The theory was named “Faculty EMP
Experience System Theory.” The conclusions of the study, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for future research were detailed in this chapter.

The faculty participants in this research study had important knowledge and insight to contribute to the understanding of faculty experiences in discipline specific educational master planning. They identified the primary motive they had for engaging in the planning process, how past planning efforts and new planning resources influenced their experiences, the methods they used to complete the planning work, the impact engaging in the planning process had on their collegial relationships, unanswered questions the process created, their satisfaction with the overall planning process and plan product, and the frustrations they encountered along the way. Their experiences will inform American River College’s ongoing efforts to improve its planning endeavors. These same experiences may also be useful for similar institutions to consider when designing an educational master planning process for faculty.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


## APPENDIX A
### PRELIMINARY IRD FOR FACULTY EMP EXPERIENCES

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### Focus Group Affinity Names
- Affinity One: Resources Used to Create the EMPs
- Affinity Two: Interpersonal Effects of Engaging in the EMP Process
- Affinity Three: Influence of Past Planning Failures
- Affinity Four: Getting the EMP Work Done
- Affinity Five: Evaluation of the EMP Process and Product
- Affinity Six: Results of the EMP Process
- Affinity Seven: Frustrations
APPENDIX B
FACULTY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These questions were generated from the affinities identified by the faculty focus group members, who were lead EMP contacts for their disciplines in Spring 2001.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFFINITY</th>
<th>QUESTION</th>
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<tr>
<td>RESOURCES USED TO CREATE EMP</td>
<td>One area, or theme, that the focus group identified was the type of resources they used to complete their plan, including research data given to them by the college research office, research from other sources, resource people both on and off campus that they contacted, discipline information they had, etc. What resources did you use to create your EMP?</td>
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<td>INTERPERSONAL EFFECTS</td>
<td>Another theme the focus group members talked about was the interpersonal effects of engaging in the EMP process. What interpersonal effects, if any, did you notice as your department worked on the plan?</td>
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<td>PAST PLANNING FAILURES</td>
<td>The focus group also talked about past college planning efforts at ARC, which they interpreted as failures. What influence did past planning efforts have on creating your spring 2001 plan?</td>
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<td>GETTING EMP WORK DONE</td>
<td>The focus group members identified different ways that they got the EMP work done. They talked about who led the work, who actually participated, how the work was distributed, and why they “decided to play the EMP game.” Can you tell me how the EMP work got done in your department, and why you did it?</td>
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<td>AFFINITY</td>
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<td>EVALUATION OF EMP PROCESS AND PRODUCT</td>
<td>Another area focus group members identified was evaluating the EMP process and the product (the actual completed plan), including new things they learned about their discipline and the people in their department, feelings of relief that the plan was completed and pride in what they had accomplished. Looking back, can you tell me what your thoughts and feelings were when your department’s EMP was finished?</td>
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<td>RESULTS OF EMP PROCESS</td>
<td>Members of the focus group also described the outcomes of the overall experience, including unanswered questions about how the plan would be actually used by the area and college, whether they had included too much or too little information, etc. They also identified some unexpected results of the process (things they learned about themselves, their department and the people in it that they hadn’t known at the start). What outcomes did you experience?</td>
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<td>FRUSTRATIONS</td>
<td>Finally, the focus group identified the theme of “frustrations”—frustrations about the process, amount of work involved, lack of participation by some department colleagues, and the standardized format of the EMP template. Can you tell me of any frustrations you experienced while working on the EMP?</td>
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<td>OTHER</td>
<td>That is end of my planned questions. Do you have any additional comments you’d like to make, or questions of me?</td>
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APPENDIX C
REALIZED IRD FOR FACULTY EMP EXPERIENCES

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Δ = Difference between IN and OUT Values

Focus Group Affinity Names
Affinity One: Resources Used to Create the EMPs
Affinity Two: Interpersonal Effects of Engaging in the EMP Process
Affinity Three: Influence of Past Planning Efforts
Affinity Four: Getting the EMP Work Done
Affinity Five: Evaluation of the EMP Process and Product
Affinity Six: Unanswered Questions
Affinity Seven: Frustrations
Affinity Eight: Why We Played the EMP Game—GREED!