

Transitioning New Board of Directors Members from
Peripheral Roles to Active Leadership Roles

By

Ray A. Ostos

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Approved April 2013 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Ray R. Buss, Chair
Joshua Barnett
Gerardo de los Santos

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2013

© 2013 Ray A. Ostos
All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

The National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP) was established to promote the community college role in the recruitment, preparation, retention, and renewal of teachers. NACCTEP is led by a 13-member executive board consisting of community college teacher education administrators and faculty members from across the United States. Board members expressed concern that their first year consisted of them trying to learn their role as a board member including how to participate in board activities. By the time they became fully knowledgeable about their role and became more active participants, their two-year term was completed. They also indicated that initially they felt disconnected from veteran board members.

To address this issue, an orientation/leadership suite was developed for new board members to assist them in transitioning from peripheral roles to full active roles. The suite included activities such as an association orientation web page, participation in monthly board conference calls, a face-to-face leadership session, and mentoring by veteran board members. The communities of practice (CoP) framework shaped this action research study and the activities of the suite were designed to foster a CoP.

This action research study utilized a mixed-method research approach in which both qualitative and quantitative instruments were used to gather data. The descriptive statistics indicated that on average, new board members perceived mentoring was effective, understood their role on the board, experienced a sense of a community of practice, considered themselves as active on the board, and believed the leadership orientation suite was effective. An analysis of the qualitative data resulted in four themes: community, communication, participation, and efficacy.

Overall, the findings indicated that the new board member orientation/leadership suite assisted new board members transition from peripheral roles to active leadership roles through developing a sense of community; facilitating and sustaining communication; defining, supporting, and encouraging participation; and increasing efficacy in their roles. Through the learning of their roles, the new board members became knowledgeable, comfortable, and confident in serving as board members, which facilitated their participating in the NACCTEP board's CoP.

DEDICATION

To my daughters Sophia and Maddie, thank you for your patience and understanding as I spent countless hours in class and studying. To my parents Augustine and Josie, thank you for instilling in me the drive and confidence to pursue higher education and continue on to get my doctorate degree. Finally this dissertation is dedicated to my wife Julia for her unwavering support over the past three years. It has been quite a journey I am thankful that it was one that I could share with you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I was privileged to work under the direction of Ray Buss, my dissertation chair. There are not enough words to express my gratitude for all of your support and guidance. Thank you for your patience and constant insistence on excellence. I am also extremely grateful to Joshua Barnett and Gerardo de los Santos, my dissertation committee members, for their great advice and assistance.

I want to thank the members of the NACCTEP Executive Board and my amazing colleague Pam Asti for her support and patience over these past three years. I also want to thank my past supervisors, Maria Harper-Marinick and Andrea Buehman, and my current supervisor, Felicia Ganther from the Maricopa Community Colleges, for their great support through this doctoral program.

Finally, I want to thank all the professors of my doctoral program. This has been a life changing experience for me. Because of you, I have grown as both an individual and as a professional.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER	
1. LEADERSHIP CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF ACTION	1
Introduction	1
Situated Context	2
The Problem	4
Purpose of Action	5
Context and Overview of the Innovation	6
2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH GUIDING THE PROJECT ..	7
Communities of Practice Foundational Concepts	7
Communities of Practice Structural Model	8
Legitimate Peripheral Participation in Communities of Practice	10
Communities of Practice in Boards, Organizations, and Associations	11
Executive Leadership Boards	12
Rationale for Orientation of New Board Members	15
NACCTEP Orientation Web Page	17
Mentoring	18
Monthly Board Conference Calls.	19
Face-to-Face Leadership Session	20
Role of the Executive Director	21

CHAPTER	Page
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	23
Setting.....	23
Participants	24
Researcher Role.....	25
Instruments	25
Survey.....	26
Observation Protocol	26
Interviews of New Board Members.....	27
Interviews of the Mentors.....	28
Intervention	28
Association Orientation Web Page.....	28
Mentoring.....	30
Monthly Board Conference Calls	31
Face-to-Face Leadership Session.....	32
Data Collection.....	33
Procedure.....	34
Threats to Validity.....	35
Summary	35
4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS.....	36
Analysis Procedures	36
Quantitative.....	36
Qualitative.....	37

CHAPTER	Page
Procedure for Mixed-Methods Analysis	38
Results	39
Results from the Quantitative Data.....	39
Results from the Qualitative Data	41
Community.	43
Communication.....	45
Participation	47
Efficacy.....	51
5. DISCUSSION	54
Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings.....	54
Connections to Theory	57
Lessons Learned	59
Implications for Practice	61
Implications for Research.....	62
Conclusions	63
REFERENCES	65
APPENDIX	
A INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL	69
B NACCTEP NEW BOARD MEMBER SURVEY	71
C OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL.....	77
D NEW BOARD MEMBER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	81
E MENTOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL	84

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Means and Standard Deviations for the Five Survey Constructs, $n = 3$	40

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. New board member orientation suite	30
2. Action research implementation table	34
3. Themes, theme-related components, and assertions from data	42

CHAPTER 1

LEADERSHIP CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Introduction

Community colleges have played an important role in teacher preparation since their inception in the early 20th century. Much of their original function was to provide the foundational preparation for upper division coursework. Nevertheless, during the past decade, community colleges have taken a much larger and more visible role in the development of educators (Coulter & Vandal, 2007). Community colleges are no longer playing an informal role in teacher preparation, but are instead becoming critical leaders in efforts to develop a pool of highly effective teachers. Nationally, over 48 percent of community colleges have teacher education programs (AACC, 2010).

As additional teacher education programs were developed throughout the United States, many community colleges sought to identify colleagues engaged in similar work who could provide support and expertise (Gaskin, Helfgot, Parsons, & Solley, 2003). In the fall of 2000, representatives of Cerritos College and the Maricopa County Community College District met to explore the development of a national association for community colleges involved in teacher education. In 2001, the first organizational meeting was held in Chicago and attended by 41 participants from 17 states.

The National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP) was formally established in 2002 through a partnership among the Maricopa Community Colleges, Cerritos College, The League for Innovation in the Community College, and the American Association of Community Colleges. NACCTEP promotes the community college role in the recruitment, preparation, retention, and

renewal of diverse PreK-12 teachers and advances quality teacher education programs among community colleges (NACCTEP, 2010).

NACCTEP supports institutions and individuals and serves as a voice for community colleges in national discussions about teacher education. It works to enhance current community college teacher education programs and serves as a resource for those interested in developing new programs. NACCTEP serves in an advocacy role for community colleges and conducts annual visits to Washington DC to meet with congressional leaders and representatives from federal agencies. NACCTEP also provides resources and expertise to new, emerging, and expanding community college teacher education programs. It has assisted many community colleges in developing teacher preparation programs. NACCTEP is an affiliate council of the American Association of Community Colleges and serves as a content resource to this national umbrella organization. Members are comprised of community college teacher education faculty members, staff, administrators, and students. Support for members is provided through policy briefs, publications, scholarship opportunities for students, and access to online resources. Additionally, a national conference is held annually for members. NACCTEP has over 400 members representing 40 states from across the nation.

Situated Context

NACCTEP is led by a 13-member executive board that includes a president, president-elect, past-president, secretary, treasurer, five at-large members, a student member, a permanent ex-officio member from the Maricopa Community Colleges, and the executive director. The board is provided support by an executive assistant. Board members consist of community college administrators and faculty members from across

the United States who are involved in teacher education programs. As a whole, the group meets face-to-face twice a year at a spring meeting held during its national conference and again at a fall meeting in Washington, D.C. Excluding the student and ex-officio members, board members are elected by the membership at large through a balloting process that occurs each spring. Elected board members serve two-year terms.

The NACCTEP president-elect, treasurer, and secretary must have at least one year of executive board experience before they are eligible to run for these positions. These individuals could be current or past board members. Each year a minimum of three new members joins the board.

NACCTEP is based at the National Center for Teacher Education at the Maricopa County Community College District Office in Tempe, Arizona. The researcher for this study serves as director for the National Center for Teacher Education and the executive director for NACCTEP. He has served in this capacity for five years. The role of the NACCTEP executive director is to provide guidance and leadership to the association. The executive director also communicates issues and opportunities to the board and provides them with teacher education data and resources. The executive director provides leadership for board and association events, activities, and meetings. Actions include planning the national conference, planning board meetings, developing publications, and networking with other educational leaders. Although board members rotate in and out of the board through the election process and because of term limits, the executive director remains a permanent fixture on the board.

The Problem

During the fall 2010 board meeting in Washington, D.C., board members expressed concern with the short two-year terms of board members. Many of them shared that the first year consisted of them trying to learn their role as a board member. By the time they became fully knowledgeable about their role on the board and became a more active participant, their two-year term was complete. The two-year term was established based on the level of support community colleges were willing to provide to staff members because a three-year or longer commitment was not seen as feasible by community college administrators. The current economic situation has greatly limited the amount of travel funds available to community college faculty and staff members.

Based on the analysis and interpretation of data from previous research cycles, the researcher was able to identify some of the issues associated with effectively and quickly transitioning new board members from peripheral roles to full active leadership roles on the NACCTEP executive board. These previous research cycles, which were conducted in the spring and fall of 2011, included interviews with three current board members and the executive assistant who has supported the board for six years. The board members indicated that early in their NACCTEP experience they were unsure of their roles and were not clear of when and how to participate in activities. When they first joined the board they experienced being “lost” about what was expected of them. One board member shared, “The first year I did not know what I should do or could do as a member of this board.”

During two face-to-face observations of board meetings, the first in spring 2011 and the second in fall 2011, the researcher documented how new board members were

not as active in meeting discussions as veteran members. Although newer members participated in the meeting, the majority of discussions at the meetings were dominated by more veteran members who had already served at least one year.

Even though board members are elected, which indicates they are interested in the positions and representing their respective groups, they are ill-informed about how to do so. This lack of knowledge and participation lessens the strength and leadership of the overall board. The executive assistant affirmed that more needed to be done to encourage board members to be more active in the association. It was apparent that new board members needed extra support to assist them in learning their roles and becoming more involved with board and national activities. To summarize, in addition to the short time period of serving on the board, new members did not feel involved in board activities and did not know the roles and expectations of serving on a national board, which ultimately made the board a less effective leadership body.

Purpose of Action

Two new board members were elected in May 2012 and began their terms on July 1, 2012. A student representative was appointed to the board by the President in May 2012 and also began her term on July 1, 2012. The three new board members served as participants in this action research study. Due to new NACCTEP board members being located throughout the country, the study took place at a distance and through one face-to-face session.

This study was conducted to examine how new board members transition from peripheral roles, limited board involvement working from the periphery of the boards' function and service, to an active leadership role, consisting of being active in board

decision making, contributing knowledge and skills, participating in board activities, and sharing of association and board information with their home institution and state. An active leadership role also includes full participation in board meeting discussions and decisions. Further, data was gathered to determine whether additional supports facilitate new board members to become more active participants in the NACCTEP board's community of practice.

Context and Overview of the Innovation

The short time period of serving on the board, and the three associated problems of new board members not feeling involved in board activities, not knowing the roles and expectations of serving on a national board, which in turn made the board a less effective leadership body, caused the action researcher/executive director, to create an orientation/leadership suite for new board members.

The activities of this suite focused on board member roles, expectations, opportunities for involvement, teambuilding, community, communication, and sharing of information. The suite activities included: (a) an association orientation web page for new board members, (b) participation in monthly board conference calls, (c) a face-to-face leadership session, and (d) mentoring by veteran board members.

This action research study sought to address the specific research questions: How does the introduction of an orientation/leadership suite assist new board members in transitioning from a peripheral role to an active leadership role? How does the increased knowledge of their role on the board influence their participation in a community of practice?

CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH
GUIDING THE PROJECT

In preparation for this action research study, literature relevant to the research questions was reviewed. The questions addressed were: How does the introduction of an orientation/leadership suite assist new board members in transitioning from a peripheral role to an active leadership role? How does the increased knowledge of their role on the board influence their participation in a community of practice? The theoretical framework of communities of practice, which shaped this action research study, was examined. Also examined were the areas of legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice, communities of practice and associations, effective board leadership, transitioning from peripheral roles to full active roles, board member orientation, and the role of the executive director.

Communities of Practice Foundational Concepts

Communities of Practice (CoP) have been characterized as groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise on the topic by interacting on an ongoing basis (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). CoP's are not viewed as a new concept and have been found in many scenarios. The theoretical framework and lens for this study was based on CoP, which originated in the studies of apprenticeships (Lave & Wenger, 1991). These studies revealed that learning frequently takes place through a complex set of social relationships. Wenger (2006) defined CoP as groups of people who shared a concern or a passion for something they did and learned how to do it better as they interacted

regularly. He added that CoP were formed by people who engaged in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavors. His research suggested that the development of a CoP was based on a common need and pertained to something that was important to all those involved in the group (Wenger, 1998a). Wenger et al. (2002) contended that individuals belonged to a number of CoP including those at school, at home, and at work. They maintained we recognize some CoP, whereas others are largely invisible. We have been and continue to be core members in some CoP and occasional participants in others. A community of practice was not just a group of people. They shared an interest and were working toward a common goal and possessed certain characteristics.

Communities of Practice Structural Model

The origins of CoP were influenced by Bandura's social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). In social learning theory, Bandura suggested people learned by observing others' behavior, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviors. This theory has often been called the bridge between behaviorist and cognitive learning theories because it encompasses attention, memory, and motivation.

With respect to CoP, Wenger (1998a, 2006) and Wenger et al. (2002) proposed three fundamental characteristics that were required to form a community of practice. The three characteristics were the domain, the community, and the practice.

- A shared *domain* distinguished members from other people; membership implied a minimum level of knowledge of the domain. Wenger et al. (2002) shared that the domain created common ground and a sense of common identity. Moreover, they affirmed the domain inspired members to contribute

and participate, guided their learning, and gave meaning to their actions. Thus, the domain brought people together and guided their learning. It defined the identity of the community, its place in the world. Wenger et al. maintained that a well-developed domain became a statement of the knowledge for which the community served as a steward. Further, the domain set boundaries with respect to making a commitment to take responsibility for an area of expertise and to provide the organization with the best knowledge and skills that could be found.

- Through the *community*, members engaged in joint activities and discussions, helped each other, and shared information. These actions led to the formation of a community and built relationships (Wenger, 2006). According to Wenger et al. (2002), “The community creates the social fabric of learning. A strong community fosters interactions and relationships based on mutual respect and trust. It encourages a willingness to share ideas, expose one’s ignorance, ask difficult questions, and listen carefully” (p. 28).
- Through the *practice*, members developed a shared repertoire of experiences, stories, tools, and ways of addressing recurring problems. According to Wenger (2000), members of CoP contributed their competence by participating in cross-functional projects and teams that combined the knowledge of multiple practices to get something done. Wenger et al. (2002) asserted, “successful practice development depends on a balance between joint activities, in which members explore ideas together, and the production of ‘things’ like documents or tools” (p. 39).

Legitimate Peripheral Participation in Communities of Practice

Legitimate peripheral participation has provided a way to speak about the relationships between newcomers and veteran participants, and about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It was concerned with the process by which newcomers became a part of a CoP.

According to Lave and Wenger (1991), when peripherality was enabled, it provided a way of gaining access to sources for understanding through growing involvement. Peripheral participation led to full participation by which newcomers became a part of a CoP. By this they meant to draw attention to the point that learners inevitably participated in communities of practitioners and that mastery of knowledge and skills required newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community. Lave and Wenger (1991) affirmed, “Newcomers’ legitimate peripherality provides them with more than an ‘observational’ lookout post, it crucially involves participation as a way of learning – of both absorbing and being absorbed in- ‘the culture of practice’” (p. 95).

Nadler, Behan, and Nadler (2006) avowed that an accelerated learning curve can give board members the knowledge and comfort level they need to quickly start contributing to board discussions and deliberations. It was not enough to have the potential to be a good board member; the potential must be manifested through participation (Carver, 2006). Thus, these researchers suggested new membership training must be built primarily around preparation for strategic leadership.

Communities of Practice in Boards, Organizations, and Associations

Wenger (2006) suggested the concept of CoP was utilized in many practical applications including organizations and associations. The strength of developing a CoP within an association was self-perpetuating. As CoP generated knowledge, they reinforced and renewed themselves (Wenger & Synder, 2000). All CoP reproduced themselves through cycles (Lave & Wenger, 1991). New members brought new ideas and insights; it was their experience that moved the competence of the community along (Wenger, 1998b). This newness brought life, energy, and knowledge to a group. Wenger et al. (2002) also asserted CoP created value by connecting the personal development and professional identities of practitioners to the strategy of the organization. The authors also shared that a community was driven by the value members obtained from it. As a result, CoP participants needed to see how their passion was translated into something useful.

CoP have been important to the functioning of any organization, but they became crucial to those that recognized knowledge as a key asset (Wenger, 1998b). Wenger also maintained knowledge was created, shared, organized, revised, and passed on within and among these communities. In a deep sense, it was through these communities that knowledge was "owned" in practice. He added that CoP preserved the tacit aspects of knowledge that formal systems cannot capture. For this reason, they were ideal for initiating newcomers into practice.

Chait, Ryan, and Taylor (2005) maintained that governance as leadership flourishes when what board members know informed what the board thought. Thus, the collective knowledge of the board enlightened the collective mind of the board. The

authors suggested that boards acted as “communities of practice,” creating multiple opportunities for the entire board or particular committees to pool usable knowledge and thereby learn together.

Functional CoP created value by connecting the personal development and professional identities of practitioners to the strategy of the organization (Wenger et al., 2002). The authors asserted that CoP did not reduce knowledge to an object. CoP made it an integral part of their activities and interactions, and they served as a living repository for that knowledge. Further, Wenger (2004) added that the combination of domain, community, and practice, when given the proper organizational support to enable growth, translated and connected strategy to performance through knowledge management. The creation, cultivation, and nurturing of CoP enabled improved performance in organizations because shared knowledge enabled participants within the group to perform at higher levels.

Executive Leadership Boards

Boards have been shown to be diverse in their functions and in the organizations that they serve. Thus, boards have been identified by various titles such as executive boards, governing boards, board of trustees, leadership board, or board of managers. For the purpose of this study, the term executive board was utilized. The literature was rich in content pertaining to school boards, for profit, and corporate boards, which did not fit the mission and purpose of the NACCTEP executive board. The literature on executive leadership boards for associations was quite limited, however there was substantially more information in the area on non-profit executive-leadership boards. The literature on

non-profit boards was consistent with the functions served by the NACCTEP executive board and with the purposes of this action research study.

Eadie (2009) affirmed that at the most basic level, a board of directors or trustees in an organization was a group of people working together within a well-defined structure who employed formal processes to carry out a mission, which generally speaking was to govern. Carver (2006) asserted that non-profit governing boards were social constructs, which was to say that their purpose was what we said it was. Carver added that the job design, rules and processes of governing boards, which he identified as governance, were dependent on the purpose assigned to such bodies.

BoardSource (n.d.) suggested there were ten basic responsibilities that every non-profit board practiced. With the exception of the responsibility number 2, *Select the chief executive*, all of other responsibilities were relevant and directly pertained to the NACCTEP Executive Board. The responsibility descriptions were:

1. Determined the mission and purpose. It was the board's responsibility to create and review a statement of mission and purpose that articulated the organization's goals, means, and primary constituents served.
2. Not relevant to this study. See above paragraph.
3. Supported and evaluated the chief executive. The board was to ensure that the chief executive has the moral and professional support he or she needed to further the goals of the organization.
4. Ensured effective planning. Boards were to actively participate in an overall planning process and assist in implementing and monitoring the plan's goals.

5. Monitored and strengthened programs and services. The board's responsibility was to determine which programs were consistent with the organization's mission and monitor their effectiveness.
6. Ensured adequate financial resources. One of the board's foremost responsibilities was to provide adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission.
7. Protected assets and provided proper financial oversight. The board was to assist in developing the annual budget and ensuring that proper financial controls were in place.
8. Built a competent board. All boards had a responsibility to articulate prerequisites for candidates, orient new members, and periodically and comprehensively evaluate their own performance.
9. Ensured legal and ethical integrity. The board was ultimately responsible for adherence to legal standards and ethical norms.
10. Enhanced the organization's public standing. The board should have clearly articulated the organization's mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public and garnered support from the community. (Taken from Boardsource website)

The cultures within which boards function, the values that guide their governing work and the traditions they were expected to uphold, can vary dramatically from board to board (Eadie, 2009). Carver (2006) stated that boards were charged with setting the organization's agenda and priorities and that they were empowered to specify the most important issues and opportunities that management should pursue.

Eadie (2009) averred, “The people on your board are its most precious governing asset, and therefore, developing the board as a human resource is one of the most powerful paths you can take to high impact governing” (p. 66). Although boards can be very diverse in their makeup and roles, there were many similar characteristics among boards that function at high levels. Harris (2001) added that, “highly effective boards operate in an environment of openness and trust, where roles are understood and respected, and thought and thoroughness are balanced with speed and decisiveness” (p. 40).

Rationale for Orientation of New Board Members

Results from hundreds of board self-assessments have shown that board orientation was often a weak aspect of board performance. Unfortunately, it was not uncommon for board members to learn what they needed to know almost entirely on the job (BoardSource, 2009). Charan (2005) stated that group dynamics underpins a board’s ability to perform all the components of its job and that unless individual directors can gel into a working group, they simply cannot be effective. When board members were unclear about their responsibilities to an organization, they either became under-involved in governance or attempted to micromanage operational activities (Warner, 2010).

In some instances board members or trustees have *gone rogue* and caused great damage to an association if they did not fully understand their role and expectations of serving on a board. According to O’Banion (2009), “Rogue trustees run roughshod over the norms and standards of behavior expected of public officials appointed or elected to office. They tend to trample over the ideas and cautions of the CEO, the trustee chair, and member trustees.”

Some boards have been managed as a responsive body, rather than a generator of actions. These boards were seen as under-employed and under-utilized. Eadie (2009) suggested, “leadership limited to reaction cannot begin to capitalize on the experience, expertise, talent, knowledge and connections that board members bring to the table” (p. 11). He also shared that being proactive was an essential ingredient in building and sustaining commitment to the board.

Carver (2009) cogently argued, “Orienting new members can help institutionalize the board’s governance process and prepare new members for immediate participation” (p. 298). He added that excellence can be lost simply through the influx of new members who have not agonized through the process of improvement. Orientation has provided an opportunity to speed up the learning curve of new members and get them quickly engaged in the board’s activities. It ensured that every member was functioning within the same framework and with the same instructions (BoardSource, 2009).

Eadie (2009) asserted that the objective was to ensure that new board members hit the ground running, rather than going through a nonproductive period of learning the governing ropes. There have been many formats of orientation in working with new board members. The objective of any orientation is to connect the new board members to veteran members and move them from peripheral roles to active roles quickly and effectively. According to BoardSource (2009), orientation should not be considered to be a one-time event, but it may stretch out as long as a year. It also added that different modes of orientation should be utilized to deliver messages and address certain issues. For the purpose of this action research study, multiple methods of orientation were

utilized. The following were the components of the NACCTEP new board member leadership suite:

NACCTEP orientation web page. BoardSource (2009) suggested that board member orientation was an excellent forum for sharing information early so that new members participated more fully from the start. Carver (2006) added that orienting new members helped institutionalize the board's governance process and prepared new members for immediate participation. Providing a thorough orientation to incoming board members on both the nonprofit organization itself and on the role, functions, and structure of the board was seen as an indispensable element of any governing skills development program (Eadie, 2009).

BoardSource (2009) added that orientation should offer information about the organization, the field it serves, and the board's role and responsibilities. Orientations should also have explained important organizational norms for how the board operates and addresses subtle issues that helped newcomers understand the work they were asked to do. Other information that should be included in an orientation for new board members included finance, history of the organization, strategic direction, and organizational structure. BoardSource added that orientation can be many things for the board member: an initiation to board service, an introduction to the organization, its mission, and programs, clarification of future time and financial demands, an opportunity to get to know other team members, and a chance to form a knowledgeable foundation for the coming years on the board.

Due to the distance and busy schedule of board members, an online resource page was developed to assist them in learning about the association. The page included the following as suggested by the literature:

- History of the association
- Mission and goals
- Role of board member
- Association activities and events
- Biographies of all board member
- Association publications and resources

Mentoring. According to Johnson and Ridley (2004), mentoring relationships are viewed as being dynamic, reciprocal, personal relationships in which a more experienced person acted as a guide, role model, teacher, and sponsor of a less experienced person. The authors added that mentors provided mentees with knowledge, advice and counsel, support and opportunity in the mentee's pursuit of full membership in a particular profession. Eadie (2009) asserted that many nonprofit boards have found that mentoring was a powerful way to help new board members find their sea legs and to become productive members of the strategic governing team far faster than merely learning the ropes by themselves. Further, Eadie advised there is also a team building dimension of mentoring, which by making personal connections decreased the psychological distance between newcomers and old hands, and hence contributed to a more cohesive board culture.

BoardSource (2009) maintained that mentoring was one great way to get board members involved immediately and to help them feel comfortable. Mentors were

expected to generally serve as a resource to new board members, introducing them in the community, if necessary, and helping them get acclimated to the culture of the board. Charan (2005) emphasized that organizational competence cannot be left to chance. Boards have a duty to ensure that management was developing a leadership pool that is relevant, capable, up-to-date, and diverse enough to meet a wide range of challenges. Eadie (2009) added that a mentor might also assist a newcomer in negotiating the interpersonal relations terrain, helping him or her to understand the board's culture and working through any interpersonal problems that might come up. Taken together, results from these research studies suggested mentoring would be useful in orienting new board members. Thus, a mentoring component was built into the orientation suite of this action research project.

Monthly board conference calls. Communication has been the primary means by which people obtain and exchange information. One component of the proposed intervention was holding monthly conference calls to increase the frequency and quality of communication among board members. At its roots, communication has been concerned with sharing or exchanging ideas or information with others. It also has been described as the sharing of thoughts, feelings, and ideas among people (Ludden, 2007). Effective communication has been shown to be essential for both personal success and success in a work environment. Communication has been the primary means by which people obtain and exchange information.

Communication has been demonstrated to be essential when attempting to enhance and make changes in an organization. Leading change has required the use of a diverse set of communication techniques to deliver appropriate messages, solicit

feedback, create readiness for change, and motivate recipients to act (Gilley, Gilley, & McMillian, 2009). Lewis, Schmisser, Stephens, and Weir (2006) highlighted several strategies to consider with respect to communication during change initiatives. Among them were asking for input, utilizing the knowledge of key stakeholders, disseminating information, and communicating a clear vision.

Based on the literature, it was clear that providing effective communication channels would be useful in moving new board members from peripheral participation to central involvement earlier during their time of service on the board. One component of the new board member leadership suite was the use of monthly conference calls to foster more effective communication. The goals of these calls were to keep everyone informed on board activities, seek information from board members, discuss local and national teacher education issues, and provide a forum for sharing resources, ideas, and opportunities.

Face-to-face leadership session. The purpose of this leadership session was to assist new members in learning their roles, sharing their skills, and connecting to the work and vision of the executive board. This session took place the evening prior to the Fall NACCTEP executive board meeting held in Washington, D.C. Collins (2005) suggested that a great organization was one that delivered superior performance and had a distinctive influence over a long period of time. It was essential that new board members know what was expected from them and learn the culture of the organization.

Chait et al. (2005) asserted that intellectual capital increased as more trustees/board members understood more together. In turn, the organization profited far more from a knowledgeable board than from a loose federation of knowledgeable

trustees/board members. Barber (2009) shared, “Achieving great performance in the public sector requires unlocking the initiative, creativity, and motivation of leaders throughout the system rather than those at the top” (p. 79). Further, Barber noted board members must ensure that their voices are valued and that their input is important. They should have received the message that they are a part of something larger than themselves, part of a system, and that their ideas and skills are valued by the executive director and, more importantly, the entire association.

Senge (2006) indicated that *systems thinking* required the disciplines of building a shared vision, mental models, team learning, and personal mastery to realize its potential. Systems thinking has been characterized as the process of understanding how things influenced one another within a whole. Senge (2006) affirmed, “The discipline of working with mental models starts with turning the mirror inward; learning to unearth our internal pictures of the world, to bring them to the surface and to hold them rigorously to scrutiny” (p. 8). In addition to learning about the NACCTEP *system*, new board members had the opportunity to share their own ideas and vision regarding the association in this interactive meeting.

Role of the Executive Director

The chief executive or executive director has been shown to play a key role in the success of the orientation. The chief executive was the person most knowledgeable about the organization, and thus the perfect person to share this information with new board members (BoardSource, 2009). Providing quality support was essential in facilitating a board to function at its highest potential. Prybil (2006) contended a sound structure and staff resources to assist the board and its committees was essential for its successful

operation. Joshi, Lazarova, and Lio (2009) studied the importance of inspirational leaders who, by developing social relationships with team members, fostered attitudes that were critical for team effectiveness in geographically dispersed settings. The authors also added that by communicating a vision, inspirational leaders have reinforced the common goals of the team. By expressing confidence in group members, they enhanced the group's distinctiveness and prestige, energized group members, and encouraged more interpersonal interaction among team members.

Fullan (2001) maintained, "Leaders in a culture of change create conditions for daily learning, and they learn to lead by experiencing such learning at the hands of other leaders. Leaders are not born; they are nurtured" (p.131). According to Eadie (2009), a board savvy CEO has been shown to bring a constructive attitude to his or her work with the board, seeing it as both a precious organizational asset and a true governing colleague and partner. The savvy CEO has paid close attention to the psychological and emotional dimension of his or her work with the board, taking pains to turn board members into passionate owners of their governing.

Barber (2009) declared, "Achieving great performance in the public sector requires unlocking the initiative, creativity, and motivation of leaders throughout the system rather than those at the top" (p. 79). As the executive director for NACCTEP, the researcher had a key role in the implementation of the intervention in this action research study. It was anticipated the use of the suite activities would foster leadership growth among new board members.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This action research study was conducted utilizing a mixed-methods component design (Green, 2007). Qualitative data consisted of information gathered from interviews and through observations of an actual board meeting. Quantitative data consisted of survey responses to the NACCTEP New Board Member Leadership Survey completed by the new board members. This research study took place between June 1, 2012 and November 30, 2012.

Setting

The National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP) is housed in the National Center for Teacher Education (NCTE) at the Maricopa County Community College District Office in Tempe, Arizona. NCTE managed all aspects of NACCTEP which included events, publications, and the support of the executive board. The executive director, who was also the researcher of this project, served as member on the NACCTEP Executive Board. An executive assistant and a part-time website manager also worked in NCTE and provided support to the association.

NACCTEP serves community college members throughout the United States, ranging from Hawaii to New York. It provides support to its members through the creation and distribution of publications, reports, and key information influencing community college teacher education programs. The members of the executive board involved in the study came from various locations around the country. New board members were identified in May 2012 after the election and the appointment of the

student representative. To address the issue of distance, this research study was conducted using various methods for new board member orientation at various locations, including a website, conference calls, and email.

Participants

NACCTEP is led by a thirteen member executive board that includes an executive director, president, president-elect, past-president, secretary, treasurer, five at-large members, a student member, and an ex-officio staff member who represents the host college institution which is the Maricopa County Community College District. Board members consist of community college administrators and faculty members from across the United States who are involved in teacher education programs. Excluding the executive director, the student member and ex-officio member, board members are selected by the membership at large through an election that occurs each spring in which on average 60% of the 400 members vote. Board members are nominated in March and the elections take place in early May.

This study included the two new member-at-large board members who were elected to the board in and the student board member who was appointed by the new NACCTEP Board President in May 2012. They officially began serving their terms on July 1, 2012. The newly elected members-at-large will serve two-year terms; the student representative will serve a one-year term. To run for a board position, nominees must have submitted an application that included a resume, brief biography, information about their role in teacher education, and a letter of support from their institution. The student representative was selected by the incoming president based on her/his leadership skills, teacher education goals, and potential for leadership growth. A secondary group that

participated in this research study were the three NACCTEP board mentors who provided support and guidance to the new board members. The mentors were current board members who had served at least one year on the board.

Researcher Role

The researcher served as the director for the National Center for Teacher Education and the executive director for NACCTEP and as a member on the NACCTEP executive board. The researcher served as the project facilitator and also as a participant observer in this action research study. The researcher facilitated the monthly connection calls, designed and created the online orientation web page, assigned mentors, followed up with board members, and organized the fall leadership meeting including the orientation component. The researcher implemented these actions and observed whether the actions assisted in transitioning the new board members from peripheral to active roles. The researcher also documented whether and to what extent the new board members became part of the board's CoP.

Instruments

This action research study utilized a mixed-method research approach where both qualitative and quantitative instruments were used to gather data. According to Stringer (2007), action research was focused on specific situations and localized solutions. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) averred that in mixed-methods research the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative techniques, methods, and approaches, concepts or language into a single study. They added that the goal of mixed-methods research was not to replace either of these approaches, but rather to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both approaches. The quantitative and

qualitative instruments that were utilized to gather data throughout this study are described in the next section.

Survey. At the conclusion of the intervention, the NACCTEP New Board Member Survey was administered to the three new board members to determine the intervention's influence with respect to moving them from peripheral roles to active roles on the board. Moreover, it was administered to determine whether the orientation materials and activities facilitated learning their roles and assisted in strengthening their connection to the Board's CoP. Items on the survey were rated on a six-point Likert Scale ranging from 6 = *Strongly Agree* to 1 = *Strongly Disagree*. The survey focused on the five constructs of: (a) mentoring, (b) understanding the role of being a board member, (c) participating in a community of practice, (d) becoming an active board member, and (e) effectiveness of the leadership/orientation suite. The 28-question survey consisted of statements asking respondents to indicate their level of agreement. Examples of items from this survey are: "Knowing my role has assisted me in collaborating with other board members," "I have become more active in board activities," and "The online resource page assisted me in learning about the mission/goals of the Association." See Appendix B for the entire survey. The survey was created because no survey specifically addressing the research questions of this study was available. This survey was pilot tested in spring 2012 with three individuals who were not board members, but who were very familiar with the work of the board.

Observation protocol. An observation was conducted during the fall 2012 NACCTEP executive board meeting held in Washington D.C. on September 17th and 18th. Although the observation included all board members, it was focused on the three

newest board members who were the target research group for this study. Examples of components of the observation protocol included observing how actively new board members were involved with the meetings' discussions and activities, how they interacted with the other board members, and what ideas they shared with the group. In addition to following the protocol and taking notes, the researcher recorded portions of the board meeting for further analysis. For the purpose of this study, the observation data were used to assess the impact of the intervention on the new NACCTEP board members at the fall board meeting. See Appendix C for the complete observation protocol.

Interviews of new board members. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the three new NACCTEP board members in December 2012 at the conclusion of the research study. The interviews provided more in-depth information concerning topics in the research survey. The interview protocol consisted of six open-ended questions asking the new board members how their participation in the intervention affected them. Examples of questions included, "What is your understanding of your role in serving as a NACCTEP board member?", "As a new member of the Board, do you feel you are part of a community? Why or Why not?" and "How have the new board member orientation activities helped you with your work on the board?"

The questions were developed to help answer the two major research questions of this study. The complete list of interview questions has been provided in Appendix D. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Prior to the interview, the board members were made aware of the purpose of the interview, that the interview was being recorded, and that they could stop the interview at any time.

Interviews of the mentors. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the three mentors in December 2012 at the conclusion of the research study. The interview protocol consisted of six open-ended questions asking the mentors how the mentorship component of this study assisted new board members in becoming more involved in board. Examples of questions included, “Has participation in the leadership suite assisted new board members in becoming active board members? How? Why? Which components have been the most effective?” and “Do you feel that by understanding their roles better, they are participating more fully on the board? What evidence suggests that?” The list of interview questions has been provided in Appendix E.

Intervention

The intervention used for this study was a four-part leadership and orientation suite for new NACCTEP board members. The components of this leadership/orientation suite included (a) an association orientation web page for new board members, (b) participation in monthly board conference calls, (c) a face-to-face leadership session, and (d) mentoring by veteran board members. These activities focused on new board members transitioning from peripheral roles to active roles, learning their roles, and participating in a CoP. As shared earlier, Wenger (2006) proposed three crucial characteristics that were required to form a community of practice. The three characteristics were the domain, the community, and the practice. These were key components that were addressed in the leadership and orientation suite.

Association orientation web page. This online resource was developed to help orient new board members to the association’s history, background, mission, and goals. Based on data from a previous research cycle, current board members indicated they did

not really know the background and key information about the association. As shared previously in the literature review, including background information such as the history, mission, and goals of an association has provided a good base from which new board members can grow (Boardsource, 2009). A shared *domain* has been used to distinguish members from other people; membership implied a minimum level of knowledge of the domain (Wenger, 2002). The page was created in May 2012 and was sent through an email link to the new board members on June 1, 2012. Information included in the webpages consisted of history of the association, mission and goals, organizational structure, operating procedures, resources, and roles and responsibilities of board members. Details about the webpage information and other components of the orientation suite have been provided in Figure 1. The new board members had one month to review the information on the site before their official term began on July 1, 2012.

Suite Item	Area Addressed	Timeline	Format(s)
Orientation webpage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of the Association • Mission & goals • Organizational structure • Operating procedures • Resources • Role & responsibilities of board members 	June 1-30, 2012	Online
Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Role and responsibility • Board culture • Sharing of skills/ideas • Connecting to the Board • Communities of Practice 	July 1 to November 30, 2012 (connect 2 times a month)	Phone calls, email, Skype, social media
Monthly Conference Call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Community • Role • Finance • Strategic direction • Sharing of skills/ideas • Key Board events • Board updates 	July to November, 2012 (monthly)	Conference call
Face-to-Face Leadership Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Advocacy • Communities of Practice • Expectations • Roles • Strategic planning 	September 16, 2012	Face-to-face

Figure 1. New board member orientation suite

Mentoring. Each of the three new NACCTEP board members was assigned a mentor starting July 1, 2012. The mentors were selected based on the following criteria:

- Had at least one year of experience serving as an NACCTEP executive board member;
- Had been active in board committees and meetings;

- Had demonstrated leadership qualities through their local and national board member actions;
- Were knowledgeable about the association;
- Had expressed interest in serving as mentor ;

Once the three mentors were identified, the researcher held a conference call with the mentors to provide them with guidelines about what was expected of them as they served in this role. The following topics were covered in the call: mentoring goals, frequency of contacts, modes of communication, discussion topics, board culture, and leadership. See Figure 1 for additional details.

Due to fact that mentors and mentees were separated by great distances, the use of phone calls, emails, Skype, and/or social media was utilized to facilitate communication. The mentors and mentees determined which mode(s) of communication they utilized. Beginning in July 2012, mentors contacted the new board members and introduced themselves. As part of this research study, they continued communicating with the mentees until the end of November, 2012. Mentors and mentees were expected to communicate at least two times a month. The goals of the mentoring component of this study were to assist new board members in learning their roles and to help build community and practice among board members.

Monthly board conference calls. Conference calls were scheduled monthly to allow all board members to connect and communicate with each other. The conference calls were meant to help develop community and practice among board members. A total of five conference calls were held in the time period from July to November, 2012. The dates of the calls were scheduled around the schedules of board members. The calls

lasted approximately 30 minutes at each instance. An agenda with specific topics for each meeting was developed by the executive director with input from board members. Examples included communication, role of board members, sharing of skills, board member news, upcoming opportunities, events, and updates. See Figure 1 for details. The researcher organized, led, and facilitated all conference call sessions.

Face-to-face leadership session. The 2012 NACCTEP fall executive board meeting was held September 17 and 18 in Washington D.C. This was the first face-to-face meeting among the new board members, existing members, and the executive director. One of the major purposes of the fall board meeting was to expose board members to national policies, initiatives, and movements that were influencing community college teacher education programs. See Figure 1 for details. The two day meeting included national resource and policy information shared by representatives from the American Association of Community Colleges, the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, the National Science Foundation, and other organizations.

Based on data from a previous research cycle, past new board members indicated that they were “lost” in this meeting, did not know what their role was or what was expected of them. Also, they indicated that if they had been provided more preparation and context they would have been better prepared to play a more active role and contribute to the meeting. Further, they shared that had they been given better context they would have made better connections in taking this information back to their colleagues in their states.

The night before the board meeting took place, the researcher held a leadership session that included the three new board members, their mentors, and the current

NACCTEP president. The purpose of this session was to discuss board member roles, develop community, address concerns, and discuss expectations. The meeting took place on the evening on September 16, 2012, from 5 to 9 pm at the hotel where the board members were staying.

Data Collection

As noted previously, three different instruments were used collect data in this study. Data were collected at various points during the intervention and the process involved the use of a survey, interview protocols, and an observation protocol. The study began in June, 2012 and concluded in November, 2012. The first instance of data collection took place at the fall board meeting in Washington D.C., September 17th and 18th, 2012, using the observation protocol. During the two meeting dates, board member participation, interactions, actions, and discussions was documented.

Portions of the meeting were audio recorded for further analysis. During the last week of November, 2012, the NACCTEP new board member survey was sent to the three new board members. The survey was created through Survey Monkey and was emailed as a link. The new board members were given one week to complete the survey.

The researcher conducted calls to interview each of the three new board members and their three board mentors in December 2012. The researcher followed the semi-structured interview protocol previously described. Each interview lasted about 30 minutes. Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Procedure

Throughout the research time period many activities were organized and planned in advance. The following figure demonstrated the procedure used for the implementation of this action research project.

<p><u>June 2012</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed the online resource page • Contacted new board members. Shared with them information about the board member orientation suite and its components • Selected mentors • Sent out online resource page to the new board members 	<p><u>July 2012</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted conference call with mentors. Discussed roles, responsibilities, and expectations • Assigned mentors to new board members • Held first NACCTEP board conference call • Held conference call with the new board members on mentee roles, responsibilities, and expectations • Sent out suggested topic(s) to discuss to mentors
<p><u>August 2012</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held second NACCTEP board conference call • Sent out suggested topic(s) to discuss to mentors • Connected with mentors/mentees to check on progress 	<p><u>September 2012</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held third NACCTEP board conference call • Held face-to-face leadership session with the new board members on September 16, 2012 • Conducted observation at fall board meeting in Washington, DC on September 17-18, 2012 • Connected with mentors/mentees to check on progress • Sent out suggested topic(s) to discuss to mentors
<p><u>October 2012</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held fourth NACCTEP board conference call • Connected with mentors/mentees to check on progress • Sent out suggested topic(s) to discuss to mentors 	<p><u>November 2012</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held fifth NACCTEP board conference call • Sent out survey to new board members
<p><u>December 2012</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted individual interviews with the new board members • Conducted interviews with mentors 	

Figure 2. Action research implementation table.

Threats to Validity

With the small number of participants in this study, participant attrition was a concern. A board member may have left the board for a professional or personal reason. All research participants remained throughout the duration of the study. History and reactive arrangements were also possible threats to validity. With respect to history, events and circumstance other than those provided in the new board member orientation suite may have influenced new board members' behavior. Further, because new board members realized they were part of an action research study, they may have responded in certain ways, reactive arrangement, because they recognized they were a participant, not because of the influence of the orientation suite, per se.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of a leadership and orientation suite that was provided to new NACCTEP board members. More specifically, the researcher examined whether the orientation suite affected new board members in transitioning from peripheral to active roles and whether by better knowing their roles they would participate more fully in the board's community of practice.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section outlines the framework utilized to analyze data from the research study. Included in this section are procedures for analysis and results.

First results from the quantitative data are presented, followed by the results for the qualitative data. Survey data was collected via an online survey tool and descriptive statistics were calculated utilizing SPSS. Data from the interviews and observation were coded and analyzed for common themes utilizing the online software program Dedoose. Assertions are presented and supported through theme-related components and specific quotes. Through the process of analytic induction, data were integrated from the observation protocol, the interview transcripts, and the survey in this mixed-methods research study.

Analysis Procedures

Quantitative. An online, 28-question survey, created through Survey Monkey, was sent to the three new board members on November 18th, 2012. All three board members responded to the survey within the week allotted to them. The survey contained 24 questions that used a six-point Likert scale, along with four demographic type questions. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were conducted for the five constructs comprising the survey. The constructs assessed new board members' perceptions of: (a) the effectiveness of mentoring, (b) their understanding of their role on the board, (c) their sense of community of practice with the board, (d) their level of being active on the board, and (e) the effectiveness of the

leadership suite in preparing them to serve on the board. This analysis allowed for some initial interpretations of the effectiveness of the different components of the intervention.

Qualitative. The qualitative data included an observation, new board member interviews, and mentor interviews. On September 17th & 18th, 2012, the researcher conducted a participant observation during the fall NACCTEP executive board meeting in Washington, D.C. This meeting was attended by all thirteen board members. During this meeting, the researcher took notes using an observation protocol sheet that was developed prior to the meeting. The protocol sheet provided a framework for collecting and organization of data. The data from the written observation notes were then typed into a Word document. An inventory of the data indicated that there were three pages of observation notes.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the three new board members and the three mentors during the time period of December 3rd through 17th, 2012. Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and were digitally recorded. The six interviews and the observation notes were transcribed into Word documents and were uploaded into Dedoose. Dedoose is an online social science software program designed for the integration of qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

The qualitative data, which included the transcription of six interviews, and observational data, was analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Glaser and Strauss noted that the constant comparative method engaged researchers in an intense, systematic process of examining and reexamining the data while comparing one source with another to identify similarities and differences. In this process, open and axial coding were utilized to identify key terms,

develop categories, and form themes. The researcher utilized open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) to break data apart and delineate concepts from the raw data. Axial coding was then utilized to crosscut and relate concepts to each other. This coding led to the development of categories. Categories were defined as a classification of ideas and concepts in qualitative data analysis (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). The researcher looked for connections within categories to identify theme-related components that suggested emerging themes. From these categories, theme-related concepts and themes were identified and assertions were developed.

Procedure for Mixed-Methods Analysis

Through the process of analytic induction, the researcher integrated data from the observation notes, the interview notes, and the survey for this mixed-method research study. This was done by searching and reviewing the full data set, generating assertions through induction, and establishing an evidentiary warrant for the assertions made (Erickson, 1985). The researcher repeatedly read the entire data set from the observation notes, the interview notes, and the survey results. From the repeated readings, the researcher began to develop a list of codes that were assembled into larger categories and then theme-related components that led to themes. Based on the theme-related components and themes, assertions were developed. Assertions are statements that the researcher believes to be true based on the understanding of all the data for mixed-methods data analysis (Smith, 1997). The researcher then began a process for establishing a warrant for each of these assertions by finding confirming and disconfirming evidence in the quantitative and qualitative data. Warranting assertions is the process of confirming evidence through a systematic search through the data record

for segments that support for confirm an assertion (Smith, 1997; Erickson, 1986). The researcher looked for quotes and frequencies that supported each assertion. Inaccurate assertions were cast out or altered. After completing the warranting process for each preliminary assertion and eliminating overlaps, a list of warranted assertions was developed.

Results

Results from the quantitative data. To explore the extent to which participation levels were influenced by the intervention three proportions were computed. Over the course of the time period from July to November 2012, five conference calls were held. New board members participated in the monthly calls 89% of the time, mentors participated in 80% of the calls, and other board members averaged 77% participation.

Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were computed for the five constructs comprising the survey (Table 1). The constructs assessed new board members' perceptions of: (a) the effectiveness of mentoring, (b) their understanding of their role on the board, (c) their sense of community of practice with the board, (d) their level of being active on the board, and (e) the effectiveness of the leadership suite in preparing them to serve on the board.

Typically, reliabilities are not computed for small sample sizes. Nevertheless, because respondents' answers were important in understanding the effectiveness of the orientation/leadership suite, reliability analyses were conducted on the five constructs of the survey. Construct 1, mentoring, had a reliability coefficient of .92; construct 2, understanding the role of being a board member had a reliability coefficient of .59;

construct 3, participating in a community of practice, had a reliability coefficient of .85,; and construct 5, leadership/orientation suite had a reliability coefficient of .76.

For the fourth construct, becoming an active board member, a reliability coefficient could not be computed due to lack of variation in the respondents’ replies. All three respondents indicated the response of “agree,” a score of 5, which did not allow for computation of reliability coefficient, but did indicate agreement with the construct.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for the Five Survey Constructs n=3

Construct	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Effectiveness of mentoring	5.13	0.81
Understanding their role	5.00	0.69
Sense of community of practice	5.27	0.50
Being active on the board	5.13	0.12
Leadership orientation suite	5.08	0.38

The descriptive statistics indicated that on average, with scores very near 5, respondents “agreed” that mentoring was effective, that they understood their role on the board, that they felt a sense of a community of practice, that they perceived themselves as active on the board, and that they perceived the leadership orientation suite as effective. Overall the standard deviations for constructs indicated that responses were not far from the means.

Results from the qualitative data. An analysis of the qualitative data resulted in four themes that were based on the initial 43 codes. The themes were: (a) community, (b) communication, (c) participation, and (d) efficacy. Within these themes were theme-related components that supported the themes. In the section that follows, each theme is described and explained, and quotes from participating new board members and their mentors are provided to substantiate the themes. The themes, theme-related components, and assertions resulting from those data are presented in Figure 3.

<i>Themes and Theme-related Components</i>	Assertions
<p><i>Community</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New board members felt like they were part of a community. 2. Sharing similar experiences among new board members and mentors was seen as important. 3. Personal connections with other board members helped new board members feel welcome. 4. New board members felt confident in sharing their ideas with other board members. 	<p>Through various means a sense of community with other board members was developed.</p>
<p><i>Communication</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consistent communication between mentees and mentors was seen as very beneficial by new board members. 2. The monthly conference calls helped to keep all board members connected. 	<p>Communication was essential in connecting board members.</p>
<p><i>Participation</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New board members demonstrated immediate board involvement at the board meeting. 2. New board members were able to articulate their role and involvement. 3. New board members were actively sharing NACCTEP information with others. 4. New board members developed a national perspective on teacher education issues. 	<p>New board members (a) demonstrated and (b) articulated their immediate involvement on the board.</p>
<p><i>Efficacy</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning about NACCTEP context and culture was seen as beneficial by mentors and new board members. 2. New board members felt comfortable and prepared for their role. 3. New board members and mentors shared how new board members knew what was expected from them. 	<p>Knowing their roles assisted new board members to be comfortable in carrying them out and being confident in doing so.</p>

Figure 3. Themes, theme-related components, and assertions from data.

Community. Assertion 1—*Through various means, a sense of community with other board members was developed.* The following theme-related components were found to substantiate the theme leading to this assertion: (a) new board members felt like they are part of a community, (b) sharing similar experiences among new board members and mentors was seen as important, (c) personal connections with other board members helped new board members feel welcome, and (d) new board members felt confident in sharing their ideas with other board members.

A new member orientation was held prior to the fall board meeting in Washington D.C. One new board member commented on their experience during the orientation session, “We did some great sharing; I gained the feeling of being part of a community.” This was further supported by one of the other new board members who stated, “We have developed some pretty tight relationships.” The feeling of community was further expanded at the board meeting held the morning after the orientation session. Regarding the fall board meeting, a new member shared, “I do feel like I am part of a community. I realized that everybody was very welcoming and easy to talk to and there wasn’t a reason for me to be intimidated.” Another added, “The board community everybody was so generous and welcoming and that was great.” One of the new board members averred, “I am not going to hesitate to pick up the phone if I think somebody knows something more about a topic more than I do. That plays into the sense of community.” The theme of community was further supported by statements from the mentors. One of the mentors claimed, “Preparing them for the board meeting before the actual meeting helped them become part of the board’s community.” Another mentor added, “Being part of the board community is reflected in their participation.”

The sharing of similar experiences among the new board members and their mentors was another component of the community theme. A new board member explained, “Sometimes we feel like we are in our own state all alone, doing our own little things. I realize that we are all going through the same things. We all do things differently but our goals are the same.” Another new board member maintained, “Hearing their [mentor’s] similar concerns and anxieties was a great experience.” Further, one of the mentors asserted, “My mentee was having some of the similar problems that we were having with articulation in our state. We spent quite a bit of time in sharing our facts. It has been definitely [*sic*] community building in many, many ways.”

Establishing personal connections with the other board members was another of the theme-related concepts. During the interviews, the following statements were made by the new board members and the mentors. A new board member suggested that through establishing personal connections at the orientation session, “You get to know where the person is from and what’s going on in their life.” Another stated, “I got to know them on a whole different level.” During the research observation at the fall board meeting, the researcher noted in his protocol sheet, “During introductions at the board meeting, nearly all the board members shared some non-work related information with the group. One board member shared pictures of her children, another shared pictures of her new grandchild.”

At the beginning of the board meeting, an activity was conducted so all the board members interacted and were able to learn more about each other on a personal level. One of the new board members affirmed, “The first activity we did in the board meeting helped new board members feel like we were part of the group.” One of the mentors also

indicated, “We were discussing children and grandchildren and she [mentee] corresponds with me when I send out my grandma’s distribution list. We’re connected at multiple levels.”

Through their various experiences, the new board members demonstrated confidence in serving as board members. One new board member commented on her experience in developing confidence and having a mentor, “Carrie is my mentor and I would say it has been an absolutely fantastic experience. The opportunity to ask questions has been very reassuring. You don’t have to worry about asking stupid questions. It has been confidence building, absolutely.” A second new board member also testified about the importance of having a mentor and developing confidence, “My mentor was number one in confidence building.” New board members indicated the orientation session was a key activity in helping them to develop their confidence. One stated, “Well it was a seamless transition, like it’s like you could walk out of the door seamlessly into the door of the board meeting without a lot of trepidation and confidence in what the expectations were of me.” Another explained, “The Sunday night orientation was incredibly [*sic*] confidence building.” Another shared that during the board meeting, “I never had to you know, second guess what I was doing or saying.” During the board meeting the researcher observed, “The new board members are much more active in the meeting; they are asking more questions and seem to be more involved than previous new members.” Also observed was the type of questions being asked. The new board members were asking great questions tied to policy and new regulations influencing teacher education.

Communication. Assertion 2—*Communication was essential in connecting board members.* The following theme-related components were found to substantiate the theme

leading to this assertion: (a) consistent communication between mentees and mentors was seen as very beneficial by new board members, and (b) the monthly conference calls helped to keep all board members connected. As an overarching theme, communication was the process by which information was exchanged between individuals. In this study, communication was a significant benefit that developed among the new board members, their mentors, and other board members. The new board members indicated that having consistent communication was crucial. One new board member claimed, “It was really good to touch base with her [mentor] several times with her. I was getting more information and I had more questions as time went along. It [communication] was a really important piece.” Another new board member asserted, “We email each other continually you know it’s sort of ongoing. I feel like I want to hang out with her [mentor] more you know, but it’s like ‘darn too bad’ she’s in another state.” The third new member added, “My mentor and I have emailed several times ... helpful.”

As part of the orientation suite, monthly conference calls were initiated to facilitate communication among all board members including the three new members. Regarding the monthly conference calls, one new board member shared, “Our conference calls every month helped keep us and keep that connection ... keep that going.” Another suggested, “The monthly calls took on [*sic*] a whole new perspective for the board.” One of the mentors explained, “The monthly phone conversations that we had provided a personal touch to the conversations.” Another mentor maintained, “I think we should continue with the conference calls. It gives not only the new board members but also existing board members the chance to communicate with one another.”

Participation. Assertion 3 - *New board members (a) demonstrated and (b) articulated their immediate involvement on the board.* The following theme related components were found to substantiate the theme leading to this assertion: (a) new board members demonstrated immediate board involvement, (b) new board members were able to articulate their role, (c) new board members were actively sharing NACCTEP information with others, and (d) new board members developed a national perspective on teacher education issues.

Central to this study was the transition of new board members from peripheral roles to active leadership roles through the introduction of the new board member leadership orientation suite. The theme-related component of immediate board involvement was supported by the following quotes. One mentor shared,

This [leadership suite] was a very systemic way of initiating somebody onto the board. I just really think that it is important if you want new board members on the board to feel a part of and also to start acting as board members and bring their ideas to the forefront.

Another mentor testified,

This was a way of initiating somebody on the board and making them feel inclusive [*sic*] right from the get go. Otherwise it takes at least a year to get them going in being active on the board. This way we're getting activity right away.

A third mentor asserted, "As far as active board members at the board meeting we had a lot of discussion from the new board members. I think that they felt more open to discuss

issues.” A mentor also added, “There was more involvement from the new people. You are going to have people coming in ready to start working.”

During the research observation, the researcher observed that one of the new board members provided great insights into planning for the future and sustainability of the association by suggesting, “.....” One of the other new board members helped lead a discussion during the strategic planning group work session of the meeting. The new board members were actively involved throughout the two days of the meeting.

During interviews the new board members provided examples of how they have been immediately involved in board activities. One of the new board members claimed, “I am going to be making a presentation at the conference in Dallas, Texas. [I] am writing a spotlight article about my school, and then a newsletter article.” Another new board member disclosed, “On the board, I’ve attended the board meeting, I volunteered to chair the selection committee for the selection of the presentations and workshops for the NACCTEP conference, [I] participated as ... continued to participate as an ambassador representative for the Midwest.” Another revealed, “Through our Blackboard site, I communicate with everybody that’s involved with teacher prep in our 23 community colleges.”

Having new board members learn, know, and understand their role was a key portion of this research study. During interviews a new board member articulated,

My main role is just to be a voice for the students, community college teacher education program, just trying to give the rest of the board members just kind of my view on things and same thing from a student’s perspective because it’s

definitely different than seeing it from our instructors' perspective and the people over our education department.

This same board member also disclosed, "I think that you know my main goal is just try to represent the students from community colleges and make sure that our voice is heard when certain issues come up that deal with us students."

Another new board member shared the following regarding his/her role as a NACCTEP board member,

I think it's to make and keep NACCTEP viable as a voice for community college teacher prep programs. I think that's the first thing that we need to do and then beyond [that] it's really to and it ties into that [*sic*] ...it's to take what we do at the board level with our decisions and basically bring it back to the constituents.

The third new board member declared, "My understanding of my role is that I am to share, promote, endorse, and celebrate the successes and the mission and the vision of the NACCTEP board, locally and nationally."

To effectively participate on a national board, board members must develop a national perspective on community college teacher education programs, policy, and legislation. The three new board members of NACCTEP had never served on a national association board before being elected to the board. One new board member explained, "I have not served on a national board. I have served on lots of local boards. This is different." Based on their experiences they obtained through the new board member orientation suite, they clearly demonstrated the development of a national perspective on teacher education as the following quotes attest. One of the new board members maintained, "Being on the board gives you the bigger picture of what is happening,"

another new board member added, “It helps when I can think globally, more on a macro level.”

A mentor added,

The shift, I think, is a critical shift as a new board member [*sic*] is to recognize that you’re going from your local college, you know maybe your state or maybe your region’s [way of thinking about things] to thinking about things on a national level.

The mentor further averred that during the fall board meeting, “It seemed to me that people [new board members] were participating in their thinking [*sic*] and in the way they were responding and asking questions in a national way.”

A new board member affirmed, “We are just a whole variety of different people doing different things for our community colleges, specifically our teacher education programs.” A mentor claimed, “That’s one of the values of being on a board is that [*sic*] especially a national board is that you get a first-hand perspective [other] than just the local. We are responding and asking questions in a national way.”

A key responsibility of a board member is to take national information acquired from NACCTEP and share it with others. This participation is crucial in fulfilling the mission of the association. The new board members have shared information with others in various ways. One new board member stated, “I brought information back to the constituents and for me that is the VCCS system.” Another new board member declared, “I went back and shared information with my boss, the Vice-president of Academic Affairs.” The member added, “I take a lot of the ideas that were shared back to my teacher education team.”

Efficacy. Assertion 4 - *Knowing their roles assisted new board members to be comfortable in carrying them out and being confident in doing so.* The following theme-related components were associated with the theme leading to this assertion: (a) learning about NACCTEP context and culture was seen as beneficial by mentors and new board members, (b) new board members felt comfortable and prepared for their roles, and (c) new board members and mentors shared how new board members know what is expected of them.

Efficacy was a strong theme that appeared in the responses of the new board members to their experiences with the orientation suite. One of the main objectives of the intervention was to transition new board members from peripheral roles to active leadership through various activities. Learning about NACCTEP and becoming familiar with the association was seen as beneficial. One of the new board members commented about the orientation web page when she/he declared, “It was definitely nice getting to see their [board members’] pictures; I want to be familiar with who I was going to be working with [*sic*].” Another new board member also commented on the website, when she/he maintained, “It was really helpful to see the organization structure hierarchy before I met everyone.” In regards to the new member orientation session, a new board member shared the following thoughts about the influence of participating in the new member orientation session, “Every social group has its own dynamics, its own rules, and its own traditions and so I probably would’ve sat back and not shared very much. It [session] was very, very comfortable and an easy transition for me.” Another new board member added that their mentor was key in learning about the association when she/he contended, “She answered any questions that I had, and she had a great context of the

history of the organization so that was good too.” Moreover, with respect to the orientation session, one of the mentors asserted, “The new board members learned about the big issues the association is focused on right now.”

Assisting new board members in being prepared and comfortable to serve on the board was another key component of the intervention for this research study. One of the mentors testified, “The website gives them a lot of information that they can read about NACCTEP before they go to the board meeting.” One of the new board members suggested, “The orientation meeting prepared us for what we were going to do and what we do from here on out.” Another declared, “All of those steps really led to walking in there and if I hadn’t had any of those steps I would have been very, very intimidated and probably would not [have] said a word.” Another new board member added, “I’m just feeling very, very comfortable about it [being a board member].” A new board member declared, “I would say that having a mentor raises the comfort level for a new board member.” Another new board member commented on the influence of the new orientation session when she/he asserted, “It made me feel definitely more [*sic*] comfortable during the board meetings. Just to know that I wasn’t the only new person at this and everybody else was learning.” The same board member added, “I think that if I wouldn’t have had that meeting I don’t think that [*sic*] I would have felt as comfortable during the meetings the following days.”

During the observation the researcher noted that the new board members seemed very comfortable interacting with the veteran board members. There was no apprehension in speaking up and sharing their thoughts. They are acting as fully engaged board members.

Knowing the expectations of serving as a board member was a prominent theme-related component. A mentor explained, “I think they will participate in the board actively in the future because the [*sic*] of the mentors and because they know the expectation.” Another mentor confirmed, “They’ll be more active because they know what their expectations are.” Another mentor added, “If I would have had a session, I would have known earlier on what was expected from me and I would have felt [more like being a] part of the group.”

One of the new board members testified, “I learned what the expectations were of me and what the expectations were of the organization.” Another new board member commented about expectations and her mentor when she affirmed, “She was number one in confidence building, clear expectations, and helping to clarify expectations of me as a board member.” This member added, “She told me about the responsibilities.” Finally, a mentor asserted, “She knows what is expected of her and we expect everyone to speak up and be involved.”

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this action research study was to assess how the introduction of an orientation/leadership suite would assist new board members in transitioning from a peripheral role to an active leadership role and to identify whether and how the increased knowledge of their role on the board would influence their participation in a community of practice. In this section, results are discussed and explained. The chapter consists of five sections including integration of quantitative and qualitative findings, lessons learned, implications for practice, implications for research, and conclusion. In the initial section, the complementary nature of the quantitative and qualitative is examined.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Because of the small number of participants, caution must be exercised in integrating the qualitative and quantitative data; nevertheless high mean scores from the quantitative data along with the small standard deviation scores indicate the quantitative data has considerable consistency. Given these circumstances, the following section on the integration of the qualitative and quantitative is offered.

The qualitative research results reveal four major themes: community, communication, participation, and efficacy. Each of these themes is complemented by four constructs from the quantitative survey. The qualitative theme of communication is complementary to the quantitative construct of effectiveness of mentoring, which has a mean score of 5.13, out of a possible high score of 6. Effectiveness of mentoring included items such as, “Having a mentor has helped me to share my ideas with the board” and “Working with a mentor has allowed me to feel connected to the other board

members.” Specifically, the communication theme includes a theme-related component, “Consistent communication between mentees and mentors was seen as very beneficial by new board members,” which is closely aligned with mentoring effectiveness. Thus, communication between mentors and mentees is an essential aspect of the transition of new board members from peripheral roles to active roles. For example, emails and phone calls allowed mentees to become more familiar with board roles and expectations.

With respect to the qualitative theme of efficacy, the quantitative construct entitled understanding their role has a mean of 5.00 that provides strong evidence that new board members understand their role. The understanding their role construct included items such as, “I have a good understanding of my role as a NACCTEP board member” and “Knowing my role has allowed me to be involved in board activities.” Thus, the quantitative construct supported the theme of efficacy because knowledge of their roles assisted new board members in feeling comfortable in carrying them out and being confident in doing so. The new member orientation session outlined what was expected out of board members and what their role was in supporting the association. This was further supported by the online orientation webpage which included numerous examples how board members could be involved in supporting the association and fulfilling their role.

The qualitative theme of community, which indicated a shared sense of community among board members, complemented the quantitative construct of sense of community of practice. Sense of community of practice had the highest construct mean of 5.27. The community of practice construct included items such as, “I feel a sense of community has helped me become involved in the board” and “I have collaborated

effectively with board members.” The theme-related components of community included the importance of sharing similar experiences, personal connections, and sharing of ideas all of which are crucial components of being a part of community and are clearly aligned with the sense of community construct. Examples include the development of a CoP among the mentors and mentees and frequent collaboration.

The qualitative theme participation is parallel to the quantitative construct being active on the board, which has a mean of 5.13. The construct of being active on the board included items such as, “I have put my ideas into action” and “I have become active on the board.” Participation included theme-related components such as new board members demonstrating immediate board involvement and being able to articulate their roles and sharing information with others. Thus, it is evident that participation from the qualitative data is closely aligned with being active on the board from the quantitative data. Examples include sharing NACCTEP and teacher education policy issues with colleagues in their states and taking leadership roles on other association committees.

The construct of the overall orientation/leadership suite influence has a mean score of 5.08, indicating that there is strong endorsement of the effectiveness of the activities that constituted the suite. Additional evidence of the influence of the leadership/orientation suite indicates it assists new board members in their transition from peripheral to active leadership roles on the board. It does so through the development of a sense of community, facilitating and sustaining communication, defining and encouraging participation, and increasing efficacy in their roles. Further, through the increased knowledge of their role as a board member, they became a part of the board’s community of practice, which is clarified more fully in the next section.

Connections to Theory

The theoretical framework of communities of practice (CoP) shaped this action research study. Recall, CoP are characterized as groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or interest in a topic and interact on the topic on a consistent basis. As noted in the literature review, three crucial components are needed to form a CoP: the domain, community, and practice. Through their participation in the orientation/leadership suite, the new board members and their mentors formed a CoP.

Legitimate peripheral participation is a fundamental concept that serves as the basis for this project. Further, and importantly, peripheral participation is strongly related to and influenced by participants' enactments of activities within a community of practice. To review, legitimate peripheral participation concerns the process by which newcomers become a part of a CoP. Lave and Wenger (1991) cogently argue that "newcomers" legitimate peripherality crucially involves participation as a way of learning. It provides a way to speak about the relationships between newcomers and veteran participants and their attainment of understanding through growing involvement, which moves them toward full participation. Thus, the orientation/leadership suite intervention was designed to efficiently and effectively facilitate new board members in learning their roles, interacting with other board members, learning about the association, and transitioning them from peripheral to more central roles on the board in a much shorter time frame. Given their short terms of service on the board, this streamlined transition to becoming a knowledgeable and active member is essential.

Lave and Wenger (1991) contend that a CoP is a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other relevant and overlapping

communities of practice. The CoP developed by the new board members and their mentors overlaps with the larger CoP, which consists of the NACCTEP Executive Board. However, over time this smaller CoP was “absorbed” into the larger NACCTEP CoP as the groups closely interacted. One of the new board members commented that the transition into the board was a “seamless” process because of the preparation and support they received. These CoP components are further evident throughout the project as illustrated in the detailed discussion that follows.

Consistent with Wenger’s (1998) criteria that define a CoP, new board members are able to develop “1) sustained mutual relationships” (p. 125) because of the strong connection established with their mentors. As a result of the orientation session, the new board members are also able to meet each other and develop relationships with the other new members. Other key criteria that demonstrate the new board members participate and benefit from the CoP include, “2) shared ways of engaging in doing things together [and] 7) knowing what others know, what they can do, and how they can contribute to an enterprise” (Wenger, 1998, p. 125). New board members work collaboratively with their mentors to learn about the association and the board culture. They also are able to learn about each other’s skills and expertise, their roles, and what is expected of them with regard to board involvement during the orientation session. Their participation in monthly calls also allows them to communicate and collaborate with the other board members.

Creating forums for communication is a key component in assisting board members transition to full participation and connecting them to the CoP. This outcome is consistent with some other of Wenger’s CoP criteria including, “3) the rapid flow of

information and propagation of innovation [and] 4) absence of preambles, as if conversations and interactions were merely the continuation of an ongoing process” (p. 125). Outcomes consistent with these criteria were demonstrated in the communicative actions established between the new board members and their mentors and the other board members. Due to their newly developed competencies and confidence as board members, the new board members contributed to the flow of communication and added their own ideas to the information being shared in the various venues. Through the orientation website and the orientation session, the new board members became connected to board culture and knowledge. They also are made aware of current issues and initiatives and can immediately contribute to current board projects, initiatives, and discussions.

As a result of the influence of the orientation/leadership suite, the new board members learned their roles and seamlessly became a part of the CoP. This outcome is evident with respect to Wenger’s criteria of “8) mutually defining identities [and] 13) certain styles recognized as displaying membership” (p. 125). These are evident as new board members learn what it means to be an active board member and the common expectations of board member service. Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that legitimate peripherality involves the participation of “newcomers” in learning by both absorbing and being absorbed in a group’s culture of practice. Each of the three new board members was able to learn about the board’s culture and become an active part of it.

Lessons Learned

A number of lessons can be learned from this research process. First, an intervention can influence others not directly targeted in the research project. In

hindsight, it would be beneficial to include all the board members in this research study. It is clear the components of the intervention influence board members other than the mentors and mentees. Allowing all board members to participate fully in the orientation process and collecting data from all of them may provide additional, valuable data for better understanding the development of the larger CoP.

I would also handle the observation a little differently in the future. Although valuable data was collected, I believe video recording the meeting would yield better data tied to new member participation and contributions. Visual cues were lost by not recording this event. Also, at times, it is difficult to distinguish who is speaking. Interviews were conducted over the phone due to the new board members and their mentors being dispersed across the country. With the current technology available for communication, I would use Skype or Google Hangout for future interviews to be able to see the person and be able to observe physical responses to the questions.

I learned about the complexity of conducting qualitative research. The analysis and interpretation of qualitative data is challenging and complex. I am amazed by the amount of time needed to analyze and synthesize qualitative data. I encourage others to select and pilot qualitative analysis software before actual research takes place. The combined challenge of learning software and learning to be an action researcher at the same time proved to be a daunting task on occasion. Taking the whole project into account, I have learned much through this process. As a result, I now am able to view education issues and challenges through a whole set of new lenses. I am able to now formulate a plan for assessing the issue, devising a solution, and analyzing the impact of an intervention.

Implications for Practice

This intervention influenced the degree of engagement and the actions of the new board members and will continue to do so as they conduct their efforts on the board. The first implication for practice is that these new board members will be better prepared and more active board members for the remainder of their terms. Through this experience they may be willing to continue their board service and be better prepared to run for officer positions on the board when their terms expire. In support of these observations, one of the new board members indicated that he/she is considering running for an officer positions in the next round of elections. The board member indicated that he/she was very confident in his/her role and wanted to pursue a higher leadership position on the board. Additionally, the student representative has conducted presentations about the association at her college and presented information about her role to her college's governing board. The student also developed articles for the association newsletter where she shared her experiences about serving on the board.

A second implication is the possibility that the orientation/leadership suite will be replicated with future new board members. In essence, a framework for new board member preparation has been developed, pilot tested, and studied. The current NACCTEP board president has indicated she would like to see the orientation/suite utilized with the new members that will be joining in the Board in July, 2013. The three mentors and the three new board members in the study also indicate that the suite should be used with future board members. They offer suggestions for enhancement including making the website component of the orientation more interactive, and making some of the conference calls, video conference calls, instead. Several of the mentors indicate that

the new orientation session should include all the board members. Their reasoning is that everyone should start from the same foundational level and all would benefit from an orientation session.

Although this action research study was focused on the NACCTEP board, components of the intervention maybe utilized with other association boards. A new board member indicated that she has already shared the orientation/leadership model with another group with which she is affiliated in her home state. She feels the model would benefit this group in helping their board members to become active in their association. Nevertheless, care must be exercised by those who seek to garner insights from action research studies because generalization of results may not occur across different contexts.

From a personal perspective, the results reaffirm my beliefs about the value of professional development and lifelong learning. As someone who works in teacher education, I recognize the critical importance of properly preparing future teachers for our classrooms. This principle also applies to those taking on new roles such as board service in an organization. Why shouldn't we offer the most appropriate preparation for professionals as they serve in new and different roles? Further, as I work with practicing professionals, I can't make assumptions that they will know what to do and how to do it. Just as I would want to learn and do a great job, I will provide others with the tools and background to assist them in succeeding in their respective roles.

Implications for Research

There are a number of implications for research based on the study. As stated earlier the introduction of the orientation/leadership suite demonstrated an influence on others besides the targeted new board members. In a future research study, it would be

instructive to include and study the involvement of all board members. This would help overcome one of the main limitations of the study, which was the small number of participants. Having only three primary participants limited the amount and type of quantitative data that could be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Additional quantitative data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes can be implemented with greater numbers of participants.

Another research area in the future could include the NACCTEP ambassadors. These are individuals who are not elected board members, but members who serve in a leadership role to represent NACCTEP in their states. This is a new initiative of the NACCTEP board. With an increasing number of ambassadors each year promoting the work of NACCTEP, the introduction and study of a leadership/orientation suite for this group may greatly benefit the association by making the work of the association more clear to its constituents, and it may possibly increase membership.

As the new board members became more knowledgeable, confident, and comfortable with the association, the more active they became. It struck me that many of our current and newer members may not be fully knowledgeable about the history and true mission of the association. Through an intervention that would include a “knowledge campaign” to all members, perhaps the level of involvement and activity at all member colleges could increase.

Conclusions

In reflecting on the influence of the orientation/leadership suite on the participants, a new board member shared during an interview, “My understanding of my role is that I am to share, promote, endorse and celebrate the successes and the mission

and the vision of the NACCTEP board, locally and nationally.” This quote captures the essence of the actions, attitudes, and ideas expected of all new board members.

The institutionalization of the orientation/leadership suite was an agenda item at the spring 2013 NACCTEP Board meeting in Dallas, Texas. The new board members made many positive comments on how much they learned through participation in the suite and provided their endorsement on utilizing the suite with future board members. The board officially approved the implementation of the orientation/leadership suite for the incoming 2013-2014 board members.

Overall, the findings indicate that the new board member orientation/leadership suite assists new board members transition from peripheral roles to active leadership roles through developing a sense of community; facilitating and sustaining communication; defining, supporting and encouraging participation; and increasing efficacy in learning their roles. Through the learning of their roles, the new board members became knowledgeable, comfortable and confident in serving as board members which facilitates their being merged into and participating in the NACCTEP board’s CoP.

References

- American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). (2012). *Community college trends and statistics*. Retrieved from <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/Trends/Pages/default.aspx>
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. New York, NY: General Learning Press.
- Barber, M. (2009). From system effectiveness to system improvement: Reform paradigms and relationships. In A. Hargreaves & M. Fullan (Eds.), *Change wars* (pp. 71-94). Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.
- BoardSource. (n.d.). *Ten basic responsibilities of nonprofit boards*. Retrieved from <http://www.boardsource.org/Knowledge.asp?ID=3.368>
- BoardSource. (2009). *Getting on board with effective orientation*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Carver, J. (2006). *Boards that make a difference: A new design for leadership in nonprofit and public organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Chait, R. P., Ryan, W. P., & Taylor, B. E. (2005). *Governance as leadership: Reframing the work of nonprofit boards*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley Press.
- Charan, R. (2005). *Boards that deliver: Advancing corporate governance from compliance to competitive advantage*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Collins, J. (2005). *Good to great and the social sectors: A monograph to accompany 'Good to Great'*. San Francisco, CA: Elements Design Group.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Coulter, T., & Vandal, B. (2007). *Community colleges and teacher preparation: Role, issues and opportunities* (Issue Paper PS-07-01). Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States. Retrieved from <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/74/01/7401.pdf>
- Dedoose [Application]. Manhattan Beach, CA: SocioCultural Research Consultants, LLC.
- Eadie, D. (2009). *Extraordinary board leadership: The keys to high impact governing* (2nd ed.). Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett.
- Erickson, F. E. (1985). *Qualitative methods in research on teaching* (occasional paper no. 81). Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED263203.pdf>

- Erickson, F.E. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed.). Old Tappan, NJ: Macmillan.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Gaskin, F., Helfgot, S., Parsons, S., & Solley, A. (2003). High schools, community colleges, and universities: Partners in teacher education and national efforts. In B. K. Townsend & J. M. Ignash (Eds.), *The Role of the Community College in Teacher Education: New Directions for Community Colleges*, (pp. 47-57). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. (2009). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (9th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Gilley, A., Gilley, J. W., & McMillian, H. S. (2009). Organizational change: Motivation, communication, and leadership effectiveness. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 21(4), 75-94. doi: 10.1002/piq.20039
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.
- Greene, J. (2007). *Mixed methods in social inquiry*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Harris, T. (2001). Establishing effective boards. *Financial Executive*, 17(4), 39-42.
- Johnson, B. R., & Onwuegbuzie, A. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14-26.
- Johnson, W. B., & Ridley, C. R. (2004). *The elements of mentoring*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Joshi, A., Lazarova, M., & Lio, H. (2009). Getting everyone on board: The role of inspirational leadership in geographically dispersed teams. *Organization Science*, 20(1), 240-252. doi: 10.1287/Orsc.1080.0383
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lewis, L. K., Schmisser, A. M., Stephens, K. K., & Weir, K. E. (2006). Advice on communicating during organizational change. *Journal of Business Communication*, 43(2), 113-137. doi: 10.1177/0021943605285355
- Ludden, M. (2007). *Effective workplace communication: Skills for success in life and on the job* (3rd ed.). Indianapolis, IN: Jist Works.
- Nadler, D. A., Behan, B. A., & Nadler, M. B. (2006). *Building better boards: A blueprint for effective governance*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP). (2010). *Who we are*. Retrieved from http://www.nacctep.org/New/About_Us
- O'Banion, T. (2009). What motivates the community college rogue trustee?, *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 33(6), 476-501.
- Prybil, L. (2006). Characteristics of effective boards. *Trustee*, 59(3), 20-23.
- Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Smith, M. L. (1997). Mixing and matching: Methods and models. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 74, 73-85.
- SPSS [Software]. Armonk, NY: IBM.
- Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stringer, E. (2007). *Action research*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Warner, E. (2010). *An organization's board of directors*. Institute for Dynamic Educational Advancement. Retrieved from <http://www.idea.org/board.html>
- Wenger, E. (1998a). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Wenger, E. (1998b, June/July). Communities of practice: Learning as a social system. *The Systems Thinker*. Retrieved from www.co-i-l.com/coil/knowledge-garden/cop/lss.shtml
- Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of practice and social learning systems. *Organization*, 7(2), 225-246. doi: 10.1177/135050840072002
- Wenger, E., & Synder, W. (2000). Communities of Practice: The organizational frontier. *Harvard Business Review*, 78(1), 139-145. Retrieved from http://itu.dk/people/petermeldgaard/B12/lektion%207/Communities%20of%20Practice_The%20Organizational%20Frontier.pdf
- Wenger E., McDermott, R., & Synder, W.M. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Wenger, E. (2004, January/February). Knowledge management as a doughnut: Shaping your knowledge strategy through communities of practice. *Ivey Business Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.iveybusinessjournal.com/topics/leadership/knowledge-management-as-a-doughnut#.UOTZr3dP9D4>

Wenger, E. (2006). *Communities of practice: A brief introduction*. Retrieved from <http://www.ewenger.com/theory/>

APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

To: Ray Buss
FAB

From: Mark Roosa, Chair
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 05/14/2012

Committee Action: **Exemption Granted**

IRB Action Date: 05/14/2012

IRB Protocol #: 1205007813

Study Title: Transitioning New Board of Directors Members from Peripheral Roles to Active Roles

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(1) (2) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

APPENDIX B

NACCTEP NEW BOARD MEMBER SURVEY

Dear Board Member:

You are invited to participate in this survey to provide an understanding of how new board members transition into their leadership roles and how they participate as a NACCTEP Executive Board member. This 28-question survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete.

My name is Ray Ostos and I am a doctoral student at Arizona State University and the Executive Director for NACCTEP. In my studies at ASU, I work under the direction of Dr. Ray Buss. The findings from this study will be used to inform NACCTEP leadership on how to best support board members in learning their roles and maximizing participation on the NACCTEP Executive Board.

Your responses will be anonymous. The results of this study may be used in reports and presentations, but all of the information will only be presented without the identification of any participants.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Dr. Ray Buss (ray.busss@asu.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

Completion of the survey will be considered your consent to participate.

Sincerely,

Ray A. Ostos
ASU Doctoral Student
NACCTEP Executive Director

Please circle your level of agreement with the following statements:

Construct 1: Mentoring

	Statement	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Slightly Agree (SLA)	Slightly Disagree (SLD)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
1	Having a mentor assisted me in learning about expectations of board members.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
2	Working with a mentor has allowed me to feel connected to other board members.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
3	My mentor has assisted me in learning about my role on the board.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
4	Having a mentor has helped me to share my ideas with the board.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
5	Having a mentor has helped me become involved on the board.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD

Construct 2: Understanding the Role of Being a Board Member

	Statement	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Slightly Agree (SLA)	Slightly Disagree (SLD)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
6	I know what is expected of me as a board member.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
7	I now have a good understanding of my role as a NACCTEP Board Member.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
8	Knowing my role has assisted me in sharing my ideas.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
9	Knowing my role has assisted me in collaborating with other board members.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
10	Knowing my role has allowed me to be involved in board activities.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD

Construct 3: Participating in a Community of Practice

	Question	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Slightly Agree (SLA)	Slightly Disagree (SLD)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
11	I feel a sense of community that has helped me become involved in the board.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
12	I have learned about other board members' skills and expertise.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
13	I am passionate about the work of the board.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
14	I have collaborated effectively with board members.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
15	I have explored new ideas with other board members.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD

Construct 4: Becoming an Active Board Member

	Statement	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Slightly Agree (SLA)	Slightly Disagree (SLD)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
16	I have become active on the board	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
17	I have shared my ideas with the board.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
18	I have put my ideas into action.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
19	I feel I contributed to the board.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
20	I have shared information and resources about the Association with others.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD

Construct 5: Leadership/Orientation Suite

	Question	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Slightly Agree (SLA)	Slightly Disagree (SLD)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
21	The monthly conference calls have assisted me in becoming involved on the board.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
22	The online resource page assisted me in becoming involved on the board.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
23	The face-to-face leadership session assisted me in becoming involved on the board.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
24	Having a mentor assisted me in becoming an active board member.	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD

Please circle the most appropriate answer:

- 25 Is this your first time serving as a board member on a national association? YES NO
- 26 If no, on which association's board did you serve previously? _____
- 27 I am an/ FACULTY MEMBER ADMINISTRATOR OTHER_____
- 28 My gender is MALE FEMALE

Thank You!

APPENDIX C
OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL

Fall 2012 NACCTEP Executive Board Meeting

- Setting: Fall 2012 NACCTEP Board Meeting in Washington, D.C.
 - Individuals Observed: The NACCTEP Executive Board with a focus on the three new NACCTEP Board Members
 - Purpose: The purpose of this observation was to observe new board members. participation, contributions, and interactions at the annual meeting in Washington D.C.
 - Observer Involvement: Ray A. Ostos, Executive Director, Researcher & Active Participant
 - Date: September 17th & 18th, 2012
 - Location: Washington D.C., AACC Headquarters
 - This observation is one component of how data will be gathered. The meeting will also be recorded and transcribed.
-

Did Board members arrive on time for the meeting? Who was present?

Board Member Name	Time of Arrival
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	

NACCTEP Board Meeting-September 17th & 18th, 2012

Time	Speaker	Notes

APPENDIX D

NEW BOARD MEMBER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

- Share with each participant that their responses will be kept confidential.
- Ray A. Ostos-Executive Director for NACCTEP and the action researcher, will conduct the three interviews.
- Participants are new NACCTEP Board Members whose terms begin in July 2012.
- Interviews will be conducted to gather information from new board members regarding their board orientation experiences and their board participation experiences.
- Each interview will be 20 to 30 minutes in length.
- Inform participants not to use names when answering questions.
- Interviews will be conducted in November 2012 through a conference call.
- Interviews will be audio recorded for later transcription.
- The format of the interviews is semi-structured.

Questions:

1. What is your understanding of your role in serving as a NACCTEP board member?
2. How have you been involved on the NACCTEP board?
3. How have you shared your skills and ideas with other board members?
4. As a new member of the board, do you feel you are part of a community? Why or why not?
5. How have you worked collaboratively with the other board members? What did you do?
6. How have the new board member orientation activities helped you with your work on the board?
 - a. Prompt: How have the monthly calls facilitated your participation on the board?
 - b. Prompt: How has the online information page facilitated your participation on the board?

- c. Prompt: How has the new board orientation in Washington D.C. facilitated your participation on the board?
- d. Prompt: How has having a mentor facilitated your participation on the board?

APPENDIX E
MENTOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

- Share with each participant that their responses will be kept confidential.
 - Inform participants not to use names when answering questions.
 - Ray A. Ostos-Executive Director for NACCTEP and the action researcher, will conduct the three interviews.
 - Participants are the three veteran board members who served as mentors.
 - Each interview will be 20 to 30 minutes in length.
 - Interviews will be conducted in November 2012 through a conference call.
 - Interviews will be audio recorded for later transcription.
 - The format of the interviews is semi-structured.
-

Questions:

1. Has participation in the leadership suite assisted new board members in learning their role on the board? How?
2. Has participation in the leadership suite assisted new board members in becoming active board members? How? Why? Which components have been the most effective?
3. Do you feel that by understanding their roles better, they are participating more fully on the board? What evidence suggests that?
4. Has the leadership suite assisted the new board members in becoming part of the board's "community"?
5. Based on your experience the past six months, should the mentoring of new board members occur each year? Why or why not?
6. What would you do differently if you served as a mentor in the future?