Instructing in the hybrid environment: A qualitative exploration of the instructor's perspective

by

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B.S., Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 2001
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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Adult Learning and Leadership
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Abstract

Student experiences learning in a hybrid environment, where in-class seat time is minimal, have been well documented. However, no similar exploration of the instructor's experiences in the hybrid environment has occurred. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences of post-secondary instructors who taught adults in a formal learning environment about their experiences teaching in a hybrid environment. The participants were recruited through social media and commercial research participant outlets. The 54 participants of this study responded to an anonymous open-ended questionnaire to detail their challenges and advantages of instructing in a hybrid environment. The participant responses were collated through an online database and batched, upon order of arrival, into batches of ten for open coding and axial coding. Between batches, the utilization of inductive thematic analysis and constant comparative analysis aligned and crystallized the concepts. After six cycles of coding, the findings suggested that the instructors described their experiences as being shaped through three nexus of experience. One nexus focused on their perception of the hybrid environment. The next nexus focused on their perception of the student experience in the hybrid environment. The final nexus focused on the overall class performance. Additionally, the findings suggested that the instructors' margin was enhanced by the organization while powering their experiences. A delimitation and limitation of the study were only one contact per participant and no participants identifying as uncomfortable in the hybrid environment respectively.

Keywords: hybrid environment, margin, inductive thematic analysis, open-ended questionnaire, instructors' experiences

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to all those unsung hero-instructors around the world who have struggled or will struggle to learn new tools and methods as they aim for excellence in the education of their students in the pursuit of a brighter tomorrow. This is your story.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

An instructor walks into their building, coffee cup in their left hand, jacket over their arm, keys in their right hand, with graded papers and course materials in a backpack slung over one shoulder. As they fumble with their keys to navigate the decades-old physical lock to enter the building, a tone sounds—staff meeting in 15 minutes. A series of rings and beeps follow, which let them know they have entered the Wi-Fi range of the building. Student messages start to arrive via instant messenger services, curricular services, and emails. Finally, through the 1960s era lock, they enter an empty corridor. The classrooms are shuttered due to a lack of ability to meet approved airflow requirements. The instructor will be alone today. The area used to teem with laughs and chatter of equal parts excited and anxious students; there is now only a pall of a weak chlorine bleach solution and an eerie silence broken only by the refrigerator click and hum of a water fountain that will dispense water for no one.

Finally getting to the office, the instructor unencumbers and sits behind a myriad hodgepodge of cameras, monitors, microphones, and new interactive media solutions. Powering each system up, the instructor works their way through the multifactor authentication systems that differ for each program while rapidly transcribing six-digit passwords designed to protect student data from those who would steal their identities for nefarious purposes. With the blue circle spinning on the primary monitor, the instructor takes a sip of coffee while preparing for the day of staring at a monitor of small squares filled with a juxtaposition of blank stares fixed on something off-camera and those so earnest in their need to connect that they are leaning over their keyboards. Will this ever change? Another tone sounds: the staff meeting has started, and the computer is still loading.

That was 2021; I was the instructor, and though the situation has improved, the hybrid environment remains integral to many curricula. What does that mean for the instructor?

Background

The academic years 2019–2021 forced education to catalyze a process that had been developing slowly since the advent of the internet: hybridization (Hachey et al., 2022; Tritsch, 2021). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES; 2009) defined a hybrid environment as "a combination of online and in-class instruction with reduced in-class seat time for students" (para. 3). Hybridization includes all combinations of synchronicity and modality that are not purely in person and synchronous. The impacts of the shift to a more hybridized environment are still being researched, with much emphasis placed on the body of knowledge on the success of the student.

Hybrid Environment Teaching Challenges

Teaching in a hybrid environment, or an environment where the instructor and student are separated either by time or location with reduced student in-class time, is not without challenges (NCES, 2009, para. 3). The prevalence of online courses began to climb significantly in the 1990s (Wallace, 2003). As instructors moved into a hybrid environment, they struggled with how to maintain the core tenets of instruction: community, presence, and immediacy (Wallace, 2003). Today, with much-improved telepresence technology, establishing community, presence, and immediacy may be easier for the instructor. However, the path to today has not always been straightforward.

As the hybrid environment evolved, so did instructor challenges. By 2012, "online learning ha[d] become commonplace" (Regan et al., p. 204). However, the hybrid educational environment, quick to adapt to new technologies, was not always effective at reinforcing

community, presence, and immediacy (Wallace, 2003). Challenges with emotional regulation while teaching in a hybrid environment led to stress, frustration, and a lack of validation by the organization, which left instructors wholly unsatisfied with their hybrid instructional experiences (Regan et al., 2012).

An Instructor's Mindset

Instructors face many challenges as they transition to a hybrid environment. A challenge can be as simple as misunderstanding how to employ new or different online tools and syllabi (Tuapawa, 2017). Alternatively, the methods for reaching out to other instructors who are separated by time and space to compensate for knowledge gaps in the technical utilization of the materials may be complex or unknown (Tuapawa, 2017). Between 2019 and 2021, the separation instructors endured was further exasperated by the impact of COVID-19 (Hachey et al., 2022). During the pandemic and immediately after, the phenomenon of rebalancing between school, work, and life demands came into vogue (Biney, 2021).

The lack of physical resources proved to be a challenge for Ghana's students as they attempted to access the hybrid environment in the post-COVID world (Biney, 2021). The inability to access education slowed career progression and access to work, which was a driving need for these post-pandemic students. The students in Ghana, recovering from a pandemic, had immediate educational needs, which the educational organizations in Ghana could not react to fast enough simply because the hybrid environment was expensive to enter and challenging for the organizations to maintain (Biney, 2021). The frustration of the inability to access education was inflamed by the external need to balance the roles the adult students had to maintain to ensure their lifestyles (Biney, 2021). This student-focused example illustrates the interconnected web of education and external life load in a hybrid environment.

However, the post-COVID transfer to a hybrid environment was not just challenging for organizations; instructors also felt the strain. When interviewed, instructors reported an 80% incidence of higher stress (Kamath et al., 2022). Overall, "the prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress in instructors were 30.6%, 45.2%, and 20.2%, respectively" (Kamath et al., 2022, p. 1). The interaction between the hybrid environment and the instructor's emotional state has been a significant problem for the core tenant of the community (Kamath et al., 2022; Wallace, 2003). However, the reasons why the instructors felt this stress have remained unanswered.

Tuapawa (2017), Biney (2021), and Kamath et al. (2022) laid the foundation for the challenges associated with instructing in a hybrid environment, which have an emotional impact on the population. However, none of the studies mentioned or that I found in the literature review focused on the generation—the experience—of interaction with a hybrid environment that creates an emotional impact for the instructor. Instead, they merely noted that the experience existed and was expressed in negative emotions. Therefore, understanding the instructor's experience requires a personal accounting, which, based on that story, points to the challenges or advantages of instructing in a hybrid environment.

Understanding the challenges and advantages instructors confront in a hybrid environment may include discussions of personal limitations and vulnerability that instructors are not keen on sharing (Gewertz, 2021). Hence, anonymity provides a method to collect data discreetly and nonattributively to counter the difficulty of sharing with vulnerability. For this study, I utilized anonymous data collection to shelter the sensitive nature of the subject matter and protect the participants, which enabled an environment of nonattribution. Furthermore, I explored the instructors' experiences through the lens of margin. By using an established theory (Lorge et al., 1963), I anchored the difficult-to-define nature of the challenges in a hybrid

environment in an academically accepted framework, which allowed for explaining the individual's capacity by exploring their perceived load and available power.

Problem Statement

Throughout the body of knowledge, researchers have sought answers to how students perform, increase their success, and cope in a hybrid environment (Adeel et al., 2023; Mosca et al., 2010; Park et al., 2019; Quinn, 2017). Conversely, past research has discussed instructors' frustration with their interactions with technology (Kamath et al., 2022; Regan et al., 2012; Tuapawa, 2017; Wallace, 2003). However, a review of the literature related to teaching in a hybrid environment showed little focus on the instructor's perspective of their experience. I found only one study that focused on implementing a hybrid environment compared to traditional lectures that approached a hybrid environment from the instructor's perspective (Romaniuk & Łukasiewicz-Wieleba, 2022).

Unfortunately, putting the student first, even in research, appears to be part of the soul of the community or the calling of teaching. The selfless nature of instructors transferring information to their students while neglecting their own interests reflects the axiom that a skillful teacher will do whatever it takes to help a student learn (Brookfield, 2015). However, each instructor accomplishes this information transfer using unique methods (Pratt, 2016). In a hybrid environment, transferring information generates emotions and experiences that are personal for each instructor.

Thus, I aimed to understand how instructors from a wide cross-section of the instructional community described their experiences in a hybrid environment. Through that sampling, I desired to develop a holistic description of the instructors' experiences in a hybrid environment. As a result, I aimed to inform practice at the personal and organizational level to the needs of the

instructor. The intent was to bring instructor needs into the discussion as instructors continue to navigate their interactions with a hybrid environment for the betterment of practice and instructor livelihood.

If the hybrid environment is here to stay, then that environment must be optimized for both the instructor and the student. Optimizing this environment requires understanding how instructors currently experience challenges and advantages while instructing in a hybrid environment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of post-secondary instructors who taught adults in a formal, hybrid environment.

Research Questions

One research question with two sub-questions drove the exploration of instructors' experiences in a hybrid environment.

1. How do post-secondary instructors describe their experiences teaching in a hybrid teaching environment?
    - **a.** How do instructors describe their advantages in a hybrid teaching environment?
    - **b.** How do instructors describe their challenges in a hybrid teaching environment?

Theoretical Framework

The literature reviewed for this study found that from 2003 to 2021, a cyclical reference of instructor and instructor challenges was associated with teaching in a hybrid environment (Kamath et al., 2022; Regan et al., 2012; Tuapawa, 2017; Wallace, 2003). The challenges

experienced were expressed as stress, frustration, and feeling overwhelmed (Regan et al., 2012). Thus, to make meaning of the stress experienced by instructors, a lens through which to view those experiences was required.

From the starting point of stress, frustration, and feelings of being overwhelmed reported in the body of knowledge, I needed a lens that would bring these feelings into focus. McClusky's theory of margin addresses stress, frustration, and feelings of being overwhelmed as a balance of personal load and power (Lorge et al., 1963), which made the well-established theory an ideal lens to make meaning of the experience driving these reported feelings. Power, the sum of the internal ability to accomplish tasks (Lorge et al., 1963), is a difficult concept for an individual to describe. To simplify the discussion of power, I used a theoretical analog: motivation. Motivation is a value that cannot be seen, touched, or directly measured but determines how much energy an individual is personally willing to expend on a given subject or task (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017). Motivation, therefore, parallels McClusky's concept of power and theories that describe intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which allowed me to explore power expenses in instructors (Hogan, 2023). Load, the sum of all tasks levied against an individual, has an internal and external component (Lorge et al., 1963). Utilization of the theory of margin allowed me to frame the challenges and advantages reported by the participants as they recalled their work in the hybrid environment.

The Theory of Margin

The theory of margin makes multiple appearances in the body of knowledge, including in modern education textbooks. Margin is used to describe motivation (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017), the fundamentals of adult education (Merriam & Bierema, 2014), and teaching methodologies (Pratt, 2016). Additionally, academic research has also investigated margin from

multiple angles. Researchers have used margin theory to quantify possible academic success (Biney, 2021; Quinn, 2017; Trautman, 2004; Weiman, 1987) and job performance (Thul-Sigler, 2016). Hence, a precedent exists for measuring one's experience in an environment by applying a measure of load to power in the body of knowledge.

Howard McClusky designed his margin theory to be simple: load divided by power. As the ratio approaches 1.0, the person should feel more stressed (Lorge et al., 1963). External demands on the individual and internal demands from personal expectations define load (Lorge et al., 1963). Power is the perceived ability derived from multiple factors, such as physical, economic, intellectual, and social prowess (Lorge et al., 1963). Ultimately, McClusky stated, "That person has margin who has the power of choice over various relevant alternatives" (Lorge et al., 1963, p. 17). It is not likely that in 1963, Howard McClusky foresaw the load demands the omnipresent hybrid environment would place on the adult instructor.

Over the next 60 years, multiple academics revisited the theory of margin but made no changes to it. A detailed review of this history is presented in Chapter 2. Howard McClusky's original theory of margin has one weakness: it does not account for the demands of technological presence in the hybrid environment. Two studies began to explore the interaction of margin with technology. During the literature review, I found only a couple of studies (Biney, 2021; Hogan, 2023) that utilized McClusky's theory of margin in a hybrid environment.

Research Design Overview

The following section introduces the concepts associated with this research intended to answer the central research question. The section introduces the methodology and then presents the data collection and analysis methods with the target population.

Methodology

As the COVID-19 pandemic transitions into history, it leaves an indelible mark on the current practice of education and the prominence of the hybrid environment. Education, catalyzed by necessity, continues to access the hybrid environment at a rate higher than pre-pandemic rates, with 20% of public K–12 schools declaring at the beginning of the COVID shift that the hybrid environment was going to stay (Schwartz et al., 2020). During the literature review for this study, the earliest exploration into the interaction of the hybrid environment at the post-secondary level relevant to this research purpose was published by Biney in 2021.

This study assumed a basic qualitative methodological approach to address the research question and the problem posed. Basic qualitative methodology is a fundamental approach that focuses on how individuals continuously construct meaning from experiences without relying on predefined categories or theories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Basic qualitative methodology is flexible and allows for the construction of a theoretical framework specific to the research problem. Through the collection of experiences from the instructors, the expression of the knowledge of the experience—the basic qualitative method allows for the construction of meaning (Crotty, 1998; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The vehicle to collect those experiences was an open-ended online questionnaire. When combined, the open-ended questionnaire, experiences, and basic qualitative analysis aligned with a constructivist epistemology to build new knowledge from dissociated experiences.

Population

The participants selected for this study were instructors at post-secondary learning institutions who had traditional campus and hybrid presences. Current academic employment was not a requirement for selection. For the purposes of multivocality and trustworthiness, it was

important to me to capture the experience of instructors who taught both before and after the pandemic (Tracy, 2010). For example, the year of this writing was 2025, so instructors who reported 0–5 years in the profession had little experience before the catalyzing event of the pandemic. Assuring my demographics identified the pre- and post-pandemic experience divide allowed me to account for both experiences in data collection. Other personal demographics (i.e., age, gender identity, instructional level, and certification level) also reinforces the multivocality of the instructors' experiences while increasing trustworthiness and maintaining anonymity (Tracy, 2010).

The study employed a professional organizational listserv database as the initial round of participant solicitation to target instructors of adult education. Part of the data collection tool was an invitation for the participants to share the tool with their colleagues and networks. In essence, the sharing nature of participant interaction had the effect of purposeful sampling, which led to independent snowball sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Independent snowball sampling differs from traditional snowball sampling in that the researcher does not ask the participant for other possible participants with the intent of the researcher contacting the potential participant. Instead, I intended to use independent snowball sampling to attempt to replicate the social media phenomenon of *going viral,* where the users became the transmitters of the data independent of the producer of the data. Independent snowball sampling assisted in increasing the exposure of the questionnaire to a larger population, which was needed when employing a methodology that accounted for only one interaction between the researcher and the participant, similar to the "single interview-per-participant" (Vasileiou et al., 2018, p. 2) methodology utilized in the medical community.

Deployment on professional listserv databases was followed by deployment on social media platforms. Social media deployment proved to be ineffective. The open-ended questionnaire did not achieve the desired social proliferation, so I utilized commercial participant recruitment to meet research timelines.

When attempting to set a goal for the number of participants in the study, I researched other studies with similar data collection methods. What constituted an appropriate sample size showed variation from "between 6 and 12" (Fusch & Ness, 2015, p. 1410) to anywhere between 15 and 31 (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Endemic to the discussions on sample size was the thought that no specific sample size fits all research, so the researcher must determine if data saturation is a goal and when it is reached (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Vasileiou et al., 2018).

With this discussion in mind, I targeted a participant population of 50 responses, with the understanding that saturation could occur before reaching that participant count. A participant sample of 50 should assist in the generation of a pan-cultural, diverse, and rich participant group. Fifty participants also built trustworthiness through increased multivocality (Tracy, 2010). Ultimately, I recruited 54 participants, with data patterns indicating saturation evident between Groups C and D (30–40 participants).

Data Collection

I determined that anonymity was important in this study, as it is in most studies where personal data are utilized, so it was paramount to the protection of the participants. Anonymity also provided an avenue to allow the participants to report their personal experiences more accurately (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007). My desire to maintain researcher-participant anonymity removed the traditional semi-structured interview as a valid data collection device, as confidentiality and anonymity are not equal in research (Saunders et al., 2015). Fortunately,

Creswell (2008) provided additional tools to assist qualitative researchers. Thus, I found the open-ended questionnaire to fit nicely with this research project.

According to the literature review in this study, the open-ended questionnaire is used much less frequently than one-on-one interviews in qualitative research. However, it has precedent. Woods et al. (2015) deployed an internet support and discussion group-based open-ended questionnaire to explore the phenomenon of individuals who heard voices qualitatively. Pastrana et al. (2021) deployed an internet-based open-ended questionnaire to hospice and palliative care healthcare workers to describe their experiences in continuing to work in the profession after the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, Erdem et al. (2021) deployed an open-ended questionnaire to fifth-grade science instructors and students to qualitatively analyze the phenomenon of their interactions with science, technology, engineering, and math computer-based applications. These three studies, with their focus on sensitive issues, utilized online questionnaires for data collection in a qualitative study, which provided a precedent for a similar approach in this study.

I developed an anonymous open-ended questionnaire utilizing education-based social media groups and communities and, ultimately, a commercial recruitment service to explore the experiences of instructors (Appendix A). In the open-ended questionnaire, I asked the instructors to describe the challenges and advantages of teaching in a hybrid environment. The response area for the reported experience had no word limit. The minimum word count was 100 words. I integrated the informed consent statement into the open-ended questionnaire so that no participant could log a response without assenting to understanding the informed consent statement. The data collection tool was active for 6 months.

Data Analysis

I selected thematic analysis as the primary analysis method to interact with the raw participant data. Thematic analysis consists of two camps: inductive and theoretical thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The difference between the two camps concerns the focus of the analysis. Inductive thematic analysis focuses on the broad domain of participants to provide "a rich overall description, [but] some depth and complexity is lost" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). Conversely, theoretical thematic analysis "tends to provide a less rich description of the data overall, and a more detailed analysis of some aspect" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84).

For this study, I focused on the broad domain of the participants, which led to the application of inductive thematic analysis. Inductive thematic analysis and open coding worked well together as both used an observer standpoint (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldaña, 2021). Open coding allowed me to analyze story similarities to build concepts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In the open coding process, the raw participant responses were reviewed, important segments were selected, and an appropriate code to describe the segment was applied. After completing each batch, I compared my results to all previous batches through constant comparative analysis, which allowed me to revisit previous participant responses for any new concepts that might have developed in later batches. Additionally, constant comparative analysis allowed me to align open codes with concepts as they evolved. Any concepts I developed in each batch transitioned to axial coding.

Axial coding served as the second coding cycle and allowed me to organize codes around axes that formed more prominent themes—concepts and nexus in this study (Saldaña, 2021). I placed the results from open coding in a matrix to graph the concepts axially. The axial matrix

evolved as I coded each cycle. Through multiple batches of coding, I positioned concepts axially to visualize the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment.

Analysis between batches required an additional method. Fortunately, basic qualitative methodology is flexible; as Merriam and Tisdell (2015) noted, "There is no single correct way to define or describe a qualitative study" (p. 41). Thus, qualitative methods can be drawn from other camps inside qualitative inquiry. Between batches, I employed constant comparative analysis as a second analysis cycle following the initial thematic analysis. Constant comparative analysis, an analytical method in grounded theory, compares all previous data points to all newly developed data points for alignment or divergence (Glaser, 2007). Thus, constant comparative analysis refined the concepts developed in open and axial coding, which were organized into a visual representation of the instructors' hybrid environment experiences.

Participant responses were batched as they arrived in groups of ten. I analyzed each participant in a batch through thematic analysis and the Herrick 7-step process utilizing open and axial coding (Herrick et al., 2021). Then, they were compared and fused with all previous groups through constant comparative analysis. Between batches, reflection and analytic memoing allowed me to make sense of what I read while reflecting on my process. I continued until all participant data were coded and fused.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Research

Utilizing a basic qualitative approach described by Merriam and Tisdell (2015) allowed for a flexible approach to addressing the research problem. Participant recruitment through various online methods and commercial services was effective in reaching the target population size (Vasileiou et al., 2018). The resulting multivocality of this participant group assisted in

saturation and trustworthiness (Tracy, 2010). However, a notable limitation and delimitation occurred.

The notable delimitation for the research sprung out of my emphasis on participant anonymity. I decided to design a research method to protect participant anonymity from the outset to increase the participants' comfort in sharing experiences that might be critical of their employers or display their vulnerability in the hybrid environment (Erdem et al., 2021; Tourangeau & Yan, 2007; Woods et al., 2015). Anonymity precluded me from utilizing a traditional interview format and drove my research to use a single-point-of-contact-per-participant open-ended questionnaire. As I only had a single point of contact with each participant, whatever they wrote in response to the open-ended questionnaire was all I had to develop the experience of the instructor in the hybrid environment.

The notable limitation of the research concerned participant self-efficacy with technology. All 54 participants assessed their capacity to operate in a hybrid environment and their comfort with technology as good to excellent. Some participants identified as experts, while only one described still learning how to work effectively in a hybrid environment. No one reported low self-efficacy with technology, which was a surprise. Thus, the lack of voices of instructors who struggle with technological self-efficacy in the hybrid environment was a limitation of this study.

Significance of the Study

Instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment have been underrepresented in the body of knowledge. While instructors have voiced frustration and stress, no studies were found during the literature review that accurately described their experiences in a hybrid environment (Kamath et al., 2022; Regan et al., 2012; Tuapawa, 2017; Wallace, 2003). In this study, I

attempted to describe the instructor's experience in a hybrid environment. Ultimately, instructor stories led to the construction of an experiential visualization that could assist in filling the intellectual void of the challenges and advantages of instructing in a hybrid environment. From these data, teaching institutions' policies and practices could possibly change to accommodate the suggested findings.

Definitions

Group power is generated by a group of like-minded or aligned individuals, a community whose power as a group exceeds the cumulative power of each individual (Tuapawa, 2017; Wallace, 2003).

A hybrid environment is "a combination of online and in-class instruction with reduced in-class seat time for students" (NCES, 2009, para. 3). For this study, the hybrid environment accounted for any modality that did not consist of only synchronous face-to-face instruction.

Individual power is generated through intrinsic and extrinsic means that set the level accessible to any individual or, for this research, the instructor (Lorge et al., 1963).

Instructor is a positional title of a faculty member at a college or university (see also *Post-secondary adult instructor*). An instructor teaches one or more subjects within a prescribed curriculum associated with a post-secondary educational institution, leads class discussions, compiles and administers grades, and directs research for graduate students or other instructors. An instructor conducts research in a particular field of study with the intent of publishing work in professional periodicals (U.S. Department of Labor [USDOL], 1991, 090.227-010).

Load is a combination of internal and external factors involved with the usual requirements of living and social, civic, and work obligations (Lorge et al., 1963).

Nexus is a term used to describe a collection of dissimilar themes into a larger characteristic of the overall experience (Neumann, 1992). In this study, a nexus is a crystallization of multiple concepts derived from inductive thematic analysis of open coding results as plotted against an axial-coded matrix of orientation and nature to illustrate the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment.

A perceived task is part of McClusky's load theory (Lorge et al., 1963), where the individual feels like they must do the task, but it does not have a physical or defined output.

A post-secondary adult instructor, according to Houle (1956), includes those "who have a primary concern for adult education and basic career expectations in the field" (p. 133). The definition utilized for an adult is in line with the U.S. average age of consent of 18. Post-secondary education in the United States is commonly referred to as education after the completion of high school, usually the tenth through 13th year of formal education, generally completed at the time of transition to adulthood.

Power is a combination of interacting personal and environmental factors that may contribute to accomplishing life tasks (Lorge et al., 1963).

A real task is part of McClusky's load theory (Lorge et al., 1963) with a physical or defined output.

The theory of margin is Howard Y. McClusky's theory (Lorge et al., 1963), which specifies the ratio between an individual's load and power. The remaining margin is an additional capability essential to mental hygiene and well-being.

Summary

The instructor's experience in the hybrid environment is personal, an experience that can only be described by the individual experiencing it. Recollection of the challenges and

advantages may require the participants to put themselves in a place of vulnerability. To combat this vulnerability, I selected a methodology and data collection tool that allowed for the greatest extent of anonymity possible. Basic qualitative analysis coupled with inductive thematic analysis of open-ended questionnaires described the instructors' experiences of operating in the hybrid environment (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). To study the previously reported frustration in working with technology, I used McClusky's theory of margin to provide a lens to bring into focus a graphic visualization of the ethereal nature of an instructor's experience in a hybrid environment (Kamath et al., 2022; Lorge et al., 1963; Regan et al., 2012; Tuapawa, 2017; Wallace, 2003). Ultimately, this graphic visualization crystallized from the open and axial coding of multivocal, diverse participant responses (Tracy, 2010).

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

To explore the experiences of post-secondary instructors who taught adults in a formal, hybrid environment, I selected McClusky's theory of margin as a lens through which to make meaning of the experiences. This chapter presents the literature reviewed to support the development of margin as a lens for understanding and presenting the description of instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment. The source material for margin is sparse (Lorge et al., 1963). Therefore, I reviewed additional theories to elaborate on the nature of load and power. To make meaning of the experiences of the instructors, I needed to understand how power was generated and expended, as well as the nature and sources of load. In the sections that follow, I detail my exploration of sources and the nature of margin as I present the theories and literature that grounded this research.

First, I describe the participants and the environment in which I interacted with them. The literature defining an adult instructor and the hybrid environment is presented in the first section of the review. Next, I begin the study of load generation, which is grounded in the concepts of intensification. Then, I delve into the multiple sources of power identified in the theory of margin (Lorge et al., 1963). I close the review with a summary of all previous margin research to indicate the maturity of the theory related to adult education and exploration of reported experiences of teaching in the hybrid environment. This chapter is intended to describe the theories framing my research and an understanding of the components of those theories that shape and form instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment.

The Post-Secondary Adult Instructor Participant

Recalling that adult instructors are those "who have a primary concern for adult education and basic career expectations in the field" (Houle, 1956, p. 133), a short description of

their role can assist in defining the target population for this study. Modern adult instructors are full-time adult instructors, vocational instructors, trainers, and managers throughout the spectrum of business and education (Ross-Gordon et al., 2017). The scope of responsibilities covered under the tent of the term "adult instructor" provides a fertile field for the recollection of their experiences in the hybrid environment. However, the term makes the population almost too wide.

For this study, participant selection focused on a section of post-secondary instructors in the formal education environment who were teaching adults in a 4-year degree-granting university or college. However, if adult instructors from non-degree-granting institutions responded during the data collection, their inclusion was determined case by case.

The literature tends to place adult instructors in hierarchies represented by pyramids or concentric circles, with the formal post-secondary instructor at the center or top and other educational professionals stratified below or outside (Ross-Gordon et al., 2017). However, the decision to focus on formal post-secondary adult instructors was not meant to reinforce this hierarchy. The decision was made based on the academic nature of the research problem and my access to potential participants.

Post-secondary adult instructors teach multiple disciplines at various levels of formality. All disciplines provide an indispensable service to the population by transferring knowledge to other adults.

Defining the Hybrid Environment

The term "hybrid environment" was operationalized in this study as "a combination of online and in-class instruction with reduced in-class seat time for students" (NCES, 2009, para.

3). However, a more precise definition was required to truly understand the scope of the target participant population for this study.

Teaching in a modern, post-secondary learning institution has multiple modalities through which education can be deployed. No definitive list of classroom modality possibilities exists because instructors continue to innovate with new methods. A meta-search on EBSCO host, Worldcat, and Google Scholar returned 115,785 articles with the keywords "classroom modalities." Narrowing the search to a single modality of a flipped classroom, where the students teach, and the instructor is in the audience (Brookfield, 2017), resulted in 53 articles. A flipped classroom is defined as an ideological modality, much like Brookfield's (2015) democratic classroom: the students decide the syllabus, grades, and general policies.

Additionally, one can divide modality into temporal domains (i.e., synchronous and asynchronous) and physical domains (i.e., face-to-face and remote). This study defines the hybrid environment as any combination of temporal and physical modalities that are not synchronous and in person. Ideological modalities were not isolated during the data collection and were irrelevant to the definition of the hybrid environment utilized for this research.

Positive Social Aspects of the Hybrid Environment

One positive social aspect of the hybrid environment for adult educators and adult students is the dissolution of the previously established barrier between instructors and students (Crampton & Ragusa, 2012). Since 2009, communication between the two has evolved to a more accessible role (Crampton & Ragusa, 2012). A more accessible instructor leads to more critical reflection from that instructor, as the students are more willing to bring issues directly to the instructor instead of letting them fester (Brookfield, 2017). Leveling the relationship between the instructor and student empowers the student to act with more independence and confidence

(Brookfield, 2017). This confidence results in more collaborative learning and better engagement in the classroom, whether virtual or brick-and-mortar (Brookfield, 2017). Independence is critical for self-directed adult students, as well as K–12 students (Crampton & Ragusa, 2012; Knowles, 1970). Additionally, while the idea is constant across the continuum of practice, it is inconsistent across the continuum of instructors. Many instructors may choose to retain the hierarchical student-instructor structure because of training, instructor-instructor interaction, or instructor-administration relationship.

Controversial topics also benefit from instruction in hybrid environments. Students are more likely to ask questions in a virtual environment that they would never ask in a physical environment (Crampton & Ragusa, 2012). Instructors are more likely to tackle unusual and complex social topics in an asynchronous environment (Lieb, 1998). However, the academic freedom felt by teachers to address these complex topics in a hybrid environment has not come without risk to the teacher. Searches on modern news media return hundreds of articles of *angry school board* meetings as parents rally against the administrators and instructors for even attempting to confront mandatory social issues the upcoming generation will face (Uygun & Arslan, 2020).

The hybrid environment can also engender anonymity in a way that is impossible with physical presence. No one can see someone enter a comment in a virtual suggestion box as they can when someone posts to a suggestion box in the classroom. Critical Incident Questionnaires or comment boxes for subjects or points made during the class that were exceptionally confusing, aggravating, or misunderstood remove that feeling of shame when raising a hand or standing in front of the instructor (Brookfield, 2017). Feedback through virtual, anonymous means tends to be bluntly honest. In answering these questions, the instructor can place the issue

neutrally to the entire student body, as the anonymity assured by the hybrid environment allows questions to be posted more frequently and answered without isolating a specific student (Brookfield, 2017). Balancing the student-instructor relationship remains a delicate balance struck by each instructor in the educational environment. Thus, telepresence has provided an avenue for a more democratic classroom of group power-sharing in ways not previously accomplishable (Brookfield, 2017).

Building the Theoretical Framework

As I build the theoretical framework, I cannot overemphasize the concision of McClusky's source documentation. The theory of margin was written in a time before computers were commonplace, and the hybrid environment was limited to courses by mail. Therefore, utilizing this theory as a lens required additional insights into its components. Applying the theory as a lens in this study required elaboration of the sources of margin. To guide my literature review of margin, I used three questions: What is load, and where does it come from? What is power, and where does it come from? What work has been done on margin to date?

A review of the body of literature revealed two interesting interactions with load and power that were useful in this study: the alignment between intensification and load and the alignment between motivation and power. With an understanding of who the participants are and a definition of the hybrid environment, a discussion of the sources of load and power is possible.

What is Load, and Where Does it Originate?

As I attempted to define load for this research, I needed a deeper understanding of where load originated. Beyond simply collecting the number of tasks and instructor encounters on a typical day of work, I needed to fully account for their determination of load since load could come from real or perceived sources (Lorge et al., 1963). McClusky did not elaborate on the

difference between a real and a perceived task. In many cases, a perceived task can be as real as the ungraded papers on an instructor's desk. Papers to be graded are an example of a real task, while the feeling that an instructor must put in a certain number of hours per day is a perceived task, as an example. Additionally, Howard McClusky did not directly address the role of society in the generation of load.

Intensification Thesis

In my exploration of where load comes from, I discovered what I determined to be a landmark theory: intensification (Larson, 1980). Basic intensification theory presents a scathing view of the organization's impact on the skilled worker. While, at times, the discussion transitions into what could be considered Marxist and anti-capitalist, the theory does not identify the overarching organization as intentionally trying to suppress the workforce under an extensive load. Quite the opposite, intensification theory takes the stance that intensification is an almost inevitable result of the streamlining of worker functions while simultaneously lamenting that the streamlining "elevates his or her specialized skills at the time it narrows the sphere of work and increases dependence on the bureaucratic whole" (Larson, 1980, p. 163).

The views presented in basic intensification theory are a product of the zeitgeist. The late 1970s represents a time when skilled workers in manufacturing were being introduced to better safety regulations and higher levels of automation, which resulted in fewer overall jobs—2 million in the United States—and no change in output (Kucera & Milberg, 2003). In this new world, for higher-level workers without the controlling functions of time clocks and union-mandated breaks, the sheer volume of work "fills the pores" (Larson, 1980, p. 163) of the day. Fundamentally, the intensification process is "one of the most tangible ways in which the work privileges of educated workers are eroded" (Larson, 1980, p. 166). These privileges are not the

privileges of the Marxist bourgeois class but the foundational privileges once common to educated middle and upper management: keeping up with the field, reworking methods, and researching new techniques. Twenty years later, intensification theory and education intersected in the body of knowledge (Apple, 1989).

The move from the 1970s to the 1980s saw more women in the workforce of the United States and more students in the K–12 educational domain of U.S. schools. However, female representation in middle and upper academic management remained stagnant (Apple, 1989). Lack of upward mobility is a hallmark of ingrained intensification (Larson, 1980). Managerial constraints by men had attempted to constrain and suppress women's ability to engage in improvement (Apple, 1989). Repression was accomplished by externally controlling syllabi, curriculum, and administrative processes. Essentially, intensification created so many external requirements that women did not have the time to improve, which eroded their skills. The intensification of the K–12 academic teaching environment had locked women into traditional roles as classroom teachers with no upward mobility despite having a more significant presence in the faculty (Apple, 1989; Larson, 1980). This news and its supporting research were not accepted by the academic community writ large, and the work was lambasted by critics (Levin, 1988).

The early 1990s, marked by optimism and increased inclusion, reevaluated intensification and provided a more critical look at the roles of management and labor in the education profession (Hargreaves, 1991). In a critical review of the fusion of Apple (1989) and Larson (1980), "The intensification of educated labour is part of a triple and unholy alliance that also includes narrowing of the sphere of work, along with greater dependence on the bureaucratic whole; and routinization of high-level tasks" (Hargreaves, 1991, p. 4). Instead of focusing on the

social issues of the previous work on intensification, the theory was now used as a measure of managerial effectiveness. Hallmarks of managerial effectiveness were distilled to specific products of intensification to monitor: "reduced time for relaxation, lack of time to keep up with one's field, reduced opportunities for interaction with colleagues, chronic work overload, fosters dependency on outside experts, reduces the quality of service by encouraging 'cutting of corners,' intensification leads to diversification of responsibility" (Hargreaves, 1991, p. 7).

Based on the extensive adverse effects associated with intensification, chronic work overload ties directly to McClusky's theory of margin and the defined perception of load therein, which is where the intensification thesis and margin theory merge. However, the question remains, "Why do instructors allow their free time to be eroded by this process?" The answer, found in the discussion of power generation later in this review, is as altruistic as tragic—because instructors want to.

The Instructor's Influence on Intensification

> There were so many dedicated instructors who gave generously of their time and effort to their work and the students in charge. The vast majority took work home in the evenings, taking it out after supper or once the children had gone to bed. The extraordinary lengths their commitment stretched stands out in many individual cases. (Hargreaves, 1991, p. 14)

A skillful teacher will do anything to help students learn (Brookfield, 2015). Hargreaves (1991) reflected this tenant when underscoring what all instructors intrinsically know: the workday does not end at the end of the workday. A recent study in Australia identified that the average work week for school instructors hovered at approximately 50 hours per week

(Fitzgerald et al., 2019). However, those hours accounted for in-classroom instruction and duties at the site.

Load, specifically perceived load, varies dramatically based on the instructor, so when individual tasks are added, instructors exceed the 50-hour work week. For example, reviewing a study guide can take 80–144 hours, while supervising a Ph.D. student requires up to 92 hours per year per student (Houston et al., 2006). Tasks that instructors must accomplish in the pursuit of their craft are not limited to the hours defined in the work week and are aligned across multiple functions. Instructional functions can be separated into three camps: "teaching, research, and what has been variously labeled as service, administration, or outreach" (Houston et al., 2006, p. 19). Tasks in these camps can interface with the instructor in parallel—many at once or in serial, one after another (Houston et al., 2006). When viewed under the lens of intensification theory, which states that no time remains for practitioners to hone their skills, a conundrum exists of where to source this additional time to develop the required skills (Apple, 1989; Larson, 1980).

However, education has not stopped, even in an intensified environment. Instructors tend to be intelligent, creative people who will do whatever it takes to help students learn, so preparation, organization, and prioritization have been the salve for complex career tasks (Brookfield, 2017). However, even the most diligent instructor finds diminishing returns in attempting to organize and prioritize tasks arriving at all hours from multiple avenues (Hargreaves, 1991).

Balance and prioritization create an equilibrium between preparation and intensification (Casper & Sonnentag, 2020; Hargreaves, 1991; Wiebe & MacDonald, 2014). Studies (e.g., Houston et al., 2006; Wiebe & MacDonald, 2014; Williamson & Myhill, 2009) have highlighted that instructors can be their own worst enemies on the topic of deintensification as they approach

a spiral of a problem and eliminate deintensifying activities, relaxation, hobbies, and collegial discussion from their schedules to make time for administration and preparation. Occasionally, some instructors need more available margin to meet this level of intensity. Unable to adapt to the cultural and organizational norms of the environment, they are left behind and eventually leave the organization (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008; Manuel et al., 2018). Alternatively, the task load is so high that instructors can never disengage, so they enter a self-reinforcing cycle of constant stress generated by incomplete requirements (Casper & Sonnentag, 2020).

Technology's Impact on Intensification

Technology and continued educational progress have not changed intensification's impact on education (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008). Adding to the intensification challenges instructors face is the need for organizations to continue to do more with less, which adds a layer of deprofessionalization to the intensified academic environment (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008). Deprofessionalization is the reduction of professional activities in lieu of "executing decisions made by others, i.e., policymakers, curriculum designers, etc., as well as de-skilling, the loss of professional skills in, e.g., planning and selecting curriculum content and in the design of learning activities" (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008, p. 48).

Suppose the organization outsources a study guide review to a curriculum developer to save the instructor the 80–144 hours required for review (Houston et al., 2006). While this outsourcing saves the instructor time, it also detaches the instructor from ownership of the academic material. Additionally, as an external entity updates the curriculum, the instructor may be required to review and prepare new instructional methods to support these curricular changes (Hargreaves, 1991). Distancing the instructor from the material is a hallmark of deprofessionalization and intensification. When transitioning the educational process into a

technological environment, keeping these examples at the forefront as hallmarks of an intensified environment for the instructor may be important.

Administrative Impact on Intensification

Individual skilled laborers are intensified to maximize productivity through the application of ever-increasing bureaucratic efforts by the organization (Larson, 1980). The previous section highlighted multiple studies indicating that instructors are implicit in this intensification process while being at the mercy of the organization (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008). Additionally, the impact of intensification is "strongly mediated by the cultural and structural characteristics of the school as an organization and by processes of interpretation" (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008, p. 48). The organization's bureaucracy is the entity destined to increase workers' requirements of inane tasks to the detriment of skilled labor; however, organizational intervention is sometimes required (Larson, 1980).

Education, as a workforce, is highly influenced by the social architecture in which it operates, which once again reflects the concept of community (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008; Wallace, 2003). Indeed, the student and faculty population is drawn from the society in which it operates and is, therefore, representative of that society. Therefore, when social changes are demanded, the educational institution feels the same demand internally and externally (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008). Moreover, the intersectional nature of the educational facility complicates this matter so that all aspects of a specific social change demand are represented by the faculty and student body (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008). Here is where the overarching organization must balance the calls for change—social or educational—to maintain the cohesion of the organization (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008; Fitzgerald et al., 2019). As a result of this organizational balancing, it is unlikely that all instructors will be happy with the outcome, so

some excursion from the centrally defined policy may occur (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008). Instructor variability may drive a need for more oversight by the organization and an increasing requirement for intensification (Apple, 1989; Larson, 1980).

Level of Intensification Today

Intensification in labor and, by extension, the educational environment remains valid in a post-pandemic world. Today, intensification takes many names and forms (Fitzgerald et al., 2019). The responsibility management feels, given the increased public scrutiny through access enabled by technology that was previously impossible, is of a much higher magnitude in the trans-pandemic era (Fitzgerald et al., 2019). Between this tug-of-war of social expectation and managerial protection are the instructors, who generally want to do the right thing for their students. Hence, these instructors' moral compasses occasionally serve as an interpretation filter between bureaucratic edicts and requirements for their students (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008)—instructors who feel that policies and programs placed upon them generate a "feeling of a general erosion of teacher professionalism" (Williamson & Myhill, 2009, p. 26). Instructors who work to try to prioritize and prepare for their workday under the strain of external cultural expectations in an intensified workplace may increase the perceived load and decrease the available margin. Therefore, the organization must monitor intensification to understand and evaluate the instructor's load fully (Fitzgerald et al., 2019).

Summary of Load Generation

The intensification of educators is happening (Williamson & Mayhill, 2009). While instructors may not report it to the organization, they feel the impacts of intensification with increased pressure for bureaucratic and social change (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008; Fitzgerald

et al., 2019). When placed side by side with McClusky's theory of margin (Lorge et al., 1963), intensification is a modifier of load.

An Instructor's Power Source: Self-Determination Theory and the Sources of Motivation

McClusky defined power in his margin theory as consisting of a web of interacting factors, where physical, social, mental, and economic collectively define the external factors of power (Lorge et al., 1963). However, the discussion between margin and the generation of personal power has been limited (Anderson et al., 2012). Personal power is a profoundly individual construct that varies from person to person within the same group and social constructs (Anderson et al., 2012). When examining power across the spectrum of demographics, the individual nature of personal power, both in a group and a community as an entity, has been repeatedly validated (Anderson et al., 2012).

With respect to McClusky's theory of margin, a delicate balance exists between a group's and an individual's power. Thus, personal power in a group and personal power to achieve tasks are not coequal (Anderson et al., 2012). This study did not intend to utilize the group dynamics of instructors in a hybrid environment but was focused on each individual. However, the group could motivate the individual instructor and produce individual power to operate more effectively in a hybrid environment.

Per margin theory, the web of interacting powers is structured by an individual's accumulated experience in wielding these aspects of personal power to accomplish life tasks (Lorge et al., 1963). The definition of socioeconomic underpinnings of power makes an individual's perception of power fungible (Anderson et al., 2012; Lorge et al., 1963). Hence, this study explored the experiences of instructors from rural, urban, well-resourced, and underresourced organizations to represent the entire spectrum of personal power development.

Self-Determination Theory and the Foundations of Grit

Academic motivation is directly related to an individual's level of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Grit is the level of an individual's determination to achieve set goals (Duckworth et al., 2007), while passion is the desire to achieve these goals (Pleace & Nicholls, 2022). Delving one layer deeper into self-determination theory adds resourcefulness, initiative, and persistence on top of autonomous learning (Jehanghir et al., 2023). When linked, the effects of learner autonomy, motivation, and grit have favorable returns on students. Thus, a similar effect can be applied to instructors (Jehanghir et al., 2023). A healthy educational environment enhances the effects of self-determination, grit, and motivation (Jehanghir et al., 2023).

A limitation of the studies in the previous paragraph was that their focus was on the student, primarily the student's academic achievement. As instructors are also learners, especially with new technologies in the hybrid environment, parallels can be drawn between the two populations. Power derived from self-determination for a student can apply to the instructor. Indeed, the concepts of grit (Duckworth et al., 2007), passion (Pleace & Nicholls, 2022), resourcefulness, initiative, and persistence (Jehanghir et al., 2023) apply to adult instructors as they attempt to navigate the challenges of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational needs to accomplish their demanding tasks. The difference is that these adult instructors do not have a 4-year clock like a university student. Without this end goal, the statement may be that grit, passion, resourcefulness, initiative, and persistence are more at risk by extrinsic and intrinsic *amotivators* (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

In summary, self-directed learning theory has a light and dark side. Autonomy, grit, passion, and resourcefulness generate motivation that allows the individual learner to overcome environmental issues and challenges. In contrast, a lack of the above results in amotivation,

which detracts from the ability to accomplish goals. Maximizing motivation in instructors parallels how much personal power an instructor can bring to accomplish tasks (Lan, 2022; Lorge et al., 1963).

An Instructor's Physical Power Definition

Physical power comes in many forms, but the result is the net product created in a single day. This study's discussion of load noted that most instructors work more than a 50-hour work week and bring work home on the weekends to accomplish all available tasks, which results in a remarkably high load value (Fitzgerald et al., 2019). To simplify the discussion on physical power, assume the 50-hour 5-day workweek in isolation, which generates a 10-hour workday and assumes 8 hours per night of rest. The result is only 6 hours a day for everything else to be accomplished, from travel to and from work and life in general.

For example, an instructor's day may unfold as follows. The average instructor leaves the house at 6:30 a.m. for a 30-minute commute to the school, where classes start at 7:30 a.m. and end at 2:30 p.m., with a 30-minute lunch break (Najarro & Kim, 2022). This lunch break can more aptly be termed a working lunch, as competing tasks from students and colleagues arise during this break. The average instructor returns home at 5:30–6:00 p.m. for evening activities and returns to bed by 10:30 p.m. to start over again the following day (Najarro & Kim, 2022).

This example is of a K–12 instructor who does not teach night classes or have global students. Amplifying this schedule are all the tasks that are not displayed: grading papers, planning courses, and answering policy questions while on family time, which add intensification to the daily schedule (Najarro & Kim, 2022). Unscheduled tasks can rapidly consume the 8 hours of sleep identified in the schedule, which limits the instructor's physical power and leads to a lack of performance, an attempt to regain physical power through access to

more time, and eventually burnout, which in the post-pandemic world is what instructors have precisely reported and demonstrated (Smith, 2022).

An Instructor's Social Power Definition

No direct reference or hierarchy of relevance exists to the instructor's daily social interactions. However, upon inspection, three social power relationships help to understand the available power to an instructor: the instructor-student relationship, the instructor-administrator relationship, and the instructor-instructor relationship. The social construct between these relationships is exceptionally complex, which represents a gap in the literature for further study. Thus, the focus here remains on how the body of knowledge references the hybrid environment to limit the discussion.

COVID-19 and the Transition to the Hybrid Environment

The social dimension of teaching has shifted since the widescale in duration and grade-level deployment of asynchronous virtual instruction in the hybrid environment (Procentese et al., 2023). The increasing employment of the hybrid environment through the grade school levels due to the pandemic of 2019–2021 generated second-order effects that have yet to be studied or manifested. However, instructors understand that this teaching methodology has likely claimed its first casualty: the snow day. As a result, the barrier to entry for administrators to cancel school for inclement weather has been lowered since school still occurs in a hybrid environment (DiFrancesca & Spencer, 2022).

Snow days were always a break in learning and were usually added during the summertime to meet the required number of days in class per school district. Indeed, it is likely that an instructor enjoyed a good snow day just as much as the students. However, this social connection between student and instructor, as well as between administrator and instructor, is

likely gone. The administration may see a transition to remote learning during inclement weather as an opportunity to refine and maintain a schedule for the programmatic year. At the same time, instructors have mixed opinions on the topic, while students generally dislike the attachment to virtual teaching (DiFrancesca & Spencer, 2022). From an aspect of power, the balance lies with the administration, so instructors are forced to have multiple game plans ready for virtual and in-person teaching throughout the inclement semester with little say in how and when a virtual shift occurs in light of a social expectation from the administration to flex with the change. However, changing to a nontraditional teaching method had some unexpected benefits.

An Instructor's Mental Power Definition

A few assumptions are required to discuss a mental power base. Like the social domain, multiple aspects of the internal perception of one's power base can be discussed, where the concepts of intelligence, mental agility, grit, and determination are understood as variables between individuals while contributing to mental power development (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Duckworth et al., 2007; Lan, 2022). The literature on load highlights multiple requests for instructors to accept additional load. Margin theory indicates that power must be available to take an increasing load. Mental power, according to McClusky (Lorge et al., 1963), describes how much instructors perceive they can accomplish. An internal belief of what one is capable of can be encapsulated in one word: motivation. Previously, the question was asked why instructors allow their free time to be eroded by intensification; the answer lies here in motivation. Motivation springs from two sources: internally through intrinsic sources and from the community through extrinsic sources (Lan, 2022).

Discussing motivation requires returning to one of the modern fundamental ideologies for developing motivation. Victor Vroom (1964) published his theory of motivation at Yale

University at a similar time to McClusky's theory of margin (Lorge et al., 1963). However, the two still must be cross-referenced. Motivation consists of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence (Vroom, 1964).

Motivation theory suggests that people are willing to exert any effort that produces a desired result (Vroom, 1964). A willingness to sacrifice time and effort to achieve a desirable result ties directly to the finding that instructors accept any additional load to do what is suitable for their students (Brookfield, 2017). This parallel connects Vroom's (1964) work to modern philosophy and reinforces his thesis into the timeframe of this study. Vroom's central thesis as grounds for exploring the motivation to satisfy Brookfield (2017) requires an evaluation of the relevancy of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Vroom's theory of motivation covers the extrinsic form of motivation, but the intrinsic form of motivation also requires evaluation as a source of power. Daniel Pink's theory of motivation is a valuable tool for intrinsic motivation.

Daniel Pink's (2012) theory of motivation and Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory have multiple common factors. The central tenet of Pink's theory of motivation is that if individuals are given room to learn about something they want to learn about, they will find endless motivation to accomplish this goal. Pink's (2012) theory relies primarily on intrinsic sources of motivation. Examples include learning to play an instrument or learning a foreign language as a source of an adult-oriented, self-determined learning experience with high motivation. Pink's theory of motivation has three components: autonomy, mastery, and purpose.

Vroom's Expectancy

Expectancy focuses on instructors and what they expect to see from a given output of effort (Vroom, 1964). Teaching is an "emotional labor of achieving a consistent and sustainable level of performance in day-to-day interactions with children … that instructors expect within

their normal working day" (Timms et al., 2007, p. 569). However, the intensification thesis fights against this fundamental expectation (Apple, 1989; Larson, 1960). Instructors, and according to Vroom (1964), all laborers expect to have their hard work recognized appropriately by their peers and supervisors.

Recognition by leadership aside, the second dimension of expectancy from Vroom's (1964) central tenant is that laborers expect to see positive, tangible results from their work. For an instructor, these results encompass the learning manifested in their students. The transfer of knowledge is the essence of teaching. Generally, a high point for any instructor is capturing that moment of understanding when a complex thought or topic finally clicks with a student.

Concluding the discussion on expectancy, instructors expect visible results from their efforts (Timms et al., 2007). These visible results can be tangible for the organization or as learning from their students, depending on the instructor's instructional perspective (Pratt, 2016; Timms et al., 2007). The desire for change and the instruction perspective sets just how far instructors will go to help their students learn, including changes in class formats, locations, and syllabi. Combining these viewpoints illustrates instructors' expectancy of the source of motivation to be a transmission of information to generate change in their students. The next discussion point focuses on the inherent or perceived value of this effort to various parts of the organization.

Vroom's Instrumentality

Instrumentality focuses on the instructor's impression of their value to the overall system and how their efforts are perceived in the school's mission, vision, and student body (Vroom, 1964). A review of an instructor's power along these three foci is required to determine how they define instrumentality. The discussion starts with encapsulating what an instructor defines as a

workday. As previously stated in the load discussion, an instructor's workday is not time-bound to hours of operation. Thus, the first question to ask in understanding instrumentality is why instructors continue to work when they are not compensated.

Instrumentality focuses on a single internal question: Is what I am doing valuable, sound, and right (Vroom, 1964)? An interesting view on the topic of instrumentality aside from a method to point out instructors' excessive worry about overdue or incomplete projects leading to eventual margin exhaustion and shutdown, as predicted by McClusky (Casper & Sonnentag, 2020; Lorge et al., 1963). Instructors can be motivated by various levels of load, including those who thrive under high task loads (Casper & Sonnentag, 2020). This invigoration can be tied to the concept of instrumentality (Vroom, 1964).

However, preparation effectiveness can swing between positive invigoration and damaging shutdown with only a minor change (Casper & Sonnentag, 2020). This invigoration is driven by the calling of teaching and the need to do whatever is good for the student. This drive pushes instructors to continue to accept higher-load tasking under the influence of instrumentality (Brookfield, 2017). The balance point can be defined as the point at which the instructor exhausts their internal power reserve during preparation and reaches the minimum effective margin (Casper & Sonnentag, 2020).

Next, a review of an instructor's power is balanced against the mission and vision of the school. Simply defined, mission and vision statements are a bureaucratic device to publish the job the organization wants to accomplish and the future the organization aspires to (Özdem, 2011; Rozycki, 2004). Drafting mission and vision statements can be an exercise in bureaucracy and an additional staff responsibility that ties directly to the intensification thesis. However, these statements are public-facing and represent the organization to the general populace.

Therefore, if the values espoused by these statements do not align with the organization's employees, the internal situation can feel disjointed.

Different approaches exist to the review of the legitimacy of mission and vision statements, with the former being a highly scientific quantitative review of the construction and nature of these statements and the latter being a point-by-point takedown of their frivolousness (Özdem, 2011; Rozycki, 2004). However, the academic administration generates these statements without input from the instructors (Özdem, 2011; Rozycki, 2004). The statements are designed to placate the public who funds the organization, directly by taxes or indirectly by tuition. Therefore, in the discussion of instrumentality as part of the motivation for instructors, the organization's primary mission and vision tend to detract from a feeling of power and motivation for instructors.

The final discussion is on how an instructor can impact the student body. Fortunately, this area is where instructors tend to have the most significant impact, as most of their efforts are aligned with the student body. Interactions between the student body and the instructor starts from the teaching perspective. The five teaching perspectives—transmission, apprenticeship, developmental, nurturing, and social reform—provide avenues for generating this impact (Pratt, 2016).

A link can be drawn between all five perspectives since they attempt to change the student's viewpoint, from merely receiving new data and integrating them into their life with transmission to integrating these new data to change the world around them with social reform. Changing the student's perspective is the primary purpose of teaching and education (Pratt, 2016). Ideally, education aims to transform the adult student's worldview (Mezirow, 1978).

These transformative experiences are triggered by a disorienting dilemma, which the student then reorients toward and reflects upon (Mezirow, 1978).

The central challenge is that instructors can only present disorienting dilemmas by challenging their students with new data. These students must then be inspired internally to reorient and reflect (Mezirow, 1978). It then follows that a wellspring of McClusky's (Lorge et al., 1963) power can be derived from the hope of generating Mezirow's (1978) transformative experience when using Brookfield's (2017) axiom of teaching requirement. As an instructor never knows when a transformative experience will happen or how it will be triggered, it is fair to say that the never-ending hope of engendering a transformative experience is a significant, if not primary, source of power generation to instructors.

To close the topic of instrumentality as a source of motivation and power, instructors likely feel little power gained from the organizational hierarchy of mission and vision. However, instructors are likely to feel a massive boost of power from the student body and the instructor's ability to generate life-changing transformative experiences. These life-changing experiences allow instructors to feel that what they are doing is good and right, which triggers instrumentality and boosts internal power.

Vroom's Valence

Valence focuses on what the instructor values as recognition and validation, which varies significantly between instructors (Vroom, 1964). Vroom (1964) viewed recognition from two sources: above and below.

The entity providing recognition from above, the organizational leadership, must understand what each of their people values as recognition to keep valence and motivation high (Vroom, 1964). Recognition can be very elaborate, or it can be straightforward. For example,

"any 'time off' resulted in a greater sum of work to be completed the next day" (Timms et al., 2007, p. 10) while simultaneously combating intensification. However, the intensification thesis cuts in both directions, as the bureaucracy responds to external pressures to formalize and standardize the product created, which adds the requirement to know each employee's point of highest valence may exceed the organizational margin (Larson, 1980; Lorge et al., 1963; Vroom, 1964).

The entity providing the recognition from below—students—is why some stay in the trenches and continue to press even in difficult times or periods of high stress because teaching is a calling, not merely a profession (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008; Brookfield, 2017; Houston et al., 2006; Manuel et al., 2018; Timms et al., 2007). Instructors feel an innate need to push through the difficulty of the teaching environment and all the ancillary tasks because helping a student learn and change the future is worth the stress, loss of sleep, minimal pay, no time off, and various other load-sapping effects of intensification. When students learn while instructors observe it, many of the latter are rewarded with the only valence they will ever need. Additionally, the effects discussed about valence validate instructors' efforts and set the next cycle of expectation. The valence-expectation cycle generates a self-reinforcing engine of motivation generation while engendering a never-ending source of mental power that allows an understanding of why instructors sacrifice as much as they do to work harder and exhaust margin to a level that borders on burnout by accepting an ever-increasing load (Lorge et al., 1963; Vroom, 1964).

Vroom Summarized

Vroom's (1964) theory of motivation relies heavily on extrinsic motivation factors, such as how superiors and peers will view the work. Victor Vroom's (1964) theory of motivation

stands in as a tremendous contemporary for McClusky's (Lorge et al., 1963) theory of margin. However, there are two components to motivation as motivation interacts with power. To discuss intrinsic motivation requires the utilization of a different motivational theory. To discuss and define intrinsic motivation, I utilized Daniel Pink's (2012) theory of motivation which also has three components: autonomy, mastery and purpose.

Pink's Autonomy

Pink's (2012) definition of autonomy is aligned with Knowles' (1970) and Deci and Ryan's (1985) theories that adult learners are self-directed. Autonomy accounts for allowing individuals to find their way through an academic issue (Pink, 2012). In this pursuit of knowledge, the adult learner finds motivation. The more autonomy students are given, the greater success they have in a course (O'Reilly, 2014). The greater success of these students is measured and displayed by their resulting grade point averages (O'Reilly, 2014). Grade point average is an extrinsic motivator and a great example of expectancy (Vroom, 1964). Self-directed learners who are granted autonomy to seek their methods of studying and learning achieve more learning per effective study hour than unmotivated students (O'Reilly, 2014). The resulting higher grade point average closes the loop on the constructive motivation circle and approaches Pink's (2012) second intrinsic motivator, mastery.

Pink's Mastery

Bruce Lee, the famous martial artist, is often quoted as saying that he didn't fear a man who practiced 10,000 kicks once, but the man who practiced one kick 10,000 times (Lee, n.d.). This quote embodies what mastery means: to be exceptionally good at something that scares Bruce Lee. However, the quote also embodies the pain and sacrifice required to reach mastery. Pain and suffering, physical in martial arts, can propel an individual to this level of mastery.

However, some seek this level of mastery and gladly submit to the pain. Such is the power of intrinsic motivation in the pursuit of mastery.

Adult learners, and instructors learning new techniques, are not much different. Adults learn a skill to be better at it just to be better at it (Pink, 2012). A ready example of the pursuit of mastery is the self-directed learning of musical instruments (Pink, 2012). Indeed, little chance exists that adults will gain fame or fortune, which are powerful extrinsic motivators for learning an instrument. Adult learners learn an instrument simply because they want to be good at it (Pink, 2012).

Research into the combination of mastery and adult learning has been limited, with the search terms returning 329,000 results on Google Scholar. Removing variations of childhood and children from the search string reduced the returns to 200. When adding Daniel Pink's (2012) version of mastery to the search, a small handful of journal articles remained.

Mastery is ethereal; once learners pursue mastery, they can freely engage with their work in a new dimension as it assumes a different demeanor: flow (Gillard et al., 2015). "Flow is a mental state in which a person becomes entirely focused and energized by the task at hand" (Gillard et al., 2015, p. 2). When learners enter a state of flow, it is likely because they have been given the autonomy to pursue mastery. Hence, they have found purpose and the accompanying high states of mental power (Pink, 2012).

Pink's Purpose

The definition of purpose, like instrumentality, is straightforward: the work needs to matter (Pink, 2012; Vroom, 1964). The difference lies in the perspective. The principle of purpose focuses inward; the work needs to matter to the instructor (Pink, 2012), while instrumentality focuses outward: the work needs to matter to the organization (Vroom, 1964).

Purpose helps explain why we have art and music, which matter to the artist before they matter to the public.

The same holds for instructors honing their craft. Through the instructor's toil and understanding that their work is more significant than themselves and maybe more extensive than the view of their employers, these instructors push to higher levels of expression. Teaching the same syllabus ad infinitum would be mind-numbing if the students did not present a different purpose for that instructor every semester. Similarly, Michelangelo would likely have been amotivated if he had to mass-produce statues of David. Every student presents a marble slab to the instructor; their purpose tends to be to find the masterpiece inside.

Motivation as a Mental Power Generator

In summary, an instructor gains power in the mental domain through motivation. Expectancy, instrumentality, and valence are the three components that must be satisfied to generate extrinsic motivation (Vroom, 1964). Simultaneously, autonomy, mastery, and purpose generate intrinsic motivation (Pink, 2012). Together, these two motivational theories describe the conditions for successful self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In short, to be motivated, one must expect to see outcomes from one's efforts, understand that one's actions are helpful, and be recognized in one's toil. These three factors are accomplished for instructors through bidirectional inputs from the organizational hierarchy and the student body. Instructors willingly sacrifice their available margin and work longer hours because they seek purpose through the attempt to generate a transformative experience in their students (Mezirow, 1978; Najarro & Kim, 2022; Pink, 2012; Timms et al., 2007).

Combining all six tenets of motivation allows for the generation of motivation, which is critical to the completion of instructors' goals. In contrast, reducing these same six values

generates amotivation, which destroys instructors' available mental power (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Lan, 2022).

An Instructor's Economic Power Definition

The discussion on power generation from motivation in the previous section identified the idea that teaching is a calling, not just a profession (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008; Brookfield, 2017; Houston et al., 2006; Manuel et al., 2018; Timms et al., 2007). However, teaching is still a profession at its base, and instructors require compensation. This section explores the interaction between compensation and the ability to generate power.

Framing the issue requires understanding the difference between good and bad economic situations. Many scholars have settled on a definition of job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976, p. 1304). Job satisfaction ties in nicely with the theory of motivation, specifically the valence tenet (Vroom, 1964). However, financial rewards, specifically salaries, directly and substantially impact job satisfaction while generally resulting in high stress levels when satisfaction due to financial compensation is low (Saqib Usman et al., 2013). Ultimately, financial stress can lead to departing the organization (Saqib Usman et al., 2013).

The timeframe during which this study was conducted saw the teaching community and the general labor community in the United States experiencing a phenomenon culturally named "The Great Resignation." Many factors led to the U.S. labor market fleeing jobs, which peaked at a rate of 4.4 million people in September 2021 alone (Tessema et al., 2022). Workers reevaluated departure factors (e.g., workplace safety, flexibility, benefits, pay, and supervisory structure) during the COVID-19 pandemic as businesses were forced to shutter. However, these businesses continued operations with varying levels of success and in-office presence (Tessema

et al., 2022). Instructors were among the first to transfer to a remote working environment, the first to transfer to a hybrid environment, and the first to return to in-office presence following the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, instructors encountered experimental situations with no changes to compensation, which resulted in more stress but the same pay (Tessema et al., 2022).

In a way, the COVID-19 pandemic, shutdown, and labor restart offered instructors an economic bargaining chip they might not have had before. Instructors were one of the career fields labeled by society as "essential personnel." In a personal recollection of events while still at the heart of the pandemic, Kathy Carrol (2021), the President of the American Association of School Libraries, described these early transition periods to hybrid learning:

> I have learned that school libraries are no place for cowards. There were numerous times during the pandemic when moving forward was unnerving, yet staying complacent was not an option. Across our country, school libraries were turned into classrooms, colleagues served as substitute or classroom instructors, and programs were diminished or eliminated. (p. 4)

The situation forced instructors to find new methods of coping with the environment as they faced longer hours, new methods, minimal training, and new technologies. What was not manifest was a change in economic repudiation.

Constantly being asked to do more with the same resources continued to stress instructors by degrading their job satisfaction, which generated a situation for leadership to change compensation rates and policies or risk losing talented instructors who constantly struggled to do their best for their students in all circumstances (Locke, 1976; Saqib Usman et al., 2013). Whether corporate indecision, inflexibility, or a sheer lack of resources, instructors began leaving their organizations in droves as part of The Great Resignation immediately following the

COVID-19 pandemic (Tessema et al., 2022). Without the economic compensation to generate satisfaction, motivation, and power, the load became too much, and burnout, as McClusky predicted, occurred (Lorge et al., 1963).

Summary of Power Generation

Power is a difficult concept to define precisely. According to McClusky's working definition of power, the "combination of such interacting factors as physical, social, mental, and economic abilities together with acquired skills and the like which may contribute to the effective performance of life tasks" (as cited in Lorge et al., 1963, p. 16) is to view power as a highly personal and fungible concept. Physical power can be limited by one's health and circumstances outside one's control. Social power can be limited by one's genetics, again, beyond one's control.

Instructors' economic situations tend toward a more limiting environment when discussing personal power. The literature exposes the mental power domain as an area in which individuals can directly impact their power-generation ability through motivation. The literature presented here paints motivation as having external and internal applications through Pink's (2012) and Vroom's (1964) theories. Balancing the various components of power allows for appreciating the instructor's power dynamic and how it interacts with the perceived load to predict their available margin. As technology is introduced to this environment, the question remains whether it helps or hurts power generation.

Through this section I have endeavored to detail the components of McClusky's theory of margin in a way to utilize load and power to make meaning of participant experiences as they instruct in the hybrid environment. I have used intensification to elaborate on load and motivation to elaborate on power. However, I have not discussed how other researchers have

utilized margin in their research or the evolution of the theory itself In the section that follows, I will provide a brief history of how margin has been used in other research to further ground margin as a lens for this project.

A Review of Margin Theory Evaluations, 1963–2024

A decade and a half after the initial publication of the theory, margin had yet to be integrated into a comprehensive teaching model (Main, 1979). Developmental work using McClusky's theory focused on significant turning points in an adult's lifetime (Main, 1979). Early research on margin demonstrated that the theory was applicable to all age groups (Lorge et al., 1963; Neugarten, 1976). Additionally, the evaluation of load and power in isolation was not as important as the understanding of the interplay between them (Main, 1979).

Social and economic derivations of margin and their influence on academic performance showed no overall impact on a student's margin (Weiman, 1987). However, tools to measure the interaction between margin and performance were limited, and research pointed out a need to develop and improve the tools to monitor this interaction (Weiman, 1987).

Margin remained an undeveloped model for adult learning into the 1990s (Hiemstra, 1993). Without an understanding of margin theory, arguments were made that instructors could easily overload their students to the detriment of student performance (Hiemstra, 1993). This situation could worsen if the instructor assumed a traditional authoritarian attitude, which resulted in complete disengagement of the learners as they sought to rebalance their margin (Hiemstra, 1993). Following these findings, the association of margin and performance became the most pursued branch of margin study (Thul-Sigler, 2016; Trautman, 2004).

Margin research focused on traditional students and quantitative research until well into the first decade of the 21st century. Asynchronous and nontraditional student margin studies had

no significant studies until 2009 (Maxfield, 2009). Transitioning to the application of margin in a nontraditional, asynchronous environment aligns with this research and points to a necessity for flexible learning as a requirement for success (Maxfield, 2009).

Margin theory research remained dormant until the trans-pandemic period when asynchronous environments saw an increase in dominance driven by need. With the pandemic as an influence, studies on the balancing of load between multiple competing influences became more prominent (Biney, 2021). For example, challenges on the impact of margin on remote learners in Ghana were noted as they balanced the external needs of maintaining and keeping homes, playing leadership roles, and fulfilling the demands of the workplace with the requirements of the school (Biney, 2021).

Experiences of Teaching in the Hybrid Environment, 2007–2025

The following section reviews experiences of teaching in a hybrid environment from 2007 to 2023. In this study, the hybrid environment included any teaching modality that was not synchronous, in-person, face-to-face teaching, or any other representation reflecting the historical norms of teaching behavior. In this definition, correspondence teaching, such as learning through mailed-out and recovered assignments dating back to antiquity, met the definition. However, as this study focused on the technological impact on an instructor's expression of margin, the study was limited in time from 2007 to 2023.

Research has tended to use 2007 as a starting point for discussing online teaching and technology (Namdeo, 2023). Literature reviews have focused on the themes and lessons present in peer-reviewed articles during the targeted time frame, with most research focusing on the student's point of view (Namdeo, 2023). The teaching experience can be separated into the

perspective of the introduction of the material, the instruction of the material, and the evaluation of learning as three separate points of view.

Nothing can truly replace the first-day-of-class feeling—a mix of hope and dread mixed with the smell of new textbooks and plastic-wrapped stationery. Then, the first wave of new students arrives, and they have the same experience. However, this shared experience, this presence, is eliminated in a hybrid environment (Wallace, 2003). The bonding of instructor and student through the traditional deployment of the syllabus on the first day of class is accomplished at best in a grid of squares on a computer screen in a hybrid environment. Little study has sought to determine the impact of this change. However, one of the most significant challenges to the hybrid environment is the lack of face-to-face interaction (Namdeo, 2023; Romaniuk & Łukasiewicz-Wieleba, 2022).

The National Institutes of Health repeats a commonly used statistic from Mehrabian that only 7% of communication is verbal (Park & Park, 2018). The remainder is accomplished through non-verbal cues, which can be lost in the hybrid environment. When deploying new materials to students, an experienced traditional instructor will "read the room" to see if the point is landing. Pauch and Zaslow (2008), in their memoir *The Last Lecture,* used the number of squeaks in the wooden chairs of the multi-hundred-student lecture hall to identify this point. When it was dark and quiet, Pauch knew he had the students' attention, and the point landed. It is difficult or impossible to accomplish the same with a sea of impassive blank stares on the grid of faces.

The online instruction of materials may be the most beneficial aspect of hybrid teaching. "These methods not only engage students in active learning but keep them motivated in the teaching-learning process" (Namdeo, 2023, p. 63). Educational tool design companies like

Kahoot have designed friendly-looking, brightly colored, competitively engaging learning platforms with catchy music and easy access. Here, the mastery feedback for the student is immediate (Pink, 2012): a change in position on the leaderboard is immediately announced through digital fanfare and public recognition, which reinforces valence (Vroom, 1964). This double tap of motivational increase through extrinsic and intrinsic means allows students to continue to learn more about the topic with the hope of rising even higher in the leaderboards.

The teaching cycle completes with the evaluation. Instructors use these tools to determine if their methods of introduction and instruction of the materials are indeed transferred to the students. It is a point of the power of the Foucault variety that some instructors loathe while others may enjoy, but it is a necessary process in formal education. “Online assessment can be as effective, and in some cases even more effective, than conventional classroom assessment” (Namdeo, 2023, p. 63). This statement is assumed to be true because an evaluation is performed where the modern student exists. By allowing online examinations, even if inside the classroom, to be accomplished in an environment and on a device where the student is comfortable, instructors can decrease mental stress that robs students of available McCluskian power. However, the converse is that by constantly making examinations a non-stressful environment, students never receive the inoculation to stress and never test themselves in challenging academic environments.

Indeed, the hybrid environment can be more exceptional. “Preparation time for instructors, lack of face-to-face interaction, communication gap between instructors and students, providing constructive feedback, infrastructural facilities, and technological support” (Namdeo, 2023, p. 63) were all issues that plagued instructors from 2007 to 2023. Technical support and infrastructural facilities impede deploying and sustaining an effective hybrid environment

(Namdeo, 2023). These requirements need constant renovation by the organization to maintain currency and security in the modern cyber environment. The threat of exploitation of data and personal identity theft remains real. Academic institutions are not immune to ransomware, malware, or distributed denial of service attacks (Motter, 2024). To a lesser extent, the ability to cheat either on the production of student work or the assessment of student work is also on the rise. Algorithmic intelligence systems such as ChatGPT and its various offspring have generated a situation for instructors where countermeasures for these digital tools must be developed and deployed so learning is not undermined (Sevnarayan, 2024). Finally, policy issues associated with work-from-home schedules are a balancing act between university policy, instructor desire, and academic necessity (Bharade et al., 2024; Blake, 2024; Crist, 2024; Quinn, 2024).

Summary of the Literature

This chapter defined the participant, the adult instructor, the environment, the hybrid environment, and the theoretical framework of McClusky's theory of margin. In my exploration, I amplified the nature of load, both real and perceived. I focused on the generation expenditure of power in the physical, social, mental, and economic domains as defined by McClusky (Lorge et al., 1963). Through that holistic exploration, I explored and presented more contemporary theories that complement McClusky's theory of margin. Self-determination, intensification, and motivation theories provided additional context as I explored the stories of instructors operating in the hybrid environment. Moreover, my understanding of the theory of intensification, a process driving more tasks of lower skill level to the level of the worker while blocking the ability to master a craft or advance in a given field, helped define additional load factors in the instructors' accounts (Larson, 1980).

A review of motivational theories applying to personal power helped me understand how instructors have maintained their levels of effort in the hybrid environment. I focused on the source of power for an individual. I did not review the power exerted on someone, as Foucault (1982) did. Instead, I focused on the internal power generated as directed by the theory of margin (Lorge et al., 1963).

I also found that the theory of self-determination allowed individuals to set a threshold for the need for motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Motivation is derived both internally (i.e., intrinsically) and externally (i.e., extrinsically). Extrinsic means for motivation are well explained by Vroom's (1964) theory of motivation, while intrinsic means are well described by Pink's (2012) theory of motivation.

I also covered the social, economic, and physical power pillars to round out instructors' perspectives on generating personal power in the McCluskian manifestation. Indicators related to motivational theory concepts in the experiences of individual instructors as they transit through the modern educational interaction environment with technology can assist in providing the basis for an internal generation of power.

Furthermore, the review covered the available dissertations on margin to determine if a gap in literature existed to review the theory for grounded theory revision. The dissertations focused on the theme of the prediction of success, given certain margin levels in individuals. They did not question the theory itself as requiring revision in the face of hybrid environment teaching, an environment requiring definition through a review of material from 2007–2023 to set the bounds of this research.

In conclusion, I presented a thorough review and discussion of the sources of load and power comprising a participant's margin. This solid understanding of the margin, load, and

power generation of the adult instructor-participants operating in the hybrid environment assisted me in making meaning of their accounts.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Research Purpose and Goals

The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of post-secondary instructors who taught adults in a formal, hybrid environment. One research question with two sub-questions drove this research. The research question was, "How do post-secondary instructors describe their experiences teaching in a hybrid teaching environment?" Sub-question 1 was how instructors described their advantages in a hybrid teaching environment. Sub-question 2 was how instructors described their challenges in a hybrid teaching environment. This section outlines the rationale for the research and reorients the previously operationalized terms to define their roles in the selected methodology.

Nature of the Subject Matter

Instructing in the hybrid environment and the challenges it presents to an instructor have been ill-defined in the body of knowledge. During the literature review, no specific sources were found that detailed the instructor's experience after rigorous review. The lack of data available on the topic in established research circles emphasized the need for more focus on instructors in the hybrid environment. The subject matter at hand, personal vulnerability when trying to accomplish a difficult task in demanding environments, was a complex subject to broach with professional instructors. Data collection methods addressed personal sensitivity and my subjectivities to ensure the accurate representation of the instructors' experiences. The subject matter here was personal. To allow the participants to share their experiences without fear of retribution or attribution, they remained anonymous in this study. I deployed and utilized passive data collection in the social media environment and commercial sources for participant recruiting (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007).

Role of the Researcher

I shared many of the experiences the participants reported, which Heidegger (1988) identified as phenomenological preunderstanding. However, in basic qualitative inquiry, no restrictions exist on how familiar a researcher is with a topic under study. Thus, I only had to maintain my preunderstanding and separate it from the data as new understandings were constructed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Among these preunderstandings was the impact on the instructor's available spare time to pursue their desired interests, either to improve their position in the educational experience or their social or personal experience.

I have instructed adults in various venues since 2005, including in-person, face-to-face instruction, remote instruction, and multimodality teaching. Throughout my 2 decades of instructing, I have seen the hybrid environment evolve from basic email correspondence to full telepresence. I have instructed in a hybrid environment at the university level, though most of my teaching experience has been in the U.S. Armed Forces.

As a military instructor of other military adults, the teaching must go on regardless of the challenge. I instructed through COVID-19 with no breaks in classes while adjusting to the demands of the pandemic, from multiple masks to ionizing disinfectant sprayers. As Professor of Aerospace Studies—an honorary title given to military officers who teach at U.S. universities—I navigated the policies and safeguards in place for multimodality teaching while teaching all day with a mask on and learning how to sanitize a classroom with an atomizing sanitizer. I have taught topics ranging from flight to physics to national policy to self-esteem in a hybrid environment.

This qualitative study was a departure from my technical background in engineering and physics. However, I share a worldview similar to Brookfield's (2017) in that the instructor's role

is to do whatever it takes to help a student learn. I have the perspective that most, if not all, instructors feel the same way about the transfer of knowledge to students independent of teaching perspective or method.

The temporal domain for this study was the post-COVID educational environment. In many ways, I saw many of the same advantages and challenges reported by the participants. I served as a professor during the post-COVID transition at a U.S. state university. I was a director of emergency operations during the build-up to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Therefore, to keep my experiences from influencing the participants' experiences, I compartmentalized my preunderstandings and conceptions.

For this study and its methodology, I had to retain a self-reflective pragmatism to describe the experiences. To maintain pragmatism through the coding process, I added analytic memos to codes in NVivo as thoughts surfaced. As the study used margin as a lens for understanding the instructors' experiences, removing my preconceptions of participant-specified power and load settings was critical.

Participant Recruitment and Sample

The selection of participants from the pool of available responses depended on the respondents' ability to represent some time in a hybrid environment. Instructing experience in a hybrid environment was a critical requirement in this study. All potential respondents who did not instruct in the hybrid environment were excluded, so all participants screened for this study met this qualification.

The open-ended questionnaire I selected as a data collection device was nontraditional in qualitative research since each open-ended questionnaire returns less data than the more traditional, non-structured interview. To compensate, I reviewed other sources of single-point-of-

contact-per-participant studies for the appropriate sample size when deciding how many participants to target for this study. Vasileiou et al. (2018) reviewed single interview-per-participant research designs across 15 years of three medical journals and determined that 15–31 participants were the median population for saturation. However, the number of participants "at which saturation was achieved within these projects cannot be routinely extrapolated for other projects" (Vasileiou et al., 2018, p. 15). Thus, the number of participants and data saturation were less prominent, with the described experience rising to the highest priority (Braun & Clarke, 2019). However, I selected a target participant population range of 30–50 participants, with the understanding that saturation could occur before reaching this participant count or might not occur at all. This study had 54 participants. As I coded the later groups, comments and codes from the participants repeated previous groups, a pattern of concepts which indicated saturation.

Coding methodologies were developed and operationalized in the pilot research project preceding this study (Hogan, 2023). As a result, I learned that more participants in the study would require organization through batching. Additionally, the pilot utilized in vivo coding with metasynthesis intercycle analysis (Saldaña, 2021). While these techniques were adequate for the small pilot study, a different process would clearly be required for a more extensive study. Specifically, I required a more structured form of coding and analysis to manage the larger volume of data I would require to answer the research question. Additionally, the pilot informed the deployment of a Google Forms-based internet questionnaire for anonymous participants. The lessons I learned from the pilot study led to the open coding, axial coding, and batching methods I utilized for this research.

I aimed to have ten participants per coding cycle, with at least three cycles, ideally five. However, I set no upper limit to the sample size since more participants would increase

multivocality (Tracy, 2010) and the accuracy of the description of the experience and rigor. Ultimately, I conducted six cycles of coding, with the last group—Group F—having only four participants.

I recruited participants from multiple educational-based social media groups: professional (i.e., the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education), semi-professional (i.e., Adult Education Facebook Groups), and informal (i.e., Reddit pages associated with adult education and teaching). After 2 months of data collection, I recruited six participants. This timeline of participant aggregation needed to be more active to meet research deadlines, so I researched commercial methods of participant recruitment requiring an approved Institutional Review Board (IRB) modification.

After a review of available platforms and approval of the IRB modification, the platform selected—Prolific, a United Kingdom-based company—allowed for anonymous and indirect payment and a filter for the eligible participant group. The platform consisted of a network of 1,603,542 global participants, who, when filtered for bachelor's degree or above and identified as teachers, narrowed the pool to 3,972 participants. Participant filtering was easily accomplished on the service's website during the initial setup through self-explanatory menus and checkboxes. After uploading the IRB approval and a simple version of a research proposal, the Prolific team reviewed the package and approved the study to go live on the website.

My initial screening of all participants resulted in six K–12 teachers who had to be screened from the study. When added to the original six social media participants, the total screened participant count stood at 49. Launching an additional round of five Prolific respondents resulted in four additional participants, with one removed for being a French middle school teacher, which brought the total to 53 participants. During the initial review and reading

of the participant groups, an additional response arrived from one of the social media sources, which resulted in the final count of 54 screened participants.

Participant Demographics

Of the 54 participants in this study, 36 identified as female, 17 identified as male, and one declined to provide their gender. The participants hailed from North America (19%), South America (2%), Africa (35%), Europe (31%), and Asia (9%), with two participants indicating their location as worldwide (4%). This final category—worldwide—was unanticipated when initially setting up the open-ended questionnaire. A field of "Other" was included in the locationality section of the demographics to give the participants a chance to write in a value that they deemed accurate. Fortunately, this choice provided two worldwide returns, which reflected the unbordered nature of instruction in the hybrid environment.

The participants' age demographics had an interesting split between experienced and new instructors. One-third of the instructors declined to identify their ages. However, those who identified their ages represented all age demographics. Instructors under 30 (20%) were almost as numerous as instructors over 50 (15%), and a bulk of the participants were between these two populations, ages 30–49 (35%). These ages were then directly reflected in the experience presentations. Nearly one-half of the population had between 0–5 years of experience (44%), with over one-quarter having 6–15 years of experience (28%) and another quarter having over 15 years of experience (28%).

The final portion of demographic data concerned the education and professional levels of the participant pool. All participants were required to have instructional time in the hybrid environment and adult instruction, which eliminated all K–12 teachers as participants. Seven respondents to the survey self-identified as K–12 teachers and were removed from the sample.

All instructors reported operational time in the hybrid environment, indicating the pan-cultural, multi-discipline, muti-national employment of instruction in the hybrid environment.

Additionally, each participant had to be a professional instructor with at least a certificate in instruction and, more appropriately, a conferred degree. Notably, 30% of the retained participants declined to provide their educational backgrounds, but all participants provided their instructional levels. The participants who declined to offer their educational backgrounds were instructors at the undergraduate level or higher. Thus, I assumed they had the appropriate educational backgrounds.

Of the instructors who provided their educational backgrounds, 18% held a doctorate, 17% held a master's degree, 31% held a 4-year degree, and 4% held a certificate. The full spectrum of adult instruction was also evident in the sample, with 54% instructing undergraduates, 22% teaching graduate students, 15% teaching post-graduates, and 9% teaching English and formal adult education in a non-degree conferring construct.

Data Collection

To avoid the inference of interviews being conducted for this research, I replaced Vasileiou et al.'s (2018) term of single-interview-per-participant with single-point-of-contact-per-participant. I intended to remove any insinuation of this study using any form or interview while maintaining the validity of previous findings with respect to the sample. The tool for collecting participant responses was an open-ended questionnaire. The open-ended questionnaire, coupled with anonymity, allowed the participants the maximum level of identity protection and freedom of expression on a topic that could be controversial or sensitive (Creswell, 2008; Erdem et al., 2021; Tourangeau & Yan, 2007; Woods et al., 2015).

One open-ended questionnaire was deployed through the internet to generate a single-point-of-contact-per-participant format. This questionnaire contained two sections: one that identified participants' nonidentifiable demographics and a second section that asked the participants to describe the challenges and advantages associated with teaching in a hybrid environment. This second section allowed for a holistic overview of the instructors' hybrid experiences without adding my perspective to the questions. As part of the open-ended questionnaire, I included a required assent to informed consent. Thus, a potential participant could not log their responses to the Google Forms response file without indicating assent to informed consent. The 54 participant responses amounted to 369 words per participant—84% more than the required 200 word response—that described the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment, which were then open-coded.

Data Management Processes

Google Forms was the primary tool for data collection and response management. Once deployed, the open-ended questionnaire fed responses to my Google Drive. The tools available in the Google suite assisted in the sanitization of participant identification to maintain anonymity.

Valid responses were exported into Google Forms and NVivo for initial open coding. I processed responses in batches of ten to allow for increased organization and focus on each participant's response. I also utilized the Herrick 7-step method to process each batch as identically as possible. Microsoft Excel tools generated graphical demographic depictions and maintained a library of raw data when codes from NVivo required quick cross-referencing to demographic data. I considered the data collection complete when no new concepts from the

batched open-ended questionnaires emerged through constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 2007).

Data Security

Finally, this research study had no requirement for any personally identifiable information. Demographic data collected were limited to gender identity, age, academic education, experience level, and regional location. I built the open-ended questionnaire (Appendix A) to collect demographics so that the participants could select as many or as few responses as they desired. All responses were collected and stored in the cloud under my biometric lock. The data remained under biometric lock until they were transferred to the research computer for coding and synthesis. The research computer had a facial recognition biometric lock. The deletion of all data from the cloud and the research computer occurred in accordance with IRB requirements.

Anonymity

The respondents and, eventually, the participants remained anonymous. Demographic data collection was limited to general regional information and experience levels, gender, age, and education. No other identifying information was collected or found during coding, which denied me the ability to identify the participants.

Anonymity was a critical aspect of data collection in this study, as the data collected required the instructors to share their experiences, positive and negative, in the hybrid environment. Certain participants were critical of their administrations, and most made honest, vulnerable statements about themselves. In a context where attribution and visibility could impact employment, I deemed anonymity a successful protection method for the study's participants (Erdem et al., 2021; Tourangeau & Yan, 2007; Woods et al., 2015).

Methodological Justification and Analytical Processes

My literature review revealed minimal literature in the body of knowledge describing post-secondary instructors' experiences in a hybrid environment as they teach adults. The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of post-secondary instructors who taught adults in a formal, hybrid environment. Ultimately, the findings suggested their experiences were an interplay of interactions between themselves, the hybrid environment, and students. The end state intent of the research was to present the instructors' hybrid environment experiences in a method to help academic practitioners and administrators tailor such experiences to maximize instructor interaction and performance. The combination of the data collection methodology and the subject matter under exploration deemed a basic qualitative method as the most appropriate approach for analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This basic qualitative analysis was based on constructivist epistemology to build an experiential visualization of the experiences of the participants.

A basic qualitative approach was selected as the methodology for this study with the intent of exploring how instructors experienced the hybrid environment in their own words. Accounts occasionally recounted issues where an instructor was mentally, physically, or organizationally challenged beyond their capacity to manage. The candid nature of the responses suggested that anonymity was effective at countering challenges that might have been present in recalling sensitive experiences relating to mental health concerns among the professional teaching population (Braun & Clarke, 2014; Gewertz, 2021).

Informed by the methodological lessons learned from the pilot study and the basic qualitative approach selected for this study, I chose thematic analysis to describe the instructor experience in the hybrid environment (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The two branches of thematic

analysis are inductive and theoretical. This study employed inductive thematic analysis, which allowed for investigating the entire range of the instructor experience to provide a "rich overall description" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). Additionally, inductive thematic analysis and the use of online tools for data collection were fundamental to the methodology, especially in the case of sensitive topics (Braun et al., 2021). Furthermore, I batched the incoming online responses and treated each incoming batch as a unique dataset during coding, which I repeated for each incoming set (Braun et al., 2021). Moreover, thematic analysis is a flexible methodology for use when a subject matter is meant to make sense to non-academics in the "policy and practice arenas" (Braun & Clarke, 2014, p. 1). Finally, the combination of batching, online data collection, anonymity, and application to areas outside practice aligned well with this research study's purpose and design.

As the basic qualitative methodology was flexible by design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), other methodological tools were available for employment in the pursuit of meaning-building. Constant comparative analysis served to reinforce the inductive thematic analysis of this study by adducing additional rigor to the open coding, as each new piece of information was compared to the preceding information for similarities or alignment as the open coding continued (Glaser, 2007).

The single-researcher, single-point-of-contact-per-participant method selected for this qualitative, inductive thematic analysis required extensive transparency to provide an accurate description of the instructors' experiences in a hybrid environment. Choosing a data analysis protocol that was present in the body of knowledge simplified my observer role (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Herrick et al. (2021) provided a method for working with single-point-of-contact-

per-participant data collection of a sensitive topic utilizing internet-based tools that fit well with this study.

Herrick's 7-Step Process of Inductive Thematic Analysis

Herrick et al. (2021) conducted a study on eating disorders through analysis of TikTok hashtags utilizing inductive thematic analysis. However, the researchers required additional structure to make the online content meaningful. Data from the TikTok videos and the answers to the open-ended questionnaire resulted in similar data inputs, which made the Herrick process directly transferrable to this research.

Step 0: Data Collection

The open-ended questionnaire's structural design made the incoming data format predictable. Each participant had the same fields and prompts for responding, whereas the TikTok comments were freeform. Similarly, Herrick et al. (2021) also had only one point of contact per participant but generated more precise information on each participant. The collection of responses from the open-ended questionnaire generated demographic data centered on experience, location, field of study, and level of instruction (e.g., 2-year undergraduate, 4-year undergraduate, and graduate).

The second portion of the open-ended questionnaire generated multiple responses to align and manage. Using the batching method recommended by Braun et al. (2021), I coded in batches of ten incoming responses, which allowed for ten challenges and ten advantages in each batch. My role in this phase was as a data manager who ensured the open-ended questionnaire was adequately deployed to record the data while individual batches were built for the ten respondents.

Step 1: Becoming Familiar with the Data

Multiple reads of the respondents' inputs were accomplished with the intent to move toward crystallization (Tracy, 2010). Each prompt response in each batch of ten was read vertically and horizontally. Vertical reading meant reading each of the ten first prompts in isolation from the second prompt. Vertical reading grouped all the advantages separately from the challenges for open coding. Horizontal reading consisted of reading each participant's total submission before proceeding to the next participant, which isolated the participant's specific voice and sentiment through open coding. Memoing between passes was utilized to record thoughts on themes between passes with minimal time between coding batches. Hence, intra-batch review was unnecessary.

Step 2: Generating Primary Codes

I was the only researcher and author in this study. Therefore, I could not accomplish Herrick's group code generation protocol, so I relied instead on constant comparative analysis to compare concepts identified by memoing in Step 1 (Glaser, 2007). Horizontal reading codified each participant's specific sentiment and story, while vertical reading crystallized codes for all the responses in isolation. Open codes that began to crystallize between reads were marked for second-cycle axial coding as a theme. My threshold for theme acceptance was set at three appearances in open coding.

Step 3: Identifying Themes

My research design and the single-researcher nature of the study required a heavy reliance on constructivist thinking to make meaning from the data. The definition I used for a theme—henceforth referred to as a concept in this study—was "something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). This axiom was used to determine

themes during Step 3 with constant comparative analysis that provided a cross-check between all other batches after the first batch of ten responses was completed. Concepts in this phase were locked for axial coding as the experience took shape. Concepts were general concepts that, upon review through constant comparative analysis, were often composed of multiple subcomponents. However, the subcomponents were not significant enough to meet Braun and Clarke's (2006) definition of a concept.

Step 4: Revision or Refinement of Themes

The refinement or revision of concepts required external input using the Herrick method. Again, I was challenged by the single-researcher doctoral dissertation since no co-researcher was available. I did consider peer-debrief as a method to increase concept refinement. However, the velocity at which the open-ended survey returned data provided rapid, multivocal, and detailed data. After a few cycles, the data began to be highly repetitive. Thus, a pattern emerged that I recognized as saturation.

With each batch of participants, I continued to refine the concepts through reflective constructivist thinking and constant comparative analysis of the previous batch of participants. Due to the velocity of data capture, I iterated rapidly, which assisted me in identifying the repetition of concepts and their crystallization around axial themes with minimal research downtime. Crystallization was the primary method of refinement that utilized multiple data to isolate a single concept. Crystallization is the inverse of the more traditional method of triangulation, which uses multiple researcher viewpoints on a single piece of data to isolate a concept (Tracy, 2010).

Step 5: Theme Conceptualization

Theme conceptualization is the personification of a theme (Herrick et al., 2021). In this step, I selected a quote, anecdote, or description of a situation or interaction from the participant to personify the concept. The intent was to use the words of the participants to present the concept to the readers. In doing so, the participants' voices were stamped on the final analysis and presentation, which added neutrality to the results.

Step 6: Write the Results

Once I conceptualized the concepts and grouped the responses, I axially coded them for alignment and crystallization. Aligning the participants' voices from initial open coding through personification allowed for illustrating a continuous description of experiences from a multivocal group. Additionally, I conducted analytic memoing during and between cycles, presented in Appendix C. Analytic memoing allowed for a transparent presentation of the results' interpretation. Finally, accurately representing the participants while seeking multivocal crystallization was needed to answer the research question accurately and richly (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

After six cycles of open and axial coding, 15 concepts emerged that supported the three nexus central to the visualization depicting the instructor's hybrid environment experience. I derived the concepts from participant experiences using the Herrick 7-step inductive thematic analysis process. Open coding returned the following concepts: access, community, engagement, flexibility, load, mastery, organizational benefit, power, presence, rapport, resource allocation, responsibility, student performance, support, and technology. Chapter 4 presents the personification of each concept while describing its importance to the instructor's experience. The personification of the theme was the final step of the Herrick 7-step process, and the participants' voices were tied to the description of the concept as they crystallized into a nexus.

The personification was the output of the constant comparative analysis process. For each cycle, all codes in each concept were compared for the code that most succinctly personifies the theme, then compared against all other codes in the theme for each cycle. The personifications presented were the statements that, through inductive thematic analysis, best represented the concept from all available codes in the concept.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness guidelines of Tracy (2010) and Guba (1981) guided the development of trustworthy analytical methods for this study. Guba (1981) framed trustworthiness in qualitative research requirements as truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. Tracy (2010) provided an updated review of methods to attain and maintain Guba's criteria.

In this study, truth value was accomplished through transparency. Analytic memoing throughout the process served to keep my subjectivities transparent to the reader and other researchers. Additionally, since no personal gain was in place for me, and I had no preconceived perception of the outcome, there was minimal likelihood that I would violate the data by injecting my preunderstandings into the proceedings. Tracy (2010) offered member checking as a method to affirm truth value in the accurate retelling of participant accounts. However, anonymity driven by this study made member checking impossible.

Applicability means that the findings of the group of participants in this study can be repeated with other subjects in similar environments (Guba, 1981). Multivocality is a method to achieve applicability since it is a quality of research derived from a diverse, inclusive, and comprehensive sample of the population Tracy (2010). Hence, this study utilized a professional, multidisciplinary, multinational approach to participant solicitation to achieve multivocality. Every effort was made to provide the broadest applicability to all members of the population

with the opportunity to participate in the research. Here, the single point of contact through the open-ended questionnaire allowed for a minimal time expense for the participants. This study was multivocal, so the participants came from multiple continents, spanned the academic spectrum, had diverse experience levels, and taught at all levels, from undergraduate to post-doctoral.

Consistency, according to Guba (1981), is the mirror of applicability, which focuses on the repeatability of the method. Consistency focuses on the steadfastness of the findings with the intent to make them "investigator-free" (Guba, 1981, p. 83). Transparency in the method was required to accomplish a consistent study, while consistency was enabled in this study through the presentation of all researcher analytic memos in Appendix C.

Guba (1981) used neutrality as another layer of data protection from the investigator. Neutrality orients the findings by asking if they are the result of the researcher or the result of the data. Removing the researcher from an inductive thematic analysis qualitative study is difficult but possible. Triangulation is a method to orient the results independent of researcher subjectivities. However, triangulation is best utilized in a team of multiple researchers because it utilizes multiple viewpoints of the same data to align the meaning and results (Guba, 1981; Tracy, 2010).

In this study, member checking could have provided these additional viewpoints to support triangulation, but it would have broken the established anonymity protocol. Instead, Tracy (2010) offered the tool of crystallization. Crystallization seeks "not to provide researchers with a more valid singular truth, but to open up a more complex, in-depth, but still thoroughly partial, understanding of the issue" (Tracy, 2010, p. 843). Tracy's (2010) definition of crystallization aligned well with the intent and the spirit of this study. Crystallization allowed the

data to reinforce the data and find meaning in the complex stories presented by multiple participants.

Finally, Guba (1981) highlighted "structural corroboration" (p. 85) to maintain research and interpretation integrity. I determined structural corroboration as similar to the constant comparative analysis utilized in the coding methodology of this study. The utilization of constant comparative analysis added another level of trustworthiness to the research's neutrality.

Trustworthiness was achieved in this study by applying the principles mentioned above. Appendix C contains the raw analytic memos associated with the iterative coding process. The participants in this study were multivocal. Finally, the data collected and analyzed ultimately reached a repetitive pattern I identified as saturation. Furthermore, when axially mapped, the concepts crystallized into a nexus. Axial mapping resulted in a graphic visualization representing and interpreting the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in this study included protecting the participants' anonymity through the study's design. Anonymity assisted the participants in giving truthful and honest accounts of their experiences while teaching in the hybrid environment without fear of reprisal. Moreover, password-protected and encrypted returns from the online data collection vehicle ensured the protection of participant data. Additionally, I could not identify the participants, which ensured an accurate and honest presentation of their experiences that could be critical to their employers and organizations. I had no way to provide data on the participants since no method could track the personal data built into the research collection by design.

The participants received no remuneration from Kansas State University, while I likewise received no remuneration or payment from any entity or individual to conduct this research. I

anonymously remunerated the participants from the Prolific recruitment service at a rate exceeding Prolific's standards of payment for academic participants.

Methodology Summary

This qualitative research study explored the experiences of post-secondary instructors who taught adults in a formal learning environment and their experiences teaching in a hybrid environment. The basic qualitative method allowed for constructing new knowledge gleaned from the instructors' words in a hybrid environment utilizing the McClusky theory of margin as a lens. When paired with open-ended questionnaires to preserve the participants' voices and constant comparative analysis of inductive thematic codes, the data crystallized into a new understanding. Finally, with subjectivity, assurance of anonymity, and preservation of the participants' voices held firmly in check, the resulting depiction of the experience crystallized into a graphic visualization of the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment. The visualization is presented in Chapter 4, with possible applications and impacts detailed in Chapter 5. Ultimately, understanding the experiences of the instructors in the modern hybrid environment provided insights into what was required to retain, recruit, and motivate them to provide whatever was required to help students learn (Brookfield, 2017).

Chapter 4 - Findings

The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of post-secondary instructors who taught adults in a formal, hybrid environment. Using inductive thematic analysis, I aimed to understand and describe their experiences encountered in the hybrid environment. One research question with two sub-questions drove the exploration: "How do post-secondary instructors describe their experiences teaching in a hybrid teaching environment?" Sub-question 1 was how the instructors described their advantages in a hybrid teaching environment. Sub-question 2 was how the instructors described their challenges in a hybrid teaching environment.

During data collection, the participants were asked to recall the advantages and challenges of operating in the hybrid environment on the open-ended questionnaire. The following sections describe the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment as derived from the experiences of 54 participants to the prompts in the open-ended questionnaire. The description presented here is the result of inductive thematic analysis of the open and axial coding of experiences.

When all analyses were complete, my findings suggested that the instructors described their experiences in a hybrid environment through the three nexus of experience crystalized from the concepts derived through the inductive thematic analysis using open and axial coding of the participants' experiences. Concepts clumped together as axial coding plotted each concept against instructor- and student-facing axes and the nature of the concept. Seeing these clumps of concepts on the axial map indicated to me a focal point, a nexus, of the experience. Further inductive thematic analysis allowed me to name the nexus based on the portion of the experience that best represented the clump of concepts. Each nexus was dependent on and interacted with the other two. To fully describe the instructors' experiences, the findings suggested that all three

nexus must be addressed. Therefore, this chapter details the inductive thematic journey that led to the findings suggesting a description of the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment.

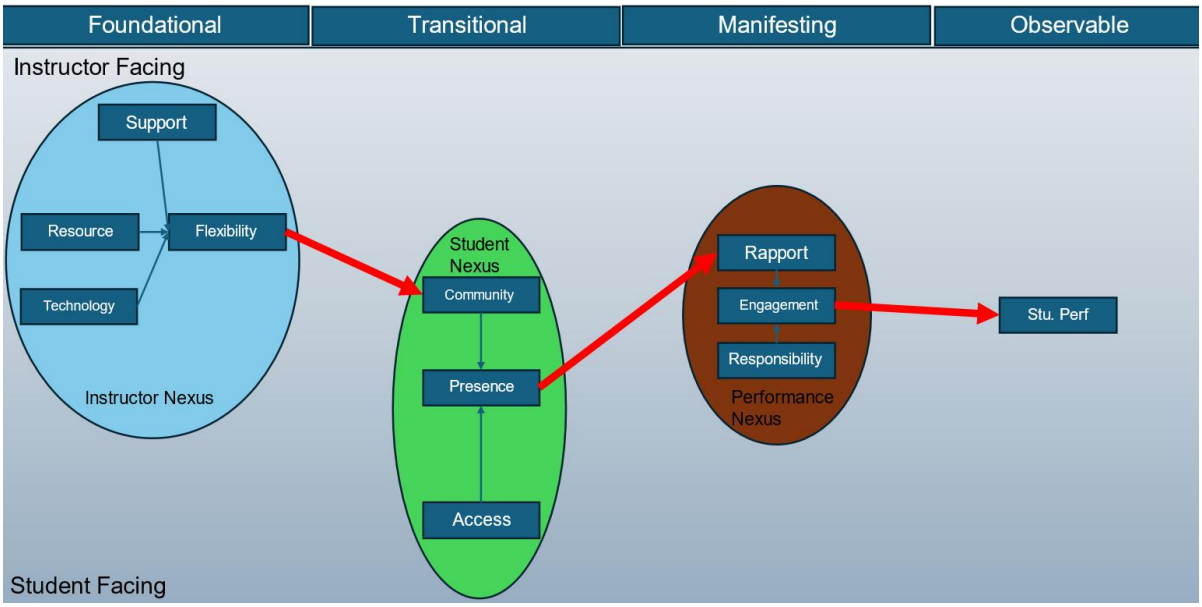
The Power-Load Map of the Instructors' Experiences in the Hybrid Environment

Figure 1 displays the output of axial coding. Axial coding was accomplished at the end of each cycle by plotting the concepts mapped against a vertical continuum ranging from instructor- to student-facing and a horizontal continuum representing the nature of the theme, ranging from foundational to observable. The power-load map is the final output of the six cycles of coding and inductive thematic analysis. The map is my visualization of the instructors' experience in the hybrid environment and serves as the framework for how I present findings in this chapter.

The progression of axial coding is presented in Appendix C. As each cycle was completed and the power-load map evolved, the concepts began to cluster and crystallize around a specific characteristic of the instructor's experience in the hybrid environment. The stories presented by the participants, as analyzed by inductive thematic analysis, suggested the hybrid experience crystalized around three nexus: the instructor nexus, the student nexus, and the performance nexus. Additionally, the instructor's margin appears during axial coding progression. While being the primary lens through which I viewed the data in this study, through open and axial coding of the instructors' experiences, I found the instructor's margin to have a more fundamental role in the instructors' experience. Margin, and the power and load concepts that form margin, are not on the final axial map. Instead, margin exists in the background, unique to each participant, while shaping the instructor's perception of every concept on the axial map. When margin is integrated into the experience, the resulting visualization is the Power-Load Map of the Instructor's Experience (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Power-Load Map of the Instructor's Experience



The places where the concept and nexus are positioned on the map have meaning. Higher and lower points on the map represent a spectrum of continuity between student- and instructor-facing concepts. Concepts placed more to the right of the map represent the nature of the concept. The further the concept is to the right, the more mature and developed it is. For example, the beginning of the experience is to the left side of the horizontal axis and is foundational. The foundation nature represents the start of the experience. Following the foundational nature is the transitional nature. A transitional concept can modify the experience. During the manifesting nature, the connection between instructor and student strengthens and can be felt by the instructor. Finally, the observable nature represents the culmination of the experience in the hybrid environment as student performance that is visible to all.

In the following sections, I describe the findings, starting with the construction and development of the power-load map, including how I defined each axis and how I plotted the concepts. Next, I present the findings associated with each nexus and the concepts assigned to

them. As I discuss the concepts in each nexus, I present participant stories and excerpts that emerged from open coding to build the concept. Finally, the section closes by discussing the influential role of margin in the instructors' experiences.

Power-Load Map Construction

The vertical component represents a continuum between instructor- and student-facing concepts. Inductive thematic analysis of the instructors' experiences suggested that the instructor-facing concepts were those the instructors felt they had more control over or for which they felt responsible. Conversely, the student-facing concepts were those the instructors perceived to have higher student influence. For example, the concepts of support—what the university provides to the instructor—and mastery—the internal drive of the instructor to improve—appeared as more instructor-facing. Conversely, access—the ability for students to attend an instructor's class, suggested a more student-facing concept. A student who did not have access to the hybrid environment would not attend the instructor's class and, therefore, have no impact on the instructor's experience.

Concepts that appeared to have a balance between instructor and student—technology, community, and rapport—appeared in the center of the vertical continuum. The positioning of technology, community, and rapport at the center of the power-load map was inductively derived from their ability to impact the instructors' experiences through the ability of the themes to shape the instructor and student experience equally. Multiple iterations of constant comparative analysis shifted the concepts in the continuum before crystallizing into the nexus presented on the power-load map. Each nexus was crystallized from multiple concepts that emerged from open coding. A detailed analysis of each theme follows in this section.

The horizontal axis depicts the nature of the concept and comprises four categories: foundational, transitional, manifesting, and observable. As I axially coded the concepts, I identified a developing maturity hierarchy, the evolution of which appears in Appendix C. Upon constructivist reflection and analytical memo review, I understood the quasi-sequential nature associated with the concepts from open coding. For example, the findings suggested that no rapport could be developed between instructor and student if a shared community did not first exist. This understanding indicated that rapport should be further right along the horizontal axis than community. I developed the four concepts of nature as a result of reflection through inductive thematic analysis.

Concepts of a foundational nature are presented as the starting point for the instructors' experiences. The concepts in this section of the horizontal continuum were set either by the organization externally or by the instructors before interacting with students. The instructor nexus falls within the foundational nature. As the study focused on the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment, it follows that concepts for crystallizing their experiences were also foundational. The participants suggested that their interactions concerning support, resource allocation, and technology were set by the organization or the environment with minimal ability for the instructors to change them. However, the participants also suggested that the values of those concepts modified their flexibility and the foundation of their experiences in the hybrid environment.

The transitional nature aligned with the student nexus. This nexus was flexible and unpredictable. Participant stories suggested that each student interacted independently of the instructor in the hybrid environment. From the participants' perspectives, students were enabled by access, empowered by community, and engaged by presence. As the instructors explain,

concepts related to the student nexus had both positive and negative impacts on their experiences and were relative to each student. The instructors reported that each student interaction was summative to the class, resulting in an averaged experience with the class as a whole. The whole class experience impacted their hybrid experience, either positively or negatively, therefore making the student nexus a transitional experience.

The manifesting nature appeared to be where the instructors' work combined with their students' work for learning to occur. Powered by engagement and bolstered by rapport and responsibility, adult student and instructor teams appeared to shine in the hybrid environment. In the performance nexus, the nature of the experience was manifest. As I reviewed the participants' statements, those who were more negative in their sentiments about their organizations and hardware also seemed to complain about their students' performance. Conversely, instructors who praised their flexibility and time savings had glowing reports about their students' performance.

Powering all three nexus was the instructor's margin. In line with the theory of margin, the instructors reported load, and they reported power. The concepts of mastery and organizational benefit assisted in adding power to the instructors through motivation. Reports of decreasing load also increased the available margin for the instructors. Each nexus and its constituent concepts interacted with the instructor's margin and received a positive or negative influence based on the instructor's margin state.

The Instructor Nexus

The three nexus of experience are the instructor nexus, the student nexus, and the performance nexus. The instructor nexus crystalized around concepts where the instructors reported having the most capacity or responsibility: support, resource allocation, and technology

combined to allow instructor flexibility. Conversely, the data suggested these same themes could also stymie flexibility.

Support

Participant F3 (female, aged 39-40, worldwide, people analytics, human resource management, graduate students) provided the personification of the concept of support: "The most challenging part is to be alone on this journey as there is no understanding from the university that it's not a job of one person but a teamwork." Thirteen codes aligned with the concept of support, which was described by codes focusing on the organization's ability to modify the instructor's capacity and capability to operate in a hybrid environment. The personification statement by Participant F3 precisely addressed the center of the support issue. The participants stated they either did or did not have support from their organization, which appeared to enable instructor flexibility.

Many participants had positive experiences with their organizations' deployment of hybrid environment technologies. Participant A2 (female, North America) said, "I had very supportive IT technicians, and this allowed my virtual students to be present and involved." Participant B3 (female, Africa) said, "Additionally, the support provided by my institution, including training on new tools and methods, has boosted my confidence and effectiveness as an instructor." Participant C7 (female, Africa) offered a collaborative perspective: "I've also appreciated the support from colleagues and administrators in navigating the challenges and opportunities of hybrid teaching." Participant D2 (female, Africa) highlighted the importance of streamlining: "I was lecturing my students on a platform designed by the university for lecturers to interact with students. It was nice and effective," while Participant E2 (female, Africa)

summarized the importance of the organization providing the proper support, “I received the IT infrastructure that I needed for the classes from the school as well as the internet connections.”

Conversely, some participants had negative experiences with their organizations. Participant A5 (female, North America) noted the ripple effect poor support could have on the student body: “My university has not always provided great support for online/hybrid classes and charge students extra fees for them, which discourages enrollment.” Participant A8 (female, North America) reinforced the importance of support while identifying the scarcity that it could sometimes have: “Institutional support, such as training and adequate resources, is crucial but not always readily available.” Finally, Participant C10 (female, Africa) was aware that sometimes the instructor could be the limiting factor: “Instructors may require additional support and resources from their institutions to effectively teach in a hybrid environment.”

Organizational support appeared to have a multiplicative effect on the instructors’ ability and general experiences in operating in a hybrid environment. Participants who reported good or great institutional support generally had more positive experiences operating in a hybrid environment. Conversely, instructors who reported a lower level of institutional support also reported more challenges in the same. The participants’ reports of the multiplicative nature of instructional support suggested the impact, positive and negative, on their ability to generate motivation and minimize additional tasks. Hence, organizational support was noted as a highly instructor-facing theme on the power-load map influencing the instructors’ ability to generate flexibility.

Resource Allocation

Participant B10 (male, aged 18–29, Asia, English, undergraduate) provided the personification of the concept of resource allocation: “I think that having the materials online is

also helpful as I can just direct my students to specific links instead of needing to print out my materials." Four codes were tied to the theme of resource allocation.

Resource allocation focused on the organizational environment in which the instructors operated. Resource allocation was independent of problems endemic to their external environments. For example, many participants reported power and internet instability (Participants B3, C10, D7, and E4). However, these problems were not related to their instructional environments but were associated with the broader environments in which they taught.

Participant B10's personification statement aligned with the other codes for resource allocation, which referenced, in some way, the reduced products needed to complete a syllabus. When discussing the digital footprint associated with quizzes, tests, and assignments, Participant D5 (female, North America) stated, "This help[s] with arranging; there is no need to take hard copies that can literally cause problems if the script goes missing or anything of that sort." Participant C6 (male, Asia) discussed how the hybrid environment allowed for allocating "limited technological resources" among students who might not have access to physical products.

Resource allocation, though with only a few codes, allowed the instructors to be more flexible in executing their syllabi. Resource allocation was axially coded to be an instructor-facing code since it appeared to be under the instructors' spheres of influence while being reinforced by the organizational environment in which they operated. Resource allocation was axially coded to suggest a direct tie to instructor flexibility, for without the ability to allocate resources dynamically, the data suggested that instructor flexibility would be limited.

Technology

Participant A9 (male, aged 30-49, Europe, business, undergraduate) provided the personification of the concept of technology: “It can be tough to deal with software glitches, unreliable internet, or students struggling with the online tools.” Thirty-five codes were tied to the concept of technology, which was central to the concept and execution of the hybrid environment. Other concepts—flexibility, engagement, support, and presence—had strong ties to or were enabled by technology. The nature of the concept of technology was foundational and cross-cutting. Technology impacted the student and the instructor equally. “Sometimes my laptop just shuts off while I’m still working. In that way, we are disconnected during a lesson,” Participant A7 (female, Africa) reported, which suggested that both students and instructors were at the whim of technology in such cases.

Sometimes, an organization tried to provide additional support but instead generated a technology problem, as Participant A10 (female, Europe) discovered a “recently swapped desktop, and this has proven to be somewhat difficult as the operating system is different and therefore the other equipment—monitor, mouse, etc.—performs differently.” Ultimately, Participant C10 (female, Africa) described the spectrum of technical problems that could arise while teaching in the hybrid environment: “Connectivity problems, poor video quality, and difficulties with learning management systems can disrupt the learning experience.”

However, these negative, uncontrollable technical issues were well balanced in the participants’ reported experiences by the gains that technology provided them in their syllabus execution. Participant C9 (female, Europe) reported that technology “technically … integrates tools like video conferencing platforms and interactive resources that enhance content delivery and engagement.” Participant C10 (female, Africa) stated, “Instructors can utilize a wide range

of digital tools, such as learning management systems, multimedia resources, and online libraries." Participant D10 (female, Europe) summarized the benefits of technology in the hybrid environment: "I would say the hybrid environment is really successful now- much more so than in the early days (from 2002 onwards) when students were uncomfortable with the technology."

At the time of this study, the use of generative algorithms was an emerging concern for instructors. Participant B10 (male, Asia) stated, "Oftentimes, I notice large disparities between their scores in the offline examinations and their online performance. Of course, I am aware that students frequently use [generative algorithms] and other methods to cheat in my online quizzes." Participant B10 indicated that the hybrid environment allowed students to cheat using algorithms while allowing instructors to proctor physical exams in the in-person portion of the environment to mitigate the impact that generative algorithms could have. Overall, the participants suggested that technology as a concept was an enabler. It could have a positive effect when it worked and was integrated, or it could have a negative effect when the integration was delegated to the instructors and students.

Finally, the operational environment in which the instructors and students existed had an external influence on the technological environment that cannot be understated. For instance, Participant C10 (female, Africa) noted that the "incompatibility between different devices, operating systems, and software can cause technical difficulties." When coded axially, technology joined resource allocation and institutional support as themes enhancing instructor flexibility while being equally student- and instructor-facing.

Flexibility

Participant B3 (female, aged 18–29, Africa, informatics, undergraduate) provided the personification of the concept of flexibility: "I've found that hybrid teaching offers more

flexibility, enabling me to balance in-person and online interaction while accommodating students' diverse schedules." Thirty-one codes were assigned to flexibility, which was one of the more commonly referenced themes in the study. These flexibility-related codes were aligned along multiple areas. Temporal, technological, and pedagogical areas arose and combined to form the concept of flexibility.

The temporal area of flexibility reflected the asynchronous nature available in the hybrid environment. For instance, Participant A5 (female, North America) stated, "Asynchronous online classes allow instructors/students to participate at times that work best for them." Moreover, Participant B9 (male, Europe) stated, "Hybrid teaching promotes flexibility for both instructors and students, accommodating varied schedules and learning preferences." Similarly, Participant B3 (female, Africa) said, "I've found that hybrid teaching offers more flexibility, enabling me to balance in-person and online interaction while accommodating students' diverse schedules." Time and its efficient use were important to the instructors and students, and the flexibility provided by the hybrid environment allowed the instructors to optimize time utilization.

The technological area of flexibility suggested the multimodal nature of the hybrid environment. However, technological multimodal instruction required the instructors to adapt to changing, sometimes challenging situations: "The challenge of engaging students through digital tools while maintaining the personal connection of in-person sessions is both stimulating and rewarding" (Participant F1, female, worldwide). However, the instructors who responded to the study, in line with their high self-efficacy in technology, assessed themselves as equal to the challenge: "I think both myself and my students enjoy the flexibility that today`s modern technology offers us; it allows me to use many diverse teaching tools" (Participant E7, female, Africa). "I often utilize video and other visuals to increase interest and engagement, and enjoy

being able to share my screen easily with links to related content" (Participant D9, female, Africa). "Actually, it allows me to use materials such as online discussion forums, video lectures, and interactive platforms to keep students engaged" (Participant A9, male, Europe).

The pedagogical area of flexibility focused on the instructors' ability to quickly adapt their material to dynamic methods made available in the hybrid environment, for instance, "enabling students to learn at their own pace while allowing instructors to address diverse learning needs" (Participant A8, female, North America) and "I enjoyed teaching in a hybrid setup because it helped meet different student needs and made learning more flexible" (Participant B8, female, Africa).

When moving to axial coding, flexibility began as heavily instructor-facing since it was apparent from the participant responses that these instructors tended to glean the most from being flexible. However, through constant comparative analysis, the participant data suggested that the flexibility the instructors had accessed and utilized was only deployed if it benefited the students' sense of connection through community and, eventually, engagement. The revelation of flexibility as a modifier of community through axial coding and constant comparative analysis suggested that flexibility was a key component in the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment as they interfaced with students' perceptions.

The Student Nexus

The student nexus crystalized around concepts where the participants were more concerned about the students' perceptions than their own: community, presence, and access. The participants' experiences indicated that the manifestation of the student nexus was engagement, the heart of the last nexus: student performance.

Community

Participant C6 (male, Asia, business management, graduate students) provided the personification of the concept of community: “I make a conscious effort to connect individually with students, understanding their challenges and providing tailored solutions, whether through one-on-one meetings or group discussions.” Overall, 20 open codes aligned with the concept of community. The central areas of the theme of community were communication, connection, and collaboration. Along the area of communication were comments that the hybrid environment made it easier for introverts and those who were “not confident in the instructional language” to respond to prompts in their own time “without judgment” (Participant D8, male, Africa; Participant F1, female, worldwide). However, the participants also referenced the challenges unique to the hybrid environment, such as “social isolation” (Participant C10, female, Africa) and an “impersonal connection” (Participant D3, female, Africa). The impersonal connection in communication led to the area of connection.

Connection was separated from the following concept: engagement. For this study, engagement was reserved for the act of instruction, both giving and receiving. Conversely, connection described how the student felt about being in the class overall. The participants provided passive connectivity (i.e., “It’s a very good thing for students to connect with each other;” Participant B5, male, Africa) and active connectivity (i.e., “I make a conscious effort to connect individually with students;” Participant C6, male, Africa,) as well as overall negative comments about connectivity (see Participants C10 and D3 above).

Finally, the participants were generally enthusiastic about collaboration in the hybrid environment: “It’s about creating space where the learning environment is fertile for growth. And the students want to participate” (Participant A2, female, North America). “I really love the

teaching, and I really love helping out the community that I live in" (Participant B5, male, Africa). "We seem just to be able to foster belonging and group identity quickly and just get in [sic] with it" (Participant D10, female, Europe).

When axially coding the theme of community, it was apparent to me that the instructors suggested that community was as important to them as it was for the students to feel part of that community. Hence, the theme of community rested at the balance point between instructor- and student-facing values.

Presence

Participant C2 (male, aged 30–49, Africa, business studies and accounting, undergraduate) provided the personification of the concept of presence: "I feel it can be challenging to maintain student engagement and ensure comprehension, especially with subjects like accounting that require a strong foundation." Eleven codes were linked to the concept of presence. The instructors focused on presence as a student, not an instructor, perception. The codes primarily focused on how the instructors perceived student embodiment in the class.

One of the more common observations of the instructors was that of student disconnection. For example, Participant A3 (female, North America) said the students were "disconnected when they are at home or in their offices as opposed to being in the classroom … As an instructor, I find it challenging to connect with students to the same degree." Participant E8 (female, Europe) offered, "Also, sometimes I feel I am somewhat isolated from the students. I don't always feel we are teacher and class."

Furthermore, the area of understanding was also presented under the concept of presence. Codes relating to understanding focused on the difficulty in ascertaining a student's understanding utilizing remote methods. Participant D7 (female, Africa) reported, "It's hard to

gauge student understanding without face-to-face cues," while Participant E1 (male, Europe) said, "For some people, it can be really limiting, as they can't express themselves as well in this environment, as opposed to in-person sessions." The most authoritative statement made on the concept was, "Of course, it cannot replace in-person teaching, mainly because some students still need personal assistance when they are struggling" (Participant E8, female, Europe).

Finally, some instructors reported that the ability to switch between online and in-person instruction in the hybrid environment made it easier to engage student presence. For example, Participant A5 (female, North America) stated, "I believe the Zoom or in-person class sessions allow students to form stronger connections than they do when only in an online class." Participant D2 (female, Europe) similarly noted, "The hybrid gives the opportunity to work better in groups as in person is better for group monitoring rather than having them in breakout rooms." Together, these statements highlighted the utility of switching modalities to maximize the student's feeling of presence.

When taken as a complete concept, presence was student-facing modified by the instructor's application of the hybrid environment. The deftness with which instructors operated in the hybrid environment and the ability to modify modalities based on student needs increased the feeling for these instructors that their students were mentally present. When applied to axial coding, presence appeared to be strongly linked to engagement as a student-facing concept.

Presence, on behalf of the student or the instructor, may have an impact on engagement relative to the perception the individual has of their presence in the hybrid environment. If the student or the instructor has a negative perception of engagement, the findings suggest a likely negative effect on engagement. Participant E8 (female, Europe) represented this feeling when

she stated, “Sometimes I feel I am somewhat isolated from the students. I don’t always feel we are teacher and class.”

Thus, it appeared that it was up to the instructor to set the precedence for the tone of presence. The participants in this study expressed a general negative sentiment about presence in the hybrid environment except when the option to return to the classroom when needed was added. The instructors reported that having that ability to return to the classroom enabled them to build rapport with their students, who couldn’t feel a sense of presence in the remote environment.

Access

Participant D6 (male, aged 18–29, Africa, mathematics and natural science, undergraduates) provided the personification of the concept of access: “Students can review course materials at their own pace, and instructors can adapt teaching strategies to meet diverse student needs, promoting a more inclusive and effective learning environment.” Overall, 37 open codes were associated with the concept of access, which made it one of the most impactful concepts on the instructors’ overall experiences in the hybrid environment. When comparing codes associated with access through the constant comparative analysis process, access trended into two areas: the opening of education to new audiences and the restriction of access due to the higher level of student technology needed to engage in learning.

The concept of the hybrid environment making education available to those previously underserved had many facets. Two participants (D10, female, Europe; C7, female, Africa) focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Others focused on class-based issues associated with traveling to school or attending while living in rural environments (Participant E1, male, Europe; Participant E7, female, Africa). Multiple participants (E9, female, Africa; D7, female, Africa;

A2, female, North America) lamented unstable power and internet coverage as a significant challenge to instructing in a hybrid environment.

During the axial coding review, all codes associated with access were determined to be heavily focused on the student. No reference in the participants' stories discussed instructor challenges with access, only the students' difficulty in connecting to the class or retrieving and understanding the data. Hence, access was high on the student-facing axis of the power-load map.

The Performance Nexus

The performance nexus represented the description of the instructors' experiences with the hybrid environment classroom output. In the performance nexus, engagement allowed for the building of rapport and the assignment of responsibility. Ultimately, the findings suggested that as the instructor and student nexus performed, the student nexus appeared to follow. No participant recollections indicated a low-performing instructor or student nexus with high performance. The participants did not indicate that expenses of margin were not always effective in recovering performance from a poor experience in the instructor or student nexus.

Engagement

Participant B3 (female, aged 18–29, Africa, informatics, undergraduate) provided the personification of the concept of engagement: "It's always the same students that engage quite a lot. Every other student just prefers to hide behind the screen." With 44 instances attached to the theme, engagement was the most prevalent code in the study. The instructors' responses concerning engagement were broad. Some instructors focused on student participation with positive comments (i.e., "I feel like even the quite [sic] students who are usually quite [sic] in person show better participation online"; Participant E2, female, Africa) and negative comments

(i.e., “It depends on the class, but maintaining high student engagement online is pretty challenging”; Participant E8, female, Europe). Others focused on fostering engagement through novel applications of technology: “Interactive sessions using simple tools like quizzes on Kahoot or polls on Mentimeter boost engagement” (Participant C6, male, Asia), and “I can also use cool tools like videos, online games, and quizzes to make learning fun and interactive” (Participant C2, male, Africa).

The most common component of engagement was the difficulty for the instructor to acquire feedback: “[It] can be challenging to connect with students because it’s not as easy to read the room” (Participant A2, female, North America). “The lack of real-time interaction sometimes made it difficult to gauge student understanding and provide immediate feedback” (Participant B1, female, worldwide). “The lack of real-time interaction can sometimes make it harder to address misunderstandings immediately” (Participant C2, male, Africa). Overall, few outright negative comments were offered in the study. These few occurred in the theme of engagement: “It is also exhausting when students don’t turn their cameras on—very difficult to teach observing black screens” (Participant F1, female, worldwide). “They ‘disconnected’/disengaged from school, no longer committing with their own learning and, worse than that, losing many social competencies” (Participant E4, male, Europe).

Moving from open to axial coding, the instructors clearly viewed engagement as student-based while important to their operations as instructors. Inductive thematic analysis revealed that engagement contributed directly to instructor motivation, and therefore increased margin. Since both instructors and students accessed engagement to improve their experiences in the hybrid environment, axial coding placed the theme of engagement near the balance point between

instructor- and student-facing concepts. The instructors reported very clearly that an engaged student also performed well, while those that were not engaged performed poorly.

Rapport

Participant D10 (female, Europe, language education and applied linguistics, post-graduate) provided the personification of the concept of rapport: "It feels like the student is getting focused, tailored support, and my impression is I have developed a deeper relationship with the people I teach than if I just saw them as a whole cohort in a lecture hall." Seventeen codes aligned with the concept of rapport or the relationship between student and instructor. This study focused on adult students. Therefore, the traditional teacher-student relationship was not guaranteed, nor could it be taken for granted. Rapport, as a concept, did not emerge until the third cycle of open coding. The participants discussed approachability, tailorability, and collaboration as areas resulting from increased rapport, all of which contributed to increased engagement and higher performance.

When discussing approachability, Participant D9 (female, Africa) offered the most explicit statement supporting the hybrid environment approach: "My students see me as approachable as I am open to communication via means they actually use; this limits the gap between our age groups and provides a casual relationship that is enjoyable." Participant F1 (female, worldwide) highlighted that teaching in a hybrid environment is "dynamic and adaptable. It's easier for me to maintain a strong connection between students and me, make them stay focused, and balance in-person interaction with digital communication tools at the same time."

The area of tailorability addressed the instructors' ability to change the method of interaction to develop rapport and meet the students where they most needed it. For example,

Participant C7 (female, Africa) said, “This blended approach has allowed me to connect with students in new ways, accommodating diverse learning styles and promoting a more inclusive learning environment.” Participant D10 (female, Europe) offered the personification of the concept and struck a similar chord: “It feels like the student is getting focused, tailored support, and my impression is I have developed a deeper relationship with the people I teach than if I just saw them as a whole cohort in a lecture hall.” The participants suggested that tailorability allowed them to meet their students where they needed to be met, which increased rapport while also suggesting increased collaboration.

Collaboration, as a thematic area, demonstrated a student-instructor relationship with remarkably high rapport. Here, the student and the instructor meet as peers concerning specific knowledge or a problem set to work as a team to understand the meaning of the issue. Participant D10 (female, Europe) personified the concept of collaboration: “We spend the whole time on task, and it’s really useful for both of us (or the group) to be able to search databases and share links in real-time when something occurs to us.”

However, not all instructors had positive results from their experiences in the hybrid environment. Many found the concept of trying to improve relationships with their students difficult or draining. For example, Participant A3 (female, North America) noted, “As an instructor, I find it challenging to connect with students to the same degree as when students are in person.” Alternatively, Participant C4 (female, North America) described, “It is hard for me to form relationships with students when I am just seeing them through emails or on a Zoom when they want to meet for office hours.” Finally, Participant D6 (Female, Africa) explained, “I also think that instructors play a crucial role in ensuring a seamless learning experience, providing clear guidance, and encouraging student engagement.” These participants suggested how the

hybrid environment could be draining at times. The increased load to maintain rapport with students in the hybrid environment placed rapport building directly across from instructor margin as a concept balanced between student- and instructor-facing to reflect the two-sided nature of the concept.

Responsibility

Participant C9 (female, aged 30–49, Europe, fine art photography, post-graduate) provided the personification of the concept of responsibility: "[The hybrid environment] balances structured in-person interaction with the independence of online learning while also fostering self-discipline." Five codes were tied to the concept of responsibility. The concept of self-discipline, as stated by Participant C9 in the personification, appeared to be central to responsibility. As the students referenced in this study were all adults, an inherent level of responsibility was associated with formal adult learners. An assumption associated with this study was that most students in the participants' classes desired to be there since they were all adults. However, adults are also busy and creative and can seek to cut corners. The codes associated with responsibility reflected this notion, which started with the definition of the rules by Participant F5 (female, North America), "Initially, students who have not taken a hybrid class are confused. So, the challenge is to help them understand the format and their responsibilities."

Once the responsibilities are defined, the concept of self-discipline becomes the driving factor. The personification statement by Participant C9 was central to self-discipline and the nature of responsibility. To provide context and bounding to the topic of self-discipline, Participant D7 (female, Africa) highlighted, "I find that attendance in hybrid sessions is also higher compared to classroom sessions as students may realize they have 'no excuse' to skip the class." Participant A9 (male, Europe) summarized the discussion: "On a more personal level,

I've found it [instructing in the hybrid environment] encourages students to take responsibility for their learning."

During axial coding, responsibility trended student-facing while increasing overall student performance. Additionally, an increased representation of student responsibility was axially coded through inductive thematic analysis to contribute to higher student engagement.

Student Performance

Participant C2 (male, aged 30–49, Africa, business studies and accounting, undergraduate) provided the personification of the concept of student performance: "I find it rewarding to see how students adapt and take ownership of their learning, but the lack of real-time interaction can sometimes make it harder to address misunderstandings immediately." Thirteen codes aligned with the theme of student performance, which emerged as a theme in Group C of open coding. What was most surprising about this set of codes was the apparent negative sentiment associated with this concept. The participants generally enjoyed themselves, were comfortable, and appreciated working in the hybrid environment, but quite a few of them were frustrated or unimpressed with their students' performance. The personification of this theme from Participant C2 was selected as the sentiment of the code was more aligned with other personifications and the overarching positive sentiment of the hybrid environment. However, student performance presented a view of the frustration that might be lying just below the surface as the instructors operated in a hybrid environment.

The negative sentiments about student performance were focused on the students' lack of effort and engagement, as observed by instructors. For example, Participant B2 (male, Europe) stated, "Students tend to underperform when classes are online and in-person classes are way more useful," while Participant B10 (male, Asia) observed, "My students are usually

disinterested in my online lectures and frequently have their cameras off." Finally, Participant C4 (female, North America) explained, "However, I see a lot of students give very minimal effort, and I think that since we do not meet in person or at the same time, they think that they have a lot lower expectations." As referenced previously, rapport with students and the ability to build relationships suggested a link between student engagement and instructor margin. The comments of Participant C4 further reinforced how a lack of student performance could drain an instructor's margin and sap motivation. Therefore, the findings suggest that the student's performance modifies the instructor's power.

However, not all comments associated with student performance were negative. Participant B1 (female, worldwide) said, "Asynchronous components allow students to learn at their own pace, which can improve comprehension," while also discussing that "fostering independent learning and critical thinking, as students often engage more deeply with material" was characteristic of the hybrid environment. The participants also lauded the ability to monitor students, which was inherent to the hybrid environment. For instance, Participant C2 (male, Africa) stated, "Technology lets me check how students are doing and give extra help when needed." Participant C10 (female, Africa) enjoyed the fact that "hybrid environments provide instructors with access to data analytics, enabling them to track student engagement, progress, and learning outcomes."

Ultimately, Participant E7 (female, Africa) summarized the situation rather succinctly: "In my experience, it is very much the same as in-person teaching. It is up to the teacher to hold the student's attention." The participants described their experiences with student performance as having two distinct and separate sides. On one side were the instructors with better access, management, and deployment of their syllabi through the hybrid environment. Conversely, the

adult student ultimately could choose whether to engage in a class presented in the hybrid environment. The participants discussed how easy it was for students to disconnect and provide only minimal effort in the class. However, they also noted that it was easy to see students who were minimally performing.

During axial coding, student performance was the manifestation of all the previous themes. The instructors had to set the environment for the students to succeed through all of the advantages and challenges of operating in the hybrid environment presented in all previous concepts in the power-load map. At the same time, the students had to manifest learning through the same advantages and challenges. However, as the participants attempted to use their best efforts to set an environment rich for learning, they reported that the students could still disengage, refuse to learn, and minimally perform. Unfortunately, students who presented this behavior sent a return signal back through the power-load map that intersected and drained instructor margin, which could, in turn, reflect on other students.

Instructor Margin

The instructor's margin does not directly appear on the power-load map. Instead, the instructor's margin is the background for the entire map. Instructor margin is integrated into every concept and interaction, either positively or negatively, based on the instructor's margin state at the given time. Margin—comprised of concepts of load and power—was the engine the participants described as keeping instructors moving forward in the hybrid environment. Mastery appeared in coding to drive the instructor's margin engine as a source of motivation—the work to make themselves better. Organizational benefit was a source of motivation as well—the work to make their employer better. However, according to the participants' experiences, the sense of community with colleagues, employers, and students enriched the motivation of the instructors.

Load

Participant C7 (female, Africa, education, graduate students) provided the personification of the concept of load: “Learning management systems (LMS) have also streamlined course administration, enabling easy access to student data, automated grading, and personalized feedback.” The 25 codes linked to the load theme were categorized by their relation to a modification of real or perceived tasks by operations in the hybrid environment. The modification of instructor load was sometimes positive—a reduction in real or perceived tasks—as evidenced by Participant D5 (female, North America): “One of the advantages of teaching in the hybrid environment is the fact that everything becomes easy: students mark attendance register online, take quizzes, do assignments, and submit online.” Alternatively, unfavorable comments were also offered, as evidenced by Participant A8 (female, North America): “Managing multiple platforms for assignments, assessments, and communication can also become overwhelming.” However, the negative comments were outnumbered by the positive comments; only five of the 25 codes had negative sentiments.

Those five negative comments highlighted the difficulty in managing multiple, new, or constantly changing platforms. In addition to Participant A8’s comment above, the other negative comments came from Participant F1 (female, worldwide), “Managing multiple platforms simultaneously can become overwhelming, requiring constant adaptation.” Participant D9 (female, Africa) said, “Learning to use a variety of different software packages was a challenge at times.” Participant C7 (female, Africa) described the “steep learning curves for new technologies and pedagogies.” Finally, Participant A5 (female, North America) observed, “I spend a lot of time planning and setting up activities, probably more than I do for in-person classes.”

Constant comparative analysis of the load codes suggested support as a key factor in mitigating the load associated with the hybrid environment. The negative codes in the load concept pointed to additional real tasks required by instructors to understand and effectively employ new technologies. The participants' statements in this study might indicate that even with a group of highly effective users of educational technology, rapid deployment of new platforms without appropriate support could increase instructor load, which could ultimately degrade the hybrid experience.

The findings suggested that the organization's methodological deployment of new technological platforms could assist instructors by lowering their learning load. However, most instructors reported that the hybrid environment reduced their load, with many of the load-related codes discussing time savings due to the lack of commuting or automated assignment management, such as "did not have to commune [sic] anymore (saved around 90 minutes per way/3 hours a day)" (Participant F4, male, Europe) and "Many digital tools offer automated grading and feedback mechanisms, reducing instructors' workload and providing students with immediate feedback" (Participant C10, female, Africa).

Overall, the participants felt more effective and efficient while operating in a hybrid environment. In an environment where technological tools did not change often and rapidly, these participants managed the changes with a net reduction of load and thrived in a hybrid environment. Their comments suggested they could set aside time to access the concept of mastery.

Power

Participant B7 (aged 40–49, Asia, computer science engineering, undergraduate) provided the personification of the concept of power: "Peaceful teaching and being came [sic].

We need not lack so much energy while teaching. No disturbances will arise but w.r.t to students we can't guaranteed [sic] full concentration." Power, for this coding, did not deal with the instructors' hierarchical positionality over their students or beneath their organizations but focused on the instructors' internal power to accomplish tasks. This definition of power aligned with the margin theory lens used to make meaning of the data in this study. Fourteen codes specifically aligned with power. The code from Participant B7, which personified this theme, was a paragon of the positive power-generation capability of the hybrid environment. Positive power generation was one area of the power concept.

Conversely, codes also identified a negative power-generation area. Participant A6 (female, Europe) said, "There is also the lack of connection to students due to them turning cameras and microphones off, making the teacher seem as if they're talking to a void." Participant C7 (female, Africa) directly referenced motivation related to internal power: "Maintaining my own motivation and enthusiasm in the face of challenges" was demanding for her in the hybrid environment. Of the 14 codes identified in power, only these two codes expressed an objectively negative sentiment.

Overall, the instructors felt empowered while operating in a hybrid environment. They drew power for time savings (Participant A2 [female, North America]; Participant B10 [male, Asia]; Participant E2 [female, Africa]) and connection through availability with students (Participant C1 [male, Europe]; Participant C7 [female, Africa]). When comparing the codes from open coding to the different sources of power—physical, social, mental, and economic—the reported experiences of instructing in the hybrid environment presented a net positive power gain for instructors.

Mastery

Participant D9 (female, aged 30–49, Africa, computer science, undergraduate) provided the personification of the concept of mastery: “I find that the students engage well with this sort of content and make use of the recorded sessions for revision. It is always great to be able to add personalized touches like music and graphics to my classes.” Mastery was the last code to emerge from the participant data, with Participant D9’s response being the first and the most descriptive of the theme. Mastery appeared as a byproduct of time saved by operating in the hybrid environment. Whether from saved time previously lost to commutes or streamlining feedback and grading, the participants clarified that working in a hybrid environment allowed them the time to hone and perfect their craft.

As the concept emerged late in the coding and late in Group D, a few codes were directly tied to mastery, with only three examples. However, constant comparative analysis highlighted other codes that were oriented toward mastery while being previously coded as another theme. I restricted open coding so that once a response was coded for a specific theme, it could not be cross-coded for other themes. However, constant comparative analysis located one previously uncoded reference from Participant C7 (female, Africa) that coded directly to mastery: “Personally, teaching in hybrid environments has allowed me to grow professionally, developing new skills in instructional design, technology integration, and adaptive teaching.” This insight into mastery was not the only one uncovered via constant comparative analysis.

For example, many of the codes identified under the theme of flexibility leaned into instructor creativity. The creativity identified by the participants focused on using novel techniques and tools to enhance their presentation of the material. Experimentation was

considered as seeking mastery of a craft, as the instructors sought these new skills because they wanted to improve them by applying new techniques.

While mastery was one of the smallest codes in the number of examples, its influence outweighed its examples. The participants' responses that were coded to mastery indicated how powerful mastery could be as a professional motivator. When applying axial coding, it was clear that mastery was one of the few themes that focused almost entirely on the instructor while increasing instructor power. Additionally, mastery and organizational benefit did not cluster into a nexus. Instead, the findings suggested that these two concepts were only tied to instructor motivation; hence, they were organized under power.

Organizational Benefit

Participant A5 (female, aged 50+, North America, adult education, graduate and post-graduate students) provided the personification of the concept of organizational benefit: "Our online/hybrid classes always have much higher enrollment than pure face-to-face classes." The instructor-participants for this study had a symbiotic relationship with the organization employing them; this mutual need relationship was almost assured by the requirement that all participants operated in a formal training environment. Without the organization, no formal education environment could exist, so finding codes that put the organization first was unsurprising. However, the frequency was low; only three codes pointed explicitly to the benefit of the organization. Aside from Participant A5, Participant C7 (female, Africa) mentioned the benefit to the organization, "Hybrid environments have enabled our institution to reach a broader audience, expanding access to education for students with constraints on time or location."

Though minimally represented, organizational benefit as a theme belied the selfless nature of the instructors. As with other concepts, the instructors were quick to focus outside

themselves, first with the students and now with the organization, to increase learning. When applying axial coding, the organizational benefit was clearly an instructor-facing theme, an increase that corresponded to an increase in the next theme: power.

Data Saturation

Data saturation is the point at which any further data collection provides no additional useful information to answer the research question posed by the study (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Fusch & Ness, 2015). Initial recruiting returned 62 respondents; 54 were retained as the participants who generated 275 codes across 15 concepts from 19,942 experiential words. The responses from participants exceeded the requested entry of 200 words. Through six cycles of open and axial coding, the second cycle identified the first 14 themes. Mastery, the final theme, appeared in Group C. Groups D, E, and F provided only codes aligned to the previously identified themes. Analytic memos following each horizontal and vertical reading from the coding process reflected the rate of saturation achievement. These full analytic memos are available in Appendix C. By the time of Group D, the data were rapidly approaching saturation, with highly similar comments repeated in each subsequent cycle. With Group E, I observed repetitive patterns in data presentation that indicated saturation.

Summary of the Findings

The findings presented in this study began the conversation on what it means to be an instructor experiencing a hybrid environment. The participants, through inductive thematic analysis, presented the challenges and advantages of teaching in this environment. Their experiences were described by 15 concepts crystalizing around three nexus. Instructor-participants described that when there was an alignment of the instructor, student, and performance nexus, the instructor experience was enhanced in the hybrid environment, which

enabled student performance. The application and positioning of these findings in the established literature are presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of post-secondary instructors who taught adults in a formal, hybrid environment. One research question with two sub-questions drove this research. The question was, "How do post-secondary instructors describe their experiences teaching in a hybrid teaching environment?" Sub-question 1 was how instructors described their advantages in a hybrid teaching environment; Sub-question 2 was how instructors described their challenges in a hybrid teaching environment. This chapter summarizes the study and the demographics, provides an interpretation of the findings, and some possible implications for practice. I close the study with points for possible future research.

Summary of the Study

This study took a nontraditional approach to basic qualitative methodology to explore the experiences of post-secondary instructors who taught in a formal environment and resolved the research question supporting that purpose (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This study used McClusky's theory of margin as a lens to make meaning from the described experiences (Lorge et al., 1963). Additionally, this study utilized a single-point-of-contact-per-participant open-ended questionnaire as a data collection vehicle, which resulted in 54 global participants. Their experiences were analyzed through inductive thematic analysis, which resulted in the graphic visualization of the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment (Braun et al., 2021). This approach and methodology allowed for participant anonymity and separation from me as the researcher to enable a faithful retelling of their hybrid experience (Erdem et al., 2021; Tourangeau & Yan, 2007; Woods et al., 2015).

Chapter 4 detailed these findings. However, a summary is presented in this chapter to facilitate the discussion. Open and axial coding of the participants' responses generated 15

concepts, which crystallized into three nexus of experience (Neumann, 1992; Tracy, 2010). The resulting visual depiction is a graphical representation of the instructor's experience in the hybrid environment not previously described in the body of knowledge. The foundation of the instructors' experiences, the instructor nexus, was comprised of the concepts of organizational support, resource allocation, technology, and flexibility. The instructor nexus centered on areas where the instructors could impact or mitigate. The transitional student nexus was composed of the concepts of community, presence, and access and centered on areas that were observable by the instructor but over which the adult students had the most responsibility. The findings suggested that the overall experience transitioned through and was modulated by the students' perceptions. The final nexus was the performance nexus with the themes of rapport, engagement, and responsibility. The performance nexus was centered on the manifestation of the experience as the adult students and instructors worked together to enable or enhance performance.

Powering the overall instructor experience was the instructors' margin. However, what was surprising in this study was the presence in the instructors' accounts of mastery and organizational benefit, which served as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation sources, respectively (Vroom, 1964; Pink, 2012). Mastery and organizational benefit ran counter to the reports of burnout, stress, and frustration that instructors were facing in the hybrid environment due to over-intensification, rapid technological deployment, and organizational oversight (Biney, 2021; Kamath et al., 2022; Regan et al., 2012; Smith, 2022). Instead, the participants repeatedly mentioned how important their organizational support was to their effectiveness and how much they enjoyed working in the hybrid environment. As I continued reflecting on the concepts of load and power and how they related to the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment, I

realized how flexible the theory of margin is, even without the inclusion of technology and organizational support in the basic theory.

McClusky designed his theory of margin to be a simple equation: load divided by power (Lorge et al., 1963). The theory is cross-disciplinary and extremely flexible. However, this theory was written when the hybrid environment was limited to correspondence-by-mail classes. It is unlikely that McClusky would have foreseen the level of integration technology has in the modern instructor's experience. Thus, for future researchers employing McClusky's theory of margin, external factors not inherent to the theory of margin should be accounted for to get an accurate retelling of margin. Concepts such as organizational intensification or cultural environmental issues will likely have a holistic effect on the margin of all participants in the sample. Keeping watch for cross-cutting concepts that motivate or demotivate instructors like organizational culture, financial compensation, or intensification will help to illuminate the participant's margin which can inform the organization of the instructor's desire to continue to perform (Apple, 1989; Lorge et al., 1963; Pink, 2012; Saqib Usman et al., 2013; Tessema et al., 2022; Vroom, 1964).

Influence of Demographics

The global nature of the participants brought interesting demographics into focus. The professional instructional level had two categories I did not expect to see: formal English training and formal adult education. Many participants were from the continent of Africa, so by analyzing their stories, I noted that some taught in regions that were underserved by what Western teachers would consider standard amenities: running water and electricity. Participant B8 (female, aged 30–49, 6–15 years of experience) hailed from Africa and was a formal English training instructor. She explained that students had to share an internet connection to attend class.

Participant E7 (female, aged 50+, 0–5 years of experience) also hailed from Africa and was a formal adult education instructor with a background in the English language. She discussed the challenges rural students had with acquiring data access and limited technological knowledge. She used the term "national load shedding," which occurs when the prime cellular data provider experiences an exceptional load. A similar issue in the United States would be data throttling, which is typically applied when a user exceeds a predefined amount of data usage per month to slow the speed down. However, national load shedding goes one step further by eliminating connections that make attending or teaching classes remotely impossible.

However, on the topic of multivocality, the cross-section of instructors that took part in this study provided a great richness to the data. The participant groups were split almost evenly between those instructors who had taught before the pandemic (56%) and those who had taught only after (44%). Additionally, the age spectrum was well represented, with the young cohort of 18-29-year-olds having almost equal representation to those instructors that are more experienced group of 50+-year-olds (20% and 15%, respectively). Moreover, the global nature of the study accounts for the cultural differences between all participants. When taken as a whole, the group's multivocality is strong, fortifying the trustworthiness of the study (Guba, 1981; Tracy, 2010).

Lastly, the cross-cultural nature of the participants in this study builds trustworthiness into the concept of margin as the engine that runs the instructor's experience in the hybrid environment. Because this study had participants from multiple continents, cultures, backgrounds, ages, and experience levels, the concepts of applicability and multivocality are well represented (Guba, 1981; Tracy, 2010). For example, while I cannot determine which country in Africa my African participants are from, the number of participants means I am likely

to have members representing large portions of that very diverse region. Indeed, some of the instructors' accounts in this study are similar to other research done on the continent of Africa, once again reinforcing the trustworthiness found in applicability (Biney, 2021; Guba, 1981). What I can determine from these diverse participants is that margin is the engine that powers their entire experience in the hybrid environment. Finally, this study is likely among the first studies on margin to evaluate a cross-cultural participant group. Studies relating to margin found during literature review were limited to only a single nation or sometimes a single community (Biney, 2021; Main, 1979; Maxfield, 2009; Thul-Sigler, 2016; Trautman, 2004; Weiman, 1987).

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings suggested the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment had three nexus—instructor, student, and performance—empowered by the instructors' margin. Instructor margin operates in the background of the instructor's experience in the hybrid environment. As margin powers choice, every concept that arose from inductive thematic analysis is influenced by the margin available to the instructor (Lorge et al., 1963). The 54 instructor-participants reported that the time savings associated with the streamlining of tasks in the hybrid environment allowed them to access their high technological self-efficacy to exploit the resulting flexibility to enable the pursuit of mastery. Time savings are a reduction in load, allowing for deintensification and an increased amount of time for improvement in one's skills (Apple, 1989; Hargreaves, 1991; Larson, 1980). Time savings, when coupled with high self-efficacy and organizational flexibility, empower accessing self-determination and intrinsic motivational efforts (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Jehanghir et al., 2023; Pink, 2012). The following sections discuss how the nexus discovered as part of the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment interacted with the theories informing this study.

Margin's Influence on the Instructor Nexus

Making complex tasks routine through automation can lead workers and teachers to perform simpler tasks that fill their days with busy work (Apple, 1989; Larson, 1980). The body of literature indicates that if routine tasks fill all available time in the day, no time remains to hone the craft of instruction or gain additional skills and removes and choices the instructor may have in the conduct of their day and allocation of time resulting in frustration, stress and burnout (Apple, 1989; Kamath et al., 2022; Lorge et al., 1963; Regan et al., 2012; Smith, 2022).

The participants' accounts in this study suggested that the hybrid environment was deintensifying in nature. The participants reported, with high levels of praise, the amount of time that was returned to them because they were no longer required to do something as simple as commuting to the office twice daily or printing classroom materials, harvesting back some of the time outside their 50-hour work week (Fitzgerald et al., 2019; Najarro & Kim, 2022). The participants' accounts also indicate that when they are not in the hybrid environment, they lose access to the time savings and are re-subjected to the more restrictive 50-hour week model. This study identifies that in a well-supported hybrid environment, the experience of the instructor is generally positive and deintensifying, countering the stress and frustration reported in previous literature (Kamath et al., 2022; Regan et al., 2012; Tuapawa, 2017). Additionally, the time saved while operating in the hybrid environment allowed the instructors in this study to access mastery to build motivation for their tasks, avoiding the burnout of an intensified environment, as reported by Smith (2022).

Additionally, the participants enjoyed the streamlined nature of assignment submission and grading afforded to them in the hybrid environment. The time regained by operating in the hybrid environment allowed multiple participants to creatively engage in the methods for

presenting information to their students. The participants found that their organizational support was critical to enabling experimentation. When working with adult students, experimentation is key to generating not only a positive community environment and rapport but, eventually, a transformative experience and real learning (Knowles, 1970; Mezirow, 1978; Najarro & Kim, 2022; Pink, 2012; Timms et al., 2007). A distinct contrast was reported between the participants who had supportive organizations and those who did not. The sentiments of the participants who reported low organizational support were more likely to be pessimistic without the creative flourishes of participants with good organizational support, reflecting low valence, and therefore motivation, power, and eventually margin (Lorge et al., 1963; Vroom, 1964).

Additionally, multiple participants reported the ability to multitask while operating in a hybrid environment effectively. Some participants worked on side projects while the students were in breakout rooms, while others set up the next digital experience for the students. In the process of multitasking, the instructors found novel and creative ways to employ the technologies at their disposal to increase learning. Effective multitasking, enabled by organizational support and flexibility from the power-load map, changed the calculus for time expenses in the physical power domain (Fitzgerald et al., 2019; Najarro & Kim, 2022). The participants reported a sense of satisfaction and mastery at these accomplishments, which further increased their motivation (Brookfield, 2015; Pink, 2012; Vroom, 1964).

The instructor nexus and the themes therein directly addressed the possible intensification associated with the hybrid environment (Larson, 1980). With high organizational support and technology functioning and adequately resourced, the instructors could access self-determination and an instructor's passion to teach to find creative ways to engage with their students in a meaningful hybrid environment while avoiding amotivators (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Pleace &

Nicholls, 2022). Thus, the flexibility enabled by a properly functioning instructor nexus was foundational to these instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment (Larson, 1980).

Ultimately, this study presents an account from instructors that is generally positive. The positivity shown by the participants of the study was a break from the accounts presented in the body of literature (Biney, 2021; Kamath et al., 2022; Regan et al., 2012). The level of positivity was a surprise to me as I analyzed the stories. The instructors were generally happy with operating in their well-deployed hybrid environments, countering the feeling instructors had during the initial rushed deployment at the onset of the pandemic, as reported by Romaniuk & Łukasiewicz-Wieleba, (2022). The participants in this study reported that the hybrid environment had a similar balancing effect on their work-life balance as the adult students in Biney (2021). Finally, the participants in this study report that when they have the power of choice, as manifested in the concept of flexibility in the instructor nexus, they feel that they have great personal power to manage the load of teaching in the hybrid environment consistent with McClusky's theory of margin (Lorge et al., 1963).

Margin's Influence on the Student Nexus

The findings suggested that the instructor's experience in the hybrid environment transitions through the perceived student experience in the hybrid environment. The participants in this study reported that through the power of choice and flexibility, they had the opportunity to build a strong foundation of experience in the hybrid environment. Those same instructors also reported the motivationally draining challenges associated with students who could not access the course or who chose not to be present. The interaction with the student nexus changes the instructor's experience. Therefore, the data in this study suggest that the instructor's experience

built in the foundational instructor nexus must be presented to, modified by, and transition through the concepts in the student nexus.

The instructors observed that community was the most significant factor in the student nexus. From the instructors' perspectives, they felt that students' sense of belonging was critical to their ultimate performance and understanding, which is reflected in student-based research (DiFrancesca & Spencer, 2022; Wallace, 2003). The link between the students' sense of community and the instructors' ability to foster that community was flexibility. Flexibility to change modalities or add tools was lauded by the participants and allowed instructors to meet students where or when they needed to be met, increasing their sense of community building with the student and reflecting the nature of a skillful teacher (Biney, 2021; Brookfield, 2015).

Some participants reported that students were doing the bare minimum or checking out behind a blank camera. The instructors described these students as not having a sense of presence in a hybrid environment due to a lack of student motivation, which in turn was a power amotivator for the instructor with consequences to margin (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Lorge et al., 1963). In this case, no sense of purpose might have existed for these students (Pink, 2012). A sense of purpose for a self-motivated individual results from understanding that their efforts have meaning (Pink, 2012; Vroom, 1964). However, a few instructors felt their students were only there to complete the course, not to learn. The inability to build community or rapport with the student due to lack of perceived presence by the student was a strong amotivator which impacted instrumentality of the instructor's efforts, sapping their margin, leading to frustration (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Lorge et al., 1963; Regan et al., 2012; Vroom, 1964).

Student access was a concept the instructors reported as critical to the student experience. However, the instructors also reported it was a concept that they were generally unable to

influence. The findings related to the concept of access suggested a description of the students' ability to encounter the material. In the hybrid environment, this ability could be as simple as logging into an LMS or a school website. Many participants in urban and rural areas reported that the access enabled by the hybrid environment assisted with increasing student enrollment and allowed education to service areas previously underserved (Anderson et al., 2012; Valentín-Sívico et al., 2023). The instructors' accounts suggested they found high motivation from the increase in equity this provided.

However, the instructors also reported challenges to access that were central to operations in the hybrid environment. The modern hybrid environment could not exist without access to electricity. However, many participants on multiple continents reported that stable electricity was not guaranteed for many students, reflecting the literature that rural areas continue to be underserviced by utilities (Valentín-Sívico et al., 2023). A loss of access due to technical or infrastructural issues broke access and impacted the community and, therefore, student motivation (Wallace, 2003). The more difficult it was for students to access class, the greater the desire to be recognized for the challenge associated with the effort, which reflected valence (Vroom, 1964).

This study defined the student nexus as transitional, meaning that the instructor's experience must transition through and is modified by the student nexus. The instructor does not directly interact with the themes of the student nexus. An instructor can set the hybrid environment the same for ten students and receive ten different interactions with the student nexus. This analysis presented here would suggest that this differential experience is unique to the hybrid environment, as each student experiences the community relative to their environmental reference. Each student's unique experience is a unique input to the instructor's

margin. The average of all student experiences and margin impacts ultimately form the instructor's interaction with the student nexus.

Margin's Influence on the Performance Nexus

The theory of margin is a common measuring stick for predicting performance in educational materials and has been used to describe motivation (Thul-Sigler, 2016; Trautman, 2004; Weiman, 1987; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017), the fundamentals of adult education (Merriam & Bierema, 2014), and teaching methodologies (Pratt, 2016). The ability to perform, according to margin theory, is determined by a simple equation: load divided by power. As the ratio approaches 1.0, a person should feel more stressed (Lorge et al., 1963). In this study, the responses from the participants and inductive thematic analysis place margin as the overarching engine for the entire instructor experience.

The instructor gains and expends margin as each concept is accessed throughout the experience in the hybrid environment (Lorge et al., 1963). The student sees the instructor's effort in completing these tasks, which builds instructor-student rapport and motivation through instrumentality (Vroom, 1964). Rapport, in turn, builds the foundation of the performance nexus through valence (Vroom, 1964). It is in the performance nexus where the instructor's experience in the hybrid environment manifests through student engagement.

This study did not evaluate external and personal factors to instructor margin. No personal life details were considered as part of this study, as instructor margin evaluation was not a question under research. Therefore, indications of social power as it relates to margin were not present in instructor accounts. However, some personal life situations were expressed by the participants while responding to the open-ended questionnaire, specifically the amount of time recovered while operating in the hybrid environment that a few participants used for personal

endeavors instead of commuting to and from work as another load item to be accomplished during the day (Najarro & Kim, 2022).

Findings suggest the instructor's experience in the hybrid environment is manifest through the performance nexus through student engagement. When the students were observed by the instructors to be engaged, participants reported having a high sense of purpose and meaning, which amplifies motivation and, therefore, personal power and margin (Lorge et al., 1963; Pink, 2012). Moreover, increased rapport between students and instructors builds valence (Vroom, 1964). As rapport and engagement increase, instructors can transfer responsibility to students, which allows them to interact with the material in a comfortable manner that increases autonomy (Pink, 2012). When fully engaged, adult students can access self-determination inherent to them (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Knowles, 1970). High engagement and rapport enable the shifting between multiple learning and instructing styles based on the understanding of student learning needs (Pratt, 2016). Additionally, the community developed between instructors and their students allows a constructive space to explore a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1978).

Summary

The findings suggested that the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment consisted of three nexus: the instructor nexus, the student nexus, and the performance nexus. Overall, the participants in this study were energetic and positive about operating in the hybrid environment. They were also comfortable operating within it. The instructor nexus focused on concepts the instructors could directly impact or mitigate as the foundation of the experience, which ultimately manifested in instructor flexibility. The student nexus was more ethereal from the instructors' perspectives. Composed of three interacting concepts that the instructors could not directly impact, the student nexus served as a transitional gateway, which shaped the nature

of the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment. Instructor margin, meanwhile, operates in the background and influences and is influenced by all three nexus and their constituent concepts.

Implications for Practice

This study focused on the instructors' perspectives on their experiences teaching in a hybrid environment. The following implications for practice focus on entities external to these experiences with the intent to improve the instructor experience. As students will likely not read this dissertation to determine how to make their instructors' experiences better, the focus of this section is on the organization and administration of the instructor's experience.

The Hybrid Environment Relieves Load

Most participants' responses with codes tied to the theme of load discussed the relative freedom they felt while operating in the hybrid environment. The simple act of not having to drive to work was referenced multiple times by the participants as a considerable time-saving effort. If a standard working day for a teacher includes a full hour of the day reserved for commuting, then giving that time back by simply not driving to the school is a boon for the instructor (Najarro & Kim, 2022). Some participants in this study drove longer, up to 2 hours a day for those navigating dense urban traffic or rural, long-distance driving environments. What these reported numbers do not account for are the ancillary tasks associated with commuting: side errands, mechanical stops, and weather. The extra time, as reported by these instructors, allowed for time to tinker with new applications, refine materials, learn new techniques, and spend more time with students and student material in the pursuit of instructor mastery (Casper & Sonnentag, 2020; Hargreaves, 1991; Pink, 2012; Wiebe & MacDonald, 2014). This additional

time allowed for increased application of creativity en route to high flexibility and rapport building with students.

Some responses addressed the challenges of initially setting up a hybrid environment. However, this difficulty was not outside what is presented in the literature (Romaniuk & Łukasiewicz-Wieleba, 2022). Something as simple as changing offices or office equipment was reported as a significant time sink where instructors had to focus on all the additional requirements and certifications to reestablish all programs on new computers, as opposed to improving themselves or their craft, a hallmark of intensification (Larson, 1980). The participants' stories suggested that minimizing the changes to an instructor's technology should increase the strength of the foundation of the instructor nexus.

Therefore, the organization should attempt to maintain a balance, and therefore, margin, between the need to refresh technology for the sake of security and performance and the instructor's need to maintain a stable platform for their students (Casper & Sonnentag, 2020; Hargreaves, 1991; Wiebe & MacDonald, 2014). The more the organization can streamline or standardize accounts, software, and hardware technologies deployed in the organization, the less intensified the instructor may feel. If the instructor requires information technology support with multiple classes to accomplish their tasks for the day, this hallmark of an intensified environment must be avoided (Apple, 1989; Larson, 1980). Incidence monitoring by information technology departments in organizations can pinpoint common problems and possibly deploy training or education to rectify the issue or provide feedback mechanisms to eliminate ineffective processes. This monitoring can be done autonomously to the greatest extent possible to avoid adding additional intensifying actions on the instructor, decreasing their margin to the point of risking burnout or departure from the organization (Casper & Sonnentag, 2020; Smith, 2022).

Flexibility and Margin as a Source of Creativity

The findings suggested that the output of the instructor nexus was flexibility. Flexibility, as a foundational concept, was the expression of what instructors could control in their experiences in the hybrid environment. Enabled by organizational support, resource allocation, and technology, flexibility was greatly influenced by the organization in which the instructors operated. The participants who had great organizational support also reported high flexibility. This interaction was independent of the subject matter, as participants in technical and non-technical degree programs reported the same impact—the flexibility of the hybrid environment allowed for increased motivation and a sense of community with students (Pink, 2012).

Conversely, organizations that stymie flexibility through administrative oversite, intensification of instructional tasks, or poorly deployed hybrid environment support were reflected in participants' negative views. Balancing the organization's needs for conformity and the instructor's need for creativity is central to managing intensification in the hybrid environment (Hargreaves, 1991; Houston et al., 2006; Romaniuk & Łukasiewicz-Wieleba, 2022). For the organizations that enabled flexibility, the participants reported accounts that indicated their available margin was also increased. When organizational policies established the freedom to explore instructional techniques, instructors accessed their creativity to meet the students where they needed to be for the best transfer of learning (Brookfield, 2015; Pink, 2012; Vroom, 1964).

The data suggest that organizations should seek to balance the ability of an instructor to explore the hybrid environment with the need for security and standardization. To maximize the instructor's experience in the hybrid environment, organizations should try to foster an environment where every new technological tool is evaluated for security with a predisposition

for deployment and vice containment. Instructors who felt they had a choice to make changes in their organization to better the students allowed these instructors to access valence while improving motivational power and available margin (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Lorge et al., 1963; Vroom, 1964).

The Hybrid Environment as an Access Multiplier

The participants in this study stated that operations in the hybrid environment increased students' access. Through the theme of organizational benefit, the participants also implied that enrollment in hybrid programs had been much more successful than in traditional brick-and-mortar environments only. However, the access enjoyed by students was only as good as the infrastructural environment they experienced. African and North American participants lamented how their students struggled to connect to classes due to unstable power and internet connections. Even in the United States, where technology appears omnipresent, internet service is still extremely limited in some rural areas (Valentín-Sívico et al., 2023). Compounding the physical access limitations is the network security situation. Academic institutions are not at any less risk for cyber intrusions or attacks than other sectors. For instance, during the production of this dissertation, the university was targeted by a cyberattack that limited access to most educational and administrative functions until countermeasures could be deployed (Motter, 2024).

The extant body of knowledge offers no indication that the cybersecurity environment will change at any point in the future. If historical precedent is an indicator, technology in the classroom will continue to evolve, as will the cyber security threat against it, a two-fold challenge to the instructor's experience in the hybrid environment. Proactive engagement in the

cybersecurity domain and the legislative domain by the host organization and grit by the instructor to endure the changes are needed to increase countermeasure funding and infrastructure growth (Duckworth et al., 2007). Delays or ineffectual deployment of cybersecurity countermeasures will only increase the frustration and confusion experienced by instructors and students, which is common in all new technological deployments (Namdeo, 2023).

The Return to Office Push in 2025

Though this study focused on the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment, the hybrid environment would not exist without the organization supporting it. At the time of writing this dissertation, there was significant turmoil in the environment, which was writ large to bring people back into the office. Among U.S. federal civilian workers (Quinn, 2024) and employees in business (Bharade et al., 2024), organizations are pulling people out of the hybrid environment and back into the office. Not everyone is happy with the return to the office, with a reported incidence rate of 20% of workers completely ignoring the mandates (Crist, 2024).

Indeed, universities are not exempt from this return to the pre-COVID status quo (Blake, 2024). Almost universally, return-to-work policies are met with stiff opposition from employees, while the retention of work-from-home policies faces opposition from the administration (Bharade et al., 2024; Blake, 2024; Crist, 2024). The educational hybrid environment should be excluded from this turmoil. Data presented here represents a global perspective for adult instructors. Instructors report better interaction with their students, a generally better feeling of utility, and overall better learning if authorized to conduct operations in a hybrid environment. Additionally, the deintensification of their workday and the simplification of administrative instructional tasks in the hybrid environment is shown to boost instructor margin (Apple, 1989;

Fitzgerald et al., 2019; Larson, 1980; Lorge et al., 1963; Najarro & Kim, 2022). From the participants' stories, a standout talking point in support of the hybrid environment is that the participant reported an increase in enrollment of non-traditional adult students. Organizational support must be available to maintain the hybrid environment and ensure a continued positive experience, as reported by the hybrid environment instructors in this study.

Limitations and Delimitations as Opportunities for Future Research

As referenced earlier, one limitation and one delimitation existed in this study. First, all participants self-assessed their comfort as high when operating in a hybrid environment. Since no participants were uncomfortable or disliked operating in the hybrid environment, the experiences reported might not have represented some of the more fundamental challenges associated with instruction in the hybrid environment. Future research should seek to find a balanced group of participants who are both uncomfortable and comfortable in the hybrid environment.

The delimitation of the study was the planned single point of contact per participant format. Future research could address this delimitation by returning to a more traditional qualitative approach, focusing on a single aspect of the power-load map with fewer participants.

Addressing the limitation and delimitation of the study is only a single avenue of approach to explore further or test the power-load map of the instructor's experience in the hybrid environment I present in this study. The next section offers additional ideas for future research on this topic.

Future Research

The research presented herein provides a detailed description of the instructors' experiences in the hybrid environment utilizing saturated, crystalized data around an experience consisting of three nexus. Avenues for future research include using an expanded qualitative

approach with fewer participants and more data points per participant to isolate specific nexus or isolate an experience particular to specific educational environments. Quantitative methods would also be appealing to validate certain aspects of the instructor's experience to allow organizations to target their efforts to improve this experience when resource-constrained. Finally, the organization remained quiet in this research, so the body of knowledge and understanding of the administrator's, the curriculum developer's, or the educational technology staff's experience would assist in building the holistic hybrid environment picture.

Conclusion

An instructor walks into the building, coffee cup in their left hand, jacket over their arm, and keys in their right hand. As they enter the building, they are greeted by the looks of students gathered in the hallways. Some are glancing up from personal electronics, some are looking over the message board, while others are patiently waiting at the door to the classroom. The dozen students who meet the instructor at this time every week represent a constantly changing kaleidoscope of experiences. There are dedicated stalwart in-class students, but often, students freely alternate between in-person and remote presence. They exchange greetings as the instructor unlocks the classroom and files into the room.

The radio frequency identification chip (RFID) on the instructor's keychain communicates with the sensors in the class to begin configuring the classroom hardware for this course and section. The instructor unslings their bag, extracts their electronic work pad, and places it on the classroom dock, identical to home dock for when the instructor teaches remotely. The same receiver is used in all classrooms, and the dock is hardline encrypted into the school's learning management and administrative systems. Autonomously, the instructor's electronic device uploads all graded papers, syllabus changes, and presentation preparations to the cloud.

The LMS detects file changes and updates the classroom hardware to display today's lesson. While the system is loading the lesson, the instructor builds rapport with the students by discussing current events. The instructor then extracts their Bluetooth device and places it in the ear. The system reports that attendance today is at 90%, with 40 students online and 14 students in the classroom. With a tap on the Bluetooth, the cameras link to the instructor's location in the room; the blue light on one camera and the remaining red show that all are active while one is recording.

As the instructor moves throughout the classroom, the cameras follow their movements by switching active cameras as needed for the best angles indicated by the switching of the blue and red lights. The instructor begins the lesson by making annotations on the smart board that are interactive with all students in the classroom and online. A tone in the Bluetooth lets the instructor know a student has a question. A tap of the Bluetooth brings the student in split-screen with the presentation, their voice projected over the classroom speakers.

The instructor opens the question up for discussion to the class. A parabolic mic electronically steers the classroom student speaking while nulling all external noise. The lively debate on the topic engages all students, the instructor facilitates, and the technology is visible yet seamless and intangible. The organization has ensured that standardized, secure educational suites are installed in each classroom. Instructors, using their unique RFIDs, can tailor the experience to their teaching styles. With the class complete, all conversations, illustrations, and lecture content are saved, compressed, encrypted, and loaded to the cloud, which makes them easily accessible for the 10% of the students who selected asynchronous attendance today. The instructor removes their workpad and leaves the room. The classroom resets while awaiting the next instructor and section.

This narrative may describe a hybrid environment in the not-too-distant future. In this environment, the organization embraces and supports the hybrid environment. Instructors are deintensified by the removal of mundane tasks, which are replaced and streamlined by technology and algorithmic intelligence. Students are free to select their method of attendance, and the instructional product delivered by the instructor is standardized, secure, and easily accessible to them. With technology managing the fundamentals of classroom administration, the instructor is free to engage the student nexus by building rapport and community. With the organization supplying the instructor with standardized resources and enabling creativity, the instructor builds a strong foundation through the instructor nexus. With the instructor nexus and student nexus aligned, performance is maximized.

The hybrid environment enables the above scenario. The participants' stories, when graphed in axial coding, were visual representative of the instructor's experience in the hybrid environment. The findings suggested that focusing on the components of this visualization could enrich the environment for student performance. The instructor—or the student—in this scenario could be you. How would you like your hybrid experience to unfold?

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Appendix A - Open-Ended Questionnaire

The following open-ended questionnaire will prompt you for some responses about your instructional experience in a non-synchronous, non-in-person instructional environment. The stories you provide will assist in a doctoral dissertation exploring the instructor's experience in the hybrid instruction environment. No personal data is requested, required, or desired. No digital data other than what appears in the form's responses will be collected by the researcher. Please don't forget to press SUBMIT at the bottom of the form.
* Indicates a required question

1. INFORMED CONSENT REQUIREMENT
PROJECT TITLE: Instructing in the Hybrid Environment: A Qualitative Exploration of the Teacher's Perspective
APPROVAL DATE OF PROJECT: 26 August 2024
EXPIRATION DATE OF PROJECT: 13 March 2025
PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATORS: Dr. Susan Yelich-Biniecki, Garrett Hogan
IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE INFORMATION:
Lisa Rubin, IRB Chair, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, 203Fairchild Hall, 1601 Vattier Street, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506,(785) 532-3224; Brad et al. for Research Compliance,203 Fairchild Hall, 1601 Vattier Street, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS66506, (785) 532-3224. Both may be reached at comply@k-state.edu
PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH: The purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of post-secondary instructors who teach adults in a formal learning environment and their experiences teaching in a hybrid environment.
PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED: You are asked to fill out short answers to the attached anonymous questionnaire. Your responses will be used to construct the representation of the instructor's perspective on interaction in the hybrid environment.
RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED: There are no foreseeable physical, psychological, social, or employment-related risks.
EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: There will be no personal data collected as part of the survey. Usernames, e-mails, account information, and location data are all stripped from the results that are collated by Google Forms. The research team will not have any of this data by design. Your responses will not be used for any other research or distributed in any way.
TERMS OF PARTICIPATION: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at anytime without explanation, penalty, loss of benefits, or academic standing to which Imay otherwise be entitled. The following radio button is required to complete the remainder of the survey.
*

Check all that apply.
I understand the above statement and consent to my responses to be used for the purposes outlined above

2. How long have you been an instructor in a formal learning environment?
*
Mark only one oval.
0-5 Years
6-15 years
Greater than 15 years

3.Utilizing the US Census Map below, select the region that best indicates from where you practice instruction. If you are an international or worldwide participant, please select the option with which you best identify.
*
Mark only one oval.
West (Includes AK, HI)
Midwest
South
Northeast
Mexico or Canada
South America
Europe
Asia
Africa
Australia and Oceania
Other:

4. Please check the appropriate demographic boxes as they relate to your identity.
*
Check all that apply.
Female

Male

Prefer not to identify gender

Non-Binary

Age 50+

Age 30-49

Age 18-29

Certificate or Credential Holder

2-year Degree Graduate

4-year Degree Graduate

Master's Degree Graduate

Doctorate Program Graduate

5. What is your field of instruction? You may identify a general area or a specific topic. Please do not include location or any identifiable information.
*
6. At what level do you instruct?
*
Mark only one oval.
2-year Undergraduate
4-year Undergraduate
Graduate
Post-Graduate

Other:

7. In just a few words, how would you describe your comfort level with technology in the field of education?
*
8. The National Center for Education Statistics (2009) defines a hybrid environment as "A combination of online and in-class instruction with reduced in-class seat time for students." For this research, the hybrid environment includes all instructional modalities that are not in-person AND synchronous. In 100 words or more, describe the hybrid environments in which you have served as an instructor and your feelings about instructing in that environment.
*
9. In just a few words, how would you describe your perception of student engagement or your connection with students in the hybrid environment?
*

10. Describe for me, in 100 words or more, some advantages you have encountered while teaching in the hybrid environment. These advantages can be technical (relating to equipment, programs, processes, etc.) or non-technical (human interaction, institutional support, personal perception, etc.).
*
11. Describe for me, in 100 words or more, some challenges you have encountered while teaching in the hybrid environment. These challenges can be technical (relating to equipment, programs, processes, etc.) or non-technical (human interaction, institutional support, personal perception, etc.).
*
12. Please use this section to provide any additional thoughts you may have about the future of instruction in the hybrid environment, such as how it may interact with your instructional philosophy.

13. Thank you for your time today; your responses, combined with other respondents' answers, represent the instructor's experience of teaching in the hybrid environment. Through proper representation of the instructor's perception, policy, and practice can be informed through the body of knowledge of the challenges and advantages of instructing in this medium. For any concerns, concerns, or questions relating to the survey, procedures, or consent that need to be directed to the institution, please contact the Institutional Review Board Chair, Lisa Rubin, at comply@k-state.edu.
If other professional groups may assist in the collection of data, please feel free to forward this survey link.
(The space below is a limitation of Google Forms and does not require utilization. However, if there are any lingering thoughts you may have, you may use this space).

Appendix B - Solicitation Letter

Dear Potential Participant, Board Moderator, or Colleague:

My name is Garrett Hogan, and I am a doctoral candidate at Kansas State University. The purpose of my dissertation research is to explore the experiences of post-secondary instructors who teach adults in a formal, hybrid environment. The hybrid environment includes all teaching modalities that are not purely in-person and synchronous. Your organization may call it remote teaching, online teaching, or hybrid teaching; all of these are valid terms under the umbrella of the hybrid environment for this research.

The open-ended questionnaire, linked below, will ask for a description of your instructional experiences in the hybrid environment. Any participant's involvement with the research is concluded after pressing "Submit" at the bottom of the questionnaire. Your assistance in posting, responding to, and sharing this anonymous questionnaire is greatly appreciated and will add to the research on the instructor's teaching experience in these learning environments. Thank you for your time today.

Link to Questionnaire: https://forms.gle/egdZCtgPVjRnyvHX6

Questionnaire QR Code:

Appendix C - Coding Data

Appendix Table 1

Participant Demographic Data

ID	Experience	Location	Gender, Age, Level	Field	Student Level
A1	Greater than 15 years	North America	Female, Age 50+, Doctorate Program	Adult Education	Graduate
A2	0-5 Years	North America	Female, Age 50+, Certificate or	Social Justice	Graduate
A3	Greater than 15 years	North America	Female, Age 50+, Doctorate Program	Education	Graduate
A4	Greater than 15 years	North America	Male, Age 50+, Doctorate Program	Education	Graduate
A5	Greater than 15 years	North America	Female, Age 50+, Doctorate Program	Adult Education, Qualitative	Masters and doctoral courses
A6	6-15 years	Europe	Female, Age 18-29, 4-year Degree	English	Graduate
A7	0-5 Years	Africa	Female	Life Orientation	2-year Undergraduate
A8	0-5 Years	North America	Female, Age 18-29, 4-year Degree	My field of instruction is in	Graduate
A9	6-15 years	Europe	Male, Age 30-49, Master's Degree	Business	4-year Undergraduate
A10	6-15 years	Europe	Female, Age 50+, Master's Degree	education	2-year Undergraduate
B1	0-5 Years	Worldwide	Female	English	2-year Undergraduate
B2	6-15 years	Europe	Male	Engineering	4-year Undergraduate
B3	0-5 Years	Africa	Female, Age 18-29, 4-year Degree	Informatics	1-year Undergraduate
B4	0-5 Years	North America	Female	Language	2-year Undergraduate

B5	0-5 Years	Africa	Male	Physics	Graduate
B6	6-15 years	Africa	Female, 4-year Degree Graduate	cost and management	Post-Graduate
B7	Greater than 15 years	Asia	Age 30-49	Computer Science	4-year Undergraduate
B8	6-15 years	Africa	Female, Age 30-49, 4-year Degree	English	TEFL
B9	6-15 years	Europe	Male, Age 30-49, Doctorate Program	Mechanical engineering	Post-Graduate
B10	6-15 years	Asia	Male, Age 18-29, 4-year Degree	English	2-year Undergraduate
C1	Greater than 15 years	Europe	Male	Teacher of a levels	2-year Undergraduate
C2	6-15 years	Africa	Male, Age 30-49, 4-year Degree	Business studies and Accounting	2-year Undergraduate
C3	0-5 Years	Africa	Female, Age 18-29, 4-year Degree	Senior and FET: English and	High School, Senior and FET
C4	6-15 years	North America	Female, Age 30-49, Master's	4th grade and STEM	4th grade and 4 year
C5	0-5 Years	Europe	Female, Age 30-49, Doctorate	Psychology	3-year undergraduate
C6	6-15 years	Asia	Male	Business Mangement	Graduate
C7	0-5 Years	Africa	Female	Teacher	Graduate
C8	Greater than 15 years	South America	Male, Age 30-49, Certificate or	Geografia	Ensino médio
C9	0-5 Years	Europe	Female, Age 30-49, Doctorate	Fine Art Photography	Post-Graduate
C10	Greater than 15 years	Africa	Female, Age 30-49, 4-year Degree	Physical science	2-year Undergraduate
D1	Greater than 15 years	Europe	Female, Age 30-49, 4-year Degree	English as a Second	Working people, almost
D2	0-5 Years	Africa	Female, Age 18-29, 4-year Degree	Chemistry	4-year Undergraduate

D3	6-15 years	Africa	Female	STEM (computer	2-year Undergraduate
D4	0-5 Years	Asia	Female, Age 18-29, 2-year Degree	I taught only English and SST	Post-Graduate
D5	0-5 Years	South	Female, Age 18-29, Certificate or	Field trips and projects	College and high school
D6	0-5 Years	Africa	Male, Age 18-29	Mathematics and natural	2-year Undergraduate
D7	0-5 Years	Africa	Female, Age 18-29, Master's	College English and	4-year Undergraduate
D8	0-5 Years	Africa	Male	Education	2-year Undergraduate
D9	6-15 years	Africa	Female, Age 30-49, 4-year Degree	Computer Science	2-year Undergraduate
D10	Greater than 15 years	Europe	Female	language education and	Post-Graduate
E1	6-15 years	Europe	Male, Age 30-49, 4-year Degree	English	Post-Graduate
E2	Greater than 15 years	Africa	Female, Age 50+, Certificate or	Primary level subjects	2-year Undergraduate
E3	0-5 Years	Europe	Male, Age 30-49, Master's Degree	Biostatistics	Graduate
E4	Greater than 15 years	Europe	Male	geography	4-year Undergraduate
E5	6-15 years	Asia	Female, Age 30-49, Certificate or	Computer Science and	4-year Undergraduate
E6	0-5 Years	Africa	Female	English	Graduate
E7	0-5 Years	Africa	Female, Age 50+, Certificate or	English Language	Students range from 5 to 80
E8	0-5 Years	Europe	Female	informatics	4-year Undergraduate
E9	0-5 Years	Africa	Female, Age 18-29, 4-year Degree	mathematics and languages	matric
E10	0-5 Years	Europe	Male, Age 30-49, Doctorate Program	Philosophy of Language	2-year Undergraduate

F1	Greater than 15 years	Worldwide	Female, Age 30-49, Doctorate	People Analytics,	Graduate
F3	Greater than 15 years	Europe	Female, Age 30-49, Master's	Education	Post-Graduate
F4	0-5 Years	Europe	Male, Age 30-49, 4-year Degree	Lecturer at a university (3	2-year Undergraduate
F5	Greater than 15 years	North America	Female, Master's Degree Graduate	Communications	2-year Undergraduate

Analytic Memos- Comments made by the researcher at the time of coding reflect the mindset and impression of data progression.

GROUP A Memos:

Group A seems to have an overall positive attitude toward self-efficacy in the hybrid environment, with a split in engagement between students liking online classes and missing the connection between in-person classes.

Completion of Group A vertical reading points to technology and its application as a central theme for this group. A majority of the respondents pointed to some technological issue as a driving factor in their ability to interact with students positively. Conversely, a majority of the instructors pointed to flexibility as a key advantage of the hybrid environment.

Group A Horizontal reading did not provide any additional insight into the participant mindset than were identified in vertical reading. Participants A1 and A10 were the most concise in their answers, while A3 and A9 had the most elaborate responses.

Theme Personification:

Access (8): students who wouldn't otherwise be able to attend in person are able to access the education

Community (3): it's about creating space where the learning environment is fertile for growth

Connection (5): The hybrid environment also seems to be a venue in which students find it difficult to connect with one another, even when there are breakout rooms and team projects

Fliexibility (6): Asynchronous online classes allow instructors/students to participate at times that work best for them

Load (4): students being unprepared for online/hybrid classes, and for the amount of self-directed learning they will have to engage in
Organizational Benefit (1):
Power (4): There is also the lack of connection to students due to them turning cameras and microphones off, making the teacher seem as if they're talking to a void.
Presence (4): I didn't believe it would be the best modality for the subject that requires interaction and engagement
Rapport (1):
Responsibility (1):
Support (3): Institutional support, such as training and adequate resources, is crucial but not always readily available
Technology (6): it can be tough to deal with software glitches, unreliable internet, or students struggling with the online tools

GROUP B Memos:
Group B Reported overall high self-efficacy, much like Group A.

Group B was my first group, containing only the commercially recruited participants. In this group, there were zero US-based instructors. The responses had a very different feel. Specifically, my African respondents reported a very high level of praise for the hybrid environments due to their ability to conduct outreach to their students. Conversely, it seemed the European/Asian respondents lamented the hybrid environment as a way for the students to tune out. Additionally, these same two respondents also taught Engineering courses. It is unknown yet if there is a trend between technical degrees and lack of engagement from students.

Participant B2 (Male, Europe, Engineering, 6-15 Years) had the most negative views of any of the first two groups of respondents, stating that there was "no advantage at all" to teaching in the hybrid environment. Participant B5 (Male, Africa, Physics, 0-5) had very glowing reviews about teaching in the hybrid environment. An interesting balance between two technical degree programs with the only location changing between the two.

Theme Personification/Constant Comparative Analysis Phase:

Access (12): students who wouldn't otherwise be able to attend in person are able to access the education
Community (8): The advantage of teaching hybrid is that the material is free, and you get to connect more with your students.
Connection (15): It's always the same students that engage quite a lot, every other student just prefers to hide behind the screen
Fliexibility (16): I've found that hybrid teaching offers more flexibility, enabling me to balance in-person and online interaction while accommodating students' diverse schedules
Load (7): students being unprepared for online/hybrid classes, and for the amount of self-directed learning they will have to engage in
Organizational Benefit (1): Our online/hybrid classes alway have much higher enrollment than pure face-to-face classes
Power (10): Peaceful teaching and being [calm]. We need not lack so much energy while teaching. No disturbances will arise but w.r.t to students we cant guarenteed full concentration
Presence (6): I didn't believe it would be the best modality for the subject that requires interaction and engagement
Rapport (2):
Responsibility (2):
Support (7): Additionally, the support provided by my institution, including training on new tools and methods, has boosted my confidence and effectiveness as an instructor
Technology (9): it can be tough to deal with software glitches, unreliable internet, or students struggling with the online tools

GROUP C Memos:
Like Groups A and B, Group C reports high Self-efficacy.

Group C had the first non-English return in the population (participant C8). This required translation from Portuguese to English via Google Translate. However, it was refreshing, encouraging, or reinforcing that once passed through translation, many of the points C8 was

making were practically identical to the rest of the participant group and Groups A and B. Mastery was added in this cycle as Participant C7 discussed utilizing the free time they had acquired from release from other teaching skills to pursue advancing their craft.
Horizontal reading of this group provided no additional insights through overall this group was very positive about the Hybrid Environment. Themes of Flexibility and Access seem to be crystalizing as core tenants while Mastery (a subset of Motivation and therefore Power, makes its first appearance). Rapport with students also gleans a few extra codes in this cycle. Finally, the code for "Connection" was changed to the term "Engagment" as this word appeared to more accurately represent the developing theme.

Theme Personification/Constant Comparative Analysis Phase:

Access (15): students who wouldn't otherwise be able to attend in person are able to access the education
Community (14): I make a conscious effort to connect individually with students, understanding their challenges and providing tailored solutions, whether through one-on-one meetings or group discussions
Engagement (24): It's always the same students that engage quite a lot, every other student just prefers to hide behind the screen
Flexibility (26): I've found that hybrid teaching offers more flexibility, enabling me to balance in-person and online interaction while accommodating students' diverse schedules
Load (12): Learning Management Systems (LMS) have also streamlined course administration, enabling easy access to student data, automated grading, and personalized feedback
Mastery (3): Personally, teaching in hybrid environments has allowed me to grow professionally, developing new skills in instructional design, technology integration, and adaptive teaching
Organizational Benefit (2): Our online/hybrid classes alway have much higher enrollment than pure face-to-face classes
Power (15): Peaceful teaching and being [calm]. We need not lack so much energy while teaching. No disturbances will arise but w.r.t to students we cant guarenteed full concentration
Presence (9): I feel it can be challenging to maintain student engagement and ensure comprehension, especially with subjects like accounting that require a strong foundation

Rapport (5): It is hard for me to form relationships with students when I am just seeing them through emails or on a zoom when they want to meet for office hours

Responsibility (3): it balances structured in-person interaction with the independence of online learning, while also fostering self-discipline.
Resource Allocation (2): I think that having the materials online is also helpful as I can just direct my students to specific links instead of needing to print out my materials.
Student Performance (11): I find it rewarding to see how students adapt and take ownership of their learning, but the lack of real-time interaction can sometimes make it harder to address misunderstandings immediately
Support (9): Additionally, the support provided by my institution, including training on new tools and methods, has boosted my confidence and effectiveness as an instructor
Technology (15): it can be tough to deal with software glitches, unreliable internet, or students struggling with the online tools

GROUP D Memos:
Once again, the group had no issues with technology reporting from comfort to expertise with the instruction. This group is mostly 0-5 years of instruction time as well, meaning they are mostly post-COVID. Additionally, more than half are from Africa, where pre-established Western educational methods are not pre-entrenched. To this point, my participants from Africa have been positive about hybrid teaching. The group is also 80% female.

At this point, many of the themes are really starting to coalesce around each other. Support, resource allocation, and technology seem to encourage flexibility and creativity in the instructor. From the instructor's perspective, community, presence, and access build engagement. Group D is no different than previous groups in their discussions of the hybrid environment. With only minor dissent, the group is positive about instructing in the hybrid environment. In this group, there was a lot more discussion about load, specifically how the hybrid environment allows for the repurposing of tasks to allow for additional time in their daily work. Participant D7 specifically references accomplishing other tasks on their device while the students are in virtual class working on an assignment.

Flexibility and Acess have built the foundations for a larger crystalization of themes. Flexibility has pulled in technology, resource allocation and support, while Access helps to build community and presence. Finally a Third group appears to be emerging that ties responsibility, Rapport, and Engagement.

Initial thoughts through axial coding Group D is the Flexibility Group, which is the Instructor Nexus, The Access Group is the Student Nexus, and the Rapport Group is the Performance Nexus.

Theme Personification/Constant Comparative Analysis Phase:

Access (21): Students can review course materials at their own pace, and instructors can adapt teaching strategies to meet diverse student needs, promoting a more inclusive and effective learning environment
Community (19): I make a conscious effort to connect individually with students, understanding their challenges and providing tailored solutions, whether through one-on-one meetings or group discussions
Engagement (32): It's always the same students that engage quite a lot, every other student just prefers to hide behind the screen
Flexibility (30): I've found that hybrid teaching offers more flexibility, enabling me to balance in-person and online interaction while accommodating students' diverse schedules
Load (17): Learning Management Systems (LMS) have also streamlined course administration, enabling easy access to student data, automated grading, and personalized feedback
Mastery (7):I find that the students engage well with this sort of content, and make use of the recorded sessions for revision. It is always great to be able to add personalized touches like music and graphics to my classes.
Organizational Benefit (4): Our online/hybrid classes alway have much higher enrollment than pure face-to-face classes
Power (16): Peaceful teaching and being [calm]. We need not lack so much energy while teaching. No disturbances will arise but w.r.t to students we cant guarenteed full concentration

Presence (11): I feel it can be challenging to maintain student engagement and ensure comprehension, especially with subjects like accounting that require a strong foundation
Rapport (15): It feels like the student is getting focused, tailored support and my impression is I have developed a deeper relationship with the people I teach than if I just saw them as a whole cohort in a lecture hall.
Responsibility (6): it balances structured in-person interaction with the independence of online learning while also fostering self-discipline.
Resource Allocation (5): I think that having the materials online is also helpful as I can just direct my students to specific links instead of needing to print out my materials.
Student Performance (13): I find it rewarding to see how students adapt and take ownership of their learning, but the lack of real-time interaction can sometimes make it harder to address misunderstandings immediately
Support (15): Additionally, the support provided by my institution, including training on new tools and methods, has boosted my confidence and effectiveness as an instructor
Technology (20): it can be tough to deal with software glitches, unreliable internet, or students struggling with the online tools

GROUP E Memos:
Again, this group (the last of the initial target population size) was comfortable in the utilization of technology for teaching in the hybrid environment. This group was 50% from Europe.

Horizontal Reading has proved to be an inefficient step in this process as reading all respondent data in this small of a batch provides no additional insight as to reading them each individually. At this point, no new themes, codes or ideas are coming out of the data. All pieces code to already established themes. It would be fair to say that the data is saturated at this point.

Theme Personification/Constant Comparative Analysis Phase:

Access (35): Students can review course materials at their own pace, and instructors can adapt teaching strategies to meet diverse student needs, promoting a more inclusive and effective learning environment

Community (23): I make a conscious effort to connect individually with students, understanding their challenges and providing tailored solutions, whether through one-on-one meetings or group discussions

Engagement (44): It's always the same students that engage quite a lot, every other student just prefers to hide behind the screen

Fliexibility (35): I've found that hybrid teaching offers more flexibility, enabling me to balance in-person and online interaction while accommodating students' diverse schedules

Load (27): Learning Management Systems (LMS) have also streamlined course administration, enabling easy access to student data, automated grading, and personalized feedback

Mastery (9): I find that the students engage well with this sort of content, and make use of the recorded sessions for revision. It is always great to be able to add personalized touches like music and graphics to my classes.

Organizational Benefit (6): Our online/hybrid classes alway have much higher enrollment than pure face-to-face classes

Power (19): Peaceful teaching and being [calm]. We need not lack so much energy while teaching. No disturbances will arise but w.r.t to students we cant guarenteed full concentration

Presence (16): I feel it can be challenging to maintain student engagement and ensure comprehension, especially with subjects like accounting that require a strong foundation

Rapport (18): It feels like the student is getting focused, tailored support and my impression is I have developed a deeper relationship with the people I teach than if I just saw them as a whole cohort in a lecture hall.

Responsibility (7): it balances structured in-person interaction with the independence of online learning, while also fostering self-discipline.

Resource Allocation (7): I think that having the materials online is also helpful as I can just direct my students to specific links instead of needing to print out my materials.

Student Performance (16): I find it rewarding to see how students adapt and take ownership of their learning, but the lack of real-time interaction can sometimes make it harder to address misunderstandings immediately

Support (20): Additionally, the support provided by my institution, including training on new tools and methods, has boosted my confidence and effectiveness as an instructor

Technology (38): it can be tough to deal with software glitches, unreliable internet, or students struggling with the online tools

GROUP F Memos:
All participants have great self-efficacy in the hybrid environment. In this diverse group, there is no defining demographic. These are excessive participants, past my target participant population. Additionally, I believe that prior to coding, the data was saturated. However, I will keep an open mind to see if any additional themes arise in these last 4 participants, and if warranted, will review the previous participants by constant comparative analysis to determine if there was something I missed in the original coding.

Having coded all 54 participants now, the themes below are indeed saturated. Their personifications best represent the themes as I move to complete axial coding. Tallies manually adjusted to compensate for NVivo dual recording.

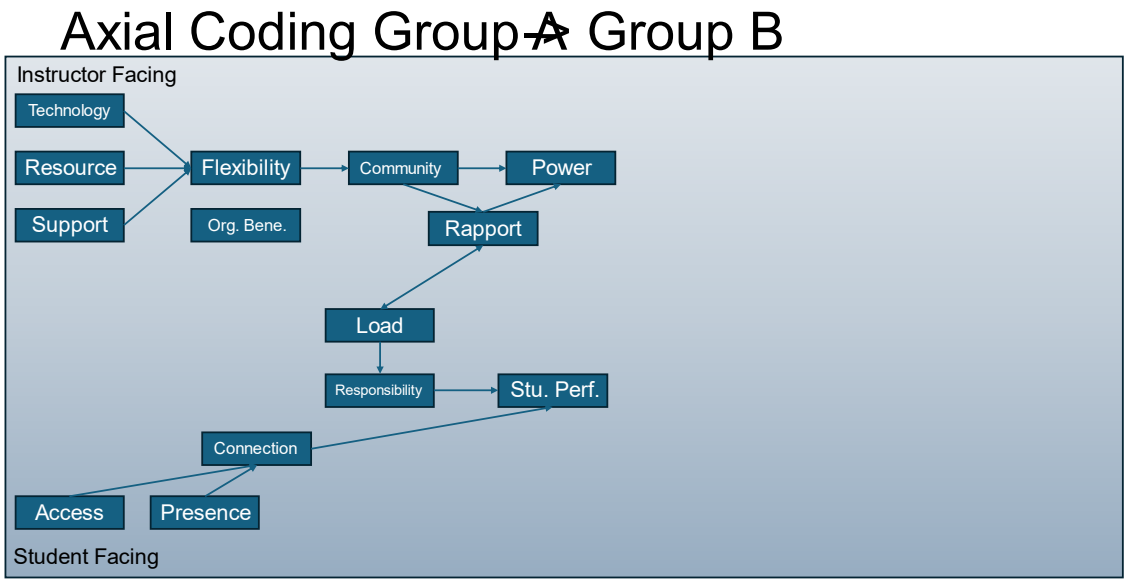
Theme Personification/Constant Comparative Analysis Phase:

Access (33): Students can review course materials at their own pace, and instructors can adapt teaching strategies to meet diverse student needs, promoting a more inclusive and effective learning environment
Community (20): I make a conscious effort to connect individually with students, understanding their challenges and providing tailored solutions, whether through one-on-one meetings or group discussions
Engagement (45): It's always the same students that engage quite a lot, every other student just prefers to hide behind the screen
Flexibility (31): I've found that hybrid teaching offers more flexibility, enabling me to balance in-person and online interaction while accommodating students' diverse schedules
Load (25): Learning Management Systems (LMS) have also streamlined course administration, enabling easy access to student data, automated grading, and personalized feedback
Mastery (3): Personally, teaching in hybrid environments has allowed me to grow professionally, developing new skills in instructional design, technology integration, and adaptive teaching

Organizational Benefit (3): Our online/hybrid classes alway have much higher enrollment than pure face-to-face classes
Power (14): Peaceful teaching and being [calm]. We need not lack so much energy while teaching. No disturbances will arise but w.r.t to students we cant guarenteed full concentration
Presence (11): I feel it can be challenging to maintain student engagement and ensure comprehension, especially with subjects like accounting that require a strong foundation
Rapport (17): It feels like the student is getting focused, tailored support and my impression is I have developed a deeper relationship with the people I teach than if I just saw them as a whole cohort in a lecture hall.
Responsibility (5): it balances structured in-person interaction with the independence of online learning, while also fostering self-discipline.
Resource Allocation (5): I think that having the materials online is also helpful as I can just direct my students to specific links instead of needing to print out my materials.
Student Performance (13): I find it rewarding to see how students adapt and take ownership of their learning, but the lack of real-time interaction can sometimes make it harder to address misunderstandings immediately
Support (13): The most challenging part is to be alone on this journey as there is no understanding from university that it’s not a job of one person but a team work.
Technology (37): it can be tough to deal with software glitches, unreliable internet, or students struggling with the online tools

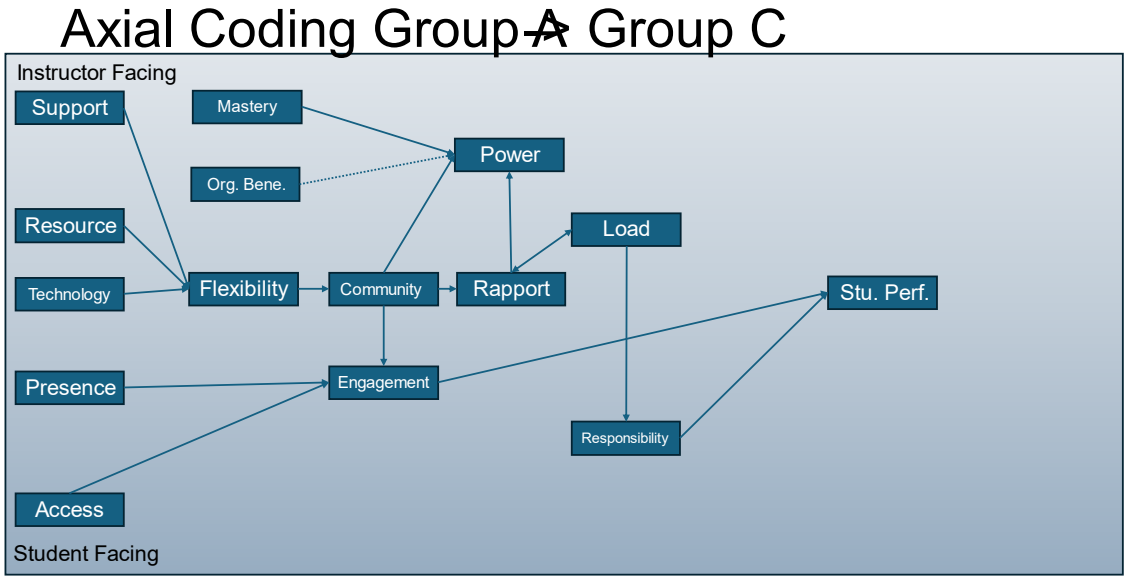
Appendix Figure 1

Axial Coding Group A Through B



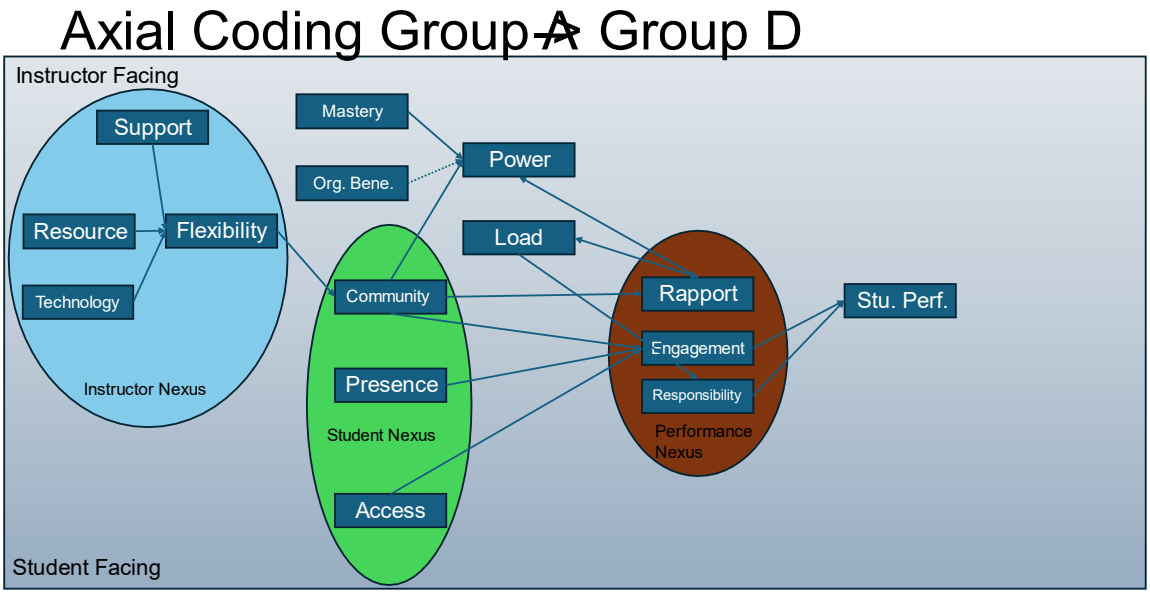
Appendix Figure 2

Axial Coding Group A Through C



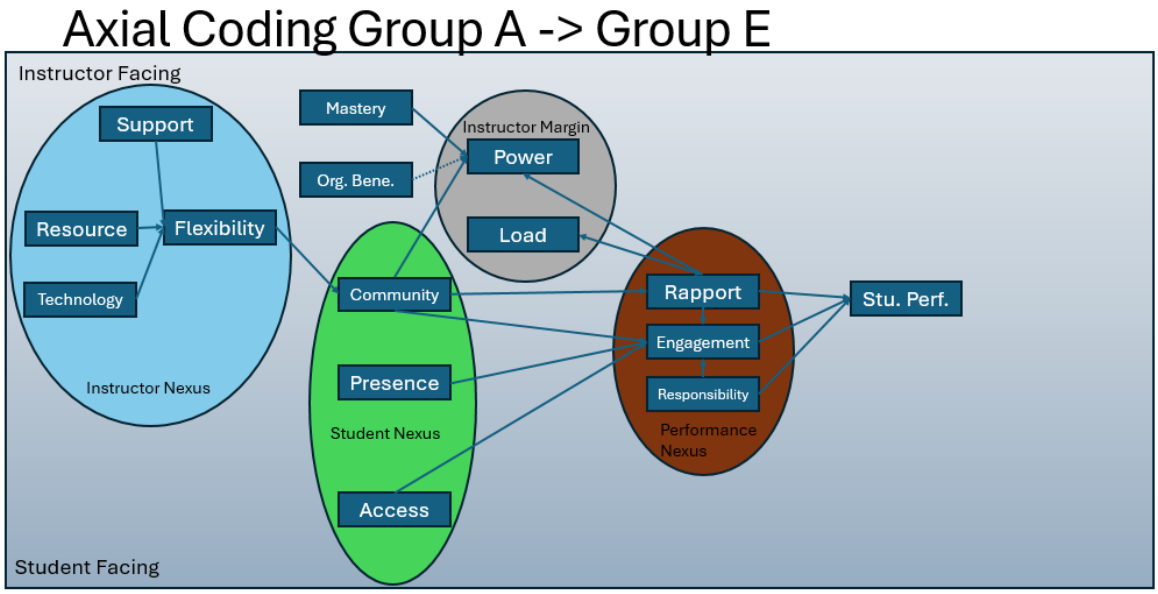
Appendix Figure 3

Axial Coding Group A Through D



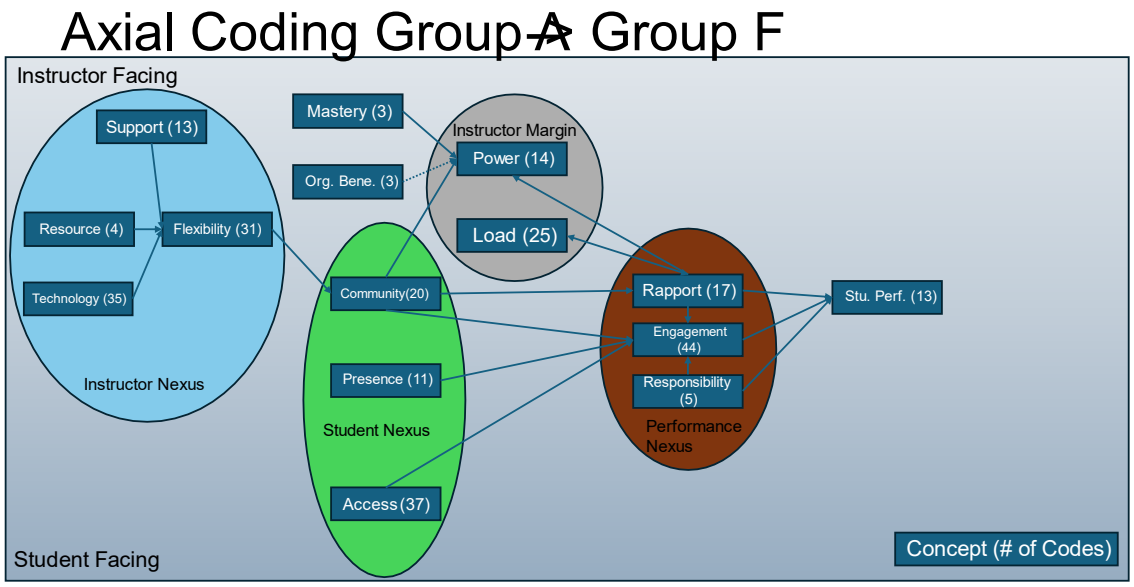
Appendix Figure 4

Axial Coding Group A Through E



Appendix Figure 5

Axial Coding Group A Through F



Appendix Figure 6

Completed Axial Map