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# A Mixed Methods Investigation of the Faculty Teaching Role: Values, Intention, and Practice

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A MIXED METHODS INVESTIGATION OF THE FACULTY TEACHING  
ROLE: VALUES, INTENTION, AND PRACTICE

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Charles Ambler, Ph.D.  
Dean of the Graduate School

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by

Robin Lynne Dankovich

2016

## **DEDICATION**

For my grandfather, Ralph R. Furbush, Jr.  
Papa, I'll be loving you, always.

A MIXED METHODS INVESTIGATION OF THE FACULTY TEACHING  
ROLE: VALUES, INTENTION, AND PRACTICE

by

ROBIN L. DANKOVICH, M.Ed.

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of Texas at El Paso  
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of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research is a mixed methods investigation of the faculty teaching role through the exploration of values, intentions and practice of college professors. To compliment the research questions the literature review explores the forces shaping the professoriate over time, contemporary context of higher education, values, and conceptions of teaching. To frame the discussion Argyris and Schön's (1974) theory of espoused values and values in use is coupled with the codification of human strengths offered by positive psychology.

The results of the study indicate that all faculty espoused values focused on love of learning, honesty, fairness and judgment. Those interviewed provided additional insight on teaching approach where engaging students, creating real world connections and encouraging critical thinking were central. Faculty had positive views of their students and felt they were capable of success yet expressed concerns about inadequate preparation for college level work. Despite that, professors had a great degree of empathy for this student population by recognizing their commitment, sacrifice and challenges they face.

Qualitative analysis revealed a central theme related to institutional context and the pressures that the faculty experience. Faculty articulated concerns about mixed messages and a perceived lack of support for teaching on campus. Arguably, most indicated a true passion and dedication to teaching, but both pre-tenured female faculty and older male faculty expressed a heightened concern about the pressures that a shifting institutional mission is causing. Despite clear issues perceived by faculty regarding climate, teaching observations indicated a congruence between espoused and enacted values in teaching practice. The flexibility of the faculty role has provided a means for faculty to flourish and enact their values thus maximizing meaning in their work. Also, early career faculty expressed challenges from pressures to serve an underprepared

student population and demands for high scholarly output. As a whole the faculty are committed to the region, the students they serve and are truly committed to their role as teachers. A concluding discussion offers suggestions for improving faculty development, campus climate and support initiatives. Suggestions of implications and further studies are also made.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements .....	v
Abstract .....	x
Table of Contents .....	xii
List of Tables .....	xv
List of Figures .....	xvi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 The Study .....	1
1.2 Research Problem .....	4
1.3 Study Significance .....	7
1.4 Research Questions .....	9
1.5 Inquiry Framework .....	10
1.6 Organization of Dissertation .....	11
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	13
2.1 Introduction.....	13
2.2 Evolution of the Professoriate.....	13
2.3 Modern Forces Shaping the Professoriate .....	20
2.4 Contemporary Teaching Context.....	23
2.5 Faculty Perspectives.....	27
2.6 Work Values and Beliefs .....	29
2.7 Teaching Conceptions and Beliefs.....	32
2.8 Values in Action – Perspectives in Positive Psychology.....	37
2.9 Importance of Study.....	41
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY .....	43
3.1 Mixed Methods Investigation .....	43
3.2 Epistemological Grounding and Research Paradigm .....	43
3.3 Research Design and Data Collection.....	46
Study participants.....	47
Electronic survey. ....	48
Faculty interviews.....	54

Observations of teaching.....	57
3.4 Validity of Study.....	58
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS.....	60
4.1 Introduction.....	60
4.2 Survey Data.....	60
Participant background. ....	61
Values in action instrument. ....	63
Survey responses to supplemental questions. ....	65
4.3 Faculty Interviewee Profiles .....	73
Dr. Downes .....	74
Dr. Winters.....	75
Dr. Avery. ....	76
Dr. Pleasant. ....	78
Dr. Artista. ....	79
Dr. Hidalgo. ....	81
Dr. Rawe. ....	82
Dr. Conrad.....	84
Dr. Tierna. ....	85
Dr. Groen. ....	86
4.4 Faculty Interviews Thematic Analysis.....	87
Faculty espoused values and the teaching role. ....	88
Faculty perceptions on teaching role and their approach to practice. ....	96
Faculty perspectives on students.....	98
Institutional context. ....	103
4.5 Teaching Observations.....	115
4.6 Implications of Striving .....	121
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION .....	126
5.1 Discussion .....	126
5.2 Theoretical Contributions .....	129
5.3 Implications.....	130
Role balance.....	130
Tenure and promotion.....	132

Administration and resources. ....	133
Professional development. ....	135
5.4 Limitations .....	136
5.5 Concluding Thoughts.....	138
REFERENCES .....	140
APPENDICES .....	154
A. Interview Protocol.....	154
B. Observation Coding.....	157
C. Survey Recruitment Email .....	158
D. IRB Approval Letter .....	159
E. Online Survey.....	161
VITA .....	171

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Values In Action Classification of Virtues and Character Strengths.....	40
Table 4.1 University Faculty Distribution and Survey Respondents by College .....	61
Table 4.2 Survey Respondent and Institutional Profile by Race/Ethnicity .....	62
Table 4.3 Rank of Signature Strengths by Academic Rank and Gender .....	65
Table 4.4 Faculty Self-Selected Rank of Priorities.....	66
Table 4.5 Faculty Role Primary Interest Area .....	67
Table 4.6 Selection of 3-5 Strengths/Qualities that Individual Faculty bring to their Work.....	68
Table 4.7 Faculty Views on Institution.....	122



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1 Espoused Teaching Approach, All faculty .....	69
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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*“In our rush to reform education, we have forgotten a simple truth: reform will never be achieved by renewing appropriations, restructuring schools, rewriting curricula, and revising texts if we continue to demean and dishearten the human resource called the teacher on whom so much depends.”* Parker Palmer (1998, 2007, p.4)

### 1.1 The Study

Teaching is personal, it is identity and integrity, it is passion and it is soul. It is sharing with another and encouraging others to become their best selves. It is accepting failures and encouraging curiosity and questions. It is seeking answers and realizing that you will never learn all that you desire. It is being vulnerable and wholehearted and it is a calling. On a teacher's worst day it is devastating, but on a good day it is euphoric and feels like oxygen. It is an honor; it is invigorating and maddening - all at the same time. As I reflect about my thinking and heart for teaching I am reminded of Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) notion of flow, where “the body or mind is stretched to its limits in voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile” (p. 3). Do others experience this sense of flow or passion for the classroom? Does one's mindset or perspectives about teaching have anything to do with how they approach their work? Do views about teaching influence feeling, and thus behaviors and actions? How much do we really understand about the thought process of the teacher, and can the focus on technical aspects of teaching temper the fire one can have for teaching and learning?

In the fall of 2016 a projected 20.5 million students returned to the nearly 5000 two and four-year colleges and universities (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). The tradition of college life and higher education is as entrenched in our minds as the seasons change. Students are continually seeking the development and training in hopes that

they can live the good life. They are pursuing the American Dream and head to the hallowed halls of our nation's institutions of higher education each fall to get the competitive edge. These students and their families are placing trust in a system and a tradition that now can be part of a narrative of a rich diversity of both men and women from all races, cultures and economic backgrounds. The challenges before our institutions of higher education are great and grow each year, so, too, must our approaches to meeting these challenges.

When I personally consider what I care deeply about and the research questions that matter to me, it comes to the obligation of these institutions to society, the obligation of the individuals within these institutions to serve and the reality that too often conflicting actions and messages push many of us off tracks. Due to many circumstances, we are confronted with varying degrees of frustration and limited support to help us meet our obligations. There are internal factors and experiences that comprise the heart of an educator and there are external forces that push on this inner heart that can help it grow or harden. Just as teaching is the intentional act of creating the conditions to help students learn, so too should institutions that we teach in create conditions where faculty can flourish as educators. To place this in context I offer the following questions for consideration.

Think of your experiences as a student. Recall whom you consider to be your best teacher, not just the most fun or the easiest teacher, but the one who inspired you, the one who somehow ignited something within you? Imagine that classroom, what did it feel like to be in that space, how did this teacher create this learning environment? Reflect, remember, and now think about what made this experience special, important and meaningful to you? Was it a teaching technique, a pedagogical approach, or was it something more? Maybe it is something that is difficult to articulate, maybe it was the excitement they brought to their discipline, the way they thought about

you as their student, or how even how they found ways to build a relationship with you. It is likely these answers do not come easy, but that is ok, as we must recognize that teaching and learning is full of complexity and something worthy of investigating for better understanding.

Scholars have spent a lot of time trying to unpack the complexity of the learning environment at all levels of the education continuum. It has been explored in a number of ways, however when I think about my best learning experiences it does not come down to a technique or a teaching style. It is something more than that, not something specific or tangible, but an underlying spirit that influenced the way I felt. Not just how I felt about the subject matter, but their enthusiasm for their discipline and their influence on my mindset as a learner. Exceptional teachers in my life have empowered me to view myself through a new lens that launched into places of growth I never would have imagined otherwise.

With that in mind, how can educational institutions sustain and deepen the selfhood from which good teaching [like this] comes” (Palmer, 1998, 2007, p.4)? To answer such a question Palmer argues for the exploration of the internal aspects of teaching and suggests that for a full understanding one must consider the intellectual, emotional and spiritual paths of the teacher, specifically the way one thinks about teaching and learning (the intellectual), the way both the teacher and learner feel through the process, (the emotional), and finally, the need to feel connected to the work (the spiritual calling). “[W]hen academic culture dismisses inner truth and honors only the external world; students as well as teachers lose heart” (Palmer, 1998, 2007, p.4). When educators are forced to become mere technicians, they are moved away from their identity and integrity and lack the ability to make connections required of teaching. Education is the building up of relationships and allowing for the push and pull on ideas, without connecting to the teacher identity, the nature of the work can become empty.

When I connect these thoughts with my views on teaching and the obligations of higher education I wonder how our mindset about our work influences our actions within a given context. How we approach our work is based on what we think and how we feel which influences our intentions and practices. The work that we do is intimately connected to who we are, how we envision the world and how we anticipate the world will respond to our actions. The most motivated and dedicated individuals can be confronted with environments that can stymie the best of our intentions, while those with little drive may conversely become inspired by enriching and nurturing environments. In order to better understand the phenomenon of teaching this researcher aimed to investigate faculty espoused values of teaching, teaching intention and the resulting theories displayed in teaching practice at a striving Tier One Research University on the U.S. – Mexico border.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

The state of higher education in the United States today is contentious and in the midst of rapid and revolutionary change. Scholars have pointed to the number of contributing forces as institutions strive to meet an array of demands and morphing purposes (Kerr, 2001). Fiscal constraints, (SHEEO, 2014), globalization, advances in technology, and marketplace pressures, combined with a growing and increasingly diverse student population have developed a pursuit of prestige and funding like never before (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007; Morpew, 2002; O'Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). In particular, former regional colleges and universities with previous low research productivity are striving to become national or international research universities (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1994; 2014).

So what do these rapid changes mean for the faculty member? The traditional role consisting of the triad of service, scholarship and teaching, is now expanding to include additional responsibilities that may include writing proposals, developing contracts, creating new modes of teaching delivery, and fundraising. These added duties have increased strains on faculty time, resulting in a lengthening of their work week, increased stress (Gappa et al., 2007; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006), a reduction in time committed to teaching (Hurtado, Eagan, Pryor, & Tran, 2012; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006) and adjustments in promotion and tenure evaluations (Boyer, 1990; Fairweather, 2005). Although scholars have attempted to emphasize the importance of the teaching role of faculty in higher education (Boyer, 1990); the focus of teaching continues to decline, particularly overshadowed to the role of research activity in higher education (Fairweather, 2005).

Most faculty in higher education claim that their pursuit of the professoriate is a direct result of their love of learning and teaching (Golde & Dore, 2001). Nearly all faculty (98%) believe that their teaching is central and significant to their role in academia (Hurtado et al., 2012); however it is important to note that over the past 30 years faculty job satisfaction has declined. Today, only one in three faculty are very satisfied with their work whereas over half of all faculty were in 1975 (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Some argue that this disconnect between purpose and reality is the result of these expanding roles coupled with an overall diminished value of teaching. In particular, they argue much of these changes are due to a system of rewards that centers on striving research missions and entrepreneurial goals (McDaniels, 2010; Musselin, 2007).

The issue is that institutional values and faculty values toward teaching are beginning to conflict with one another. Research suggests that when goals change rapidly or are ambiguous a

divide between the individual and the organization may develop, resulting in reduced motivation and performance and ultimate disengagement (Berg, Csikszentmihalyi, & Nakamura, 2003; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Through the examination of faculty life over thirty years, Schuster and Finkelstien (2006) uncovered two dominant responses faculty have made to this phenomenon. Either this “lack of congruence between individual faculty orientations and changing institutional missions has led” some to detach from institutional priorities, or others have embraced this change and have directed roles of faculty toward grants, research funding and entrepreneurial pursuits in response to economic pressures (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006, p.35).

Whether faculty members detach or embrace the changes happening in their institution, there are additional factors shaping the teaching and learning environment. In light of these institutional changes, it is important to reflect and understand the values that faculty bring to their role as teachers and if this context affects how they conceptualize their work. An examination of the literature reveals the bulk of the scholarship on teaching in higher education focuses on techniques and best practices. Studies have documented the quality of teaching and learning (Lindblom-Ylänne, Trigwell, Nevgi, & Ashwin, 2006; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999), teaching assessment (Yorke, 2003) and nearly every college or university has programs or offices to enhance faculty skills in teaching (Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy, & Beach, 2006). However, there are few studies that examine teaching in the context of changing higher education and even less that investigate the potential link between teaching beliefs and teaching practice (Kane, Sandretto, & Heath, 2002; Norton, Richardson, Hartley, Newstead, & Mayes, 2005). Rarely is the discussion about the nature of the work of teaching or the values of teaching.

Parker Palmer, sociologist, writer and educational activist and his colleagues have recently pointed to this discrepancy and argues that we should transcend the mechanics of teaching and

learning and focus on increased understanding about the individuals that teach and the students who learn (Palmer, 1998, 2007; Palmer, Zajonc, & Scribner, 2010). Individually, each educator has a mindset that affects our values, belief systems and other non-skilled based attributes that tend to affect how we think, feel and ultimately act in the teaching space (Palmer, 1998, 2007). So the fundamental question must become, not what techniques are available, but the mindset and heart each educator holds that affects how we think, feel and ultimately act in the teaching space.

### **1.3 Study Significance**

Teaching and learning are the building blocks and the foundation of what we call education. However, to begin to unpack and understand what happens in this complex and changing environment one must examine how teachers conceptualize their work, what values they bring, how they think about those they teach and if their espoused beliefs are manifested in their practice. This investigation is not an evaluation of teaching directly; however it is founded on the notion that what we think affects what we feel and thus is the baseline to how we act. If we understand how faculty conceptualizes the teaching role and the students they serve, we may better uncover influences little considered when investigating learning environments in higher education. Understanding the relationship between faculty espoused values and perspectives on teaching and how that is enacted in practice could have implications on doctoral student preparation, new faculty transition, faculty development and the overall quality of learning experiences for all students.

This study takes place in a large Hispanic Serving Institution located in an urban center on the U.S. – Mexico border. The borderplex region that the University of Texas at El Paso serves is a geographically isolated region where the population, as well as this specific institution's, is overwhelmingly working class and Hispanic (80.7% of city, 78.2% of student population) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012; UTEP, 2015). Nationally this demographic group has made a significant



leap in college enrollment. In 1980 a mere 4% of college enrollment nationally comprised Hispanic students, but today Hispanic students comprise 17% of the college population and the overall Hispanic population in the U.S. projected to more than double over the next forty years (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

The state of national population growth, coupled with the large Hispanic population that UTEP serves results in an important cross-road of opportunity. An institution of higher education on the U.S. – Mexico border, which is actively undergoing a shift from a regional teaching focused institution to the ambition of becoming a national research intensive institution, now creates an evolving context that likely adjusts the faculty role. In light of these institutional changes, it is important to reflect and understand the values that faculty bring to their role as teachers and if this context affects how they conceptualize their work, if it influences intentions to develop classroom environments, and if it ultimately shapes teaching practice.

The complexity of institutional context, the limited research on teaching in higher education and how faculty values, beliefs, and intentions influence teaching practice are important rationales for this line of research. The preparation of the future professoriate and faculty development should be grounded in the best practices, not only in their knowledge of content but in the teaching and learning environments that they create. Previous research on this institution has identified a number of concerns and the effects that this institutional shift may have on teaching and the future of the education of its students (Gonzales, 2010). In order to preserve the rich tradition of this long serving teaching institution, while moving in this new direction, research must be done on what faculty think about their teaching and their students, and how it affects their practice given the unique population served at this Hispanic Serving Institution.

It is this context and how it may frame faculty approaches to teaching and learning that is of interest to this researcher. Specifically, this study aims to investigate faculty espoused values of teaching, teaching intention and the resulting values enacted in faculty teaching practice at an aspiring Tier One research university on the U.S. – Mexico border. If it is true, that research on faculty beliefs could provide a more powerful connection of teaching to learning than pedagogical techniques alone, benefits for the future development of the professoriate could emerge.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

The following details the overarching research questions that guide this study.

### *Central Research Questions*

- How is the role of teaching shaped by faculty values and institutional context in higher education?
  - How do teachers' values, beliefs and conceptions relate to their teaching practice at the university level?
  - To what extent, if any, are these values, beliefs and conceptions shaped by their institutional context?

### *Quantitative Research Questions*

- What are the values frequently represented by faculty in regards to the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths –72 (VIA)?
- What percentage of faculty members focus primarily on their teaching role?
- What perspectives do faculty members hold about those they teach?

### *Qualitative Research Questions - Interview*

- What values do faculty believe are most important in regards to the teaching role?
- How do faculty members perceive their role as teachers in higher education?
- How do faculty members describe their approaches to teaching?
- What are the influential factors on teaching at an emergent Tier One research university on the U.S. Mexico border?

### *Qualitative Research Questions – Teaching Observations*

- What values (theories in use) are evidenced in faculty teaching practices?
- How do faculty members behave toward those they teach?

## **1.5 Inquiry Framework**

The overall theoretical framework for this study was developed initially by Argyris and Schön (1974) in their book *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness*. Investigations of theories in practice or action are based on the premise that humans are agents within their own environment capable of purposeful action (Argyris, Putnam, & McLain Smith, 1985). In order to cope with the complexity of our world, rather than create a set of actions and solutions to every situation one faces, Argyris et al. (1985) suggest that individuals learn to develop “concepts, schemas, and strategies ... for drawing from their repertoire to design representations and action for unique situations” (p. 81). As a result, when individuals are asked about specific scenarios, they tend to explain how they think they may behave, an espoused theory of action. Unfortunately, people often verbally respond with a theory that suggests their intentions; however, this may not necessarily align with the actual actions as a result of living their experience directly.

In order to understand how espoused theories influence actions, researchers suggest a framework to examine this phenomenon (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Argyris et al., 1985). Specifically, “understanding how we diagnose and construct our experience, take action, and monitor our behavior while simultaneously achieving our goals is crucial to understanding and enhancing our effectiveness” (p. xxxii). Given this, initially I will investigate how faculty construct their experience and create an espouse theory via a general values survey. However, since this is only a theory how one suggests they may behave, the investigation must also explore how this espoused theory develops into intention and is enacted. It is through the observation and monitoring of teaching behavior after establishing an understanding of the educator’s espoused theory to learn more about how theories in actions are shaped. Thus this study will investigate faculty espoused theories of teaching, teaching intention and the resulting theories displayed in teaching practice.

## **1.6 Organization of Dissertation**

The following chapter presents a review of the literature. Beginning from the historical perspective of the evolution of the professoriate, particular the developments over the last 100 years and the transition toward contemporary forces shaping a new faculty of the future. A discussion of general values, faculty values and values toward teaching follow a brief investigation of the literature on faculty identity development. In an effort to get at faculty values, the study of character strengths in conjunction with the tenets of positive psychology is explored as a basis of later data analysis. Finally, a connection is considered through the unpacking of the scholarship regarding work intentions to explore how espoused values evolve into actual classroom practice.

Following the literature review, chapter three presents the methodology utilized in this study. A discussion on underpinning paradigms to various research methods is covered and

provides insight in to this researcher's positionality. Time is taken to explain the steps employed, beginning with the conception, design and launching of an online survey. Phase two of the investigation, and the bulk of the data is collected via qualitative methods. The open-ended interviews and subsequent teaching observation methods of data collection are explained along with the accompanying approaches to data analysis.

In chapter four, the answers to the research questions are explored. An overview of the faculty survey and how it provides a backdrop and access to the faculty who shared their truth and opened their classrooms for investigation. The bulk of discussion centers on the qualitative analysis of dialog and the identification of enacted values. A portion of this chapter also encompasses the organizational climate that the faculty experience that shapes their work responsibilities and how it challenges their teaching. Overall, major themes and threads of discovery are presented.

In the concluding chapter five, I discuss what my analysis means to the context of teaching in higher education today, and I identify additional areas of exploration. Opportunities for faculty development, institutional knowledge, the intersection of individual values with institutional context and striving institutions are discussed. Limitations and implications for future research needs are addressed and a hope for a renewed interested into the heart of a teacher is argued.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Several lines of research are considered to inform this investigation; the evolution of the faculty role, forces shaping the higher education context, faculty beliefs and values, and teaching practice. Teaching in higher education is explored through three distinct perspectives, from espoused values, intentions and the values expressed through teaching practice. While the professoriate requires participation in multiple roles that include research, service, and grantsmanship, the focus will remain on the obligation of teaching in the higher education setting.

### **2.2 Evolution of the Professoriate**

Origins of higher education in the United States date far before this country was even conceived with the founding of Harvard College in 1636. These early days in the New World education centered on the primary purpose to advance Christianity. The Statutes of Harvard clearly states “[e]very one shall consider the main End of his life and studies, to know God and Jesus Christ which is Eternal life” (Statutes of Harvard, 1646, 1989). Other early colonial colleges were similar as Yale affirmed their mission in 1701 that it was a place “wherein youth may be instructed in the arts and sciences, who through the blessings of Almighty God, may be fitted for public employment, both in church and in civil State” (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 6). This central purpose of faith was very similar for other colonial colleges and clergy where often the key to the development of the original purposes of these institutions.

The majority of the faculty during this period were young men, about the age of twenty with baccalaureate degrees who served as tutors. This role was often a temporary position that served as a stepping stone for a future life of ministry. Early college faculty tended to be in

residence with the students and served in quasi-parental roles with round-the-clock presence (Jencks & Riesman, 1968). As a result, tutors not only cared for the intellectual development of students, they were dedicated to students' spiritual and moral development, as well. It was through the preparation of daily recitations and lessons along with evening discipline in the dormitories that provided the means for early faculty to deeply shape the character of their students. This idea of the early faculty role is quite different from our image today and more career-based professional faculty members did not emerge in America until the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006).

For the first one hundred years, colonial college instruction followed the English tutoring tradition; however, following the mid-1700s instructional clergy begin to be replaced with the first professors in America. This period of time marked the gradual shift from faith influenced education toward one more closely tied to colonial governments. Students began to pursue education for occupational specialization and over the span of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the focus on religious studies declined. From 1700-1750 about half of all students were entering the clergy, however by 1761 it fell to 37% and by 1801 less than a quarter of all students pursued religious studies (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997).

Professors were now being drawn from specialized disciplines: law, medicine, and philosophy, with formal education obtained in Europe. The instructional role was no longer a transitional career path and even those who previously pursued the ministry were now opting for this more lucrative and stable career in academia. Generally, these early new world professors had been experienced and successful practitioners who were older and regularly alumni of the institutions that they served (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). The cadre of faculty during this period flourished during this initial period of professoriate professionalization. In 1750 there were only

10 career-track college professors, however by the end of the century there were over 100 serving a growing student population surge during the post-Revolutionary War period (Carrell, 1968).

The notion of the academic expert begins to take hold throughout the course of events spanning the 1800s. It was a time of extensive intellectual activities and the upstart of educational guilds (Carrell, 1968; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Faculty begin to create and participate in the American Philosophical Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Academy of Fine Arts (Carrell, 1968). Their membership was not limited to the American landscape, as many faculty also participated in scientific and medical societies in London, Edinburgh and additional European academic centers. College professors developed a growing interest in educating one another and advancing their field through scholarship (Jencks & Riesman, 1968), however their focus was still primarily on the education of students (Boyer, 1990). A tradition of academia is established as the Civil War comes to a close as historians note the first appearance of the academic rank system. The hierarchy of the professoriate is likely a response to the faculty who enter the professoriate immediately after graduate training (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006).

While the role of the American academic evolves a new compelling interest of service joins the growing list of university objectives during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The federally enacted Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 encouraged the development of at least one college in each state to emphasize workforce needs of agriculture and mechanical arts (Geiger, 2005). This utilitarian approach to education was twofold, first to serve economic development and second, to provide increased educational access across society. In 1887 the Hatch Act aided these college upstarts further through the influx of federal dollars to support extension services across each state.



The ideals of state service continues to blossom across the nation inspired by the President of the University of Wisconsin who declares in 1904 that “I shall never be content until the beneficent influence of the University reaches every home in the state” (History of the Wisconsin Idea, 2015, para. 2). This served as a model for the emphasis and development of higher education extension and outreach services. Initiatives ranged from summer programs and courses brought to the people of the state and an intimate connection between university faculty and state legislators. Faculty members were consulted on the drafting of new policies and often even held governmental positions in conjunctions with their faculty appointments. This arrangement became known as the Wisconsin Idea and it was praised by President Theodore Roosevelt who wrote, “In Wisconsin there has been a successful effort to redeem the promises by performances, and to reduce theories into practice” (History of Wisconsin Idea, 2015, para. 3). This early melding of government and education clearly establishes service as a broad commitment of higher education; a moral duty and a view that the boundaries of the public institution are actually the boundaries of the state (Boyer, 1990; Geiger, 2005).

Competing with this newly added institutional mission of service is the notion of knowledge production in American Higher Education. Jencks and Riesman refer to this period as the “rise of the university” and argue scholarship gradually evolves throughout the last half of the 1800 (1968, p.13). An influx of number of Americans returning from Germany with terminal degrees, primarily in the sciences, become influential as the German model of the research university takes hold in the United States. Following the awarding of the first American Ph.D. at Yale in 1861, an additional fourteen colleges follow by awarding terminal degrees by 1900 (Gumport, 2005; Jencks & Riesman, 1968). The establishment of research centered educational institutions emerge as German educated Americans found Cornell in 1868, Johns Hopkins in 1876

and the University of Chicago in 1890. Specialized disciplines and subject specific departments are formed, much like we are familiar with today (Carrell, 1968). The desire to share knowledge establishes the first university press at Johns Hopkins in 1878 where founding president, Daniel Coit Gilman declares, “[i]t is one of the noblest duties of a university to advance knowledge and to diffuse it not merely among those who can attend the daily lectures but far and wide” (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015).

The German influence now requires American faculty to have achieved a Ph.D. in order to enter the professoriate, which pressures faculty to produce research and to publish. The importance placed on scholarship morphs the faculty role. William Rainey Harper, the founding president of the University of Chicago, ensures that faculty follow suit by requiring all faculty appointees to sign an agreement affirming that promotion and rank is dependent upon research production as the 20<sup>th</sup> century begins (Boyer, 1990). This added pressure to create new knowledge requires faculty to shed the locus parentis role of their colonial predecessors. Universities respond as non-academic responsibilities, student supervision and discipline now transfers to staff and signifies the birth of the student personnel movement by 1920 (Kezar & Maxey, 2015).

Several forces are now shaping the professoriate; however, the emphasis on research created new challenges. Faculty pursuing research that produced unpopular results or threats to dominant industry interests were being pressured to end their work. Often this work was in the public interest and for the greater good of society; however, more frequently faculty were dismissed from appointments. In an attempt to protect academic freedom, faculty across the nation mobilized and establish the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in 1915. The AAUP is significant for uniting faculty from a broad array of disciplines with a common interest

and works to create tenure policies and secure autonomy and academic freedom for faculty work (Kezar & Maxey, 2015).

As World War II approaches a coupling of research and service occurs on college campuses throughout the nation. Professors are now serving the nation in new ways through the Great Depression and the dawn of World War II. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt assembles what he terms the “Brain Trust” to resolve and address issues caused by the Great Depression. Later many university scientists contribute to the war effort via effort like the Manhattan Project and other scientific advances for military warfare. Overall, this period marks the solidification of the uniquely modern American academic, now much different than the English and German ancestors, who is a blend of teacher, researcher and public servant. The United States society relies on collegiate faculty to support political and economic challenges as they emerge (Jencks & Riesman, 1968; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006).

At the close of World War II faculty continue to respond to national needs as enrollment in higher education climbs after the GI Bill in 1944 and later the Higher Education Act of 1965. As a result, the number of faculty in America grows rapidly during this period. Those in the professoriate in 1939 comprised a mere 147,000, however faculty ranks triple 450,000 by 1969, and then ten years later reaches to nearly 700,000 (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Access opportunities supported by federal initiatives open doors to those previously absent in higher education (Geiger, 2005). The proportion of youth matriculating in college tripled from 15% to 45% during this same time frame and for the first time, women, minorities and low income students enroll creating a diversified student body. These changes, while historically significant, brought new challenges to the modern academic which included a broad range of backgrounds, preparedness and those unfamiliar with the college experience.

The challenges of enrollment and the modernization of American higher education continue to shape faculty life. Education for the masses and a desire to serve many missions and societal needs created what Kerr termed, ‘multiversity’ in 1963 (Kerr, 2001). These multiversities focused on research, but held on to well-established service missions and dedication to student instruction. Institutions desiring to be all things to too many masters created an environment where teaching was challenging and impersonal. It was becoming commonplace to have large lecture halls of 400 students or more. Institutions justified this by believing that students would benefit regardless of class size if there was a distinguished scholar leading the discussions. While this may have been true it led to the belief that the multiversity was an impersonal place.

Kerr, a strong advocate of these ever evolving multiversities, agreed that conflicting missions came at a high cost by stating, “[t]here seems to be a point of no return after which research, consulting, graduate instructions become so absorbing that faculty efforts can no longer be concentrated on undergraduate instruction as they once were” (Kerr, 2001, p. 49). While the American research university espoused values toward service and teaching actions were confirming “that new knowledge [was] the most important factor in economic and social growth” (Kerr, 2001, p. xii). Stanford Provost Frederick Terman demonstrated this making the acquisition of federal research grants an institutional priority during the span of 1955-1965 (Thelin, 2011). The hard-working scientists that aided the war effort were now in demand to compete for federal funding in exchange for teaching a large format lecture as mentioned above. The familiar mantra of ‘publish or perish’ materialized as Terman also demanded that all faculty, regardless of discipline, produce scholarship in the field. Faculty who were previously hired to mainly teach were now being evaluated as researchers and grant writers (Boyer, 1990). Thelin notes that a top Stanford biologist, elected to the National Academy of Sciences for exemplary scholarship, was

actually scolded by Provost Terman, for failing to secure federal research grants (2011). This type of behavior by administration begins to create a tension in faculty life and emphasizes that competing roles require faculty to choose what each one may be worth.

### **2.3 Modern Forces Shaping the Professoriate**

The state of higher education in the United States today is contentious and in the midst of rapid and revolutionary change in the United States. As Kerr's multiversity takes on more in the information age, higher education is in the midst of a new era of supercomplexity (Gappa et al., 2007). Scholars have pointed to the number of contributing forces over the last fifty years, which include economic challenges (Johnstone, 2004), globalization (Altbach, 2013), advances in technology (Altbach & Salmi, 2011), marketplace pressures (Rhoads, 2011; Schuster, 2011), accountability measures (Hussey & Smith, 2010) and striving missions (Gonzales, Martinez, & Ordu, 2014; O'Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011). All this coupled with growth in enrollment and diversity of the student body not only shape higher education, they contributed to restructuring of the faculty role, particularly.

The push for accountability in primary and secondary education has taken center stage through federal initiatives such as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top, and now has permeated into public skepticism and the push for accountability in higher education (Austin, 2003). For example, state legislatures are proposing policies to reward faculty members on the basis of grades and student satisfaction. Curricular decisions that once were fully vested in the professoriate are now being debated by politicians. In the state of Texas currently, policies supporting a three-year bachelor's degree and incentives for fast track programs shape the funding of higher education and ultimately the limit of content for any particular degree.

Pressures to serve an ever increasingly diversity of learners has mounted. From 1980 to 2008, the total number of white undergraduates in American colleges and universities increased by 22.9% (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). This growth compares to a 218% jump in the number of Asian, Hispanic, African American, and Native American undergraduates during the same period of time. In 1980, minority students (i.e., Asian, Hispanic, African American, and Native American) constituted 16.9% of the total national undergraduate population, while in 2008 they accounted for 25.7% of the national undergraduate population. College ranks now also host more adult learners than ever before. In 1970 only 27% of college students were over the age of 25, yet since the mid-1980s that population has risen to over 40% and has remained around that average through the fall of 2013. A more recent phenomena shaping college enrollment is that women now comprise over 57% of enrollment (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2012) and the Pew Research Hispanic Center reports that for the first time Hispanic high school graduates outpace whites in entering higher education. As of the fall of 2013 69% of Hispanic graduates entered college where only 67% of whites enrolled (Fry & Taylor, 2013).

The rise in enrollment numbers contributes to the need to find new revenue streams, but so does the shift in government support over the last fifty years. Political ideology centered on the argument that higher education is a private benefit rather than a greater public good has led to a reduction of state and federal funding (Austin, 2003; Johnstone, 2004). Scholars argue as a result there is a “de facto privatization of American public higher education” as state contributions account for minimal amounts of institutional operating cost (Lyall & Sell, 2006, p. 6). To best illustrate this, a review of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) report on

educational appropriates reveals a defunding of higher education per full-time equivalent dropped by 24% from 1988 to 2013 (SHEEO, 2014).

Over the last fifty years, scholars' have had a growing concern for the future of the professoriate and new threats to the tenure and academic freedom. Once readily available, full-time tenure track jobs are few and far between as noted by the drastic reduction in employment status of collegiate instructional staff over time. In 1975 57% of faculty full-time tenure or tenure track positions, this dropped to 43% in 1993 and in 2011 is was at a mere 28%. Over this same period of time, full-time non-tenure track positions increased slightly from 13% to 19%, however the greatest jump occurred in part-time non-tenure track positions. Less than a third of part-timers composed the instruction ranks in 1975 and that rose to 40% in 1993 and is over 50% in 2011 (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). When all these categories are factored it is important to note that 70% of all instructional staff are now composed of contingent faculty and the smallest percentage of faculty serve multiple missions. Some scholars believe this demonstrates that faculty work is unbundling, and that the traditional triad of teaching, research and service is in decline (Kezar & Maxey, 2015).

This unbundling is coupled with an ever-increasing amount of colleges and universities who are intensifying their research focus. Morphew's review of the Carnegie classification of colleges and universities reveals an eighty-five percent increase in doctoral degree granting institutions since 1987 (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1994; 2014). While the reclassification process of the Carnegie Foundation in 1994 and in 2010 make it difficult to track the specific growth in institutions categorized with the highest research activity, it is evident that the 26% increase of doctoral granting institution over the last 20 years is a strong indication of shifting institutional missions toward research. Morphew's (2002) work illustrates

that increased selectivity and focus on post-baccalaureate education contributed most to this change in his study of colleges moving toward university classification (Morphew, 2002). However, interestingly this research did not find that the need for funding as a significant contributing factor. While this is important to note, many scholars argue increased prestige coinciding with rising Carnegie classification may attract students, endowments, grants and entrepreneurial ventures which would result in increased revenues (O'Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011).

Finance pressures and shifting institutional missions have shaped the professoriate and changed the role of faculty. These striving institutions are utilizing research centric measures for the recruitment, promotion, and tenure of the few tenure track faculty remaining (Boyer, 1990; Fairweather, 2002). Despite many of these institutions speaking to ideals of teaching missions, research productivity and quality are favored over teaching commitment and excellence. State legislators have further subsidized to this practice. In Texas, the passage of House Bill 51 in 2009 abolished the state higher education fund to redirect state dollars to incentivize post-secondary institutions in the state to increase research productivity (19 Texas Administrative Code §15.22, 2010). Additionally, immediately following this period the Texas Public Policy Foundation in conjunction with former Texas Governor, Rick Perry, pushed for a rigorous market driven agenda to evaluate faculty by the tuition revenue they generate.

## **2.4 Contemporary Teaching Context**

While the mission of higher education has changed over time, from a purely scholarly pursuit, through the influence of German research model, to today where institutions aim to reach goals of a variety of lofty goals, it begs the question of the quality of teaching and learning on today's campuses. One does not have to look long and hard to note the excessive criticism of



higher education. The current political climate and the mainstream media have developed a discourse that continually questions the quality of higher education (Arum & Ruska, 2011). It is not surprising that scholars suggest that the “respect for the professoriate is declining” (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006, p. 136) from diminished academic values and the common belief that higher education is primarily about workforce development.

There appears to be a disconnect from within institutions as faculty react to the changing landscape of their work lives. Overall job satisfaction has declined, where about 50% of faculty were very satisfied with their work on the mid 1970s but today less than one third of faculty enjoy their work (Hurtado et al., 2012). Schuster and Finkelstien (2006) suggest that possible incongruence “between individual faculty orientations and changing institutional missions has led” some to detach from institutional priorities (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006, p.35). The fact that over two thirds of faculty now believe that it is difficult to achieve tenure without published research, whereas 40% believed this in 1969 gives some credence to how morphing missions affect the context of teaching (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). These shifts are real in the professoriate and it must be noted that when goals shift or become ambiguous and individual values become conflicted with organizational values, motivation and performance tend to decline and individuals disengage (Berg et al., 2003; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006).

Faculty in higher education most often claim that their pursuit of the professoriate is a direct result of their love of learning and teaching (Golde & Dore, 2001). Nearly all faculty (98%) believe that their teaching is central and important to their role as faculty (Hurtado et al., 2012), despite competing pressures that reduce time dedicated to teaching (Hurtado et al., 2012). While this may be true, the demands facing faculty are growing in contemporary higher education. In addition to the traditional responsibilities of service, scholarship and teaching,

faculty today must support growing institutional missions by writing proposals, developing contracts, creating new modes of teaching delivery, and fundraising. These added duties have expanded strains on faculty time, resulting in a lengthening of their work week and increased stress (Gappa et al., 2007; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Despite faculty commitment to teaching, overall time committed to teaching and preparing to teach has declined over the last twenty years (Hurtado et al., 2012; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Currently, 43.6% of faculty spend nine or more hours on teaching each week, whereas just twenty years ago 64% of faculty did (Hurtado et al., 2012). Some argue that this is a result of expanding roles coupled with a diminished value of teaching, stemming from a system of rewards that centers on research and entrepreneurialism over teaching (McDaniels, 2010; Musselin, 2007).

Boyer (1990) suggests that these contextual forces pushing institutional missions away from student learning in favor of the development of research agendas and institutional sustainability. In his work, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (1990) he claimed that focus on research does not and should not result in a sacrifice for the learner. Boyer further declared that there are actually four realms scholarship within the professorate; discovery (original research), integration (building scholarship across discipline), application (using scholarship for practice and service) and teaching (pursuit of pedagogical innovation). It is through his broader vision of scholarship that we can reclaim the balance of supporting the multiple missions of today's research institutions and increase the value and quality of higher education. While this concept provides an approach to create a balance in the faculty role, there are additional challenges that faculty face in their preparation for academia.

In 1995, Barr and Tagg contributed to the argument supporting the teaching role by addressing the need to shift from an instructional paradigm toward a learning paradigm in higher

education (1995). Over the last twenty years this new paradigm on teaching and learning has resulted in the proliferation of faculty development programs (Sorcinelli et al., 2006) and a new focus on students and an explosion of literature on techniques and content transmission regarding teaching in higher education settings (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, & Lovett, 2010). Despite these efforts, reward structures continue to favor scholarship as research and faculty are rarely rewarded promotion and tenure as exceptional educators alone (Kezar & Maxey, 2015).

When promotion and tenure decisions are centered on the creation of new knowledge and fail to incorporate the scholarship of teaching how can faculty develop as teachers? There often is an assumption that experts in a discipline will intrinsically know and understand how to teach in a way to promote learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995) and that those who do research and create knowledge are those best to teach that knowledge (Brew, 2003). However, the majority of faculty are not prepared for the complexity of teaching as they transition toward their early life in the academy (Austin, 2003).

As doctoral students, few future faculty experience the socialization necessary for teaching or the exposure to pedagogical practices of education, making it difficult for them to teach in any other way than how they were taught (McDaniels, 2010; Ramsden, 2004). New faculty members travel the path to teaching alone, relying on their own ideas and experimentation on how to approach the work of teaching and deciding alone the amount of time to dedicate to this endeavor (M. Wright, 2005). The context and rewards established within the professoriate, particularly early in faculty careers as they strive for tenure, adds to the difficulty of supporting a high standard of teaching as competing priorities of research and external funding demand time as well (Musselin, 2007). As faculty members are learning and developing their craft as teacher, they are forced to

face the pressures to research, publish and raise grant funds to support institutional research missions furthering them from their role of instructional leader.

Boyer argues that teaching is central to the faculty role and suggests that “reflect[ion] on the meaning and direction of their professional lives” is critical in order to fully integrate their roles for the benefit of the greater mission of higher education (Boyer, 1990, p. 25). Education has long been studied for its inputs and outputs however scholars argue that there is a need to investigate education through the incorporation of the experiences of actors within this context (Clark, 2007; Gumpert, 2007). There are obvious challenges ahead in higher education, however in order to remain valuable to society, the future must balance innovation and tradition with a special focus on those who carry out the missions, the faculty (Berg et al., 2003).

## **2.5 Faculty Perspectives**

Teaching in higher education is a complex process. The learning environment is influenced by a number of variables, but no more powerful than the teacher themselves. When discussing the approach to the role of teacher, a number of cognitive attributes are addressed. Of course teachers must have at minimum: content knowledge, intellect, experience, technique, skills, and credentials. However is having these traits enough?

What is fundamentally missing from the discussion is, regardless of the tools, tricks and techniques available to the educators, is a heart of teaching that each educator holds (Palmer, 1998, 2007) Parker Palmer believes that there is an inner landscape of the teacher; the non-skilled based attributes that affects our values, belief systems, how we think, feel and ultimately act in the teaching space These characteristics include values, belief systems, motivation, drive, caring, expectations, mindset, self-identity, and attitudes. But, the discourse on learning centers heavily on outcomes, but rarely do we ask about the self that teaches beyond the method or techniques.

This self includes the intangibles of identity and integrity. Identity as defined by the nexus of inner and outer forces that develop the self and integrity where teachers make choices on what is important to that self and what it not. Clearly this is personal. Those who have ever led a classroom would have to confess that the act to teacher is incredibly personal and that it goes beyond any technical training you could ever experience (Palmer, 1998, 2007).

The idea that there is something more to teaching has been explored in higher education. Bain (2004) in his qualitative study of excellent teachers in higher education across the United States found that despite different approaches and disciplines, outstanding faculty possessed some common traits. While he found that all were accomplished scholars with cognitive traits that displayed depth of understanding in their field, there was something more. There were non-cognitive traits that displayed a difference in how they approached the work as teacher, regardless of discipline, teaching style or technique used. All these exceptional teachers had exceedingly high expectations of their students and approached their teaching as a serious endeavor. As sound scholars, they demonstrated a passion for their discipline and created learning environments that encouraged deep thinking and engagement of their students. These teachers saw students as equals in the classroom and students felt they were always treated with decency and respect. Instruction was not limited to the sharing of knowledge but these exceptional teaching spaces centered on the grappling with ideas and the reflection on individual assumptions. They encouraged their students to look inward in order to grow outward.

Research has shown that how students think about their own abilities and intelligence has direct impact on motivation and learning outcomes (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007). However, how faculty consider their students can also have impact on the climate teachers create as they approach their work. Astin (1997) reviewed the impact of personal and situational

variables on learning outcomes of college students and uncovered that there was a relationship between climate and learning. Specifically, how the faculty felt about the students they taught. Positive faculty-student orientations were found to not only increase retention, but also enhance the development of critical thinking and problem solving skills.

So if something as simple as thinking positively about those we teach can enhance their progress, should this too be considered as we attempt to reform education? If how we think and feel about our work has such influence on learning outcomes we must uncover the source of these choices. Scholars suggest that an important area of consideration are underlying interpersonal theories that shape how individuals see their professional knowledge and how they may implement it in action (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Argyris et al., 1985; Dewey, 2012; Pajares, 1992).

## **2.6 Work Values and Beliefs**

To look more closely to how faculty think about and approach the teaching role, we must understand that individuals experience work by the expectations that they believe the experience should be like (George & Jones, 1997). George and Jones argue that values are the most influential ways of experiencing work and in turn influences work attitudes and mood. They make a case that work moods and attitudes also can affect long term work values. In a study of how individuals approach their work then must explore individual values and beliefs.

Values have been discussed and debated from the founding of the written word. As far back as Socrates and Plato, individuals have pondered the concept of moral values of action and its connection to genuine self-knowledge. From a social science standpoint, values are the true thread that can be studied across any discipline and over time have been (Rokeach, 1979).

However, despite this long-standing conversation and interdisciplinary blending, a decisive and clear definition of values remains unclear.

Values are complicated and they are difficult to explain. The term ‘values’ can have a number of connotations, as it is a reference we make both in daily conversation and in theoretical spheres. Further, the term values is often used in a number of contexts from political, family, faith, and morality to name a few. A search of the literature for human values reveals a number of inter-related constructs that include beliefs, attitudes, self-concept and conceptions, all of which tend to be used interchangeably.

Much of the modern day understanding of these constructs are built upon the work of the first personality theorist, Gordon Allport. Critical of the overemphasis on unconsciousness, Allport established the importance on motivational forces that are within each individual’s consciousness. He believed that each person was unique where behaviors were motivated by what he termed central dispositions (Allport, 1961). Rokeach built upon this work by being the first to suggest that values were actually similar to trait-like qualities; meaning “an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct” (Rokeach, 1973, p. 5).

For the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Rokeach empirically studied values and developed an instrument, the Rokeach Value Survey, to classify individual values or trait-like qualities. The basis for his framework is the argument that values are either instrumental, meaning they guided modes of conduct, or terminal indicating an end-state or overarching life-time goal. The connection between these value categories is that terminal values (lifetime goal of a productive life) only can be achieved through behaviors that are guided by instrumental values, those of daily action.

Rather than diminish the unconsciousness of reasoning and subsequent action as Allport had previously, Argyris and Schön (1974) reconsider the notion of individual values. They argue that reasoning and decision making must incorporate both the conscious and unconscious where individuals create frameworks for behavior. They believe that individuals are the creators of actions who aim at achieving desired outcomes (terminal values) and they use these unconscious schemes to interpret if behavior is effective. This is important and suggests that our world and experiences happen too quickly for us to continually assess and align each individual action with the values that we espouse. Our mind creates these shortcuts to manage our actions so we can effectively manage our days. These are shortcuts however, and our daily choices fail to be examined and may lead to contradictions or responses that fail to fully represent our espoused values (Argyris et al., 1985).

It is important to delve deeper into the connection between values and the action that they potentially influence. Argyris and Schön believe that there are multiple theories of action within individuals. First, they do not think that there is a mere issue in the difference in what people say and what they do, they argue that there are consistent theories for both. They argue that the framework of values that people assume guides their beliefs and shape their actions termed espoused theory. However, since few are actually aware of their framework and its contradictions, it is rare that individuals unpack it to truly understand what influences choice. Argyris & Schön suggest there is a parallel theory of action that they refer to as theory-in-use, the actual decision making values that are called upon in the moment of choice.

To explain these theories of action in the context of teaching, consider the following. When asked, teachers often contend that their practice is student-centered and thoroughly seek to engage students in their own learning. However, upon observation this teacher conducts class in a



traditional teacher driven model and focuses predominately on knowledge dissemination. They create a teaching and learning space where learning collaboration is limited and fails to be student-centered. This example is not to support the idea that the teaching is dishonest or uncaring about a student-centered space, but to illustrate that the value espoused may not match how they teach. There is a value they associate with student-centered practice; however, actual behavior is not achieving what they intended. This is a critical point in the understanding of espoused versus theory in use. If a teacher is unaware of the difference between their values, intention and practice how can they effectively manage their behavior and grow as instructors? These models of understanding behavior are important as a means to help educators become cognizant about the actions they intend and ensure the corresponding implementation. Specifically, an integration of internal values and beliefs with external actions should demonstrate behaviors that are congruent (Argyris & Schön, 1974). When behaviors are not aligned with espoused views, what is at play, what external factors may inhibit behaviors of self-actualization?

## **2.7 Teaching Conceptions and Beliefs**

Studies investigating the conception, beliefs and values of students and teachers in primary and secondary education have found that these notions can have profound and important influences on individual motivation and practices in a variety of settings (Dweck, 2006; Pajares, 1992). And while it is known that “the practice of teaching is governed by thought” (Pratt, 1992, p. 204), efforts to improve education focus on every other variable other than this within the P-20 continuum. The reality is that there is not a clear method to measure an idea, a thought or a feeling and that is difficult in the age of educational accountability and data driven decisions. Simply, “[k]nowledge systems are open to evaluation and critical examination; beliefs are not...and yet for their idiosyncrasies...beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in

determining how individuals organize and define task and problems and are strong predictors of behavior” (Pajares, 1992, p. 311). Despite the difficulty to understand and measure these important factors it remains an important line of inquiry considering what is at stake.

Scholars have directed the discussion regarding teacher values toward teaching conceptions and beliefs. Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976) were the first to establish an operational definition of self-concept that can provide a foundation to understanding teaching conceptions and beliefs. By pulling together commonalities of various definitions of self-concept in their seminal piece *Self Concept: Validations of Construct Interpretations* (1976) they assert that self-concept is simply a person’s perception of self that is gathered through experiences and interactions with external stimuli. It is through this process that individuals interpret and make meaning of experiences that contribute to the construction of self. This self-development process is the baseline of individual beliefs that Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton suggest are useful in the explanation of behaviors and actions within a specific context.

Pratt (1992) defines a conception as “specific meanings attached to phenomena which are then mediate our response to situations involving those phenomena” (p. 204). He suggests that teaching beliefs are routed in cultural, social, historical and personal realms of meaning and to teach means different things dependent upon one’s beliefs, values and intentions. These meanings construct frameworks and shape how one sees self, their world and how they make sense of new information and thus how they intend to teach and act within that teaching environment.

Similarly, beliefs are ingrained, deep and personal and the more central they are to our own self-identity the more difficult they are to alter (Kane et al., 2002). Mezirow (2000) uses the phrase, meaning schemes, as a way to explain that there must be a disorienting experience that

fosters critical self-reflection for an opportunity toward perspective transformation. It is through this cognitive dissonance and recognition that there is disruption between thinking and beliefs that can result in a sharpening or shift in beliefs. More specifically, Parajes (1992) identifies the gap in the research specific to teacher beliefs and the relationship to teaching practice. He suggests that “unexplored entering beliefs may be responsible for the perpetuation of antiquated ineffectual teaching practices’ (p. 328).

How primary and secondary school teachers think about their students and conceptualize their roles as teachers has been shown to be deeply entrenched in personal experiences and highly resistant to change (Block & Hazelp, 1995). Generally, theorists agree that beliefs form early, withstand outside forces and are created through the process of socialization and acculturation, particularly through schooling (Pajares, 1992). Pratt (1992) submits that teaching beliefs are rooted in our cultural, social, historical and personal realms and to teach means different things dependent upon one’s beliefs, values and intentions. These meanings construct frameworks and shape how teachers see themselves, their world and how they make sense of new information, and thus how they intend to teach and act within that teaching environment.

Although values and beliefs are intimately connected to who we are, there is evidence that they can evolve and develop when individuals are confronted with new situations. Longitudinal research conducted by Roche and Marsh (2000) on 209 university teachers at the University of Western Sydney compared teacher self-concepts with student evaluations of teaching effectiveness. Initially there was only a moderate correlation between these two variables, however after faculty received feedback that demonstrated the difference in self-concept compared to the perspectives of others (their students) they found that faculty tended to re-evaluate and alter their teaching behaviors. As a result, follow-up to this study indicated that subsequent comparing of

these factors led to stronger correlations of teacher self-concepts to student perceptions of their effectiveness.

To explain this development Mezirow (2000) uses the phrase, meaning schemes, similar to Argyris & Schön's (1974) notion of schemas, as a way to explain that there must be a disorienting experience that fosters critical self-reflection for an opportunity toward perspective transformation. It is through this cognitive dissonance and recognition that there is disruption between thinking and beliefs that can result in a sharpening or shift in beliefs. This idea illustrates the point that teachers must first acknowledge and reflect on their values and teaching beliefs and intention in order to critically develop as educators.

A qualitative study of eight faculty members at two Swedish institutions of higher education investigated the nature of each researcher/teacher normative values on teaching in an aim to outline possible similarities and differences. Rather than a multitude of values, Schwieler and Ekecrantz (2011) uncovered that faculty member fell into what they classified as moralistic or non-moralistic viewpoints. Those who were moralistic in their approach to teaching revealed rigidity in thinking and tended to blame students or other external forces for challenges within their work. For example, these faculty implied that students' poor learning required lowering standards, there was a focus on what students did not know and quite simply, that research is more important. Conversely, those with the non-moralistic lens were generally more optimistic and recognized that they controlled their teaching and would take creative measure to solve challenges. This perspective echoed values that students' ability and previous knowledge were starting points, teaching and learning was a shared responsibility and time management was necessary to balance the role of teacher/researcher. While this study utilized a small sample, it provides important insight to how faculty think about their work shapes perspectives that affects

the choices made in the teaching space and prioritization of the varying work obligations. When we discuss faculty development we tend to focus on teaching strategies, however if there are lines of thinking that inhibit the use of pedagogical strategies or the commitment to the teaching process itself, we must consider any efforts that ignore values toward teaching may be lost.

The literature on teaching conceptions has been studied in higher education and in the K-12 arena, however the focus on the research has varied. Within the context of higher education most often teaching conception is considered from the approach dichotomous approach of teacher-centered versus student-centered approaches. As a result, there is a gap in the research on teaching beliefs and their connection to practice and some argue that an exploration of beliefs in teaching may develop a shift in real education reform that will directly affect learning outcomes (Pratt, 1992). However, given the literature on conceptions, beliefs, and values in primary and secondary education there is a smaller amount of research in regard to faculty teaching in higher education. In a comprehensive review of the literature on teaching beliefs, values and practice in higher education, Kane, Sandretto and Health (2002) argue that the bulk of the research only reveals part of the realities regarding the complexity of college teaching. A significant portion of the body of research on individual university teachers' conceptions of teaching often deals with what could be categorized as descriptive beliefs more specific to teaching practice and techniques (Ambrose et al., 2010; Kember & Kwan, 2000). Such conceptions are often said to influence teaching practices, although this causality is often implied or inferred indirectly, and empirical studies of actual teaching practices in higher education are still scarce (Kane et al., 2002).

"Fundamental changes to the quality of teaching and learning may only result from changes to [faculty members] conceptions of teaching" (Kember & Kwan, 2000, p. 489). As

institutions of higher education shift from teaching-centered focus to entrepreneurial models aiming to incorporate more research driven missions, institutions must be mindful of the potential effects on the quality of learning experiences for students. It is through this context that questions of teaching beliefs are investigated and then observed to see if espoused theories of teaching match actions by faculty in the creation of learning environments.

## **2.8 Values in Action – Perspectives in Positive Psychology**

A new and growing area of psychology, known as positive psychology, is incorporated in this study in an effort to discuss values and traits that faculty bring to their role as teacher. Positive psychology is an attempt to consider the strengths associated with leading a productive life and focuses on and what makes individuals thrive in the context and institutions that they navigate (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2011). Founded on personality psychology and trait theory (Allport, 1961; Rokeach, 1973) and led by the President of the American Psychological Association, Martin Seligman, this new field of psychology combines “the study of positive subjective experiences, the study of positive individual traits, and the study of institutions that enable positive experiences and positive traits (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 5). Up until 1998, psychology focused on disease and dysfunction and very little was understood about resiliency, grit, and human flourishing.

In order to codify human strengths Peterson and Seligman (2004) aimed to unpack human character. Through a three-year developmental process, the input of many scholars and clinicians and reviews of literature that explored virtues that crossed cultures, religions, and borders six overarching virtues were identified. Based on the initial process and the continual refining through empirical evidence they argued that these virtues are universal and go on to suggest they grounded in the process of evolution and connected to survival and central to well-being (Peterson &

Seligman, 2004). The virtues include: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence. It is through the use of core traits, or what positive psychology terms character strengths that these virtues are displayed, which may be considered values-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

In 2004 the Values in Action (VIA) classification system was introduced to further identify actions and behaviors that exhibit the above virtues. The virtues were further classified into 24 character strengths where 3 – 5 strengths fall within each virtue area. For example, the virtue of justice can be demonstrated through act of fairness and teamwork, whereas, courage may be exhibited through bravery, honesty, or perseverance. Through a survey instrument character strengths can be ranked and those that rise to the top are the traits that are core to the expression of the individual. These top strengths termed character strengths and Peterson and Seligman (2002) agree that most people have from 3-7 of them. Positive psychologists suggest that signature strengths are values that an individual “celebrates and frequently exercises” and when used frequently they are believed to increase meaning and engagement (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In addition high levels of engagement can be reached by using one’s strengths (Harzer & Ruch, 2012; Seligman, 2002; Seligman, 2011) and may lead to a state of flow where the mind is consumed by an activity that matches an individual’s abilities for maximum performance (Csikszentmihalyi 1990).

Recent studies have explored character strengths in context of the work environments and their connection to job satisfaction and productivity. In a recent study of 111 highly educated German adults in the workforce illustrated that the when positive work experiences increased, so too did job satisfaction (Harzer & Ruch, 2012). It must be noted, however, that while one may possess a character strength, they must be in the context to utilize it. This study found that when

positive experiences were more closely associated with core signature strength, those most central to who that individual was, there was a reported sense that individuals felt that their work was a calling. Results indicated that there needed to be a critical mass of at least four strengths in use to achieve these outcomes. So in summary, the higher the rank order position of strength, “the more central and important is its degree of applicability at work for positive experiences” (2012, p. 363). Other research has further supported this by noting that when work places are congruent with personal strengths that job satisfaction and productivity in the workplace increase (Harzer & Ruch, 2013).

The important connection that positive psychology attempts to make is not only for the individual, but to seek to assist leaders in all aspects of society to consider how they can create environments that encourage innovation, high performance, and productivity, while bringing into focus meaning, purpose and satisfaction (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2011). It is this nexus of leadership and human flourishing that provides a framework to consider how faculty value their work and how they create meaning and purpose within it. Positive psychology, based in virtues, is about what is right and good and how workers perceive what is right is based on their values and belief systems in a given context. This framework or mindset that guides human action is key to understanding how we respond and the rationale behind our choices and provides a launching point for this investigation.



Table 2.1 Values In Action Classification of Virtues and Character Strengths

<b>(1) Wisdom and knowledge:</b> Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge.
• <i>Creativity</i> : thinking of novel and productive ways to do things
• <i>Curiosity</i> : taking an interest in all of ongoing experience
• <i>Judgment</i> : thinking things through and examining them from all sides
• <i>Love of learning</i> : mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge
• <i>Perspective</i> : being able to provide wise counsel to others
<b>(2) Courage:</b> emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal.
• <i>Honesty</i> : speaking the truth and presenting oneself in a genuine way
• <i>Bravery</i> : not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain
• <i>Perseverance</i> : finishing what one starts
• <i>Zest</i> : approaching life with excitement and energy, vitality
<b>(3) Humanity:</b> interpersonal strengths that involve “tending and befriending “others.
• <i>Kindness</i> : doing favors and good deeds for others
• <i>Love</i> : valuing close relations with others
• <i>Social intelligence</i> : being aware of the motives and feelings of self and others
<b>(4) Justice:</b> civic strengths that underlie healthy community life.
• <i>Fairness</i> : treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice
• <i>Leadership</i> : organizing group activities and seeing that they happen
• <i>Teamwork</i> : working well as member of a group or team
<b>(5) Temperance:</b> strengths that protect against excess.
• <i>Forgiveness</i> : forgiving those who have done wrong
• <i>Humility</i> : modesty, letting one’s accomplishments speak for themselves
• <i>Prudence</i> : being careful about one’s choices; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted
• <i>Self-regulation</i> : regulating what one feels and does
<b>(6) Transcendence:</b> strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning.
• <i>Appreciation of beauty and excellence</i> : noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in all domains of life
• <i>Gratitude</i> : being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen
• <i>Hope</i> : expecting the best and working to achieve it
• <i>Humor</i> : liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people
• <i>Spirituality</i> : having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of life

(adapted from Peterson & Seligman, 2004 & VIA Institute on Character, 2016)

## **2.9 Importance of Study**

The specific purpose of this study is to investigate the values that faculty bring to their work as teachers and to explore that one must first consider the context. Higher education is a complex system where a number of forces shape. Faculty must perform their duties within this context and combine their own sense of identity with the mission of this larger system. The tension between the teaching and research role has long been an issue in higher education. Since the introduction of the idea of the multiversity, Kerr (2001) foreshadowed the focus on the production of knowledge as central to the research university and a movement away from purposes of student learning.

As a result, it is the thesis of this student that educational leaders should seriously consider the significance of the environment that shapes the work lives of those most central to their mission of education. While the research aspects of an institution are very important, given the geographically isolation of the institution, the population that it serves and the nature of K-12 education in the region that we must be cognizant of the need for dedicated educators that will do all that it takes to reach their students. Context matters and motivation is an important influence on the actions that we take, while we may have high values for education and the development of those we teach, when burdened with pressures to publish, obtain grants and meet promotion and tenure benchmarks, we may lose sight of those we are here to serve.

This investigation of espoused values of teaching, teaching intention and the resulting values enacted in faculty teaching practice at an aspiring Tier One research university on the U.S. – Mexico border is intended for educators, leaders in higher education, sociologists, policy makers, and anyone interested in understanding the complexities of the heart of the teacher, the forces that influence it and how perspectives create realities that shape perspectives

and performance. Specifically, it focuses on the interaction of institutional context of higher education and the effects it has on the work that we aspire to do in regards to teaching and learning. It is an attempt to provide an institutional information about itself as is transitions from a mission focused on the region and teaching to becoming a national model who identifies research as a stronger priority. By using an espoused theory/theory-in-use framework this study will aim to get a glimpse at what faculty say about their teaching and how they enact their teaching role.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Mixed Methods Investigation**

In order to examine how faculty members approach their work, this study used a mixed-methods design, which is a method of analyzing and combining both quantitative and qualitative data within a single study to understand the research question more completely (Creswell, 2009). The rationale for a mixed methodological approach is that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient alone in capturing the complex issue of values and actions in regard to teaching in higher education. While quantitative approaches to understanding beliefs and values may shed light on perceptions or personal characteristics of faculty, alone they are less informative for providing insight into intention and ultimately enacting of these beliefs. It is through qualitative methods that we gain a better insight to the subjective understanding of the individual; the process of making the implicit ideas explicit through the explanation of them. When these methods are used in combination they produce a more complete picture by combining information from complementary sources (Creswell, 2009).

### **3.2 Epistemological Grounding and Research Paradigm**

In recent years there has been a debate among social science researchers regarding the choice of methodological approaches. More specifically, discussions center on the underpinning paradigms, personal frameworks that guide action, which support various methodologies (Guba, 1990). Burrell and Morgan strongly claim that for a researcher to understand alternate truths or perspectives of potential discovery one must first “be fully aware of the assumptions upon which his own perspective is based” (1979, p. xi). Other qualitative researchers also have argued that paradigm consideration is critical and that no research should be conducted without an informed understanding of an individual’s worldview and belief systems (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln,

2010). The basis of the debate is that there are deep philosophical and methodological issues that make these paradigms incompatible as lines of inquiry (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). While most mixed methodologists support the perspective that pragmatism underpins this approach, meaning choice in methods simply defer to the best method to answer the questions at hand (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009); others suggest that claiming pragmatism is dishonest. Lincoln contends that by not committing to one paradigm, as in the case of pragmatism, it fails to convey the researcher's perspective (ontology), their relationship to others and what is even considered as knowledge on the part of the researcher (epistemology) (Lincoln, 2010).

So as an informed researcher, I have explored my ontological and epistemological views that inform the paradigm that guides my own actions. As my understanding of research methodologies has developed over the course of time, I have come to realize things about the questions that I ask that I was not fully aware of at the onset of this investigation. In consideration of Lincoln's point, today I am uncomfortable with the notion of a methodological perspective that rejects choosing an overarching paradigm to guide choices, as pragmatism does not have a clear stake on perspective. While I have utilized the mixed methodological approach in this instance, I am a researcher who is influenced by a post-modern socio-constructivist view where I believe meaning is socially constructed from the phenomenon that we experience. Further, I support the idea that all methodological approaches are value laden. I challenge the idea that there is a universal theory that can explain all social phenomenon and that realities are constructed by meaning individuals' gain via perceptions and interpretations (Guba, 1990). As one who is concerned with values that shape actions, as demonstrated by this investigation, I recognize that as the researcher I must be cognizant of my own values and orientations that influence this

research. With these reservations in mind, I will explain the organization of the research methods based on a pragmatist framework that initially supported this research design.

There are a number of choices to make with mixed methods approach. However, to classify all mixed methods scholars claim that there are three considerations which include; priority, implementation and integration of methods employed (Creswell, Plano Clark, Guttman, & Hanson, 2003). Priority requires the need for the researcher to identify the emphasis of the study, where I have chosen to utilize a form of mixed methodology that relies heavily on the qualitative components of the study give my own personal epistemology. Second, implementation refers to the order of the methods used. This study uses sequential exploratory design, where an initial survey provides access to a purposeful sample and key indicators for the qualitative phase whereas interviews and observation are used to explore values of teaching practice (Creswell et al., 2003). Finally, integration references the process of mixing the qualitative and quantitative data collected. Within this investigation the initial quantitative data is collected for the purposes of understanding the study institutional context and provide an overall view of the population being investigated. In addition, these quantitative results provide a foundation for exploring and evaluating both espoused and enacted values in teaching via the qualitative phase.

Qualitative research uses narratives to describe and understand the complexity of a given context (Merriman, 2002). While the results are difficult to generalize to the greater population, the depth and detail provided by this line of inquiry may lead to new theories of understanding. By the utilization of quantitative data alone, while it may hold some statistical significance, it likely has little meaning when one considers individual cases (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Not every case fits the conclusion drawn from statistical evidence alone and it is through the exploration of the phenomenon through qualitative approaches that help to fill in the blind spots that quantitative

approaches may create. It becomes clear that when an investigation explores values and intention, it is important to incorporate the dialogue of the study subjects to provide a point of reference in order to make meaning of individual's conceptions.

The choice of this sequential mixed methods design provides a number of advantages (Creswell et al., 2003). This straight forward approach, where methods are separated from one another, aids with exploration and analysis as they are conducted in distinct phases. This separation is helpful for the interpreting and reporting of results. Creswell et al. (2003) also suggest that this step by step approach may be described independently and that full integration may take place in the final discussion of the investigation. Despite these advantages, the distinct disadvantage to this sequential approach is the time for completion of each phase and delays that may occur in one phase will inhibit moving on to additional stages of the study.

### **3.3 Research Design and Data Collection**

This research attempts to address faculty values in regards to teaching practice. In an effort to understand faculty values from espoused perspectives, verbalized intent and actual teaching practice as previously stated a sequential mixed methods design is used. This method involves collecting qualitative data after a quantitative phase to explore faculty values specific to teaching in more depth. In the first, quantitative phase of the study, the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths – 72 (VIA-72) along with supplemental questions were collected as data from tenured and tenure track faculty at the University of Texas at El Paso. The second, qualitative phase explored these values specific to the role of teaching. In this exploratory follow-up, values and beliefs regarding teaching intent and teaching practice are considered via a smaller volunteer sample of tenured and tenure track faculty at the University of Texas at El Paso. During the first phase of the qualitative portion of this study, semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity

for the researcher to get behind survey data in an effort to make sense or understand participant espoused values of teaching (Appendix A). The final qualitative phase of data collection consisted of interview participants who agreed to have their teaching practice observed. In order to find evidence of espoused values in teaching practice the researcher used a twofold framework that incorporated the results of the VIA-72 and discourse on teaching gathered in the interview session for an individually customize an observation protocol (Appendix B). While it is understood that values and beliefs in any context are difficult to measure, it is believed that the combination of a survey, interviews and teaching observations provided a broader understanding of faculty teaching values.

**Study participants.** The participant pool for the quantitative phase of this study included all tenure track and tenured faculty at the University of Texas at El Paso in the fall of 2014. Higher than the national average of 33.5%, the faculty who are tenured or on the tenure track at this institution make up 40% of all faculty on campus (Pullias Center for Higher Education, 2011; UTEP, 2015). The group is predominantly male (68%), tenured (72%) and the bulk of the pool represent either Caucasian (53%) or Hispanic (28.5%) (UTEP, 2015). This study did not consider professors with appointments, such as lecturer; visiting professor; or adjunct as they are not evaluated via the institutional Tenure and Promotion policy in the same ways as tenure-directed faculty.

The individual participant selection for the qualitative phase of the study were a sub-set of the participants from the quantitative phase. Faculty self-selected if interested in the interview phase of this study through the survey administered. In an effort to best represent the institution, tenure status, college, gender and ethnicity guided the purposeful sampling of candidates for the interview phase of the investigation (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). A smaller sub-set of



interviewed candidates, who were willing to have teaching observed, were chosen to learn more about values enacted in teaching practice.

**Electronic survey.** Values are clearly difficult to discern through self-report and when someone is asked how they will behave in a given situation they respond with what Argyris and Schön refer to as an espoused theory, meaning the set of values that people believe they base their action on (1974). Educational researchers have come to develop a concept that while individuals have espoused views, they often tend to be incongruent with actual actions in practice (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Argyris et al., 1985). In order to understand faculty value in teaching practice, I must first learn about their espoused frameworks. To begin, I ask a number of questions to help me gain insight into the mindset of faculty as they approach their work through an online survey administered through Qualtrics, a university owned software. This survey was administered in two distinct portions; the first uses an established instrument, Values in Action-72 Survey of Character Strengths (VIA-72), to learn specifically about the general values that faculty hold by identifying individual signature strengths. The second portion asks several multiple choice and open ended questions to learn about faculty perceptions of their work, time on task, teaching experience, career stage and demographic information. I use descriptive statistics collected from the complete survey to contextualize the faculty work experience as a whole. The character strengths identification provided a framework to support one-on-one interviews and faculty teaching observations. The critical information from the survey helped me probe the faculty about the values they espouse and ask questions that aimed to understand the intended use of these values as they prepare to teach.

The online survey was deployed to all tenured or tenure-track faculty at the University of Texas at El Paso to begin the investigation of faculty teaching values. The survey was a compilation of a standard instrument, opened and closed ended questions, a number of which were

modeled after the *Higher Education Research Institute Faculty Survey, 2013-2014* (Eagan et al., 2014). As a means to unpack values without direct questions regarding values, the first section of the survey uses the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths-72 (VIA-72). This instrument is a seventy-two item questionnaire used for the assessment of twenty-four character strengths that is well founded in the discipline of positive psychology. The choice to use this instrument was based on how these character strengths are derived from six categories of virtues and values that include the following; wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and spirituality (Seligman, 2002). The goal of positive psychology is to measure and build human flourishing and this instrument has been utilized to reveal that when work environments align with personal strengths job productivity and satisfaction increase (Park & Peterson, 2007; Seligman, 2011). In addition, a study of over 9,000 employee across all walks of life found that zest specifically correlated with higher levels of work life satisfaction and the belief that work was each individuals calling. Due to its past application to work place and the establishment of strengths as virtues and values, the researcher felt that the VIA Survey of Character Strengths an interesting way to learn more about general faculty values.

The supplemental questions asked in the second portion of the online survey aimed to understand faculty members' educational and teaching background, experiences with institutional context and demographic questions. Several questions focused on specific training, teaching experience, rank and phase of faculty life, all of which have proven important indicators of faculty academic priorities (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). The majority of questions were closed asking faculty to rank work interest, indicate the extent that they agreed or disagreed with statements about purpose of higher education, beliefs about students and the amount of support they believe they have in their work-life. In addition faculty were asked to indicate the number of hours they

spend on given tasks required for position. Several questions probed to ask faculty to rank importance of specific teaching goals and values that they utilize to prepare for their teaching.

To ensure a smooth deployment of the survey and improve the flow of items to answer several colleagues and educational research experts were recruited to help in August of 2014. The piloting of the survey incorporated two phases that included first a check of misleading questions, sequencing and syntax and later tinkering with organization, web appearance and user experience. Prior to phase one the survey was designed utilizing the online survey management software, Qualtrics. Once tested several times by the researcher under the Preview Survey option, the panel of experts were sent a secure online link to the pilot survey from the Qualtrics website. The Survey Test option was used in this manner as it alerts researchers immediately if there are problems with survey logic or functionality for participants. The experts then provided feedback on wording, how to best break up sections to improve user experience and question sequencing. Once these changes were incorporated, phase two enlisted the support of several student colleagues to test more specifically for improvements for user interface. Updates stemming from this phase included adjustments to the number of questions per page, ensuring appropriate skip logic was present based on various responses to questions and overall appearance. Several tests after phase two revealed smooth survey operation.

On September 5, 2014 research approval was received from the Internal Review Board which included permission to deploy this survey to all tenured and tenure track faculty at the University of Texas at El Paso. With the assistance of the campus Center for Institutional Evaluation, Research and Planning and the Information Technology department I was able to obtain a listing of current faculty meeting the study criteria with corresponding email addresses toward the end of September. An initial cursory review of the email list revealed a number of

retired or part-time faculty were included. To ensure only those who met the rank of faculty with a current appointment that included tenured or tenure track faculty each name was cross referenced across the PeopleSoft personnel records of the university. The final list resulted in 494 out of the 516 original emails provided. For the purposes of this study and in order to analyze the role of teacher within the complexity of work demands only tenured and tenure track faculty experience an elimination of faculty designated as adjunct, visiting professor or lecturer were removed given their singular focus on teaching. It was also discovered that several tenured retirees, now serving as adjunct instructors were included on the original list. These individuals were also removed for the preceding reason.

The survey was launched in early October through a recruitment email (see Appendix C?) directly from the Qualtrics website. This survey services keeps track of the panel of possible respondents and allows for individual email to be sent and responses are noted to avoid duplication of solicitation in follow-up emails. The initial thought was to allow for three weeks for survey collection, however responses were less than expected. Follow-up solicitations were sent at one week intervals over the first four weeks. Given continued slow return rates the window to collect surveys was extended for two additional weeks.

A total of 138 out of 494 responses were recorded through Qualtrics. A portion of the responses were found to have an incomplete survey and were therefore eliminated. The final count of 119, a 24% response rate was less than hoped for, but given the time frame of early in the semester it was likely challenging for faculty to find time to complete a survey that was about 15-20 minutes in length. Of the 119 survey completers 70 (59%) indicated that they were willing to participate in a face-to-face interview.

Once the survey closed the first step was taken to analyze the responses to section one, the VIA-72. Since this is an externally owned instrument, data was exported into an Excel spreadsheet directly from the Qualtrics website where the survey was hosted. The spreadsheet included only those who completed all 72 items which was required to effectively process responses with the ranking algorithm. This spreadsheet was modified to include only the respondent's identification number and the 72 instrument responses and then this encrypted file was emailed to Communication Specialist from the VIA Institute on Character in late November 2014. The programmer at the institute ran the signature strengths algorithm to create numeric values attributed to each character strength measured. The results from the VIA-72 instrument were returned within two weeks of this first submissions. In early December, a few additional late survey response were collected from those who began the survey but completed after the initial export date. The same processed was followed to obtain results from the VIA Institute on Character where corresponding results for these late responses were returned on January 4, 2015 in an Excel spreadsheet.

The responses from part two of the survey were exported directly from Qualtrics into a file compatible with IBM SPSS Statistics Version 23 software where it was then imported for analysis. Initially, I renamed each variable uniquely with a naming convention for organization and quick reference and coded individual responses as needed. For example, Question 81 asked about the discipline area of their faculty appointment. The raw data imported provided numeric responses that corresponded to broad based disciplines that did not align to campus college divisions. These numeric items were coded to reveal the selection name (i.e. 3=Hard Science, 7=other). I then created a new variable to categorize faculty into the actual college to correspond to college of faculty appointment. It was through both the responses on Question 81 and the campus faculty directory that I was able to determine primary appointment. I avoided asking the faculty directly

about the area of assignment in attempt to be sensitive that they may not want to reveal too much about themselves given the nature of the questions regarding institutional context, support and their own views on teaching. In addition, a few multiple choice questions that referred to views on good teaching and teaching approach were coded to match the teaching styles or values that matched each statement. Item 102 asked faculty to select a responses that best described their personal approach to good teaching from five statements. Each of these statements were aligned with Prosser and Trigwell's (1999) framework on conceptions of teaching; for example response one, "Effective teaching requires a substantial commitment to the content or subject matter" represents a transmission approach to teaching.

After the coding process, all of the evaluated data from the VIA Institute on Character was imported to SPSS from the Excel spreadsheet provided. This file was then imported into its own data file in SPSS Version 23 and later merged as additional variables into the SPSS data set file previously described from part two of the survey. Cases were matched utilizing the response identification numbers that were unique to each survey respondent in both data files. After merging this newly compiled data, an additional seven new variables were added to each record to record each respondents top seven strengths from ranking the 24 character strengths from the original processed VIA-72 data. Once the complete set of responses, including these new variables, were housed in a single SPSS data file, I was then able to do some statistical analyses. Primarily this process was focused on descriptive statistics including frequencies, medians, modes and averages. In some cases I wanted to explore varying responses among faculty rank, gender and discipline resulting in the need to run cross-tabulations. The discovery of a few higher frequency results for certain character strengths were noted and in the interest to understanding the relationships

between-groups and within-groups across faculty rank one-way ANOVA were run. Finally, t-tests were run to learn about differences across gender.

**Faculty interviews.** The qualitative phase of this study is broken into two portions; face to face faculty interviews and observations of teaching. A smaller sample of faculty were drawn from the 70 individuals that agreed to a follow-up interview through the final question of the survey. “Theoretical sampling” (Glaser & Strauss as cited in Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 33) was utilized to ensure all stages of faculty life were represented as it has been noted that faculty teaching changes over time (Beyer, Taylor, & Gillmore, 2013). In addition, I aimed to get a mixture of faculty that represented various ethnicities, disciplines as well as gender. This form of sampling allowed for the maximization of difference between the cases in order to increase the exposure to data across a range of faculty. Unfortunately, I failed to get the enthusiastic response from the good size pool of those agreeing to the interview to draw from.

I made an attempt to contact a total of 26 of the volunteers for a follow-up interview. A number of them did not return my emails or messages and 3 chose to withdraw due to scheduling conflicts. Despite having the largest number of volunteers, those with the rank of Associate Professor (n=32) were the most difficult to secure for an interview. I am unsure of the reason, I can suspect that the timing, toward the end of the semester, may have been complicated their busy faculty schedules. In the end total the interview pool consisted of 10 faculty members, 5 men and 5 women. Six were tenured, half were full professors (n=5), two were associate professors and three were untenured assistant professors. The group represented a broad range of disciplines that included; business, social sciences, hard sciences, health professions, and humanities.

Contact with each interviewee was made by email to secure a time to meet. While alternate or neutral off campus locations were offered, all were comfortable with meeting in their offices.

The interviews were conducted from mid-November thru February. The timing of finals, the end of the semester and the winter break caused a bit of a delay to arrange meetings. All interviews were digitally recorded with a single recording device. Most sessions were about an hour in length and each began with providing a copy of the IRB approval for this study. An informed consent was presented with the opportunity for each interviewee to review and sign providing their permission to participate in this study. Copies of both forms were provided, however only two faculty member chose to keep them.

The format of the interview consisted of a series of open ended questions which provided rich content where the significant analysis was spent. In an attempt to make the session conversational each session began with asking the faculty member to tell me a bit about their background and how the choice to enter the professoriate manifested itself. There was an outline of questions that remained the same for each interview, however after the first few interviews, I choose to move a few questions around to avoid doubling back on topics covered. The flow began with a focus on education, where I asked what they felt the purpose of higher education is and their beliefs on good teaching. The mid-range of question centered on their own teaching intentions where they were probed about objectives, goals and learning outcomes. Given that teaching takes place within the context of the larger institutional setting additional questions focused on the population that they teach and the support system for teaching on this campus. Each session ended with having the faculty explain to me why they selected the 3-5 character strengths on the survey they completed to describe the approach to their work. This was an attempt to understand the espoused values that they consider as they think of their teaching life.

While this basic outline was followed for all interviews, it became apparent in some of my later interviews, which happened to be mostly with women, led me to have follow-up questions



regarding to work-life balance and juggling family and career. Faculty appeared to be open and candid in their comments and many casually stated, some several times, “I would not normally say this....” or “at this point I really do not care if it is known what I think...”. The final question of each interview asked if there is anything they would like to add and most asked what I intended to do with the results and who might I share them with.

During each interview I took notes and jotted down thoughts that came to mind. I reflected on the spaces that they created around them as I met all of them in their personal office spaces. After each session I spent some time reflecting on the feel of the interview and the main focus the interview took. I considered if there were surprises from some faculty or if new themes I had not considered emerged. At a later date, all interviews were transcribed fully by me and stored in an encrypted digital file on a password protected personal laptop. I choose to personally transcribe so I could reconsider the tone, hear the interview in a new way and listen even more intently. As each session was transcribed I kept a journal to note thoughts of new consideration I may have come across for later review (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). I did my best to remain open and exercise reflexivity and be reflective so I might pick up on nuances that may have been missed during the face to face interview (Bogden & Biklen, 2003; Geertz, 1973).

Once interviews were transcribed they were imported in to NVIVO 10.0, a qualitative data analysis software, for further examination. This software was employed to help with data management, organization of ideas, data visualization and the coding of themes. Each interview was imported separately; however, coding of the data did not begin until all interviews were complete. The first attempt at coding began by utilizing the conceptual framework of espoused values, intention and enacted values (Argyris & Schön, 1974). Maxwell suggests utilizing a theoretical model, such as this, in order to best visualize qualitative work and to ensure consistency

of identifying emergent themes (2013). To avoid the duplication and manage similar concepts I also kept a journal to track naming convention when coding. Creswell and Plano Clark support this as a method of keeping focus on the research questions, the conceptual framework and to avoid the blurring of ideas (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

On the second phase of coding I reviewed the variety of codes that emerged from the 10 transcripts. I developed a list of coding categories to lump similar concepts into to theme families. For example, when themes referenced the setting or context or those that referenced various beliefs or values I placed these themes within a corresponding theme family through the functionality of the NVIVO software (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013; Bogden & Biklen, 2003)

**Observations of teaching.** From preliminary review of interview sessions, I selected four faculty members from the pool of 10 interviewees to observe their teaching. The group consisted of two tenured and two tenure-track faculty, one man and three women and one full professor, one associate professors and two assistant professors across a variety of disciplines. Two of the courses observed were undergraduate level and two were graduate level. Each faculty member suggested the class date that they would prefer the observation to take place and I arrived early each time to assume a low profile and minimize “observer effect” (Bogden & Biklen, 2003, p. 34). I also dressed in casual clothes and aimed to blend in, to appear as an insider, to further reduce the potential for my presence to change normal classroom activity (Shank, 2006).

The mode of observation for each faculty member was customized based on the results from their survey responses and from the interview. An observation matrix was created that noted the top character strengths from the VIA Inventory of Strengths assessment, the character strengths that were self-selected in a specific question on the survey and any additional espoused values that were apparent from the one-on-one interview. With this matrix I observed the class and noted each

interaction the faculty had instructing the class and recorded if it fell into one of the pre-established values/strengths. When it fell outside of those on the matrix, if I had time I noted what I felt it was on the spot, however most generally this was recorded during the post-observation reflection period. Also I kept field notes that I attempted to gather rich detail and description of the event for later recall and understanding. After each observation session I spent the next several hours reviewing the coding of activity, supplementing the field notes with memos about what was being learned and making observer comments in margins and on the matrix for added detail (Bogden & Biklen, 2003). To assist with this review I considered the engagement of the students, the class size and setting, the methods of instruction, the use of technology and the general demeanor of the instructor.

### **3.4 Validity of Study**

This is a mixed methods investigation and for that reason there are a number of areas to consider validity. The first phase of the investigation was the survey that first utilized a standard instrument and a smaller amount of supplemental questions. According to the Institute on Character Strengths the internal consistency for the VIA-72 is .75. This is slightly lower than the longer versions of this instruments, where the 240 item survey has an internal consistency of .83 and the 120 item instrument has .79. The closer that this coefficient is to 1.0 the stronger the internal reliability. This is a small sacrifice and the option to select the 72 item questionnaire significantly reduced the time to complete the survey portion of the study.

The main portion of data collection however is from the second phase, the qualitative portion of this study. With the guidance of Merriman (2002) there are a number of strategies to reduce threats to validity when approaching qualitative data. She first suggests the triangulation approach which requires data collection from a number of sources. During this latter stage of the

study I collected interview and observation data in addition to several documents for analysis. As a second layer of defense, I asked one of the study participants to comment on a portion of my data interpretation for a member check. This individual commented on the analysis and concurred that I accurately depicted the experiences they attempted to share. Finally the fact that myself, as the researcher, has been submerged in the data collection and interpretation for over a period of a year, suggests that I was submerged in the phenomenon enough to have an in depth understanding (Merriman, 2002).

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I present the findings that illustrate themes that emerged from the data that focus on the values, intentions and practice of tenured and tenured-track faculty at the University of Texas at El Paso. The overarching research questions pursued by this study are the intersection of faculty teaching values and institutional context in higher education. Since this is a sequential mixed method investigation, the findings to follow are first illustrated in the order they were collected and later combined to make meaning and understanding to contribute to the research question in totality.

### **4.2 Survey Data**

The investigation began with a survey of a total of 494 tenured and tenure track faculty members who received an electronic survey via the mailer option in Qualtrics Research Suite in the fall of 2014. While 28% of the faculty solicited choose to begin the survey, the final response rate of completers totaled 24% (n=119). Of those that failed to complete the survey, most often tended to drop out in the midst of the VIA-72 instrument where all 72 items asked required answers in order to fully compile instrument results. Since the character strength assessment was the first portion of the survey, there is no background or demographic data to understand further the choice to exit. Given some feedback received in response to the survey requests it is likely the amount of similar behavioral type questions (72) or the inability to skip some questions may have deterred the completion. Additionally, two retirees, who were tenured faculty completed the survey, but they were actually classified as instructors and were eliminated from the sample as they no longer fell into the full-time tenured or tenured-track faculty that this study centers on.

**Participant background.** An examination of the University’s current fact book, reveals a current faculty count in which to compare my survey respondent sample to check for distribution of responses against the number of faculty within each college. The survey completers ultimately created a sample that was relatively representative of the composition of tenured or tenure track faculty employed in the fall of 2014 when compared to the institutional interactive 2014-2015 Fact Book (UTEP, 2015). Table 4.1 compares the college representation of faculty appointments compared to my sample.

Table 4.1 University Faculty Distribution and Survey Respondents by College

College Division	Total Tenured or TT Faculty	Percent of Faculty by college	Number of Responses by college	Percentage of total responses by college
Business	48	9.3 %	6	5.0%
Education	51	10.0%	16	13.4%
Engineering	80	15.9%	10	8.4%
Health Sciences	37	7.2%	15	12.6%
Liberal Arts	183	35.8%	51	42.9%
Sciences	105	20.5%	20	16.8%
Nursing	7	1.4%	1	0.08%

\*Tenured and tenure track faculty only

The College of Liberal Arts represented the highest percentage of survey completers as they too are the largest population on campus. The largest discrepancy in results from the smaller percentage of the population from the College of Engineering that responded (8.4% where campus make-up is 16%). The closest representation to campus composition is from the College of Education that made up 13.4% of the sample as compared to their 9.3% of the institutional faculty. There are few full-time tenure track faculty overall from Nursing, likely due to their online format and use of adjuncts for many classes, however having one response from that contingent was too representative of the greater campus population.

Gender and ethnicity were further aligned to the overall campus tenured and tenured track population. Male responses (63%) predictably outnumbered female responses (37%) as they hold an overwhelming majority (67%) of faculty positions. Table 4.2 shows the racial and ethnic percentages of the respondents compared to the pool available for this survey. The survey sample resulting in an even more aligned representation of campus, with the exception of Asians whom responded to this survey (6.7%) at a considerably smaller rate than their population represents on campus (12.8%).

Table 4.2 Survey Respondent and Institutional Profile by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents	UTEP Faculty % Composition by Race/Ethnicity
African American/Black	2	1.7%	2.0%
American Indian/Alaska Native	2	1.7%	0.0%
Asian	8	6.7%	12.8%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	0.0%
Hispanic/Chicano(a)/Latino(a)	30	25.2%	28.1%
Puerto Rican	2	1.7%	0.0%
White/Caucasian	73	61.3%	52.2%
Other	2	1.7%	5.0%

\*Tenured and tenure track faculty only

As this study examines the faculty role of teacher it is important to understand preparation and experience in that role. The average number of year teaching was 18.54 and the range was from 1 year of teaching experience to 48 years of experience. The majority of respondents were mid to late career, as indicated by average years of teaching, where 71.4% were tenured, however only 12.6% of the entire sample were near retirement. Ninety-three percent of faculty taught at the undergraduate level, 89% at the graduate level and 57% at the doctoral level at the time of the survey.

**Values in action instrument.** The Values in Action Instrument (VIA) is a strengths-based questionnaire that measures the degree to which respondents believe the relevancy of the statements when considering self. The 72 item questionnaire uses five point Likert scales that range from 1 = very much unlike me to 5 = very much like me. This instrument is the widely known and a considered a comprehensive classification for measuring character and was designed to codify human strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The instrument used in this study was a smaller more compact version of a larger 240 questions inventory (VIA-IS - 240) measures 24 strengths of character. The selection of this instrument was based on its unique perspective grounded in positive psychology where character strengths are defined by positive values that govern thinking, perspective and action (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004). Further, this discipline explores positive individual human traits and their intersection with institutions in an effort to understand how to create contexts where individuals are encouraged to flourish (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Seligman, 2011).

Responses from the 119 completed surveys from the VIA-72 survey were sent to the Institute on Character Strengths for interpretation with their strength ranking algorithm. The resulting rank of strengths of each individual compiles a picture of the general population of the campus faculty and the values and strengths that they bring to the institution and potentially their work as teachers. The top 5-7 character strengths of each individual are considered their signature strengths, the ones that when best incorporated in daily life and have been shown to aid in the ability to feel fulfilled and satisfied with life and work (Park et al., 2004; Park & Peterson, 2009; Peterson, Park, Hall, & Seligman, 2009). The faculty at the University of Texas at El Paso displayed a variety of signature strengths as one would guess given the diversity of race, ethnicity,



gender, and disciplines of thought. Despite the diversity there were a significant number of traits that overlapped.

As illustrated in Table 4.3, the values that were most prevalent, as examined through the lens of signature strengths, aggregated across all faculty survey included; honesty (68%), fairness (61%), judgement, (54%), love of learning (51%), humor (45%), perseverance (44%) and love (43%). Analysis of these traits across gender and rank indicated some similarities all indicated high rates of honesty, fairness and love of learning. However, women tended to have love, gratitude and curiosity at higher rates, where men aligned with values associated with perseverance, judgement and leadership. When considering rank, full faculty results indicate that kindness and leadership fall under signature strengths more often. Perseverance appears more often with associate professors and assistant professors had humor among their top strengths.

An analysis of gender and rank revealed some signature strength differences. Females overall signature strengths included, in order, love, honesty, love of learning, gratitude, fairness and curiosity. The comparison of women across rank shows full professors higher on judgement, associate professors higher in perseverance and assistant professors highest in kindness. Largely men's signature strengths incorporated, honesty, fairness, judgement, love of learning, perseverance, and bravery, but also had outliers across rank. Male full professors more often have strengths with curiosity, whereas associate professors indicate more bravery and assistant professors are higher in kindness like their female colleagues.

Table 4.3 Rank of Signature Strengths by Academic Rank and Gender

	Bravery	Love	Creativity	Curiosity	Fairness	Forgiveness	Gratitude	Honesty	Humor	Perseverance	Judgement	Kindness	Leadership	Love of Learning
<b>ALL Faculty</b>														
ALL FACULTY (n=119)		7			2			1	5	6	3			4
All Full Professors (n=35)					5			1				3	5	3
All Associate Professors (n= 55)		7			2		6	1		3	4			5
All Assistant Professors (n=29)		1			1			1	1		6			6
All Female Faculty (n=42)		1		6		5	4	3						3
Female Full Professors (N=9)		5		5				5			5			1
Female Associate Professors (n=17)		5		7	5		5	1		5				7
Female Assistant Professors (n=16)		1			4		5	6				4		6
All Male Faculty (n=73)	6				2			1		6	3			4
Male Full Professors (N=25)			6		4			1			2		4	5
Male Associate Professors (n=17)	6				2			1		4	4			6
Male Assistant Professors (n=11)											3	1	3	4

\*Appreciation of beauty, prudence, teamwork, hope, humility, perspective, self-regulation, social intelligence, spirituality and zest omitted from table as they did not appear as signature strengths across groups when aggregated.

**Survey responses to supplemental questions.** The survey the faculty completed also had a number of questions that further related more specifically to their roles as teachers, perspectives toward students and the institutional context they experience. This section will report responses bundled by these themes and broken down further by gender or rank when relevant.

**Survey, values.** Aside from the Values in Action Survey, faculty were also asked questions regarding their personal and work values both directly and indirectly. Questions including the ranking of values, the importance of the obligations of the faculty role, area of primary interests and their espoused values. When asked to rank what they valued most in their lives that incorporated both personal and professional categories. Not surprisingly, the majority of respondents (52.7%) ranked family/children first and personal life second (30.2%). Comparing the means of the ranking reveal that teaching was third, followed by research, faith/spiritual life and service (see Table 4.4) below. Teaching and research we very closely

prioritized, where 47.46% rank teaching in their top three and 47.83% ranked research in their top three.

Table 4.4 Faculty Self-Selected Rank of Priorities

Area	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Count	Ranked in Top 3	Ranked in Bottom 3
Family/Children	2.3	1.7	3.0	110	75.5%	24.6%
Personal Life	3.2	1.6	2.6	116	62.9%	37.1%
Teaching	3.5	1.1	1.3	118	47.5%	52.5%
Research	3.7	1.5	2.2	115	47.8%	52.2%
Faith/Spiritual Life	3.8	2.0	3.9	116	44.0%	56.0%
Service	4.5	1.4	2.1	112	23.2%	76.8%

To understand more about work life requirements, faculty as a whole felt research was essential, but specifically assistant professors seeking tenure were most concerned about research (93%). The majority of faculty, regardless of rank, also felt that teaching was essential or somewhat important, but assistant professors minimized teaching importance at a higher rate than their peers (57% of all respondents who felt teaching was somewhat important).

As one would expect, individual primary interest area was greatly influenced by rank. Untenured assistant professors early in the career path focused primarily on research, associate professors were split focusing on teaching and research more equally and full professors, while interested in research were more investing in their role as teachers. While this was not a question on the survey, I suspect that as rank and career obligations shift, so too do the priorities of the faculty over time.

Table 4.5 Faculty Role Primary Interest Area

	Professor	n	Associate Professor	n	Assistant Professor	n	Total
Very heavily in research	35.3%	6	23.5%	4	41.8%	7	17
In both teaching & research, but leaning to research	22.2%	10	48.9%	22	28.9%	13	45
In both teaching & research, but leaning toward teaching	36.4%	16	47.7%	21	15.9%	7	44
Very heavily in teaching	11.1%	1	66.7%	6	22.2%	2	9
Other, neither teaching nor research are my primary areas of interest	50.0%	2	50.0%	2	0.0%	0	4

To focus more closely on the values that faculty espouse, survey respondents were asked to select three to five main strengths or qualities that they believe they utilized in their faculty role. The listing was composed of the same twenty-four character strengths from positive psychology. Much like the results from the Values in Action survey, faculty self-selected Integrity/Honesty the most often (52.6%). The other strengths most frequently selected by all faculty included leadership, creativity, perseverance and kindness. While some of these traits appeared across the VIA-72 results previously mentioned, leadership at 44.8% is notably different. This focus this particular questions was that to their work life and less general than the VIA-72, but must be considered an espoused value that many faculty feel strongly about.

Table 4.6 Selection of 3-5 Strengths/Qualities that Individual Faculty bring to their Work

Character Strength	All	n	Professor	n	Associate Professor	n	Assistant Professor	n
Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence	10.3%	12	25.0%	3	41.7%	5	33.3%	4
Bravery	2.6%	3	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	100.0%	3
Caring/Kindness	34.5%	40	25.0%	10	50.0%	20	25.0%	10
Citizenship/Teamwork	25.9%	30	33.3%	10	50.00%	15	16.7%	5
Creativity	37.9%	44	31.2%	14	38.6%	17	29.6%	13
Curiosity	26.7%	31	32.3%	10	48.4%	15	19.4%	6
Fairness	30.2%	35	14.3%	5	60.0%	21	25.7%	9
Forgiveness	2.6%	3	0.0%	0	100.0%	3	0.0%	0
Gratitude	3.5%	4	25.0%	1	75.0%	3	0.0%	0
Hope	2.6%	3	66.7%	2	33.3%	1	0.0%	0
Humility	6.9%	8	25.0%	2	50.0%	4	25.0%	2
Humor	27.6%	32	28.1%	9	56.3%	18	15.6%	5
Integrity/Honesty	52.6%	61	27.9%	17	54.1%	33	18.0%	11
Judgement	12.1%	14	42.9%	6	35.7%	5	21.4%	3
Leadership	44.8%	52	38.5%	20	40.4%	21	21.2%	11
Love	3.5%	4	25.0%	1	50.0%	2	25.0%	1
Love of Learning	31.9%	37	35.1%	13	46.0%	17	18.9%	7
Perseverance	35.34%	41	34.1%	14	39.0%	16	26.8%	11
Perspective	25.9%	30	23.3%	7	46.7%	14	30.0%	9
Prudence	0.9%	1	100.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Self-Regulation/Self-Control	5.2%	6	16.7%	1	83.3%	5	0.0%	0
Social Intelligence	16.4%	19	26.3%	5	47.4%	9	26.3%	5
Spirituality	2.6%	3	33.3%	1	33.3%	1	33.3%	1
Zest	6.9%	8	50.0%	4	37.5%	3	12.5%	1

Faculty were presented with a survey prompt asking them to assess their approach to teacher. The questions are based on Approaches to Teaching Inventory designed by Trigwell and Prosser (1999) and the five categories that result from assessing teaching beliefs, values and actions. The question specifically asked; “The following list of statements represent different perspectives on 'good teaching'. Select the statement that best describes how you approach your teaching role.” The respondents only had to select from the five descriptions of the teaching

approach categories without the label that is associated with it. The choices consisted of, (1) Effective teaching requires a substantial commitment to the content or subject matter. (Transmission), (2) Effective teaching is a process of socializing students into new behavioral norms and ways of working. (Apprenticeship), (3) Effective teaching must be planned and conducted "from the learners' point of view". (Developmental), (4) Effective teaching assumes that long-term, hard, persistent effort to achieve comes from the heart, not the head. (Nurturing) and (5) Effective teaching seeks to change society in substantial ways. (Social Change). The following diagram illustrates the responses to the question by all faculty. The majority of faculty fell between developmental (30.7%) and transmission (27.1%).

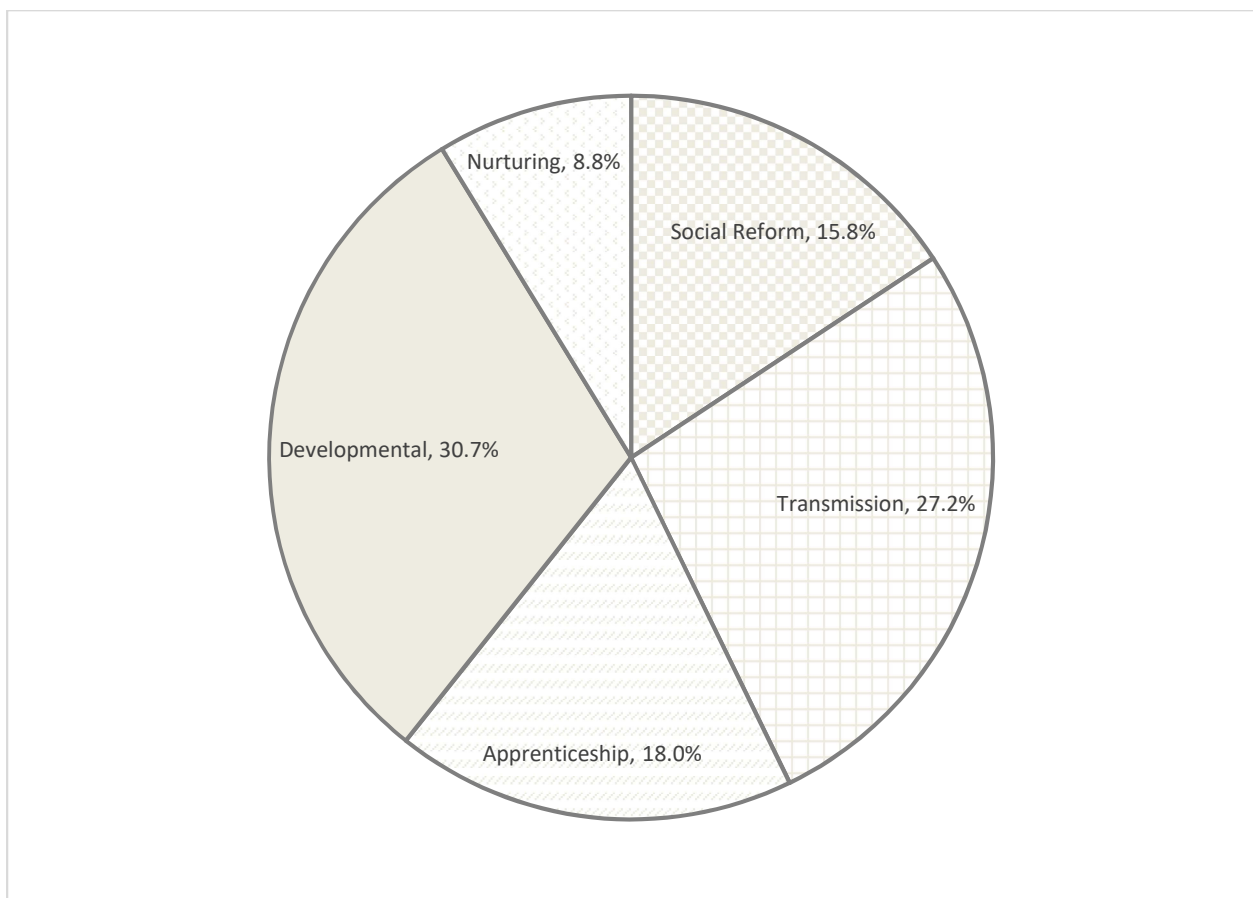


Figure 4.1 Espoused Teaching Approach, All faculty

Overall survey findings show that there are some minor differences with preferred teaching approaches when disaggregated by academic rank. Assistant professors had a slightly higher (20.7% vs. 17.5%) tendency to suggest they utilize an apprentice approach when teaching and full professors were the lowest on the nurturing approach (3.2% of full professors vs. 8.7% overall). Assistant professors were much less likely to consider a social reform approach (6.9%) compared to their senior colleagues (full 16.1%, associate 20.4%). At all levels of rank, a developmental or transmission approach to teaching was favored which when combined represented nearly two-thirds of all full and assistant professors and just over half of associate professors.

The consideration of gender and espoused teaching approaches a similar percentage self-selected a developmental approach but differed slightly in all other area. As stereotypes would suggest, more women indicated an interest in a nurturing (12.2% v. 7.1%) and an apprentice (19.5% v. 15.7%) approach. Male faculty suggested that they utilize social reform (17.1% v. 12.2%) or transmission (30.0% v. 24.4%) approaches more often than their female colleagues. Despite the differences none of these values indicate a significant difference and may even be more aligned with specific disciplines.

In summary, faculty values from this survey phase indicate the percentage of faculty that focus on teaching are aligned more with the phase of career, as assistant professors prepare for the tenure review process, they indicate that they focus on the area that is significantly weighted in that process, research. As obligations shift, there is more balance between teaching and research as indicated by associate professor (who nearly all were tenured) tended to focus on both, with either a leaning toward teaching or research. Like associate ranked faculty, full professors dabbled in both teaching and research, but more indicated that they were leaning

toward teaching, may be an indicator that their research productivity is waning or that they were recruited and groomed under a very different reward system.

***Survey, teaching perspectives.*** The survey also provided some insights on the faculty in regards to their roles as teachers and how they approach via questions about goals they set for their students. All faculty felt that it was either essential (91.53%) or very important (8.47%) to develop students' critical thinking skills. Across the board writing skills were also highly revered where 9 out of 10 faculty felt it was either essential or very important in their classrooms. Female faculty members felt more strongly than men in regard to both these goals while associate professors placed a slightly lower emphasis on the centrality of critical thinking (85.2% believing that it was essential).

Faculty appear prepared and committed to their teaching obligations. Overall they feel well prepared for the faculty role thorough their graduate school experience. Only 1 in 3 full professors agreed that they were prepared to a great extent, however half of their younger peers were this positive about their early training. Despite feeling fairly well prepared as teachers, faculty across the board engaged in means to improve their teaching. The majority sought out workshops, colleagues and deeply reflected about ways to improve their teaching. Comparison across rank indicated that assistant professors tended to seek colleagues' advice more often than their peers as a means to develop in the classroom.

***Survey, views on students.*** Faculty views on students were considered through questions that focused on ability and preparedness. In an examination of the responses (detailed in Table X) across gender and rank faculty general expressed the similar views on encouraging students to seek their help and that there is no question too elementary to ask in class. Faculty agreed (83%) that while students have the potential to excel in their courses more than half suggested that



students were underprepared, 40 percent acknowledged that students were overwhelmed by the pace and 70 percent claimed the amount of course material was a challenge to students. Women in general had a more positive notion of the potential for students to succeed and both men and full professors suggested more often that students were challenged and overwhelmed by their courses. Assistant professors more often placed the onus of success on the student (72%), felt more positively about learning through group work (45%) and disagreed more often (42%) with the statement that were overwhelmed.

*Survey, views of institution and work life.* Gender appears to have influenced faculty perspectives on teaching at UTEP. Women generally were more favorable in thinking that the institution valued teaching excellence (74%), rewarded efforts to improve teaching (52%) and felt that there was adequate faculty development opportunities (41%). One in five men felt that the institution did not value teaching while just over 50% thought that it did. Also men less frequently agreed that efforts to improve teaching were rewarded (35%) and that there was sufficient faculty development (29%). Aligning with that data is information about the level of effort made in seeking to improve teaching. Although men appear to think as highly about institutional value and support of teaching, men also less often sought out workshops, colleagues or reflected on means to improve their teaching.

Since tenure is an import milestone in faculty life and teaching in a component of the evaluation criteria it is important to note how faculty envision advancement and promotion. Nearly half of all faculty disagreed when asked if advancement and promotion criteria were clearly defined and almost 40% responded that institutional values did not align with the promotion process. Full professors, who are tenured for a length of time, generally saw advancement and promotion favorably than their peers. In fact the favorability declines in those

nearer to initial tenure review. Forty-six percent of associate professors and 68% of assistant professors disagreed that promotion and tenure was clearly defined. Half of all untenured faculty felt that promotion and tenure was not aligned with institutional values as well.

### **4.3 Faculty Interviewee Profiles**

Profiles of the ten faculty interview participants are provided below. Profiles are provided in an effort to recognize that each participant offers a unique point of view. The following thematic analysis of this data also illustrates that as a group, they also have commonalities that are important to explore. The interview sample consisted of ten tenured or tenure-track faculty members purposely selected from survey participants who indicated an interest in participating further in this study. Although a large pool of survey participants offered to participate, a number did not return calls and emails to arrange meetings times. As a result five men and five women were interviewed, half of whom were full professors, 2 were associate professors and 3 were assistant professors. Six of the faculty members were tenured, while the rest were in the process of tenure review preparations at various levels. While only a few minorities offered to join in the study, the three Latino/a faculty members are representative of the faculty population. In addition two faculty members were born and trained outside of the United States and interestingly half are non-native English speakers. All colleges were represented with the exception of Engineering and the teaching experience ranged from 2 years to 45 years.

Each faculty member assigned is pseudonym for the ease of discussion and to assure their anonymity. The selection of the names assigned was a combination of either my general impression of their current state of mind in their work life or the way that they presented themselves in the interviews with the use of both English and terms in other languages to express my perspective. When referring to them only the general area of their field (i.e. liberal arts) is

discussed and not their specific discipline. Also, with their permission, I refer to their rank or gender to help analyze themes specific to the group that they represent, as needed.

**Dr. Downes.** Dr. Downes is a passionate educator with an interesting background in professional practice, educational administration, researcher, and teacher. While being a white male, he has an affinity for the Central American culture and spent some of his academic training as both a graduate student and scholar outside of the United States in Spanish speaking nations in the Americas. Dr. Downes never planned to become a professor in higher education. The social scientist always believed he would work within his professional discipline and later work his way up the ladder to an administrative role. After some time in his field he decided to pursue a master's degree to further his career and this is where he developed the interest in teaching and considered a life in academia. Once completing his terminal degree he moved up academic rank quite quickly, as he states, "I was a young man in hurry". His efforts to develop his teaching, research and serve administratively got him noticed and he was an overachiever in every area and thus became in demand across the country. After several large administrative jobs and major accomplishment at the institutions he served he realized that he "did not want to work seven days a week indefinitely" so he ultimately landed at the University of Texas at El Paso.

A desire to have a better work-life balance and the border attracted him to this institution. Dr. Downes also notes that "the university aspires to do the things I like to do, which is give first generation students an opportunity" to enter a variety of professional fields that they otherwise would not have had access to or even envisioned for their lives. It was apparent that he was very moved by the privilege to work with typical first generation UTEP student by the following comment:

...working with kids in fairly isolated lives, then has their eyes opened [in] college and maybe going abroad...it is an eye opening experience to go to college, it is really the most important thing in a person's development, if they get the opportunity it is a transformative experience...

The full-professor went on to explain that he has a true affinity for teaching and serving the students in this border region. In particular he claims that he derived great satisfaction through the extension of his teaching with the community outreach and pro bono work that he performs on both sides of the boarder. Despite choosing UTEP for work-life balance he laments that today he has less time to research and invest students due to the heaviest teaching load of his career. He was very candid how while he is protected by tenure that he senses a "true crisis" for the faculty of UTEP and has grave concerns for his younger untenured colleagues.

**Dr. Winters.** Dr. Winters is a more traditional academic who trained at a rigorous and prestigious research intensive institution. However, his pursuit of the professoriate was happenstance, as a young working professional who was pursuing a master's degree, a faculty member encouraged him to consider pursuing a Ph.D. Needing both financial support and realizing this was what he wanted to do he accepted an assistantship and made quick work of his doctoral studies. Immediately after completing his terminal degree he opted for a post-doc appointment and trained under national leaders in his discipline. He is highly principled and cares deeply about his field and the students that he serves. Dr. Winters has been a faculty member at a number of institutions and selected to join the University of Texas at El Paso as a full professor later in his career to have an impact on the border region. Regretfully he laments that he has not had the impact that he aspired to by noting, "I have been very disappointed since I got here...I mean that...I never had achieved anything close to what I hoped."

Although highly accomplished, well published and active in his professional organizations, Dr. Winters appears to be defeated and wanders from the interview questions to express his frustration many times. It appears that he is dedicated to higher education and its purpose, but it is evident that outside factors permeate his inner core and inhibit his ability to take actions to make a change. He admits that ... “he is tired” and since he is within five years from retirement is unlikely to make a concerted effort to change and realize his early ambitions when joining UTEP. When asked about the meaning he derives from his work it is centered more on the relationships that he had in the past with academic colleagues and expresses some remorse in not truly building the collaborative and stimulating relationships from his past professorial work.

**Dr. Avery.** Dr. Avery is a woman who was a trailblazer in her field. Working in the sciences, she was regularly the only female on the faculty in her early days and one of the first women appointed to a tenure track position in her department. Despite that however, she never really considered herself out of place, coming from an academic family who prided themselves on curiosity and learning. Both her parents were scientists and she notes that she “had a lot of family support, and as it turns out a lot of my cousins and siblings, you know are all scientists and engineers.” She appeared to have chosen the professoriate early and once she got a taste teaching in her senior year of college, she was hooked. She loves teaching, but her work has been balanced with healthy amounts of research and service to her field. She has held leadership roles in administration and on national boards all while being a mom, wife and exemplar scholar. Now that she is coming to the back half of her career she reflects that she has learned to say no more and placed more emphasis on her teaching and special research projects that are focused and manageable. Admittedly, although her kids are grown, her family often says to her, “you are

spending too much time doing this or that,” and she course corrects in order to reprioritize and focus on the family away from campus.

Interestingly despite being in the minority as a young woman in a male dominated profession, she notes no barriers or frustrations related to her gender at all. Today, as a full professor who has spent her entire academic career at UTEP she notes that she has always felt completely supported and expressed gratitude to have had the opportunities she has been granted in El Paso. She adds that she is appreciative that her teaching schedule was always “aligned so that [she] could get kids from school and pick them up when she needed”. Dr. Avery shared that the border region has provided a rich environment for her studies while also serving as a nice place to raise her family. She feels that her professional development as teacher was well supported and credits the Center for Effective Teaching and Learning (CETAL) for her recent growth as an educator even after many years of teaching.

When asked about the meaning that Dr. Avery derives from her work her response is two-fold as one would expect from someone who strongly values teaching and research. As far as teaching goes she “believe[s] it’s been an interesting place to teach because of what you can do for the students....seeing the changes that can go on....because of the fact that they don’t have a lot of the resources”. She has witnessed first-hand over her long career that exposing students to the richness of her discipline can be transformative to students in this border community. As a researcher, Dr. Avery feels the smaller scale of UTEP has provided opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration that would not happen at major research institutions. She feels that this has been a strength of her research agenda and that it makes her as competitive as any other scientist in her field nationally.

**Dr. Pleasant.** Dr. Pleasant is similar to Dr. Avery in that she was one of the early female faculty members hired in her department, but her experiences based on her gender were quite different. Although she was working in the humanities, the department was a good ole “boys” network that “did not hire housewives”. As strong student in a local El Paso high school she originally aimed at being a high school teacher. Once she was on a college campus however, she became passionate about the humanities and before she knew it she had both her undergraduate and master’s degrees. Due to the shortage of faculty after completing her studies she often aided the department by teaching classes from time to time and wanting a steady schedule for her family she asked how she might obtain a permanent position. She was told that she needed a Ph.D. and she must do it somewhere other than El Paso. The male department chair set expectations that he felt impossible for a young mother and wife, but that did not stop her.

Dr. Pleasant shares her story about breaking the glass ceiling of the male dominated professoriate and admits she simply “was not the coffee clutch and bowling league type.” So she investigated a path to her Ph.D. and persisted through the challenge where she temporarily relocated herself and her young family for several summers and took the required coursework at an institution hours from El Paso. In her final year of her doctoral program, Dr. Pleasant moved close to her institution to complete a required year in residence. Once she had her terminal degree in her hand she quickly returned to El Paso to fight for a faculty position at UTEP. At first the department offered her only part-time work, but her persistence paid off when due to staffing shortages they offered her a full-time tenure-track appointment.

Once a professor at UTEP, she began to raise issues of equality across campus and fought for equal pay. She notes that even the cafeteria workers were paid quite differently based on gender. She admits that she has a “tremendous amount of energy” and despite a challenging

environment she has been extremely productive as a researcher, teacher and leader in her on campus. She is extremely well published, continues to work on intensive research projects and is well respected across the country. She has been a teacher for decades and simply loves it as illustrated by the comment, “I am writing three books right now...and again, why retire? I love what I do and some of the most interesting things I do are in connection to my work.”

There is a satisfaction and appreciation for the past and the path that was less traveled as Dr. Pleasant weaves her story for me. She was proud and matter of fact at the same time as she relayed stories of being a trailblazer for women’s right across campus. She was one of the original females on campus and one the first women appointed to a full-time faculty position within her department. It took time to change the tide and she joined forces with other women across campus to fight for fair pay from the level of the cafeteria staff through the ranks of the professoriate. It did not come easy, but it is clear that her values of persistence and leadership are exemplified by her life’s work. Over and over the door slammed in her face, from first trying to work as a teacher on campus with a master degree and the department chair rebuffed her with, “...we don’t hire housewives”. From that moment she found a way around and through the stubborn brick wall of gender discrimination and moved herself and family out of state to complete her Ph.D. only to return to UTEP. Ironically she was the department chair when the former chair who dismissively called her a housewife retired which is the symbolic passing of the torch for change, innovation and unparalleled passion for all aspects of her work.

**Dr. Artista.** Dr. Artista was originally born in Mexico and is a non-native English speaker. His undergraduate and graduate training were in Mexico and his terminal degree was completed in the United States under the support of the Mexican government. Thanks to the backing provided from his country he was able to complete his terminal degree relatively quickly



and as a result his entire professional life exists in academia. As a boy he was truly interested in the theatre and wanted to pursue acting or the arts in some way, however his traditional father did not allow this path. He believes that the choice to teach seems like a natural transgression from acting as he views his teaching as, “putting on a performance everyday”. He also is motivated to teach because he adores being part of the aha moment, “the moment that it clicks...you can see the faces of the question marks and [the] oh that is what [he] meant.” He claims that he simply loves that moment and suggest that is why he favors teaching to the research aspects of his work. Although his research productivity has earned him the rank of professor, both his background to in Mexico, where knowledge production is less important, and his commitment to serving others and his institution contributed to a diminished importance on research.

Dr. Artista chose UTEP after a bad experience working as an assistant professor at a college in the southeastern portion of the United States during the early 1980’s. He admits he loved the city he was living in, but it was a “big culture shock” and alludes that to racial discrimination as a motivating factor to leave. He details a “couple of not very pleasant events that did not go very well”..., so he and his wife packed up his car and moved to El Paso. Once at UTEP he quickly engaged in publishing and leadership roles while relishing his teaching role. When asked about the meaning he derives from his work, he centered squarely on the rewards of being a memorable teacher in the following passage,

A satisfaction, pride...for me there is nothing more motivating, more encouraging to me to continue in this field than to have somebody come to church or in a public place and say you were my professor 20 years ago and I still remember your class, you know I have

used your teachings in many other things. I think that should be our purpose, it should be creating proud citizens....

**Dr. Hidalgo.** Dr. Hidalgo is an associate professor within the area of social sciences at UTEP. As native of the Paso del Norte region his pride in the community that UTEP serves and his passion for serving the region is palpable. His pursuit of the professoriate was linear although not planned from the onset. As someone who always loved learning Dr. Hidalgo initially envisioned himself as a high school teacher. He was a bright and determined student who was constantly told by his peers that he would be waiting his value working in secondary education. Although believing that being a teaching was meaningful work, this perpetual dialog made him reflect on way that his talents could be used to make a broader reach. As a result of reflection and reconsideration he felt becoming a teacher of professionals that his reach could be multiplied.

The story of Dr. Hidalgo's path to the professoriate exuded an enthusiasm and a true love of learning. He is grateful for the privilege to work in higher education, what he refers to the "microcosm of the universe," where he can choose to be exposed to learning at every turn, even outside his chosen discipline. This love of making a difference and opportunity to continue to learn contributed to his choice to return to El Paso. His own undergraduate experience at UTEP informed him that, "from the President on down, that there never any apology about the focus of education Latinos." At a previous institution Dr. Hidalgo revealed his frustration in serving this population where rather than seek means to recruit more Latinos they sought to redefine what a Hispanic Serving Institution was so they could still fit into that category. This notion violated his value of serving the Hispanic community and immediately sought to find a role that matched his ethical core.

Now at UTEP for several years he discusses the meaning he derives from his work which is significantly grounded in his focus on teaching. He shared that it is “the difference that I make, when students not only tell me, but I see it...in their own work...their actual professional work.” Dr. Hidalgo goes on to keenly express an example of how he completely changed the perspective about how his student approached their job and how they sought to serve their clients in ways that they revealed they had a heightened sense of purpose which translated in more thoughtful and determined service. His exuded gratitude for the positive feedback from students where he made a difference in their lives and felt that it was proof that he would be “remembered fondly”.

**Dr. Rawe.** Another associate professor that participated in the interview phase was Dr. Rawe. A woman teaching in her first full-time faculty position who is less satisfied with her work than Dr. Hidalgo. She is a traditional academic who pursued a terminal degree directly after her undergraduate. Coming from an academic family she felt that it was natural to do, however she did not enter the professoriate immediately. Once Dr. Rawe completed her doctorate she took a break that led her to a rich and impactful life experience. Visiting some friends in South America for a brief vacation turned in to a five year commitment working for the government undergoing a national reform initiative. She reflects how this, her first teaching job, was actually instructing teachers with 15-25 years of experience and how stressful it was. However in the end she is grateful that she was in the right place at the right time to learn so much, gain a variety of teaching experiences all while immersed in a foreign culture.

Once her assignment ended she returned to the states and sought a full-time teaching position. The market for her field was never fantastic, but times had changed significantly since she completed her degree. She spent several years searching for a full-time academic appointment and opted for a three year post doc position in the meantime. Joining the faculty at UTEP was

twofold, first finally having an opportunity to join the faculty ranks and more importantly the opportunity to work with Spanish speaking students and border culture that would align with her research agenda.

Despite the high hopes when arriving in El Paso, the interview with Dr. Rawe revealed some disappointment. She shared that over-all “it [UTEP] has been a good place to be, but I am actually thinking about leaving now... I am kind of bummed out on academia for various reasons.” From probing she shared that she does not feel supported by the institution, particularly because of her field. She laments that institutional support seems centered on the STEM fields and her department does not have a graduate program which means she spends most of her time teaching undergraduates. She goes on to state that “the teaching load is high here...the travel money is almost non-existent...and I have found it difficult to find and maintain a trajectory, a research trajectory.” After several unsuccessful grant applications, large class sizes and the inability to get a course buyout she reveals that research is done in her spare time on her own dime.

Despite the frustrations, she does express her renewed focus on her teaching that gives central meaning to her work. She credits the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning on campus for helping to develop her teaching approach and skills. Her meaningful moments in the classroom have centered on her ability social justice and perspective where she “show[s] students that, that previous bad experiences that they have had in school were more about the school than about them.” She is convinced that “the level of talent at UTEP to be the equal of anywhere else” however they are “educationally marginalized with reasons that had nothing to do with their talent.” Dr. Rawe expresses a clear commitment to this population and argues that educating and serving the Paso del Norte region and improving how they see themselves as learner and citizens is a “super important part of UTEP’s mission.” She goes on to categorically state that “we do that

better than any other place in the country that I know of” however she does “feel like UTEP is drifting away from that a little bit, and that bothers” her.

**Dr. Conrad.** Dr. Conrad is a confident and forthright assistant professor in the humanities in the early years of his first faculty appointment. He comes off as confident and very self-assured and provides very direct and succinct answers. Originally aiming to be a lawyer he was encouraged as an undergrad by a professor to consider academia and he is satisfied that he has. As a doctoral student he spent a significant amount of time teaching and although he is in the early years of his first faculty position he is very comfortable with his work. The only assistant professor in his discipline he feels well protected from service duties and is satisfied with the level of support provided by several teaching assistants. He explains, his

...department that is very good at shielding us assistant professors from service. I devote the vast majority of my time to research. But I try to balance that as well. I have a couple hobbies that I dedicate time to and make sure that I do so that I don’t go completely insane. But aside for that, there is the time that I am here that I am working on research. Teaching honestly is an afterthought, but it is something that I know that I can put together quickly, especially with classes that I have already taught. This is going to be, this 300 person seminar will be probably the 10th time that I have taught this course. I don’t want to say that it is plug and play, but it is pretty – nothing is strange.

When asked about the meaning that he derives from his work, it focuses on his research interests significantly. However he did consider his teaching and minimal advising role important and that he felt it was his duty to help the UTEP student avoid the pursuit of professional school if they could not cut it in his classroom. He demands much from his students and has a sense of

pride when he discusses how his 50 seat seminar often ends with less than 30 students enrolled. He sees his role and duty to weed out those who just would not make it at the next level.

**Dr. Tierna.** Dr. Tierna is a female assistant professor who is early in her first tenure-track faculty appointment. She works within the allied health sciences and left professional practice after being disenchanted in the professional world that was driven merely by the bottom line and not what was right for patients and clients. Inspired by research and how that could make a broad difference she choose to enter the professoriate with the hopes of training practioners who put patients first. While enthusiastic about her research she reports that she leans toward favoring the teaching role. With a spark in her voice she shared the meaning from her work, “I enjoy the interaction the students. I enjoy findings in my lab. I really mean that does excite me, and being able to share that information with the students is also, I think a great experience for me.”

Despite her zeal for her work she candidly reveals that she is simply overwhelmed by the obligations of the professoriate.

“I think where I struggle is when it’s, okay you have to have 10, 12, 15 manuscripts by X amount of time...when I think I already stay up until 2 [am] almost all the time... and yet I can’t seem to catch up.”

When probed she unpacks her frustration to illustration a lack of support from her college and the shapeshifting guidelines for tenure and promotion. Additionally she been asked to prepare a new course in each semester of her short three years of teaching. Dr. Tierna clearly has a work-life in balance as she works long hours as a dedicated teacher who feels there is not enough time in her week to prepare for teaching, teach, supervise her interns, work in her lab, and serve on committees all while she is aiming to produce a number of peer-reviewed publications.

**Dr. Groen.** Dr. Groen, a female assistant professor who had just completed her first year in her initial tenure-track appointment and expresses a similar narrative to that of Dr. Tierna. To begin, her pursuit the professoriate was a direct and traditional as she immediately entered graduate school after completing her undergraduate degree and then moved on to a post-bac upon completion of her Ph.D. While she has extensive teaching and research experience, her reflection on her past year revealed the following:

...I remember my first day here as new faculty, I came in and I sat at my desk and I am like OK, I am a professor now, be a professor, and like, and having no idea on what I should be doing.

While she is grateful for the flexibility of the work she discusses how the lack of guidance and mentorship has led to a feeling like the professoriate is “flounder[ing] for your first couple years” while you “do what you think you should be doing and then when you get your third year review you find out if you guessed right.” Throughout the interview she discusses how she was left to figure out everything on her own and too often has to ask for help or information that would be best if it was made readily available to all new faculty hires.

Not only is the path to tenure navigating faculty life difficult for her to understand she is confused over what expectations she should have for her students. Both her foreign training and rigorous research intensive background translate in high standards and was surprised at the low level of critical thinking her students were prepared to engage in. She explained that it not an issue of student ability but a reflection on how little her colleagues demand. For example her upper division science students had never taken anything but multiple choice tests and had the virtual no

experience in discussing and designing simple experiments. Dr. Groen wants to ensure that her students have the proper foundational knowledge and argues,

I also don't want students from UTEP to be leaving and not have it basics, they should have when they have this degree...and we don't want to have the reputation that, "don't hire students from UTEP because they're crappy"...you know we haven't given them what they need to get out here I don't want to someone to graduate who can't design an experiment.

"As a woman in the hard sciences, she is clearly struggling to balance all her obligations. She is vested in both teaching and research, and while she favors research she is spending the majority of her time on instruction, "more than 80% teaching" and she has "prepped a new course every semester." While her work is designed to be a "50-50 appointment, teaching-research, service somehow that makes it more than one hundred. Clearly overwhelmed she shares the following, "I celebrate when to take a day off now and I can count for you the number of days I have taken off since this is my job over a year ago, and it's like less than five." When asked about the meaning she gets from her work, she struggles and actually laughs about how she has become bitter in the last year. Simply the workload and the lack of balance does not allow her to dive deep in her research or spend time mentoring students, both reasons she entered academia. She expected it to be a challenge and knew, "like everyone else really struggles, but [she was] going to be okay", however admits it is different "when you get here, but no I am not."

#### **4.4 Faculty Interviews Thematic Analysis**

The coding process allowed for a number of patterns to emerge across the interview transcripts. The interview protocol itself, while varying slightly from subject to subject, allowed



for the chunking of data in to broad concepts. Each pass through the data I utilized the memo functionality within the NVIVO 10 software to make note of areas that required follow-up and re-examination.

In Phase I reviewed over 12 hours of transcribed interviews and identified key works to assign free codes (referred to as nodes in NVIVO 10). During Phase 2 I analyzed the free codes to determine relationships among them and concepts that could group emerging themes. These new clusters of coding included:

1. Teacher espoused values/beliefs
2. Teacher intended actions
3. Teacher values is use
4. Teaching Practice
5. Perspectives on Students
6. Institutional factors

**Faculty espoused values and the teaching role.** A number of interview questions were aimed at unpacking how faculty value and conceptualize their work as teacher. In order to frame the concepts that faculty discussed in their teaching, comments were coded based on the twenty-four character strengths as classified in the Values in Action survey instrument. While all faculty espoused various values in regard to teaching, the predominant emergent themes included, love of learning, judgement, perspective and kindness.

Nearly all faculty divulged a pure love of learning as they consider their role as teacher. Some appeared to nurture that love toward student learning development and others were grounded in the desire to learn as a development of self. Several faculty discussed a frustration when students focus primarily grades and devalue the learning process, there appeared to be take this as a violation to their values. In particular several male faculty expressed the dichotomy between student growth and the mere desire for a grade. For example, Dr. Artista expressed,

My teaching philosophy is was always very much the most important person in the classroom is the student. And I never been obsessed with grades, I think that in that sense I might have done things that I shouldn't in terms of I normally pass people that probably shouldn't have passed. But I thought that the effort that they had done was worth it.

Another faculty member suggested that it is difficult when students do not see the college experience as a growth opportunity as illustrated by the following;

I've been disappointed when it's clear - and it doesn't happen very often, but when it's clear that for student a grade is more important than the feedback that they are getting or the learning that there experiencing or not...I call them grade grubbers, they're more fixated on the grade than they are about the learning. So that's part of what discourages me. Most recently, it seems that I've experienced some students who see a degree as a checklist. You know it's like okay, here are steps one through ten, I am just checking stuff off, and they're not in the learning journey...

The idea of learning for students as a journey was also raised by Dr. Downes as he described his hope for students to grow and become productive citizens through the college experience. Excitedly he shared what his perspective on the importance and of higher education and the opportunities it provides,

...it is an eye opening experience to go to college, it is really the most important things in a person's development if they get the opportunity it is a transformative experience, and it is especially when you do internships off campus, or even more transformative when you go abroad...graduates of universities tend to be more critical, more well read, more active in political life and community life, and, uhm, they tend to be more thoughtful as a result to being exposed to all of these ideas and all of these ideas and all of these people...

Many of the female faculty expressed a love of learning and also aligned it with their research and pursuit of new knowledge. For example Dr. Tierna shared how she loves to take something she learned in her lab and share it with her students and emphasized the importance that her work can make in real time. She wants “the students to get excited about the kinds of things that [she is] finding in [her] research.” Dr. Pleasant was over the top enthused about her work and opportunity to learn, she commented, “I am writing 3 books right now [laughter] and again – why retire? I love what I do some of the most interesting things I do are in connection with my work.” She went on to share the wonderful learning opportunities she had experienced as a result of her faculty life. She had traveled the world, been a Fulbright scholar, spent semesters abroad teaching and is constantly creating new projects, courses and collaborating with others across the world.

Dr. Avery combines her own passion for learning and aims to inspire her students to be curious about the world. This value is exemplified by a practice she uses as she shared in the following anecdote on how she begins a course she is teaching, particularly to undergraduates. She explains,

I started out my intro lectures with a picture I have of when I was a kid. When my brother and I were kids and my father was holding this frog out and we’re wanting to, you know how kids are, touching and I say to my students, you know, we all as kids had this, you know, boundless curiosity about things. We were asking a million questions, we wanted to know how things worked. Then somehow between that point and your start of college here, some of that has been lost and what I want to try to do is to get you to start asking questions and being curious again.

Dr. Groen also finds a deep sense of meaning when her love of learning is reflected back at her through the mentorship of her students, in particular when the students take ownership of their learning. She explains,

I love seeing it when I see students actually getting excited about something that you're talking about. And like I had some students come in and be like, "oh, I watched a documentary on this because it was so cool in class", and I love it when they just go that extra step after you've taught them something that just peaks their interest.

The love of learning as illustrated through the lens of female faculty was predominately through the inspiring and learning for their students. While male faculty responded in that manner as well, two male faculty, felt that their writing and research stimulated their love of learning most. For Dr. Winters he felt that given his disappointment with the campus community in general that the best outlet he had was his writing and consulting that allowed him to share his knowledge with others. Dr. Conrad was similar in that he thinks "the most fulfilling part of research is that it actually does have some tangible real world policy affect to it and he dismisses his teaching as "an afterthought, but something that [he] knows [he] can put together quickly."

Love of learning is considered a trait of wisdom in the categorization of character strengths in positive psychology. Interestingly other traits within this virtue are well represented through faculty espoused teaching values. Faculty expressed both the value of judgement, the ability to develop critical thinking, and perspective, the ability to see the big picture. For example, the young Dr. Conrad discussed the purpose of his teaching is to encourage his students to reflect on their thought processes and learn to unpack the points of view and construct arguments founded in evidence. Assistant professor Groen agrees with this notion and suggests that the,

University is the place you are where people think critically, where you learn, as a scientist, examining the patterns that you see and figuring out that the causes of them. And that you're not, you know anyone can look in a book and learn the factual information that they were giving people and what, you know I don't think you should come out with like a set of facts full the knowledge, but you should know how to be able to apply (sic).

Dr. Avery takes the ability to think critically and applies an important contemporary skill by suggesting that,

...in this day and age, with the internet, you can look anything up, but you just have to be able to judge the quality of what is there and how to go about using it...we have to teach students a new way of looking at things, we need to teach them how to think in deep time...

Dr. Pleasant shared that "the purpose of the courses that [she] teach[es] is to inspire critical thinking" and goes to explain to her students that do not have to agree with her, but that there opinion "has to be informed". She also raises a concern that "in higher education is that more and more professors are not requiring writing in their classes" and laments that "too many people think, think [sic] of higher education now as a job training." But she see job training not in specific skills of the trade, but skills of judgement that can only be developed through the practice of reading and writing. She supports this mindset through what she has learned from a local business leader who told her, "I don't care what they teach him over there at UTEP, he says as long as they teach him to think and to write, he says when they come to work for me, I will teach them my system[s]."

Most of the faculty expressed a value that confirmed this need for critical thinking skills with a focus of problem solving and the ability to think things through. Dr. Hidalgo for example express the focus on learning through lens of evolvment and new meaning. He explains this as he discusses his perspective on learning through change,

to me the essence of learning is change. If a student comes in with certain attitudes, certain knowledge bases, certain skills at the beginning of course and that the end their viewpoint, their attitude, their skills, their knowledge base has changed - changed in a positive way...their understanding has expanded some degree, then they have learned.

When faculty espoused values of perspective, it was apparent in those who tending to raise social justice issues in regards to their work. Several faculty expressed beliefs about making a real difference in perspectives of students with the goal of renewed understanding of society and the barriers. I suggest that both associate professors echoed this perspective the most with full professors following close behind. As mentioned earlier in Dr. Rawe's profile, she wants to "highlight the social processes that students themselves have been subjected to." She even goes as far as stating that teaching partly allows and opportunity for "getting students politicized about these processes that they are in, and that does not mean go out and you know, and becoming activists all the time, but if they do, that is great."

Kindness and caring emerged as a final value in faculty narratives. Caring in education is not something new; however it is concept has not been well documented in higher education. Noddings (1992) through her research in primary and secondary education theorizes that when teachers care, they have an attitude that encourages constant effort to meet professional obligations through modeling, dialogue and practice. I found evidence in the interview data that faculty espouse values in line with understanding and sympathetic to their students' background, personal life and experiences. Many faculty expressed concern for student achievement and sought means to meet students where they were and encourage them to keep trying. For example Dr. Avery explained how she approaches support students who are non-native English speakers,

I do tell students, you know on their exams, if you got an essay question and you cannot think of the words in English or you are pressed for time – go ahead and write in Spanish, between me and the teaching assistant, we will figure it out. I think that is a good transition, but I always say that there are not a lot of professors that are going to want you to do this, this is just kind of a transitional thing and usually those students just get enough confidence in their ability.

Other faculty discuss how they take the time to work with their students so that they can understand how to prepare for exams and college level work. Another notes,

so we actually spend time, after the first exam in class talking in class about well how did you spend your time, how did you study for this exam and what seemed to work and what didn't work and notice what the people who did the best on the class, I kind of compare – here is the people who got A's and B's on this exam and this is how they said that they spent their time

She chooses to spend an entire class "about how to study smarter rather than just, I sat here and read the book for 3 hours". For long success in her course and beyond she does not believe in "telling them to go off and study harder, that is not going to help" but to find ways to solve the issues the students face like time management, thinking about what is important and finding new and improved study techniques can help. This full professor admits that she "just started doing [this] in the last year or two" but is now "see[ing] a lot better scores overall just by spending some time "talking about how to ace this class"

Another faculty member mentioned how he takes the time to mentor his students. He finds great satisfaction in this work as he reveals,

you have to provide a level of mentoring and skill development that perhaps you would have to do in other situations. But I think that really gives a lot of relevance, I feel like I can provide a huge impact to students here where as you probably wouldn't necessarily, you know, at other institutions.

The caring also extends beyond the discipline and into personal needs of students as necessary. For example a young professor tells her students that,

I'm here to help you succeed and so I want my students to do well; and if it takes, you know, talking about their problems that they are having outside and helping them to how to get around those, then I will do that.

However that same faculty member worries that sometime students may take advantage of her caring, "because there is being nice and then there is you can be walked on." She admits that she struggles with balance, but recognizes that it is more important to let her students know that she is in their corner. Dr. Rawe agrees and shares how she witness such "dire situations" in her students' lives and she aims to be understanding and provide support." She is concerned about

...students who drop out and disappear and I don't know what happened to them but I knew they had some really difficult situation and now they are gone and I worry about them, and then it is hard to sort that out from the students, there are always just a few who are just working the system, and it is hard to sort that out.

Dr. Avery demonstrates care by assisting her students to feel comfortable and unafraid to ask a question. Her experience has taught her that vocabulary causes issues from time to time so she regularly asks, "does everyone know what this word means?" Through her constant encouraging, group and interactive work and caring ways she feels that, "students seem much more comfortable about asking during an exam, they don't feel dumb saying, 'I don't know what



this word means, or can you explain" this? Dr. Hidalgo explains how he attempts to make a caring and nurturing environment in his class space through discussion. Both through his syllabus and in class discussions he emphasizes that "we can disagree, but not be disagreeable." Dr. Rawe concurs with this notion and states that she wants her students to be able to "discuss conflicting issues in a respectful and listening kind of way" and that she encourages her students to "express differences of opinion without personalizing it and getting nasty about it." Both Dr. Rawe and Dr. Hidalgo work at creating safe learning spaces so their students "feel comfortable to be able to say what [they] truly think" to better support learning and engagement.

**Faculty perceptions on teaching role and their approach to practice.** Taking a step beyond what values faculty espouse brings the question about how faculty perceive their work and their approach to practice. Similar to results that Kember and Kwan (2000) found in their qualitative study of conceptions of teaching of higher education faculty concepts were framed through motivation and teaching strategy. More specifically Kember and Kawn (2000) found motivation was when faculty took on the responsibility of motivating their students. While faculty at UTEP did not use the term motivation, they all discussed attempts to engage their students and provide real world connections to course content, thus motivating their students to associate meaning to the course content. For example, one stated their purpose is to "really be a catalyst to get them to learn things on their own and get excited and enthused and work with real world situations and get them the relevance" so that "they can apply it to the real world."

Some faculty use this approach to motivation through connections to real world contexts as stated above. It might be a guest lecturer in the field, a simulation or a contemporary case as means to inspire engagement through concrete connections to the future students envision. For instance, one faculty member uses references to "daiquiris at a cocktail party" to illustrate

quantitative research concepts and another uses role playing where students experience what it is like to work with clients in their field. The role playing scenario engages students in a real world context where they are evaluated by peers and have the opportunity to watch video tape of the experience to see themselves from a new perspective.

Other faculty claim to motivate students through challenges focused on critical thinking. Dr. Groen aims to "engage the students and have them actively doing their own learning, rather than giving information" and Dr. Teirna provides "a lot of demonstrations and group work." For example she explains, "I want them to think critically, so I am going to give you the information and now I want you to problem solve, and so that is why it takes me a long time to prepare for my classes." Critical thinking is key and many comment that they hope to have "students [who] have read and they want to discuss and they want to challenge."

Two faculty in particular noted that when there is something unique in the class content it provides a means for understanding and recall in their students. For example, the overwhelmed and often tired assistant professor, Dr. Groen, reveals that when she is less scientific and a bit lazy in her speech, somehow students respond positively. Recently when she was tired and used a short hand expression and borderline inappropriate expression to convey a scientific principal, her students learned the concept well and on the exam provided a thorough explanation, then provided her colloquial speech in summary. Several faculty mentioned using their personal experiences as a way to illustrate content. For example one notes,

I used to feel like a weakness of my teaching is that I would digress a lot, you know sort of field work stories and anecdotes, and after some years of studying student evaluations pretty closely I realized that a lot of students feel that is the best part of my teaching that

they liked the stories, that they liked the personal anecdotes that illustrates the content for them

Dr. Rawe conveys similar success in engaging her students when she recently had laryngitis and could not speak in class. Instead of canceling the class she opened a word document on the projected screen and typed prompts that started a class discussion. She used nonverbal cues and typed emojis on the screen to give students feedback. While unplanned, this means to engage her class help them dig deeper in the content than her traditional lecture might have in the past. Although she admits she has not done this technique since, she is open to the creative outlet that this method provided and works to get students engaged and talking more in class.

**Faculty perspectives on students.** In order to get at how faculty feel about the student population they served I asked them about what it was like to teach at UTEP. Most of the faculty responded in similar ways and in summary the themes that emerged included politeness, obligations, academic preparation, language and motivation. Seven of the ten faculty interviewed had taught at other institutions and many considered the UTEP student in comparison to other students they have served.

The predominant belief was focused on student respect toward the authority of the teacher. Dr. Conrad share that the “students are respectful to a fault” which makes it “hard to play devil’s advocate and challenge their thinking.” UTEP students tend “respect the authority of the teacher so much” that they “do not stop and challenge thoughts, even when they are completely outrageous”. Dr. Downes agrees and states that,

...it is certainly true here is that the students are respectful. I don’t mean that in an obsequious, not at all, but they, they’re generous with you...they...consider you to be sort of an authority on the topic and that’s kind of novel.

As someone who has taught across the country and in more affluent locations, Dr. Rawe shares her experience teaching at a private east coast institution where there "is a very privileged student population and very academically talented," but often she was confronted with the "attitude that, my dad is paying thirty thousand dollars a year for me to be here, where is my A?" But she like the other faculty affirmed that demands of the privileged student never happens at UTEP.

Students are not only respectful, they are extremely mannerly which surprisingly was seen as a challenge and a barrier for learning. For instance, Dr. Groen clarifies that, "the student here are just so polite, so polite, it gets a little frustrating because they will not tell you if they're not understanding something or if they're upset about something." While at other institutions Groen claims that she would have to actually have a lesson on how to appropriately interact with faculty and that given the UTEP population that she would never have to do that here. So goes to describe the issue that this creates for learning,

...they don't seem to feel comfortable...uhm...challenging authority, even in the most minor way...so it's really hard to judge, are they understanding, and you ask them, so do you understand this and they say, oh yes Dr. [Groen], and none of them did, but [the students say] that you did a very good job...thank you Dr. [Groen] for teaching us this...and it's hard to get them to speak up in class as well because they are very afraid of being wrong and of showing you didn't teach it well...

Dr. Artista refers to this phenomenon as timidity, simply too shy to ask questions, "and you have many times to pull them and to pull them and that takes time." Dr. Conrad concurred with this notion and expounds on how in El Paso it is much more difficult to "engage [students] in that discussion back and forth."

Academic preparedness also crept into the narrative when discussing students. Dr. Winters plainly refers to it as "a sophistication that is lacking here", where others frame it the school system they come from prior to arriving at college. Dr. Rawe explains that most of her students are just "badly educated and who have been uhm...educationally marginalized with reasons that had nothing to do with their talent." Dr. Groen concurs and understands that "90% of our students are coming out of El Paso high schools" so she thinks that "they're arriving in UTEP without the skills they need to get a university degree so we become kind of a blend of high school-University."

Dr. Avery agrees with the knowledge gap, but quickly turns it into an opportunity to provide significant impact. To her

...it's been an interesting place to teach because of what you can do for the students and bringing in the students, both the local students and seeing the changes that can go on in these students because of the fact that they don't have a lot of the resources that say students would have at other places in the United States and they don't have the support network. That is a challenge to, because you have to provide a level of mentoring and skill development that perhaps you would have to do in other situations. But I think that really gives a lot of relevance, I feel like I can provide a huge impact to students here where as you probably wouldn't necessarily, you know, at other institutions....where you know, I think like a liberal arts college or something where they are very prepared and very directed and already know what they want to do with their lives and have probably had all of these AP courses and all of that, it's a different world.

Some faculty struggle with the mismatch of expectations as in the case of Dr. Groen who explains,

I have the impressions that they students do not have some of the skills that expected them to have at this point. And there's a lot of regurgitation of information, but being able to actually, being able to think, you know is something that I am trying to work with my students on...

All of the faculty commented on the responsibilities that their students must bear, and how they are amazed by the level of commitment that they witness regularly. Dr. Rawe discusses how "for the most part" students here "know what their families are sacrificing for them [sic] to be here and they don't take it lightly." Faculty explain a perception that college for the UTEP student is "about social mobility and so they are not messing around". Admittedly this has "a downside, because they study under such challenging circumstances" and competing obligations. For example Dr. Rawe elaborates that at other schools

...if a student was sleeping in class it would probably because they were partying the night before, here it is because they are a manager at Pizza Hut and they close until three in the morning, their raising small children, they are raising problematic teenagers, they caring for elderly parents [and] they are crossing over from Juarez every day. I'm surprised at the number of students that I have here at UTEP who are homeless while they are studying...

The thought of how students persevere through their challenging life situations faculty often reflected on the motivation of their students with respect. Dr. Downes suggests that

...people come to UTEP because they want to go to college, they are not here because their dad told them to go to college or their mom told them to go to college, that may play a part in it, but they are ultimately here because they realize that they have got a chance

for a higher education, [where] many of their family didn't, and now they have got that chance and they want to make the best of it...

Other faculty had an opposing view to a degree where they often witness a lack of motivation.

Dr. Artista laments,

When I don't see in the students the motivation, the willingness to learn. When I see they are coming here because they have been forced to, it takes a while sometimes to get used to it. For example, I am not trying to stereotype, but some of the kids are sent to take this [or] that because that is what the program says. Once they get into class they have no idea what they are going to do.

Dr. Groen even takes this a step further and is frustrated with the automatic response of the college going culture in America. She feels strongly that college is not for everyone and when students are just seeking job training that they should pursue community college or trade schools. As noted earlier some faculty see the students who are merely motivated by grades, like Dr. Hidalgo's "grade grubbers" and Dr. Pleasant's students who complain about their grades, she explains how students tell her how they "have never made a C before" and her responses is "well I don't know why" as she will not give "an A just as you were there" her students must earn it.

A final theme that emerged on faculty perspectives on students was related to language. Being a city on the U.S.-Mexico border the student body has a significant number of native Spanish speakers. This has created barriers in particular to faculty from outside of Texas. Specifically faculty have to learn the hard way that colloquialisms are almost always lost in translation for the many UTEP students. Both assistant professors from other parts of the country, Drs. Conrad and Groen, discuss their surprise how certain terms used in class and on

exams completely stumped their students. These misunderstandings coupled with extremely respectful students tend to make problems linger. For example Dr. Conrad shares his experience,

I found on my first semester, they wouldn't ask me what it [colloquialisms] meant – and therefore they would come to a test question they wouldn't actually understand...they knew how to answer it, they just didn't know how I wrote it. So they were getting lower grades when all that I needed to do, or all that they needed to do was to write it more simply or for them to ask, so I have gone back and changed a lot of my test questions to make the language easier in essence, not lower the content any, but making the language easier understood. But that is something, until my first semester, would have anticipated.

**Institutional context.** The findings suggest that the role of teaching in higher education is shaped by individual faculty values and institutional context is influential in the way that faculty utilize these strengths and values to manage the context they are in. To better explain this, it is important to first explore how faculty values, beliefs and conceptions revealed a connection to their teaching practice within this study of tenure and tenure-track faculty at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Faculty addressed a number of factors that influence their work based on the structures within the institution that they serve. The topics addressed fell mainly into three main themes that include the teaching environment, infrastructure and leadership. Teaching factors centered on teaching load and student preparation challenges. Infrastructure issues incorporated topics regarding faculty development, administrative support and financial resources. Finally, leadership themes emerged from discourse on a shifting mission and tenure/promotion policies. While many negative aspects were raised there were a few notes that supported a positive climate.



In general faculty felt that teaching loads at UTEP were high and cause undue pressures, particularly on those on the tenure track. Assistant professors Drs. Groen and Tierna both added that having new course preps semester after semester make it difficult to balance their teaching, research and service obligations. Dr. Downes, as a full professor with tenure, see the issues and comes to the defense of young faculty on the tenure track,

teaching three and three or three and two at this institution and expected to get an NSF grant and NIH grant while they are still on the tenure track, but to me is a set-up it leads to people's hair falling out, I have seen assistant professors with bald patches, I have seen people with stress related eczema, people with anxiety disorders, taking anti-depressants...

Dr. Downes believed that to be an effective teacher you need more time. He explains, ...good teaching is when you have time enough to do good prep work, develop relationships with students in the classroom and in the field, to mentor them and have enough time to take on some masters thesis's work, to have the time to take on a Ph.D. student or two or three...uhm...to still enough time so that you can also be an active scholar, so you are not constantly running from class to class, prep to prep, and you know...

As a former department chair and administrator balance factors greatly concern Dr. Downes. He worries about the difficulty to retain good teachers when they "burn-out after five years." Many faculty discuss the challenges of balancing obligations and as a result admit too often work is left undone. Dr. Rawe struggles with research and grantmanship due to the limited opportunities for course buyouts and states, "lots of research project I feel are left undone because I couldn't get them done here. If I had been at a place that had a 2-2 teaching load

instead of a 2-3, I might have gotten them done." Dr. Tierna admits that she regularly stays up until 2 a.m. and Dr. Groen only took 5 days off in her first year as a professor. And signs suggest that it may not improve as these young women gain tenure and seniority. Dr. Downes share that his teaching load as a full professor is higher than that as an assistant professor. He shares,

Now as a Full professor I run three graduate classes in the fall, one graduate class in the spring and one undergraduate class in the spring, so I have a heavy teaching load, this is the heaviest teaching load that I have ever had in my career.

There is a note of resentment about teaching loads and there is a perception that some colleges are favored as noted by the comment, "the teaching loads are heavy at all of the colleges and they are way too high outside of science and engineering."

Despite those feeling the pressure from teaching obligations, other faculty dismissed this issue. Assistant professor Dr. Conrad was confident and felt no pressure at all from his teaching in humanities. He claims that he gets to teach similar classes, so prep is minimal and most of his teaching work is "front-loaded" meaning all done well in advance of the first class. He admits that his teaching is "an afterthought" but is something he knows he "can put together quickly." This is a bit of a surprise from a pre-tenured professor although some full professors expressed an ease with teaching likely from the many years of experience. Dr. Winters suggested that he could teach much more and claims he could "teach four classes, four or five classes here without staying up all night prepping for them."

Faculty appear to have various experiences on teaching load and how it affects them. Not surprising the young female professors are learning the ropes of the professoriate and are challenged to balance teaching, particularly when they have had brand new courses to teach each semester. Also what stands out is that dependent upon the discipline some faculty have more

help with their teaching as in the example of Dr. Conrad who does not even hold office hours and has his three teaching assistants field questions from his students. Half of the interview sample represent the ranks of full professor and all solidly confirm that their years of experience make them real comfortable with teaching and the load they carry. However many also reflected on how difficult it might be on new faculty ranks as they noted increasing demands and a changing landscape of higher education.

Because the typical UTEP student is less prepared for college level work, some faculty are frustrated by the inability to spend the required time with students to bridge needed gaps. Faculty interviewed agreed that critical thinking is important to develop, but admit that large class sizes make it difficult to incorporate classwork that builds these skills. For example Dr. Groen shared her commitment to ensure her students can design simple experiments and require short answers and essays on her exam, but grading and returning effective feedback in a timely manner is difficult when there are over fifty students in her class. She even requires five research abstracts from her students each semester in an effort to develop the ability to read research and discern what is important, but admits if her class size continues to grow these meaningful assignments may need to be dropped. Dr. Rawe expressed a similar concern and as a result has compromised her values. She explains,

I am moving toward having them [her students] write less...because it just takes up so much of my time to evaluate their written papers and I feel like it is not time that is really well spent because I don't know if the feedback that I give them, when they are writing, I don't think it is feedback that they take up and use to improve their writing much over the course of a semester. It is very labor intensive, so I think that I am just moving toward doing less of that.

Faculty concerned with class sizes also suggested that learning is difficult to maximize with the inability to make connections with their students on a meaningful level and comments like, “the issue is never really getting to know your students because you do not have time to know them....or memorize their name, because you have so many of them...” were common regrets. The real issues remain however faculty who are overwhelmed with the work load consider or actually compromise the learning experiences of their students. Interviews suggest faculty a significantly dedicated to developing quality students and enhancing critical thinking skills but when structures are set to inhibit best practices student outcomes may suffer. It is important to consider the ramifications that these pressures may have in particular as young faculty replace the greying professoriate in the years ahead.

So in order to better support faculty institutions should investigate the infrastructure and resources available and how faculty perceive and take advantage of them. From interviewees, I have discerned that the hot button issues at UTEP center on administrative support, resources and faculty development. Both female assistant professors agreed that administrative bureaucracy took up much of their time and suggested that more assistance from additional support staff would be welcomed. The administration of grants was raised and the complicated systems on campus, like PeopleSoft, are considered "the bane of everyone's existence." These young faculty expressed concerns about learning the ropes from budgeting to hiring lab assistants. They felt that everything was overly complicated and believe that there time would be better spent teaching and conducting research. The faculty recognize that "the fact that we are so short-handed" contributes to frustration.

Faculty who have interns or supervise a practitioner based discipline that requires student field observations discussed the time that each site visit takes. They suggest that even a handful

of students creates a significant amount of work if you plan on teaching and providing meaningful feedback to their students. When asked what you would need to better meet these obligations, they too, recommended that additional "clerical support" and teaching assistants would make a critical difference. One faculty member actually admitted to requesting this kind of help and despite asking repeatedly over the last several years, she was told that "it could not be justified" and "we never [will] have the money for that." But some faculty reported that if they were in the right department or college that they would have more resources.

Comments that reflected a frustration for not having balanced funding across disciplines were prevalent in many interviews. The focus on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) was referenced often and some faculty felt the administration favored and better supported these areas, "because those schools have a lot of resources and many of the colleges have almost none." The start-up packages for new faculty were considered bigger in STEM departments and "those kinds of faculty" were thought to be "brought in quickly and mentored." Faculty in the social sciences and humanities particularly took offense to this perceived trend and felt that the institution did not value this discipline based research. Some went as far as suggesting that STEM is really not that important noting that "STEM isn't what we need in the world to promote the next steps in our society and culture" and that our focus should center on creating productive engaged citizens.

Many mentioned institutional pressures to produce research but the lack of funding to support non STEM based fields. For example, one notes, "there is more research money for things that I do not feel that passionate about and the things that I really want to research on there is not much research money for that." Dr. Hidalgo echoes this sentiment and has chosen not to simply chase the money to fund his work. He comments that it has been a struggle "in terms of

like funding, is not sexy... [and] it doesn't attract a lot of funds." He goes on to underscore his love of learning and complain about colleagues who simply produce publications that is based solely on what others have written as note by his comment, they "never collected data of any kind, never pushed the envelope, never asked you know bigger questions that addressed some of the gaps" in the literature.

It becomes apparent that some faculty outside STEM fields on the UTEP campus feel that they are less important, both on a national level with limited funding opportunities and internal support from the institution, as illustrated by the following narrative,

...so that is frustrating and this something that I hear from so many colleagues right now...how there is this big push toward Tier One and becoming a more robust research institution, but the support is not really there for us to do it...especially in areas that are (sigh) not well funded in the larger research world. Our former chair used to say, there is plenty of research money for killing people, curing people or spying on people...(laughter) so if you are doing something that are in the STEM field or in health, or in homeland security, there is a lot of money for that.

In addition, another mentioned that UTEP is actually focusing on graduation and completion rates of science and technology majors over the liberal arts and he is simply disgusted. Another full professor offered a more cynical stance and suggest the shift in higher education away from a greater purpose and toward merely expecting its faculty to become "worker bees that write grants and turn out pacified consumers for the American capitalist" system.

Financial resources were not only a concern for supporting research and teaching, faculty openly discussed limited resources to support faculty development outside of the institution. For

some the invigorating discussions that take place with colleagues outside of the institution are vital to maintain morale and push innovation and research agendas. Dr. Winters was particularly frustrated with that as expressed by his comment, "for lack of resources in recent years I have given up going to the professional association meetings...and conferences and things like that, I don't have any money to do those things anymore...that is where my heart really lies."

Professors specifically complained about "the non-existent" travel funding, particularly in comparison to other research intensive universities that UTEP aspires to be. Issues that impeded outside enrichment for faculty are compounded the lack of a sabbatical system and no opportunities to be take part in summer programs or faculty abroad opportunities.

Despite the negative comments about the lack of resources many faculty applauded the efforts of internal faculty development opportunities through the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETAL). Even faculty who were critical of UTEP suggest that UTEP in some ways "gives great support, there is great mentoring, [sic] CETAL is wonderful, I have really improved my teaching with the resources that UTEP offers."

Older faculty also appreciate the efforts of CETAL, but some have not taken advantage of opportunities available as in the case of Dr. Artista,

I think it [faculty development] was more supported, you know now we have the institute, what's the name, the one...CETAL. I have seen a couple of the courses and I have not gone to any of them. I don't sound too, I don't want to sound uhm...pompous or anything like that, but I think that 43 years in the trenches teaches you a lot.

Yet full professor, Dr. Avery eagerly shared the benefits that CETAL has provided her, I had a lot of support, certainly I've worked a lot with CETAL and I've had workshops with CETAL. I think that it is just the ability to go workshops...when it's possible I think

those workshops they have at the beginning of the semester right before classes start in the fall have always been really good one to get you know excited about teaching again and meet some of the newer faculty and so I think, I think that's, that's been helpful.

Even young faculty appreciated the efforts of CETAL, and while they understand that it has significantly assisted their less experienced peers they expressed gratitude that teaching development programs were not required. Dr. Conrad explains,

CETAL which it's amazing that program is there, I know it helped them, but by the same token, I am glad that we were not all required to take certain programs through CETAL because to me, that would have been... I wouldn't say were superfluous, it probably would have been beneficial in some ways, but it was not something that I needed to do to actually feel comfortable for what I was doing

A final thread on institutional influences centered on administration and the direction of the institution itself. Early passages have eluded to the concept that UTEP is aiming to grow its research productivity and many faculty had mixed feelings or strong reactions to that goals. Male full professors, both associate professors and both female assistant professors had similar negative reaction to the aspirations to grow into a robust research institution given the current context of UTEP resources and the population that is served in the border region. Several faculty expressed nostalgic remarks as they thought about the changes of UTEP overtime. Dr. Artista expressed a concern out the population serves,

I think that, as I said before, that we are losing a little bit of what used to be the spirit of this university. We used to be more concentrated on the student, we are less and less and less [sic] concentrated on the undergrad student, more and more concentrated on the



graduate student, which I think is a mistake, because of our location, because of our work, because of our stakeholders that use our services.

Dr. Rawe confirmed this idea of abandoning a more meaningful mission with this thought,

I feel like that right now when UTEP is most loudly trumpeting the things about their mission that made me feel at home here, is when, in reality they are kind of abandoning those things, and making it look more like, you know, with other colleagues we joke about an University of Phoenix...that they are moving more toward online, short form courses.

An impassioned Dr. Downes felt the aspiration for a more intensive research institution was possible in this border community but had concerns about the current path and motivation,

This [UTEP] is a great place to be, so why can't we find a good balance between being a research active or a research intensive school, but still maintain our mission as community based, minority and minority serving institution? You can be a research intensive university and a minority serving institution, there is no question about that, we have great minority institutions in the United States, ah, but let's not abandon our mission, on the track toward, on the road toward dollars, which it seems like this is all about, at the heart of it.

Many faculty mention the path toward research intensive within UTEP's current resources make long-term success unsustainable. Some even referred to the situation as a crisis for the faculty, explaining that the "dilemma that we face as a faculty at UTEP is that we have Tier III infrastructure and Tier II teaching loads and Tier I expectations, so it makes for a lot of really fried faculty and burned out faculty."

Faculty are not only overloaded and burning out, they are confused on where to place their efforts when it comes to tenure and promotion. The overwhelmed young assistant professors expressed great concerns in regards to the mixed and vague messages they were being sent as they navigate their pre-tenure years. There is a sense that the expectations are extremely high, across teaching, research and service and while they are discouraged to volunteer for committee somehow they are "appointed to be on X committee and Y committee." Dr. Tierna discusses that she was prepared for the demand in research when hired three years earlier but tenure expectations have been a moving target. She explains,

I mean I was told this is the focus, but there wasn't a specific amount [of publications] said to me. It wasn't till a few months ago, a couple of months ago I was told ok you need X number. However in talking to some of the other individuals who have gone through those meetings, within a week's time of my meeting, the numbers are different. So I think, the sense I am getting is that there isn't really one, [hesitation in her voice; deliberate in language] unless you are told, 'this is how many you will need', so there's no set standard.

Faculty feel that they are sent out just to figure the tenure process on their own as a young academic. Many faculty suggest that it is guess work, "you flounder for your first couple of years and do what you think you should be doing" and when you "get your third year review you find out if you guessed right."

Full professors expressed a concern for their young colleagues. Comments about the "UTEP's really good at making faculty feel insecure" and the lower expectation of the past cause worry. Some even suggest that they would have difficulty making tenure in today's climate and

that in their time if "you published one a year, a couple of times a year that was more than enough... then in the late 1990s we started becoming more and more focused on research."

Faculty regularly expressed concern on the ramifications of this research focus and new pressures to attain tenure. Specifically, what does it do to the teaching and learning environment?

I really do not think that teaching counts here anymore and I really do not think that service counts anymore...lip service is paid to it, but I do not think that in the decisions that I see being made, which is the ultimate measure of what really counts or not, that it counts at all, because I see great teachers leaving, that I see research active, but they have not hit the big league, and they are not going to hit the big league with the kind of teaching loads.

While some messages are mixed, faculty are learning that excellence in teaching is not rewarded. A pre-tenured faculty member notes, "I really enjoy the teaching part of my job, but that is no longer focus...but we are told that is not the focus... we're told the focus is on your [sic] research." Others share that

You read the writing on the wall and it [teaching] is not rewarded, and if it is not rewarded people only do it out of their own passion. So I do it despite the reward system. I do not hear messages of...from the...figurative pulpit that it's what really counts and uhm...you know because, when I was chair I would go to all the administrator meetings that the all, you know tons of them...the message had even gotten more crystal clear, crystal clear and the [was] emphasis on grants and contracts and so so-called high impact journals to the detriment of everything else.

## **4.5 Teaching Observations**

Four faculty members were observed briefly as a follow-up to their interview. This process was an attempt to explore the espoused values and teaching approach as enacted in practice. One full professor, both associate professors and one assistant professors were part of the teaching observation sample. The faculty member selected the class to be observe and all observation sessions took place in the early to middle of the spring semester.

Themes that emerged from the observations included practice that aligned with values and proposed teaching approaches. All faculty sought means to engage the students in the class discussions in various ways and to some degree utilized humor as a way to entertain the students. A noticeable amount of care was also demonstrated in the class sessions and nearly all teachers engaged in pushing on students' judgement in an effort to unpack their critical thinking skills.

The three more experienced professors displayed an ease and comfort in the classroom where they appeared to have a solid sense of self and a set of objectives to accomplish. They have gone through the tenure and review processes and likely have had some feedback on their teaching overtime. The group was either focused on teaching or on both teaching and research with a teaching focus, so they were attentive and engaged with their students and all offered a balance of lecture and group activities to keep student involved. The summaries below provide a comparison of their espoused views on teaching and intentions with the practice of the class observed.

Dr. Avery's VIA survey revealed five strong signature strengths that included appreciation of beauty, perspective, honesty, love of learning and self-regulation. When she was asked to self-select character strengths that she believes she brings to her work as a faculty members she selected curiosity and leadership along with love of learning and most resonated with the virtues of wisdom and temperance. Through the interview process as Dr. Avery described her views on teaching. I noted the values of kindness/caring, curiosity, love of learning, teamwork and perspective. During

the one hour upper division undergraduate course in the sciences that I observed, Dr. Avery took many of these values and placed them in action. Simple acts of kindness that related to the course logistics, such as when referring to the syllabus telling students she had extras "in case they lost theirs" or telling students who arrived late where the class was and that they had not missed much. Just as she had explained in our meeting about encouraging curiosity by reminding students to have the child-like sense of wonder, she asked the students to "be curious today" as we think about the class content. She walked around the lecture style space with nearly 50 students and maintained eye contact and modeled self-regulation in her attempt to address a commotion in the back of the classroom. Dr. Avery demonstrated some social intelligence when she used local El Paso architecture and landscapes her students were quite familiar with to illustrate her points. While the class session was mostly lecture style with a traditional PowerPoint presentation, she use a creative technique to engage her students. On every 3 – 4 slides she posted a multiple choice question and students were required to hold up a card with the choices of A, B, C or D to share what they thought was correct. Overall she was not showy in leading her class, but confident, competent and found means to be attentive to her students while maintaining their interest and involvement. All in all I would argue that her espoused values were strongly in line with her practice and she demonstrated many additional strengths that are likely to have evolved from her extensive faculty career.

Dr. Rawe was equally competent, organized and in command of her class of over 50 students. Her VIA survey reveal the following seven signature strengths; appreciation for beauty, gratitude, bravery, love, fairness, curiosity and love of learning. When asked to self-select strengths on the survey she suggested that she brought perspective, honesty, caring/kindness, social intelligence and love of learning to her role of faculty member and most resonated with the virtues of wisdom and justice. From the ninety minute class that I observed I also noted humor, judgement

(critical thinking) and fairness. Overall her style was conversational although she supplemented her discussion with a PowerPoint presentation and group work. It was obvious that she loves teaching and connected well with her students by using humor, sometimes teasing and other times as the punchline to emphasize her point. Justice was strong in her course, both because it lends well to her discipline, but also as it highlighted social norms that her diverse class of students experience. She did not gloss over content and she challenged her students to consider the content and supply examples a means to engage critical thinking skills. When doing this however I believe that she missed an opportunity to display her espoused value of social intelligence. As she asked for examples of breeds of dogs to illustrate a concept, the class was silent, not a single breed was named. She then waited and pushed to students to come up with one, and pleaded with a "come on guys..." Given the feedback from my interviews, there is a cultural divide for many faculty. A very different set of experiences and language barriers set up a lack of engagement when it is merely cultural experiences differ and things that might come more freely in other areas of the county just are lost on the UTEP student. Other than that disconnect, I feel that the class and her teaching practice matched her espoused values of teaching well. She was sincere and although she likely had taught this exact content multiple times she displayed an honesty, caring and love of her discipline.

Dr. Hidalgo is obviously a well-seasoned teacher with lots of experience engaging students. His VIA revealed a broad range of strengths where eleven strengths rose to the top. They included, gratitude, bravery, honesty, kindness, forgiveness, humility, teamwork, leadership, curiosity, judgement and love of learning. When asked to self-select values that represented his teaching he choose; love of learning, teamwork, fairness, leadership and kindness with an affinity towards the virtues of justice and humanity. Overall I must admit there was a self-understanding that Dr.

Hidalgo expressed both in his teaching and in his interview. He demonstrated thoughtful consideration of his role as a faculty member and his place within the institution itself. His perspective, notions of teamwork, gratitude were pervasive as he explained his approach to teaching and the institution that he has the privilege to serve. Those same values were apparent in his teaching and his espoused values were clearly displayed in his teaching. Dr. Hidalgo demonstrates great care in his teaching from the clarity of his assignments and the class agenda to the thought considerations of the points that students raised in class. He also incorporated threads of humor, although this is not something he considered as a strength, but it was a means to keep things easy and friendly to create a safe place for students to express their views. In the class that I observed creativity was evident as well as he used various techniques from role playing, group work and lecture formats. His love of learning and curiosity were evident in his enthusiasm for the course topic and his interest in understanding student perspectives to enlighten his views. He was honest when telling the students he just did not get to complete grading their papers showed humility by not imposing his views on his students. He would ask probing questions and play devil's advocate to draw out students' arguments and would not take ownership of an opposing view by stating, "some would argue" rather than devaluing a the student's perspective. Of all the observations, Dr. Hidalgo appeared to be most grounded and confident and I would attribute to his unique perspective on his role and place within an institution that he does not 100% agree with, but remains grateful to the privilege to teach students and learn alongside of them.

The final observation was of the young and time-challenged pre-tenure academic, Dr. Groen. Based on her VIA survey 14 areas tied for strengths which included; humor, perseverance, honesty, kindness, social intelligence, prudence, self-regulation, teamwork, fairness, creativity, curiosity, judgement, love of learning and perspective. The self-proclaimed over achiever may

have had a more discerned listing of strengths if she took the full 240 question version, but the limited VIA-72 had less success in separating medium strengths from her signature strengths. When she was asked to self-select strengths that she brings to her work she limited that to creativity, perseverance, kindness and leadership and showed the most affinity toward the virtues of wisdom and transcendence, a connection to a higher purpose. Throughout her interview values that were expressed included a clear love of learning, caring for her students, social intelligence on how her experience differ from her students, judgement in the form of critical thinking and her sheer perseverance.

The class I observed was a ninety minute lower division undergraduate science course. From the start of the class she appears organized and well prepared. She arrived early, prepared teaching materials and provided some impromptu guidance to students who walked up to ask a question before the class began. Once class started she clearly displayed the session objectives, provided some reminders of outside development opportunities and reminded students of upcoming due dates. Several students arrive after the start of class and she does not acknowledge them or look at them, which could be a missed opportunity to show caring and social intelligence. Her love of learning and curiosity is on display as she moves through her PowerPoint while providing an example that connects her research to the slide content. A few times throughout her lecture she uses a pun and makes the students laugh, relax and provides some feedback to who is engaged. However, other times her joke is lost and students fail to understand her. She is young and appears to talk very fast, particularly for this region, and I believe that is more to her cultural background rather than nerves. Several times she pauses and asks students to consider or provide an example as a means to engage them in critical thinking, and provides positive feedback to those who dare to provide answers. Overall she has engaged most of the 34 students in the class and



when they appear to nod or she hears mumblings she shows persistence to wait it out until she gets an intelligent answer. Overall she displays many of her espoused values although her teaching effort appears laborious and calculated more than the others that I observed. She apparently spends a significant amount of time preparing her lecture and does a good job engaging the students.

In summary, both hard science instructors, Drs. Avery and Groen, spent the majority of their classes on the content and while they were kind and sought to engage with students ideas, the discipline was the central focus. Both assistant professors, both from the social sciences, reveals a blending of the content with student perspectives. However the more experienced faculty displayed a better awareness of the students as learners by balancing the learner and the content more evenly (Beyer et al., 2013). Scholars suggest that over time faculty tend to incorporate a more balanced approach as a result of students observations and reflection.

The primary questions of this study revealed a common core of values that faculty bring to their work at UTEP. The VIA-72 survey of strengths revealed that the faculty as a whole share high rankings in honesty, fairness and love of learning. The espoused values that were revealed in the interviews incorporated threads of judgement, perspective and kindness in conjunction with love of learning. From the teaching observation, while I expected those who spend much of their interview lamenting about the institutional context to minimize the practice of teaching, it appeared that the direct opposite happened. Both associate professors dove into their work as teachers almost as it was a life raft saving them from the flood of frustration. In all four observation sessions it was evident that the faculty all took great care of the privilege to teach and while techniques and styles varied, they displayed a love of learning that sought to engage and challenge their students. Research has shown that when character strengths, regardless of what they are, are integrated into one's work that there is a greater perception of work satisfaction (Harzer & Ruch, 2012; Harzer & Ruch, 2013). I would argue, although some of these observed faculty were a bit dissatisfied with

their work life, they found means to make the work that they controlled meet their personal values and thus find satisfaction in an aspect of their work life, in essence making it more tolerable.

While not all the frustrated faculty were observed it is important to note as a group how they scored on the VIA-72 as the topic of work satisfaction is raised. This group, comprised primarily of males, rank lowest in forgiveness, humility, prudence and self-regulation. These values are all measure of the virtue of temperance. The literature does not support this finding fully other than some contributing evidence that work demands (non-academic setting) require large measures of self-control and prudence among other traits (Money, Hillebrand, & Camara, 2008).

#### **4.6 Implications of Striving**

The purpose of a mixed methodology investigation is to engage data from multiple and varied data sources that combine both qualitative and quantitative data. The information that was gathered from the survey, when coupled with interviews surfaced a few insights, particularly for those most frustrated with the institution. While institutional context may not appear to matter directly on teaching, particularly if the faculty is altruistic and driven to serve students, however overtime scholars have noted concerns with shifting missions and unintended consequences (Gonzales, 2013; Gonzales et al., 2014; O'Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011)

It has been noted that although institutions striving for new research oriented missions provide slogans and narratives that undergraduate learning matters and teaching is valued (Gonzales & Pacheco, 2012), the reward structures tend to favor a research centric agenda (M. C. Wright, 2008). It is important to note that this concern was reflected both within the survey and the narratives from faculty interviews. As illustrated by Table 4.5 below the majority of faculty felt that the institution values teaching, yet less believed that efforts to improve teaching were rewarded. The narrative from faculty interviews indicated a belief that the university is only providing "lip service" to teaching excellence. Professional development also raises a concern.

While nearly 90% of faculty regularly engage in reflecting on teaching improvements, only 45% actually seek out workshops for faculty development. Many faculty have come to learn that efforts to improve teaching is not rewarded, as noted by Dr. Hidalgo, who claims that "in your actual evaluation, professional development is not in any way shape or form taken into account, much less rewarded on an annual basis and [it] is definitely not a criteria for tenure."

Table 4.7 Faculty Views on Institution

	Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Institution values excellence in teaching	63.8%	74	20.7%	24	15.5%	18
Efforts to improve teaching are rewarded by my institution	42.2%	49	33.6%	39	24.1%	28
There is adequate support for faculty development	33.6%	39	21.6%	25	44.8%	52
I regularly seek out and attend workshops to improve my teaching	45.7%	53	23.3%	27	31.0%	36
I regularly engage in conversations with faculty colleagues about ways to improve my teaching	63.8%	74	20.7%	24	15.5%	18
I continually reflect and think about ways to improve my teaching	89.7%	104	6.9%	8	3.4%	4
Advancement and promotion/tenure criteria are clearly defined	36.2%	42	14.7%	17	49.1%	57
Institutional values align with advancement, promotion/tenure criteria	37.9%	44	23.3%	27	38.8%	45

Dr. Downes points out the mixed messages from the state level and the institutional level on the importance of teaching.

When we have three or four star teachers rewarded at the state level, I think that's good and it precedes the current emphasis, but it's a state program that identifies excellence with a substantial cash award sends a signal that somewhere at least, in the UT system that teaching is still valued. But it isn't celebrated for the rank and file. I would like to see some component of merit really based on teaching, instead of what it all boils down to is that they count. They count how many articles, how many grants, how many dollars, and there is a paragraph on teaching, but the measurement of it is completely arbitrary.

The faculty are frustrated with the tenure and promotion process which is also a derivative of the push for a Tier One research agenda. Nearly 50% of all faculty surveyed believe that advancement and promotion criteria are not clearly defined. There was interview feedback that confirmed this idea as previously mentioned by Dr. Groen: uncertainty on where to place her efforts. Dr. Hidalgo empathizes with assistant faculty like Goren and notes,

Especially with the new demands that they have on their plate, because you know it used to be [that] an assistant professor was able to somehow continue doing the things that most of us like. Which is teaching and doing a little bit of service and having a little bit of research. Now if you are not concentrating on your research, you are never going to get tenure. Which I think is crazy. Because we are teaching and learning institutions, not research institutions, and I question the research part. Because it is not research, it is publication and that is a big, big, big problem in our evaluation system.

The evaluation system was also mentioned as an issue for post-tenure reviews as well. Tenured faculty feel harassed and belittled by the process and the need to document their productivity. As a result of the disrespect for experience and productivity one prolific full professor noted a frustration and has decided to just give in and to ignore the administration focus on research and do what that individual does best. They claim,

I have never been a sloucher, except that last couple of years, I mean I am not. I used to spend and stay up until 2 or 3 in the morning, down in the basement, well there is not basements here, so now I go bed at 8 o'clock and get up at 4 and do a little bit of stuff. But I do not feel compelled to anything than what I have to do.

The faculty believe that excellence in teaching is personally important to them, but they are certain that it means nothing to the administration. One young pre-tenured faculty explained her frustration and commitment to teaching excellence, but reveals that that commitment comes at a sacrifice.

I been told is to be the biggest factor that determines if I get tenure not is whether I have brought in money...I spend most of my time teaching, but, you have to be, you can't suck as a teacher, if you don't totally suck it doesn't matter for tenure. You just have to not totally suck and I don't totally suck, so they are like yeah, don't put so much time into teaching, which is hard to do. Because it is what you get constant feedback on, so a lot of time when I am not teaching, writing grants...my writing has really suffered and I know that's one of the things that I'm also really be evaluated on is my publications but finding the time to do things that don't have all these, the things with the deadlines, it is true with graduate school as well, things that don't have these specific deadlines get pushed back, and writing is one of them...

The blending of the interview narratives and interviewee specific results from the VIA-72 survey revealed an interesting connection between values and those most vocal about their frustrations with the striving mission. The virtue of temperance, made up of the values of forgiveness, humility, prudence and self-regulation, were all scored noticeably lower on those most open about expressing their dissatisfaction with the institution and its current direction.

First, the male full professors, Drs. Artista, Downes, and Winters, were very frank in discussing their reservations about the infrastructure and spotty financial support currently available at UTEP. They all had experienced the tenure process when research was less

emphasized, and despite being productive scholars they view teaching and making a difference in the community more deeply and purposefully. As a group they expressed worry for a professoriate in crisis for the impending changes in higher education. There was a collective traditional tone they shared for the purpose of college, to create an educated citizenry, and thus a need to focus on teaching and learning in meaningful and connected ways.

The associate professors, Hilgado and Rawe were both influenced by themes of social justice and as social scientists this seems most appropriate. There were views on the frustration regarding the striving institution, however it seemed as if they have settled on their role. They recognized the policies and institutional forces at play, but were not real interested in making a change in themselves or the organization. I had a sense that they saw the structures as something that can shape them, but have chosen to see it for what it is and to remain who they are and focus on what they can influence, their students through teaching. While Rawe was more outraged and vocal about leadership and the push toward a research intensive institution, they both found a connection to a higher purpose through their work.

Clearly there are unintended consequences evolving on the UTEP campus as the administration sets a course toward a research intensive mission. Although they suggest that teaching is valued this research is showing that they faculty are not trusting the institution that they serve. A solid teacher and researcher sees the path as unsustainable so that person begins to do the minimum, the next young teacher values all aspects of her work and ignores aspects of her job since the reward of research productivity is less immediate than the needs of her students. There appears to be a perfect storm forming on this campus and outcomes align with the research intensive mission may be lost as faculty are confused by mixed messages and struggle to align their personal values with the newly minted values of the institution.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

*"Our colleges and universities need to encourage, foster, and assist our students, faculty, and administrators in finding their own authentic way to an undivided life where meaning and purpose are tightly interwoven with intellect and action, where compassion and care are infused with insight and knowledge."* Palmer, Zajonc, & Scribner (2010, p. 56)

### 5.1 Discussion

Educational outcomes and educational efficiency are central to the contemporary discourse surrounding all levels within the P-20 continuum. States are reducing their funding for higher education nationally and more scrutiny and budgets cuts are on the horizon. To illustrate this point an excerpt from the most recent State of Higher Education address by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Commissioner Raymond A. Paredes explains,

There is plenty of evidence that we can reduce the cost of higher education significantly. There was a study done by the McKinsey Consulting Group about 10 years ago that said there was a built-in cost inefficiency in higher education in this country of between 15 percent and 30 percent. I happen to believe that in Texas we are closer to the 15 percent mark than we are to the 30 percent mark, but there is still a lot more we can do. For example, adopting competency-based education, particularly at the graduate level and in professional fields, is something that we should expand as quickly as we are able. I know that it is a lot of work to completely redo a curriculum to reduce the costs, but that is what we have to do (October 26, 2016).

This policy talk has created a context that has pressured institutions to seek external funding and other revenue streams. This is particularly true in the Texas where they have further incentivized efforts by state universities to push toward research intensive institutions with House Bill 51 in 2009. As a result there are now eight state institutions in Texas that meet the Carnegie

Tier I criteria where six years ago there were only three (Paredes, October 26, 2016). While progress and considerations of creative funding solutions is likely needed for the long term sustainability public higher education, this rapid change may have some unintended consequences.

Scholars who study the professoriate have noted that the face of faculty life in higher education has changed significantly (Kezar & Maxey, 2014; Kezar & Maxey, 2015; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Ever since Clark Kerr's Godkin Lecture in 1963 the notion of the "multiversity" has transformed of the university from a "community of masters and students with a single vision" into a community of conflicting agendas. The aim of this study was to look at how competing missions of traditional teaching university striving for a research intensively may affect the mindset and values of their most important asset, the faculty who teach.

In order to unpack faculty values in regard to their teaching role, I have focused this investigation on espoused and enacted values of teaching practice. Data collected through a survey, interviews and teaching observations have illustrated the connection between espoused values and values in use with teaching practice. This project began as an attempt to answer my personal questions about how those who deeply value learning can ultimately create learning environments that fail to honor that. Coursework earlier in this doctoral program informed me through a pilot study that faculty can say one thing about learning, for example they are student-centered teachers, but spend a whole class monopolizing a discussion and imposing their viewpoints upon their students.

Additionally the questions presented here are a result of also learning about the work of Bain (2004) who explored what the best college teachers do. He argues that faculty who have an attitude that teaching is a serious endeavor and dedicated time and energy to that end, create critical learning environments that contribute to deep student learning. When viewing Bain's work through



the lens of positive psychology one can associate the cognitive approaches that he found in exceptional teachers as values and when observed in practice, as values in use. The commitment to their discipline may be considered as zest, their culture of high expectations could be viewed as honesty/integrity, their beliefs in their students' ability to learn as hope and their commitment to engage students in the learning process as persistence.

When I consider Bain's work through the narratives and observations of the faculty that were a part of this study, I see parallels. Eight of the ten faculty interviewed had a clear commitment to their teaching, and understanding of their students' needs and aim to motivate engaged learners in the safe spaces that they create. Much of the findings of this study reconfirm Bain's work that those espousing a mindset that values the learning relationship and were not influenced by external factors showed care and commitment to their students and the obligations of teacher. In summary, these teachers showed great care for the work and have made efforts to diligently uphold their self-identified professional obligations and connected their espoused values to their values in use in practice. The care they display goes beyond caring for simply the student, or caring for self, but to a greater good of caring for the practice and the purpose of teaching and higher education (Noddings, 1992).

In the midst of a climate of academic capitalism (Rhoads, 2011), these teachers display a moral commitment to the learning process and honor the contract between student and teacher. Throughout the investigation faculty revealed an understanding of the students they serve in this border community and many were motivated to teach here because of the population of this Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). In addition, they generally felt their efforts matter more here given the gains students could achieve and dismissed the notion of teaching privileged students at affluent private colleges.

## **5.2 Theoretical Contributions**

Faculty members are an important and valuable resource whom much is demanded and little is offered. Often faculty rely on their own altruistic values and sound sense of purpose to do the right thing for their students and the institution they serve, however overtime those with the best intentions can burn out. Particularly if they believe that they are not valued or trusted. Mixed messages create disconnects between perceptions and reality and too often faculty detach from what appears to be out of their control and concentrate what personally fulfills them. I would suggest if institutions truly want to support their faculty and help them contribute thoughtfully to the mission while encouraging them to flourish as teachers and scholars they consider how faculty values align with institutional values. The literature supports that when employees find means to use several of their character strengths in their work that they find meaning and purpose and experience higher levels of workplace satisfaction (Harzer & Ruch, 2012; Harzer & Ruch, 2013; Peterson et al., 2009).

If colleges and universities better understood that values that faculty bring to their work, they could provide resources, policies and support structures that allowed maximized use of these traits. For example at the University of Texas El Paso, as a campus faculty strengths centered on many signature strengths, the strongest were found to be: honesty/integrity, fairness and love of learning. Based on the narratives and finding in this study faculty espouse and enact the love of learning frequently. However they too express a frustration regarding the integrity and honesty of the new institutional mission and believe many of the policies formed as a result violate their sense of fairness and purpose. Blending leadership decisions with an understanding of positive psychology allows for a lens to view the motivation and values of the pool of faculty intuitions' need on board to fulfill their missions and serve their students. On a greater scale this could be

viewed as administrators' opportunity to evaluate institutional espoused values and the enacted values in use. Do they align, do they support faculty values and do they create spaces where all can flourish? The founding principles of positive psychology aim to consider the strengths and values that lead to a productive life and focuses on and what makes individuals flourish in the institutions that they navigate (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2011). It is through this framework colleges and university can respond to challenges they face while incorporating the stake holders who can be the change desired.

### **5.3 Implications**

I suggest that there are a number of opportunities for leaders in higher education to glean from this research. The understanding of faculty values and how the context of their work shape their beliefs, intention and action with duties that are charged to carry out could lead to thoughtful leadership that mitigates frustration and maximizes faculty engagement. The areas that I suggest for improvement in the institutional climate to better support of faculty include, role balance, clarity in tenure and promotion policies, administration and resources, and professional development. In addition, faculty development programs could benefit by helping faculty find means to apply their strengths in ways that provide work satisfaction and benefits to the intuition.

**Role balance.** The faculty role is demanding and varied, and traditionally has been comprised of three major components; teaching, research and service. However, scholars argue that the nature of that work has changed overtime and more drastically in recent year (Kezar & Maxey, 2014; Kezar & Maxey, 2015; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). According to the most recent National Study of Post-Secondary Faculty (2008), full time faculty at public research institutions work, on average, over 55 hours per week and their time is divided 43% for teaching and 33 % for

research. Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) report from their study on faculty that nearly half of tenure track faculty in the U.S. report difficulty to stay current in their field. More recently, the phenomenon of striving institutions has created increased pressures on work demands that may not be reflected in this data. Accounts provided through the interviews indicated that many faculty have difficulties in balancing their responsibilities and many state they do their research in their "spare time". Even one tenured full professor noted that his teaching load is the highest it had been in his whole career. Younger faculty who are pressured to produce scholarship noted that the number of courses they teach limit their ability to make time for research and they are choosing not to be a "crappy teacher" just to meet demands of the institutional values. Professors in the social sciences lamented their inability to obtain large grants that would offer them course buyouts given their line of research is "not sexy" and funds are offered along their research areas. In summary, the findings suggest that tenure track faculty express the need for reduced teaching loads to both improve their teaching and provide the needed time to work on research.

One suggestion that could assist UTEP with these challenges would be to encourage interdisciplinary research, where faculty could work together to balance their research load while possibly combining interest areas that attract external grants. Small internal mini-grants to support collaborations could offer incentives for faculty while reinforcing how the institution values all research and does not care primarily about STEM center initiatives. Additionally, once interdisciplinary collaborations are created, the administration could offer opportunities for course buyouts. The reduction in faculty teaching load could improve morale, encourage quality teaching practice and provide opportunities for young and mid-career faculty to meet the pressures of tenure.

**Tenure and promotion.** Faculty narratives revealed that these pressures of tenure and promotion caused a great deal of angst and confusion. The vague and inconsistent communication from the administration regarding expectations to gain tenure were discussed frequently and the survey indicated a high degree of dissatisfaction in the congruence between espoused institutional values and the measures of evaluation. Seven faculty interviewed consistently reported that teaching excellence is not rewarded, they included the three male full professors, both associate professors and both female assistant professors. The following provides an example as one full professor noted,

I would like to see some component of merit really based on teaching, instead of what it all boils down to is that they count. They count how many articles, how many grants, how many dollars, and uhm...there is a paragraph on teaching, but the measurement of it is completely arbitrary.

Consistent narratives were expressed by both pre-tenure female faculty about the mixed messages creating confusion. As one notes “schools don’t have specific requirements for tenure, so they don’t say this is exactly what we are going to look at.” The message she feels is that one should “be kind of good at all thing[s]” and added she is unsure “how much of [her] time to devote to certain things for [her] own successes is really hard to figure out.” Her colleague agreed and added that the expectation keeps changing depending upon who you talk to as noted by the passage referencing research productivity and tenure,

...there wasn’t a specific amount said to me - it wasn’t till a few months ago, a couple of months ago I was told ok you need X number. However in talking to some of the other individuals who have gone through those meetings, within a week’s time of my meeting, the numbers are different...

These finding of aggravation over mixed messages confirm reports of early career faculty across the nation (Greene et al., 2008). While laying out clear expectations and aligning reward structures to match seems like an easy fix, since this is a challenge there has to be something else at play. It would serve UTEP if they investigated this mismatch in expectations and rewards that faculty perceive. The challenge is that great variances exist across discipline and what may be appropriate for engineering faculty, may not coincide with professional norms in sociology.

**Administration and resources.** Issues to meet expectations of tenure and promotion are further challenged by the availability of support resources. Financial resources in higher education are increasingly scarce and given the currently climate it is unlikely that state legislatures will provide additional funds to develop labs, hire support staff and provide teaching incentives. However, as pointed out by Dr. Groen there are a number of low cost scenarios that would support new faculty specific in their roles as teachers. She explains when she first arrived on campus she had little time to learn the landscape and take part in training opportunities at the Center for Effective Teaching and Learning (CETAL). She clearly recollects sitting in her office on her first day saying to herself, "ok you are a professor, now what?"

In hindsight Dr. Groen discussed a number of resources that would have made her transition to UTEP smoother. First and foremost, the regulations and requirements for institution syllabi. She explained,

No one is checking in and saying like hey, do you know how to make a syllabus? and so I did email other faculty here before I got here and said, hey are there rules for syllabuses [sic] that I should know... but I had ask. Apparently there are rules, but if I hadn't thought to ask I would have done my syllabus wrong...

Over the past year, Dr. Goren had to learn the hard way about student assessment, how to curve grades, student preparedness, and language barriers. She was shocked to learn that her students had only ever taken multiple choice exams and quickly had to run to a senior faculty member for help after she gave her first exam. Students were not prepared for short answers and essay requirements and so in order to avoid failing the whole class she needed guidance. She admits that she is "really struggling with figuring out what [her] expectation should be" and is challenged by her own standards versus student preparation. She was also caught off guard by the cultural and language gap when her students did not know what a shrub was during a recent lecture.

These issues Dr. Groen has faced all in the first year have caused her great stress all in her first twelve months as a faculty member. A welcome packet or some collegial guidance could have solved many of these issues and prevented sleepless nights. Being provided syllabi standards and tools to manage assessment challenges could be offered via a web link and a letter of guidance. In regards to what teaching at UTEP would be like it would have been helpful to understand the student population that included; the challenges they face, the obligations, their level of preparedness and the respectfulness that they all share. The ability to see and prepare for what challenges lie ahead would have both improved her success and provided her with the ability to cope. For example, when she approached a senior faculty member on how to recurve grades he responded, "I've had this conversation with every single junior faculty member who's come here." To her credit her response was "If it always what happens after the first midterm so why don't they warn us before the first term?" Small but meaningful support could be provided so that pitfalls of early academic life like this are avoided and stress levels of the faculty are reduced.

**Professional development.** This concept of providing support resources and advance guidance brings to mind professional development opportunities and mentorship specifically. If Dr. Groen had a mentor when she started it could be argued that casual conversation could have provided the support she desires. While there are varying needs based on the experiences reported by some new faculty members, this could solve two issues identified by this study. First, several senior faculty members report their frustrations with the lack of respect for their experience and the limited amount of collegiality and collaboration. This is best described as Neumann's (2009) concept of "colleagueship" (p.14) where new faculty learn to survive a organizational culture quickly while personal relationships among scholars create intellectual stimulation for both parties. In addition a mentoring opportunity creates a space for faculty to use their love of learning value while creating a safety net to keep senior and junior faculty engaged in professional growth.

The idea of faculty mentoring circles or relationships in higher education is not a new concept (Boice, 1992), however the faculty at UTEP were not familiar with a formal program in use. Traditionally faculty mentoring has been a top-down relationship, but as noted though colleagueship a program that emphasizes a symbiotic arrangement where all faculty members involved can benefit seems like a viable solution for this campus (Sorcinelli et al., 2006; Sorcinelli & Yun, 2007). However, implementation should not be forced, but encouraged, to avoid alienation of others. The sole male assistant professor suggested that he was prepared for faculty life and would not benefit from a forced relationship, as he shares;

...if I need help I can go to anyone in this department and ask. Which I have done on a few occasions, but if I don't need help, there is no one breathing over my neck. Which makes me happy. I mean, I see, I understand the university mission and it makes sense and I agree with it, but I am also happy that it is not over bearing...



Clearly not all faculty are interested in the support provided through mentorship, however other means could support faculty through helping create a lens that codifies their strengths and provides means for them to use them regularly in their practice. In particular, if faculty could learn how to view their strengths within the context of their work, where they have a susceptibility to be influenced, they can find means to focus on means to best incorporate them into their work and enhance both self and institutional effectiveness. Research suggests that people are able to gain increased benefits when they focus on building their talents rather than remediating their weaknesses (Clifton & Harter, 2003). It is through the purposeful and productive application of character strengths where both increased satisfaction and productivity occur (Harzer & Ruch, 2013; Hodges & Clifton, 2004). In fact individuals that incorporate their signature strengths regularly report they are six times more engaged and their work and describe greater satisfaction with life in general (Rath, 2007). Therefore if faculty too also had true understanding of their strengths and were assisted through faculty development to find areas to apply these strengths would benefit the individual, support the institution and provide richer experience for students.

#### **5.4 Limitations**

"The study and practice of teaching is grounded in our own conceptions. There can be no neutral ground from which to understand another person's teaching" (Pratt, 1992, p. 204). With that in mind and given my grounding and socioconstructivist point of view I must be careful that the meaning that I attach to my analysis and observation in the data are product of my perception and not necessarily based on a singular truth. It was through constant reflexive analysis of the findings allowed for the opportunity to explore my role in the research process.

In a mindful way, I reconsidered my experiences and how they shape my view, particularly within the field of education. I am fully aware that many years of experience as a student and teacher has oriented my gaze in a certain way. The way I prefer to learn, the materials I wish to have as a student, my approaches to teaching and my way of understanding is not the only way. Peshkin (1988) piece on subjectivity helped me understand that I must be aware of my gut reactions and not hide them but to acknowledge them as I attempt to minimize how my perspective may shadow my thinking.

As a result, as I consider my place in this research through reflexive analysis I know that I identify most with faculty who have demonstrated care in my development as a student and scholar. My eye is attuned to pick up on how this might manifest in others' teaching practice. I must reflect on the values of perspective that I am to incorporate in my teaching. How can we as teacher focus on the content to rely, prepare our students and show that them all that we do does matter, there is a method to our madness and we hope relevant to their life as they move forward. So when I visit and look at these documents, I recognize that this caring in teaching is something I value and as a result am looking for ways to develop this in my own teaching.

What I have learned from this analysis is that I may overly value caring as a part of the approach that these faculty making in their role as teachers and that this may have increased the tendency to pick up on this quality. However, what I was unaware of was that caring does not always have to be solely about caring for students. It can be caring about the development of students; it could be caring about the discipline, or caring about the future of our society. Maybe the caring can be creating safe environments, or caring about the development of self as becoming a better educator. As a result I view the role of caring in teaching in a much broader sense, where my previous understanding felt that the caring should have been directed in one particular way or

another, however many forms of caring actually can result in exemplary teaching that can benefit both the teacher and the learner.

The lower response rate of the survey could have contributed to the results, where less than one third of the faculty responded. The recruitment letter discussed an investigation of teaching at UTEP and those most frustrated with the shifting mission may have taken the time to complete the survey over others less interested. Given that only 4 faculty were observed and the observations were limited to one session could have also limited the results and the opportunities to uncover additional themes and perspectives. The diversity of those observed from varying career stages and disciplines also could have implications on the outcomes and analysis.

Further investigation of this subject would need to incorporate the experiences of students in these classroom spaces to determine if deep learning is occurring and that the connections faculty aim to make are happening beyond the space of the course.

## **5.5 Concluding Thoughts**

Higher education is currently evolving faster than we can study or keep up with it and the rapid changes are beginning to leave some of our academia's best talents behind or alienated. The national discourse surrounding higher education reveals a public distrust, lack of support and emphasis on accountability. Policies are in place that place punitive responses based on metrics that do not really get to the core of the challenges faced as faculty aim to do more with much less while increasing research productivity and teaching a diversely prepared student body. How can faculty cope and how can institutions' endure these tough times? My research suggests that most faculty care deeply about their work and the students they have the privilege to teach, however their heart is being crushed by increasing demands that compromise their integrity and devalue their purpose.

As Parker Palmer suggests, "Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or worse" (1998, 2007, p. 4), therefore we cannot ignore the feelings and perceptions of faculty. In an effort to support and provide resources to allow the human flourishing of faculty for the ultimate benefit of the missions and populations they serve, institutions must examine where faculty values lie and how they can create conditions to enact them.

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## APPENDICES

### A. Interview Protocol

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**Protocol Title:** Interview Protocol

**Interview Date/Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal Investigator:** Robin Dankovich, M.Ed.

**UTEP: Educational Leadership and Foundations**

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#### *Interview Question Guide:*

Introduce self; briefly describe the study I regards to teaching values, intentions and practice and elaborate on interest in learning more about the teaching role of college faculty and the factors that shape it.

1. Tell me about yourself and your background.
  - a. Where did you go to school?
  - b. How did the choice to become a professor manifest itself?
    - i. [Probe] – Where there major life experiences or individuals that influenced this choice?
2. What brought your to UTEP?
  - a. [Probe] What were the key influential factors for accepting your appointment?
  - b. [Probe] Is this your first faculty appointment? If not, what made you move on from last institution?
3. In your view, what is the purpose of higher education?
4. What meaning, if any, do you derive from your work (Seligman)?
5. What are your beliefs and attitudes about teaching?
  - a. What does good teaching look like in higher education?
  - b. Explain how you approach your role as teacher?

- i. What preparation do you take?
  - ii. What are your overarching objectives or goals are when you prepare to teach? Or What do you attempt to achieve through your teaching?
  - iii. Do you achieve your objectives? How do you know?
- 6. Share with me one of your best experiences teaching.
- 7. Tell me about a time you were disappointed (or challenged) with your teaching.
  - a. How have you responded to this?
- 8. What is it like to teach at UTEP?
  - a. Do you feel your teaching is supported? [Probe – At the department level, college level, university level?]
  - b. What would you like to see happen at UTEP to increase support of teaching?
  - c. Tell me about teaching the UTEP student.
    - i. [Probe – if they taught at other institution of higher education] – How does this differ or align with your previous teaching experience in higher education
- 9. According to the VIA Character Strengths Inventory the following where your top rated strengths. [Show report of character strengths – with brief description of each]
  - d. Do you believe that these strengths describe you? Explain?
  - e. Considering your teaching practice, can you explain how you may have used these strengths in the past, if at all?
  - f. How do you utilize these strengths in your non-work life?

Interviewee #\_\_\_\_\_

Character Strengths Self Selected:

10. Faculty have varying responsibilities; (teaching, research, service, grantmanship, administration)...tell me about these work responsibilities?
- a. [Probe] How do you balance these obligations?
  - b. [Probe] Is there an area you tend to focus on more? – Why?
  - c. [Probe] What do you wish you could do more of? (what is left undone)
  - d. [Probe] How can UTEP better support this (improve conditions) – is there a better reality that could evolve for this balance?
11. As mentioned when we first spoke, I would like to observe 2-3 class sessions that you teach. Are you interested in continuing participation in this study?
- g. IF YES - Of the classes that you are currently teaching, which ones might best help me understand your teaching approach?
12. **Thank you for all that valuable information, is there anything else you'd like to add before we end?"**

## B. Observation Coding

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_ # of Students: \_\_\_\_\_ Class Type: \_\_\_\_\_

	Values Demonstrated																								Comments (Explain Coding choice, what is happening)
	Wisdom/Knowledge					Courage				Humanity			Justice			Temperance				Trancendence					
Min	Cr	Cur	OM	LOL	Pers	Brv	Prv	Int	Ze	Lv	Knd	Sl	Ctz	Fai	Ldr	Mer	Hum	Pru	SRg	App	Grt	Hp	Hu	Spt	
4																									
8																									
12																									
16																									
20																									
24																									
28																									
32																									
36																									
40																									
44																									
48																									

### C. Survey Recruitment Email

Dear Professor:

I am conducting my dissertation research and would like to invite you to participate in a survey directed at tenured and tenure-track faculty at this institution. In this survey, you will be asked questions about your strengths in general and later more specifically about your role as an educator. The survey takes approximately 20 minutes to complete and includes mostly close-ended questions.

If you choose to participate, you will be assigned a pseudonym. You can be assured this survey and your responses will be guarded with full confidentiality throughout the entire research process and subsequent publishing of results.

I recognize that you have a busy schedule and I sincerely appreciate your time. I am hopeful you will choose to participate in this survey by visiting the survey link below. Please note that while you will not receive compensation for participating, survey respondents are eligible to enter a drawing to win an iPad Mini (valued at \$299).

**Follow this link to the Survey:**

[\\${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

[\\${l://SurveyURL}](#)

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:  
[\\${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}](#)

Should you have any questions, please contact me at 915.490.4637 or you may speak with my advisor, Dr. Rodolfo Rincones at 915.747.5300. Any questions regarding the conduct of this research, the IRB or your rights as a research participant may be directed to the IRB Administrator at 915.747.7939. Please make reference to IRB# 649680-1.

Sincerely,

Robin Dankovich, Doctoral Candidate  
Educational Leadership and Foundations Department  
[rldankovich@miners.utep.edu](mailto:rldankovich@miners.utep.edu)  
915.xxx.xxxx

## D. IRB Approval Letter



**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO**  
Office of the Vice President for Research and Sponsored Projects  
**Institutional Review Board**  
El Paso, Texas 79968-0587 phone:  
915 747-8841 fax: 915 747-  
5931  
**FWA No: 00001224**

DATE: September 5, 2014

TO: Robin Dankovich, M.Ed.

FROM: University of Texas at El Paso IRB

STUDY TITLE: [649680-1] A mixed methods investigation of the faculty teaching role; values, intention, and practice.

IRB REFERENCE #: 649680-1

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: September 5, 2014

EXPIRATION DATE: September 4, 2015

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. University of Texas at El Paso IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This study has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.



Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

## **E. Online Survey**

**PART I** - VIA Survey-72 © 2014 VIA® Institute on Character; All Rights Reserved Used with expressed written permission

Introduction: This portion of the survey is an attempt to understand how you think, feel and act. All of the questions reflect statements that many people would find desirable; however answer only in terms of whether the statement describes what you are like. Please be honest and accurate! Work quickly and trust your first response.

Q1 – Q72 – VIA-72 prompts

### **PART II** – Faculty Background and Institutional Context Supplemental Questions

The remaining questions center on background demographics, teaching and contextual questions. Please complete all items remaining to the best of your ability.

Q77 Please enter the four-digit year when you received your terminal degree (Ph.D., M.D., Ed.D., J.D., etc...).

Q78 Was your terminal degree obtained in the United States?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Q79 What is your present academic rank?

- ☐ Professor (1)
- ☐ Associate Professor (2)
- ☐ Assistant Professor (3)
- ☐ Lecturer (4)
- ☐ Instructor (5)
- ☐ Other (6) \_\_\_\_\_

Q80 Select which best describes the point you are in your faculty life:

- ☐ 0-3 years as faculty member (non-Tenured) (1)
- ☐ 3+ years (non-tenured) (2)
- ☐ Tenured (more than 5 years from retirement) (3)
- ☐ Tenured (less than 5 years from retirement) (4)
- ☐ Retired (5)

Q81 Select the Broad Discipline that best describes area of faculty appointment

- ☐ Business (1)
- ☐ Education (2)
- ☐ Hard Sciences (3)
- ☐ Health Sciences (4)
- ☐ Humanities (5)
- ☐ Social Sciences (6)
- ☐ Other (7) \_\_\_\_\_

Q87 Please rank the following items in order (1-6) detailing your personal values and priorities.

(With 1 as the most important)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Family/Children (1)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Faith/Spiritual Life (2)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Personal Life (3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Research (4)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Service (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching (6)

Q85 Personally, how important are the following roles of faculty life to you:

	Essential (1)	Very Important (2)	Somewhat Important (3)	Not important (4)
Research (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q86 Select the item that best describes your primary interest area in your faculty role

- ☐ Very heavily in research (1)
- ☐ In both teaching and research, but leaning to research (2)
- ☐ In both teaching and research, but leaning toward teaching (3)
- ☐ Very heavily in teaching (4)
- ☐ Other, neither teaching nor research are my primary areas of interest (5)

Q82 Total number of years teaching at the university level (all institutions):

If Total number of years teach... Is Equal to 0, Then Skip To During the current term how many hour...

Q83 What level of courses have you taught? Select all that apply:

- ☐ Non-credit courses (1)
- ☐ Undergraduate Level courses (2)
- ☐ Masters Level Courses (3)
- ☐ Doctoral Level Courses (4)
- ☐ I have not taught (5)

If I have not taught Is Selected, Then Skip To During the current term how many hour...

Q102 The following list of statements represent different perspectives on 'good teaching'. Select the statement that best describes how you approach your teaching role.

- ☐ Effective teaching requires a substantial commitment to the content or subject matter. (1)
- ☐ Effective teaching is a process of socializing students into new behavioral norms and ways of working. (2)
- ☐ Effective teaching must be planned and conducted "from the learners point of view". (3)
- ☐ Effective teaching assumes that long-term, hard, persistent effort to achieve comes from the heart, not the head. (4)
- ☐ Effective teaching seeks to change society in substantial ways. (5)

Q88 Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following:

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
The chief benefit of a college education is that it increases one's earning power (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is primarily up to individual students whether they succeed in my courses (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I encourage all students to approach me for help (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most students are well-prepared for the difficulty of the courses I teach (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In my classroom, there is no such thing as a question that is too elementary (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All students have the potential to excel in my courses (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The amount of material that is required for my courses poses a substantial challenge to students (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students are often overwhelmed by the pace of my courses (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most students learn best when they do their assignments on their own (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q89 Indicate the importance to you of each of the following educational goals for your students

	Essential (1)	Very Important (2)	Somewhat Important (3)	Not Important (4)
Develop ability to think critically (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prepare students for employment after college (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prepare students for graduate or advanced education (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop moral character (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide for students' emotional development (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help students develop personal values (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instill in students a commitment to community service (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhance students' knowledge of and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promote ability to write effectively (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engage students in civil discourse around controversial issues (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teach students tolerance and respect for different beliefs (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encourage students to become agents of social change (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q90 Below are statements about your college or university. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following:

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
Institution values excellence in teaching (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Efforts to improve teaching are rewarded by my institution (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is adequate support for faculty development (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I regularly seek out and attend workshops to improve my teaching (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I regularly engage in conversations with faculty colleagues about ways to improve my teaching (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I continually reflect and think about ways to improve my teaching (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advancement and promotion/tenure criteria are clearly defined (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Institutional values align with advancement, promotion/tenure criteria (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q91 Please indicate the extent to which you:

	Not at all (1)	To some extent (2)	Great extent (3)
Feel that the training you received in graduate school prepared you well for your role as a faculty member (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Achieve a healthy balance between your personal life and your professional life (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience close alignment between your work and your personal values (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel that you have to work harder than your colleagues to be perceived as a legitimate scholar (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentor new faculty (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentor undergraduate students (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Structure your courses so that students master a conceptual understanding of course content (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Structure your courses so that students develop study skills that prepare them for college-level work (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Q92 During the current term how many hours per week on average do you actually spend in each of the following activities?

	0 (1)	1-4 (2)	5-8 (3)	9-12 (4)	13-16 (5)	17-20 (6)	20+ (7)
Scheduled teaching (actual, not credit hours) (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preparation to Teach (include reading papers & grading) (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advising/Counseling students (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Committee Work & Meetings (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrative duties (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Research & Scholarly Writing (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other Creative Products/Performances (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community or Public Service (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outside consulting/Freelance work (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Home/Household or Childcare duties (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other employment, outside academia (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q93 Select the 3-5 main strengths or qualities that you believe you bring to your work as a faculty member

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence (20) | <input type="checkbox"/> Integrity/Honesty (6)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bravery (7)                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Judgement (3)                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caring/Kindness (10)                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership (15)                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship/Teamwork (13)                | <input type="checkbox"/> Love (11)                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity (1)                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Love of Learning (4)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curiosity (2)                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Perseverance (8)                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness (14)                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Perspective (5)                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forgiveness (16)                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Prudence (18)                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gratitude (21)                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Regulation/Self-Control (19) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hope (22)                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Spirituality (24)                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humility (17)                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Intelligence (12)          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humor (23)                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Zest (9)                          |

Answer If Total number of years teaching at the university level (all institutions): Text Response Is Greater Than 0

Q94 Please select the two most important categories below as it relates to personal values and your approach to your role as teacher:

- ☐ Wisdom & Knowledge – as defined by creativity, curiosity, judgment, open-mindedness, love of learning and perspective. (1)
- ☐ Courage – as defined by the capacity to overcome fear (physical, moral or psychological) and are enacted through bravery, perseverance, honesty and zest (2)
- ☐ Justice – as defined by making life fair and equitable and enacted through civic nature, fairness, leadership and teamwork. (3)
- ☐ Humanity – improving another's welfare through acts love, kindness and social intelligence (4)
- ☐ Temperance – Control over access; ability to monitor one's emotions, motivations and behaviors. Demonstrated through forgiveness/mercy, modesty/humility, prudence and self-regulation. (5)
- ☐ Transcendence – Connection to something higher in meaning and purpose than ourselves. Often exemplified through an appreciation of beauty/excellence, gratitude, hope, humor and religiousness & spirituality (6)

Q95 Gender

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)

Q96 What is your race/ethnicity?

- ☐ African American/Black (1)
- ☐ American Indian/Alaska Native (2)
- ☐ Asian (3)
- ☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (4)
- ☐ Hispanic/Chicano(a)/Latino(a) (5)
- ☐ Puerto Rican (6)
- ☐ White/Caucasian (7)
- ☐ Other (8)

Q97 Is English your native language?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Answer If What level of courses have you taught? Select all that apply: I have not taught Is Not Selected

Q98 Would you be willing to participate in an interview at a later date regarding my research topic on faculty and the teaching role?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Answer If Would you be willing to participate in an interview at a later date regarding my research topic on faculty values and the teaching role? Yes Is Selected

Q99 Thank you for agreeing to support this research. For contact purposes please provide your name and email address below:

Name (1)

Email (2)

Confirm Email (3)

## VITA

Robin L. Dankovich was born in Framingham, MA in 1971 to Henry J. and Lynne J. Bouchard. She graduated from Milford High School in Milford, MA in 1989. Following high school she attended Boston University where she majored in Education with a focus in Physical Education/Human Movement. After graduation in 1994 she began working in higher education initially as a support staff member and later as an administrator in the Physical Education, Recreation and Dance department at Boston University. After a period of time she relocated to Moscow, ID and held several administrative positions within Campus Recreation at the University of Idaho. After five years her family relocated to the El Paso area. Here is where she held a position in Student Services and worked to earn her Master of Education degree in Higher Education Administration at the University of Texas at El Paso. After degree completion she worked as a recruiter for the Texas Tech University Paul L. Foster School of Medicine. In 2010 Robin applied and was accepted into the Educational Leadership and Foundations Doctoral Program at the University of Texas at El Paso. During her course of study she worked as a Ph.D. Research Associate and instructed courses in introduction to doctoral studies, research methods, educational ethics and the professoriate. In addition, she worked under the supervision of Dr. Eduardo Arellano supporting his research on cross-racial interactions. Today she serves as an administrator in the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso where she supports the accreditation process and ongoing educational program improvement of the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine.

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This thesis/dissertation was typed by the author.