THE ROLE OF CAREER READINESS IN HUMANITIES CURRICULUM: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY IN PRE- AND POST-TENURED HUMANITIES FACULTY COURSE DESIGN

by

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Rachel V. Smydra

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF CAREER READINESS IN HUMANITIES CURRICULUM: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY IN PRE- AND POST-TENURED HUMANITIES FACULTY COURSE DESIGN

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This qualitative ethnographic single case-study was conducted to investigate what influences pre- and post-tenured humanities faculty course design, the effects of those influences, and their perceptions about career readiness. This study focused on a career readiness initiative at Mid-western Michigan University (MMU), which was built around the National Association of Colleges and Employers' career competencies. With much of the success of this initiative dependent on faculty, the course design process and career readiness perceptions served as critical areas to explore. Eisner and Vallance's (1974) education value orientations theory served as a framework for this investigation. Thirteen pre- and post-tenured MMU humanities faculty with at least two years of teaching experience participated in the study. Data collection included one-on-one semi-structured interviews, influence rankings, and document analysis of faculty syllabi and current and archival department/program resources. The data collected were analyzed and coded for insight into different influences, effects of those influences, and perceptions about career readiness. Findings showed students, academic discipline, and the purpose of education

resonated as primary influences. In addition, faculty participants demonstrated that they employ meta-orientations by considering different influences concurrently. Influences resonated in faculty decision-making with regard to the following course design elements: content, skills, learning outcomes and themes, and big course questions. Findings also demonstrated that most participants are resistant to the language, branding, and logistics of MMU's career readiness initiative; however, some see the value of career readiness and have implemented aspects of transfer into their courses. These findings have implications for not only administrators who consider strategies to build a culture around career readiness but also for stakeholders concerned about the value of the humanities, the collective humanities disciplines, and ultimately for students who take courses in humanities disciplines.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IRB	Institutional Review Board
OBL	Outcome-based learning
MMU	Midwestern Michigan University
NACE	National Association of Colleges and Employers
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and math

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Most university leaders see their prime obligation as one of preparing students both personally and professionally for life after graduation. However, given the cost of higher education and the amount of debt students incur, stakeholders in higher education have become increasingly concerned and vocal about the investment and value of a college education. In response, some university leaders are striving to improve and promote career preparedness by crafting and implementing initiatives focused on career readiness.

Many of these initiatives attempt to lay the groundwork to move humanities disciplines toward embracing curricular structures that develop skills, competencies, and critical practices that align with 21st Century employers. However, some humanities faculty object to the idea of centering their courses around skill development and transfer; others are skeptical and fearful of an administrator's ability to track course outcomes more closely; and still others lack a current, comprehensive understanding about other disciplines, careers, work culture, and competencies. Therefore, generating faculty buy-in, especially at the course design level, may prove particularly challenging. Koerner (2018) concurred noting that regardless of how much support college leadership and administration offer, student-focused initiatives, or for that matter any other activity that is institutionally driven, rarely succeed unless they have faculty support.

As the primary architects of curriculum at the program and individual course level, university faculty are largely responsible for creating courses that foster either program designated or individually designed learning outcomes. Since career readiness takes place primarily in the classroom, focusing on faculty and how they design their courses is essential in creating professional development opportunities. The method of designing a course, however, is uniquely individual since the process entails a faculty member making decisions about content, objectives, skills, themes and/or activities; several factors influence decision-making with regard to both design and sequence. Goodyear (2015) labeled course design as a "space of wicked problems" (p. 36) because, as Stark et al. (1990), noted it is "completely individual and informal" (p. 142). Even though many studies concurred that faculty members' beliefs are related to their views about the nature of their respective disciplines, Norton et al. (2005) asserted that many studies do not address why faculty design courses differently in similar contexts even though influential factors have been connected to different styles of teaching, thinking, and unique personal characteristics (p. 539). Therefore, knowing and understanding what influences faculty design and how they feel about career readiness may help university leaders create strategies that foster buy-in with regard to the idea of faculty designing their courses with career readiness in mind.

Educational Significance of the Research

For the next several years, universities will face continued competition for students and funding. Furthermore, both the public and private sectors will set even higher expectations for colleges to prepare and train students to enter the workforce. In response, university leaders may increase the pressure on faculty to construct classes with

a focus on transferable skills, degree articulation, and career engagement. This creates a framework that has faculty not only disseminate relevant knowledge but address the practical application of that knowledge as well. However, for many humanities faculty, improving students' employability skills and increasing access to employment gateways does not align with the culture of the humanities (Campion, 2018, p. 440).

Corrigan (2018) suggested that humanities faculty hold the view that a focus on jobs or competencies is "crass utilitarianism beneath, if not antithetical to the intellectual, spiritual, or political calling of the humanities" (par. 5). Holm (2015) stated that historically, the culture of the humanities is steeped in the idea that the pursuit of "knowledge and understanding is valuable for its own sake and does not actually require some further goal in order to be of value" (p. 16). Therefore, embedding career readiness or information about career pathways into humanities department culture and curricula undermines a core value many humanities faculty share about the purpose of education and academic freedom.

In addition, some humanities faculty do not consider career readiness as part of their jobs while others think that they already embed skills, such as writing and critical thinking, into their courses but let students work out the details of how these skills might be valued by employers (Corrigan, 2018). Complicating the issue further is the factor that many faculty lack a current, comprehensive understanding about careers, workplace, work culture, and competencies. Moreover, many humanities faculty do not see themselves as experts in career readiness nor do they feel armed with the ability to integrate university knowledge and skills with the work world because some faculty have worked exclusively in higher education.

While research has been dedicated to curriculum decision-making at the primary and secondary levels, little research is available about how faculty in higher education design their courses, what influences their design process, and how they feel about implementing material and/or activities related to student career preparedness. Understanding more about how faculty make decisions about course design can help fill a research gap and help university leaders facilitate professional development opportunities that successfully assist faculty in acquiring new perspectives to conceptualize new design practices.

Background

Changing Landscape in Higher Education

The landscape of higher education has been changing over the course of the last few decades. Even before COVID, university leaders started listening to market demands and stakeholder concerns; consequently, institutional leaders have become more active in discussions about teaching and learning, which are areas that have been, historically, faculty driven. Since the 1980s, according to van Ameijede et al. (2009), "pressures have led to what has been experienced as a commoditization of knowledge work" (p. 763). In response, institutional leaders, van Ameijede et al. suggested, have sought a shift "within higher education discourse in which the academic language of deans, students, and courses has become increasingly displaced by language of line-managers, customers, and products" (p. 763). Post-pandemic, many universities may encounter increased external and internal pressures to graduate students prepared for the workforce.

Many universities will face budgetary concerns, competition for students, and access to public funding. In addition, both the public and private sectors will set even

higher expectations for colleges to prepare and train students to enter a changing workforce. With states and the federal government already decreasing funding in the past few years, COVID may tip the scale and create even greater societal pressures for universities to be more cost efficient and provide quality programming. Consequently, university actions will become even more fixated on revenue, the viability of certain departments, and declining enrollment trends.

With a forecasted 15% decline in population of traditionally-aged students between 2025 and 2029, experts predict that universities will compete for students with the exception of elite institutions (The Hechinger Report, 2018). In fact, some elite institutions may see as much as a 14% increase in demand in 2029 from 2012; regional four-year institutions that primarily serve local students may lose more than 11% of their students, from 1.43 million in 2012 to 1.27 million in 2029 (The Hechinger Report, 2018). However, projected figures may change because of COVID: no one knows how the pandemic will affect college budgets and enrollment. In addition to worries about overall lower institutional enrollments, universities have also incurred enrollment shifts in individual humanities departments. Some of these shifts may stem from changes in certain fields, such as teaching and publishing, that have traditionally employed humanities majors.

Students interested in teaching K-12 or attending graduate school to teach or work in higher education have populated many undergraduate and graduate humanities programs but over the past decade, the pool of credentialed K-12 teachers has declined. This change may reflect that fact that fewer students are choosing to teach or fewer trained teachers with bachelor degrees are staying in their fields (Tsang, 2017, p. 21). In

addition to high levels of stress and burnout, many students who desire to teach have come to recognize that K-12 positions in many regions of the country do not provide a living wage nor job security (Rich 2015; Strauss, 2015, 2017a; Westervelt 2015). Balleisen and Wisdom (2018) noted that the availability of teaching jobs in higher education has also shrunk; academic hiring in tenure-track positions plunged over the past decade, especially in English and History with more than a 60% drop since 2007 (p. 47). Steep declines have also occurred in the publishing industry. The United States Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2020) projected the number of jobs in publishing will decline by another 16% through 2028. Many of the jobs that do exist in publishing have turned into short-term or contractual positions with lower wages as a result. With these changes in two fields that typically employ humanities majors, graduates are seeking opportunities in different fields that tend to hire other majors.

Humanities in Crisis

Historically, one of the purposes of attending college was to prepare undergraduate students with specialized training for jobs, such as the ministry, the teaching profession, or the law. With the opening of religiously-affiliated colleges, such as Williams College in 1793 and Bowdoin College in 1794, the nature of the educational experienced shifted from training-oriented to that of providing exposure and degrees in the liberal arts, which included humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and mathematics (Hutner & Mohamed, 2016, p. 10). Intended "to be pursued with leisure," a liberal arts education aimed to expose students to subjects in the humanities and both physical and social sciences (Miller, 2012, p. 20).

After the first wave of European immigrants came to America in the 1830s, higher education came to fill a slightly different role. As Miller (2012) explained, institutions became more focused on providing "people and knowledge for use by the state and business and sought to integrate the population through civic culture" (p. 20). Early architects of the humanities in higher education strove to create programs that encouraged students to embrace different perspectives, be nimble thinkers, speak up, answer tough questions, and explain ideas articulately (Meadowbrook Seminars, 1959). Once regarded as the core of higher education, educators and supporters of the liberal arts stressed that exposure to these subjects fostered, as Kent (2012) stated, "citizenship in democratic, pluralistic societies" (p. 274). The humanities filled this niche in the liberal arts curriculum.

In higher education, differences separate department from discipline. An academic discipline is a field of study, and an academic department is basically a division, or branch, of an academic institution; each department is devoted to a particular discipline (Neumann, 2010). Different schematics exist that divide or group disciplines differently but for this research focus, disciplines divide into three categories: science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), social sciences, and the humanities. The humanities disciplines allow and encourage students to dive deeply into the human experience and to consider what it means to be human. Consequently, the humanities disciplines have played a significant role in challenging students to foster curiosity and think both critically and creatively (Kent, 2012, p. 273). In an interview with the National Endowment for the Humanities (2009), Kass indicated that the essence of engaging with

the humanities offered students opportunities to think about humanity, consider the past, reflect on what matters, and ponder universal truths.

To facilitate these types of inquiry, scholars of the humanities explore existential and historical questions across cultures, engage in academic rigor, and wrestle with questions of life and liberty; all of which are crucial for the functioning of an engaged society. Consequently, studying the humanities exposes students to areas that strengthen their capacities to negotiate challenges in the workplace and other settings. Differences in how institutions define and categorize the humanities exist most likely because of institutional histories. Early scholars, Fish noted (2008), limited the definition of the humanities to researching and teaching literary, philosophical, and historical texts; however, most universities now consider the arts and social sciences to coexist in the humanities along with courses in language, literature, art, music, theater, film, and creative writing.

Public perceptions about the role and value of college, especially the humanities, however, started to shift in 1967 after Ronald Reagan, the Governor of California, told reporters that taxpayers should not subsidize "intellectual curiosity" (Berrett, 2015, par 2). The debate about public funding of the arts and humanities spawned cultural and class wars since a majority of the supporters of the arts and humanities were well-educated whereas opponents often resided in rural areas and were frequently anti-intellectual.

After Governor Reagan's remarks, conversations became more focused on the purpose of and differences between liberal arts education and vocational schools, which gave students a trade upon graduation (Berrett, 2011). During the 1980s, a resurgence of neoliberalism focused attention on the economic benefits of the arts. In 1988, President

Reagan gave a speech that addressed those who categorized his administration as being antagonistic toward public funding of the arts. Reagan defended his position stating that the government should not determine what is good and bad art and what projects are worthy of funding and which ones are not. Heated conversations ensued among government officials who wanted to defund the National Endowment for the Arts (Berrett, 2011).

In response to these ongoing national debates, scrutiny around the economic benefits of a liberal arts education grew as well (Savage, 2017, p. 150). Gyamera and Burke (2019) indicated that the neoliberal agenda has sought to reshape higher education in terms of "maximizing market forces in the public sphere" (p. 450). As a result of this reshaping, higher education intuitions became more focused on "individualistic goals and extrinsic benefits" during the1980s by turning students into consumers of educational products (Saunders, 2007, p. 5). The Association of American Colleges and Universities (1998) made a defensive statement about students as consumers and emphasized that a liberal arts education "fosters a well-grounded intellectual resilience, a disposition toward life-long learning, and an acceptance of responsibility for the ethical consequences of our ideas and actions" (par. 1). Over the past few decades, however, humanities scholars have struggled with the influx of consumerism and the task of how to show the importance of their disciplines and their modes of knowing and thinking for public life as the connections between STEM and market values continue to strengthen.

The 2008 financial crisis intensified the criticism of the humanities since the financial fallout shifted students' attitudes toward choosing majors that were practical and marketable to employers (Williams, 2016, p 148). Along with a decrease in public

funding came increasing tuition rates. Selingo (2013) noted that with these high tuition rates and fees, both parents and students started to view college as an investment with an expected return. More specifically, students and parents started to view college as means to access professional, high paying jobs rather than an opportunity to explore, engage, and create a lifelong thirst for education (p. 5).

Heimlich (2011) noted that many Americans express similar opinions that colleges should train students for jobs. A Pew research survey conducted in 2011 with 2,142 participants showed that just under half of respondents, 47%, expressed "that college faculty should teach "work-related skills and knowledge"; 39% of participants categorized college as "an opportunity for students to grow personally and intellectually"; and, 12% emphasized that colleges should "do both pursuits" (par 1). Stakeholders have advocated for more transparency about universities and graduate employment success and in response, organizations, such as the *Princeton Review and Business Insider*, have ranked universities based on how fast their graduates find employment. Stakeholders have also advocated for institutions of higher education to create and support career-oriented programs because societal views have come to consider learning as valuable only if it is useful, which suggests that the acquired knowledge one gains should lead to employment or application of those skills (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014; Dey & Real, 2010; Hollister; 2011; Lawhead et al., 2017; NACE, 2016; Peck, 2017; Xu, 2013). Consequently, many have come to equate the skills that students in STEM programs acquire as more useful and applicable than the skills students gain in the humanities disciplines.

STEM proponents see STEM programs as the liberal arts curriculum for the 21st century because, as Tsupros et al. (2009) noted, STEM programs deliver "an interdisciplinary approach to learning where rigorous academic concepts are coupled with real-world contexts that make connections between school, community, work, and the global enterprise …" (p. 4). Because we live in a knowledge or information society that is dependent on intellectual capital rather than materials, Rose (2012) noted that the post-industrial role of the university system has become one that forms individuals who are "able to participate in the production, exchange and consumption of information" (p. 2). STEM, Rose stated, proves to be a better educational paradigm because STEM grads learn useful, valuable concepts "in the generation of income and the innovative creation of new work practices" (p. 2).

Although Kent (2012) noted that the humanities offers students intrinsic value and "opportunities to enter into other people's imaginative worlds, learning how to suspend one's egoistic self-absorption" and make significant contributions to "progress and democracy by identifying and interrogating privilege, power structures, structural inequality, and injustice," humanities disciplines wrestle with how or if they should assert or attach extrinsic value to the skills their students accrue as well (p. 274). However, learning, in a knowledge economy, Rose (2012) stated, "is worthwhile in so far as it can produce knowledge with a market value or can train individuals in skills that are useful to the production, exchange, and consumption of knowledge" (p. 3). Even though some administrators and faculty continue to debate the merits of career readiness (Bridglall, 2018; Ramaley, 2016; Stebleton et al., 2020), many scholars and university leaders acknowledge that the modern university must balance the body of knowledge that forms

the curriculum and an approach that values skills as part of the teaching and learning process (Bowden et al., Clanchy & Ballard, 1995; Gash & Reardon, 1998; Smith & Bath, 2006). Consequently, university leaders have found themselves creating initiatives that aim to promote extrinsic benefits as outcomes for students; Saunders (2007) suggested that in this exchange, students have become more like consumers of educational products (p. 5).

Replacing an older way of thinking, this newer educational paradigm attaches more value to areas that generate valuable knowledge, such as STEM, creative arts, and technical media instead of those areas that efficiently "manage knowledge," which is primarily what the humanities disciplines do (Rose, 2012, p. 3). Rose stated that the "undesirable consequences" of this paradigm shift is that some do not consider the knowledge that humanities majors acquire as valuable since these skills allow those who obtain them to "manage, coordinate and present knowledge" (p. 3). Many employers, however, value the soft skills that humanities majors acquire. For example, Google, LLC indicated that it prefers soft skills and looks to hire new employees who are coachable, empathetic, critical thinkers, problem solvers, and good communicators and listeners; in addition, Google LLC wants employees who can understand and consider different points of view and can make connections between and among complex ideas (Strauss, 2017b). However, constructing courses around skills and creating opportunities for students to demonstrate how they can use these skills may be a problematic for some humanities faculty.

According to Rose (2012), the easiest way for humanities disciplines "to cohere with the new knowledge economy is to cohere with the skills agenda and demonstrate

how their students can innovate work practices" (p. 2). Humanities disciplines, however, rest on the periphery of quantifying skill development and skill transfer since the idea of viewing knowledge as a commodity to be consumed clashes with how many see the role of education (Rose, 2012, p. 4). Nevertheless, leaders in higher education are responding to market demands and creating programs that tag certain skills as a "form of training for the transferable skills required for capital accumulation" (p. 3). Institutional leaders are finding, however, that because training takes place in the classroom, much of the implementation and success of their initiatives rest with faculty; however, facilitating change on the department or individual level can be challenging because of university structure.

University Structure

The traditional university structure employs decentralized and distributed leadership. Consequently, implementing changes both at the department and individual level require university leaders to navigate a lack of collective decision-making and academic departments that reside and operate in silos. Bolman and Deal (2013) indicated that universities embody a structure that "is unfocused, authority is diffuse, and coordination is confusing" (p. 44). With shared governance among faculty and administration, and the board of trustees, Ambrose (2017) emphasized that the university system resonates as a "flexible, loose, decentralized" structure that, to some degree, embodies one quality of an organic system: unclear "formal lines of authority" (p. 156). Alvesson (2002) emphasized that most departments have some levels of ambiguity and fragmentation and that complex organizations like universities present particularly

challenging cultures to identify (p. 160). Furthermore, academic departments function quite autonomously as do faculty in those departments.

An academic department has its own unique set of beliefs, norms, and routines; therefore, considering more than just a department's performance and productivity is necessary. Most academic departments function democratically using distributed leadership to shape their policies and procedures. Bennett et al. (2003) emphasized that "distributed leadership highlights leadership as an emergent property of a group or work of interacting individuals," which contrasts with leadership that is "a phenomenon which arises from the individual" (p. 7). Because of distributed leadership, Gonaim (2016) suggested that the academic department serves as the "the most critical locus for achieving successful change" (p. 273), especially for curriculum decision-making.

Curriculum Development

At most universities, curriculum development starts in the academic department; faculty are empowered to develop programs of instruction leading to the awarding of degrees. At some universities, department faculty meet to discuss curriculum revisions and if they just vote to modify courses, this serves as a final stage of governance; however, quality assurance mechanisms outside the department provide oversight on some changes. For example, if a department makes program changes, revisions must move onto university committees for approval. These university committees evaluate and monitor all academic policies and procedures concerning proposed and existing undergraduate programs to ensure that they align with the institution's policies and mission. Committee members may work closely with general education and senate committees because getting general education designation for a course may be a separate

process. Departments may design their own assessment plans with committee approval. Nevertheless, the common denominator for all of these processes is that they start from the ground up at the department level; however, who initiates curriculum decisions does differ. Sometimes the department chair initiates the process of updating the major and minor requirements; other times, an instructor chooses to develop a course and present it to the department for approval. Regardless of how courses come to be assigned, instructors enjoy a pretty wide latitude in terms of what they can teach and do in those courses.

Department culture has always placed a premium on faculty autonomy and independence. Austin (1990) noted that faculty autonomy, which gives them freedom to produce knowledge and decision-making power to choose how to disseminate that knowledge to educate students, represents a "bedrock" value of the academic profession (p. 62). Overall, department chairs and the university itself, generally, trust instructors to do what they feel works best. Therefore, students encounter very different experiences depending on who teaches the course since individual teaching styles and course design differ. Since no formal system for coordinating consistency across courses exists at most universities, faculty ultimately decide how students can best achieve course objectives defined by the faculty member, department, or a general education program.

Course Design Decision-making

In general, designing a course entails a decision-making process that includes the selection of content and activities, but contemporary understanding now considers the course planning phase as a holistic process that involves decision-making about many factors including platforms, contexts, and learners (Prawat, 1992; Toohey, 1999). Three

interlocking areas guide faculty through this process: what they want to teach and how to organize it, how they want students to learn, and how to measure success (Reece & Walker, 2000; Russell & Latcham, 1979). Consequently, planning a course entails making individual decisions about how to structure a course, what content to include, which aims, goals, or objectives apply, and how to evaluate learning or outcomes; the end result is a blueprint, template, or plan that identifies and organizes content, activities, objectives, and/or assessment protocol.

McKernan (2008) emphasized the individuality of the act of designing a course since "curriculum design rests a considerable degree on the exercise of individual practical reasoning and deliberation"; it is not simply a procedural or technical response to problem solving" (p. 57). Goodlad (1979) noted that the "making of curricula is the making of decisions" (p. 33), and the design itself reflects the identity, assumptions, and perspectives of the decision-maker (Stark et al., 1988, p. 220). Barnett and Coates (2005) indicated that good design has a greater chance of spawning the "knowing, acting and being" desired in education (p. 3). These different designs point to beliefs that lend themselves to influencing and shaping faculty curriculum decision-making thus shaping the designing of a course at the university level a uniquely, individual process.

Faculty beliefs draw from many different sources that may change over time (Awbrey, 2005; Conrad & Pratt, 1983; Hubball et al., 2007; Neumann et al., 2002; Roberts, 2015; Seidman, 2015; Stark 2000; Toohey, 1999); for example, personal and professional experiences, discipline knowledge, and/or personal, cultural, and political values (Toohey, 1999). Toohey (1999) indicated that some faculty are very conscious of their beliefs and can articulate them quite clearly; consequently, they employ a process

using their beliefs to examine and refine "their own values" to work out how they can incorporate their beliefs into their course (p. 44); some rely on objectives to guide their planning process; and for others, Toohey noted, "beliefs about curriculum are tacit and unexamined" (p. 44). Some faculty may try to find the right balance of knowledge and skills while others see a deeper need to incorporate a course plan that attempts to transform students both professionally and personally. Others may never question their course design because they are so entrenched in employing a disciplinary lens to consider the design of a course that they do not consider other options (Toohey, 1999, p. 45). Nevertheless, the state of a faculty member's course design process requires deliberate thought, so faculty often base their decision-making, according to McKernon (2005), on "accumulated situational understanding" thus making the process and outcome "personal, social, political, and theoretical" (p. 57). Therefore, Smith and Lovat (2003) indicated that curriculum decision-making is more complex than just selecting content; Taba (1962) also noted that this "complex undertaking" involves many kinds of decisions, and that educators make these "decisions on many different levels" (pp. 6-7). In addition, how faculty members define curriculum and view their own roles as educators lend themselves to the construction of different curriculum orientations.

Many factors can shape faculty teaching styles and curriculum design. Because faculty function autonomously for the most part suggests that both internal and external pressures from the academic community and practical, epistemological and ontological considerations can influence them differently (Bovill & Woolmer, 2019, p. 418). Consequently, different experiences, contexts, attitudes, and beliefs can contribute and

change how an instructor thinks and designs a course as Roberts (2015) suggested in the following framework as shown in Figure 1.1 (p. 49).

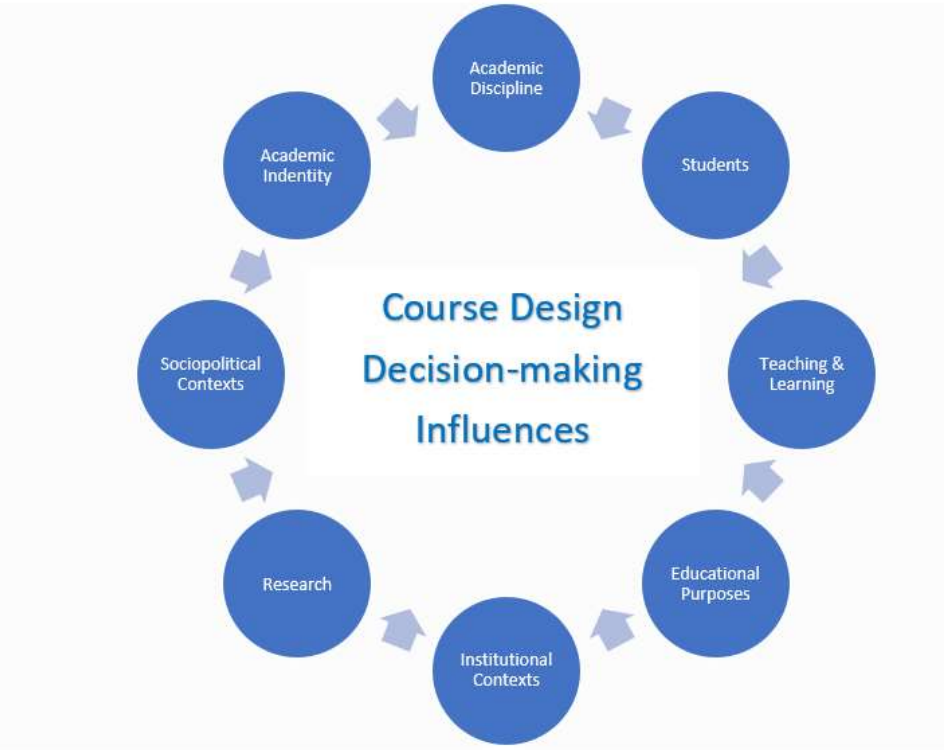

Figure 1.1. Faculty Curriculum Influence Factors. The figure demonstrates influences on faculty decision-making. Adapted from "Higher Education Curriculum Orientations and the Implications," by P. Roberts, 2015, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 20(5), p. 544 doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2015.1036731

For most faculty, curriculum decision-making usually entails making choices among several viable options. Collectively, these choices shape a distinctive lens or orientation that has its own unique set of beliefs about how a faculty member should design a course; these beliefs stem from views about the purpose of education, personal

and professional experiences, and discipline-based perspectives. Typically, faculty rely on one orientation to guide their thinking about knowledge, skills, objectives, learning activities, and assessment; however, they can adopt a meta-orientation framework as well. Because educators hold different views about these aspects, they also hold different foci for decision making; consequently, finding answers to questions about how faculty choose content, identify learning outcomes, and employ teaching and learning activities will contribute to understanding of what shapes their vision and understanding about course design.

Investigating what factors influence curriculum orientation relies on using a framework that captures faculty perceptions as to what factors shape their curriculum decisions and the implications for improving curriculum practice. In general, faculty in the humanities disciplines rely on a traditional approach to guide decision-making with the primary goal of disseminating knowledge for cultural transmission. I investigated if humanities still employ a traditional approach, if differences related to gender, rank, or age/experience are present and affect course design, and whether career readiness acts as an influence to guide their course design decision-making.

Key Terms

Because terms can be open to interpretation with regard to personal perspectives and different contexts, signifying how they function in my study is essential. More specially, the terms *career readiness*, *competencies*, *skills*, *humanities*, *curriculum*, *course design*, *pedagogy*, and *instruction* are referenced in my research study and require clarity.

Career Readiness

The National Association of College and Employers (NACE) (2019) defined career readiness as "the attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition to the workplace" (par. 3). The process of preparing students for the workplace relies on skills and competencies that NACE defined as the following: critical thinking, oral/written communications, teamwork and collaboration, digital technology, leadership, professional/work ethic, career management, and global/intercultural fluency (NACE, 2020, par. 4). Faculty embed activities and content related to the NACE competencies and offer opportunities for students to reflect on the connections between theory and practice. In addition to preparing students for the workplace, career readiness emphasizes giving students the opportunity to articulate the value of their degrees as well.

Competencies and Skills

The University of Nebraska's Human Resource Department (2019) defined a competency as "the combination of observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal attributes that contribute to enhanced employee performance and ultimately result in organizational success" (par. 2). Even though similarities exist between competencies and skills, employers view them differently.

Competencies represent people's knowledge and behavior that lead them to be successful in a job; skills, on the other hand, contribute to competencies and indicate specific learned abilities to perform a job well (NACE, 2020). Students learn skills, so they can carry out job tasks; competencies can incorporate skills, but they include abilities, behaviors, and knowledge fundamental to using a skill (Sturgess, 2012). Casner-

Lotto and Barrington (2006) emphasized that competencies in given areas fortify NACE's framework of career readiness and align better with employers' needs. Because scholarly researchers tend to use the terms interchangeably, I did so as well.

Humanities

The humanities are a set of disciplines that allow and encourage students to dive deeply into what it means to be human. Differences in how institutions define and categorize the humanities do exist most likely because of institutional histories. Early scholars, Fish noted (2008), limited the definition of the humanities to researching and teaching literary, philosophical, or historical texts; however, most universities now consider the arts and social sciences to coexist in the humanities along with courses in language, literature, art, music, theater, film, and creative writing.

Often, faculty and administrators do not hold a unified vision of what constitutes the humanities, especially with regard to the social sciences (J. Corso-Esquivel, personal communication, June 29, 2020). For most, however, humanists see the humanities minimally consisting of the following: English, film, creative writing, writing and rhetoric, modern languages and literature, music, art and art history, and visual and performing arts. Linguistics, pre-law, and interdisciplinary studies are all quirky; some see these residing in the humanities core, and others do not (J. Corso-Esquivel, personal communication, June 29, 2020). For my study, I will address course design with regard to the following disciplines that reside in the humanities at the site of my study: visual and performing arts, art history, film, creative writing, language, literature, history, philosophy, and writing and rhetoric.

Curriculum, Syllabus, and Course Design

Traditionally referred to as an academic plan for learning, educators and scholars, over time, have redefined curriculum. Derived from the Latin verb *currere*, which means to run, curriculum refers to a race or a course to follow (Ellis, 2004; Goodson, 1995; McKernan, 2008; Smith, 2000). At the K-12 educational levels, curriculum corresponds to the role it plays as a product or as a collective decision-making process. Herrick (1965) noted that this decision-making process in K-12 produces "an adequate structure or design," that defines the components or aspects of curriculum, and determines "the patterns of their relationships to each other" (p. 17); collectively, these elements lead to "one consistent set of decisions about the nature of the curriculum" (p. 37). At the university level, however, faculty connect the meaning of curriculum to that of their course syllabus and/or course design.

Hicks (2018) located several other terms employed as synonymous with curriculum in higher education: "program, course, learning package, educational experience, educational framework, educational directions, and even education futures" (p. 9). Consequently, in the context of higher education, curriculum refers more to the educational aspects of course planning, design, or development while teaching and learning focuses more on instruction and pedagogy (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Knight, 2001; Stark, 2000). For the purposes of my investigation, I used curriculum, syllabus, and course design interchangeably and Stark et al.'s (1988) definition of college course planning: "the decision-making process in which faculty select content, engagement strategies, and teaching and learning aspects, such as goals, assessments, and outcomes" (p. 221).

Pedagogy and Instruction

Some studies about pedagogy and instruction used the terms interchangeably in that they both addressed planning, subject matter, and teacher beliefs, so it is no surprise that confusion about the three educational terms exists; however, the terms reference different educational aspects. Pedagogy, from the Greek words for *boy* and *guide*, refers to the art or science of teaching or the techniques used to teach (Watkins & McKeown, 2018); Hyan (2006) indicated that pedagogy lends itself to "building of relationships among teacher, learner, and learning experiences by their meaning making, curiosity, negotiation, and questioning" (p. 143). Instruction defines an educator's role as a disseminator of content knowledge for students to master (Hyun, 2006, p. 142). Therefore, Posner and Rudnitsky (2006) emphasized that curriculum development and instructional planning differ; curriculum is a set of intentions that results in a design that outlines specific learning outcomes while instruction planning focuses on what to do and what should happen in the learning process (p. 9). For my research, I considered pedagogy and instruction as different entities from designing a course and thus adhered to the boundaries Posner and Rydnitsky (2006) crafted.

Research Questions

As universities move to respond to stakeholders' demands about the value and use of college degree, the humanities disciplines rest on the periphery of quantifying skill development and skill transfer since the idea of viewing knowledge as a commodity to be consumed clashes with how many see the role of education (Rose, 2012, p. 4). Goodyear (2015) emphasized that the traditional approach that humanities faculty use to disseminate disciplinary knowledge is "unstainable in a rapidly shifting environment"

and that an accumulated body of research "condemns" the "apparent good sense of some past practices" (p. 37). However, with pressure on higher educational institutions to graduate students who are employable, leaders in higher education are, in turn, placing some of that pressure on faculty. Creating and embedding career readiness programs that aim to prepare students, especially in the humanities disciplines, serves as one transparent way educational leaders can point to as their attempts to address stakeholder concerns. However, engaging faculty at the course level proves difficult.

Delving deeply into curriculum theory showed that course design and what influences decision-making is messy and complex, especially since faculty often hold stronger disciplinary connections than they do with the university they attended or teach at. To develop more "student-centered programs and demonstrate relevance" such as career readiness, Campion (2018) suggested that humanities faculty must "reevaluate their pedagogical objectives and embrace learning outcomes that meet the needs of humanists and non-humanists alike" (p. 440). However, Goodyear (2015) and Stark (2000) expressed that the area of studying how faculty design courses is wide open for further investigation, especially in the areas of learning as participation, integrative teaching, connected curriculum, and learning as knowledge creation designs. Therefore, my research focused on investigating humanities pre- and post-tenured faculty curriculum decision-making processes and what influences that process, perceptions about career readiness, and their willingness to alter the way they teach their courses. Specifically, I identified the following questions to frame my investigation:

1. What aspects influence course design for pre- and post-tenured humanities faculty at four-year research institutions, and how do those influences affect their course design decision-making?

2. What are pre- and post-tenured humanities faculty perceptions about career readiness and a course design process that includes more focus on career readiness?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Overview

As views about higher education as a commodity intensify, a college degree continues to become more about student satisfaction, quality, performance standards, and quantification of the student experience skills (Chow & Leung, 2016, p. 73). New socio-political and economic contexts are pushing for more connections between the "external world and the knowledge enterprise" more than ever before (Muller, 2005, p. 9). One important facet of strengthening this connection begins at the course design level. However, the act of designing a college course is shrouded in ambiguity and thus has become somewhat of an enigma because faculty are rarely asked and rarely articulate how they go about this process and what influences their decision-making.

To find articles centered on higher education faculty course design, I sought articles dedicated to higher education that focused on the design stage rather than pedagogy or classroom activities. Through my review, I discovered that scholars have often exited research studies on course design without an enhanced understanding of the connection between university faculty and their course design process. What scholarship does exist tends to characterize this relationship as one full of idiosyncrasies. I also found that humanities faculty and STEM faculty tend to approach course design quite differently, but that no one process exists within these disciplines, departments, nor, at times, from course to course. Finally, I uncovered numerous articles about the humanities and its

current critical state and the push and pull among universities, stakeholders, and faculty about career readiness and future implications about course design expectations.

Course Design

Stark (2000) stated that "course planning is an important faculty role requiring expertise and effective decision making" (p. 413), and Stark et al. (1990) noted that it is "completely individual and informal" (p. 142). Stark and Lattuca (1997) stressed the importance of the process since the "structure, coherence, and integrity of a student's formal academic program depends substantially on the plans faculty create, how tightly they prescribe what students should study, and how well they communicate their plans to students" (p. 100).

Some research is available that offers insight about how disciplines differ with regard to aspects of teaching and learning, especially in the course design decision-making phase (Goodyear, 2015, p. 43), but Neumann (2001) indicated that this is a relatively new field, and Quinlan (1997) concurred noting that researchers know little about how educators' beliefs affect their practice. Stark et al. (1990) agreed and emphasized that university faculty have rarely been asked how they design their courses and what influences their decisions (p. 141). Plenty of research exists that references department program planning (McAlpine & Norton, 2006; Stark, 2002), but Goodyear (2015) clarified that planning and design are not the same and that the process is "intrinsically complex" because of the tensions between "competing objectives" (pp. 34-35).

Some faculty may make decisions consciously about how they design a course; others may think little of these matters. Scholars do agree though that, for the most part,

faculty approach curriculum development using one of three perspectives: subject knowledge, societal contexts, or learner focused (Kelly, 1989; Marsh & Willis, 2007; McKernan, 2008). Toohey (1999) noted that college faculty think quite differently about educational aspects such as the following: the role of broad disciplinary knowledge and structured knowledge, skilled performance, cognitive development, intellectual growth, ability to think critically about social issues, and what constitutes meaningful learning (p. 67).

Most of what researchers know about course planning is linked with what they know about academic disciplines (Confrey, 1981; Dressel, 1980; Dressel & Marcus, 1982; Stark et al. 1990). Theories surrounding course-planning models indicate faculty employ a linear process (Poser & Rudnitsky, 1986), an approach to using commonplace elements (Schwab, 1969), or a perspective that views course design as content, context, and form (Toombs, 1977-1978). Oleson and Hora (2014), however, concluded that designing a course is not "a simple, linear process, where a single factor" drives individual behavior; Conrad and Pratt (1983) also critiqued the sole use of a linear approach to modeling the design process indicating that most likely this model does not reflect real-world practice. Instead, Oleson and Hora (2014) indicated that course design is "a complex combination of cognitive, sociocultural, and organizational factors that interact in particular situations to influence teaching behaviors" and course design (p. 42).

Faculty Educational Values

Research on curriculum planning in higher education indicated that faculty members' educational values heavily influence the inclusion of particular course content (Awbrey, 2005; Conrad & Pratt, 1983; Gaff & Ratcliff, 1997; Hubball & Gold, 2007;

Neumannn et al., 2002; Ratcliff et al., 2004). These value orientations represent belief structures or philosophical positions that faculty reveal in various ways in performing various educational tasks. Therefore, the values come to represent educational perspectives that influence an educator's focus on the learner, the context, and the body of knowledge. However, measuring the effects of values on decision-making is challenging since faculty between, among, and within disciplines prioritize values differently. Little is known about how or whether those values predict the inclusion of content or activities differently but according to Eisner and Vallance (1974), different educational values lend themselves to different value orientations.

Because faculty hold different educational values, they employ different approaches to designing courses and selecting teaching tools and assessment. For example, some faculty may value rigor or pedagogical approaches that produce critical thinkers or good writers; others may prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion; and still others may value their respective disciplinary epistemologies. Collectively or independently, faculty may hold static views about what they value and be less open to adopting new values. Nevertheless, curriculum theorists have conjectured that the value systems or orientations that educators bring to the curricular decision-making process determine, in part, their goals for student learning and academic and behavioral expectations for student success (McNeil, 1990). As a result, faculty create different goals for desired outcomes. For example, humanities may identify goals that focus on disseminating knowledge, so students can accrue disciplinary knowledge while science faculty may focus more on skills and the application of accrued knowledge.

The American Association of Higher Education's project on teaching in the 1990s served as the catalyst for motivating researchers to investigate how faculty view the nature of teaching, what processes they use to facilitate course design, and how the learning outcomes they define differ across different disciplines (Becher, 1989; Quinlan, 1997). Neumann (2001) qualified that disciplinary differences have been the focus of major studies but rarely have they served as the major focus in investigating differing influential factors on individual course design (p. 136). Neumann also emphasized that looking at different disciplines requires inclusion of the following factors: "knowledge of the culture and context in which teaching occurs and the attitudes of academics (and students) about teaching, educational goals, values, philosophies and orientations" (p. 137).

More studies have emerged in the past few decades that showed how faculty from other disciplines view conceptual processes, knowledge validation methods, and values that shape how they perceive curriculum (Braxton, 1995; Donald, 1995; Neumann, 2001; Smart & Ethington, 1995). Researchers have also explored the inclusion of specific skills and content (Donald, 1983); faculty teaching goals (Angelo & Cross, 1993), and influences on faculty planning introductory and advanced courses (Stark et al., 1990). Even though many studies concurred that faculty members' beliefs are related to their views about the nature of their respective disciplines, Norton et al. (2005) asserted that many studies do not address why faculty design courses differently in similar contexts even though influential factors have been connected to different styles of teaching, thinking, and unique personal characteristics (p. 539).

Oleson and Hora (2013) also recognized a lack of empirical research aimed at addressing the other sources that influence faculty other than their own disciplines (p. 30). Oleson and Hora noted that "the influence of preexisting knowledge systems in shaping cognition, behavior, and identify is widely recognized" in educational research, but other factors, such as on-the-job training, influence of mentors, knowledge of pedagogy and the subject matter, and immediate family influences, are less well known (p. 31). Ellis et al. (2009) and Bennett et al. (2015) also confirmed that little is known about how beliefs about students and pragmatic issues of teaching, such as time and technology, tend to influence faculty, and Stark et al. (1997) mentioned institutional differences as a rarely researched angle. Researchers agree though that disciplinary socialization and the fields faculty teach in strongly influence how they plan courses and teach them (Stark, 2000, p. 414).

Discipline Course Design Differences

Both Phenix (1964) and Dressel and Marcus (1982) addressed how different disciplines influence teaching; their research findings showed that faculty from different disciplines have different beliefs that directly affect their practices. Umbach (2006) found that faculty from different disciplines use different educational practices in the classroom; Braxton and Hargens (1996) noted that "the differences among academic disciplines" with regard to faculty beliefs, processes, and protocol for many tasks "are profound and extensive" (p. 35). Even though Neumann (2001) acknowledged that some studies looked at differences in teaching processes across disciplines and showed that faculty from different disciplines conceptualize, plan, and enact curriculum differently, she called for greater systematic studies.

Existing studies confirmed that faculty from different disciplines have different perspectives about the purpose and value of education and that these different beliefs and attitudes influence their course design decision-making differently. However, faculty in similar disciplines have similar outlooks even though anomalies exist in that some faculty in similar disciplines view education "quite differently from their colleagues" (Stark et al., 1997, p. 102). In a comprehensive content analysis of reports that encouraged faculty from different disciplines to address curriculum topics, coherence, and development published by the American Association of Colleges (AAC), Lattuca and Stark (1994) showed the variances among departments with regard to course design elements as shown in Table 2.1.

Donald (1993) found few differences within disciplines but more obvious differences appeared between faculty in the humanities and STEM. In their courses, humanities faculty usually promote soft skills, such as communication, flexibility, problem-solving, and empathy; these skills are often more personal attributes that shape how a person works individually and collaboratively. Hard skills, such as computer skills, foreign languages, and accounting, are teachable abilities or quantifiable skill sets (Donald, 1993). According to Donald, faculty in STEM tightly structure their courses with interlinking concepts and principles, which supports an "all-or-none learning pattern" (p. 37); however, faculty in the humanities and social sciences often opt for loosely-structured courses.

Donald also highlighted that social science faculty build courses around "certain key concepts" that act as pivots; humanities faculty create a course to facilitate the learning of one key concept, so student learning resonates as more "divergent" (p. 38).

Table 2.1. Discipline Design Variability

	STEM	Social Sciences	Humanities
Curricular Coherence	Integration of knowledge and skills readily addressed.	Problematic. Content is eclectic but coherence can be enhanced.	Mixed responses from fields as some objected coherency idea but some tried to meet the challenge.
Coherent Design	Stressed need for local department variation and autonomy.	Stressed need for local department variation and autonomy.	Stressed need for local department variation and autonomy.
Sequential Learning	Possible to sequence.	Sequential learning is unfamiliar but possible.	Objections to prescribed sequences.
Critical Perspective	Unfamiliar; common-held belief that scientific method as primary perspective.	Addressed in various ways; diverse approaches are acceptable and important.	Stressed the link between cultural and humanistic sensitivity; context important.
Connecting learning to other fields, life, and careers.	Critical of own efforts to connect to students.	Somewhat more confident with connecting students with other disciplines.	Mixed response from fields – assumed emphasis on connectedness.

Note: Variability of educational elements in course design. Adapted from "Will Disciplinary Perspectives Impede Curricular Reform?" by L.R. Lattuca and J.S. Stark, 1994, *The Journal of Higher Education*, 65(4), p. 408.

Braxton (1995) indicated that the STEM disciplines place a greater emphasis on student career readiness by emphasizing cognitive activities that include learning facts, principles, and concepts; faculty in soft pure disciplines stress broad general knowledge, personal growth, and critical thinking skills. Hativa (1997) clarified that hard pure fields emphasize the ability to apply concepts while soft pure fields promote creativity and communication. Hativa also emphasized faculty in hard fields were more likely than faculty in soft fields to choose factual subject matter and related values as their primary teaching goals, and faculty in soft fields were more likely to select personal development and growth as their primary teaching goal.

Course Design Influences

Stark et al. (1988) created an exploratory study that investigated the factors that influence faculty members planning for intro courses; strength of influences in course planning; and design differences for faculty in various disciplines and at different institutions (p. 221). In interviews with 89 faculty who taught introductory courses at in biology, business administration, composition, history, literature, nursing, mathematics, and sociology at different and diverse institutions, Stark et al. (1988) found that faculty were "strongly influenced by their own backgrounds, including their beliefs about the purposes of education" (p. 227); however, participants frequently stressed that they had a hard time differentiating the strength of each influence. Stark et al. noted that even though faculty did not articulate them, the researchers sensed "that other important influences within the specific teaching environment, such as student characteristics, may be superimposed upon these background factors" (p. 227). For example, faculty

participants referenced textbooks as an influencer even though they did not comment on making decisions about different “instructional strategies" (p. 227).

Stark et al. (1988) referenced Toomb’s (1977-1978) categories for curriculum components for mapping curriculum and highlighted that participants’ responses reflected that they centered in on content primarily, context modestly, and “peripherally on form” (p. 227). Faculty participants also alluded to external forces, such as accrediting bodies, program goals, and college goals, as influential factors in some situations as well (p. 227). However, respondents noted that “the views of instructional experts, feedback from previous classes, research modes from the disciplines, and local factors” seldomly influenced them.

Participants' responses also specified that they tend to organize their courses according to discipline and beliefs (Stark et al., 1988, p. 231). Stark et al. (1998) concluded that “planning proceeds in a non-linear fashion in ways that remain to be clarified, but selection of subject matter is likely in early step for many”; additionally, the researcher found that faculty consider very few alternatives in planning introductory courses. In addition, Stark et al. noted that faculty beliefs seem to be “enduring,” and that it is difficult to “disaggregate the extent” that a discipline or graduate school socialization plays in decision-making (pp. 234-236).

Stark (2000) extended her research and summarized the three-year study she conducted with colleagues about course planning. Stark’s findings noted that 58 percent of participants selected improving basic communication skills and sharing knowledge in their respective fields as primary goals; 15 percent noted effective thinking as a primary goal for students; and fewer than 10 percent of participants listed improving student

personal, social, and their intellectual development as primary goals (pp. 416-417). Participants referenced that their discipline and experiences as both students and scholars influenced their course planning (p. 417); Stark noted that these influences are "intricately linked with their beliefs about the purpose of education; however, according to Stark, "gender, age, academic rank, tenure status, and length of teaching experience" and pedagogical training "were essentially unrelated to teachers' beliefs about education, their discipline views, or their course planning" (p. 417). Stark indicated the common steps faculty use to design their courses are shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Common Steps in Course Design Process

Common Steps in Course Design	Step taken (in percent)	Step taken first (in percent)
Select Content	85	46
Consider student characteristics	69	15
Consider how students learn	67	9
Establish objectives based on own background	61	16
Select materials and activities	59	6
Examine previous student evaluations	42	1
Base objectives on external influences	35	6

Note*:* Faculty course design process. Adapted from "Planning Introductory Courses: Content, Context, and Form" by J. S. Stark, 2000, *Instructional Sciences*, 28, p. 419.

Even though most respondents showed that they considered content first, Stark (2000) emphasized that this was not the case for faculty who taught skill-based courses such as English composition, foreign languages, and mathematics (p. 419). Psychology faculty focused on how students learn while sociology, biology, and language teachers tended to select materials and textbooks early in the design process. Participants noted that they fine-tune intro courses from year to year rather than perform a large overhaul since students are basically the same year to year; goals and objectives are "seldomly refined" from year-to-year. (p. 420). However, Stark emphasized that overhauling a course or teaching a new course requires more intense efforts. Participants clarified that they seek little outside input outside department colleagues; they also noted that literature on teaching and learning does not influence them; however, nursing faculty did note that they do engage and apply teaching and learning best practices (p. 420). Stark acknowledged the contextual factors that influence course planning shown in Table 2.3.

English composition faculty reported that they relied on student characteristics; Stark (2000) suggested that this may be the result of a heterogeneous student population in introductory courses. Some faculty in fields that adhere to accrediting bodies, such as nursing, engineering and education, implemented course design features to adhere to accreditation guidelines or requirements (p. 421). Stark et al. (1988) credited faculty members' disciplines with influencing their decision-making more than institutional, career, or other external factors; Lattuca and Stark (1994) agreed that disciplines hold different values and attitudes that fuel different impressions and practices about course design.

Table 2.3 Faculty Rankings of Influences on Course Design

Rank of influence	Type of influence
1	Student characteristics
2	Student goals
3	Pragmatic Issues
4	Influences external to the college or university
5 (tie)	Program and college goals
5 (tie)	Advice available on campus
5 (tie)	Literature on teaching and learning
6	Facilities, resources, opportunities, assistance

Note: Influences on course design. Adapted from "Planning Introductory Courses: Content, Context, and Form" by J.S. Stark, 2000, *Instructional Sciences*, 28, p. 421.

In their research, Lattuca and Stark (1994) found that faculty in math, science, and social sciences expressed self-criticism about their limited efforts to construct a connected curriculum across majors (p. 415). In the social sciences, faculty in economics, psychology, and political science stressed the importance of making connections between and among knowledge, real world applications, and problem solving (p. 415). In the humanities, history and philosophy faculty acknowledged a connected curriculum as familiar (Lattuca & Stark, 1994, p. 416). However, Lattuca and Stark concluded that stronger connections between the curriculum and other fields, life, and careers is needed (p. 420). Stark et al. (1988) noted correlations between faculty disciplines and backgrounds and how they contribute to planning and sequencing courses, but Stark

(2000) stated that most educators had similar conceptions of designing and teaching courses at the intro level and the advanced level. However, some faculty viewed their disciplines differently at the advanced level. These findings provided more support for the idea that faculty in different fields tend to have different beliefs about teaching (Barnes et al., 2001).

Roberts (2015) also conducted an empirical study exploring how academics use decision-making about course design. Roberts' findings showed that 20 faculty participants from different disciplines held differing beliefs about the purpose of education. Alignment between their beliefs and other key influences created "a coherent orientation to curriculum decisions" (p. 550). The study identified five curriculum orientations that aligned with participants' beliefs: a discipline-based orientation; a professional and academic orientation; personal relevance orientation; social relevance - reform orientation; and systems design orientation.

Even though research participants indicated that academic discipline served as a major influence in decision-making, Roberts found that institutional and sociopolitical contexts represented second-tier influences indicating that participants were "responding to institutional change agendas" identified in Barnett (2000) and Rowland (2006). Participants referenced goals related to developing generic cognitive and workplace skills; both were expressed as learning outcomes (Roberts, 2015, p. 550). Roberts' (2015) also acknowledged that many survey participants emphasized skills in their course design suggesting that participants may have been reacting to external stakeholders' agendas, which address graduate employability. Therefore, Roberts concluded that participant responses reflected that the emphasis on generic skills in course design has enticed many

academics “to broaden their learning outcomes and processes beyond content and knowledge transmission to consider the relevance of students and diverse future pathways” (p. 551).

Using national representative data of faculty teaching 12 different types of introductory courses at 7 universities, Stark et al. (1990) conducted a quantitative study about course design influences and discovered a variance in strength with regard to the following influential factors: discipline concepts and mode of inquiry; background and preparation; student preparation and interest; student needs for personal growth; college and program mission; external goals and standards; materials and facilities; pragmatic factors; and available advice. Stark et al. stated that “a very small part of the differences” were attributable to “variations in gender, educational background, professional status” and other factors (p. 158); the major differences related to assumptions about students and disciplinary issues. Context and situation were far less influential on course planning than content and discipline for introductory courses, but Stark et al. emphasized that “faculty draw heavily upon their background and expertise to make planning decisions, using their academic field as a foundation for content selection, arrangement, and conceptual integration” (p. 162). Stark et al. noted one shocking finding: how strongly students and student variability influenced participants’ planning, especially since student growth and preparedness are technically institutionally-related factors (p. 162). The authors suggested that faculty in different disciplines may consider student growth and preparedness as part of their teaching tasks. Other important mentionable items from their findings include the following: how little tenure and promotion factored into course planning; the small percentage who indicated student goals related to jobs, careers, and

life factored into their design; and the strong influence related to student characteristics (p. 163). Stark et al. stated that even with the study's limitations, the data demonstrated "little justification for recent accusations that the faculty have capitulated to students' vocational plans or desires" (p. 163).

Stark et al. (1988) indicated that faculty views about educational purposes also differed "substantially across teaching fields and that concepts such as 'mode of inquiry' have meaning unique to the discipline" and implications for faculty development (p. 237). Therefore, Stark et al. (1990) suggested that leaders striving to improve course planning have a few things to consider: how faculty respond to planning suggestions that do not align with disciplinary interests or related fields, and how to motivate faculty to pay greater attention to students' needs and goals and increase professional development opportunities that foster better course design planning (p. 162). Creating faculty buy-in is essential for the success of career readiness initiatives that may undermine faculty autonomy and interfere with course design decision-making.

Stakeholders Perspectives and Career Readiness

Societal views have come to understand learning as valuable only if it is useful, which suggests that the acquired knowledge one gains should lead to employment or application of those skills. The linking of a college degree to better job prospects is not a new phenomenon; for many, the opportunity for high paying jobs has long served as the prime reason people seek a college degree. Replacing an older way of thinking about the purpose of college, this newer educational paradigm attaches more value to areas that generate valuable knowledge, such as STEM, creative arts, and technical media, instead of those areas that efficiently "manage knowledge," which is primarily what the

humanities does (Rose, 2013, p. 3). Rose (2013) stated that the "undesirable consequences" of this paradigm shift are that some stakeholders do not consider the knowledge that humanities majors acquire as valuable since these skills allow those who obtain them to "manage, coordinate and present knowledge" rather than employ knowledge (p. 3).

Bridgstock (2007) emphasized that stakeholders' attitudes have resulted in universities being more accountable to produce employable graduates. As a result, a student's ability to find a job after graduation has come to serve as an important metric of student success for most colleges and universities, especially in a competitive environment to keep and retain students (Fox, 2018). Muller and Young (2014) stressed that this shift has "basic disciplinary knowledge" being "crowded out of the university" and "out of its "privileged place" in the curriculum and has set "the stage for conflict of perception" about the purpose of a college education and the role of "disciplinary knowledge and relevant skills and knowledge" (p. 128). As a result, higher education leaders have reacted with greater immediacy to the social discourse about the value, cost, and utilization of a college degree.

Employer Perspectives about Career Readiness

Over the past few decades, employers have become increasingly emphatic about the need for well-prepared college graduates since they need employees that possess high-ordered thinking, communication skills, ethical decision-making, and the ability to apply knowledge (Dacre & Sewell, 2017; Jiang & Alexakis, 2017; Knight & Yorke, 2003; Lowden et al., 2011). However, various studies indicated that students graduate from college underprepared for the transition from school to work (American Academy

of Arts & Sciences, 2018; Arum & Roksa, 2011; Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2015; Botes & Sharma, 2017; Hansen-Martin, 2017; Schwartz, 2015). Differences in perceptions and students' ineptness to articulate their skills may be fueling these issues.

In 2015, 26 percent of employers indicated they felt students demonstrated critical and analytical thinking skills, but 66 percent of students expressed that they felt well-prepared in these skill areas (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2015). In addition, CareerBuilder (2013), Miller and Malandra (2006), and Tanyel et al. (1999) indicated that college graduates also fall short with respect to non-cognitive skills as well including adaptability, leadership, time management, and communication. A National Association of Colleges and Employers' (NACE) (2018) survey found that only 43 percent of employers found recent college graduates prepared and proficient.

Unpreparedness may occur for several reasons. Some researchers attribute the lack of college graduates' career readiness and skill levels to differing perspectives about preparedness. These aspects, along with different values, use of language with regard to core and enacted skills, and definitions, contribute to this misalignment between employers and universities.

In a mixed-methods research study, Rowan-Kenyon et al. (2017) cross-referenced language and definitions used to describe non-cognitive skills at higher education institutions and employment publications. Their findings revealed variability in desired skills across different areas; findings also showed a difference in how employers and higher education institutions designated core skills, such as reflection and self-efficacy, and enacted skills, such as taking initiative (Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2017, p. 163). Bennett

et al. (1999) also found different definitions for core skills (p. 74). In their research about skill development in higher education, Drew et al. (2000) noted that employers and universities lack a common language usage with regard to skills; this void has created a "confused, confusing, and under-conceptualized notion of generic skills" (p. 131). Different perspectives also affect student preparedness.

Smith and Bath (2006) expressed that perceptions about skills vary across different institutions, programs, and disciplines (p. 261); for example, a PayScale (2020) survey indicated that 64 percent of educators say they teach the skills employers value most, but only 41 percent of employers agree with that statement. Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991) research located differences in meaning with regard to communication and critical thinking skills. Variances in values also exist. For example, NACE's (2016) job outlook for 2017 placed a lower priority on global/multicultural fluency, but Matos et al. (2016) noted that employers prioritized a global perspective. Tymon (2013) also acknowledged only limited alignment between the views of undergraduates and students, and Kovalick (2019) emphasized that these differing perceptions indicated that a skills gap exists between students and employers (p. 26). This knowledge gap may be one factor contributing to concern among students about their career readiness.

These discrepancies between employers' perceptions of student preparedness and students' self-perception of preparedness have motivated university leaders to consider other ways to close a perceived skills gap. Some scholars, however, indicated that the problem may not be a skills gap but more a problem with students' lack of ability to articulate the value of their education when applying for employment opportunities (Anders, 2017; DuRose & Stebleton, 2016; Goodwin et al., (2019); Hartley, 2017;

Watkins & McKeown 2018). Collectively, these data, charges, and expectations have intensified university leaders' focus and expectations on the viability and application of a college degree.

Pretti and Fannon (2018) noted that the skills employers desire and the ability to articulate and demonstrate those skills represent both "the language and the currency" of the job market (p. 108). In research studies with students, Straka et al. (2019) and Ambrose and Poklop (2015) found that many students could not explain their college experiences in terms of the skills they acquired. DuRose and Stebleton (2016) noted that students' inability to articulate degree value, coupled with faculty's inability to notice these shortcomings, present "both a critical and timely problem confronting students and educators" (p. 272). Another barrier, according to DuRose and Stebleton, may be the lack of "intentional opportunities to reflect, practice, and evaluate the links between the learning that takes place on campus and how it may translate to the workplace environment" (p. 273). Knight and Yorke (2003) emphasized that when faculty only tacitly present employability-enhancing elements in classrooms, "students' claims to employability are seriously compromised" (p. 5). Furthermore, when students cannot express what they learned and the applications of that knowledge, the lack of ability creates a sense that the degree did not adequately prepare them personally or professionally. Scholars argue that if students cannot articulate what they learned then transfer of those skills and knowledge comes into question (Billing, 2007; Gray & Orasanu, 1987; Knight, 2001).

Transfer refers to the notion that learners can take the knowledge and skills they accumulated and use them in other disciplines and/or contexts. Billing (2007) noted that

promoting students' abilities "to explain concepts (to themselves and others), and the conditions of use of strategies, improves transfer" (p. 512). Gray and Orasanu (1987) concluded that the training in cognitive skills minimally affects intellectual performance; more specifically, skills simply do not transfer to new contexts. Alexander and Murphy (1999) expressed that transfer happens much less than educators think it does. Hatano and Greeno (1999) stated that little evidence with regard to transfer exists because of narrow teaching. Billing (2007) agreed that "automatic transfer to new contexts of these desirable higher abilities should not be assumed" (p. 484); however, Billing also noted that knowledge and skill transfer is possible only if certain conditions are in place (p. 484). Some of these conditions include the following: self-aware learners who can understand when they can apply what they learned (Bransford et al., 1999, p. xiii); transfer conditions include the learner, the content, and the context (Alexander & Murphy, 1999); students have opportunities to reflect on what they learned and the applications (Bransford et al., 1986); and learners are shown how problems are similar, and educators include metacognitive strategies (Billing, 2007, p. 512). Billing (2007) also noted that unlike transfer of problem-solving and reasoning skills even less evidence showed the feasibility of transfer for "communication, team and critical skills" without interventions (p. 512). However, Drew et al. (2000) indicated that additional research is required to explore the role academic institutions must play in raising the skills of students (p. 132).

Other factors, such as limited exposure to career services, inaccurate and unrealistic expectations of the job market, major, and career options, and negative prior career interventions, also come into play (Muñiz & Eimerbrink, 2018). Muñiz and Eimerbrink (2018) indicated that cumulatively these barriers foster negative effects and

adverse behavior; for example, withdrawal from college (Reardon et al., 2013); negative perceptions of individual skills (Hirschi, 2009; Reardon et al., 2013); and negative perceptions of interests (Hirschi & Lage, 2007). Hence, a sense of heightened urgency has caused career readiness to emerge as a system to prepare students (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2011; Hirschi, 2018; Lent, 2018; National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2017). Fox (2018) stated that it is critical that institutions prioritize career readiness since "stakes are higher than ever" (p. 13).

Curriculum Theory

A quick key search of curriculum and theories in higher education nets an abundance of scholarly resources and articles. Over time, curriculum scholars have attempted to identify the nature of curriculum using their own philosophical and ideological perspectives. As its own component in the field of education, curriculum theory separates into two classifications: design and engineering. Beauchamp (1968) moved the thinking about curriculum forward by dividing the field into six components: foundational influences, subject matters, curriculum design, curriculum engineering, evaluation and research, and theory building. Design theories, formed by philosophy and knowledge, psychology, and social theories, address the basic organization of the curriculum plan whereas engineering theories describe, guide, and predict curriculum-development activities.

Huenecke (1982) classified curriculum theorizing about decision-making into three categories: structural, generic, and substantive. Structural theories identify curriculum elements and their connections as well as the structure of decision-making; generic theories focus on curriculum outcomes of curriculum addressing assumptions,

beliefs, and perceived truths underlying curriculum decisions; and substantive theories expand on desirable and worthy subject matter or content and knowledge (Huenecke, 1982). While helpful, Huenecke's grouping of theories does not account for theories related to the processes of curriculum design, such as Schwab and Harper's (1970) theory; therefore, theories dedicated to curriculum design move more effectively into the following four classifications: content-oriented theory, process-oriented theory, structure-oriented theory, and value-oriented theory.

Content-oriented theory addresses the content faculty incorporate into their courses; process-oriented theories focus on the developmental process of learning; structured-oriented theories are concerned with the principles that govern selection, organization, and sequencing and how those elements interrelate; and value-oriented theories address the values and assumptions inherent in course design, issues related to the hidden and stated agenda, and what constitutes legitimate knowledge (McKernan, 2008).

For the most part, many curriculum theorists have presented curriculum models rather than formal theories to explain decision-making about course design (Lindén et al., 2017). However, according to McKernan (2008), "theory yields up rational explanations for worthy models" and "models function as representations of theory" (p. 56). Posner and Rudnitsky (1986) contributed a linear course-planning model; Toombs (1977) focused on three areas of course design: content, context, and form; and Schawb (1969) developed the deliberative process of curriculum inquiry which uses multiple stakeholder perspective to invent and reinvent student learning experiences. Even though these

available models give educators ways to contemplate options, curriculum orientations lend themselves to explaining the decision-making process.

Cheung (2000) noted that terms such as "curriculum ideologies, curriculum beliefs, educational value orientations, conceptions of curriculum, and curriculum orientations" are often used interchangeably; I will use the term curriculum orientation in my research.

Curriculum orientations equate to theory because they explain the decision-making process faculty make in course planning. Print (1993) noted that curriculum conception is "the fundamental base from which we think and act about curriculum" (p. 93). Toohey (1999) expressed that these fundamental beliefs do not present themselves in goal statements but in the allocations of time and space with regard to different topics, learning activities, and assessment (p. 48). Therefore, faculty members' differing views as to the nature of education and curriculum with regard to beliefs, approaches, and methods for planning and designing lend themselves to the different curriculum value orientations and will work well for my investigation.

Educational Value Orientation Theory

Curriculum theorists have conjectured that the value systems or orientations that educators bring to the curricular decision-making process determine, in part, their goals for student learning and academic and behavioral expectations for success (McNeil, 1990). Cheung and Wong (2002) defined curriculum orientation as a "collective set of beliefs about curriculum elements" intent, content, strategies and assessment that lead to different ways of thinking about course design (p. 226). Even though some scholars indicated that the nature of curriculum is indeterminate (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Kelly,

2009; McKernan, 2008), others think these aspects both individually and collectively lend themselves to the construction of a curriculum orientation (Barnett et al., 2001; Cheung & Wong, 2002; Eisner & Vallance, 1974; Linden et al., 2017; Roberts, 2015; Yeung, 2012). Each orientation presents a distinct set of beliefs and philosophies about curriculum that affects faculty priorities with regard to course design (Kelly, 2009; Print, 1993; Schiro, 2013).

These value orientations represent belief structures or philosophical positions that faculty hold. Revealing themselves in educational settings, these views represent educational perspectives that influence the educators' focus on the learner, the context, and the body of knowledge. Some researchers indicated that little consensus exists about influential aspects at the macro, meso, and micro levels that contribute to shaping one's curriculum orientation (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Cheung & Wong, 2002); others, however, suggested that most important internal influences on curriculum include the following: educational goals and purposes; the subject matter and discipline; teaching, learning and students; teacher identity; and the institutional and sociopolitical contexts (Eisner & Vallance 1974; Lattuca & McNeil, 1996; Miller, 1983; Ornstein, 1987; Schubert, 1986; Stark, 2009; Toohey 1999; Trowler 1998). Lattuca and Stark (2009) also noted that external forces such as "social, cultural, and historical factors …" can influence faculty decision-making as well (p. 6).

Many of these beliefs are attributable to faculty who become immersed and socialized in various disciplines thus taking on educational and discipline-embedded assumptions from their own experiences (Dressel & Marcus, 1982; Stark, 2000; Stark & Morstain, 1978). Within the theoretical curriculum literature, scholars such as Eisner and

Vallance (1974) and McNeil (1990) have hypothesized a number of value perspectives that may affect the curricular decision-making process. In Figure 2.1, Roberts (2014) identified some of the educational value orientations that faculty employ during the course design process.

Differing perspectives about how these elements should play out in the classroom drive different attitudes about the use of content, goals, and objectives. In turn, these responses lead to different curriculum orientations because as Toohey (1999) noted, responses about course design reflect "a coherent set of assumptions" about key educational factors (p. 49). Cheung (2002) expressed that operationalization of an orientation may rely on situational contexts (p. 230). In other words, for a variety of reasons, faculty may not be able to employ the orientation they hold in a classroom setting because of contextual aspects. It is also important to note that orientations are not necessarily mutually exclusive; faculty may draw on different orientations or multiple orientations for planning a course or different courses. Nevertheless, Tyler (1949) and Dewey (1916) asserted that adopting an appropriate orientation and philosophy to develop and design curriculum proves useful; Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) concurred that orientation, conceptualization, and philosophy provide a framework for faculty to design their courses to achieve intended educational goals and objectives.

Even though scholars have proposed various schemes to classify curriculum orientations, Eisner and Valance's (1974) model still remains the definitive choice for categorizing and explaining different orientations (Cheung & Wong, 2002; Yeung, 2014). Three of their orientations, academic rationalism, curriculum as technician, and development of cognitive processes, still apply to college level course design; however,

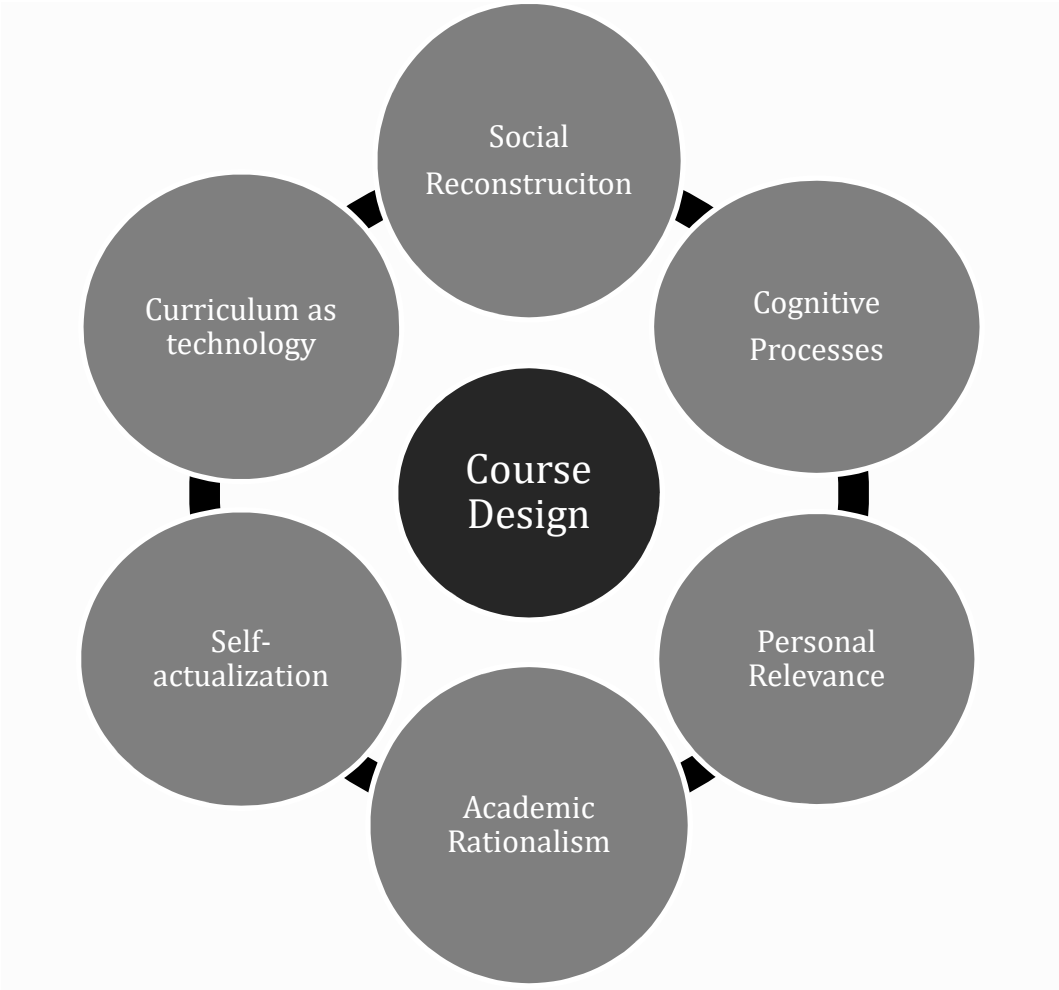

Figure 2.1. Curriculum value orientations. Adapted from "Curriculum Decision Making in a Research University: An Interplay between Ideologies and Influences," by P. Roberts, 2014, (Order No. U623820). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Vallance (1986) revisited her original conflicting conceptions that she created along with Eisner and noted that the self-actualization and social reconstruction orientations have become somewhat obsolete. McNeil (1996), Schiro (2008), and Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) also contributed similar classifications of orientations.

Eisner (1992) noted that each orientation has its own degree of implementation, but Cheung and Wong (2002) stressed that "measurement of teachers beliefs about curriculum design is different from measurement of curriculum implementation (p. 230). In addition, faculty may have more than one predominant orientation (Cheung & Wong, 2002, p. 230). Understanding how philosophical views, educator roles, theories, and conceptualizations about curriculum as content, product, process, and praxis becomes a necessity to identify the boundaries and purpose of the following educational value orientations.

Academic Rationalism Orientation

Faculty who use Eisner and Vallance's (1974) academic rationalism orientation, which is similar to McNeil's (1996) academic orientation, Schiro's (2008) scholar academic ideology, and Orestein and Hunkin's (2009) academic approach, conceptualize curriculum as developing student's intellectual abilities in subjects deemed worthy. Having served as standard practice before the development of theories and models, this orientation originated from the seven liberal arts of the classical curriculum; this traditional, or epistemological, orientation is still the most widely used curriculum design by faculty, especially in the humanities (Adler, 1982; Herschbach, 1989).

Academic rationalists hold a traditional view of academic disciplines: they consider them hierarchical communities, which includes members, scholars, educators,

and learners, all in the pursuit of knowledge (Yeung, 2012, p. 29). Built on rationalist theories, this orientation views exposing students to the various forms of knowledge and developing students' ability to think rationally as the primary purpose of education.

To fulfill this purpose, academic rationalists disseminate objective knowledge organized by subject matter in the form of academic disciplines for the purpose of cultural transmission. In simpler terms, they build a course around a discipline's knowledge, skills, and ways of thinking (Yeung, 2012, p. 30). This traditional approach of constructing curriculum, according to Staykova (2013), "emphasizes a set of fundamental values and skills such as respect of authority, knowledge of fundamental terms, and socially accepted norms" of the dominant culture (p. 75). However, academic rationalists do not limit their perspective only to the transmission of existing knowledge to future generations. Erekson (1992) explained that academic rationalism also "includes the perspective that knowledge can be created and the systems for disciplined inquiry are an integral part of the theoretical rationale" (p. 7). These ideas about knowledge have philosophical underpinnings of perennialism and essentialism, which are both subject-centered and emphasize the value of knowledge that transcends time (Tanriverdi & Apak, 2014).

Perennialists hold the belief that the ideas of the past are just as relevant and meaningful today as when people conceived or wrote about them (Tanriverdi & Apak, 2014); essentialists focus on teaching basic skills to train the mind (Tanriverdi & Apak, 2014). Hirst (1974) emphasized that all knowledge and understanding resides in specific domains and suggested that mathematics, physical sciences, literature, the fine arts, religion, and philosophy disciplines foster distinctive ways of thinking.

Primarily, knowledge that faculty deem worthy of passing on resides in traditional disciplines; for example, language and literature, history, science, math, the arts, music, and foreign languages (Yeung, 2012, p. 29). Hirst and Peters (1970) emphasized that knowledge about these subjects initiate students into an intellectual life in their pursuit of knowledge and understanding; therefore, exposure to this kind of knowledge, noted Hirst (1974), requires serious attention by faculty, so they can plan and design a course that passes on various forms of accumulated knowledge about civilizations to train students and stimulate their intellect and citizenship (p. 32).

From a theoretical perspective, academic rationalists believe themselves to be experts or scholars in their disciplines; therefore, their decision-making in planning courses revolves around finding ways to expose students, according to Shiro (2013) "to the essence of their discipline" (p. 4). Basically, curriculum takes on the shape of a syllabus in this orientation since, as Curzon (1985) noted, the document tends to follow a traditional approach listing subjects to cover in a logical order. Faculty employ an authoritative, instructor-centered approach that includes selecting and disseminating accumulated knowledge of society worthy of knowing to match educational objectives that focus on cultivating intellect (Posner, 2004, p. 47). These educational objectives entail having students master subject knowledge, think logically and rationally, and accumulate perspective to assess and evaluate truth.

Academic rationalists systematically organize content in a linear fashion and employ didactic forms of teaching to disseminate disciplinary knowledge, skills, and ways of thinking (Dukacz & Baebin 1980; Eisner & Vallance, 1974). Students, on the other hand, take on passive roles in the classroom to absorb selected existing knowledge

educators choose. Faculty decision-making does not include practical learning in this orientation, Eisner and Vallance (1974) stated, because it undermines the quality of education and "robs students of the opportunity to study those subjects that reflect man's enduring quest for meaning" (p. 13). In addition, according to Schiro (2013), academic rationalists are not concerned with individual learning styles, so they design curriculum around subject knowledge and "assume that the academic disciplines, the world of the intellect, and the world of knowledge are loosely equivalent" (p. 4). For the most part, course design decision-making proves to be uncomplicated for academic rationalists with one exception: choosing content that, according to Staykova (2013), serves as the transmission of "cultural heritage of a dominant culture" (p. 75). Critics of this orientation, however, note the limitations in course design and content.

Critics of academic rationalism point to the limitations that didactic instruction generates with regard to transferability, problem-solving abilities, and problematic intersections with knowledge and culture. Hyun (2006) also identified that an instruction-centered curriculum creates a "power struggle" between educator and student (p. 143); this power struggles centers on what curriculum scholars call the hidden or unstated and null or left out curriculum (Apple, 1979, 1985, 1999; Giroux, 1988, 1992, 1997; Kincheloe et al., 2000). Staykova (2013) defined the hidden curriculum as "what is not taught but objectified in behavioral expectations" and emphasized that a traditional approach may alienate students who do not reside in the dominant culture because of differences in language, skills, or ethnic or cultural aspects (p. 75). Reid (2006) stated that academic rationalism restricts inclusivity to those "who support and understand a particular kind of doctrine," yet it excludes others (p. 15). Nevertheless, for many faculty,

this approach works well since they can replicate the model of teaching that they experienced themselves as students. Because many faculty members lack professional knowledge in employing alternative course designs, they may be limited to making decisions that an academic rationalist orientation offers. Others, however, seek a more organized approach that yields clearer indications of learning by matching course design to objectives, which is a key component in the curriculum as technology approach.

Curriculum as Technology Orientation

Eisner and Vallance's (1974) curriculum as technology orientation, along with McNeil's (1966) the technologist, Schiro's (2008) social efficiency, and Ornstein and Hunkins' (2009) managerial approach, aligns with a curriculum as product conceptualization and offers users a systematic approach to design and organize their courses. Influenced heavily by thinking in industrial and managerial practices, this performance or systems-based approach views curriculum as product and revolves around set objectives, a plan built around those objectives, applications, and a means to measure outcomes. For many educators, curriculum as product still resides as an effective means to think about course design.

Based on the epistemological assumption that the scientific way of making decisions to prescribe learning are technical in nature, the curriculum technology orientation, Eisner and Vallance (1974) noted, depends on "stable assumptions about the nature of learning" (p. 8). Toohey (1999) identified that the stable assumptions curriculum technologists use stem from viewing that "understanding is exemplified in action" and the "purpose of learning" as expanding one's skills and behavior (p. 52).

Knowledge accumulation shows itself in performance; the performance serves as the by-product of learning.

In addition, Eisner and Vallance (1974) stressed that in this orientation "learning does occur in certain systematic and predictable ways and that it can be made more efficient if only a powerful method for controlling it can be perfected" (p. 8); objectives serve this niche.

Objectives or outcomes steer the decision-making process rather than disciplinary knowledge since decisions about what content to include depends on how or if it fosters measurable performance goals. In this way, the objectives act like quality controls guiding the course design. Bobbitt (1918), Tyler (1949), and Taba (1962), along with others, promoted objectives as a way to assist faculty in decision-making with regard to the learner's experience, content, activities, and assessment methods (Linden et al. 2017).

Bobbitt (1918) introduced a course design approach using a scientific technique to build steps to facilitate attainable behavioral objectives; he modeled his approach around skills, according to Scott (2008), "derived from the activities of experts in a variety of fields essential to the well-being of society…" (p. 6). According to Bobbitt (1918), students encounter specific activities through education and these activities prepare them for life; therefore, students become skilled performers and curriculum becomes a series of experiences that students follow as a means of meeting the course objectives (p. 42). Because faculty pre-determine and outline core skills and objectives, little flexibility in the course design exists. Tyler's (1974) rational curriculum planning or objective models of curriculum design expanded on Bobbitt's model with an added emphasis on behavioral objectives.

Advocating for a greater focus on objectives than Bobbitt, Tyler (1974) stated that curriculum must be product-driven and implement educational objectives to guide material choices, clearly outlined content, instructional procedures, and assessments to measure outcomes (p. 3). For Tyler (1969), education "was the process of changing behavior patterns of students" (p. 5); in a broad sense, Toohey (1999) noted that these changes in behavior contribute to the learning goal of becoming "a skilled performer" (p. 53). The stated objectives that a faculty member creates represent the behavioral changes that should take place in the student (Tyler, 1974, p. 44). Consequently, these behavioral objectives provide the foundation for curriculum planning because they communicate intended learning, offer faculty a systematic way to organize and classify course content and objectives, and provide more accuracy with regard to testing and evaluation.

The role of the faculty member in this orientation, according to Toohey (1999), depends on whether he or she completely designs the course; if so, the role proves to be quite complex. Scott (2008) noted that faculty take on the role of technicians since they cannot "speculate about the worth" of the pre-set goals or objectives (p. 28); Toohey (1999) compared the role faculty take on is one of instructional designer (p. 52). Noting the complexity of this role, Toohey expressed that faculty must determine expected performances that align with each unit; analyze those performances to forecast needed skills and knowledge; and sequence learning accordingly (p. 53).

Also inherent in this role, according to Toohey (1999), is the "belief that learning is best facilitated when important learning tasks are analyzed into their component knowledge and skills" and that "knowledge is only useful to the extent that it informs action" (p. 52). Therefore, a curriculum technologist determines what are the expected

unit performance outcomes, how to sequence knowledge, which learning outcomes align, and when and how to schedule frequent student assessment and feedback (Toohey, 1999, p. 53). Similar to academic rationalists, curriculum technologists use a linear process to build a course plan that describes what the students exiting the course should have learned. Toohey (1999) indicated that the sequencing of knowledge and skills is important if "new learning builds upon previous learning until complete performances can be mastered" (p. 52).

To meet these design goals, Tyler (1974) identified four main questions in dynamic succession as a basis to guide decision-making with regard to aims, activities, and objectives:

- What is the educational purpose?
- What experiences will attain purpose?
- How can organization shape purpose and experiences?
- How can outcomes be measured (p. 1)?

By transforming choices into questions, Tyler's model offers theoretical features that present educators with a scheme for selecting and organizing educational experiences (Dillion, 2009, p. 352).

Building on Tyler's ideas, Taba's (1962) rational model emphasized that planning a course is a task that requires a "rational scheme for planning its various elements" (p. 12). Planning requires a methodology for implementing and relating the following elements: diagnosis of needs, formulation of objectives, selection and organization of content, selection of learning experiences, and a determination to evaluate outcomes (Taba, 1962, pp. 12-14). Curricula differ depending on how educators emphasize the

elements, Taba noted, because of the "... basis on which the decisions regarding each are made" (p. 10). If curriculum development is to be "rational and scientific rather than a rule-of-thumb procedure," Taba stressed that faculty must base their curriculum decisions about these elements on "valid criteria" such as the following: tradition, social pressures, and established habits (p. 10).

Tyler and Taba's ideas have continued to serve as foundations for newer designs, especially other objective-based models (Brady & Kennedy, 2013; Knight, 2001; Print, 1993), outcomes-based models (Prideaux, 2003), and competency-based models (Voorhees, 2001). Wheeler (1967) modified Tyler's model by using a cyclical model instead of a linear approach; he also addressed the lack of feedback to help students achieve expected objectives in Tyler's model. Kerr's (1968) model focused on objectives, knowledge, evaluation, and the school learning experience emphasizing that the educator should organize, integrate, sequence, and reinforce knowledge.

Many educators and scholars, however, find rational curriculum planning using a scientific method problematic (Eisner, 1985; Kelly, 2000; Knight, 2001; Schubert, 1986; Smith, 2000; Stenhouse, 1975). Since this model of curriculum planning is tailored after technological and industrial settings, the benchmarks used by industry to measure performance do not necessarily always carry over into the classroom (Eisner, 1985). Additionally, faculty do not always have the ability to measure behavioral changes objectively (Eisner, 1985). Both Stenhouse (1975) and Eisner (1985) stressed that this approach does not take complex learning into account; it also does not account for skills, beliefs, morals, ethics, and other qualities that faculty cannot express as objectives (Knight, 2001, par. 11).

Even though students may appreciate the clear expectations that this design creates, others addressed the limited voice they experienced in curriculum as product with regard to what they learn and how they learn it (Eisner, 1985; Smith, 2000). Smith (2000) pinpointed the limited role of faculty who run the risk of acting like technicians using a plan, much like an industrial blueprint, to guide student learning. Schubert (1986) criticized the "cookbook approach" this method employs in course design and the lack of the ability to judge certain learning experiences. Prideaux (2003) also noted that critics expressed that Tyler's model, and others like it, is restrictive because of its "narrow range of student skills and knowledge that can be readily expressed in behavioural terms" (par. 9). Knight (2001) referenced that writing up attainable, detailed objectives is "fraught" with problems because complex learning "is not reducible to precise statements; for example, if an undergraduate program outlines that students should be able to work autonomously at a high level, the words autonomously and high level are somewhat unclear as far as extent and/or degree (Knight, 2001). Nevertheless, despite its controlling design features, many faculty still find that curriculum as product offers them a systematic way to measure learning. Others, however, have replaced Tyler's language of objectives with an outcome-based approach (Guskey & Passaro,1992).

The objectives models showcase a "means end, efficiency-centered" approach that has manifested itself, over time, into such forms as a behavioral objective model, competency-based instruction, and the accountability movement" (Manely-Delacruz, 1990, p. 10). Outcomes-based learning (OBL) resembles the objectives model design, but it aligns with societal and political concerns and has faculty employ a backwards design starting with significant and enduring learning outcomes and then connecting those to

content, teaching and learning experiences, assessment, and evaluation (Prideaux, 2003, par. 10). Spady (1994) stated that OBL is a "designing down" approach to curriculum development (p. 1); more specifically, once a faculty member defines long-term significant outcomes, those outcomes become the starting point for curriculum design (Killen, 2009); anything not stated in the designated objectives is not included in the course plan (Knight, 2001). In this way, the outcomes define the curriculum if, Spady (1998) noted, outcomes are "not the score, label, grade, or percentage that someone attaches to the demonstration, but the substance and actions of the demonstration itself" (p.25). Instead, Spady (1998) emphasized that outcomes reflect higher level learning and real-life complexities.

Spady (1994) recommended faculty organize everything in a course around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences (p. 1). Biggs' (1999) model aligns learning outcomes, teaching and learning, and assessment and encourages faculty to organize design around three key areas of the curriculum: the intended learning outcomes, activities, and assessment. Driscoll and Wood's (2007) OBL design promotes institutional accountability based on student learning. Similarly, Kudlas (1994) holds that OBL is a process that focuses on what students should learn and the outcomes of that learning. Heavily dependent on behavioral objectives, outcomes or competencies, curriculum scholars have sought other methods to facilitate the curriculum planning phase; curriculum as process emerged as an alternative to the content and product models.

Development of Cognitive Processes

Vast differences exist between orientations, but none are more apparent than those between the product, or objective/outcome model, and the process model. Neary (2003) explained that curriculum as product emphasizes "plans and intentions" while the process model emphasizes "activities and effects" (p. 39); this approach connects to empiricists' theories, which purport that activities should determine the curriculum. In response to Bobbitt's scientific curriculum making approach, Scott (2008) indicated that the process of curriculum approach emerged to "designate appropriate processes that learners go through" to avoid "pre-specified behavioral objectives" and to build in a more active, influential role for the educator (p. 7); in other words, curriculum as process addressed the shortcomings inherent in curriculum as product.

Dunne (1988), a critic of behavioral objectives, indicated that "the most appropriate way of inculcating intellectual virtues such as respect for truth, critical appreciation and the like is through processes …" (cited in Scott, 2008, p. 25). Eisner and Vallance's (1974) development of cognitive-processes orientation, cognitive processes for short or curriculum-in-action, aligns with curriculum as process since this orientation alters an educator's focus from objectives to the process of how a student learns. McNeil (1996), Schiro (2008), and Ornstein and Hatch (2002) did not produce orientations similar to cognitive processes.

More open-ended, the cognitive processes orientation focuses on how students' learning develops over time in the college classroom (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Cheung & Wong, 2002; Kelly, 2009; Smith, 2000). In this sense, curriculum is not a static entity that includes measurable objectives. Instead, Newman and Ingram (1989) indicated that

course design should evolve and present as “an organic process by which learning is offered, accepted and internalized” (p.1). Supporting that the humanities require a hermeneutic process of understanding to facilitate the process of interpretation, Stenhouse (1975), a strong proponent against behavioral objectives to design curriculum, advocated for a curriculum decision-making model that is based on interaction and student participation in the learning process.

The cognitive process orientation originated in the 19th century from the idea that the process of logic and rigor needed to study math and Latin could transfer over to other knowledge areas (Toohey, 2002, p. 55). Thorndike (1913) proved the idea false; students could transfer over only what they learned to similar-like situations, which indicated that the transfer of knowledge across different disciplines is not possible. However, renewed focus on the process model ignited recently with research efforts dedicated to the structure of intellect (Toohey, 2002, p. 55). With this movement, the shift from behaviorism to cognitivism shifted the research focus “from reproductive-learning and memory to thinking, reasoning, understanding, and meaning making” (Toohey, 2002, p. 55).

Unlike the academic rationalism orientation, discipline-related content proves less important in this orientation; however, some disciplinary knowledge, such as math, presents as more valuable because it fosters mental discipline (Eisner, 1985, p. 63). Because information, facts, and theories change over time, the cognitive processes orientation, according to Yeung (2012), rejects “static, factual knowledge” (p. 38). Instead, cognitive processes orientation users consider the purpose of education as promoting a student's intellectual ability to think, which, in turn, serves as a foundation

for lifelong learning; therefore, Vallance (1986) stated that the cognitive-processes orientation "sees the development of intellectual skills as the chief purpose" of education (p. 25).

Eisner and Vallance (1974) indicated that because this orientation aims to "provide the student with a sort of intellectual autonomy" to encounter and respond to situations outside of the school context, cognitive pluralism factors into this orientation (p. 6). Cognitive pluralism is a theory of knowledge acquisition that encourages faculty to use multiple ways to relay information to students (Gardner, 1983). Advocates of this approach, such as Stenhouse (1975), stressed that a didactic way of teaching only touches on the superficiality of the discipline rather than the underlying principles of the discipline's knowledge (p. 38).

To develop students' cognitive processing, faculty with this orientation must plan for classroom opportunities that revolve around inquiry and problem solving. Cognitivists consider the inclusion of rigorous analysis, higher-quality thinking, and better problem finding and solving keys factors to drive decision-making. Toohey (1999) simplified that the orientation's aim is that "thinking becomes the both purpose and the content of the curriculum" (p. 57). Because cognitivists believe students construct knowledge, faculty course planning must center on the inclusion of real-life examples, small group work, and content that creates opportunities to develop key skills and master concepts, according to Toohey (1999), to "integrate new knowledge with previous experience" (p. 56). Ideally, these materials and tasks are applicable to an extensive set of intellectual problems; for example, higher-order thinking skills, such as critical thinking, and intellectual skills that focus on classifying, analyzing, summarizing, and evaluating (Yeung, 2012, p. 39). King

(1994) suggested adding guided peer questioning or mapping, and Krathwhol (2002) recommended a revised taxonomy to strengthen student cognition.

In addition to problem-centered activities, Eisner (1985) emphasized that faculty should add opportunities "to raise the kinds of questions with students that direct their attention" to a higher level of analysis (p. 65). To meet these outcomes, Toohey expressed that faculty must have design goals that entail time for students to process materials and concepts actively and ask questions (p. 59). In this way, students become engaged in their own learning while faculty model the process of critical inquiry by acting like researchers in the classroom (Stenhouse, 1975).

Stenhouse (1975) stated that when faculty become co-researchers in the classroom "translating any educational idea into a hypothesis testable in practice" they invite "critical testing rather than acceptance" (p.142). This exchange allows faculty to engage with students, point out their misperceptions, and challenge them to find better solutions (Toohey, 1999, p. 56). To meet these design outcomes, Toohey expressed that faculty must have goals that build in time for students to process materials and concepts actively and ask questions (p. 59). For these reasons, curriculum as process is more learner-centered because faculty can consider each student and exchange differently and adapt accordingly (Grundy, 1987). Incorporating these types of cognitive models in the classroom and employing specific teaching techniques, such as modeling, explanation, interaction, and feedback, can facilitate transfer (Tishman et al., 1995).

Cognitivists hold that assessment relies on students' abilities to demonstrate what they know. Stenhouse's approach promotes the development, understanding, and application of material rather than just knowledge acquisition. Conceding that faculty can

measure some skills students gain against course objectives, Stenhouse (1975) emphasized that assessing student knowledge cannot be reduced to behaviors nor assessed through predetermined objectives but rather through organized writing. Students can demonstrate their understanding of "phenomena, experiences or problems" through writing and reflection (as cited in Rudduck & Hopkins, 1985, p. 83). Toohey (1999) indicated that this type of assessment requires faculty to judge outcomes, which can prove to be difficult (p. 57).

Several models based on cognitive process theory and Stenhouse's model emerged to facilitate exploration and intellectual growth. Ornstein and Hunkins' (2004) deliberative model provides students with choices in what they learn and how they learn it. Their model relies on a deliberative process whereby educators make known their ideas to the students and together plan an educational journey. Constant feedback and room to adjust plans also factor into the course design. Gardner (1983) developed eight intelligence levels including linguistics, logic, music, body/kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist; Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of educational objectives listed six levels of complex thinking: possession of information, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation; Bruner's (1961) seminal work on educational processes embraced the ideas of merging inquiry with academic discipline concepts; and Guildford (1967) developed a complex model that distinguishes intellectual operations to define a variety of tasks that stimulate cognitive development. Eisner (1985) expressed that these models share a common aim: to develop "intellectual power rather than simply disseminating a body of ideas or information" (p. 65). Generating a curriculum plan that manifests the values and aims of cognitive processes

relies on a faculty member's flexibility and creativity in designing the course. However, prescriptive orientations afford faculty even greater flexibility.

Prescriptive Orientations

Traditional orientations employ prescriptive approaches to curriculum design differently; for example, through the use of objectives or outcomes, logically ordered or sequential content logically, teaching and learning activities, or assessment. Taking on the form of a plan, prescriptive approaches provide faculty with what should occur in a course to help them facilitate course decision-making (Ellis, 2004, p. 4). In response to these prescriptive models that guide decision-making in a linear fashion, descriptive curriculum models, critical of standard approaches, emerged (Print, 1993). Descriptive approaches focus on "not merely in terms of how things ought to be . . . but how things are in real classrooms" (Ellis, 2004, p. 5). Descriptive models offer faculty a way to organize curriculum in a non-linear, non-sequential fashion (Print, 1993). Some learner-centered orientations fall into the descriptive category and are applicable to higher education.

The shift in focus from educator-centered to learner-centered has origins in constructivism (Ertmer & Newby 1993). A foundational component in constructivist approaches is that students actively construct knowledge by being active, self-regulating learners who use their experiences to make meaning (Alexander et al., 1998). Tigelaar et al. (2004) noted that this approach has become more visible in higher education (p. 254).

The goal of a learning-centered approach, Yeung (2012) stated, is to provide individuals with experiences that add to "personal liberation and development" (p. 45). Learning-centered models revolve around curriculum as praxis or practice; action and

reflection act as basics to guide design. Curriculum as praxis, to some degree, is an extension of curriculum as product, but it pays greater attention to the collective well-being and to the emancipation of the human spirit (Grundy, 1987). Holdsworth and Hegarty (2016) stated that "explorations of praxis focus on knowledge, content, and epistemological awareness which is critical to the evolution of current practice traditions for changing times" (p. 177). Grundy (1987) noted that faculty who view curriculum as praxis must question through their course design planning stage if content and activities "operate to emancipate the participants through the process of learning" (p. 122). Both Freire (1972) and Habermas (1970) contributed greatly to the role of emancipation in education.

Freire (1972), who produced seminal work on critical pedagogy, embraced the radical idea of a learner-centered model that advocates self-realization as a major aim of education. Freire suggested that "the act of knowing involves a dialectical movement which goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action" (p. 31); if achieved, Freire emphasized that education can be liberating because it can give one the opportunity to find one's voice (p. 60). Habermas (1970), however, reflected that achieving this ideology is problematic because in a post-industrial world "communication may be systematically distorted," so all participants may not have equal opportunity to engage in a dialogue (p. 205). Grundy (1987) elaborated that this approach takes place in the real world and operates in the "social and cultural world" while using action and reflection to construct knowledge (p. 115). Therefore, praxis is "not simply about doing something and thinking about it," Grundy expressed, but more about "meaning making" and "freely choosing to act in ways" informed by social critical theories (p. 107). As a

result, the curriculum develops through the interaction of action and reflection (Grundy, 1987, p. 115).

Grundy (1987) emphasized "that the curriculum is not simply a set of plans to be implemented, but rather is constituted through an active process in which planning, acting and evaluating are all reciprocally related and integrated into the process," and its focal point is informed, committed action (p. 115). Theory and practice work together in praxis. Even though curriculum as praxis appears to be open-ended by affording faculty wider choices for student learning, Grundy (1987) stated that faculty should not consider this as an "anything goes" approach" (p. 125). Instead, the educator and student must negotiate the content focused on critical consciousness and an authentic learning experience as key goals (p. 125); in addition, faculty must make decisions about practices that do no focus solely on individuals but instead draw attention to collective understandings, practices, and structural questions. However, praxis can mean different things in the context of curriculum design and thus facilitate different types of questions to steer decision-making. Unlike curriculum as product, evaluation operates as a separate aspect to consider or measure in curriculum as praxis. Grundy (1987) noted to avoid the "oppression of external judgement of practitioners," the "locus of control for making judgements about the quality and meaningfulness of the work will lie with participants in the learning situation and not elsewhere" (p. 127). A few orientations used in higher education conceptualize curriculum as prescriptive.

Vallance (1986) revisited the original five orientations she and Eisner (1974) identified and expressed that two of the orientations had become somewhat obsolete; social reconstruction-relevance and self-actualization. I included an overview of social

actualization below, however, because the orientation is still applicable since some faculty use it or combine it with other orientations. The orientations below fall under the umbrella of prescriptive learner-centered approaches.

Personal relevance. Focusing more on the personal success of students coincided with the decline of social activism in the 1960s because of rapid changes in technology that, Vallance (1986) noted, threatened "to make the much-established knowledge obsolete …" (p. 27). Petrina (1992) indicated that the underlying rationale for personal relevance design is supported by theories in interactional sociologies and humanistic psychologies and philosophies. Petrina also suggested that "the educational process is defined within unique contexts" because "humanists advocate freedom of curriculum development through an emphasis on personal relevance as a challenge to traditional subject-centered models" (p. 38). Vallance (1986) noted that this orientation may look similar to others but that it focuses on something that the others do not: "the conception of the curriculum as itself an end product of the curriculum, embodied in its graduates" (p. 27). Even though student success has been a staple in curriculum design, it becomes more salient in this orientation (Vallance, 1986, p. 27). Priniski et al. (2018) created a continuum that displays three degrees of relevance for students: personal association, personal usefulness, and identification.

Over the past few years, the sustainability and education movement has gained momentum on college campuses (Holdsworth & Hagerty, 2014, p. 177). As a result, some university leaders and outside influencers have started paying greater attention to the practical uses of a college degree. In response, some faculty have turned their efforts towards planning courses centered around the utilization and transfer of content and

skills. This approach differs quite a bit from traditional approaches of mastering subjects and acquiring skills (Vallance, 1986, p. 27); however, this orientation does blend together some of the aspects of other orientations; for example, academic rationalism and self-actualization.

Vallance (1986) explained that this orientation "allows and celebrates the intellectual territories of the traditional disciplines" even though it does not focus solely on intellectual skills, technology, or social benefits; it also acknowledges self-actualization and "celebrates the personal liberation that can come from understanding and appreciating the questions that traditional disciplines ask …" (p. 27). Sterling (2001) indicated that this approach has underpinnings of transformative education because it nurtures students' abilities to distinguish the limitations of disciplinary knowledge and solve problems differently; in higher education contexts, however, Holdsworth and Hagerty (2014) stressed that sustainability has more to do with employment after graduation (p. 185). Nevertheless, a focus on personal relevance allows for customizable instruction methods and materials.

McNeil (1981) indicated that faculty must choose activities that facilitate inclusion of the following: participation that includes power sharing; negotiation; joint responsibility; integration; relevant subject matter that relates to participants emotionally and intellectually; the self as a legitimate object of learning; and goals that designate the social purpose to develop the whole person within a human society (p. 9). Petrina (1992) expressed that "within curricula based on these designs, the integration of emotions, thoughts, actions, and goals with the social setting and environment are emphasized" (p. 39), so content does not represent a source to ignite learning in this orientation. In fact,

Petrina stressed that "humanists reject disciplinary content as knowledge on philosophical grounds" (p. 40). Content that does not provoke inquiry but instead limits or suppresses other perspectives outside the content base proves problematic (p. 41). Faculty can choose to organize through the use of units because they encourage a comprehensive, unified experience (Joyce & Weil, 1980; Kolesnik, 1975; McNeil, 1981; Petrina, 1992). Faculty assume a non-authoritarian role and plan a non-unilateral design; they can also choose to use various methods such as "nondirective teaching, synectics, seminars, awareness training, social inquiry, cooperative and individual projects, and discovery encourage self-expression and personal meaning" (Petrina, 1992, p. 42). Collectively, these elements guide course decisions along with, according to Petrina (1992), "the content and modes of inquiry, modes of expression, and goals," which are "matters of personal choice or democratic process" (p. 38). Therefore, strategies that facilitate both planned and spontaneous discussion and activity, along with reflection, represent, Petrina (1992) referenced, keys to "curricular unity, comprehensiveness, diversity, and consonance" (p. 38).

Supporters of personal relevance appreciate the unity and integration that this orientation affords them. Even though students are free to help to define their own course plans based on their personal problems, developmental levels, goals, interests, curiosities, capabilities, and needs, faculty still contribute to student growth as well.

Several models showcase personal relevance for course design; for example, Hidi and Renniger's (2006) four-phase model of interest development, and Eccles et al.'s (1983) expectancy-value model. Barnett and Coates' (2005) model uses engagement to have students consider how their personal relationships with knowledge changes their

sense of being. However, those who oppose personal relevance as an orientation find that the approach does not work well in technology-focused classrooms; in addition, without strong teaching skills, this approach fails to work well.

Self-actualization. Curriculum development using self-actualization as an orientation differs quite a bit from traditional orientations and that of the measured curriculum. Eisner and Vallance's (1973) self-actualization orientation aligns with McNeils (1996) and Ornstein and Hunkins' (2009) humanistic orientation, and Schiro's (2000) learner-centered orientation. Klein (1986) stated that in this orientation, "students become the curriculum developers" using their interests to select what to study" to achieve personal growth (p. 33). According to Klein, "growth is viewed as the process of becoming a self-actualizing person" rather than strictly learning content, using set cognitive processes, or studying non-relevant issues (p. 33).

Educators take on a more passive role since planning evolves from individual students or a group of students. Co-learning replaces faculty-driven instruction, so predetermined content does not align with this self-actualization orientation (Klein, 1986). Instead, Macdonald et al. (1973) stressed that learning occurs through a constant cycle of exploration, integration, and transcendence. Content must be relevant and meaningful, but the individual student or a group of students ultimately decide which materials to include (Macdonald et al., 1973, p. 33). Eisner (1979) referenced that student evaluation centers around expressive outcomes because this orientation values the learning process as creative, imaginative, and empathic. Vallance (1986), however, indicated that "the self-actualizing perspective has probably suffered the most, losing its saliency to the changes of a society that has become increasingly practical and job-

oriented in its demands for curriculum" (p. 26). Rather than a stand-alone orientation, Vallance noted that the approach has become a tenant in other orientations.

Social reconstruction. Social reconstructionism has roots in both pragmatism and progressivism because it calls for students to change. The tenets of social reconstructionist theory in curriculum stems from seminal work by Addams (1902), Apple (1999), Counts (1934), Dewey (1916), and Freire (1972). Eisner and Vallance's (1986) social reconstruction orientation, also claimed by McNeil (1996), Schiro (2008), and Ornstein and Hunkins (2009), can take on different forms, but its primary purpose is to empower students with the ability to criticize and improve society. Schiro (2013) noted that social reconstructionists hold a critical view of society and see it as troubled but that viable solutions are available (p. 6).

Vallance (1986) noted that faculty can employ varying degrees of a critical approach in course design; for instance, from conservative to a more aggressive approach. These approaches are categorized as adaptive and reformists (Eisner & Vallance, 1974). The adaptive approach, considered more conservative, recognizes that society is constantly changing and that this change offers opportunity for personal growth; therefore, curriculum planning revolves around the purpose of improving students' abilities to adapt (Yeung, 2012, p. 51). More aggressive, a reformist approach advocates for students to become strong leaders critical of society and change. Either approach, Giroux (1992) indicated, fixes educators as "transformative intellectuals" in that they give students what they need to become "critical citizens" (p. 15).

The belief behind this orientation, according to Schiro (2008), is that through curriculum development, educators can "educate the masses of humanity" to analyze

their role in society, understand the problems of society, develop social justice solutions, and actualize those solutions (p. 133). Orienting students to social justice issues, such as pollution, crime, poverty, and discrimination, entails an action-oriented outcome according to Yeung (2012): "to reconstruct society into one that is more just, democratic, egalitarian, and humane" (p. 49). In this orientation, faculty make decisions from a social perspective; therefore, the educator must have a solid understanding of factors that drive injustice and oppression, including economic, political, and social factors, in order to relate the issues both locally and globally (Yeung, 2012, p. 53).

Faculty adopting this orientation cannot prescribe curriculum ahead of time because faculty and students jointly develop the curriculum (Yeung, 2012). Instead, course designers look to society to guide content, community resources, group work, and experiential learning. Faculty choose content much like an academic rationalist in that they choose materials that give students access to disciplinary knowledge (McNeil, 1996); Yeung (2012) noted that the academic disciplines offer social reconstructionists the knowledge to "solve real world problems that tend to be complicated, messy, and often unforeseen" (p. 50). However, Klein (1986) expressed that immersing students in experiences enables authentic learning rather than a 'subject-centered design" (p. 33). Because learning experiences extend beyond the classroom, testing, behavioral objectives, and outcomes are non-existent in this orientation, but Klein noted that social reconstructionists collaborate with students to create goals or general objectives, such as how to study a problem (p. 33). Evaluation centers on what students learned as opposed to skill or content mastery. Several scholars take issue with social reconstructionism, McNeil (1996) noted, because of its "utopian nature" (p. 33); others take issue with the

lack of structure it offers with regard to planning content, identifying objectives, and creating evaluation strategies.

Vocational or Enterprise Orientation. Trowler's (1998) vocational or enterprise orientation considers the primary role of education to prepare students to transfer relevant skills needed to succeed in the workplace. Faculty focus on equipping students with transferable skills that prepare them professionally; consequently, new skills and new technology offered to students are highly valued in this orientation (Trowler, 1998, p. 82).

This orientation stems from Collier's (1982) economic renewal ideology and Burgess's (1977) service tradition. Rooted in enterprise ideology, faculty with a vocational enterprise view the purpose of education as one to prepare students for the world of work; progressivists reject this framework noting that improving the critical thinking of students to be full participants in a democratic society should frame course design (p. 81). Trowler (1986) noted that traditionalists in academe are also critical about this orientation and its "dilution of their own disciplines by transferable skills and other features" (p. 76).

Users of this orientation make decisions about the following in course planning: including applicable competencies associated with a degree or program; organizing the course around the master of competencies; identifying content connected to competencies; supporting students throughout stages off learning; incorporating support systems; and developing assessments (Nodine, 2005). Faculty members take on the role of mentor or advisor to the student. Critics of this approach question decision-making focused on the inclusion of generic skills. Barnett and Coates (2005) expressed that it is

difficult to distinguish generic skills from subject-based skills in a competency framework and gauge what these skills are for and how to evaluate them.

Theory Framework Rationale

In most scholarly articles about curriculum and/or course design, researchers referenced Eisner and Vallance's (1974) educational value theory signifying that it is still a valid framework with which to view how faculty values influence their actions. Cheun (2000) expressed that value orientations are "the hidden forces" that guide aspects of course design aspects such as learning objectives, content selection, and assessment (p. 151). Each value orientation carves out its own framework as a means for faculty to prioritize course design elements (Kelly, 2009; Print, 1993; Schiro, 2013).

Research has shown that faculty from different disciplines tend to use different orientations to design courses (Barnett et al., 2001; Cheung & Wong, 2002; Eisner & Vallance, 1974; Linden et al., 2017; Roberts, 2015; Stark, 2000; Yeung, 2012). More specially, humanities faculty have traditionally employed an academic rationalist orientation to construct curriculum around the goal of exposing students to the culture of the respective discipline (Schiro 2003). The distinctive underpinnings of each orientation can assist me in exploring if pre- and post-humanities faculty use an academic rationalist's orientation to build a course; if they have adopted a different lens or a blended approach; and, if other aspects, such as externalities or career readiness now influence their process.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Overview

Global changes have placed pressure on higher educational institutions to strengthen a connection between classroom learning and workplace needs. Manifesting itself as a push for course design reform, institutional leaders have advocated for strategies that focus on career readiness.

With university leaders seeking ways to address and respond to both internal and external criticism about the value of a college education, especially in the humanities, many are turning to initiatives that focus on career readiness. One pathway to sustain programs that pertain to career readiness is to engage humanities faculty through professional development opportunities that focus on connecting course design to career readiness. However, persuading humanities faculty to adapt a course design focused on career readiness aspects, such as skills and measurable outcomes, is rife with challenges.

Using educational value theory can serve as an effective lens to consider humanities faculty course design process, the influences on that process, and the effects. Measuring the effects of values on decision-making, however, is tricky since faculty between, among, and within disciplines prioritize educational values differently. Stark (2000) and Morstain (1978) referenced how Wilson et al.'s (1975) study showed that faculty views aligned with their respective disciplines. However, Stark (2000) and Morstain's (1978) studies found that faculty in different disciplines demonstrated diverse

views about the purpose of education (p. 435). The authors also noted that many humanities faculty in their studies did not espouse "preparation for life and work as a framework for education" (p. 435). For the most part, little is known about how or whether faculty educational values predict the inclusion of content or activities differently.

A thorough literature review, however, showed that course design is a uniquely individual process and that the majority of humanities faculty employ a traditional approach that has content guiding course design decision-making. Therefore, this study examined faculty decision-making in course design to explore what influences humanities faculty to detect emerging patterns with regard to beliefs, practices, or external influences and if faculty are change-oriented toward the inclusion of career readiness elements into their course design decision-making.

Research Questions

My research focused on the course design process and what influences pre- and post-tenured humanities faculty and their attitudes and beliefs about career readiness. In particular, I explored how faculty think about course design and what influences their decision-making, and the effects of those influences. Eisner and Vallance's (1974) educational values orientations and NACE's definition of career readiness served as key components to identify patterns in practice and beliefs about course design decision-making. Specifically, I investigated the following two research questions:

1. What aspects influence course design for pre- and post-tenured humanities faculty at four-year research institutions, and how do those influences affect their design?

2. What are pre- and post-tenured humanities faculty perceptions about career readiness and course design that includes more focus on career readiness?

Research Design

Merriam (2009) noted that a qualitative study creates an opportunity for a researcher to investigate "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experience" (p. 23). Consequently, a qualitative research design was appropriate for my research because I relied "on the views of participants" and asked "broad, general questions," collected "data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants," and described and analyzed "these words for themes" (Creswell, 2005, p. 39). Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated that researchers should choose a design that has the best chance of answering the research questions they set forth. In my case, an ethnographic case study facilitated that opportunity.

Both feasible qualitative approaches, ethnography provided me a rich opportunity to investigate, unearth, and describe discoveries that explain how humanities faculty feel, think, and act; a case study offered me the boundaries necessary to carve out a research focus. Ethnography is a qualitative research method defined by its approach. Creswell (1998) defined ethnography as a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system; Hammersley (2006) expressed ethnography as "a study at first-hand about what people do and say in a particular context" (p. 4). Implicit in these definitions is the idea that ethnographers must immerse themselves in the culture they are studying to investigate and convey aspects of a group under observation accurately (Silverman, 2000). The central aim of ethnography, according to Hughes (1992), is to offer a "rich,

holistic account into peoples' world views and actions," as well as the contexts and settings they reside in (p. 440).

Unlike ethnography, the nature of case studies focuses more about the choice of what to study as opposed to a method to study it (Stake, 2003, p.134). Yin (2003) articulated that a case study provides a solid research method for a researcher who wants to "deliberately" address "contextual conditions" as they may be highly "pertinent" to the study phenomenon (p. 13). Merriam (1998) listed three key attributes distinctive of case study: they must focus on specific situations, contexts or scenarios; be descriptive; and give the reader insight. Even though case studies have specific boundaries, within those boundaries a researcher has a good deal of wiggle room to design the study and collect the data (Amerson, 2011).

With overlapping similarities, an ethnographic case study enables a researcher to employ the best of both methods to conduct a rich study. Hancock and Algozzine (2011) further stated that the ethnographic case study is meant to "explore the observable and learned patterns of behavior, customs, and ways of life ..." (p.35); therefore, blending case study with ethnography offered me the best of each approach.

Yin (2003) indicated that in addition to creating substantive questions, it is important to identify propositions that direct "attention to something that should be examined within the scope of the study" (p. 22). A primary proposition in my study is that knowing more about how humanities faculty make decisions about course design will shed light on what influences their decision making and if they are open to responding to stakeholders' calls for an infusion of career readiness into their courses.

To facilitate this investigation, I examined the bounded group that consists of

university pre- and post-tenured humanities faculty with at least two years of teaching experience. My ethnographic case study was a single case study and exploratory in nature. The data for the case study was gathered from three sources: semi-structured interviews, participant rankings, and analysis of faculty participants' syllabi and current and archival department/program resources. Each phase of data collection method provided insight about connections between and among faculty beliefs and practice.

Research Setting

To investigate faculty course design decision-making, my single ethnographic case study took place at Midsize Midwestern University (MMU), which is a mid-sized, public doctoral university located in the Midwest. With a Carnegie classification of R2: Doctoral Universities – High research activity, MMU has a high undergraduate enrollment level. Located thirty miles from a major metropolitan area, MMU qualified as a viable option to conduct my ethnographic case study because it recently rolled out a new career readiness initiative, and it has a prevalence of pre- and post-tenured humanities faculty with at least two years of teaching experience and great autonomy to design their own courses.

Research Participants

To conduct my research, I invited pre- and post-tenured humanities faculty with at least two years of teaching experience to partake in my research study. MMU humanities faculty who recently created new courses served as an ideal population to interview about their course design processes. Humanities faculty participants' primary appointments reside in one of the following core humanities departments at MMU: art and art history, English, modern languages and literature, creative writing, film, history, music and

performing arts, philosophy, or women and gender studies. The study population reflected professors who are responsible for not only teaching but who have department, college, and university service responsibilities as well. Faculty who teach part-time or are visiting faculty were excluded from this study.

For my research study, 13 pre- and post-tenured faculty from MMU participated. The participation population consisted of four males and nine females. Three participants hold the rank of professor; four participants hold the rank of associate professor; and, six participants hold the rank of assistant professor. The participants reflect a wide array of teaching experience, from 2 to 27 years, and varied research interests.

Research Data Collection

Watson (2011) stressed that "participant observation can be considerably strengthened if, alongside it and possibly at the same time," a researcher conducts interviews and analyzes documents (p. 206). Therefore, three survey instruments were used during this research study: semi-structured interviews, rankings, and analysis of syllabi and current/archival program review. The research instruments were designed using the educational aspects that faculty think about quite differently: knowledge, skills, cognitive development, meaningful learning, intellectual growth, and critical thinking/social issues (Toohey, 1999).

To investigate the complexities, real-world practice, habits, and traditions within and across different disciplines, the semi-structured interview questions asked faculty about their design process, belief structures, goals, and perceptions about student utilization of knowledge and career readiness; how they prioritize educational aspects; and what effect these priorities have on the inclusion and sequencing of content and/or

activities. Questions also focused on the role externalities, such as career readiness initiatives, enrollment, and stakeholder concerns, play and if and how these influences may or influence design. As a research instrument, document analysis focused on a faculty participants' syllabi to investigate if noted influences align with their final course designs. The third research instrument encompassed a review of program and university records; for example, college, department, and program mission statements and other relevant documents and resources. As the third data collection point, these current and archival resources provided insight into how they affect and align with individual faculty course decision-making

Pilot Study

My methodology was piloted using a similar design in 2019. I tested an unrefined qualitive ethnographic case study as a pilot at Midsized Midwestern University (MMU). I interviewed five MMU humanities pre- and post-tenured faculty who have at least two years of teaching experience.

Prior to each interview, I asked faculty to email me a copy of their syllabus for the course that we would discuss in the interview. Being able to review the syllabus ahead of time worked well as it gave me time to look over the organization of the document, check for the presence of objectives, and take stock of content and activities. The interviews themselves went rather well despite some connectivity issues with Zoom. However, I recognized immediately that I needed to a better job of redirecting the participant when he or she strayed from the topic at-hand. Some faculty hesitated to answer two of my questions, so I knew that I had to rephrase a few of my questions prior to conducting my formal research. Before conducting the interviews, I created the set of codes shown in

Figure 3.1 to reflect the different value orientations faculty may employ when designing a course.

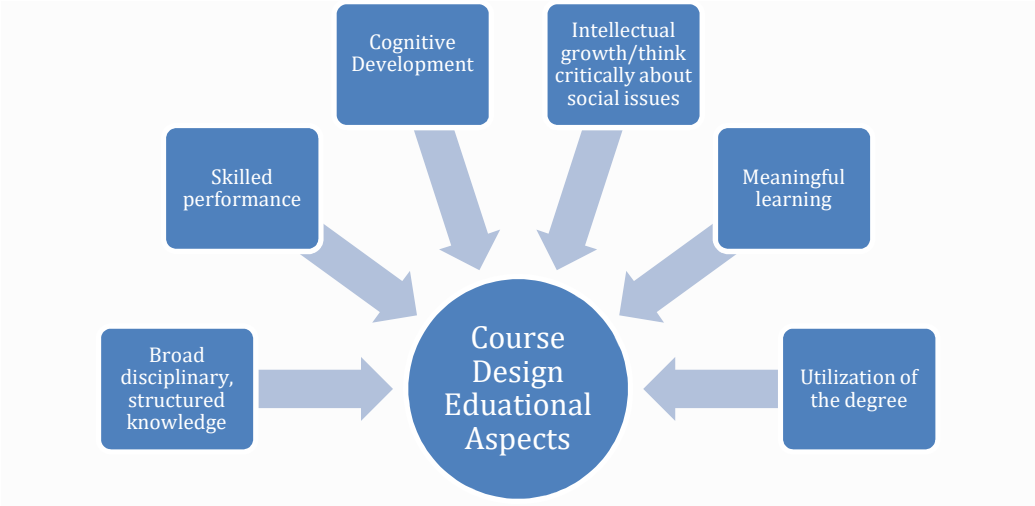

Figure 3.1. Value Orientation Coding

These codes reflected educational factors faculty value and, in turn, influence course design decision-making. Using these codes enabled me to note the educational factors that contributed to the course design content, activities, and sequencing. After doing some informal coding, however, I became aware that I had to revisit my literature review and theory research to ensure the integrity of my coding for data analysis.

Validation

Yin (2003) noted that a case study research design's validity relies on construct validity, external validity, and reliability (p. 34). To strengthen my construct validity, I used three sources of evidence: targeted interviews, syllabi, and program/department

documentation and archival records. Tedlock (2000) noted that these firsthand interactions with people in their everyday lives can lead to a better understanding of their beliefs, motivations, and behaviors (p. 32); Fetterman (2010) concurred emphasizing that "the insider's perspective of reality is instrumental to understanding and accurately describing situations and behaviors"; consequently, the fieldworker can come to understand why members of the social group do what they do," (p. 21).

A chain of evidence was established during the data collection phase to ensure movement from one phase of the case study process to another (Yin, 2003, p. 105). Even though Yin (2003) noted that critics cite single case studies as a "poor case for generalizing," Yin stressed that case study researchers can employ analytical generalization rather than statistical analysis (p. 37). Therefore, to establish external validity, I employed the educational values theory as a model with which to compare and contrast my findings. Consequently, the theory served as a means to replicate future studies with other participants and in different settings.

The intent of my research case study was to make it analytically generalizable, so that other researchers working with Eisner and Vallance's (1974) educational value theory can build on available evidence about course design. To safeguard the reliability of my ethnographic case study, I created documentation about my procedures and protocol and operationalized steps about locating and analyzing syllabi and department/program resources. In addition, I remained vigilant through the data collection phase about my accountability as a researcher to ensure the replication of a future study.

Data Collection Procedures

My ethnographic case study had three data collection points: semi-structured interviews with faculty participants, rankings, and syllabi and archival university/program/department review. Before collecting any data, I sought approval for my formal study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Semi-structured Interviews

Merriam (1998) stated that semi-structured interviews are flexible and less structured because this format "assumes that individual respondents define the world in unique ways" (p. 74). The interviewing process must be methodical to collect valid data; therefore, I established protocol for one-on-one interviews.

Prior to the soliciting participants, I created a semi-structured interview format since a researcher does not merely ask scripted questions; rather the interview process is free-flowing as a researcher reacts to cues in participants' responses (Hughes, 1992, p. 444). Therefore, I designed the interview protocol with open-ended questions in mind and flexibility to jump between and among topics. Next, I decided on a one-time interview approach. Even though Seidman (1998) recommended a three-interview series for qualitative research, he acknowledged that as long as participants can "reconstruct and reflect" on their experiences, one-time interviews suffice, especially if scheduling the interviews proves challenging (p. 15).

Once I finalized my interview questions, I identified pre- and post-tenured humanities faculty who met the following criteria: discipline, teaching experience, position, and recent experience with course design. Once identified, I emailed the faculty member an invitation to partake in my research study and attached an Information Sheet

outlining the research purpose, recording protocol, data storage, and opt out options as required by IRB.

Interview scheduling and recordings were conducted on Zoom. For each interview, only the researcher and faculty participant were in the Zoom meeting. Prior to each interview, I asked each participant to send me a syllabus for the course we were to discuss; I had the syllabus loaded on Zoom and a hard-copy print out as a reference point when sharing my screen. My purpose in having the participant's syllabus accessible was to facilitate the recording of "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) and my own personal reflections.

At the beginning of each interview, I asked each participant to confirm the following information: Course name, number of students, status of course (new or review), and teaching history of the course. Using semi-structured interviews provided me flexibility to cover general topics rather that adhere to a formalized list of ordered questions. Other benefits of a semi-structured interview allowed me to ask the participant for comparisons and contrasts, examples, clarification, evidence, and reflection. Therefore, I employed the following general prompts giving the participant great leeway in response and direction and asked follow-up questions to clarify comments, experiences, and actions.

1. How long have you been teaching at MMU?
2. Tell me about this class we are talking about today and how you came to teach it.
3. Will you tell me about your process in designing this course? Do you use this process for all your course designs or does it differ from class to class or platform? Will you

show me examples on your syllabi that reflect on your process/procedures? How did you select and organize the course content (linear, sequential, etc.)?

4. Tell me about the goals for this class. Do you have a philosophical approach to teaching and learning? What methods did you use to design this course?
5. What do you believe are the most important influences in your process as you designed your course?
6. How does your discipline factor into your design? How does being a member of _____ community affect your decision-making?
7. How do students factor into your process? Do you think about student success? Preparedness/career readiness? Different student needs? Size of your class? Student skills? How do you define student success?
8. How do your own experiences as a student learner factor into your course design?
9. Does the university influence your course design? What about MMU's career readiness initiative? Have you implemented any info competencies connected to MMU's career readiness initiative?
10. Have any external factors influenced your decision-making? Professional associations? Stakeholders? Employers?
11. Social media sites (rate your professor)?
12. Describe your commitment to teaching. Do you partake in professional development opportunities? Has your course design process changed over your time at MMU?
13. How do you define career readiness? Do you incorporate career readiness or transfer of knowledge activities into your course design? Do you plan to add more activities related to career readiness in the future?

14. How would you feel about adding more aspects of career readiness and connections for students to help them articulate the value of their degree?

At the end of each interview, Zoom provided me with an interview transcription; I de-identified participants' names on each transcript and stored them on a secure, password protected computer. I created a master list with identifiable information and stored this separate from the interview transcripts as well.

Ranking of Influences

After each interview, I emailed the participant a list of the following influences: Academic discipline, students, purpose of education, evaluations, external media, social justice issues, career readiness, colleagues, personal experience, department/general educations goals or materials, and pragmatic issues. I asked that person to rank the influences from 1-11 with 1 being the greatest influence and 11 the weakest and email me back the list. I used these rankings to compare against interview comments.

Syllabi/University/Program/Department Archival Review

In case study research, Stake (1995) noted that researchers should use documents as a source of contextual information when they cannot observe events and as a cross-referencing tool

Participants' Syllabi. Each faculty participant emailed me a syllabus for one course; this course served as a focal point for the interview discussion. When faculty alluded to objectives, assignments, and organization, I could ask for clarification using the participant's own materials. After the interview, these documents served as a resource to cross reference participants comments with actions or outcomes listed on their documents.

Department/College/General Education Resources. For my ethnographic case study, I collected department documents related to student success, course descriptions, archival catalog descriptions, college and university mission statements, and career readiness materials. To retrieve documents and archival information, such as mission statements, teaching and learning materials and course descriptions, I accessed MMU's academic catalogs, department websites, teaching and learning materials, first-year advising website, and both the college and university's websites.

Course catalogs offered me an overview of university, college, and department mission statements; the department websites gave me insight into the department missions, course offerings, and posted career readiness information. Reviewing these materials before each interview provided me exposure to the language MMU uses with regard to career readiness and an overview of college and department resources dedicated to career readiness and general education. In addition, the materials also provided me with a glimpse into how each faculty participant's department conceptualizes its mission and whether the department collectively references career readiness aspects for students.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in a qualitative research study is a process. My process for data analysis included the following steps: review of notes, reflections, rankings, and archival resources, interview transcript review, preliminary coding, second round of coding, and categorization.

I began the process of analyzing my data by reading through notes and reflections that I took during interviews; in addition, I reviewed faculty participants' syllabi, rankings, and archival information that I retrieved from online resources. Collectively,

the transcripts, syllabi, rankings, and archival records served as reliable data to assist me in developing a holistic vision of how each participant viewed various course design influences and career readiness. In addition, I confirmed my knowledge and awareness of how prevalent the mention of career readiness is at the university, college, and department level.

Semi-structured Interview Analysis

Immediately after each interview, I viewed a transcript that Zoom complied and re-listened to each recording very carefully for transcription accuracy. Since each Zoom transcription showed some errors, I corrected those mistakes to assure that the words matched what the speaker said. This step helped me to ensure descriptive validity. After assuring transcription accuracy, I deidentified the transcripts and uploaded them into Dedoose, a software program that assists in coding.

Unlike Yin (2003) who advocated for a conceptual framework to conduct analysis, Stake (1995), maintaining a constructivist orientation, suggested that researchers do not have to use a conceptual framework to guide the study nor issue statements. Instead, Stake (1995) advocated for a flexible conceptual framework. I employed Stake's suggestion for a flexible framework with regards to coding since my experience coding in my pilot showed me that I needed to broaden my list of categories and consider a more formal means of coding; therefore, I decided to employ in vivo coding.

Saldaña (2016) noted that in vivo coding, otherwise known as "literal coding" or "verbatim coding," entails using the words of the participants found in the "qualitative data record" (p. 105). To code using the in vivo method, a researcher reads interview transcriptions and looks for words or phrases "that seem to call for bolding, underlining,

italicizing, highlighting, or vocal emphasis if spoken aloud" (p. 107). Saldaña suggested that no set "rule or formula" exists in this process but that a researcher must trust her instincts (p. 108). Saldaña (2016) also recommended the use of codes that allow researchers to consider not only themes but continuums of those codes in different "dimensions" (p. 109). Strauss (1987) indicated that in vivo codes help the researcher capture the "behaviors or processes" (p. 33), and Charmaz (2014) stressed that this method of coding can help "preserve participants' meanings of their views and actions …" (p. 109). Saldaña (1987) stressed that a researcher can use in vivo codes as a sole coding method in the first round of coding and as a "sole method for small-scale studies" (p. 109). Saldaña (2016) noted that "first cycle coding" represents an effective way to "summarize segments of data into categories, themes, or concepts," and that a second round of coding enables a researcher to look more closely at connections (p. 236). Pattern coding works well to facilitate this closer look at data (Saldaña, 2016, p. 236). Miles et al. (2014) identified pattern coding as an effective means to develop "major themes from the data" (p. 87).

Since my study was small-scale in nature and I was looking for major themes, I decided to use in vivo codes as my primary coding method and pattern coding in my second round of coding. Per Saldaña's (1987) suggestions, I created a coding framework using the following general categories as codes: External influences, internal influences, career readiness, course type/info, assignment references, process, and students. Within each category, I added sub-categories; for example, in the general category labeled "process," I entered the following categories: design process, design assessment, connections, content/knowledge, activities, goals, has process changed, skills, and

organization. My initial round of coding included working my way through the transcripts by pulling out excerpts and attaching applicable codes. Once I had consolidated and categorized participants' wording, I printed my materials to begin my second round of coding, which entailed pattern coding.

In my second round of coding, I attempted to locate specific patterns as far as preferences or unique or unstated influences and connections to career readiness. Yin (2003) and Stake's (1995) referenced different approaches to data analysis. Yin identified five strategies for data analysis: pattern matching, linking data to propositions, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis; Stake, in contrast, preferred categorical aggregation and direct interpretation for analysis types. I blended the two approaches to analyze my formal research data. Even though this step proved more difficult, the task of deciphering the connections between, among, and across participants' comments about their attitudes, beliefs, process, and perceptions did reveal themes relevant to the questions I posed to structure my research study.

Influence Rankings

For the influence rankings, I looked for patterns across gender, rank, teaching experience and discipline. I decided to use Excel to create a visual of the data by separating rankings by category and participant. In addition, I calculated the average ranking for each influence to view order and alignment.

Syllabi Analysis

Prior to the interview, I asked each participant to email me a syllabus copy for the course that we would discuss; each participate complied. I read and reviewed the participant's syllabus prior to the interview in order to highlight certain aspects that I

wanted to include in my interview questions: for example, objectives, specific assignments, organization, and content choices. After I conducted the interviews, I revisited the syllabi and tagged specific information that connected the participants' words to actions.

University/Program/Department Archival Review

For this phase of my data analysis, I searched university, college and department websites at MMU retrieving documents connect to course design, objectives, mission statements, and statement and actions connected to career readiness, course design, and general education. I applied descriptive coding as a method to categorize topics related to course design and career readiness. Even though Saldaña (1987) suggested that descriptive coding does not work well in case study research, the author did suggest that this method does work well in ethnography where a researcher asks reflection questions about how things work (p. 102). Saldaña framed descriptive coding as an effective means to create a "categorized inventory" and "summary" of data content (p. 104).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this ethnographic case study was to explore what influences pre- and post-tenured MMU faculty in their course design process and their perceptions about career readiness. The qualitative design of an ethnographic case study offered me an effective research method to investigate the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of university pre- and post-tenured humanities faculty hold about course design and career readiness. More specifically, thick description allowed me to encounter and observe the context, details, emotions, and relationships faculty expressed about course design and career readiness; in addition, observation and document analysis provided me access to behaviors and actions with regard to participants' voices, feelings, and actions.

As demonstrated in my literature review, the process of designing a course is idiosyncratic across university faculty since they experience great autonomy in how they design their courses. My literature review indicated that humanities faculty have traditionally considered the dissemination of knowledge within their respective academic discipline as the primary influence in their course design process; in addition, research showed that humanities faculty opposed suggestions that they connect content and/or activities associated with the utilization of the knowledge they disseminate to students. Listening to participants tell their stories about what they think, feel, and do to create a course provided me a means to consider the intricacies of how they design their courses, what influences that design, and their attitudes about career readiness. The research

design and data collection strategy detailed in Chapter Three included participant selection, semi-structured interviews, transcription, thematic coding, influence rankings, and analysis of syllabi and archival documents.

Description of Participants

The participant pool for this research study reflected faculty who share common characteristics such as the following: an appointment in a humanities department at MMU, at least two years of teaching experience, and an academic rank of assistant professor, associate professor, or full professor. In addition, every faculty member interviewed worked as a graduate assistant while obtaining a PhD. Some participants' experiences differed in that a few have taught only at MMU; others held appointments at other institutions prior to coming to MMU. Adhering to IRB ethical guidelines, participants were assigned pseudonyms outlined in Table 4.1; course names have also been changed.

Course Design Influences

Faculty participants were asked to reflect and elaborate on what influenced their process of designing a course. Unlike the other data collections of syllabi and archival university/college/department program analysis participants interview responses revealed insightful information about what shapes their design process. Throughout the conversations, faculty alluded to a variety of influences but focused mainly on their academic discipline, students, and the purpose of education as primary drivers behind their designs. To register if time and reflection offered faculty a chance to revisit their influences, each participant received a request to rank 11 influences after the interview:

Table 4.1 Faculty Participant Research Information

PSEUDONYM	DEPARTMENT	RANK	Years/MMU
ART			
James	Art & Art History	Associate Professor	13 years
CREATIVE WRITING			
Beth	Creative Writing	Associate Professor	21 years
Augustine	Creative Writing	Assistant Professor	5 years
Elijah	Creative Writing	Associate Professor	8 years
ENGLISH			
Sarah	English	Associate Professor	13 years
Jean	English	Professor	25 years
FILM			
Marie	Film	Assistant Professor	2 years
Ethan	Film	Assistant Professor	3 years
HISTORY			
Jackson	History	Professor	25 years
Siena	History	Assistant Professor	2 years
Olivia	History	Professor	27 years
MODERN LANGUAGES			
Emma	Modern Languages	Assistant Professor	3 years
GENDER STUDIES			
Jane	Gender/Women Studies	Assistant Professor	2 years

Academic discipline, students, purpose of education, social justice, career readiness, colleagues, external media, evaluations, personal experience, pragmatic, and program/college goals. Figure 4.1 shows a visual representation of faculty rankings for the following 11 influences.

No two faculty ranked the influences in the exact same order; however, combined, faculty interview responses and rankings indicated some patterns and insight into what faculty value. Most faculty participants are still deeply entrenched in the practice of using their academic discipline as an orientation to guide their course designs; however, students play an important role in the process as well. Even though purpose of education closely aligned with academic discipline, consistency in the ranking of these factors, academic discipline, students, and purpose of education, revealed them as overwhelming influences on design for these faculty participants. However, some ranking outcomes contrasted with participants' comments about influences suggesting, perhaps, that some members may have conflicting or competing priorities in play when designing their courses. In the visual presentation figure, academic discipline looks as though faculty ranked it higher, but the outlier affected the mean ranking of influences, which is shown in Table 4.2. Because of the design of how influences were scored, the lower the mean ranking, the more significant the influence.

Rankings and interview comments supported top tier influences as students, academic purpose, and purpose of education. Middle tier influences ranked as the

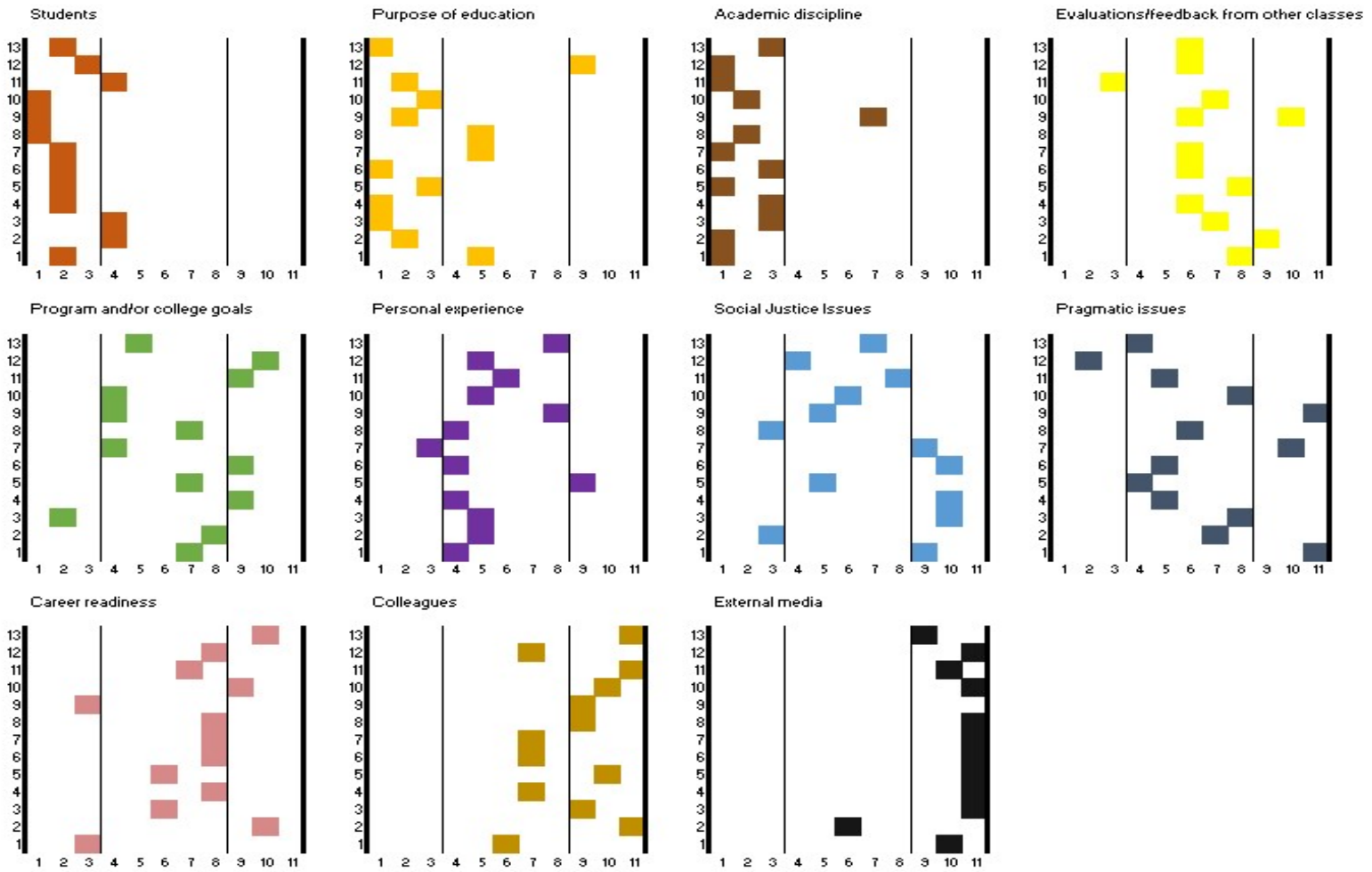

Figure 4.1(A). Visual Representation of Rankings

Participant Key

1. Emma	8. Augustine
2. Jane	9. Jean
3. Jackson	10. Olivia
4. James	11. Marie
5. Beth	12. Sarah
6. Elijah	13. Ethan
7. Siena	

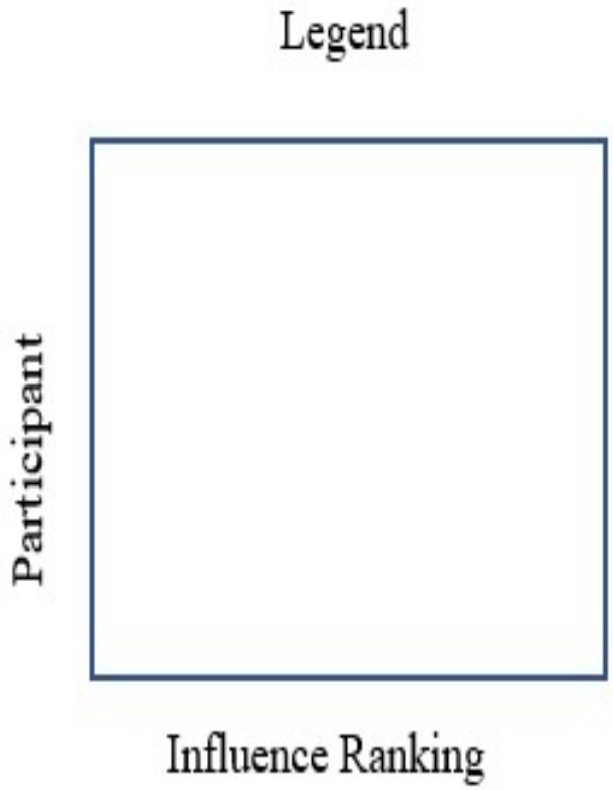

Figure 4.1(B). Visual Representation of Rankings

Table 4.2 Mean Ranking of Influences

Influence	**Mean Ranking**
Students	2.0
Academic Discipline	2.2
Purpose of Education	3.0
Personal Experience	4.8
Program/College Requirements	5.9
Pragmatic Issues	6.2
Evaluations	6.3
Social Justice	6.8
Career Readiness	7.2
Colleagues	8.8
External Media	9.5

following: personal experience, program/college requirements, pragmatic issues, evaluations, and social justice. Bottom-tier influences included career readiness, colleagues, and external media. Little consistency exists in the middle tier, and no clear pattern presented itself as to how factors may overlap, build on each other, or closely align. An overall uneven distribution of rankings, especially in the middle tier, revealed gaps in how faculty consider and value internal and external factors in course design. Noteworthy, however, is that several faculty participants ranked two external issues, career readiness and social justice, towards the upper portion of the bottom tier, with external media and colleagues rounding out the bottom positions even though several participants indicated the they discuss course design with colleagues or view their syllabi. Collectively, the rankings and interviews provided a glimpse into why and how faculty orient themselves in their course design process.

Top Tier Influences

The combination of interview comments and average rankings showcased students as the most influential factor for course design; academic discipline, defined as knowledge/beliefs, and purpose of education, defined as disseminating knowledge, love of learning, civic-mindedness presented as top three choices for many. In fact, every recipient listed either students, purpose of education, or academic influence in their top three; five participants listed all three factors in their top tier.

Students. By a close margin, students prevailed as the number one influence in course design. Beth, Elijah, and James, three associate professors, identified students as the top entity that influenced their process of course design. Each person talked extensively about making course design decisions based on students. Beth discussed that

she “built” the course around small groups to help create a sense of community and that she considered different levels of student preparedness as they entered the course. She also noted that she chose content based on student interests both personally and professionally. However, Beth acknowledged that it is difficult to design a course around students in an online course because of certain limitations.

Elijah, who indicated his general education course is capped at 35 students from various majors, designed his course “to meet the students at their level.” Elijah shifted his expectations away from what he would expect to cover in a course for film studies majors to a design intended to “equip the students with skill sets around this discourse” such as communicating with other students, interacting in a group situation, presenting ideas, and engaging with others’ ideas. Therefore, he clarified that he incorporated group work and how to negotiate with other people since these skills “are really important” even though they are “outside of the discipline.”

James noted that he designed his course to pique students' interests in an attempt to reach an audience who did not want a course with “a long historical narrative of art history”; he stressed that he “wanted a course that wasn't one of those.” Jean ranked the students as 2nd. With several years of teaching experience, Jane can see how students' needs and attitudes have changed and that “students now are so very different” than they were when she first started teaching; consequently, she finds herself “often redesigning” her classes and response to their “level of cultural sophistication.” Based on shifting relevance of texts to students, Jean stated that, “Over the years, I note what resonates and what doesn't, and in gen ed classes in particular, I'm always asking students which works they found relatable.” In addition, Jean said she draws parallels between her lecture,

discussion questions, and themes in the readings and universal themes and issues in the world, so students can understand the relevancy and connections of course materials.

Academic discipline. Academic discipline emerged as a close second influencer. For the six participants who ranked academic discipline as the primary influence, their comments aligned with their course design practice of focusing first on content. More specifically, these participants clearly outlined how their respective discipline played a major role in shaping their course. However, participants who did not rank academic discipline as the top tier influence also commented on how they try to incorporate a design that facilitates modeling, disseminating knowledge, or developing skills.

Jean underscored that her disciplinary training informed her "goals for each class" and "all decisions about selection of texts, the lecture and framework's shape and focus." Jean also stated that her training encouraged her "to be aware of the difference between critical value and popular appeal" and gave her "knowledge of literary history, cultural context" and that she considered "all of these issues in designing a course." Her syllabus reflected her design approach with her use of a particular writer, such as Gertrude Stein, to shape the readings and assignments.

Others also articulated quite clearly how their respective discipline influences their design. In fact, most participants saw their general education courses as a way to model what it is like to be a practitioner in the discipline; for example, a filmmaker, a historian, or a creative writer. By modeling discipline-related skills, such as critical thinking, close reading, and writing, faculty participants introduce students to the nuances of thinking like a historian, reading like an English professor, or writing like a published creative writer. Part of his design goal, James noted, is to "show that this is what you do

if you are a professor." Participants agreed for the most part that upper-level courses, where students are more nuanced, must equip students with opportunities for mastery of disciplinary-based skills.

Both Jackson and Siena, who both teach in the history department, chose their academic discipline as their top influence for course design. Jackson noted that his academic discipline contributed "quite a bit" to his decision-making for a general education course about American History. To design this course, Jackson noted that "the books are less important," so he was not tied to a textbook. Instead, he focused more on skill application because he wanted to teach students "how to read and then how to write."

Siena echoed Jackson's comments in that she, too, aimed to expose students to how historians think. To facilitate this, Siena focused on designing her course with disciplinary skills such as teaching "students to think critically" and to "evaluate different viewpoints." She noted that part of being a history major is being "able to express yourself clearly and succinctly in both an oral fashion, but in a written fashion as well." However, Siena also noted that part of the discipline is "passing on knowledge" since that, "to a certain extent, is what teachers do." As a result, Siena noted that her discipline "factors in completely" because as "a researcher and a historian, these are the same questions I have to ask myself." She said she tells students that she is a professional historian "but you are historians in the making." Therefore, she designed most of her courses around getting students to "understand how this works" through exposure to "conversations in the field at this time." In this way, Siena articulated that she wanted students to think and write critically, "evaluate different viewpoints" and draw their own

conclusions but that, primarily, she tries "to pass on knowledge so students understand "what we're talking about." She strived to give them tools to continue their interest in a particular topic or "apply to whatever they're going to do."

Sarah noted that because she teaches in her field, she relies on her own discipline to inspire and fuel her own teaching. Since graduate school, she has wanted to teach literature because it has a lot to do "with what is going on today" and learning about history can "help students make connections between the present and the past," so they can "start to recognize the discourse." Sarah said, "In returning to my own discipline and making sure that students see the roots of these issues, they become more literate in these contexts, and these concepts become less abstract, so I think that facet of my discipline, kind of the gift of my discipline, is that students become more sort of aware of and literate and more able to describe better the problems they see today."

Elijah indicated the role academic discipline plays in his course design differs depending on what class he is teaching. In the general education course, he knows most students are not film majors and are not interested in making films, so he asked himself what life lessons "can they learn to better equip them in their fields" rather than a career readiness focus that is centered on film. He noted that often what students learn in general education courses is outside the discipline and scope of what he does in his upper-level courses. In his general education courses, he noted that he "passively" or "indirectly" communicates to students what they will learn, so it is something "they are being presented with" so they can engage with those the course learning objectives. A review of general education program information supports Elijah's insight that the purpose of introductory general education courses differs from that of upper-level courses.

Recounting an experience as an undergraduate, Sarah said that "sometimes in college you get lucky and meet a professor who ... just you ... know … sets your mind on fire." Sarah indicated that there was "just something about" a class that she took as an undergraduate; for example, she noted how the professor's discussion on post-colonial literature made her "fall in love with the way the professor" approached the material because it made her think about connections beyond the text. She pinpointed this experience as the beginning of her love for literature and her research interests. In trying to explain how this happened, she said, "it was that intangible thing like chemistry and mystery where the thing that I never thought would have turned me on, turned me on ... like reading a novel from Zimbabwe." Recounting her experiences as undergraduate, Sarah noted that she has always appreciated that course and designed her classes much the same way: igniting interests and challenging students to master difficult texts.

Only one research participant, Beth, did not list academic discipline as a strong influence; instead, she ranked it in 7th place. However, when asked about how creative writing, her discipline, influenced her, Beth commented that she focused on content and spent time connecting texts to various social political issues that the authors were all responding to as part of her selection criteria. Furthermore, she continued that she tried to "build into the course a historical narrative" that is all "discipline informed," so all that "discipline stuff is interwoven with the content choice." In addition, her syllabi closely resembled other participants' syllabi with regard to language and purpose.

Purpose of education. Some participants emailed me letting me know the difficulty they encountered distinguishing between the purpose of education and academic discipline when ranking the items; however, some saw the purpose of

education quite differently. Four faculty chose the purpose of education as their top influence: James, Marie, Augustine, Olivia, and Emma.

Marie's responses showed that she viewed academic discipline and the purpose of education differently from several participants. She noted that she "played around with the syllabus" for her course on film methods and criticism. She responded in the interview that she "really wants to have the students work through how to read scholarly texts and then apply critical frameworks to the media they see in class or outside of class." Marie discussed her experiences as a graduate student and an adjunct at other institutions as informing her course design. She noted that when she first started teaching as a graduate student, her philosophical approach to teaching was very much rooted in discussion; however, over time, she has become more strategic about designing a course that "gets students to talk critically about ideas and trains them to be citizens or people who work out in the world." With film studies production, Marie also noted that "You might be training someone who is going to work in the film industry; you might not, so over time, I've become very concentrated in teaching students critical thinking and visual literacy skills, so they can watch and consume media and understand it critically." Expressing that even though she models what it is like to be a film studies professor, she viewed connecting important skills embedded in her discipline with "images encoded with meaning and how it relates to their world and how to write about it in a sophisticated and civil way" as "more important than understanding like film theory from 50 years ago." On her syllabus, Marie included language highlighting her course purpose and indicating skills that she wanted students to develop.

During their interviews, both Emma and Augustine addressed how their respective discipline influenced their design, so they may have understood the purpose of education and academic discipline to be one in the same. Emma noted that her experiences in two disciplines, literature and language, contributed to the ways she designed her courses in both subjects.

Middle Tier Influences

Differences were apparent for how faculty considered middle tier influences. Four participants included either pragmatic issues, student evaluations, program/college goals, or personal experience in their top three; two noted career readiness; and two listed social justice issues.

The middle tier of rankings is quite messy. Two faculty listed social justice issues as fourth or fifth, but the remaining five listed it as ninth or tenth; only three participants placed career readiness in the bottom tier; therefore, even though no clear consensus existed as far as order, personal experience, pragmatic issues, program/college goals, and evaluations, with a few exceptions, fell into the middle tier of influences for most participants.

Personal experience. All of the participants commented on how their own experiences as students and/or graduate assistants influenced the way they designed their courses; however, nine faculty listed personal experience toward the top of the middle tier; a few participants elaborated on how their experiences as student learners and/or graduate assistants resonated with them still today. Elijah reflected on his experiences:

> You know, it's always in the forefront of my mind these experiences I had as a student and trying to work as an undergraduate studying - whether it was a

> positive or negative experience - either looking to reinforce or emulate the experience that I had, or alternatively to craft and design elements of the course antithetical to things that I feel didn't work particularly well for me as a student, so that has certainly had an impact.

When she went to graduate school, Olivia said she encountered faculty who argued that the purpose of history is to explain how we "got into this mess that we're in right now," so she designs her classes with this in mind. Having experienced teachers who tried to cover a swath of information, Jackson, as a graduate assistant, decided that he wanted to focus on important issues, conflicts, and situations instead of "trying to cover everything." He noted that early on he used lectures but as time went on, he replaced didactic lectures with a discussion-based format. Jackson indicated that it took him a while to figure out how to teach this way naturally and has "come into his own" moving away from mimicking the approach his own favorite professors used, which he relied on in his early days of teaching.

Augustine credited her professors as a graduate student with helping her teach and design syllabi; she learned a lot from her mentors and she uses much of what she learned to design a class "where students want to engage and talk about myth." Ethan gravitated toward professors who were both practitioners and theorists. He expressed that is why he "positioned" himself to make films and to teach, so he can bring as "much practical experience from the field" into the classroom. Ethan relies on his experience outside of academia as a maker of films related to commercial and corporate work as aspects he brings into the classroom because "that's what really helped" him as a learner. Jane's experiences as a student in her own grad classes, which included participation and

engagement, helped her cultivate a similar model into her 3000-level seminar. Jane also commented that an experience at a different institution before starting at MMU contributed to her course design process as well. As an instructor in an interdisciplinary program, Jane was involved in cohorts with faculty across the university. Exposed to different disciplines, Jane credited these interactions with drawing her focus to aspects inherent in her discipline of film and gender and women studies, such as equity and representation.

College/Department/Program goals and requirements. Jane, Augustine, Sarah, and Olivia placed college and program goals as bottom tier influencers, but the remainder, with the exception of Marie who ranked it in her top three, included this factor in their middle tier. Seeping into each school and college at MMU, the embodiment of the university's mission and core values resonated on the webpage for the College of Arts and Sciences, which houses the humanities faculty participants in this study. Under the faculty resources tab, the webpage included a wiki that offered faculty access to high-impact educational practices dedicated to situating writing in the classroom. Even though the materials do not mention course design specifically, examples uploaded over time included sample syllabi and assignments and writing rubrics.

For the most part, specific guidance about course design is largely absent on the College of Arts and Science's webpage; however, the college does highlight its programs as tenets of a liberal arts education; more specifically the classes taught in the college help students "discover new capacities, and "build a foundation of skills for those with the drive to succeed, the knowledge to understand, and the willingness to take action." This language trickled down to faculty participants' department websites with one

exception: The modern language and literature department web page, which is void of this type of language. Table 4.3 showcased each department's own unique set of visions and goals.

Participants did not reference these statements from the college or websites specifically, but those who ranked this higher on their list noted that the program requirements factored into their design. Siena noted that a 3000-level course she teaches is "very much shaped by departmental requirements for history major." Her other courses, specifically electives and general education, offer her greater design flexibility. Jean said that she is always aware that the classes that she teaches "are serving specific programmatic functions," so she wants "to be respectful of those functions." Marie ranked program/college goals 2nd and articulated in the interview that she is always thinking about what her program or department are trying to do when she designs a course.

Pragmatic issues. Emma, Jackson, Elijah, James, Augustine, Jean, and Oliva placed pragmatic issues toward the top of their middle tier even though they commented very little about this aspect during the interview with the exception of high enrollment in general education courses. Jean identified pragmatic issues at the top of the middle tier since "the class size is directly related to what kind of work" she assigns. Three participants ranked pragmatic issues in the bottom tier. Only Jane ranked pragmatic issues as a top tier influence.

In a follow-up email to Jane about her high ranking of pragmatic issues, she

Table 4.3 Department Vision and Goal Statements

Department	Goals/Vision Statements
Art & Art History	Our graduates in studio, graphic design, and art history possess strong communication and creative problem-solving skills. Centered in the history of art & design, our programs are grounded in aesthetic and critical theory. With transferable skills in a variety of media, talented students have the creative capacity to conceptualize, communicate, and activate their critical and creative agendas."
History	Studying history is an important path to informed and effective citizenship. Its emphasis on broad knowledge, critical reading, careful judgment and precise writing offers excellent pre-professional preparation for a wide range of careers in business, public service, the law, teaching, the military, the ministry, journalism, and library and museum employment.
Gender & Women Studies	Through the interdisciplinary orientation linking the humanities, arts, social sciences, and education, our program enables and inspires students to work together to promote social justice.
Creative Writing	Our focus on literary history will introduce you to current writers who are producing exciting work in your genre, while also introducing you to the history of your genre, a foundation all writers need. You will work closely with faculty members who specialize in poetry, short stories, novels, screen writing, literary nonfiction, comics, and multi-media texts. No matter what you do in life, strengthening your writing skills will provide you with language and editing skills, as well as research and critical thinking abilities, that are easily transferable to any other profession or area of interest.
Film	This wide-ranging and intensive program provides our majors and minors with the critical-thinking, communication and production skills to enter careers within the film industry and a variety of other professions. In addition, students will be well-prepared to pursue film or other academic disciplines at the graduate level.
English	By majoring in English, students can enhance appreciation of literary masterpieces, gain critical understanding of imaginative writing and develop sensitivity to the uses of language while developing skills in analysis, research and communication. Such knowledge enriches all aspects of life, while such skills prepare students for careers in law, business, publishing, medical professions, library science, journalism, government and education.

referenced the following practical concerns: whether the course was online or face-to-face, how many hours it meets per day/how many times a week it meets, what the pre-requisites are, and what room the course is scheduled to be in. She stated that "these details, which I'm often not in control of, really, really shape a class." Furthermore, Jane remarked that a "once-a-week three-hour evening class needs more activities" and allows for longer screenings. She also noted that she has to cover multiple topics in one night to keep students engaged and awake whereas a class that is 50 minutes long and meets several times a week requires her to cover only one topic per session and allows for limited film screening time. Because she likes to get students up and moving quite literally, Jane commented that when she teaches in seminar rooms with rolling desks, she moves the furniture around a lot, "constantly reconfiguring where and who we're facing, and how we're sitting next to each other" as opposed to her limited options teaching in the big lecture halls with students stuck facing forward her at the bottom of the room "in front of the tech cart and screen." Jane further expressed that "So far at MMU, I haven't had much control over these kinds of pragmatics, so they've really driven my teaching." She indicated that once she has more "decision-making over them in the future," her teaching and course design will not be influenced by them so heavily.

Evaluations. Only one participant, Jackson, placed evaluations as third in the top tier. Instead of a scantron, Jackson noted that MMU's history department uses an evaluation that includes prompts to solicit feedback from students. Jackson indicated that reading his evaluations tells him if students differ in opinion about a book, assignment, or skills. For example, Jackson referenced a student who commented that the course helped

him develop social awareness and social engagement skills, which Jackson noted was a big part of his course design goals.

Evaluations fell in the middle tier for everyone except for Sarah and Elijah, who ranked the influence in their bottom tier. All participants stated that they read their student evaluations with the exception of Elijah, who stated that he does not read his evaluations anymore since they do not offer him much "individually or collectively." Ethan ranked evaluations as 8th, but he said that he does read the student evaluations and that he "definitely takes into consideration how students feel about things like course load and design." To assess his design, Ethan looks "for trends across classes: and is open to "changing things a little bit based on student evaluations." Emma qualified that her process "in some ways" is informed by evaluations. Elaborating further, Emma stated that the first couple of times she read the evaluations for this class students commented "that there was too much work" so she reworked the load "a little bit." Emma said if she finds the criticism fair, she "changes things." Since most faculty have been teaching online, several participants indicated a poor rate of completion for student evaluations.

Social Justice Issues. Similar to career readiness, social justice initiatives encourage faculty in the college to include content and activities related to diversity, equity and inclusion challenges. A search on MMU's website and participants' department websites indicated that a number of events across the university and specific courses within departments focused on social justice issues, but the college and departments in the college do not promote guidance for design around social issues. Six participants listed social issues as a middle tier influence; a total of five, four assistant professors and one professor, placed social issues in their bottom tier; and, two placed the

influence in their top tier. Participant responses about the role social issues played in their course design process demonstrated that all respondents indicated that issues in society either directly or indirectly contributed to the shaping of their courses; however, two participants, Elijah and Sarah, ranked social justice third on their list of influences.

During his interview, Elijah commented that with the social upheaval leading up the summer of 2020, there has been a "social reckoning" about "whiteness and maleness," and he wants his courses to reflect those social changes. Sarah said that her course design allowed students to "track the evolution of the kind of the way that the supernatural is being used in various texts throughout these periods as a trope to critique racism or sexism."

Two faculty participants listed social issues in their bottom tier. Olivia suggested that social issues factor into her design for courses in history, but the level depends on what she is teaching. She stated that when she taught about the 1980s in the middle of the Reagan era, she addressed economic access; in classes about the 1960s, she highlighted social issues that surfaced from the Vietnam war. After 9/11, Olivia said she decided to teach a class on the Vietnam war since so many students expressed interest. She expressed that "even though this isn't what we traditionally think of as social justice" to her, "the role of the state in war making" constitutes a social justice issue. Oliva also noted that, "They're parables for where we are today and how we got here and that has huge implications for social justice." Jackson, also in the history department, noted that as a student, he encountered professors who found ways to interject politics into every class, so he has grown "terribly averse" to bringing his own politics into the classroom; however, Jackson noted that "the themes I teach, the books I assign, the way I teach ... I

think all those things are designed to point out, for example, instances in the American past where social justice" has been absent.

Bottom Tier of Influences

Some similarities appeared in how participants ranked lower tier influences, especially with regard to career readiness, colleagues, and external media.

Career readiness. Questions about career readiness as an influence elicited several responses during the interviews and demonstrated that faculty were familiar with MMU's career readiness initiative, which developed out of a collaborative effort with the dean's office, college advising, and career services. Prior to COVID, career service representatives, the director of first year advising in the college, and a committee of career center liaisons representing each humanities department met to brainstorm ideas and progress of the initiative in their own respective program or department. Faculty participants in my study indicated that what they knew about MMU's specific career readiness program, they heard either at a department meeting from a career center liaison or at a college assembly meeting.

A search for information online yielded very few faculty resources with regard to connecting or mapping course design to career readiness. MMU's career center does not have any posted documents aimed at course design; a link housed on the MMU's College of Arts and Science page takes faculty members to a folder on e-Space that houses an overview of the program and clarification about each competency in the career readiness initiative. Other than that, no workshops or guides were available for faculty to peruse. Nevertheless, eight faculty listed career readiness in the middle tier with five participants

ranking it as 8th; three faculty place career readiness in their bottom tier; however, career readiness factored into the top three for two participants: Beth and Ethan.

Beth indicated that she wanted her students, English and creative writing majors, to develop transferable skills, so she designed her course around improving their reading abilities, research, analytical thinking, and oral communication skills. Ethan expressed that he considered what employers and the film industry are looking for during the course design process since film majors must graduate with technical skills to get jobs. Even though students may never take another film class, Ethan said he built his syllabus around stimulating critical thinking skills and developing media literacy.

Colleagues. Surprisingly, eight faculty participants placed colleagues in the bottom tier even though several participants stated that they talked with colleagues about courses and/or looked at syllabi posted on e-Space. Emma, Jackson, and Sarah listed it as the least important influence. In her interview, Emma indicated that she looked over syllabi from faculty who previously taught her course. Jackson stated he used to talk to his colleagues about teaching but that what he mainly does now is to "think and read more and more teaching and learning." Sarah suggested that colleagues do influence her design: "I mean, we're always borrowing people's syllabuses and we're always swapping them" and "each discipline has its own ways, sort of like my own discipline has like a repository, and we're always sharing services and swapping things in and swapping things out." Elijah ranked colleagues as 9th, but he provided quite a bit of commentary on how colleagues do influence him through informal conversations with both junior and senior colleagues about ways to teach a course. Elijah also referenced tenure and promotion meetings as opportunities to observe colleagues for tips, and, he stated, "If not

anything else, it's always great because it's so easy to become siloed as a university professor and so easy to not evolve your own teaching style and of course design beyond what you're comfortable with, especially post tenure so given an opportunity to engage with others is something I relish."

Jane, Siena, Augustine, Olivia, and Ethan registered colleagues as a middle tier influence. Olivia highlighted that even though it is more difficult now, she does chat with colleagues and sometimes she uses what they suggest, and it "works great"; other times their suggestions do not work well. Ethan pointed to a "close knit group" in film that allows him to reach out to colleagues because of a "very open exchange of ideas" and a high comfort level environment in going to colleagues to talk about course design. He elaborated that when teaching a course for the first time, he finds it "super beneficial" to be able to see what other faculty who have taught the course are doing; he also emphasized that he has given suggestions as well, so it is collaborative environment that allows faculty "to bounce ideas off of each other."

External media. Eight participants ranked external media last. Beth ranked external media tenth, yet she noted that she does not respond in an "A, B, C way" as far as changing her design according to what she reads. If she sees patterns on social media about forums or other issues, she will change what is not working because her course "design is loose" so she has "enough flexibility to adapt things" if students say something is not working. Only one participant, Sarah, listed external media as a middle tier influence. She did not elaborate why she ranked external media higher than others during the interview but in a follow-up email, Sarah indicated a lot of public scholarship exists in her field and she wants her students "to know and read about it." She also noted that

"these aspects are so hard to rank," so she thought about "how weighty they feel" in terms of importance.

Other Influences

When asked to identify other aspects that might influence their design, a few participants attributed professional development experiences for affecting their course design process. Most participants indicated they attend annual conferences related to their disciplines, but they do not attend national or regional conferences on teaching and learning as frequently. However, attending conferences, according to Sarah, offered her opportunities to learn from panelists and credits conferences as "good resources for different sort of pedagogical tools and ideas for assignments; she emphasized that she will often attend a conference and come back and "teach a text in a different way or assign a different paper."

Instead of seeking out conferences and other professional development opportunities, Jackson expressed reading scholarship on "teaching and learning and reading things about being a history teacher," such as the teaching columns in the *Chronicle of Higher Education,* gives him access to new ideas. Jackson also noted that even though he may not incorporate suggestions into his course design, this exposure offers him a chance to reflect on what he does do and borrow what he sees will work. Jackson stated that, "I have read a lot of other stuff on teaching over the years because I'm just fascinated by that and always thinking, well, how can I be better at this." Sarah also credited the work of Peter Elbow and others in teaching and learning scholarship along with some theorists, such as Mina Shaughnessy, for serving as foundations and influences in her course design. Ethan indicated that the pandemic has given him

opportunities to partake in virtual conferences and that he plans to attend more conferences dedicated to teaching online. Jane expressed that she belongs to professional organizations, but they are not "necessarily helpful." She also participates frequently in MOOCs for fun and to learn how to create a more dynamic, interactive online experience for her own students. Being a student motivates Jane to think more about how she herself designs her classes with regard to what engages her students.

Jean and Siena also credited the course catalog descriptions with influencing course design. Unprompted, Jean also pointed to the course catalog. She said, "It is, you know, the way that our catalog course descriptions are written; they are capacious enough that people can sort of narrow them down" and incorporate into a design. Siena explained that the course catalog language creates "an indirect or unintentional influence" on her courses.

I also asked participants about their respective course design process to investigate how their influences informed their process. This question aimed to keep participants focused on discussing their design approach rather than the pedagogy they employed in the classroom; quite frequently, however, I had to redirect the conversation back to designing the course rather than to classroom activities and approaches even though participants indicated their pivot to online teaching because of COVID had course design fresh on their minds.

Effects of Influences on the Course Design Process

Throughout the interviews, faculty participants acknowledged their autonomy in course design. Although with the shift to online, participants expressed more active engagement in their "design," "blueprint," or "syllabus." With the exception of general

education guidelines and the quality online learning certification course experience, however, participants did not refer to course design, directives, guidelines, or resources that affect their design. For instance, Jackson noted that as a tenure-track faculty member, no one along the way has ever told him what to teach, how to teach it, which books he should/could use, or how to structure his course, even though introductory and capstone courses have some expectations of consistency. Marie explained that she has experienced more autonomy at MMU than she did at other institutions. Outside of general education requirements, a search on MMU's website confirmed Marie and Jackson's insight: only a few resources availed themselves to the specifics of course design.

MMU's teaching and learning center's web page included a few resources with language centered around course design. More specifically, a few syllabi templates referencing the creation of an engaging and liquid syllabus exist along with a syllabus checklist, links that lead to general education requirements, and a video tutorial that calls for all syllabi to include the following: goals, objectives, and measurable and observable learning outcomes for assessment purposes. For the most part, the syllabi I collected from research participants for this study included goals and objectives even for courses outside the general education program; in addition, most syllabi listed learning outcomes, but a few did not include this language.

Limited resources on MMU's teaching and learning website addressed aspects related to course design; for example, students, universal design, or best practices for instructional design. In the past, the center has offered workshops tailored to facilitating syllabus design with different topics; for example, applying course/program concepts in

new settings; assessing student learning and growth through guided reflections; and, adding an academic service-learning component to courses.

During the interviews, several faculty alluded to MMU's e-learning resources. A search of the e-learning's website resulted in a few documents and links connected to course design; more specifically, e-learning highlighted its self-paced online course design tutorial and two quality teaching online certification classes, which address aspects of course design. Outside of the quality online programs, a few documents and links also inform faculty about best practices and online pedagogy with regard to syllabus design.

The most referenced resource for course design throughout the interviews was the general education program at MMU. The website clarified MMU's designated goals of general education: they are designed to help students develop knowledge, skills, and critical capacities that serve as a foundation for meeting their academic, professional, civic, and personal goals and responsibilities. Posted information described core skills faculty should develop for students: critical thinking, effective communication, information literacy, and social awareness. The website also offered a syllabus template with suggested language, for example, cross-cutting capacities and knowledge applications, organizational options, and learning outcome examples. To a certain degree, most faculty participants noted that MMU's general education syllabus requirements have led to a more uniformed syllabus design across courses in the college; a few faculty participants, however, suggested that their design for upper-level courses departs from the suggested template for general education courses and that those syllabi reflect individual style preferences with regard to organization and language.

Because of their autonomy, and, perhaps, a lack of opportunity and/or exposure to a plethora of course design resources, several participants indicated that, prior to my interview request, they had never articulated their process aloud before nor explicitly stated what influences the way they construct a course. I encountered a number of pauses and raised eyebrows with some of the participants prior to them initiating a description of their design process. However, the insight faculty participants offered demonstrated how their influences contribute to decision-making. More specifically, faculty participants' reflections indicated that their influences affect decision-making about the following: content, skills, objectives and learning outcomes, student experience/engagement, learning themes, and big questions. Although faculty referred to these different aspects of course design throughout their interviews, it was difficult to ascertain if their influences motivated them to think about these course aspects exclusively, tangentially, or mutually with the exception, perhaps, of Marie, James, and Siena.

Content

Several influences shaped how faculty chose the substance of their courses with regard to materials, assignments, or activities. Academic discipline, students, and the purpose of education heavily influenced decision-making, but social and pragmatic issues resonated in content decision-making as well.

Ethan expressed that for him design "starts with content"; others implied this as well. During the interviews, many faculty identified content as a textbook, a film, historical events, literary periods, poems, literature, or in, Siena's case, a game.

For her upper-level elective history course, Siena began describing her design, which primarily focused on content. More specifically, she indicated that "the first thing"

that she did was think about "the materials students needed, so she "drew up" a book list and decided what aspects of the Renaissance she wanted to discuss. Siena located a book by Virginia Cox, which approached the Renaissance thematically, but Siena organized her content chronologically to "cover the swath of time." After choosing assignments that would engage students in critical reading and writing and align with assessment, Siena decided to use the Reacting to the Past game. Next, she said that she made decisions about "primary sources that would help "elucidate those ideas" and allow the students to ask historical questions," so they could see "the connections between the work that historians do and where that's coming." Starting with decisions about what should serve as her "foundational knowledge" for background, particularly for students who do not know much about the Renaissance, Siena moved "next" to choose assessment. Siena summarized her process as focusing on the following: choosing content, making sure that students have access to the secondary background and the primary sources, selecting assessment tools, and then picking activities that ensure students "are participating in their formation of knowledge."

Ethan said that he chose a course text with each chapter covering a formal element of film, such as cinematography or editing. As far as films, he noted that his department has a large library of films and access to a film service, so he can select different films and rotate them into the course. However, Ethan emphasized that he tries to choose films from different genres including documentaries and world cinema; he also tries to show films connected to diverse directors; for instance, race and gender.

In an upper-level modernism course that English and creative writing majors take, Beth noted that even though the building of her course was implicit, she created a

"blueprint" by thinking about many different things; for example, what she wanted to happen in the course, how students learn, what are the abilities and needs of students, which, she noted, is easier to determine for courses in the major. Beth also acknowledged the challenge of designing the course "to teach these very difficult texts" to two groups: English and creative writing majors. With two sets of students, she wants to offer English majors the basic vocabulary of modernism and creative writing majors a sense of modernism as a genre and "how modernism kind of left its fingerprints on contemporary fiction," which is important to grasp especially if they want to be writers. Therefore, she tries to design the course in a way that makes "these difficult texts accessible and builds up" students' understanding of what modernism as a genre could do or did.

To accomplish these goals, Beth stated "the first thing I decide is what works to include," and then she tries "to map out the international nature of modernism" through her author selection." Beth relied on this order of texts because "a lot of the later authors are responding to the earlier ones, especially in a period like modernism"; therefore, she noted that this organization scheme allowed for students to go back and contrast newer texts with older texts; for example, week one begins with a discussion focused on Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* and week 2, moved on to James' *Portrait of a Young Artist.*

Like Beth, others emphasized content selection as well. Emma clarified that she chose texts that fostered her goal of students practicing close reading and to "get an idea of how things have changed" from the Middle Ages up to Romanticism, "particularly the idea of punishment and justice." In addition, she wanted texts that explored different topics that allowed students to "debate and to analyze literature to really go deeply into

particular like to understand why a writer writes the way they do." Emma also wanted to "find texts that were short enough" to keep students interested.

Olivia expressed that she has "a fairly large library of stuff to talk about," so each semester she changes out texts that align with the topics she decides to cover. However, ultimately, she chose books fresh out the historical period and/or event that offer students a way to understand the "important relationship between the political structure of the country and the economic structure and understand who all the players are and what are the potential implications." Social issues also factor into the materials she selects. When she talks about the Great Depression, Olivia explained that she made room for discussions about race relations in the New Deal and WW2, but she clarified that she also made connections to modern day issues, such as poverty. Oliva stated that social issues play a role in her course design because "there's a resonance between feminism and racial civil rights" and that all "kinds of stuff acts in harmony and so if you understand one, you can start asking probing questions of the others."

Augustine highlighted finding contemporary texts relevant to mythology and organizing them sequentially to build connections that reinforce accrued knowledge and stimulate student discussion, which she views as a main activity of her courses. She also expressed that she modifies her approach to upper-level courses but still uses content to guide her process.

In her upper-level English course, Sarah acknowledged that she turns "to my own discipline" to make sure students see the "roots of these issues, so they become more literate in these contexts." In a course on the supernatural for English majors, Sarah pinpointed that her syllabus included a list of "very concrete texts" to cover each week

but that this course is the most fluid course she teaches because of how ideas and terminology circle back to prior weeks. Furthermore, she said this type of design would not work well for non-English majors. Since the course spans the Puritan period to post modernism, Sarah says she primarily chooses texts that allow students to "track the evolution of the way that the supernatural is being used in various texts throughout these periods as a way Its cultural expression." For example, Sarah's syllabus started with a focus on Egger's *The Witches* and then moved to other texts listed chronologically on her syllabus. However, Sarah also expressed that she seeks texts that bridge conversations, cater to different groups of students who tend to follow or create their own sort of areas of interests, and allow for close reading. She also indicated that she wants the topics she chooses, such as the Salem witch trials, to trigger discussions about racism and "how powerful the patriarchy is and how persistent it is and how its tentacles of patriarchy operated in the Salem Witch trials." Pointing to Edith Wharton's stories as an assigned text she used to facilitate close reading, which is "essential in this course," Sarah explained how Wharton's stories "conceptualize and express" elements around cultural context.

In her upper-level course in modernism, defined from 1900 to "roughly" the Second World War, Jean mentioned that "first and foremost" she thinks about what kinds of texts she wants to include." Jean clarified that she definitely changes up how she approaches things depending on the goal of the class and the size of the class. In general education courses, she wants to make a broad appeal "in terms of subject matter" while "maintaining the intellectual integrity of the class." For this general education course, the readings all fall between 1900 and 1950, but Jean emphasized that she "makes it a point"

to include a variety of different styles and a variety of different topics, which includes "as much diversity as possible in terms of race and gender and social class and subject matter." Since she has been teaching for some time, Jean feels she has a "sense of what goes over well with students," so she tries to use texts students have liked in the past. However, some tougher texts fit better with Jean's purpose; for example, Gertrude Stein, who, according to Jean, "is not an easy sell." Nevertheless, she thinks it is important to read Stein, so she includes the author and moves "directly into Hemingway which people are more familiar with and tend to respond to better." Therefore, Jean characterized her text decisions as "the salty with the sweet or the sour with the sweet, as it were, and always sort of keep them going by including things that they themselves characterized as fun reads and so there's definitely some customer service." Jean also noted that she had previously relied on themes in her design but moved away from that approach preferring to have "chronology as the anchor" to facilitate organization around "a variety of literary forms and a variety of different voices" in order to show students a "historical contingency in the development of literary aesthetics."

In Jackson's general education course, he models what is like to be a historian by having students read historical documents and make interpretations with his primary goal of getting students "to look at evidence," such as primary sources and historical documents." He chooses texts that "make arguments and don't just lay out both sides," so students can encounter them much like a practicing historian does. For example, the first week starts with an overview of what historians do and what the course entails and includes Bradford's *Plymouth Plantation* and Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible Word*. However, in this history course, Jackson remarked that "the books are less

important," so he is "not too tied to a textbook" or a certain "documentary reader primary source book or problems book because again there are a lot of good ones out there." Therefore, according to Jackson, the actual materials are not as important in this particular course; however, that differs in upper-level courses where students "need to read specific, important arguments, specific historical documents, and text." He referenced an American Revolution course he taught this semester as an example about the questions he asked himself during his design process: "How am I going to sequence the topics, which ones do I start with, and do I want to go strictly in chronological order or jump around a little bit more to cover thematic approaches?" Jackson also noted that he factors opportunities to trace the history of social issues, for example, poverty, immigration, and mental illness, into his course design. He uses these factors as a backdrop to talk about current issues to help students "connect the dots" and to understand that "there's a backstory - that this just didn't happen and it's not just suddenly because of 2020 and what happened in Minneapolis everyone's outraged ... there's a long history there."

Since Jane's course cross-lists in the Gender and Women's Studies program and film, she makes decisions about both films and texts. Jane said she mulled over how much content to cover as to avoid the coverage model approach. She also expressed that as a student she encountered classes that were organized topically and thus jumped around in time. Finding this "very disorienting," she has found it best to organize her classes "to be somewhat linear and chronological."

In most of his courses, James said he typically uses an anchoring text or a video series to scaffold learning for students. In his special topics course on contemporary art,

James relied on a video series and did not require students to purchase a text; instead, he used open-source educational resources and "cherry picked essays from less scholarly sources but still very respected sources in art so like art magazines that do exhibition reviews are interviews with artists." Employing Bloom's Taxonomy, James said he "breaks down the semester into chunks, divided up the reading, and added simpler tasks in the beginning like "naming and then combining those to do something that's a little bit more complex like a comparison" and then moved into things that are more complex from there, such as analytical works.

Marie's responses showed that she viewed academic discipline and the purpose of education quite differently. She noted that she "played around with the syllabus" for her course on film methods and criticism. She responded in the interview that she "really wants to have the students work through how to read scholarly texts and then apply critical frameworks to the media they see in class or outside of class." Marie indicated that in some ways, she approached the design of this class as a "training tool to kind of move on to upper-level classes in film studies and production program or other divisions of the university but also as a way to teach students about the core methodologies that film scholars and some critics and even still movie makers use when approaching the field." Marie's syllabus exemplified her formal process. Her course objectives and outcomes forecasted what students should be able to do at the end of the course, which included: understanding, researching, and writing about screen media. The weeks on the syllabus were tightly organized by a theoretical framework or method of studying, such as critical race theory or production studies in context. Each framework or method housed readings, activities, and assignments that correlated with the week's objectives

and learning outcomes. Marie emphasized that she thought about her design in terms of "how is what I'm assigning going to be fundamental to understanding later texts or if this skill we learn here will be fundamental to later assignments or even, in some ways, in other classes."

Elijah indicated that he has a few different textbooks from which he chooses, but the films in his course are the primary content. In choosing films, Elijah explained several come from national film because they are "from outside of their sphere of understanding and knowledge." With this in mind, Elijah said he wanted to curate the course offerings around a "diverse selection of filmmakers." For example, filmmakers of color and/or women filmmakers. He also stated that he sought films that "reframe" or "rectify" students' attitudes that people who "weren't white and male" make films too. Therefore, he included films like *Juno* and *Black Panther* to engage students.

Skills

Top tier influences, pragmatic issues, and career readiness resonated in faculty participants' decision -making about skills. Primarily, faculty participants mentioned that they focused on the similar skills: critical thinking, close reading, oral and written communications, and small group collaboration. Some stated that they made connections between skills and application of those skills beyond the course, but they tempered those comments noting that the course type and student population influenced those decisions.

When Beth talked about her design, she highlighted that fact that she built a lot of flexibility into the schedule for discussion around transferable skills and different careers. In a traditional face-to-face class, Beth found that she could make better decisions about content that drives active discussions about transferable skills and careers. For instance,

Beth assigned Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* to create opportunities for class discussion about failure and overcoming failure and connections to career goals. Beth acknowledged that it "sounds really abstract," but she tells students each semester that they shape their own narratives by "actively deciding who you are and how the past affects you and that you are also preparing for a career down the line." However, Beth remarked how difficult it is to make these types of connections in an online class.

Using her general education methods of film course as an example, Maria sees this course as a great opportunity for students to improve their writing and revising skills. Consequently, Marie indicated that in some ways, she approached the design of this class as a "training tool" for students who eventually move on to upper-level classes in film studies or other divisions of the university. However, she also seeks to teach students about the core methodologies that film scholars, some critics, and filmmakers use when approaching the field. Marie acknowledged that "You might be training someone who is going to work in the film industry; you might not, so over time, I've become very concentrated in teaching students critical thinking and visual literacy skills, so they can watch and consume media and understand it critically." Therefore, Marie indicated that she does not "adhere to older models" of design that centered on students reading a text and then writing a paper. Instead, Marie's process was shaped by her view that she did not want students to just glean knowledge from her course; she wanted them to exit the course with skills as well. Marie stated that the more time she spends teaching students, the more she values "giving them skills," so they "encounter other readings or other books or other movies and can make sense of them beyond the classroom and understand

how what we learn in college is actually really meaningful, especially in the humanities to the world around us."

James also considered skills in his course design. He noted that he asked himself, "What skills do I want students to leave with?" Rather than recall historical content, James said he answered his question by acknowledging that he wanted his students to exit his class with "a love and familiarity with content." Since his special topics course included an array of students, he recognized that only art history majors look to attend graduate school and need to accrue extensive knowledge; therefore, James said, in this course, he cared much more about getting students to think deeply and critically, which for him is "a very specific thing." James also desires for students to improve two skills: critical thinking and writing. To facilitate skill development, James included a video series to orientate discussion and critical thinking opportunities and several writing assignments around note-taking, reflection, and collaborative writing.

Ethan explained that he designed his general education courses revolved around formal cinema elements, such as sound and editing, and films that exemplify those elements. In contrast, Ethan structures his upper-level courses intended for film majors around skill development and application and thus, they are more technically-oriented and career-related. Although, the connections to careers reside more naturally in upper-level production courses, Ethan explained that he tries to find general ways to connect the skills that students learn in general education courses to future classes or careers. For instance, even though his general education course is not writing intensive course, Ethan thinks working on grammar and writing skills is important; however, critical thinking plays a pivotal role in his course design since, according to Ethan, "analyzing a film takes

tremendous amount of critical thinking." Linking critical thinking to the breaking down of scenes for analysis and writing with assignments that demonstrate "the comprehension of the textbook" offers connections between skills and careers albeit not as many as in his production courses. However, Ethan's choice of skills he incorporates into this particular class, "will carry students through in their academic career and into their professions"; the specific formal elements of film that he weaves in represent exposure to and knowledge about an art form that students can use "throughout their lives."

In his upper-level film courses for film majors, Elijah designs his course with the idea of equipping students with skill sets that enable them "to be successful in the world of screenwriting and in the film industry." More specifically, in these classes, Ethan emphasized that he does not only give students skills, but "rules and traditions of screenwriting" or "storytelling" as well. However, in the general education course he teaches, Ethan makes decisions about which kind of skills appear in "this discourse"; for example, communicating with other students, interacting in a group situation, "the presentation of ideas, the engagement with other ideas, and entry into a dialogue," appealing to students practically or personally since many students in general education courses are not film majors.

Siena makes decisions about content and assignments that focus on developing critical reading, thinking, and writing in her general education course. She values these "transferable skills" for both history majors and non-history majors since they allow students to convey and evaluate viewpoints. Consequently, Siena embeds rich opportunities to practice and master writing, researching, and presenting information since these are skills essential for historians but also for other types of jobs as well.

Objectives and Learning Outcomes

For general education course syllabi, faculty must include objectives that layout how the course will satisfy general education requirements; for example, knowledge or writing application. On most course syllabi, regardless of course level, faculty said they incorporated a list of objectives and/or learning outcomes. However, a few faculty participants talked at greater length about how objectives and/or learning outcomes guided their decision-making. Academic discipline, purpose of education, students, career readiness, and social issues were apparent influences in this course aspect.

Marie described how she viewed the general education course objectives and developed her own learning outcomes for the course; she then indicated that she went through the "tedious process of making assignments" that matched her outcomes and assessments. Marie emphasized that she thought about her design in terms of "how is what I'm assigning going to be fundamental to understanding later texts or if this skill we learn here will be fundamental to later assignments or even, in some ways, in other classes." Therefore, she thought more about scaffolding assignments by having weekly tasks "build up to something bigger." Tweaking the outcomes and assignments, she developed a schedule. Marie's syllabus exemplified her formal process: objectives and outcomes forecasted what students would be able to do at the end of the course: understand, research, and write about screen media. The weeks were tightly organized by a theoretical framework or method of studying, such as Critical Race Theory or production studies in context. Each framework or method housed readings, activities, and assignments that correlated with the week's objectives and learning outcomes.

Ethan also emphasized how course objectives play in a role in his design process. He expressed that the specific general education course objectives and those developed within the film program for certain courses help not only "hit the gen ed requirements and other objectives" but program requirements as well.

Elijah pointed to the objectives listed on his general education syllabus and how they frame his course design.

> This course surveys a non-exhaustive list of national cinemas that have had a meaningful impact on the world stage. It will introduce you to significant cinematic movements and filmmakers outside of the United States. In each module of the course (2-3 weeks), we will be screening both fiction film and documentary film from national cinemas and see how these films reflect national identity.

However, Elijah noted that he also used learning outcomes to help students articulate what they learned. For example, his syllabus stated: "[You will engage with] environments, political systems, economies, societies and regions outside of the United States and awareness of a transnational flow of goods, people, ideas and values." Even though he does not expect students to "take on" all of these learning outcomes, he built in enough material so that students can articulate, either orally or in writing, "the role of historical via the historical impact, the impact that history has had on historical events and the historical trajectory of cinema." Elijah synced the course learning outcomes with his goals to foster connections between the films, themes, and values in relation to todays' world.

James noted that his design is “always about learning outcomes” rather than objectives. He elaborated that he has “little by little” changed his terminology from objective to outcome because he thinks learning outcomes places more “agency with the student.” Therefore, James described his process begins with framing a “sense of the area of artistry,” acknowledging the level of students who will take the class, and employing “reverse design” to build his course around his defined learning outcomes.

Student Experience/Engagement

Every participant discussed students extensively and how they play an important role in guiding their design decision-making. Some participants framed student concerns as pragmatic issues by talking more about course population, time management, or student expenses; other participants articulated the need for more critical reflection or more focus on student variability; for example, different needs or different learning approaches.

As far as pragmatic issues, Olivia noted that she considered “the energy level” of her students and their workload; Jean mentioned pragmatic issues in her design and that she is “always attentive to what” she thinks “are the potential problems of student workload” and that “pragmatic issues are a big influence” with regard to class size especially since she noted size is “directly related to what kind of work” she assigns.

Marie, Olivia, and James indicated that they consider the expense of course texts. Marie stated that she thinks in terms of accessibility and “in terms of finances … can they get this PDF open … so I'm trying to kind of factor that in.” She also expressed that she does not want to “design classes just to pander to students” but to understand which level they enter the course and at which level they can exit the course.

Jane said the actual room size that she teaches in factors into her design. Because she was a theater and performance major, she often has students do "physical warm ups to start class to sort of get our heads in the right place." Jane also mentioned that she thinks about whether students are taking her course as an elective and how that affects students' passion levels toward the material. Ethan stated that he wanted his course to "work for students in terms of metering things out each week, giving them certain deadlines to hit, and making sure that they're staying on top of their progress." Emma expressed that she wanted to create a safe environment for students to feel comfortable in. Augustine thinks about students' backgrounds, and Beth indicated that she thinks about student preparedness levels for those entering her course.

Conversations around recognizing student needs, choosing assignments, organizing weeks effectively, and clarifying expectations also surfaced in the interviews. Most of these threads were connected to designing the course to enhance the student experience and/or engagement level. Jackson thought about the broad base of students in his course: "all kinds of different majors, all kinds of different backgrounds and trainings." Therefore, he said that he "tries to be alert to all those different groups that are out there and to try to figure out how to work with those particular subgroups" to help them be successful.

James stated that students are also his primary concern in his course design. He thinks about who is in the class and how this class can benefit students. James also described that his design is around student-centered teaching, which he noted stems from "kind of the pedagogy that developed ultimately out of, you know, client-driven, client-centered therapy," which for him "means letting students choose what they want." To

facilitate his approach, James chose to include a metacognitive journal or reflective journal, which James emphasized as "one of his favorite parts for students." The intent of the journal was, according to James, "to encourage students to be honest and use stream of consciousness in order to reflect on some concept" in the PBS videos and to connect ideas to what they learned in the class that week or to skill applications.

Beth discussed that she "built" the course around small groups to help create a sense of community and that she considered different levels of student preparedness as they entered the course. She also noted that she chose content based on student interests both personally and professionally.

Jean mentioned that when she designed and "pitched" a general education course to students early in the semester, she told "them that right off the bat" that she designed the course "for people who don't see themselves as wanting to become college professors" and that she was "aware of their needs and expectations and not trying to impose an arbitrary intellectual agenda on them." For those reasons, Jean said that she aimed to make the course as "broadly appealing in terms of subject matter, as is possible, while maintaining the intellectual integrity of the class" in addition to including "a variety of different topics" and "as much diversity as possible in terms of race and gender and social class and subject matter."

In her upper-level gender and women's LBGTQ film course, Jane clarified that she received a teaching and learning grant to design this elective course primarily for film majors around experiential learning. Because of COVID, she had to make some adjustments to her design by opting for more virtual events for students to connect with the LGBTQ community. Her hands-on-learning events created flexibility in her design

that allowed students to have "a lot of say in the actual class itself." Jane also contemplated ways for students to be more involved in just "watching and consuming" movies; thus, she added experiential learning opportunities to move students out into the LGBTQ community in addition to having students have "a lot of say in the course" by allowing them to pick topics they wanted to study and talk about each week. She noted that she likes to add these elements of experiential learning to all of her classes, so they tend to be a focal point of her course design; for instance, in the week focused on death, she took her students to a cemetery.

Marie explained that the rationale behind the first week on her syllabus. She emphasized that she designed that week to create time to talk about "how to read films and film language in the style of films," which, she noted, students should have already studied in their intro to film class. However, Marie saw this as an opportunity to emphasize skills and the need to "refresh" their knowledge by stating "this is what we should already know, but let's think about why it would be important to filmmakers, film critics and scholars." In this way, Marie indicated that before students moved on to other concepts, she tried to build onto other courses and create an awareness by having students take what they learn with them as they move forward through their education at MMU.

Learning Themes

Some faculty chose themes to organize their courses noting different reasons behind this approach. Marie, who typically organizes around the historical context of the films she uses in her classes, noted that, in this particular course, she "organized around different regions of the globe starting with Europe, the United States, then Asia." With this organization, Marie said her aim was to take students on "a virtual tour of different

spaces that were grouped semantically based on different political or socio-economic structures in those regions in terms of the film industry. In her methods course, she used general themes to house her content; for example, “Formal Analysis and Aesthetics” and “Genre and Industry.” In her course about horror, Jane also relied on building content around thematic headers, such as The Monstrous Woman and Black Horror,” to create connections and drive weekly discussions; for example, “Hollywood Code and decoding queerness.”

In her European literature course, Emma coupled texts with themes; for example, Villon’s “The Ballade of the Hanged Men: Guilt and Justice in the Middle Ages”; Elijah relied on film themes, such as “Early World Cinema” and “French Poetic Realism”; and, Ethan also used film themes, such as “Film Form and Genre” and “Sound,” to facilitate organization in his general education course.

Elijah relied on themes around national cinema so that the semester offered movement across different cinematic offerings from various regions and opportunities to consider different directors and film movements. Siena noted that she used an array of themes in her upper-level history elective course to not only organize the course but to provide a breath of cultural, social, and political issues; for example, art in the Renaissance, turmoil in the Renaissance, and the individual and gender in the Renaissance. Since Siena wanted to structure her weeks thematically as well, the book that she found helped her ground the order of her lectures and frame “whatever theme” was scheduled for the week.

Jackson employed historical topics, such as “Topic: The New World,” in his Intro to American History course. Even though he arranged his content somewhat

chronologically within each theme, Jackson indicated his organization was more focused on what he needed to do because he was "primarily teaching them how to think like in a story, how to read a source, how to read the document, and how to think about context." James expressed that the series he used in his special topics course were organized by theme, so he felt the program "was already scaffolding. For example, one episode talked about the use of light in paintings and then referenced four artists over time to elaborate on the technique; another episode focused on spirituality and identity in art.

Big Questions

A few research participants indicated that they design their courses with big questions in mind. James contemplated how to engage his students through the use of "tough questions." The purpose of the questions, he noted, was to facilitate a deep dive for students through a critical theory lens, which he categorized as "theoretical tools to uncover hidden meanings in an artwork and how it functions in society." Siena's choices of primary sources helped her create ways for students again to "ask historical questions of those primary sources and see the connections between the work that historians do and where that's coming from right."

In her general education course, Jane pointed out that she struggles with balancing what topics she has to cover and big questions she wants students to linger over when designing her course; however, Jane articulated that her design process is "a bit different" because in the upper-level courses, students "just have to know certain things," but in the introductory courses she has more flexibility to design the course around questions she wants students to contemplate. Jane indicated that for her film class in Gender and Women Studies, she designed the course around "what is LGBTQ cinema?" She

emphasized that this question led students to break down and consider the role and identity of the writer, a film's intended audience, the characters; eventually, the foray into these questions helps students describe LGBTQ cinema. Thus, she expressed that she "let go" of the coverage" model and used a question about what the class title even means to help guide her design instead.

Perceptions about Career Readiness

After faculty participants discussed their course design process and what influenced that design, they answered questions about career readiness and MMU's year-old career readiness initiative. Analysis of participants' syllabi yielded little insight into career readiness aspects, so interview comments served as the main source for perceptions about career readiness. Each conversation took a similar tack in that questions evoked responses around the criticism of the humanities, perspectives about career readiness and student success, role in job preparedness, current and future applications of career readiness, and resistance to MMU's initiative.

MMU's initiative rolled out a year prior to this research study. In building the initiative, the task force members acknowledged that tension exists in some MMU academic departments when it comes to career competencies; this existing tension, according to the task force, would make it harder to sell faculty on the idea and value of embedding competencies. Because they knew mandating participation in the career readiness initiative would not go over well, the committee members explored having department chairs play a role in motivating faculty, having the Committee on Instruction require or recommend it, or allowing career services staff to create text to include on syllabi. In addition, the committee outlined solutions to overcome faculty and student

skepticism such as the following: creating a campus culture around competencies, having course syllabi list areas for competencies, encouraging faculty to discuss competencies tied to course projects and assignments, providing students with lists that identify general education and major/minor courses in the college that meet requirements and promote competencies.

Criticism of the Humanities

Faculty responses demonstrated that they are well aware about the external criticism the humanities disciplines have had and may continue to have with regard to the value and use of the degrees their programs offer. Most faculty responded emotionally to the de-valuing of the humanities, but some seasoned faculty were more emphatic in their responses. About half of the participants stated that they do not anticipate changing the way they do things in response to critics' claims, especially with regard to course design; the other half, however, expressed interest in adding more elements focused on readiness and/or articulation of skills and knowledge.

Olivia expressed the strongest opinion about external stakeholders and critics of the humanities. For Olivia, the idea of validating her courses in the eyes of society "isn't going to happen." In fact, Olivia emphasized that she could "care less about stakeholders in some ways" and that what or how she teaches will not change to appease stakeholders: "I teach what I teach because I think it's important and because it tells you about a small piece in a larger puzzle and if I don't teach that, then other pieces of the puzzle don't make much sense, so it's how all the pieces fit together."

James also recognized that the "legitimacy of the humanities" has been called into question. He remarked that, "The humanities really are under fire, and no one

understands their value, and I think their value is you can go out in the community and you can explain your experiences and you make connections with people and, you know, those sorts of things …" Sarah expressed that the "cultural message about" and around the humanities is "sort of everywhere, so it feels inherently like she is "pushing back against that," especially in general education courses. However, in a room full of English majors, Sarah said that she does not have to validate the value of the humanities even though they "understand the kind of beating the humanities is taking"; English majors are well aware of how society views their degrees, so "they feel it, and they see it."

Elijah expressed that he is also aware of the "kind of conservative approach of or like anti-humanities approach" and how the humanities is presented to the "outside world," but he does not "allow it to control" how he shapes his courses nor does he arrange his courses with that intent in mind. However, Elijah said he likes to think that content of his courses, while perhaps with "a cursory look from a parent or a conservative politician might not see the value and of course of that nature," focuses on using the discipline of film to enable students to "engage with the world around them and not just watch movies because they're cool."

Jackson noted that he is "certainly alert and aware of those kinds of outside influences," but that overall and, especially, at the level of course design, he indicated a "really minimal influence." If he was teaching at a research institution or larger state school, Jackson said he might think more of the "world beyond MMU" where more "political pressure from the outside and demands for a response" to stakeholders exists. However, in terms of being "just a classroom teacher who designs his own courses," Jackson emphasized that he gives little thought to stakeholders "or what would the state

legislature think about a class I teach on political rebellion or something like that." Restating that his thinking about external factors does not ever get to that point, Jackson underscored that it is the role of deans and provosts to "respond to stakeholders and to be able to frame whatever's going on in the college"; for example, "in terms of meeting whatever goals and benchmarks and things."

Some faculty mentioned parents and/or employers as stakeholders. James emphasized that he does not think about parents as stakeholders, but he does want his primary stakeholders, students, to be able to articulate what they learn in class to parents. Augustine explained that she does think about parents and employers, especially in upper-level courses; consequently, she makes sure that she gives students pathways to succeed in creative writing even though she articulates that the lack of employment as a creative writer is non-existence.

Beth expressed that what she knows from talking to friends is that critics' message about the value of the degree is inaccurate. In conversations with friends outside of academe, Beth heard that many private sector organizations prefer to hire humanities majors over business majors because these students tend to be more flexible and "quicker to catch on with whatever the mission of the particular job is." Ethan said he thinks about "what's going to get the students to a point where they can get a job"; therefore, in terms of external stakeholders, he indicated that he considers "what employers are looking for," to prepare students.

Career Readiness and Student Success Definitions

When asked to talk about career readiness and student success, most participants connected these aspects to skills instead of words like *competency* or *transfer*. Marie

stated that, to her, the definition of career readiness "depends on the career," but she characterized it as a "level of professional responsiveness and responsibility that I would expect students to be able to go into a job, ready for that they have some kind of self-accountability to take care of tasks and that if they have a problem, they know how to talk to someone responsibly." In response to a follow-up question, she added that she also sees readiness as preparing students to know how to behave "ethically and responsibly and civilly" and how to communicate "and do their work." She pointed out that student success for her does not always mean mastery of content but is more about "being able to process the information and apply skills outside of class."

Jean has always been implicitly aware of the transferability of skills and that teaching and training them for "the world outside" has "always been a part" of her conversations with her students. Part of her approach has been to make it clear to them both "implicitly or explicitly why English classes matter once you're done with college." However, Jean stated that in only the past few years has she "revised that notion of success to include success in the workplace or success outside of class." Instead of seeing success as grades as she did up until a few years ago, Jean now tells her students that succeeding in the class, mostly means realizing "their best potential as readers and writers and critically engaged conversationalists."

Jackson detailed how he considered initiatives around career readiness and student success as "buzz words" and a "part of everybody's mission statements and whatever else we call them these days like learning objectives." He said he points out to students that if they are taking a class in the humanities, such as English or philosophy,

that learning how to read a document, interpret and make an argument, or structure an essay can and do have a practical application beyond his class and other classes at MMU.

Noting that she already focuses on skills, "rather than "changing behavior," Siena explained that she wants her students to think critically and evaluate different viewpoints both orally and in writing since she viewed these attributes as components of career readiness. Ethan associated career readiness with skills as well and said that "narrowly speaking," he equates grades and comprehension of the material as signs of success; however, "more broadly speaking," success after the academic career equates to "students' ability to find a job that makes them happy and is in the career field that they hope to work in."

Elijah said he thinks that career readiness applies to his upper-level courses for film majors since those courses are about giving students "relevant skill sets connected to the discipline to enable them to potentially be successful working in the film industry." However, with large classes and a variety of different majors and backgrounds, he thinks the skills he offers general education students are more general skills. Therefore, he measures student success differently in general education courses and pointed to his learning outcomes for his course syllabus as indicators of readiness.

Job Responsibility to Prepare Students

As far as feeling responsible for preparing students for employment, responses were mixed; most expressed that the answer is not a simple binary yes or no, especially in general education courses. Several addressed that it is impossible to know how or if students will use what they learn beyond the course; others underscored that they do not

view preparedness as vocational training but instead skill development and/or civic mindedness.

Jane commented that "in general" she doesn't know "where the students are going to go," but she wants "to prepare them for something"; therefore, she views providing students with information they process and apply to frameworks and "demonstrate applied skills" as part of her job. In upper-level courses, however, she does think in terms of graduate school or jobs in film production. Thus, she targets skills that can help students who want to go to graduate school or work in film. In her general education courses, Jane considers her goals somewhat differently, but she still equates producing creative, thoughtful work with success and sees this success leading to "positive outcomes as citizens and people in the workforce." To foster success and allow them to showcase their skills, Jane creates opportunities for students to "be communicative with their classmates and civil, and engage with the content." Recognizing the variability of student's interest and that "many of our students will be getting like working in an office," Jane said she tries to connect tasks to preparedness" Jane mentioned that having students learn how to do a PowerPoint, write emails, or create visual graphics "may just seem like a fun little activity, but it's the thing that increasingly digital world is translatable." Jane also remarked that she "has become more assertive about explaining to students why humanities will help them in any sort of job" or in roles as citizens "since our country needs people" who can think critically and "approach problems to respond ethically and humanely." Trying to be realistic with students, Jane wants them to understand what skills they will find "useful," no matter what career path they take since she cannot always "anticipate what they will be." Therefore, Jane does not know if this

will “fix the crisis in the humanities,” but she finds it essential that she informs her students about what they will do in class but also why they are doing it and “how it might have kind of ramifications beyond” their “14 weeks together with regard to the ideas, concepts, and skills she has students build.”

James stated that the “simple answer is yes” with regard to preparing students for jobs; however, he continued noting “the way I answer it would be different.” He clarified saying that he is not interested in vocational training for his students “unless the vocation is in the arts specifically.” James “think it's bigger than” preparing students for jobs.” For him, “it comes back to student success” and if students will be employed in three years, in a graduate program, and happy that they took this class.” He said, “The calling I see in teaching is in creating citizens who live well-rounded and kind of reflective lives and part of that is figuring out how you're going to contribute to society and make a livelihood off of it.” In addition, he emphasized that he definitely thinks “very concretely about what will they do when they leave” his class. However, according to James, preparing students for jobs is “not like a mechanical thing; these are the humanities and they are about thinking, analyzing, and breaking down problems.” Therefore, for James, “it's really not about feeding them a set of skills that they'll use on the job”; he thinks anyone can learn that. Thus, he thinks “this is really about how you do learn” and if you can learn on your own and develop the skills to learn on your own.” Finally, James said, “To me, it's more about like differentiation and letting them conquer the world.”

In his general education courses, Elijah focuses on “really just opening their eyes” and trying to open their understanding of “culture and creative work outside of their comfort zones,” which he noted is very challenging. With a “mixed bag of students”

every semester, Elijah tries to give them an appreciation of film, equip them with the "language of film," and the ability to talk in groups. However, "to be more vocationally specific with anything else" is virtually impossible in that class, according to Elijah, because of student variability with regard to majors and interests.

Beth also considers preparing students for employment as part of her job even though she hesitated to some degree about the outcome of her efforts: "I mean, I'm always having them think about it or am talking about it but, you know, do I actually prepare them? Um, I don't know if I always succeed." She tells students that the job market for creative writers or poetry teachers at the college level is disappearing, but she also stresses the importance of "developing reading abilities, research, analytical thinking and oral communication skills" since these are "tools" they can use in "almost any career."

Jean clarified that a lot of her interaction with students during the course of the semester "is framed around student success." She noted that this intensified focus on student success may be a change from her "pre-tenured goals to post-tenured goals" or from "an ongoing conversation" at MMU and "higher ed in general." However, she recognized career readiness as a "framing device" that is helpful and "a liberating way to reject an old paradigm of teaching that was really punitive."

Marie highlighted that she offers her students "knowledge," but she gives them skills, so they "can now encounter other readings or other books or other movies and be able to make sense of them beyond the classroom." In addition, Marie desires for students to understand that what they learn in college is "actually really meaningful, especially in the world around us." However, she also noted that she does not see her job as passing

every student, giving every student a “great grade” for meeting “every single learning outcome”; instead, she understands her job as being part of a student’s journey and “moving them to grow and build, which might mean personal growth” or accountability.

Jackson reflected that he probably thinks about preparedness slightly more than he used to do; however, he categorized this as “simply drawing the connections between the value of what we do in any given class meeting or any given semester and what students can take away from that to apply someplace else.” He does not think though that this has changed what he has been doing since he has “been teaching pretty much the same way forever.” However, he suggested that he has “gotten more attuned to making those connections” and in explaining “how what we do in class” matters in that sense. Jackson said he finds himself “maybe putting it specifically in terms of here's something that you can take away, so next time your parents say why are you taking a history class, you can go home and say, well, I'm learning how to understand the news; I'm learning how to read a document and understanding how to hear a political speech; and I'm understanding how to put together an argument with evidence from sources.” Thus, Jackson stresses to students the importance of framing an argument, laying out evidence, and building a case based on evidence; he tells students there are “so many different applications” from participating in a meeting or in “picking the next minister” at a church, or making an argument for “why this person over the other person.”

Even though she identified her primary goal is “to pass on knowledge,” Siena also passes on the value of the skills to her students since “there's a tendency now to think there's no value in humanities.” To Siena, discussing career readiness is an “important part of countering criticism about the value of a history degree.” While anecdotal, she

indicated that in her previous teaching position, business school leaders "came into the history department pleading that what business leaders in the wider community were looking for is students not just with a business degree, but with the critical thinking skills that a humanities degree helps confer." Therefore, she wants her course to give students, both majors and non-majors, tools "related to subjects" and that can apply to whatever they will do. In lower-level courses, Siena sees a large part of her responsibility as helping "students cultivate skills that will be valuable to them regardless of what career they pursue"; in upper-division classes, she focuses more on content and discipline specific skills. Therefore, she tells history majors that "even if you don't become a history teacher or even if you don't stay a history major, the skills that you are getting out of this are "really, really important." Therefore, Siena emphasized her first goal of passing on knowledge is just as important as "leaving them with something" and giving them "tools."

As far as career readiness, Ethan considers this aspect more in his upper-level film courses for majors. He explained that in the general education course discussed in the interview, he thinks about the course as "expanding a student's horizons and that it can be useful in a lot of ways, but I don't think specifically that this course would prepare students who are not going to be film majors." Ethan noted that his goals differ for courses in the major. More specifically, he identified his main goal "as an educator" is to prepare majors and minors who want to go out and work in the field. More specifically Elijah expressed that "it is absolutely my job to prepare them to do that; my job is to get them ready to go out and not only be able to create what they want to create but sustain themselves as an artist as they do it, which are not necessarily the same thing."

Emma argued that preparedness happens “naturally for students in the humanities,” so she does not “explicitly” teach preparedness because she believes that the humanities, in particular, “really prepare students” for the workplace. Additionally, Emma contends that “nobody ends up doing the job they think they're going to do,” so trying to fit the skills a humanities majors learns “into a scientific box that works for engineering students isn’t feasible”; however, Siena acknowledged that humanities majors and engineers can find themselves working in the same fields, so the skills transfer. Therefore, she views what she can offer students on two different levels. According to Emma, “on one hand, there are real-life human skills”: getting to a job on time, doing what is required of you, taking direction, and finishing your work. However, then there are more “content” skills, which Emma characterized as job performance and using the skills to complete the task successfully.

The conversations with Sarah and Olivia differed from other participants in that they took on different tones. Sarah stated that for many of her students, she does not “really know what their future plans are,” so she does not have “any sort of bridges” that connect the meaning in the class with “a job later on down the road”; for example, she does not tell them how studying Edith Wharton’s ghost stories “can transfer into, say, a career in human resources.” However, she clarified that she already adds rigor to her classes focused on developing disciplinary skills, such as close reading since “it is the hardest thing to teach and it's the hardest thing to learn and it's the most important thing to learn.” She views this skill as “the bread and butter” of the discipline and the “foundation of anything that we do.” Consequently, student success, for Sarah, revolves

around the demonstration of "mastery of a certain subject," through discussion or the written word.

Oliva was the most adamant about her inability to define student success since she does not "presume to know what students will do" after leaving her course. She stated that she does not ask her students to share their career aspirations throughout the semester unless they seem like they want to share. Indicating that "it's not that I don't pay attention to that stuff," Oliva expressed that she does not package information as fulfilling career readiness to transfer since she thinks it is "useful" if students figure that out on their own.

Career Readiness Course Applications

Several participants expressed that they are already embedding clear connections between knowledge and transfer, skill development, assignments related to employment, and discussions that promote student articulation of their skills and the degree value. For the most part, faculty participants expressed the following as key skills: critical thinking, oral and written expression, close reading, and communication and articulation in groups. A number of times, participants' comments reflected no concrete mapping between decisions and desired outcomes with regard to these skills, employment, or educational application. Nevertheless, some faculty responses showed they are thinking about career readiness aspects and how to improve the transfer and application for students both personally and professionally outside the classroom.

Beth equated career readiness to skills and preparedness and remarked that the term career readiness has some "abstraction to it," but she described how she adds elements of it to have students develop transferable skills. Beth felt that her students "will be ready for their career if they are good at both doing those things" and pivoting, if

necessary, to apply those skills. She elaborated that she is constantly talking about the importance of developing skills; for example, she stated that she tells students "your skills will come into play in different ways in other courses or jobs." She gave a specific example: she tells students that when they write papers, it "might not feel like it has a lot of real-world application but those transferable skills give you the ability to communicate with, you know, a colleague or, you know, even with a family member or friend; you're developing your ability to articulate your thoughts to present them to someone else." Beth also remarked that her discussions are student-driven, so she will often talk with them about "how English majors are perceived and how businesses actually want humanities majors" because of their skill sets. Guiding discussion, Beth strives to help them see how this course or their major can help them in the future. Beth, however, commented that she has found it much harder to discuss the application of skills in an asynchronous online course. In a face-to-face class, Beth said that right along with the first book she teaches, she will tell students "you have to prepare yourself for your career." Using the book as a vehicle to discuss skills and careers, she encourages students to "be less self-conscious and to have more agency."

Marie uses her upper-level course as a "training tool" to "teach students about the core methodologies that film scholars, and some critics use when approaching the field"; she compliments skill mastery with job search tools such as writing a cover letter that asked students to translate the skills they were learning in this class. In introductory courses, Marie still focuses on some skills, such as communication and writing, but she focuses more on giving students assignments that enable them, especially non-majors, to apply the skills they learn about watching movies. She will often have students pick their

own examples, employ analytical close reading skills they learn in class, and then apply those skills to watching a show outside of class.

Jackson also makes connections between what students learn in external situations, such as "giving a workplace presentation, answering questions in a job interview, and speaking at a church or political meeting." Jackson stated that "All of these are kinds of, I hate to use the phrase, life skills, but I mean these are life skills, the things we do in class." To illustrate his point, Jackson pointed to adding assignments that have students do a close reading or "trying to figure out the context of a document, not just taking things at face value, but trying to figure out, okay, well who's writing this and do they have an agenda, are they trying to get to something." Incorporating these types of assignments into his design, Jackson stressed that he chooses tasks that transfer "to all kinds of situations in life" even modern-day politics where part of being a "good citizen" entails "asking questions" to avoid "taking things at face value because people need to be sophisticated in their consumption of information and knowledge." Jackson highlighted that the skills he weaves into his courses facilitate these goals and connect to "the work world."

Most students Jane encounters in Gender and Women Studies and film are very conscious about the value of their future degree and what the degree brings to their future careers. Therefore, Jane is flexible in choosing different types of assignments that fit students' needs or interests. For example, if students are not interested in working in higher education, Jane finds ways to make a critical studies class useful by assigning a resume writing exercise. She will also assign writing assignments that have students employ a popular style "that can be translatable to a broader audience." Residing in the

Gender and Women's Study program and film, Jane recognized her subject matters are not highly valued in most people's minds. Therefore, Jane provides students guidance by talking about "what they've learned from a liberal arts degree or from a critical space or film degree." Instead of using a 12-page research paper, where the "utility was pretty small" since none of the students wanted to attend graduate school, Jane talked to friends who work as media writers and freelancers for suggestions and replaced the paper with shorter writing assignments that students can place in a portfolio and "use to make pitches at BuzzFeed or Salon." Jane found these types of assignments more useful because students can use them "as a springboard for actually submitting their own work somewhere." When watching films, she tells students that what they are learning "can be applied to anything." For instance, the viewing of 1960s art film or a popular film can connect to "whatever you want in your real life." Jane expressed that she focuses on the usefulness of assignments for students and tends to replace longer traditional pieces with resumes and/or "projects that are multimedia rather than an essay that gets stuck in a drawer that they hate writing and I hate reading" because the value does not "translate out in the real world" or "to an employer" that well.

Like other faculty participants, Elijah emphasized that he already does many of the things career readiness embodies. In upper-level courses, Elijah said he tries "to equip them with skill sets" that enables students to be successful in "the world of screenwriting and in the film industry." He referenced an assignment that had students research employment opportunities outside of being a script writer; for example, jobs in writing coverage. The goal of this assignment, he noted, was to prepare students "with the skill set of how to write coverage in an assignment to better enable them to be kind of

vocationally prepared so that they can leave the university." Elijah also tries to stay current on performance media, streaming services, cinema, TV, and "anything that involves the moving image, and indeed the spoken word" since these areas are evolving at such a rapid pace now. With changing film industry paradigms, employment possibilities change as well, according to Elijah, so he follows the trends that are occurring in technology and how they might impact the way that he teaches; however, at the same time, Elijah reflected on the difficulty of venturing out of his "silo of screenwriting to learn about these new social norms." These externalities outside the discipline are elements that he "certainly takes into consideration, but they don't have a dramatic impact on" how he organizes his classes.

Siena creates a number of assignments that model a historian's approach: locating information, looking at the sources, and figuring out valuable historical questions to ask. Siena discussed that she tells students to ask why something happened to show students how asking questions can help a person develop a "research mind." According to Siena, this focus on research methods is coupled with actual conversations about grammar and "structuring papers and what makes a good introduction."

Augustine links activities to transfer of knowledge as well, but she noted that she does do more of this in upper-level creative writing courses. In her general education course about folklore, Augustine's learning outcomes underscored students' abilities to recognize literature as an expression of culture, analyze and evaluate relevant information, alternative points of view, inferences, assumptions and to "synthesize information in order to arrive at substantiated conclusions." However, in Augustine's workshop on poetry and other forms of creative writing, she indicated that she can work

with students who want to practice as creative writers. For example, her poetry workshop is geared toward poets and allows students opportunities to "slow down with language and dwell on words to expand their critical vocabulary as they provide feedback to each other on their work."

For James, the most important skill that students learn from art history is expository writing because the best, most employable skill, people want from graduates is their ability to think things through logically and explain them. Thus, for James, developing those writing skills in general education courses is "the primary thing." The higher-level courses he teaches are more about methods, and he designs those courses to prepare students to go into the field. For general education courses, however, James referenced his use of a metacognitive journal or reflective journal that he uses in class as an example of how he challenges students to reflect critically. He finds the journal to be "a successful part of what we do in every class" because students have "to articulate specific goals" or course connections. Reflections can be general, but James emphasized that "there has to be something specific about the content of the class and how that's going to help them." Because he has students from different majors in his general education courses, he stresses connecting course content to their own lives in their journal entries. Therefore, weekly assignments move students to connect concepts to skill improvement; for example, one assignment has students imagine they are applying for a job and the interviewer asks the student to describe the skills they learned in this particular class. James indicated that he has received positive feedback from students about these types of assignments. For James, "it's about them learning how to articulate SMART goals for themselves," which means a goal that is specific, measurable,

attainable, relevant, and time-limited. Even though he designates learning outcomes that he wants students to achieve, he expressed that, in his view, articulating their own goals allows students to track their progress.

Comments from most of the participants indicated they not only currently employ assignments to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and/or career readiness, but some plan to add more elements in the future. However, it was no surprise that Sarah and Olivia did not point to assignments, career connections, or planned discussions around the usability of learned knowledge nor do they plan to incorporate elements in the future. Sarah said she takes "pride in the fact that her students" leave her course "having really mastered super, super difficult stuff." She wants students to leave "mastering a way of thinking and a way of being and a way of reading." Sarah said that she was often surprised by what she found interesting as a student herself, but that what she enjoyed about her college experience was "getting to know really difficult texts and feeling like I had sort of mastered them in some way" much like an "intellectual challenge," which are the types of discussion and assignments she creates for her own students.

Olivia expressed that she does not weave in specific connections to transfer beyond the class. She commented that "All of this, like, you know, autonomy and stuff like that, you know, the, the language around it has a lot to do with this idea of, you know, it used to be really bad and we made it good by making students more autonomous and so on, so forth and I don't think my relationship to my students isn't any different than my relationship was to my professors." She elaborated that when she was an undergraduate, she had a lot of autonomy and she does not understand "a lot of the contemporary philosophy" because in fact what people talk about in a contemporary

philosophy of higher education is instructional; "the pedagogical stuff is stuff that we did." Overall, she strives to encourage her students to interpret things through their own lenses, which is not all that different from the way she was taught, which included "a lot of autonomy" as an undergraduate.

Faculty Resistance to MMU's Career Readiness Initiative

When asked specifically about feelings toward MMU's career initiative, some participants showed resistance to the program for a variety of reasons: language, branding, concept, purpose, or need. Others expressed interest in the initiative but did not commit wholly to embedding any additional components into their courses.

The career readiness at MMU emerged from a task force with staff from career services, college advising, and the dean's office after early discussions highlighted that MMU students can attend for four years and never be asked what they are going to do with their degrees. Since part of MMU's mission is to prepare students to be responsible, engaged citizens and equip them with skills to address problems/politics appropriately, task force members identified a gap. To remedy these gaps in delivery, the task force explored using career competencies as a solution since they help students demonstrate the value of their degrees and are relevant to what faculty do: teach.

For those faculty who said they were open to the idea of the initiative, most appreciated how it could be helpful to students. Marie is onboard with the initiative and is open to doing "more," especially in her upper-level classes since, she noted, "students are about to graduate and it is never too early to start demonstrating those things." Emma expressed that the career readiness has not influenced her design, but the ideas behind the initiative are things she does think about and feels she already does. Ethan was somewhat

familiar with MMU's career readiness initiative, but he stated that he has not been at MMU long enough "to pick up on the broader trends" of the program; consequently, he has not changed his course design in the short time the initiative has been in place; however, he does plan to get himself more "informed on the initiative, and work on "how to align the program with the course objectives" for his courses. Siena admitted that she does not know much about the career readiness initiative, but she suggested that the program could be of "value if it provides a more systematic way" to approach putting in career readiness pieces into a class.

Elijah said that MMU's diversity and inclusion initiative was definitely informing his course design but that, overall, university initiatives do not dictate his course design per se; rather, he agrees "with the sentiment of them more than anything," but that for the most part, "those things, actually, you just think about yourself." Augustine indicated that she is familiar with the career readiness initiative and plans to add more elements even though she did not identify it as a primary concern in her interview.

Jean expressed that she is familiar with the career readiness initiative and unlike some other university initiatives, Jean has found this initiative "exciting." However, Jean also detected some issues with the potential success of the initiative. Because career readiness can align with academic and intellectual goals, according to Jean, she emphasized that the only reason this particular career readiness would not be a "phenomenal success is if and because individual faculty members just roll their eyes at anything that feels like a market strategy." When asked if career readiness and conversation about utilizing the degree align with the culture of the humanities, Jean expressed that the initiative may not "take off because of the pandemic." However, she

pointed out that many humanities faculty have been resistant to teaching online, yet several of them completed the quality online teaching course and are teaching online. Jean also acknowledged that "really overwhelmed and overstressed people" will probably be hostile and resistant if career readiness is pushed as a top priority. With COVID, Jean sees the initiative as losing momentum because she feels like she is "paddling to keep" her head above water" and "adding anything new in right now - it's just too much to think about."

Even though he viewed this as a "worthy initiative," Jackson qualified that he thinks faculty have been "doing these things all along." Programs like this, according to Jackson, work well to recruit and retain students, but he clarified that they will not change the way he designs or teaches his classes. Jackson stated, "I am going to teach without consciously saying, well, this is going to be this" competency and "run through the list"; however, he emphasized that if he were to review his syllabus, he would be able to pinpoint where and how many times he covers applicable competencies in his history class. He did state though that he might consider "publicizing, for a lack of a better term," the transferable skills and abilities students can learn in his history classes, which is something, he clarified, was not something he considered "25 years ago."

Beth explained that she was familiar with MMU's career initiative but was "not a fan" of the logistics and language. Jane expressed that she thinks MMU "can do that in other ways" because "introducing a new acronym adds complications that don't need to be there"; therefore, Jane has dismissed the emails she received about the career readiness initiative and has no plan to incorporate the language around course readiness into her course design.

Olivia pointed out that "a lot of students" she encountered at MMU lack "cultural capital." She noted that this may be that MMU has "a lot of students who are first generation college" and are entering fields that "their parents and their uncles and aunts" cannot help them navigate. For these students, Olivia emphasized that they do not have a career-savvy person to say to them as they are walking out of the house, "Are you really gonna wear that to an interview?" Olivia responded that she does not think that MMU students are "career savvy, which makes answering these questions ironic and complicated." Back when she was a student, Olivia said "we were much more sophisticated about expectations… and knew intuitively what behavior was expected of us; it kind of shocks me how that does not seem to be generically intuitive for our students." Olivia stated that she will not focus on competencies in her courses now or in the future unless someone tells her she has to do so.

With regard to the career readiness program, Elijah categorized the initiative is "kind of opaque to professors." He explained that he had heard of the career readiness focus but is not confident about figuring out "how to implement that in terms of our general education courses." However, Elijah referenced that if the initiative opens new ways for students to engage with the material, he is a "fan of that" because it may "equip the students in some way that" he has not been able to do.

James articulated that MMU's "branding is off" even though he believes in the idea behind the initiative. Therefore, when he assigns tasks for students to practice talking about their skills and transference, he incorporates the spirit behind the initiative but not the branding or language.

Sarah was also opposed to the language or ideas behind MMU's initiative; she stated that she finds MMU to be "a rather lumbering reactive institution." Even though she noted that she understands the "importance of certain initiatives" like this one and that it may be helpful to students, she does not see it impacting what she does in the classroom.

Summary

For several participants, the opportunity to articulate their course design process was not one that had availed itself until our interviews. However, with COVID and the transition to online teaching, participants expressed that they have been thinking about course design aspects. Overall, their responses embodied a thoughtful regard for how they create courses to engage students. Even though course design is considered idiosyncratic, faculty described some similarities in how they think and what they think about, especially with regard to their students, their respective disciplines, and the purpose of education.

Responses about career readiness showed that they are fully aware of the concerns about the humanities and criticism about the lack of career readiness. Several participants supported the ideas associated with career readiness and have embedded activities into their courses, but they showed resistance toward the language of MMU's initiative and the idea of mechanically implementing career readiness into their courses.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Overview of Major Findings

This chapter discusses my findings from my qualitative ethnographic case study, which explored influences on MMU pre- and post-tenured humanities faculty decision-making in course design, effects of those influences, and their perspectives about career readiness. I found that a variety of influences contribute to how faculty design their courses and even though course design is considered idiosyncratic, faculty described some similarities in how they think and what they think about, especially with regard to their students, their respective disciplines, and the class objectives or learning outcomes they design courses around.

Participant responses about career readiness showed that they are fully aware of the concerns about the humanities and criticism about the lack of career readiness. Even though participants showed resistance toward MMU's initiative, most participants expressed support for career readiness aspects and outcomes, and some have embedded activities into their courses.

Implications of Findings

This study's central research questions focused on what influences faculty in their course design, the effects of those influences, and attitudes about career readiness. My research study proves valuable by filling in some of the gaps about current humanities faculty use of similar approaches in course design, employment of meta-orientations to

consider course aspects, and their willingness to incorporate career readiness attributes into their courses.

Course Design Influences

In reviewing the literature, the few studies I located dedicated to course design outlined how humanities faculty have traditionally considered the dissemination of disciplinary knowledge as the primary influence on their course design process. Academic discipline still resonates as a strong influence for the faculty in my study, but the majority of responses also showed that they have moved beyond thinking about disseminating knowledge as their only purpose. These findings could be particularly relevant to administrators and external stakeholders who are calling for humanities faculty to design courses to develop skills, prepare students, and facilitate the articulation and utility of knowledge. Humanities faculty may already be building the aspects administrators' desire into their courses; however, more research that investigates faculty perceptions about the purpose of education may reveal how and if faculty perspectives align with institutional goals.

My findings also demonstrated that students represent a key influence; for some, even the primary influence. Faculty explained that they see students at the center of their design and make choices accordingly. With this acute focus on students, faculty participants indicated that they modify their designs to match student interests and ensure student success; however, ideas about student success and course goals differed across participant responses.

James viewed student success as "progress towards those goals"; Jean considers student success as students realizing "their best potential as readers and writers and

critically engaged," so they can be "critically and well informed as they participate in conversations about literature and culture"; and, Olivia articulated that she has "no idea what success is" and that she does "not have the wisdom to be able to judge it in the moment." These responses reflect varying ideas and degrees about the idea of student success in the classroom and may very well conflict with views of some educational leaders outside the humanities. Therefore, developing common language around student success can ensure that faculty, administrators, and employers are thinking about these aspects in a similar fashion; faculty could then use this language to guide and shape their courses to meet stakeholder expectations with regard to rigor and quality.

Some faculty also noted that they realize the current college student differs in cultural capital and efficacy levels; educational leaders should continue to share information about graduation rates, graduate feedback, employment rates for graduates, changing student needs, overall skill deficiencies, and learning issues related to race, gender, and non-traditional and first-generation college students. In addition, faculty could survey their own students early on in the semester to capture the nuances related to some of these issues mentioned above. Access to data and information can assist faculty in decision-making and could motivate them to modify their designs accordingly to mesh with student needs.

In addition to primary influences, faculty also acknowledged other influences on their design. Since many commented that they had difficulty ranking the items, faculty participants may consider different influences in different combinations as they move throughout their design process. Unlike Stark et al. (1990), I found that faculty in my study viewed pragmatic issues as a strong influence on their designs: for example, Jean

highlighted class size; Olivia mentioned problems teaching synchronously; and, Marie addressed the size of the classroom. Even though pragmatic factors are typically beyond faculty control, their consideration of these factors shows they continue to have concerns about course sizes, teaching-load, and delivery platforms. Therefore, administrators may want to acknowledge that course decision-making is dependent on some of these factors, especially in larger general education courses.

In contrast to Stark et al., participants ranked colleagues as a lower tier influence, which may indicate, especially during COVID, that faculty have become more isolated and interact with colleagues less. However, participants noted that they do access a communal department space and view sample syllabi electronically. Many of these syllabi, especially those for general education courses, resemble each other quite closely. Participants referenced looking at syllabi or emailing colleagues rather than talking face-to-face; for example, Jean stated that "ever since we've had that eSpace website, I look at other people's syllabi quite a lot." James, Augustine, Marie, and Jane also used verbs like "look," "read over," and "viewed" to signal that they are engaging with colleagues indirectly and digitally rather than in more face-to-face conversations. Subsequently, faculty participants may consider these digital interactions with their colleagues as less influential even though they are actively engaging with their peers albeit in different ways and on different levels. Therefore, making faculty syllabi available on communal spaces should continue as access to sample designs can expose faculty to different strategies and inform them about different practices and formats.

The effects of external resources on the course design process are, perhaps, not as clear. Similar to Lattuca and Stark (2009), I also found that external entities, such as

society, culture and history, influence faculty decision-making as well although at undeterminable degrees. Faculty ranked both social justice issues and career readiness lower, but participants hinted that social justice as an influence permeates throughout their process.

Most faculty indicated that they make decisions based on social issues and this action is reflected in their content choices. Ethan said social issues influence which films he shows; Jane explained that these issues are "also a part of how" she makes selections for texts; and, Jackson clarified that the themes he teaches and the books he assigns and the way he teaches "are designed to point out, for example, instances in the American past where social justice has been absent." Faculty responses also indicated that participants consider racial, gender, and class issues that are relevant to their course topic and make some decisions based on these aspects. This outcome may signify to administrators that initiatives aimed at diversity, equity, and inclusion are seeping into course design considerations at both general education and upper-level courses. Less clear, however, are how other external entities, such as critics of the humanities, administrators, and employers, resonated as influences in the participants' design process.

Several faculty acknowledged external criticism aimed at the humanities, but they reacted to these charges differently. Jackson expressed that "it influences him minimally," so he does not make any design changes to address these claims. Olivia claimed that she does not teach what she teaches "to please anyone." Faculty noted, however, that they do talk to students about the value of a humanities degree, which suggests that they are reacting to critics on some levels. Beth said she is "always talking

about how English majors are perceived," and Siena indicated that she tries to help students understand the value of their degree. Jane expounded on this a bit more:

> Yeah, I am in a field right now that is considered whipped cream, and I don't think it is. I think it's actually really important to society to have people do what I do and to have students take the classes I teach. And so, if I am not able to communicate that to students so they can communicate that to their parents and their prospective employers, like, we're just setting ourselves up for failure. Right? We have to sell the value of what we're doing and the humanities.

Interview responses also showed some faculty directly or indirectly think about employers as well. This occurred less frequently in general education courses, but a few comments still suggest connections. In his general education course, James said, "… there has to be something specific about the content of the class and how that's going to help them … for gen ed students, I want them to connect it to their own life [sic], so if they're going into pharmacy, they learn something new." Jackson feels "complete latitude" with his course, but he stated that "what we're kind of locked into obviously is the general education goals and skills that we're all supposed to help students get." In upper-level courses, especially in production and technical courses, employers influenced course design at greater degrees, especially in film and creative writing courses.

In his production course, Ethan keeps "an eye on" what students will need when they leave MMU and makes "sure their skill sets" align with these external expectations. In his screenwriting courses, Elijah referenced the unclear "vocational" path for screenwriters and that employment in the film industry for screenwriters is "forever evolving, especially given like the nature of technology, how media is consumed" and the

rapidly changing nature of employment and hiring in screenwriting, “so it becomes about equipping them with what they need.” In his elective course, James said that if students “can articulate the skills that they learn, then that will be helpful to employers,” so he definitely wants them “to practice saying what they've learned or writing about what they've learned.” In a non-technical course, Marie said she reflects on ways to get students to “translate these skills” they learn “to something beyond this university.” Administrators may find these findings valuable as they show faculty are well aware of external entities and are responding to them in implicit and explicit ways with regard to course design. Additional research focused on external stakeholders could flesh a deeper understanding of the relationships between faculty and external stakeholders, especially since Stark et al. (1988) credited faculty members’ disciplines with influencing their decision-making more than institutional, career, or other external factors.

Overall, concluding how or if course design influences act independently or collectively can be difficult to assess. Many participants noted the difficulty of assigning a rank to the influences indicating that they change or “blend together in the design of some classes” according to Jane. Some participants suggested that they think about things more logically, which suggests that influences may work together throughout the process. For example, James noted that he begins his process thinking about learning outcomes, skills, and then content and activities. In contrast, Beth stated that the “first thing I decide is what works”; therefore, the role of the influences is a bit more nebulous. Even though no clear patterns about influences emerged with regard to gender, rank, or discipline, I did ascertain that most study participants think about multiple factors when they design a course and that they think about these things in the same way. Consequently, my findings

suggest that most study participants employ meta-orientations that allow them to reflect thoughtfully about several factors in their design; for example, skills and knowledge transfer. Even though some participants did not clearly articulate the connections between their decision-making and the implications of their choices, some of their comments and actions showed that they, at times, step out of their disciplinary silos to contemplate the utility of knowledge and skill application. However, faculty comments also suggested they struggle with offering students more contextual specifics about how they can connect knowledge to utilization, especially with regard to employers.

Effects of Course Design Influences

The effects of academic discipline, purpose of education, and students resonated clearly in faculty descriptions about their choice of content, objectives, contextual considerations, organization, activities, and themes. Similar to Stark's (2000) findings, two faculty in my study clearly expressed that they make decisions about content first, which indicates they may employ a traditional approach to letting the content guide their design decision-making. Even though others indicated that they too choose content first, their comments reflect they are also contemplating other aspects simultaneously.

Jane, for example, articulated that she thinks about films to use and "very actively" selects films with people of color on screen and behind the camera; Jean articulated that she tries to cover "a variety of different topics" and "include as much diversity as possible in terms of race and gender and social class and subject matter." Ethan also noted that he chooses chapters to address in the textbook but in choosing films, he tries to show "a variety of different films, different genres, different kinds of directors male and female, and diverse filmmakers world cinema." Some faculty indicated that they consider

the accessibility of assigned content, which shows a consideration of students is in the mix. Marie said she considers textbook costs while choosing her content: “I've been trying to think through if there are other ways I can teach this that makes the cost of college more affordable for students right now, but also get them that same knowledge that they could pay for with a textbook.” Olivia and Jane also addressed assigning affordable texts when choosing content. In decision-making about content, effects of the discipline are apparent, but external social issues, students, and maybe some criticism about college costs also influence their actions. Helping faculty connect to open-educational resources may be helpful in connecting them to resources that foster knowledge and skill building and application for students.

A few participants indicated that they start their design process contemplating aspects other than content suggesting that they adopt different orientations to initiate their designs. Therefore, unlike Toohey (1999), I found most participants were not entrenched in viewing course design through a disciplinary lens and consider other aspects either alongside or instead of content as an initial factor.

Jackson said he thinks about skill application and less about content in general education courses; James and Marie highlighted that they designate learning outcomes as a first step. These three participants alluded to the literature on teaching and learning and/or professional development experiences that have informed their practices even though Stark’s (2000) findings suggested that literature on teaching and learning did not influence faculty in her study. However, Stark’s participants did not have access to the extensive body of scholarly resources that have emerged in the past 20 years.

Jackson credited his research in teaching and learning scholarship with changing the way he thinks about his course. James and Jane referenced professional development experiences. James acknowledged his active participation in teaching and learning conferences and MMU's teaching and learning center while Jane discussed a teaching and learning grant that she received to design the course we talked about in her interview. These findings may indicate that exposure to teaching and learning strategies such as mapping and/or reverse designing a syllabus, may influence the design process. Therefore, exposing faculty to teaching and learning opportunities either on campus or in print may motivate faculty to adapt new course design strategies. However, determining what types of resources and activities that resonate with faculty proves difficult since many participants said they do not find professional development helpful and do not access teaching and learning resources. Several participants, however, referenced the quality online courses they took to transition to online teaching as valuable resources suggesting that if they see the professional development as directly relatable, they may seize the opportunity.

Every participant referenced skill building either in conjunction with content or other design aspects. In reviewing literature, I found several sources that showed humanities faculty resist suggestions to connect content and/or activities with the utilization of the knowledge they disseminate to students. However, like Roberts (2015), my findings suggest faculty may be reacting to external stakeholders' agendas, which address graduate employability. Most participants' responses around skills included words circling around career readiness: *articulating, transfer, application,* and *use.* However, faculty, for the most part, stayed clear of using phrases such as *career*

readiness or *preparing students for jobs or vocations* in their responses. For example, Beth noted that she draws "on different combos of those skills" to assist students in articulating and employing what they learn; and Jackson described his approach to "not just learn skills, but, I guess, the application of those skills and the application of knowledge as they begin to accrue during the semester to learn how to act and think, like, like a story." Some participants made direct connections to scaffolding activities indicating that these faculty consider connections between the materials and beyond the course. Therefore, similar to Roberts's outcomes, participant responses reflected that they emphasize generic and disciplinary skills in course design, but a few participants have moved away from isolating content as the driver of all decisions making and instead use a broader process that uses learning outcomes to consider the relevance of students and future pathways in upper-level courses. In general education courses, however, the process is a bit fuzzier since some most faculty expressed that have to incorporate program objectives and language into their decision-making. Embedding more language around knowledge and skill transfer into general education program language may encourage faculty to focus more on scaffolding knowledge and skill utilization into the course design phase.

Career Readiness Perspectives

My research showed that university pre- and post-tenured humanities faculty are open to embedding content and activities related to transferable skills, but they shied away from thinking they can prepare students for employment or careers. They are also not keen on the language of career readiness or vocational training; neither are they open to mandatory compliance with a university initiative that affects the autonomy of their

design process. Regardless of their firm stance on MMU's initiative, interview responses indicated that some of the ideas around career readiness have seeped into course design decision-making for some faculty.

Skills and Value Articulation

Most interview responses indicated that faculty associate career readiness with skills and the transfer of those skills, which are key aspects of career readiness along with being able to articulate learned knowledge. Unlike DuRose and Stebleton (2016) whose findings showed faculty do not build reflection into their courses, I discovered otherwise. A few faculty participants detailed the opportunities they provide students for intentional reflection; some even provide opportunities for deeper critical reflection. James, for example, assigns a metacognitive, or reflective, journal that has students foster a sense of how to use the skills they learn. Similar to DuRose and Stebleton, however, I, too, encountered little sense that the majority of my study participants gear reflection prompts around the learning that takes place in their courses and how it may translate to the workplace environment. Instead, their focus appears to be more on broadening the historical, cultural, and societal perspectives of students, especially in general education courses since building these connections served as one of the expectations of these courses.

Several faculty participants noted that they include activities or discussion that facilitate value articulation, but language dedicated to this aspect did not appear in their syllabi language or learning outcomes. Ten faculty participants included learning outcomes on their syllabi, but the outcomes were heavily grounded toward articulation of disciplinary information, such as historical, philosophical, and cultural connections,

rather than personal and professional growth. For example, Elijah said his approach to student success, especially in his general education course, is aimed at students articulating what he defines in syllabus learning outcomes; for example,

> [You will engage with] environments, political systems, economies, societies and religions of one or more regions outside the United States and awareness of the transnational flow of goods, people, ideas, and values. [You will discover] the role that different cultural heritages (past and present) play in forming values in another part of the world, enabling you to function in a more global context. You will learn cinema-specific language as a means to discuss film technique in relation to the films chose [sic].

Similar to Elijah, learning outcomes on other sample syllabi resonated more as objectives than learning outcomes; for example, Ethan, in his introduction to film general education course, employed words, such as "knowledge of cultural or historic artistic traditions…" and "the role of art as critical commentary on society…." The only two people who included application of knowledge and skills were James and Marie. Under objectives, Marie states," At the end of the semester, students should be able to apply methods learned in the course to media they encounter in their everyday lives." James provided learning outcomes for every activity detailing what students would take away from the action: for example, "practice both active leadership and followership skills" and "learn challenging goals that support your values." Several syllabi contain objectives and outcomes that are generic in nature and void of practical application of learned knowledge and skills. The absence of language dedicated to the utility of knowledge and skills suggest that general education program committees may have to create better

language and assessment measures that encourage faculty to consider application and transfer. Additional research should investigate faculty members' understanding and use about learning outcomes, objectives, and career readiness as they may provide additional insight into how faculty use and construct language around these terms.

Knowledge and Skill Transfer

Faculty contrasted upper-level courses with general education courses noting the challenges associated with connecting content to professional aspects and/or personal relevance or self-actualization; however, this attitude may not be problematic or uncommon since Gray and Orasanu (1987) concluded that skills simply do not transfer to new contexts. According to Billing (2007), many of the skills faculty participants referenced, such as communication, close reading, and writing, have not been proven to transfer without intervention.

Some faculty demonstrated that they offer the needed interventions, or conditions as Billing (2007) called them, to create opportunities for students to transfer skills and knowledge (p. 484). For transfer to occur, Bransford et al. (1999) recommended learners understand when they can apply what they learned to create self-awareness. However, these types of descriptions were lacking on several syllabi learning outcomes with the exception of James syllabus. He used clear language to identify the learning outcomes and transfer contexts under each activity along with an assessment tool and tips for success. Alexander and Murphy (1999) referenced optimal conditions as focusing on the learner, the content, and the context. Beth inferred that she thinks about these conditions when she indicated that she focuses on the student learner, the book, and skills that "they're developing when they do a close reading and can be transferred into, say, you

know, research or argumentative writing in a job." Billing (2007) said faculty must show learners how problems are similar and include metacognitive strategies; however, this linking of knowledge and skills to monitor and assess one's understanding to a broader context beyond the classroom seems missing as a guiding element on some participants' syllabi. Hatano and Greeno (1999) identified this as narrow teaching, which can limit the deeper understanding students need to transfer knowledge and skills to different contexts. For the most part, faculty indicated that they do "retool," "update" or "modify" their courses every time they teach their course, but comments reflected that these changes have more do with content decisions rather than a major rehaul of a course. Implementing workshops around mapping or reverse design may help faculty recognize problematic aspects and build stronger connections to broader contexts; however, as stated previously, getting faculty to access professional development resources is a battle.

Research Limitations

My research study contained several limitations that may have affected my findings. As true with most qualitative research, there was no expectation that my results might be generalizable to a large population of pre- and post-tenured humanities faculty. First, I solicited participants who met my criteria at only one institution. Interviewing faculty across different institutions could offer more insight into patterns and influences with regard to course design and perspectives about career readiness. I also did not secure participation across every humanities department at MMU thus identifying participants in other areas, such as music and performing arts and philosophy, may have produced different findings.

Another coverage limitation was my small sample size. My study included only 13 pre- and post-tenured faculty at MMU; therefore, my data do not reflect outcomes related to influences, processes, and attitudes for every faculty member at this institution. In addition, this small sample size does not reflect humanities faculty at other institutions either.

Another potential limitation of my research study was the use of Eisner and Vallence's value educational orientations. Using this theoretical framework helped me craft my questions, but it may have limited my investigation with regard to scope, language, assumptions, and participant interaction. However, I employed a pilot study that allowed me to revisit my questions and list of influence rankings; doing so assisted me in focusing on new themes and/or patterns.

I also relied on a limited list of influences to guide my investigation. In asking faculty to rank influences, they expressed trouble ranking items as they considered overlap in some areas with regard to how they think about things. My own positionality as a humanities faculty member may have also influenced and possibly limited or biased my phrasing of questions. Modifying and/or adding items for ranking may also evoke more explicit connections between influences and effects of those influences.

Finally, because of COVID, I had to rely on Zoom to conduct my interviews, which put me at a disadvantage in some ways as far as observing body language and asking questions about a hard copy of a syllabus that faculty could point to more readily. Face-to-face interviews may result in better sensitivity to posturing and pauses and enhance interactions and communication and, therefore, net better opportunities for follow-up questions.

Future Research Recommendations

Faculty responses in my investigation evoked some new findings about course design and what influences their design, but new questions about my focus surfaced as well. Therefore, future researchers could use a larger sample size. They could also explore how other external entities, such as critics of the humanities, administrators, and employers, resonated as influences in the participants' design process. In addition, more research focused around ideas of student success could flesh out meaningful insight, especially with regard to how definitions or outcomes change between courses and course-levels. More research should also be conducted comparing skill development and transfer with regard to optimal conditions and the differences in traditional and online classes. Finally, investigating if different influences affect faculty in online course design could prove insightful.

Conclusion

For many stakeholders, a shift has occurred in how they view the value of a college degree. Completing the college experience has become more about getting a good job than the pursuit of knowledge and understanding. Consequently, humanities faculty are caught in the crosshairs of this external criticism since, historically, humanities faculty resist the notion of preparing students for jobs.

Much of this attention focuses on universities offering courses that align with employer needs. In response, universities are steering faculty, both implicitly and explicitly, to find ways to embed career readiness indicating that the responsibility rests with faculty at the course design level. My investigation revealed that faculty value their autonomy in course design, so they resist anything that can infringe on their uniquely

individual process. Nevertheless, language around student success and diversity, equity and inclusion has entered into their conversations about design. So too, on some levels, has the language of career readiness. My findings revealed that faculty participants have embedded language around skills, articulation, transfer, and application; their responses and actions demonstrated how the ideas behind career readiness are seeping, albeit slowly for some, into their course design process. However, building a sustainable community culture around career readiness will prove difficulty.

University leaders could leverage a primary stakeholder that faculty prioritize as well: students. Faculty participants emphasized they make design decisions around students in both general education and upper-level courses. Therefore, securing student support for a career readiness initiative could facilitate a shift in decision-making to focus on readiness. Administrators could facilitate student support by inviting students to the table as student ambassadors for career readiness. Administrators could also have faculty members committed to embedding career readiness into their courses model syllabus design for department and college colleagues; for registration purposes, college leaders could also earmark courses that focus on career readiness and/or offer more professional development opportunities that focus on how students learn and/or strategies to ignite the transfer of knowledge and skills.

Administrators could also replace optional participation in this initiative with a mandate that forces faculty to use the language of career readiness in their classrooms. COVID provided a good test for administrators to see how faculty would pivot to something many in higher education opposed: online teaching. Much like career readiness, the majority of MMU faculty expressed resistance to online teaching, but they

managed to transition online to accommodate students during the pandemic. Therefore, administrators could follow suit with career readiness and strongly suggest or require compliance with the program. For faculty, this would be a major strike against their academic freedom as many would see this as interference with their intellectual property and a drastic shift from fostering intellectual curiosity and developing citizens to one of preparing students for jobs.

University leaders could also continue to introduce initiatives and let faculty select program aspects that align with their designs. Most faculty in my study stated or showed that they had already, directly or indirectly, weaved in elements around MMU's student success and diversity, inclusion, and equity initiatives. More importantly, some faculty participants said they agree with the spirit of these initiatives and that they are already implementing many of the considerations these programs set forth, but they will not design their courses with these initiatives in mind.

Students may play a key role in the success of a career readiness as well. Since a few research participants showed that they noted career readiness aspects on their syllabi or in the marketing of their classes, students may start gravitating towards courses that deliver on exposure to more positive scaffolding learning processes. A few research participants expressed that it is not their job to make these connections for students because they viewed "figuring it all out" as part of the learning process. However, others clearly showed that they design with students in mind, so they may be open to changing their designs to be even more accommodating of student needs. Communicating student needs to faculty and exposing them to new course design strategies is essential, yet it will be challenging to facilitate this type of sweeping change.

Because most faculty reside in silos, they rarely have opportunities to engage in professional development as a department collectively nor do they have many opportunities for face-to-face interactions. Therefore, one recommendation is to view career readiness at the department level. Department chairs, professional develop units, or a department career liaison could facilitate the groundwork to foster faculty buy-in by encouraging faculty to collaborate and share ideas related to what happens in their classroom. Since career readiness does not resonate the same for English and History faculty, specific applications may be more relevant coming from within departments. Faculty could also be influenced by their colleagues. Even though faculty are typically guarded about sharing assignments and activities, the move to online learning because of COVID may have changed their attitudes about sharing and viewing colleagues' course syllabi. In addition, offering faculty professional development opportunities to continue their understanding of how students learn proves to be essential as well even though my participants indicated that they do not find professional development particularly useful.

Explaining to faculty the disconnect students encounter as they move from course to course can show faculty why articulating learning outcomes and the value of those outcomes becomes so problematic for students after they graduate and encounter employers. Assisting faculty in understanding the importance of intentional critical reflection centered on the utility of coursework and experiences benefits students in numerous ways. As the changing landscape of employment becomes increasingly complex, fluid, and, most likely, automated, college students, especially in the humanities, must be cognizant of the skills they gain in college, so that they can have

every advantage in successfully transitioning from college to whatever the next step for them entails.

APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board

December 14, 2020
Protocol #: IRB-FY2021-166
Research Team: Rachel Smydra Jana Nidiffer

Based on applicable federal regulations, the following study, " The Role of Career Readiness in Humanities Curriculum: An Ethnographic Case study in Pre- and Post-tenured Humanities Faculty Course Design" has been determined to be Exempt, with the following categories Category 1. Research, conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, that specifically involves normal educational practices that are not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction. This includes most research on regular and special education instructional strategies, and research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
Permission from Research Site(s):
Please note the following:

- This IRB exemption determination letter means that this research has met one or more of the federal criteria for exemption per 45 CFR 46.104- Exempt Research.
- Before the research is initiated, permission to conduct research at a given site must be obtained from all research locations listed in the IRB submission. You must keep copies of all such permission letters for your files.
- It is the responsibility of each researcher to follow all applicable policies and procedures of any outside institution where the research will be conducted.
- Letter and Consent Document:
- This letter along with the IRB date-stamped consent document can be found in Cayuse in the Submission Details page under Letters and Attachments, respectively.
- The IRB date stamped consent document must be downloaded and used in consenting participants.

Modifications: Any changes to this exempt project must be reviewed by the IRB prior to initiation by submitting a MODIFICATION request. Do not collect data while the changes are being reviewed. Data collected during this time cannot be used in research.
Record Retention: Exempt projects will be retained by the IRB office for three years after the last action on the project.
You are approved to start the research. Please retain a copy of this notification for your records. If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office.
Thank you.
The Oakland University IRB

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT EMAIL

RESEARCH RECRUITMENT EMAIL

I am Rachel Smydra under the direction of Dr. Jana Nidiffer, Associate Professor, Department of Organizational Leadership and the faculty advisor for this project I am conducting a research study to complete my dissertation for my doctorate in Educational Leadership at Oakland University.

I am recruiting individuals who are pre- and post-tenured humanities faculty with at least two years of teaching experience to interview them about how they design their courses and what influences this process. The research will take approximately one hour.
Your participation in this study is voluntary.
The research will take place through scheduled Zoom meetings.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact me at smydra@oakland.edu

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Tell me about this class and your connection to it. (RQ1)
Will you tell me about your process in designing this course? (RQ1)
Do you use this process for all your course designs or does it differ from class to class or platform? (RQ1)
Will you give me examples that show your process/procedures? (RQ1)
Tell me about your goals for the class. (RQ1)
How did you select and organize the course content (linear, sequential, etc...)? (RQ1)
Do you have a philosophical approach to teaching and learning? What methods (did you use? (RQ1)
What do you believe are the most important influences in your process as you designed your course? (RQ1)
Which influences are lower priorities? (show list of influences). (RQ1)
Rank influences.
How does your discipline factor into your design?
How does being a member of _____ community affect your choices? (RQ1)
How do students factor into your process? (RQ1)
Do you think about student success? (RQ1) Preparedness/career readiness? (RQ2)
Different student needs? (RQ1)
Size of your class? (RQ1)
How do your own experiences as a student learner factor in to your course design? (RQ1)
Does the university influence your course design? (RQ1)
Have you implemented any info competencies connected to the CAS Advantage? (RQ2)
Have and external factors influenced your decision-making? (RQ1)
Professional associations? (RQ1)
Social media sites (rate your professor)? (RQ1)
Describe your commitment to teaching. (RQ1)
Do you partake in professional development opportunities? (RQ1)
Has your course design process changed over your time at OU? (RQ1)
How would you feel about adding more aspects of career readiness and connections for students to help them articulate the value of their degree?

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