A Qualitative Study of the Experiences of Higher Education Faculty in Faculty Developer-Led Instructional Consultations

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ABSTRACT

Higher education faculty receive assistance with their instruction, often through teaching or faculty development centers. Instructional consultations, offered by teaching centers, help to examine and analyze teaching to establish areas of improvement. This study examined the perceptions and experiences of higher education faculty who participated in an instructional consultation. The purpose of this study explored the reason for the participants to attend a consultation, their emotions and feelings throughout the consultation, and the perception of the consultation's benefits. Also, this research showed the differing consultation approaches and processes used by teaching centers consultants.

Twelve faculty from the University System of Georgia (USG), which consists of 26 public colleges and universities, participated in the study. The participants varied in rank and institution-type. Data collection occurred through comprehensive semi-structured interviews, summarized in Chapter 4. The three research questions examined in this study: (1) What were the experiences and perceptions that led faculty from the University System of Georgia higher education institutions to participate in an instructional consultation? (1a) What teaching challenge led these higher education faculty to participate in an instructional consultation? (3) How beneficial did the faculty member perceive the consultation process in addressing the reason for the consultation? Major findings include differences in the consultation process based on the institution type, the participant's motivation to attend, the emotions experienced by the participants, and support for consultations and teaching centers.

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fun in our future – and no schoolwork. I appreciate your support more than I can write in this acknowledgment.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Higher education faculty usually have expertise in their disciplinary content; however, they are not always proficient in teaching. As a result, they may be unaware of their teaching ineffectiveness and become complacent (Menges, 1991; Palmer, 1998). Moreover, once they discover their pedagogical shortcomings, they may not know where to seek assistance. In most higher education institutions, faculty developers, instructional designers, and other teaching specialists are available to assist faculty with their teaching and learning. Faculty development is a relatively new field associated with higher education as compared to traditional higher education disciplines, such as math and science. The field of professional development in teaching and learning for instructors dates back about 50 years (Brinko, 1988, 2012). With the assistance of faculty developers, faculty can dissect their teaching practice and explore proven methods and teaching strategies, thus attempting to affect student success.

Faculty can seek instructional consultations from faculty developers or teaching center staff for assistance with pedagogical concerns, such as instruction, assessment, course design, or to address concerns revealed from student evaluations (Brinko, 2012; Border, 2012; Malouff et al., 2015). Additionally, consulting about other professional

needs, such as writing and academic or career goals, is also a practice of educational developers (Border, 2012). Educational developers can also help faculty with their research and service goals for their institution; however, faculty development mostly focuses on improving instruction and learning (Ouellet, 2010).

Researched approaches and strategies frame the work of instructional designers and faculty developers and help to align the consultation to the needs of the faculty. Within any framework, knowing the motivation behind what brought the faculty to seek a consultation provides the consultant with comprehensive information to assist the faculty. In the longitudinal study by Jacobson et al. (2009), the researchers noted the lack of information regarding the initial motivation for faculty to seek out consultations makes it difficult to assist the faculty. Additionally, DiPietro and Huston (2009) suggested that a framework for "entangled consultations" needs to be developed in order for faculty developers to be able to be effective in difficult consultation situations.

Statement of the Problem

This qualitative study identified and explored the experiences of the University System of Georgia (USG) faculty who participated in instructional consultations. The System includes diverse groups of faculty from different sectors and institutions. The University System of Georgia includes 26 higher education institutions and employs approximately 11,000 faculty (University System of Georgia Research and Policy Analysis, 2020). These twenty-six institutions include research universities, comprehensive universities, state universities, and state colleges. Examining a sample of this population revealed distinct differences in consultations experiences.

Additionally, most faculty development research examines consultations from the consultant's or faculty developer's perspective. Also, most research on instructional consultations in higher education teaching centers focuses on consultation approaches and satisfaction of the consultations (Brinko, 1988, 2012; Boye & Tapp, 2012; DiPietro & Norman, 2014; Jacobson et al., 2009; Little & Palmer, 2011; Rutt, 1979). This exploratory research study looked deeper into the experiences of the faculty and explained their perspective on the process and benefits of instructional consultations. In the end, the case studies presented in this research could lead to creating additional approaches and processes for different types of consultations, as well as connecting motivation to the consultation outcomes.

Conceptual Framework

Two theories make up the conceptual framework for this research study. These are the Adult Learning Theory by Malcolm Knowles (Knowles et al., 2012) and Motivation Theory by Ambrose et al. (2010). The conceptual framework aligned with the research questions focusing on experiences and perceptions of the entire consultation process, from beginning to end. This research classified the participants in the study – the faculty – as adult learners, and considered motivation to be one factor that could affect the outcome of the consultation.

Adult Learning Theory

Malcolm Knowles began developing adult learning theory over 40 years ago, and throughout that time, the rules of andragogy have evolved. Knowles et al. (2012) recognized that adults have different learning assumptions than younger students, and therefore, Knowles' work explained the education and learning process of college-age

students and beyond. According to the Adult Learning Theory, the participants of this study developed into an adult learner when they express their desire to make changes to their teaching and acknowledge their readiness to learn. Also, when the faculty accepted the vulnerable space they are in during consultations and began to identify how to make improvements, their orientation on learning developed (DiPietro & Huston, 2009). Therefore, Knowles' assumptions explain how consultation-related experiences influence a faculty's progress and attitude. The assumptions align with this research in the following ways:

- *Faculty are self-directed learners*. Inherently, faculty want to learn more and improve their teaching on their own volition.
- *Faculty have experiences*. Faculty have experience and expertise in their discipline. However, they may not understand good teaching techniques.
- *Faculty have a readiness to learn*. The faculty's readiness to learn may determine how beneficial the consultation is for them.
- *Faculty have shifted their orientation to learn*. The consultation is dedicated to improvement; therefore, the faculty should be shifting their focus toward the teaching challenge and away from themselves.
- *Faculty have a motivation to learn*. The faculty's motivation can potentially affect their consultation experience.

Motivation Theory

Another theory that supports the conceptual framework is the Motivation Theory by Ambrose et al. (2010). The Expectancy-Value Motivation Theory established that a person needs to see the value in the task and also have high self-efficacy to be motivated

to complete the task (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Learning scientists commonly use Wigfield and Eccles Motivation Theory; however, Ambrose et al. (2010) took Motivation Theory one step further and included the element of a supportive environment. In addition to seeing the value and also having the expectations that one will do well, Ambrose et al. (2010) suggested that a supportive environment also contributes to motivation. The theory shows that consultants need to support the faculty in making teaching improvements since formal training in teaching is not typical for most higher education faculty (Menges, 1991). Additional support from the faculty's administration and peers is also critical to helping faculty feel confident enough to use different evidence-based instructional strategies to improve their practice (Ambrose et al., 2010). When uncovering these underlying issues, the faculty can begin to move forward and create effective learning experiences.

Purpose of the Study

I examined the perceptions and experiences of faculty during the consultation process from the faculty participant's perspective. Examining their motivation to seek a consultation and why they may be hesitant or not to do so provided a comprehensive look at how faculty perceive consultations. Additionally, I explored how the faculty's motivation, rank, status, and institutional sector within a large higher education public system influenced the consultation experience. Finally, by studying the perceived benefits of the consultation, I established how the faculty's environment effected their consultation experience.

Research Design

In order to thoroughly explore the experiences and perceptions of faculty in instructional consultations, the research study dictated qualitative exploratory research design. When examining the phenomenon of consultations in an exploratory paradigm, it is necessary to collect data-rich information, delving deeply into the faculty's perceptions of the process (Holley & Harris, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In order to understand the breadth of the faculty experience, the case study protocol was used to collect data in this research study. Patton (1990) stated that a researcher should be able to create the type of case study that is consistent with their field of study or discipline. While staying consistent with Patton's (1990) measure, Stake provided a framework for qualitative case study design, which discussed the need to examine only one case at a time. By focusing intensely on each case, the exploration into each consultation will produce comprehensive data and allow for a robust analysis. Field notes and within-case analysis allowed from a partial use of Stakes method, however, coding was done after all interviews were completed. Even in an exploratory study, it is possible to build new theory or approaches from the data and analysis. While that was not an intended outcome to this research, nor was making connections or generalizing across the case studies, new information and processes were explored and stated in the findings and conclusion.

As an extension to this research, the findings will continue to guide the work of the research beyond this project. Additional qualitative studies or quantitative research can lead to building a robust library of instructional consultation data. This research can extent into identifying newly discovered approaches to consultations. While there are consultation approaches that already exist, a well-prescribed process for difficult

consultations is needed (DiPietro and Huston, 2009). In addition, exploring the similarities and differences expressed by the USG faculty offered some conclusions about the diversity of the System and the faculty's experiences within each of the institutions.

Research Questions

Through these research questions, the study examined the experiences and perceptions of faculty in instructional consultations.

RQ 1: What were the experiences and perceptions that led faculty from the University System of Georgia higher education institutions to participate in an instructional consultation?

RQ 1a: What teaching challenge led these higher education faculty to participate in an instructional consultation?

RQ 2: How beneficial did the faculty member perceive the consultation process in addressing the reason for the consultation?

Data Collection

The data for this project was collected through in-depth and detailed interviews. This method was appropriate for the research design because it allowed the participants to describe their experiences, mindset, perceptions, and feelings about the entire consultation process. A close look at a sample population allowed for comprehensive analysis and provided information-rich case studies (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 1990). The unit of analysis for data collection of these research questions was higher education faculty who participated in an instructional consultation. Interview data was collected synchronously using a semi-structured interview format. This type of data collection method allowed flexibility with the questions asked during the interviews,

responding with follow-up or additional questions as the interview proceeded (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yazan, 2015). Few participants shared tangible items to support their interviews, such as concluding consultation memos.

Significance of the Study

Since most faculty development research examines consultations from the consultant's perspective, this research sought to describe the faculty's perspective about the benefits of consultations and motivation for attending the consultation. This perspective gives the readership the participant's true examination of the experience and can eventually inform how faculty developers design and utilize consultations processes. Also, developers could use this research to construct additional approaches for different types of consultations. The results of the study presented unique findings since the participants were from two different types of public higher education institutions within the same system of schools. Exploring these differences and the intensive interviews may lead to overall changes in our instructional consultation practices.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations are aspects of the research project that the researcher cannot control. Limitations are essentially a product of the research design, and it is necessary to communicate these to maintain honest research (Holley & Harris, 2019). This study had limitations and attempted to minimize threats to internal and external validity. Because of my own experience as a faculty developer, researcher bias was a limitation. To preclude threats to this internal validity, I identified my expertise in the field. Also, I detached my own ideas and thoughts from the data collection process due to my potential bias during the interviews. In response to research bias, I used peer checking. Having a colleague in

the field review the data collection and analysis and other aspects of the study ensured that the research was substantial and instrumental to the field. To minimize the limitations of external validity threats, such as generalizability of the findings, I spent a significant amount of time interviewing each participant and collected a breadth of information-rich data necessary to answer the research questions in their entirety. Also, I conducted member checking with the participants on their transcripts and narratives, Chapter 4. These limitations and validity checks will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Delimitations are the choices made by the researcher that limits the study. These are limitations that the researcher fundamentally has control over when designing the scope of the study. The delimitations of this study included the population sample and the methodology of the research. The population included faculty in higher education who have participated in instructional consultations. Higher education has influences on their career that K12 educators may not, such as tenure and promotion, strict hierarchy in divisions and departments, and student evaluations. Because of such influences, faculty in higher education seek teaching and learning advice from faculty developers in services, such as instructional consultations. The methodology of the study, qualitative research, could also be considered a delimiter. Keeping the methodology strictly qualitative allows the researcher to deeply explore case studies, which can result in the exploration of different anomalies. This is the opposite of quantitative methods where conducting surveys or collecting data dictates results, but may create false generalizations for the field. Qualitative data is commonplace in educational development and this research provided fruitful insights for both the teaching center staff and the faculty.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this study.

Faculty: In this research study, faculty were considered people who teach in higher education institutions. The faculty for this study can be either tenured or non-tenured and have any rank and status from instructor (first rank in higher education) to professor (last earned rank in higher education). In this study, I used the terms teacher, instructor, educator, and faculty interchangeably. The word participant was also used to describe faculty who participated in the research.

Faculty Development: Faculty development is a term used to describe an individual's opportunity to cultivate their instructional teaching practice and pedagogy. This term is used mainly in academic settings where instructors or professors seek assistance to improve their teaching. In the last 30 years, researchers began to incorporate organizational development (structure of an organization) and personal development (self-awareness and self-improvement) into faculty development (Ouellet, 2010). Additionally, faculty practitioners also sought to include staff and institutional development in academia by using the term educational development (Ouellet, 2010). In this study, the terms faculty development or educational development described the practice of assisting faculty in performing better as a teacher and growing in their academic performance.

Higher education: According to the U.S. Department of Education, higher education is defined as an educational institution that admits students after they complete secondary education or an equivalent (2003). In the University System of Georgia, where the data for this research was collected, higher education institutions are divided into four

categories based on areas like student enrollment and degrees offered. These four categories are state college, state university, regional comprehensive university, and research university. In this research, a place of higher education is also known as an institution.

Instructional Consultation: A consultation is a confidential event between a faculty development consultant and an instructor who seeks information about how to improve their teaching. Consultations can focus on syllabus design, course design, student evaluations, special course projects or assessments, or other instructional strategies, with which the faculty seeks assistance (Lee, 2000).

Instructional strategies: These are strategies that faculty use to teach students. These strategies should support and align to the course objectives. For example, the use of clickers, discussions, or group work can be considered instructional strategies. Instructional strategies enhance and support student learning.

Pedagogy: Pedagogy describes the teaching strategies of specific content or disciplines. It is distinct from andragogy, which is specific to adult learners. Adult learners are generally autonomous learners and have had life experiences that could affect their learning process (Knowles et al., 2012). However, in this research, pedagogy was used to describe adult teaching practices in the learning environment, as well as andragogy.

Teaching centers: These are centers located at higher education institutions. Staff and faculty work at teaching centers and provide services, such as instructional consultations to faculty on their campus. In this research, teaching centers are also known

as centers for teaching or faculty development centers. Those that work at the teaching centers are referred to as teaching center staff or consultants.

Organization of Study

Chapter One provided an introduction to the research study. This chapter included the purpose and significance of the study, as well as the research questions. Chapter Two included an in-depth exploration of the literature that supports the research questions and study. Chapter Three provided a description of the data collection and methodology for the study.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

About 50 years ago, faculty development became a field of study associated with higher education and the professional growth of teaching and learning for instructors (Brinko, 1988; Brinko, 2012). One standard service provided to faculty or instructors through faculty development centers has been instructional consultations. In a 2016 survey by the Professional and Organizational Developers Network in Higher Education Membership Survey Team showed 90% of those surveyed offer consultation services. Instructional consultations provide faculty a confidential space to examine their teaching practice, establish a plan of action for a determined pedagogical issue, and consider ways to improve, sometimes based on student feedback (Border, 2012; Brinko, 1988; Malouff et al., 2015). What motivates faculty to ask for a consultation appears to vary. Some seek services based on personal and professional needs, such as writing or academic and career goals (Border, 2012). Some use instructional consultations to get assistance with pedagogical concerns, such as instructional changes or improvement based on student evaluations (Border, 2012; Malouff et al., 2015). The determination of the underlying pedagogical concerns usually presents after utilizing a faculty development service or in conjunction with other services, such as Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID),

student focus groups, classroom observations, and instructional consultations (Brinko, 2012; Jacobson et al., 2009; Knol et al., 2013; Millis, 1999).

The following sections of this literature review includes an overview of instructional consultations. This overview provides background for the readership regarding the approaches and models consultants used, as well as the ones I explored in data analysis. Additionally, the literature review provides information about the effectiveness of consultations, faculty development, and teaching centers. This literature proves the need for and effectiveness of faculty development services, like instructional consultations. Also, gaps in the current consultation literature are discussed in this section, since this research study intended to address those gaps. Finally, in the literature section, the conceptual framework explains the connections between the theory and the research questions and offers a foundation for the study.

Consultation Services and Approaches

There are different frameworks and approaches to the consultation process that may guide a consultation; however, there is a common structure derived from Rutt's (1979) early work on consultations (Brinko, 2012; Border 2012). The consultation begins with an explanation of events that brought the faculty to the discussion. While the consultation process is not always prescriptive, specific teaching concerns and problems could drive the consultation. Expert consultants should address the instructor's responses and input regarding their thoughts on the situation (Border, 2012). Having classroom examples or data-driven findings, such as student evaluations or classroom observations, can also guide the consultation. During the consultation, the consultant helps to uncover possible ways to improve the teaching challenge. As progress from the first or

consecutive consultations occurs, faculty often begin to discover how different events in the classroom align with the issues they are experiencing. When the faculty makes these connections, they begin to examine their practices. The consultation can conclude in different ways: a plan of action to make improvements, a plan for the consultant to conduct a class observation and potentially a student focus group session, a plan for another meeting to continue the conversation, or a plan for collaboration with other staff, such as technology personnel (Border, 2012; Erickson & Sorcinelli, 2012). In the end, the instructor must accept the mutually agreed-upon plan in order for the consultant and faculty to continue to work together (Border, 2012; Erickson & Sorcinelli, 2012).

Faculty Services and Processes

While there are numerous services and programs that faculty development or teaching centers offer instructors to improve or enhance their teaching, most of these services involve consultations. The consultation meeting before the service establishes expectations and objectives, and the meeting afterward should be used to make a plan of action (Border, 2012; Erickson & Sorcinelli, 2012; Rutt, 1979). Commonly used services are Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID), student focus groups, classroom observations, and individual instructional consultations (Lenze, 2012; Millis, 1999). A Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID) is facilitated by a consultant in the classroom with students at the instructor's request. The SGID generally occurs around the mid-term of the semester but can occur at other times in the semester. The SGID allows students to share how the course helps them learn and what could be changed in the course to improve their learning experience. These in-class interviews are voluntary and confidential; therefore, the faculty will not know who provided the feedback. Idealy, the

data collected frames the improvements in the course work. After the SGID, the instructor will consult with the faculty developer and establish a plan to address the feedback suggested in the SGID (Lenze, 2012; Millis, 1999). The second commonly used consultation practices are student focus groups. These provide similar information to an SGID, but it is conducted with small groups and takes more time to complete. Also, the instructor usually provides the questions, even though the faculty developer is conducting the focus group (Millis, 1999). The third type of consultation practice, classroom observations, occurs when the faculty development consultant observes the instructor teaching in the classroom or online. In a face-to-face class, the consultant arrives before class and usually leaves when class is over. They take notes regarding the instructional procedures and strategies of the faculty and also student behaviors during class time. In an online course, the consultant observes the synchronous or asynchronous learning environment for a designated period of time. The collected raw data should then drive the consultation that follows.

All three of the services mentioned above, SGID, focus group, and classroom observation, should begin and end with a consultation (Erickson & Sorcinelli, 2012; Menges, 1991; Millis, 1992). The initial consultation establishes the needs of the instructor who is asking for a service and sets the objectives for the service. In addition to these types of consultations, faculty developers could conduct one-on-one instructional consultations at the instructor's request. During instructional consultations, the conversation can be driven by what the faculty perceives as a teaching problem or challenge and a desire to improve. Initially, developing a positive rapport between the consultant and the faculty can create a bond of trust that helps the professional

relationship grow (Erickson & Sorcinelli, 2012; Millis, 1992). From an instructional consultation, other services can develop. Discussing student evaluations or instructor perceptions is another way to collect more data from the instructor or their students to help support the faculty. Discussions about evidence-based teaching practices also add to these consultations and should drive conversations for improvement.

Consultation Approaches

Brinko (2012) and Border (2012) suggested deciding on the type of consultative interaction, whether it is instructor-centered or consultant-centered, during the initial interview. Additionally, Border stated that instructors needed to trust their consultants in order for them to feel comfortable enough to share their teaching problems. Building trust and rapport creates a welcoming environment that shows faculty that the consultant supports them. Brinko's work on consultations and student evaluations led to research on instructional developers and expanding the models of consultations.

Consultation models identified by Rutt (1979) and Brinko (2012) are the Product model, Prescription model, Collaborative/Process model, Affiliative model, and Confrontational model. In the Product model, the instructor arrives at the consultation with the diagnosis and solution. The consultant produces some type of instructional tool or research to help the client rectify the problem. This method is not commonly used in collaborative environments. In the Prescription model, the consultant determines the problem and prescribes a way to improve or fix it. The relationship in this model is similar to the relationship between a doctor and a patient. The consultant gives the information to the instructor, and the instructor takes the advice and performs it. The consultant has the authority in this model (Brinko, 2012). In the Collaboration or Process

model, the consultant and instructor work together to devise a plan of action. Since the consultant is knowledgeable about teaching and the instructor is the subject-matter expert, they combine their expertise to solve the teaching challenge. They work together, with the instructor maintaining the authority in the process (Brinko, 2012). In the Affiliative model, the consultant provides psychological support on a personal and professional level. The faculty shares their personal problems that may be interfering with their instruction and the consultant councils and provide answers based on the perceptions of the faculty. In this model, the instructor maintains control of the consultation (Brinko, 2012). Finally, in the Confrontational model, the consultant takes a contrarian role to help the instructor take a stand. This type of consultation may begin as collaborative or affiliative, but as the consultation progresses, the consultant realizes that the instructor does not recognize the real teaching challenge or refuses to recognize it. This model is new to faculty development research and not included in Rutt's initial work. While this type of consultation does exist, researchers have not written much about the model, nor expanded upon its success (Brinko, 2012).

Boye and Tapp (2012) contributed to the literature by posing another model for consultations called "Tough Love" or "Provocative" consultations. The authors added to the field of educational development with this consultation model. Boye and Tapp (2012) explained the Provocative consultation model as having the consultants use a direct approach, conducting an honest and possibly blunt conversation with the instructor to arrive at the teaching issue. The model included seven steps with one being "cut in and call them out" (p.120), where the authors suggested intervening if the instructor was side-stepping or on a tangent. Boye and Tapp (2012) suggested asking direct and telling

questions to uncover the real reason for the consultation. Through this model, there is potential to increase research on identifying the actual chronic teaching problem in a consultation setting.

Little and Palmer (2011) presented a coaching-based framework for consultations that involved: (1) deep listening, (2) asking important questions, and (3) prompting action. The author's approach to consultations took into account these three different components to create a collaborative experience. According to Little and Palmer (2011), coaching consultations led the faculty to become more self-aware and, therefore, the faculty came to conclusions about their teaching challenges during the consultation.

Finally, DiPietro and Norman (2014) provided a theoretical framework for consultations based on the seven principles in the book *How Learning Works* (Ambrose et al., 2010). Research in social psychology, cognitive psychology, and other learning science fields provided a basis for the framework (DiPietro & Norman, 2014). In this framework, the consultation focus is on cognition and learning more than on counseling and training. DiPietro and Norman (2014) outlined learning principles related to consultations for faculty development consultants. This approach is different from other frameworks because it focused more on the faculty receiving the consultation (DiPietro & Norman, 2014). The article concluded with a case study that incorporated five of the principles at work in a consultation. Additionally, DiPietro & Norman's (2014) consultation framework provided the faculty developer a structure for consultations to support faculty, regardless of discipline.

Effectiveness of Consultations and Faculty Development

Looking at effectiveness from the macro-level of the institutions guides the impact of faculty development on teaching practice. Also, reflecting on the effectiveness of faculty development services, including consultations, provides evidence to necessitate teaching centers, just as more teaching services develop. This section seeks to provide research supporting faculty development services and teaching centers to support improvements in faculty's teaching practice.

Impact of Faculty Development on Institutions

The effect of faculty development ranges from how faculty development impacts institutions to how it impacts teaching, both areas represented in the study by Sorcinelli et al. (2006). The survey by Sorcinelli et al. (2006) of 494 faculty developers from 300 different institutions exposed a cadre of new responsibilities for faculty developers and faculty. These included (a) technology in the classroom, (b) teaching in different modalities, (c) supporting diversity in the classroom and with the faculty, and (d) determining the organizational structure of teaching centers. As institutions continue making changes to the course offerings for students, such as online and hybrid classes, instructors needed to evolve their teaching styles to the learning environments. Instructors began to seek out assistance for technology training, as well as to learn more about the paradigm shift in online pedagogy (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013). The researchers found that these faculty responsibilities, along with the diverse needs of the students, permeated the institutions. Also, according to Austin and Sorcinelli (2013), reorganizing teaching centers to align with institution needs and growth was common practice over the last ten years. Decentralizing the center and offering discipline-specific support was also noted to

improve impact (Huston & Weaver, 2008; Lee, 2000; Sorcinelli et al., 2006; Weston & McAlpine, 1999). Austin and Sorcinelli (2013) pointed out several implications that these new responsibilities bring. Among them were positioning faculty development in a leadership role at the institution.

Daily-Herbert et al. (2014) discussed additional ways faculty development could make an impact. First, providing faculty development for part-time faculty shows the institution understands the importance of teaching in general, as compared to other faculty responsibilities. Second, building creditability as faculty developers increases the potential for partnerships across campus. Third, reorganizing as a decentralized model creates expert partnerships throughout the institution. This institutional research denoted a shift from the individual direct effect of faculty development to a more global, institution-based improvement plan for teachers (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013).

Impact of Faculty Development and Consultations

Over the past several decades faculty development centers strived to prove their influence on teaching practices. By being able to establish a positive impact on learning, centers proved their importance and justified their need to their institution (Brinko, 1988; Jacobson et al., 2009; Kreber et al., 2001; Rathbun et al., 2017). Brinko (1988), Jacobson et al. (2009), Kreber et al. (2001), and Rathbun et al. (2017) examined different aspects of determining the impact on teaching by using different frameworks for assessment. The frameworks ranged from overall center evaluations to service evaluations, specifically consultations. Kreber et al. (2001) developed a plan to assess an entire center. The authors pointed out that instructional design models have similar plans for developing courses or programs; however, often units like teaching centers do not assess themselves

the same way. The assessment plan by Kreber et al. (2001) included five different interventions common to faculty development: a course on teaching, one-on-one consultations, workshops, scholarship of teaching and learning research, and peer consultation programs. Kreber et al. (2001) assessed these interventions through several different areas, including teaching performance and student perception of teaching performance.

Jacobson et al. (2009) conducted a study on data acquired from five years of consultations with faculty. The researchers had 170 out of 784 former individual consultation clients complete a survey. The survey results showed a high correlation between perceived improved teaching of respondents and the value of consultations (Jacobson et al., 2009). The research team noted that neither rank, discipline, nor number of years' experience influenced a change in the data and that the services provided appeared valuable overall. One noteworthy implication for future research in this study stated that examining faculty motivation for attending a consultation was one reason to continue studying the effects of teaching consultations (Jacobson et al., 2009).

A longitudinal study by Rathbun et al. (2017) followed eight faculty for five years. In this study, faculty perceived improvements in their teaching based on the work they did in consultations, as well as other teaching improvement events. According to the results of this study, those most affected by the consultations were tenure-track faculty (Rathbun et al., 2017).

Another study conducted by Brinko (1988), involved ten instructional consultants from eight universities partnering with ten faculty to work specifically on consultations. This seminal data identified the interactions of the consultant and the faculty through

video recordings. The coded data contributed to the research on frameworks for different consultation methodologies. In these instances, consultants mostly used the Collaborative and Prescriptive model of consultations which Brinko (1988) noted sometimes presented on a continuum between the two models. This unexpected continuum discovery created more discussion about consultation models. Additionally, Brinko (1988) pointed out that actively listening to instructors' needs during consultations was a pivotal component to help them effectively.

Robert Menges (1991), a well-known researcher in the consultations field, proposed a faculty-centered consultation model. He pointed out that faculty who want to improve will either do so on their own or seek out teaching experts, like faculty developers. Unfortunately, faculty do not always come to institutions with teaching expertise, but rather discipline-specific expertise (Menges, 1991). Therefore, some instructors become complacent in teaching or unaware of their ineffectiveness. Menges (1991) uncovered that faculty need to be at the center of the consultation and improvement plan for achieving effective results. As the faculty shift to this role, they need to be involved in setting objectives for consultations and creating a plan of action to improve their teaching practices. To incorporate faculty back into the growth process, Menges (1991) suggested giving faculty a voice by having them determine questions and objectives for their reflections, interviews, and consultations. In this model, faculty developers create a faculty-centered approach to improvement.

Effectiveness of Discipline-Based Consultations

Contrary to the above research, other authors suggested the need for discipline-based faculty consultants. Huston and Weaver (2008), Lee (2000), and Weston and

McAlpine (1999) contended that by having a peer consultant from the same discipline as the instructor created a more effective consultation. Huston and Weaver (2008) provided a three-year program which followed up each year with a satisfaction survey and culminated in a qualitative study. The outcome of the study proved that peer coaching, which happened in the third year of the program, led to a quicker and more accurate diagnosis of teaching problems (Huston & Weaver, 2008). The authors pointed out that more experienced faculty supported and mentored younger, junior faculty. In the end, Huston and Weaver's (2008) approach helped these teaching centers support more faculty and provided a place for experienced faculty to serve as mentors. Additionally, institutional buy-in proved essential to the success of the program (Huston & Weaver, 2008).

Both Weston and McAlpine's (1999) and Lee's (2000) studies proved that discipline-specific consultants were more effective than non-discipline specific consultations. Weston and McAlpine (1999) discovered that a decentralized approach to consultations proved beneficial in their teaching center. The authors took an approach to consultations that encouraged a connection between the discipline and the consultant. This approach helped faculty because the interventions addressed the specific needs of the teachers and students in that discipline (Weston & McAlpine, 1999). The authors also suggested that a faculty liaison who worked in conjunction with the teaching center could be value-added expertise to consultations (Weston & McAlpine, 1999). Lee (2000) provided a list of challenges that non-discipline specific consultants would face. Those were problems with "credibility, nature of subject matter, patterns of thought, and assumptions about teaching and learning" (p. 285). These cautionary tales for the

consultants proved Lee's (2000) point of producing effective consultations. Contrary to most general strategies was the author's suggestion to frame the consultation experience in the scientific method when working with faculty in the science, technology, math, and engineering fields (Lee, 2000). The faculty were more likely to accept the suggestions for improvement when using a framework, like the scientific method, that they were comfortable with. These researchers forecasted more changes in the structure of teaching centers aligned to the discipline-based consultation model (Huston & Weaver, 2008; Lee, 2000; Weston & McAlpine,1999).

Addressing Gaps in Literature

This research study on the experiences and perceptions of higher education faculty in consultations attempts to fill literature gaps in the field of faculty development. Jacobson et al. (2009) surveyed hundreds of faculty resulting in a high correlation between perceived improved teaching of the respondents and the value of consultations. In the end, the researchers discussed what motivates an instructor to attend a consultation is a critical component of the value they place on the consultation. This research study seeks to explore the connection between the perceived value and motivation to attend and improve.

Educational development research does not usually focus on examining and dissecting the experience of faculty participants. Instead, they focus on the role and needs of faculty developers. Menges (2000) stressed in his article on research shortcomings when stating that educational research does not always delve into why a teacher teaches a certain way or what drives their practice. He suggested conducting "specific investigations" about the "perspectives of the participants of teaching and learning"

(Menges, 2000, p.8). While often research is conducted on the satisfaction of faculty with faculty development services, is it rare to explore the experiences from the faculty perspective. He stated that shifting methodology to qualitative studies in order to gather detailed information about instructors will grow the research in the field. This research study proves to support Menges' suggestion and offer an in-depth view of the faculty perceptions of instructional consultations.

DiPietro and Huston (2009) explored difficult consultations through case studies using Brinko's four consultations models and additional compounding factors. The authors recognized that not every consultation has a step-by-step, prescriptive model to follow. However, they do concede that, to some extent, the collaborative model works best when the instructor and faculty developer agree on the goals and dynamics of the consultation. It is important to note that DiPietro and Huston (2009) discussed the variations in performing consultations, such as complicated or "entangled" consultations. Because of these types of variations, faculty development researchers need to explore flexible and creative ways to approach difficult consultations. In this research study, the exploration of consultations could contribute to the research on the systematic consultation approaches and possibly expand the consultant models and faculty insights during difficult consultations.

Additional gaps in faculty development consultations center around an instructor's motivation to participate in faculty development (Karabenick & Conley, 2011). Much of the research on motivation to improve through faculty development comes from the K12 environment. Often attending professional development events in K12 are mandatory, whereas in higher education, mandates rarely come from the institutional or divisional

level. Also, the authors pointed out that when data is collected, biases that occur in data collection regarding motivation to participate in faculty development lead to misinterpreted results (Karabenick & Conley, 2011). In this research study, exploring the motivation to attend the consultations and how that motivation affects the faculty's perception of the value of the consultation will add to the research.

Conceptual Framework

The Adult Learning Theory by Malcolm Knowles (Knowles et al., 2012) and Motivation Theory by Ambrose et al. (2010) are the two theories that make up the conceptual framework for this study. Grounding data collection and research exploration in the faculty's personal experiences and teaching challenges supports the research questions. In this way, the research questions align with the Adult Learning Theory and the Motivation Theory by Ambrose et al. (2010) and establish a need for further examination of the instructors' perspectives and experiences with instructional consultations.

Adult Learning Theory

Malcolm Knowles' Adult Learning Theory aligns with the needs of the adult learner during an instructional consultation and their ability and desire to make changes or improvements to their teaching. The work of Knowles and several other theorists, such as Lindeman's *The Meaning of Adult Education* (1926), established that adults' experiences affect their learning differently than the typical school-aged student (Knowles et al., 2012). Ingalls, an adult learning theorist, established that the adult learners' experiences make them more autonomous and intrinsically motivated (Robles, 1998).

With the onset of adult learning theories, theorists researched andragogy compared to pedagogy (Knowles et al., 2012). Pedagogy is the study of teaching young children. Andragogy acknowledges the experiences and motivations of adult learners and how that affects their learning process. Knowles established that adult learners are generally more focused on inquiry and process than on the product of learning. He stated that adult learners could react to the world differently because of their personal life experiences. Additionally, Knowles contended that adult learning not only occurs in educational research, but also in psychological, social change, and critical theory research, and therefore, Knowles' theory can apply to several different camps (Knowles et al., 2012). Instructors in higher education teach adults; however, when in the position of potentially changing or improving their own instructional strategies, as in this research, they become the adult learner (Lawler & King, 2000).

Putting Adult Learning Theory into Practice.

Since the 1970s, Knowles developed six assumptions of adult learners. These six assumptions are the core of the Andragogy in Practice model. This "three-dimensional" model established that learning is "multifaceted" and not a one-size-fits-all model (Knowles et al., 2012, p.147). The three layers of the model are (1) goals and purposes for learning, (2) individual and situational differences, and (3) core adult learning principles of andragogy. In the second dimension that examines situational differences, Knowles suggested that there are differences in learning based on the subject-matter, situational factors, or individual needs. In this research, all three of these differences could affect the instructional consultation process. For example, consultation research conducted on discipline-specific consultants vs. non-discipline specific consultants

showed effectiveness for outcomes of consultations (Huston & Weaver, 2008; Lee, 2000; Sorcinelli et al., 2006; Weston & McAlpine, 1999). Additionally, situational factors of instructors can also affect the consultation process. For example, instructors teaching large class sizes versus small class sizes need to examine different types of instructional strategies. Instructors who need accommodations for themselves or their students will also need to address these situational differences.

Aligning the instructor's perspective during a consultation to the six assumptions is key to establishing the link to this study's the conceptual framework. Knowles' assumptions explain how consultation-related experiences influence a faculty's progress and attitude, as well as the work they do to improve their practice as adult learners (Knowles et al., 2012). The assumptions align with the research questions in this study in the following ways:

- Assumption 1: *Adults have a need to know.* Knowles et al. (2012) pointed out that adults want to establish the why, what, and how of the teaching matter. Because of this assumption, faculty may ask to set their own agendas for consultations (Cox, 2015). This practice can help the consultant understand the needs of the faculty, whether actual or not. What faculty wish to discuss can sometimes be smaller acute classroom issues, as opposed to discovering the chronic teaching challenge. However, this adult learning assumption can bring the faculty to the consultation initially, and then further dissection of the issues with the consultant can occur. For example, the instructor may have received mid-semester or end-of-course evaluations and want to discuss how the quantitative and qualitative data gleaned from the evaluations can improve their teaching. The evaluations may

initiate the teaching consultation, and then the instructor and consultant can begin to examine their teaching practice honestly.

- Assumption 2: *Adults are self-directed learners*. Characteristically, faculty want to learn more and improve their teaching (Knowles et al., 2012). They are autonomous learners and can control the effort put into their teaching practice (Lawler & King, 2000). Being self-directed is not inherent; however, it is a characteristic that can be developed and honed as adults experience different life events (Cox, 2015). By asking for assistance with their teaching and participating in an instructional consultation, instructors seek the need to improve and learn.
- Assumption 3: *Adults have experiences*. Faculty have experience and expertise in their discipline. However, they may not understand good teaching techniques. While faculty have attended numerous classes and created their mental models of effective teaching (Knowles et al., 2012), the practice of teaching is not merely modeling former professors. The consultant should help faculty challenge those existing models and create new effective teaching models (Cox, 2015). Through reflection and critical thinking, faculty need to align their own experiences to their goals for good teaching. A consultant can assist faculty in connecting prior knowledge to a successful teaching model.
- Assumption 4: *Adults have a readiness to learn*. The faculty's readiness to learn may determine how much the consultation will benefit them. By being open-minded to change, the faculty will respond positively to the consultation. The adult or instructor, in this case, needs to be ready to be honest about the teaching issue and make a plan to change (Knowles et al., 2012), and that is when progress

happens. Faculty with a readiness to learn can work with a teaching consultant to identify a teaching challenge, explore options to improve, enact the plan, and then assess it (Cox, 2015).

- Assumption 5: *Adults have shifted their orientation to learn*. Since the purpose of the consultation is about improvement, the faculty should be shifting their focus toward the problem in the classroom and away from themselves. They need to focus on the teaching problem. Additionally, instructors may struggle with seeking the chronic teaching issue, and choose to work on smaller, less pervasive teaching issues (Cox, 2015). The consultant needs to be explicit about the connection between the two types of teaching problems in order to shift the orientation to learn (Knowles et al., 2012). Also, feelings of resentment or defensiveness could emerge in the consultations due to this shift (DiPietro & Huston, 2009). Instructors are vulnerable when participating in instructional consultations, and the consultant needs to be aware that these feelings can affect the outcome of the consultation. Building trust and a relationship at the beginning of the consultation process allows the instructor to be vulnerable in a safe place (Brinko, 2012). Discussions about the actual teaching issue can help to contextualize the need to improve and shift the learning.
- Assumption 6: *Adults have a motivation to learn*. Initially, by exploring their reason for seeking a consultation, the consultant will learn more about the faculty's motivation to improve. However, adults are intrinsically motivated more than young students (Knowles et al., 2012). Instructors can be motivated to improve their teaching, and their desire to do better will potentially have a

positive payoff (Knowles et al., 2012). Once the instructor believes in the change in their teaching practice, they will buy-in and be more motivated to work harder (Cox, 2015).

Knowles' adult learning assumptions support the work of the consultant and the faculty through instructional consultations. While it is uncommon for instructors to be considered the adult learner, Cox (2015) explained that transformative learning can occur for instructors. Cox stated that for transformative learning to occur, adults need to experience an "interruption in [their] ability to fulfill a goal" (p. 33). Then at that critical point, the faculty become "coachable" and motivated to transform the current situation.

Motivation Theory

Ambrose et al. (2010) established that "students' motivation generates, directs, and sustains what they do to learn" (p. 69). This means that motivation is the main ingredient in student learning. A commonly used motivation theory established by Wigfield and Eccles (2000) stated that a person needs to see the value in the task and have high self-efficacy to be motivated to complete the task. This theory is known as the Expectancy-Value theory and can commonly explain what motivates students in the classroom. However, Ambrose et al. (2010) developed another motivation theory which includes the effect of the supportive environment on the motivation of others. In their book *How Learning Works*, Ambrose et al. (2010) applied this theory to higher education students. The authors identified the supportive environment for higher education students as being the student's instructors. However, in this research, the instructors are the adult learners and their supportive environment could be the faculty development consultant, their colleagues, as well as their administration – Chair, Dean, and Provost. By evaluating

the supportive environment in conjunction with value and self-efficacy, individuals are more motivated to accomplish tasks and proceed.

The foundation of Ambrose et al.'s (2010) theory starts with identifying a goal. In order for the faculty to seek deeper learning and persist in adverse situations, they need to establish a consultation goal. When the instructor, in conjunction with the consultant, sets the goal, it should be made clear at the beginning of the consultation process. Setting expectations is motivating in itself (Ambrose et al., 2010).

Wigfield and Eccles (2000) stated that expectancy is the person's belief that they can successfully accomplish a task. This definition is similar to Bandura's distinction between efficacy expectations or outcome expectations. The instructor is one step closer to being motivated to accomplish their goal when they believe they can do it. Daily-Hebert et al. (2014) provided several different motivators in their research on adjunct or part-time instructors. Four of the highest-rated indicators for motivating faculty were intrinsic/expectancy motivators, such as the desire to enhance teaching or professional satisfaction. Two of the highest were extrinsic motivators, such as increased salary. Yoo (2016) researched the motivation and self-efficacy of instructors after they completed an online professional development experience. The results showed that instructors' efficacy did improve when they were encouraged to "gain new knowledge" (Yoo, 2016, p. 91). While there are similarities in extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and the Expectancy-Value Theory, they developed from different supporting theories.

Value is the other component of the Expectancy-Value theory. The person needs to value the goal they have set out to achieve. Wigfield & Eccles (2000) established three different types of value: attainment value (satisfaction of performing well on a task),

intrinsic value (internal satisfaction of doing the task), and instrumental value (receiving a tangible reward for completing the task) (Ambrose et al., 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Turner and Thiekling (2019) studied the effects of instructor's seeking value in their work. Their research uncovered that instructors can find meaning and motivation in their work through "improving their pedagogical knowledge and also when learning from peers" (p. 78). Also, once instructors find meaning in their work, it will increase their motivation, well-being, and engagement.

The third component needed for instructors to be motivated to improve is the supportive environment (Ambrose et al. 2010). Hansen (1989) influenced Ambrose et al.'s approach to motivation. Hansen's work established criteria for students who rejected or evaded classwork and, therefore, were not motivated to accomplish their goal. Ambrose et al. stated that a supportive environment "likely enhances" a person's motivation and an unsupportive environment "likely threatens success" (p. 79). When applying this component to the study, faculty will be more motivated to accomplish their goals if they feel supported. Since faculty do not generally receive teaching training, but rather create a strong expertise in their discipline, the faculty development consultant could be the frontline of that type of support (Menges, 1991). Additionally, Woldkowski (2003) stated that the administration also needs to be supporting the development of faculty's teaching practices. While mandatory training is often a component of faculty development, the administration should encourage positive progress in teaching practice consistently. Shea (2012) pointed out several factors that can affect teaching consultations outcomes and the motivation to seek assistance. Faculty may arrive at a consultation at the advice of their chair or dean or personal dissatisfaction of student test

scores or student evaluations. This type of motivation can derail the consultation if the consultant does not know about it. Exploring this exact situation will frame motivation in this research.

In this study, I explored faculty experiences and perceptions of the consultation process. Additionally, the teaching challenge that brought the faculty to the consultation in the first place underpins of the research study. Their perception of the value of the consultations and how they expect to perform after the consultations could be influenced by the actual motivation to attend.

Chapter Summary

The literature section included the research on faculty development, consultations, motivation, and provided a conceptual framework for the research study that aligned with the research questions. Examining different types of consultations models and approaches provided background on the topic for the readership. Effectiveness of consultations and faculty development provided research-based evidence about the practice of consultations and their usefulness to instructors in higher education. Explicitly stating the gaps and how this research can fill those gaps in the literature shows how this research study adds to the field of research in faculty development and faculty consultations. Finally, the conceptual framework involving the Adult Learning Theory and the Motivation Theory provided a map to support this study's research. The conceptual framework helped to explain the main elements in the research questions, how adults learn and grow professionally, and how motivation affects that growth.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study examined the perceptions and experiences of faculty who participate in instructional consultations. The qualitative study also explored the teaching challenges or motivation that brought faculty to consultations, as well as the faculty's perception of the benefits of the consultation. This chapter includes a description of the research design and methodology, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, validity issues, as well as ethical precautions.

Research Design

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), a qualitative study is an inductive strategy using the researcher as the instrument to provide highly descriptive and informative findings. Additionally, qualitative research studies are bounded or limited to a group of people or cases. In this project, the limited case or unit of analysis was higher education faculty who participated in an instructional consultation. A qualitative study can provide some flexibility so that the methods can morph and change as data is collected and results are analyzed (Maxwell, 2013). Semi-structured qualitative protocols, like interviews, allow for flexibility in data collection and data analysis while focusing on the individual and not just the experience or event (Holly & Harris, 2019; Maxwell,

2013). While examining the phenomenon of consultations themselves occurred, it was necessary to also delve deeply into the faculty's perceptions of the consultation – the individual's experience (Holley & Harris, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The individual story, or case study, about the faculty's experience in an instructional consultation drove the methodology, with examination into the details about consultation approaches or practices; therefore, the semi-structured qualitative research design was the best fit for this research study.

I used case studies to examine faculty from different institutions and share their perceptions and experiences of instructional consultations (Holly & Harris, 2019; Yin, 2018). Due to the nature of this research, I found it difficult to separate the institutional details from the case study. For example, the effect of a supervisor on a consultation, availability of institutional teaching resources, or the ability to achieve excellence in the classroom could correlate to a specific type of institution or teaching center. Considerations were made for this context in the research design; therefore, I considered to "let data and analysis drive the findings" instead of going in the analysis phase with preconceived ideas and outcomes (Holly & Harris, 2019, p. 92). In the end, I combined of the two methods using the semi-structured approach. Additionally, I was aware of what I did not know and avoided distorting by over-generalizing the data.

Research Questions

The research questions drove the study and data collection process. The questions focus on the experiences and perceptions of faculty in consultations, as well as explores the consultation process and its perceived benefits. The research questions are:

RQ 1: What are the experiences and perceptions that led faculty from the University System of Georgia higher education institutions to participate in an instructional consultation?

RQ 1a: What teaching challenge led these higher education faculty to participate in an instructional consultation?

RQ 2: How beneficial did the faculty member perceive the consultation process in addressing the reason for the consultation?

Population and Sample

The study's sample consisted of faculty from the University System of Georgia (USG) institutions who participated in instructional consultations. Twenty-six USG higher education institutions employ approximately 11,000 faculty (University System of Georgia Research and Policy Analysis, 2020). This qualitative study focused on the breadth of information to retrieve descriptive data and support analysis through case studies. The research was conducted by examining higher education faculty who participated in an instructional consultation, which was the unit of analysis. The multi-case study provides the opportunity for transferability rather than generalizability. In transferability, the ownness of deciding how to apply and interpret the data is primarily on the reader. Interviewing participants from diverse sites aligns with transferability, as well as encouraging strong internal validity. However, I provided enough detailed evidence and explanations so that the reader can begin to transfer the data to their own situations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Purposeful sampling was used to locate the sample population. Participants for the study were acquired by requesting faculty through an email listserv dedicated to faculty

and faculty developers (see Appendix A). When I did not receive any participants in this way, I contacted the teaching center directors directly and asked them to send the preliminary research information to their faculty. In this case, the center directors acted as gatekeepers to the sample because consultations are often confidential and they could not share their participant data with me (Seidman, 2013). The study information explained the project, the study's importance to improving teaching and learning services, and asked for their interest in participating in the study while emphasizing confidentiality and anonymity. Encouragement from the teaching center staff could have boosted participation, while they were benefitting most from this research. The instructors then contacted me through email to participate in the study. Through purposeful sampling, information-rich data was collected from a select group of participants who directly answered the details of the research questions. These participants provided useful data that allowed me to make explicit findings (Maxwell, 2013, p. 98). To reduce validity issues, I did not cold-call suggested research participants.

The sample size of a qualitative case study project is usually small (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2002), and according to Creswell (2014), a sample of four or five cases can be examined. Patton (2002) suggested that there is no optimal sample size for qualitative research. The sample collected should be based on the purpose of the study and not an arbitrary number. However, Patton does advocate for setting a sample size number at the beginning of the project, with the understanding that the sample size needs to be "flexible and emergent" (Patton, 2002, p. 246). Maxwell (2013) suggested that in basic qualitative methods, the researcher should seek to find "recurrent patterns in the data," and because of this, the data collection process needs to

be fluid (p. 107). In addition to Maxwell's method, several researchers suggest using data saturation to end the data collection period (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

To establish any type of saturation of data in this study, I analyzed data through descriptive and thematic coding. By using the inductive method, themes were established from the data. I determined a point where the individual thoroughly shared their experiences and answered the research questions in relation to the emerging themes (Saunders et al., 2017). Saturation was granted when "a full understanding of the participant's perspective" was reached (Legard et al., 2003). Using Patton (2002) and Legard et al. (2003) techniques for saturation, I collected data initially from six participants, conducting some in-case analysis and established that saturation was not met. I then collected data from six additional participants and determined the data had reached saturation (Legard et al., 2003; Maxwell, 2013; Saunders et al., 2017).

Data Collection

The data collection protocol for this research study involved comprehensive interviews. As with most qualitative research, the timeline of data collection depended on the participant's ability to provide information and the point at which saturation occurred. In the interviews, I built appropriate and significant relationships with the interviewees to "ethically gain the information to answer the research questions" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 90). This relationship, according to Maxwell, is built on more than just trust and rapport. There is a need to explicitly identify the type of relationship relative to the purpose of the research. Seidman (2013) explained the need to build a relationship where the researcher and participants are comfortable, but not equal. Seidman (2013) refers to this as an "I-

Thou" relationship as opposed to a "We" relationship. In an "I-Thou" relationship, the interviewee should feel safe enough to answer honestly and completely without any influence from the interviewer (Seidman, 2013). However, the researcher should maintain a professional distance. Participants in the study may also be concerned with the political or ethical behavior within their organization since everyone involved in the research project works for the same system of institutions. This is why it was essential to help the participants understand the purpose and goals of the research, as well as the confidentiality and anonymity of the data.

Considerations were made for any power differential exploited between the interviewer and interviewee during data collection (Maxwell, 2013). Identifying the power issues and reassuring the participant of the confidentiality of the data collected, as well as reiterating the reason for the research, reduces participant concerns. Also, the interviewee should have a clear picture of how the data would be handled. These areas were addressed before the initial interview so that the participant could feel confident and comfortable enough to honestly share their experiences and perceptions (Maxwell, 2013). Seidman (2013) proposed offering to share the interview and transcript with the participant so they can suggest any inaccuracies derived from the interview. This is how I conducted member checking in order to establish validity. Not having an open conversation and full participation of the study's participants can compromise the data collected. Additionally, I acknowledged the work of all of the participants and showed appreciation for their commitment to the research study during the interviews.

Participant Interviews

Interviews allowed me to get first-hand knowledge of the information and gather it directly from the study participants (Maxwell, 2013). When interviewing, I referred to a specific event in the past tense to gather the most accurate data (Weiss, 1994, as cited in Maxwell, 2013). This encouraged the participant to reflect on the events and draw conclusions during the interview. Also, the semi-structured synchronous format for interviews allowed me to ask additional questions and follow-up or expand on participant responses, instead of using a structured format which does not allow for questioning flexibility (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yazan, 2015). Asking different types of follow-up interview questions allowed the participants to provide comprehensive answers. As the researcher, I asked a range of questions spanning from the original questions, including playing "devil's advocate" or using hypothetical questioning formats (Holly & Harris, 2019). Interviewing with computer-mediated communication (CMC), Zoom, was the best option for conducting the interviews due to proximity and the COVID-19 pandemic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Instead of interviewing via phone, using a CMC with visual face-to-face capabilities showed participant's emotions which helped to build a relationship between me and participants.

Although the interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format, some interview questions were prepared ahead of time. See Appendix B and C for the interview protocol and questions. I considered the perspective of the interviewee when writing the interview questions in order to focus the questions on the goals of the project. Before the interview, the research questions were pilot-tested on a sample population, and I made adjustments to questions that were misaligned, unclear, and unreasonable.

While Seidman (2013) suggested three rounds of interviews, this study consisted of one round of comprehensive interviews and member checking. The interview questions focused on the faculty's experiences with the beginning stages of the consultation process and their reason for pursuing the consultation. Additional questions were asked to seek more information about their motivation to attend a consultation. The motivation to attend led to questions about specific teaching challenges or practices that they wanted to change or improve. Also, I explored the participants' value, expectancy, and environment, aligning with the theoretical framework of the study (Ambrose et al., 2010). If the participant entered the consultation wanting to improve their teaching practice, I asked exploratory questions about that topic. These questions showed how the participant perceived themselves as an adult learner; thus their responses could be compared to the assumptions of the Adult Learning Theory and the theoretical framework for this research (Knowles et al., 2012). Lastly, I included questions regarding the participants' perception of the success or failure of the consultation, as well as their analysis of the consultation method. These interview questions guided the faculty through the entire consultation process and the approach used. They also helped to examine the relationship between those involved in the consultation and the perceived benefits of the consultation itself. The interview process took approximately two hours for each participant and rich, in-depth data was collected.

Data Coding and Analysis Procedures

During the interviews, I recorded field notes and conducting open coding, noting the experiences and perceptions that appeared to be impactful for my research. I also shared some of the intended topics with the interviewees to ensure they understood the

research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). At the conclusion of each interview, I conducted within-case analysis, allowing me to make additional notes and generate some results (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Memo writing and exploratory analysis allowed me to note early data that appeared highly relevant. Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggested that a quick interpretation of something the researcher finds interesting or important should be collected early on and then possibly follow-up on later.

After conducting six interviews and running within-case analysis and reflections on the interviews that occurred, I established that I had not reached saturation. I had a random sampling of events, consultation experiences, faculty, motivations, and benefits. I then pursued six additional interviews and, after some analysis, determined I reached saturation. At this point, there was no need to request additional interviews. I sent the transcripts to the participants for member checking. I imported the transcripts into the MAXQDA software after receiving their feedback. MAXQDA software provides a repository for transcripts for qualitative and mixed-method research. I used the software to code responses; however, the software does not analyze the data.

As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested, I made notes about potential descriptive codes and categories while conducting the interviews, jotting down words and ideas in the margins of the field notes. Using MAXQDA, I generated my first round of coding using the Descriptive Coding method, creating codes that described chunks of the data (Saldaña, 2016). Descriptive Coding is a word or phrase that explains the essence of the "topic, not the content of the data" (Saldaña, 2016, p.102). Additionally, Charmaz (2014) stated that initial codes should provide a complete picture of the interviewee's ideas, experiences, actions, and we should begin to use those codes as analysis or

explanations. These initial codes are considered "significant data" (Charmaz, 2014). I began to develop the initial codes and, in the end, established 37 unique codes. These codes were focused on the interviewee's chronological reflection of events regarding the consultation process, a wide range of feelings and emotions describing their experiences and rapport with the consultant, and the interviewee's perceptions of the outcome of the consultation. These initial 37 codes morphed and changed as I analyzed and reanalyzed the data. I created additional data codes or eliminated codes with each interview analysis based on its alignment to the research questions and the importance to the findings. Saldaña (2016) shared Harding's (2013) explanation that one-fourth of the codes shared by the participants could be considered an outcome and discussed as such in the research. Because of this, it was important to establish consistent codes. During this initial phase of coding, I also used In Vivo Coding to extract specific findings that were similar and consistent within the interview data (Saldaña, 2016). In Vivo Coding, often used to explain cultural languages, identifies when participants use the same terms or phrases to describe similar or same situations (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Saldaña, 2016). This occurred in the interviews at least three times. The results of these findings are explored in Chapter 5.

When the Descriptive Coding and In Vivo Coding were complete and I felt it was time to dig a little deeper into the data, I began the second round of coding. In this phase, I converted the numerous initial codes into the overall themes of the data. A theme explains a recurrent pattern of ideas and thoughts of an interviewee (Saldaña, 2016). I identified the recurring topics, ideas, or sentiments in the interview and focused on the data to answer the research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I complied and reduced

the initial codes to 15 (See Table 1) and derived those data true sentiment or theme. While identifying recurring ideas, the codes were divided into more codes or became consumed and were no longer a code. As Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggested, I thought about the concepts these initial codes represented and determined the overarching commonalities among those data. There were six themes that developed: Teaching Center Specifics, Motivations and Emotions, Rapport, Teaching Challenge, Benefits, and Additional Developments. Based on Glaser and Strauss (1967), Merriam and Tisdell (2016) established criteria for categories, themes, and findings which recognized that the themes must be aligned to the research questions and "be exhaustive, mutually exclusive, as sensitive to the data as possible, and conceptually congruent" (p. 213).

Table 1

List of Themes and Codes Used in Analysis

Theme	Codes
Teaching Center Specifics	Exposed to consultation service Consultation procedure Teaching center presence on campus
Motivation & Emotions	Feeling prior to or during the consultation Feelings after the consultation
Rapport	Effect of prior connections with consultant Collaboration in the consultation Uncomfortable feelings and rapport change Perceived expertise of consultant
Teaching Challenge	Reason for consultation participation
Benefits	Meaningful Takeaways Seek additional consultations Share with others
Additional Development	Effect of COVID-19 on consultations Mandatory professional development

Validity

In order to minimize the threats to internal and external validity, Maxwell (2013), Creswell (2014), and Holley and Harris (2019) provided the following validity checks for qualitative research projects. Additionally, these areas were designated as a limitation or delimitation of the research.

Research bias

In order to reduce researcher bias, I openly shared my expertise in the field with the participants. This acknowledgment explicitly provided the readers, and the participants, with an honest reflection. I detached my ideas and thoughts from the data collection process and data analysis due to the potential bias during the interviews. At times when I shared ideas with the participant, I indicated that the interview was over and that I was offering additional support for their teaching practice.

Member Checking

Another form of validity checks is to ask your interviewees to participate in member checking after some interviews have been decoded and interpreted by the researcher. In this research, member checking allowed the participants to be certain that the facts of the case study were accurate. I did receive some feedback and suggested edits to the transcripts and the narratives presented in Chapter 4. Asking the interviewee to check the initial findings helped to establish credibility between me and the interviewee.

Peer Checking

Having a colleague in the field of faculty development review the data collection, analysis, and other aspects of the study assures the readership that the research was significant and instrumental to the field. Additionally, colleagues read the findings before

publication, and were able to question any misinterpretations that may have occurred. I collaborated with my colleagues from the faculty development field regarding the research, data, and analysis.

To minimize threats to external validity in this research, Maxwell (2013), Creswell (2014), and Holley and Harris (2019) explained the following considerations:

Rich Data and Extended Time in Field

By spending quality time interviewing each participant, I was able to collect the depth and breadth of information-rich data necessary to answer the research questions in their entirety. This was done by conducting an approximately two-hour comprehensive interview and asking questions aligned to the research questions and theoretical framework. In addition, the semi-structured interview method allowed the participants to share additional information as they wished.

Transferability, not Generalizability, of Findings

The findings and patterns found in the study may apply to other faculty who attend instructional consultations. However, this is a limitation to the study due to how the sample population was determined. Through purposeful sampling, a clear heterogeneous group was not found for participants in the research project. In this case, generalizing findings was a non-factor. Additionally, transferability is more valid, as readers will be able to determine for themselves what can be applied to their own situations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Audit trail

For minimizing threats to reliability, an audit trail was created. To prove the data collection is reliable, Holley and Harris (2019) suggested creating an audit trail that

explains every step associated with that data collection process. The audit trail proves to the readership that the methods for collection are trustworthy and correct. The dissertation itself is considered an audit trail and the trail is evident in the structure of the paper (Harris & Holley, 2019).

Limitations

Limitations in research are necessary to identify transparent and honest research validity. Limitations are aspects of the research project that the researcher cannot control. The limitations to internal validity in this research were research bias and peer checking. In researcher bias, the researcher needs to be aware of the potential for confirmation bias, question order bias, or leading question bias. These limitations will disrupt the process because it can cause prejudices during data collection or inaccurate predictions during analysis. Peer checking is another limitation of this research. Since colleagues will be examining the process of data collection and analysis, there needs to be standardization reducing bias in the peer-review process.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the choices made by the researcher that limit the study. These are limitations that the researcher fundamentally has control over when designing the scope of the study. The delimitations of this study included the population sample and the methodology of the research. The sample population was faculty in higher education who participated in instructional consultations. This was potentially a small pool of participants to study; however, they were different types of consultations in which they could have participated. Through the request to research, it was necessary to convey the different consultation types. Higher education faculty who sought assistance at their

teaching center or through their administration to improve their teaching practice have essentially experienced an instructional consultation. Additionally, the methodology of qualitative research was a delimiter. Qualitative research is commonplace in educational research projects. Because of the nature of this project, participants experienced deep introspection and reflection during the interview process, and I shared those insights of the higher education faculty. One area of validity that could have been improved was triangulation. Since few the participants shared documentation to use for triangulation, there was no way to establish this type of validity across all participants. These delimiters provided an opportunity to extend the research in the field of faculty development.

Human Participants and Ethical Precautions

Ethical considerations in research projects stem from the protection of the participants and the participant's data. Managing the data collected ethically and safely to maintain the participants' confidentiality begins when the first participant accepts the request to be interviewed. The interview notes, field notes, and any documentation was stored on my personal computer and housed in my personal office space. The computer hard drive was backed up on a VPN-secured personal backup drive, as well as in Dropbox.

Approval to conduct the research study was obtained through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Valdosta State University (Appendix D). As part of the IRB process and also to advocate for honest and safe research, the participants consented to participate in the research study. The informed consent was emailed to the participants, as well as read aloud before the interview (Appendix A and E). Before the interview began, the interviewees verbally consented to participate. The consent form established the

expectations of the participants in the study. The form also stated that any identifying information (i.e., names, institutions) would be removed from reporting and that there was no physical risk to participating in the study. Ethical concerns were addressed in the informed consent that the participant accepts; therefore, acknowledging the potential risk (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Additionally, Patton (2002) suggested that the trustworthiness of the data is directly aligned to the trustworthiness of the researcher and their methods to collect the data.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and Patton (2002) both remind researchers that the nature of interviews can feel like an invasion of privacy for the participants. During data analysis, some data was coded, and some was not coded. Regardless of what data is retained, I needed to guarantee to tell the participant's entire story. Once the study was completed, the raw data collected was not shared with anyone other than the participant. It remained in my possession.

Chapter Summary

This chapter included discussions about research design, data collection, and data analysis procedures. A sample size of 12 participants was examined with interviews to fully understand the participants' stories and I established a point of saturation to end data collection. Limitations and delimitations regarding the validity of the research project were discussed. In the final section of the chapter, data analysis procedures for coding were established and explained.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

University and college faculty often enter their higher education teaching career with little to no official education in pedagogy and may be unaware of their teaching effectiveness (Menges, 1991; Palmer, 1998). As a result, faculty seek out support and guidance from teaching centers or other instructor-mentors at their institutions. They can pursue assistance through instructional consultations to learn more about teaching theories and methods, such as designing and developing engagement activities, assessments, or online instruction (Brinko, 2012; Border, 2012; Malouff et al., 2015). The interviews conducted in this study on higher education faculty examined their involvement with instructional consultations and focused on the following research questions:

RQ 1: What are the experiences and perceptions that led faculty from the University System of Georgia higher education institutions to participate in an instructional consultation?

RQ 1a: What teaching challenge led these higher education faculty to participate in an instructional consultation?

RQ 2: How beneficial did the faculty member perceive the consultation process in addressing the reason for the consultation?

These questions were explored through a single comprehensive interview with 12 higher education faculty. There were seven faculty participants from comprehensive universities and five from state universities of the University System of Georgia (USG). Participants varied in rank, institution, gender, discipline, and motivation; however, all of the interview data contributed to answering the research questions. Table 2 displays demographics of each participant. All participant names are pseudonyms, and they are listed alphabetically.

Table 2

Demographics of Participants Contributing to Research

Participant	Rank	Discipline	University-Type
Alan	Lecturer	Chemistry	Comprehensive
Betsy	Assistant Professor	Sociology	State
Donna	Associate Professor	Education	State
Fran	Professor	Marketing	State
Goldie	Professor	Sociology	State
Howard	Assistant Professor	Biology	State
Kathy	Instructor	Nursing	Comprehensive
Mike	Lecturer	History	Comprehensive
Molly	Sr. Lecturer	Accounting	Comprehensive
Sam	Associate Professor	Geography	Comprehensive
Tom	Professor	Biology	Comprehensive
Violet	Associate Professor	Nursing	Comprehensive

Specific characteristics about each instructional consultation is provided in Table 3. The table includes information about the timeline of the consultation in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic (Pre or Post), whether the consultation was self-initiated, recommended by a supervisor (Rec), or mandatory, who led the consultation, and the consultation mode. The majority of the participants were consulted before the COVID-19 pandemic began. All but one participant worked with consultants from a teaching center (TC), and the majority were self-initiated and conducted in-person.

Table 3

Specifics of Consultations

Participant	Timeline	Initiated	Where	Mode
Alan	Pre	Self-initiated	TC	In-person
Betsy	Pre	Self-initiated	TC	In-person, Email
Donna	Pre	Self-initiated	Fellow	In-person
Fran	Post	Self-initiated	TC	Virtual, Email
Goldie	Post	Self-initiated	TC	Virtual, Phone, Email
Howard	Pre	Self-initiated	TC	In-person
Kathy	Pre	Self-initiated	TC	In-person
Mike	Pre	Rec/Self-initiated	TC	In-person
Molly	Pre	Self-initiated	TC	In-person
Sam	Pre	Rec/Self-initiated	TC	In-person
Tom	Pre	Mandatory	TC	In-person
Violet	Pre	Self-initiated	TC	In-person

Note: Timeline = in relation to COVID-19 with Pre meaning prior to Spring semester 2020 and Post meaning after Spring semester 2020; REC = Recommended to attend consultation; TC = Teaching Center

The questions asked in the interviews gathered information about their experiences and perceptions that led them to participate in instructional consultations, how the consultation took place, their feelings and emotions during that time. Additional questions regarding consultation rapport and teaching center presence were also asked. Findings, themes, and conclusions will be explored in the following chapters; however, this chapter provides a detailed summary of each participant's interview, highlighting the most fruitful stories and information.

Alan

Alan is a Lecturer of Chemistry at a comprehensive university in the USG. Alan participated in formal instructional consultation through his university's teaching center. Alan learned about teaching centers from his previous institution, so when he attended orientation as a new instructor, he sought out the teaching center staff. He participated in a faculty learning community (FLC) for new instructors facilitated by the teaching center. Even though this FLC was focused on new instructors, he recognized that he was not new to teaching but rather new to teaching this particular student body. The classroom observation and consultation services were offered to the entire FLC as one way to improve their teaching experience. That year, Alan had been given a course that turned out to be "extremely challenging," so he thought he would benefit from a consultation. The consultation consisted of a pre-observation meeting, class observation, student focus group, and a follow-up consultation. The pre-observation meeting was used to establish goals and determine Alan's motivation for requesting the consultation and observation. The consultant observed Alan's class and conducted a student focus group, also known as a Small Group Instruction Diagnosis (SGID), on the same day. In the post-observation

consultation, the consultant shared what they observed, discussed some conclusions, and provided suggestions for improvement.

Alan shared that he was interested in establishing a baseline classroom observation in this consultation. He also knew the consultation could help him because he and his students were feeling discouraged about the low number of students passing the exam. Alan expressed that he enjoys gathering data and feedback from the teaching center and his students at different points during the semester. He knew that the baseline observation could be helpful to him even though it was after midterm, but at least his students would see that he cared to seek assistance and ask for their feedback through the student focus group. Additionally, he felt he could use the suggestions for the upcoming semester. He was not expecting a quick fix, and he knew it would take work to improve the course and reduce frustrations. Alan expressed that he felt “angst” during the consultation events. He determined this feeling was related to not knowing what was going on with his class; the angst was not caused by the actual process of the observation and consultation. He explained that he did not have issues like this at his previous institution or in his other classes, so he was unsure what happened and really wanted some assistance in figuring it out.

Alan shared that he did know the consultant from the FLC and felt comfortable talking with them. He stated he felt a relationship between the consultant and instructor was important but wanted the consultation to be as "unbiased as possible." He compared the consultation process to a medical procedure stating, "you have to go through some kind of surgery, and you have to be ready for the pain. And then only, you can heal.”

Alan's initial reaction to the feedback from the consultant was that he needed to "brew" on the information provided. He needed to look at the feedback from all lenses and decide what he wanted to implement and how. He noticed that the consultant suggested improvements as opposed to just telling him how to fix the class. He figured that this was the process because he would be making the changes and eventually needed to buy into his changes. He compared the consultation to having an academic paper reviewed. For instance, he had a few moments when he thought that he did what the consultant suggested, just like how he felt after someone made suggestions on a peer-reviewed paper. However, there were other areas where he needed to think about incorporating the suggestions into his class. Alan felt the consultation was one component to improving his overall teaching. He was intentional about being systematic and making sure to record all of his changes.

While Alan felt the consultation was "immensely helpful" and that class observations should be mandatory, he did express some frustration with the consultation outcomes. He felt the suggestions for improvement may not work for his discipline and instead thought that another observation from a colleague from the same discipline may be helpful. He stated that the teaching center consultation provided him with holistic feedback that eventually shifted his course design, where he began to require course work to be completed before class. He also knows that the students appreciated his efforts in having the focus group, so he could gather more data and help them succeed.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions and the move to remote instruction, Alan feels like he is back to "square one" in some areas. He was not able to implement all that he had gained from the consultation due to a change in teaching modalities. However, in

other aspects of the course, Alan now realizes his work prior to the move to remote instruction due to COVID-19 helped him transition easier to the online environment. Moving forward, Alan shares his consultation experiences with his colleagues. He tells them about having both the teaching center consultants observe, as well as someone from their own discipline. This is one suggestion that he offered to improve the overall consultation process.

Betsy

Betsy is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at a state university in the USG. She learned about the teaching centers from previous work in her doctoral program and being a junior faculty fellow in that teaching center. Betsy feels that she is open to having people observe her classes or offer feedback on her work because she is from an education field where she knows feedback can help improve the student experience. She had previous experience working with this teaching center consultant and knew they would work well together, so she was comfortable working with her.

Betsy met with the teaching center consultant to discuss how to improve the classroom assessment she used for accreditation. These consultations consisted of several informal meetings compared to the more formal process in which Alan participated. Together they discussed potential options, and Betsy continued to review literature for ideas. They decided on an assessment plan that included writing prompts, framing for the students, and a rubric for grading. At that point, the consultant encouraged Betsy to try it out in the classroom. Through email, texts, and hallway conversations, Betsy and the consultant continued to evaluate the assessment tool together. Betsy even met with the consultant during lunch and at other informal times. Over two or three semesters, several

iterations of the plan, and additional conversations with the teaching consultant, Betsy finalized the assessment piece and currently uses it in her classes.

During the creation of the assessment plan and several consultations, the consultant and Betsy began presenting their work at conferences. She felt they both had a stake in the ownership of the assessment tool. Betsy said the relationship between them shifted to peer collaboration and that the consultation benefited both of them to that end. To this day, Betsy feels they are “kindred spirits” because of their work on assessment projects, not just for her class but for the entire institution.

Even though Betsy needed constant help on this project as it continued to grow and morph, the teaching center consultant did not reach out to her to nudge her along. Betsy felt that was due to the nature of their relationship. She felt the consultant understood that Betsy would return to her for the next step. However, without this relationship, Betsy said she felt the consultant would have contacted her to see how the project was progressing and to offer help. Betsy expressed and appreciated that the consultant often works informally with faculty. The consultant is known to guide and help faculty refine teaching solutions to challenges through several informal meetings. Betsy has returned for consultations on several different topics.

Betsy explained that everyone is not in-tuned to the teaching center and the consultation process at her institution. She says the faculty are "siloed," and some think that their discipline is so unique that the teaching center may not be able to support them. While some faculty do not take advantage of this service, Betsy says that this consultant is known for her "passion…temperament and enthusiasm." Betsy stated that some do not use the teaching center’s services because they may not know about them. She sought out

the center on her own; no one mentioned their services to her when she started teaching at this institution. She thinks that most people do not use the services, besides actually not knowing they exist, because faculty are not secure enough to be observed or get feedback from someone else. They are too worried they might be viewed as a weak instructor for doing so. Betsy thinks mandatory consultations could be beneficial to everyone if they are relevant to the instructor's needs.

Donna

Donna is an Associate Professor in Education at a state university in the USG. Donna's experience with a consultation was different from all of the other research participants. Donna was part of a small select group of faculty focused on improving specific courses. She participated in multi-session development opportunities with this same group of eight to 10 faculty for one year.

During the initial sessions, the group was asked about specific issues they were experiencing in their classes. Donna was curious about what small changes she could make that would have a big impact on student success. She did not think it was possible to complete an entire course redesign because the courses she teaches have certain requirements due to accrediting bodies; however, she did have flexibility in making some improvements. Donna shared with the lead consultant that she was interested in finding the "best thing to help the students do better on their assignments." She shared that her students did not always provide authentic and creative projects and assignments. She wanted to help students improve the "quality of their assignments," feeling like they sometimes regurgitate items similar to the examples or missed the project's purpose entirely. During this experience with the small group of faculty, Donna felt "excited

about learning something new" and "supported in that space." She shared that she was the only faculty in the small group that was from an education discipline. Because of this background, Donna felt she did not need additional theoretical information but rather practical strategies.

After the initial meeting, where Donna shared with the lead consultant and the group, she was excited and ready to learn more. During the next meeting, where they discussed ways to improve the assignments that Donna's students were submitting, the lead consultant presented information to the group and had them complete an assignment that proved the value of the strategy she was teaching. After that follow-up session, Donna felt confident that she could implement the strategy; however, she was concerned about the amount of time it would take to change her assignments.

Since Donna's consultation took place with a group of faculty, we discussed how Donna built rapport with her lead consultant. Donna explained that the group participated in icebreakers and had discussions to get to know each other's needs initially. Their discussions were both structured and unstructured and continued throughout the year. During breaks and lunch, time was allotted for faculty to work or get to know each other. Donna bonded one-on-one with the lead consultant because they were from the same discipline and could relate to similar situations, reports, and requirements of the field. They also had personal elements in common.

When asked about attending mandatory professional development, Donna reflected on the many meetings she has attended in the past that were not significant yet were mandatory. She feels that for professional development to be mandatory, the faculty "need to have buy-in for it to be meaningful." Faculty need to see the benefits of the

development and be willing to make changes based on the information. If they do not buy in, then the meeting becomes useless.

The results of the consultation and resulting presentations and activities facilitated by the lead consultant proved beneficial to Donna. She made changes to her teaching practice and saw improvements in her student's work. Because Donna saw the overall benefit of consultations on her teaching practice, she shared her experience with colleagues at her institution. While Donna did not participate in a consultation through her institutions' teaching center, she says the center is very visible to the faculty. The faculty know where the center is located, and they often receive information about sessions that are offered.

Fran

Fran is a Professor of Marketing at a state university in the USG. Fran considered this specific consultation to be "multi-phased" and consisted of some formal and informal conversations, as well as communication through email. Fran explained that she has worked with teaching centers at previous institutions, and she understood that most faculty are knowledgeable about their discipline but not taught how to teach their discipline. Fran learned about the consultations offered by her institutions' teaching center through faculty orientation. This specific consultation was not her first consultation with the teaching center or this consultant. This consultation and the subsequent follow-up consultations were conducted virtually due to COVID-19. For this teaching issue, Fran worked with this consultant as well as other staff from the teaching center.

Fran needed a video conferencing tool for a large university event that she hosted and facilitated numerous times in-person in past years. This event benefited students specifically but also the community that supports the institution. Initially, Fran reached out to the teaching center consultant with her need through email. The consultant researched the issues, challenges, and benefits and responded to Fran with new ideas and technology to help her event. During the preparations, Fran consulted, tested, and trained with several of the teaching center staff throughout the entire summer.

She felt confident that the team would help her, but she was not sure she would be "able to pull it off." Fran insisted canceling the event "was not an option." She conveyed to the lead consultant how the event ran when it was in-person to understand the type of virtual tools she needed and the way the technology needed to function. Fran expressed how much she enjoys working with the lead consultant. She said he is "curious" and "he cares about you personally." Fran did have some apprehension unrelated to the assistance from the consultants, but about the fact that she did not want to fail. She was worried about her reputation as well as creating the best experience for her students. She said the closer she got to the event, the less timid and afraid and more "confident" she could make the event a success.

Fran said that as she worked on this event through the summer, she experienced "continuous growth of relief as things were developing and more confidence." Some of that confidence came because she used the same video conferencing tool for her classes that shifted to remote instruction due to COVID-19. The tools and technology she used for this event were utilized for all of her Fall 2020 courses as the USG institutions were conducting instruction remotely.

Fran considers herself a person that "seeks out help," but she made a point of sharing that she enjoys working with her teaching center's team. The teaching center's location at this institution is not central to the campus; however, Fran said that the lead consultant does communicate through weekly emails. In addition, she feels the administration could do more to share the teaching center's services and resources with the faculty to show support of the center. Fran also shared an idea of creating a "Need Help" button, like in the aisles at Lowe's or Home Depot but placed it on their Learning Management System (LMS) main page instead. That button would link to the teaching center, which supports the LMS at her institution. She called this an "Emergency CTL Call Box." Fran shared that the teaching center is not located in an area that faculty frequent. She suggested adding signs to the exterior of the building so other know where the center is located. When asked about the benefit of mandatory faculty development, Fran suggested that faculty need to build relationships during these events to make them meaningful. She says it takes a while for some faculty to see the advantage, but through enduring experiences, they can begin to feel more supported and relationships can be nurtured.

Goldie

Goldie is a Professor of Sociology at a state university in the USG. Goldie shared that she frequently calls the teaching center for help with the LMS. These consultations appear to be more about solving issues around technology. This specific consultation experience began when Goldie realized her the grades provided in the LMS in one of her courses were incorrect. Goldie was the person that enters the grades, however, she noticed that the platform was calculating her student's grades differently than she

intended. Goldie started using the LMS gradebook about two years ago and was still unsure about its functionality and capabilities. During the interview, we commiserated on the issue of trusting the system. We even shared the technique of downloading .csv files as backups to the system. Goldie called the teaching center for assistance and a consultant called her back.

Goldie said she often calls the center at the beginning and end of the semester and rotates the consultants that she works with. On this day, one of her frequently used consultants called her back. Goldie explained what she thought was happening and the consultant said she would check it out and get back to her. In the meantime, the consultant helped her hide all of the grades from the students so that Goldie would not receive calls from upset students about their grades. Even after a few exchanges, Goldie was still not feeling like the consultant understood what was incorrect. She thought, "I'm not making myself clear. And I felt like we were talking over each other in some ways." Goldie enjoyed working with this consultant, so she knew the consultant was not sabotaging the consultation. Goldie expressed that sometimes she feels like the consultant thinks she might be “dumb” because the consultant does not “assume anything.” At some point, the consultant offered to fix the gradebook once she understood what Goldie was expressing. Goldie thought about trying to do it herself, but the consultant did it for her.

During this time, Goldie had feelings of frustration over the platform, anxiety over student grades, as well as doubt about her own math ability. The frustration stemmed from the fact that she had already discussed the gradebook with this consultant and thought it was correct. In the early stages of fixing the issue, Goldie felt “worried’ and thought “this is going to be a catastrophe.” Goldie expressed how “stressed” and

“overwhelmed” she was when she first started talking with the consultant. Part of these feelings of frustration arose because Goldie reached out to this consultant before the semester began to avoid this exact situation. She said she began to doubt herself and thought she might have "misunderstood percentages [her] whole life?” After time passed and she talked about the situation in this interview, Goldie said she was "still a little bit stressed because [she] had so many self-doubts.”

Because Goldie worked in-person pre-COVID with this consultant, Goldie was comfortable having candid conversations with her. This consultant taught Goldie about the LMS, so they had been through several levels of learning. Goldie expressed that both she and the consultant are patient people so their conversations were not heated, rather just getting the job done. Additionally, she identified a few areas for improvement in the process, including communication via phone or virtual would be easier to understand than email.

Goldie shared that mandatory training is not always favored by her colleagues and ventured to guess by others in academia across the country because most wish autonomy over their own professional development. Goldie feels that her colleagues may not seek out the teaching center for consultations and assistance because they feel nothing the center can provide would be helpful. She says [a significant number of faculty] believe they are unlikely to benefit from consultations or other teaching center services; however, she sees the value and uses the center for all of their resources.

Howard

Howard is an Assistant Professor of Biology at a state university in the USG. Howard was a member of an FLC that worked with the teaching center at his institution.

He learned about the center and the consultation opportunities through this FLC. He also taught in a high school before college and was exposed to classroom observations at that time. Howard often has informal consultations with the teaching center consultant at his institution, however, for this specific consultation, he engaged in a more formal experience. In this consultation, Howard was interested in learning more about teaching techniques from the common reader used in the FLC.

Howard was interested in improving how students see the relevance of his course. He stated that biology majors understood why they had to learn the content and were excited to do so. However, the non-major students had a hard time understanding why they had to take the class and, because of that attitude, generally performed poorly. Howard thought entrance and exit tickets, which he learned about through the FLC, might be one strategy he could try to help his students see the value in his course. He contacted the consultant to discuss using the tickets in his class. Howard said the consultant often responded with questions to make him think about applying the strategy, the steps he would take, and his expected feedback. Howard likes this approach because it allows him to express his ideas before hearing the consultants. The consultant provided some feedback at that point; however, after a few weeks passed, Howard and the consultant came back together to discuss how the strategy worked. Together they dissected improvements and discussed current and potential outcomes for students. Howard said, at this point, he was feeling optimistic and was excited to continue the work. He said the motivation to help his students is that they are "achieving and doing well."

Howard discussed that he checks in often with the consultant informally about class-related events. He mentioned that he feels more veteran professors should do the same. He feels that since the newer, novice professors are seeking tenure or promotion, they are more willing to try new things in the classroom, ask for feedback, and evaluate their teaching and learning. Howard thinks the veteran teachers are more interested in not making changes to their classes and potentially have a reputation for being the hardest. He is more focused on being "approachable" and available to his students.

Before this consultation, Howard already had a professional relationship with the consultant. They connected over their discipline, worked together in the FLC, and had other consultations before and after this one. Howard often shares his ideas with the consultant through hallway conversations, and the consultant often follows up by asking Howard how he liked the activity, questions about the activity, and ways to improve it. Howard has noticed that over the years of hallway and formal consultations, their conversations have become more about “one teacher talking to another teacher.” Howard stated that the consultant is “very supportive.” He says she is collegial and comfortable with all of her colleagues and the faculty. He says she is “willing to stick with you.”

Howard encourages his colleagues to go to the teaching center. He may not have shared this particular experience, but he does encourage others to become a part of the consultation process. He said the center sends email communication about events, workshops, or information about collaborations with professors. Howard shared that he would not have an issue with making some teaching center events mandatory because he is a person who is always seeking ways to improve his teaching.

Howard is trying to continue this process even when teaching remotely due to COVID-19, however, he said it is difficult to accomplish in the online environment. He constantly reflects on his work and asks students for feedback on how to improve his teaching. He feels that most students at his institution have adapted well to remote instruction.

Kathy

Kathy is an Instructor of Nursing at a comprehensive university in the USG. Kathy's consultation experience was more formalized and consisted of working with a teaching center consultant in a pre-observation meeting, class observation, and a follow-up meeting. She had reached out to her institutions' teaching center in the past but had not received a formal consultation before. In the pre-observation meeting, Kathy discussed her teaching issue with the consultant. The consultant then facilitated a class observation and followed up with Kathy in another meeting to discuss the findings and later provided a memo outlining what was discussed. Kathy was excited to have time with this teaching center consultant, whom she respected.

In the pre-observation meeting, Kathy explained to the consultant that she was having difficulty with student engagement with one class in particular. She usually does not have engagement problems but felt some of the content was more challenging to create those types of learning experiences. However, Kathy was eager about the consultation saying:

> I was so excited to sit down. I just value [the consultants'] opinion. I just know how learned she is and I was super excited. I was excited to have the opportunity.

I was excited for the help. I was excited for the feedback and we don't grow if we don't get feedback, even if it's feedback that we don't necessarily want.

Kathy said that the pre-observation conversation went well. She felt the consultant understood what she was seeking out of the class observation. The consultant observed her class and met with Kathy after to discuss what she saw. The only time Kathy was nervous was going into the post-observation meeting. She was unsure of what the consultant thought of her teaching. The follow-up conversation was full of thought-provoking information for Kathy. She was pleased by the discoveries of the consultant and Kathy knew the consultant was correct in her suggestions for improvement.

Some time passed after the consultation and Kathy felt inspired by the strategies shared and the action items she and the consultant devised together. Kathy said she "felt empowered," like she had an "ally" in teaching. She felt the consultation was beneficial because she started acquiring more teaching "tools in [her] toolbox." During the interview, Kathy jokingly asked if she could have a consultation and class observation every semester.

Before this observation, Kathy had built a rapport with the consultant through other campus-related meetings and personal commonalities. She considered her consultant a "close acquaintance." The positive rapport continued throughout the entire consultation process. When asked about mandatory teaching center services, Kathy felt there are two sides to this: those that will not be happy with mandatory trainings and view them as punitive, and those that may eventually get something beneficial from it. Kathy is the latter; she is willing to give something a chance before saying it would not be helpful.

There was no time for another consultation because of closing campuses due to COVID-19. However, Kathy does tell her colleagues about her experience and several have also received observations and consultations. At the end of the interview, Kathy said she thinks this type of consultation should be required stating, "I feel like every faculty member should do this on a regular basis."

Mike

Mike is a Lecturer of History and Philosophy at a comprehensive university in the USG. Mike did not remember a teaching center at his last institution, but he learned about this institutions' center quickly after working there. His consultation experience was more formalized and included a pre-observation meeting, a class observation, and a post-observation meeting. The consultant from the teaching center also conducted an SGID and provided a memo with details about the strengths and weaknesses of Mike's teaching. Mike learned about the consultation process from his Department Chair. Mike felt motivated to ask for a consultation to provide additional teaching evidence for his tenure and promotion documentation. Also, he was interested in additional strategies for engagement and interaction with his students.

This consultation was the first Mike that participated in with this consultant. Initially, Mike was anxious because he never had an observation done by someone outside of this department. After the consultation, he had a conversation with the consultant. Mike admitted that he understood the outcome of the observation and SGID; however, he was hopeful there would be a "switch" that would make him the most "effective [teacher] ever." He noted that the consultant was “pretty comfortable dissecting the information and giving [him] the results.” Due to the comfortable nature of the

follow-up conversation, he said he felt they were both “cooperating on the same project” instead of providing a consultation. He also stated that he did not have a professional relationship with the consultant before the consultation, but since the consultant explained what was happening every step of the way and provided expectations, he felt comfortable with the process and consultant. Additionally, the consultant shared that they had expertise in the same discipline, which contributed to Mike's comfort with the consultant. When asked if he ever felt uncomfortable during the consultation, Mike stated that he was comfortable during the consultation; however, when he had to leave his classroom during the SGID, he was anxious about losing control in the classroom.

After the consultation, Mike felt relieved and sought out ways to implement the suggestions, however because of the pandemic, Mike has not been able to put many of the new strategies into practice. He did state how beneficial the consultation and observation were and said he would continue to ask for the services. However, Mike believes that if his consultation and class observation were mandated, he would have felt even more anxious and a loss of control. Mike shares his consultation experience with his colleagues and encourages them to participate in teaching center events. He says the teaching center has a presence at his institution due to the culture of the faculty and also through different means of communication.

Molly

Molly is a Senior Lecturer of Accounting at a comprehensive university in the USG. Molly’s consultation experience consisted of a pre-observation meeting, class observation, SGID, and follow-up consultation. The consultant from the university’s teaching center conducted the consultation and provided documentation afterward. Molly

could not recall if this was her first consultation with the teaching center but learned of its services through a course redesign program offered by the university system. Molly was interested in gathering baseline data on her teaching. Since she was involved in this university system program that would encourage course redesign, Molly asked the consultant to conduct a class observation consultation before and after her course redesign.

Prior to the observation, Molly felt "a little nervous." She had been observed in less formal ways and this process where the consultant was "taking notes about [her] school teaching" was somewhat different than expected. After the class observation, the consultant reminded Molly that they would meet up in about a week to discuss the data. Molly was not apprehensive about the next meeting at all. At that meeting, the consultant provided Molly with feedback about the observation, shared the data she had collected, and discussed improvements. Molly did not consider these "recommendations" because it was clear to her that making the changes was not required. She realized she was allowed to decide what to change in her course and what feedback to incorporate.

Molly felt the consultant was attentive to her areas of concern, especially one area in which Molly had not identified herself. Molly discovered that the consultant could "capture the level of engagement" or disengagement of the students in her large class during her lecture. Molly was somewhat surprised at this finding. When asked about her emotions and ease of talking to the consultant, Molly said she "felt very comfortable with the consultant." She said, "I trusted her and her expertise," and "…it was interesting for me to hear … feedback from that perspective." After some time passed from the

consultation and Molly reflected on the feedback, she said she was “excited” and that the consultation “gives [her] the opportunity to have measurable improvement.”

The consultant and Molly had a professional relationship before this consultation. They worked together in the FLC on course redesign for about six months prior to the consultation. Molly felt comfortable with this consultant and connected on areas of life outside of work and school. The consultant and Molly continued to work together even after the FLC was over. Molly even presented at a conference associated with the consultant. Molly shared that the consultation was valuable to her because she was provided notes after the consultation to reread for ideas or suggestions. Molly also remembered that she worked hard on preparing for the class that was observed and stated, "I became more aware of what I wanted to do if I knew I was going to be observed, which is really what I should do more often." She was aware that she increased her “self-reflection on teaching” as a result of the consultation. When asked about mandatory faculty development or consultations, Molly said she might be “skeptical” and that if “[she] were singled out, and it was mandated for [her] specifically, that would make [her] really nervous.”

Molly agreed with the recommendations and observations of the consultant. However, Molly did note that she felt "some of them are harder to implement in a larger classroom with a big number of students with no support." She was clear that she agreed with the consultants' recommendations but that the suggestions may be more challenging to implement. Molly's major change in her teaching practice was to be more "deliberate about the plan" for teaching. The consultation made her "brainstorm a lot about [her] inventory of different types of activities [she] can do" in between lecture segments. The

move to remote instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic has created more obstacles for her in this area. She stated that she "almost got good," but now she is "really struggling actually to come up with new ideas." She identified some tools and skills she has acquired due to COVID that she will keep in her teaching toolbox.

Molly recommended this experience to her colleagues, especially those who teach the same class that she redesigned. She felt that the teaching center offers "fantastic services," however, she did recognize that there are faculty at her institution that are not aware of the teaching center and their services. She feels that since faculty are not always trained in teaching, that faculty should be "required to do something with the [teaching center]." Molly stated that due to a change in how institutional emails are sent out, she receives less from her institutions' teaching center than she used to. She knows they exist, so she seeks out their website to identify programming of interest. Molly perceives a large number of resources currently exist at her institution, as well as system-wide, and determined that "[faculty] have so many opportunities, it's like people don't care anymore" about attending programming and events.

Sam

Sam is an Associate Professor of Geography at a comprehensive institution in the USG. Sam's consultation experience included having his online course reviewed and two meetings with two consultants from his institutions' teaching center. He is the only participant in this study that worked with two consultants instead of one. Sam's consultation included a meeting to discuss his expectations and goals, a course review conducted independently by the consultants, and then the consultants and Sam met to discuss the review's outcome to meet Sam's goals and expectations. Sam has visited his

institutions' teaching center "a half a dozen times, at least, for different things." Sam did not remember when he first learned of the teaching center's consultation services, but he did know that he went to the center for assistance after about 20 years of college-level teaching. Sam identified that after 20 years of teaching "you start discovering how important it is to keep your teaching fresh … and come up with new techniques and methods." That is when he found the teaching center and started visiting the staff for assistance.

Sam was interested in improving his teaching in his online course and the overall online course design. He wanted to "modernize [his] delivery method." Sam learned of the consultation service by the university's teaching center from his Chair. Sam knew that his student evaluations were above average but also knew there were some "best practices" that he could be incorporating to improve his delivery.

After the course review, Sam felt "a very mild level of discomfort during the consultation." He noted that the feeling was similar to having an article peer-reviewed and the stress surrounding that. Sam said that it is important to find out "what makes the paper better," but "it is still an uncomfortable process to go through." Sam recognized that he was open-minded to the experience and wanted to make improvements to his course. When we explored the reason for someone of his veteran teaching status to seek out teaching consultations, Sam said that he was more willing to try new things in the classroom when he first arrived at this university. He said that "after a few years, you kind of find a rhythm or a practice that you just feel comfortable in after you've experimented with a lot of stuff." Additionally, Sam made a connection to the fact that when he first arrived at his institution, he was told by a Provost that student evaluations

are highly considered in the tenure process. At that time, he felt the need to work hard to improve his classroom evaluations. After getting to a certain rank, Sam was more focused on his research and less on teaching. He noted that these sentiments may be different for new junior faculty now at his institution.

After reflecting on the consultation, Sam was not hesitant about incorporating the changes suggested by the consultants. He made improvements before he taught the class again the following semester. Sam noted that the changes also made his course easier to teach, which appeared to be a value-added component that he did not expect to achieve. He said the changes made the “students happier," and the changes also "made him happier" because he didn't have to grade as much as he had done in previous semesters.

Sam knew his consultants a few years before this consultation. He felt his consultants were “friendly and professional.” The consultants “very clearly communicated” the information and review of the online course. Following the consultation, the consultants provided a written formal report for Sam to refer back to for recommendations. As a result of this consultation, Sam made a few changes to his other courses. Sam felt the consultation was “very thorough” and the consultants “took it very seriously”

Sam did not think mandating faculty development was a good idea. He predicted that faculty would be “resistant and defensive and probably unwilling to follow the recommendations.” Sam has suggested using the teaching center’s services to his colleagues if they go to him with “frustrations they were having with a class or an assignment or something.” Sam does think that, at his institution, the Chairs should do more to promote the services and resources from the teaching center. He feels that the

center “could be wider known or better known among faculty.” However, he had a great experience. Sam said:

> I was just very grateful for it, really. And again, especially the teaching resource center has been, it's been really good for me early on. And now I'm at the later stages of my career, and it's also been really helpful to help me rejuvenate, you know, my teaching and keep it fresh. And that's what we do mostly is teach, you know, and so it's been a great thing.

Tom

Tom is a Professor of Biology at a comprehensive university in the USG. Tom’s consultation experience was formalized through his institutions’ teaching center and consisted of a pre-observation meeting, a class observation, and a follow-up meeting. Tom inquired about a consultation because it was a requirement of an FLC focused on redesigning courses. He initially met the consultant during committee meetings for the course redesign initiative and began building a professional relationship with the consultant. During this time, the consultant worked with a group of faculty, including Tom, for two semesters. Tom felt the consultant initiated the consultation because it was required as part of the FLC work. He later mentioned that the FLC provided the participating faculty a stipend and wanted to clarify that this meant he had a "responsibility to fulfill."

Tom shared that he did not ask the consultant to focus on any specific teaching challenges when he was observed. He said he did not want any “pre-observation interference.” He was comfortable having class observations because he was an experienced professor. When asked what he expected to hear from the consultant

regarding the class observation, Tom replied he expected “to receive some valuable information” and that there was nothing to “act anxious about.” Tom had been teaching in higher education for over 30 years at the time of this consultation. He was also a textbook author and collaborated with a group of college professors on numerous textbooks. He appeared very knowledgeable about teaching and pedagogy and stated he had been “practicing active learning pedagogy before getting into the learning community.” However, Tom shared that the FLC did provide him with new information, such as learning theories and additional active learning strategies.

Tom saw the value in having an additional person observe his teaching and offer any suggestions for improvement. He recognized that he may receive information from the students that he could not get personally, especially when teaching large classes with over 80 students. The consultant conducted an SGID in which the students provided feedback. He complimented the consultant in getting the students to open up and share some areas of improvement. Tom recognized that the students would probably open up to the consultant and not him. He knew he did not want his students to feel "threatened or intimidated" even though he wished they would not be with him. He recognized the professor's power who "gives grades" and that he may not be the best person to ask for feedback on his teaching. The most notable suggestion from the students was regarding the amount of time he provides to complete in-class assignments. Tom’s expert blind spot caused him to provide less time than the students needed. Tom noted that he “adjusted [his] teaching with appreciation” of the consultant’s results.

Following the consultation, Tom felt grateful for the information provided by the consultant. He said he expected to receive “valuable information” and he did. He used

that information to make changes in his course. The consultant and Tom had conversations previous to the consultation when doing committee work together, so they were comfortable working with each other. This consultant also did a follow-up class observation for Tom the next semester. Tom was clear that even with his level of experience and knowledge, students change throughout the years and instructors need to "adapt, otherwise [they] wouldn't be effective." Tom stated that he and the consultant developed "trust and mutual respect" throughout the FLC and work with the committee. He felt the relationship with the consultant "changed for the better" during the consultation. However, with that being stated, Tom shared that he did not agree with all of the suggestions for improvements offered by the consultant. He felt that the consultant was "theoretical" and he was more "practical" stating that some of the suggestions were "things that cannot be done" in his discipline. He stated that he and his colleagues focus on "having good learning outcomes" and not only to "please students." However, Tom was clear that the information gathered during the consultation was helpful and beneficial to improving his teaching. The consultant provided Tom with documentation about the consultation, student feedback, and observation.

Tom admitted that he had not known or worked with teaching centers and their consultants prior to the FLC; however, now he recognizes that it is a "very good resource." Previously he knew the teaching center only as "an acronym" and did not realize that they could help instructors. He feels that his colleagues recognize the teaching center as a resource more now than before the FLC and course redesign work. Because of the FLC work with in his department, he invited the teaching center numerous time to provide pedagogical workshops. Since he hosted those events, he felt he showed his

connection to the teaching center publicly. He did not find it necessary to have private conversations with his colleagues about the services. He said that the "accounting faculty now see the involvement and the value of [the teaching center] much better now." Before his work with the FLC, Tom would “just delete” the emails and advertisements sent by the teaching center. Now he gives them more attention.

Violet

Violet is an Associate Professor of Nursing at a comprehensive university in the USG. Violet experienced a formal consultation offered by a consultant from the teaching center. Violet is relatively new to higher education and classroom teaching. She had sought out assistance from the teaching center at her institution a few times before this consultation. Violet's consultation consisted of a pre-observation meeting, a class observation, a follow-up meeting, as well as receiving documentation from her consultant after the consultations were complete. Violet taught a class of over 100 students, and because of that, did not request a student focus group as part of this consultation.

Violet initiated the consultation and was seeking feedback on two specific areas from the consultant, asking good questions in the classroom to engage students and managing her time during a class period which included lectures. Prior to the class observation, the consultant went to Violet’s office to meet her and discuss the class. Violet said she felt “very comfortable talking to [the consultant].” She was excited and happy to work with the consultant from the teaching center. After speaking with the consultant, Violet considered the consultant to be an “expert professional in that area.” Following the class observation, the consultant and Violet returned to Violet’s office to discuss the class observation. Violet says she was anxious at that point before talking to

the consultant but was "pleasantly surprised" by the feedback. At the end of the meeting, the consultant offered to provide follow-up articles for Violet to read more about questioning and engaging students in the content of the class.

Violet stated that she was pleased with the work of the consultant, even though she did not request this specific consultant when setting up the consultation and class observation. Following the initial consultation, Violet said her teaching began to change immediately in the next class. After reading the resources, she felt even more confident about how to improve her classroom teaching. Violet stated that the relationship between herself and the consultant changed over time because she continued to return to this same consultant and ask for assistance on other items, such as her teaching philosophy and also for assistance during COVID-19 regarding her online teaching needs. Violet felt the consultation was helpful as well as specific and constructive. She shared that the consultant provided a letter regarding the observation and consultation. Over time, Violet feels she has learned to be more "open and comfortable trying new things" in the classroom. Violet stated that she may not have felt the same if the consultation was mandatory instead of self-initiated. Violet said that what made this professional development more meaningful to her was that it was specific to her teaching, specific to her needs, and provided "personal feedback."

Violet shared with other colleagues and in faculty meetings that she worked with the teaching center. Some of her colleagues have also shared their experiences with the teaching center. She says she notices the announcements about upcoming events and has “taken several of their workshops.”

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth look at each participant's unique experience with consultations and consultants. The benefits of the consultations, the motivation for the consultation, and the emotions attached to these types of experiences were shared. The participants shared their perspectives on their consultants and the results of the consultations. They explained the presence of their teaching centers at their specific institutions, sometimes only focused on their specific department's perception. Finally, the participants shared their views on mandatory educational and professional development opportunities. The next chapter establishes the themes and findings of the interviews while answering the research questions.

Chapter 5

FINDINGS

This qualitative study of 12 faculty participants led to several themes answering the research questions regarding instructional consultations from institutions within the University System of Georgia institutions. The nature of the semi-structured interviews and a diverse participant pool provided varied findings. Two participants sought a consultation for technology issues, while others were seeking teaching methodology feedback. One faculty participated in a consultation because it was mandatory, some participated because their supervisors informed them about the process, and others self-initiated the consultation. In the end, I decided to "let data and analysis drive the findings" that aligned to the research questions (Holly & Harris, 2019, p. 92). Because of this method, I used the semi-structured interview design to allow for derivatives from the original set of interview questions and encourage meaningful dialogue with the faculty participants (Holly & Harris, 2019; Maxwell, 2013). In this chapter, I explain the findings and answer the research questions:

> RQ 1: What are the experiences and perceptions that led faculty from the University System of Georgia higher education institutions to participate in an instructional consultation?

RQ 1a: What teaching challenge led these higher education faculty to participate in an instructional consultation?

RQ 2: How beneficial did the faculty member perceive the consultation process in addressing the reason for the consultation?

Findings for Research Question 1: Teaching Center Specific

In order to examine the first research question regarding the experiences and perceptions that led 12 faculty participants from the University System of Georgia higher education institutions to participate in an instructional consultation, it is necessary to understand the background of the faculty participant consultation experiences. Prior to participating in an instructional consultation, participants explained how they learned of the consultation service. Not all participants learned of this service through a new faculty orientation, but most did. Similarities between the consultation procedure and process existed in half of the faculty experiences. The faculty participants also provided background on the presence of their teaching center at their specific university since all but one consultation was provided by this type of center. Another aspect of this research question involves the faculty participants' emotional reflection on the consultation and their rapport with the consultant. Many of the faculty participants knew their consultants before the event and had built a relationship with them. These relationships positively affected the consultations. In addition, the faculty participants shared what they perceived to be the reason for the consultation based on a teaching challenge or other issue. Only one participant did have a particular teaching challenge. Understanding these aspects – the type of service offered at their institution, rapport building, emotions due to the

consultation process – sets the tone for each interview and gives valuable insights about the faculty experiences in consultations.

Exposed to Consultation Service

Some participants learned of the service during faculty orientation; however, five participants learned of the service by participating in a Faculty Learning Community (FLC) for new faculty, a course redesign project, or a faculty fellow position. Department supervisors informed two of the participants about the consultation service. There were a few participants that could not remember how they learned of the service. Some participants sought the consultation service due to their experience with teaching centers at other institutions. Alan stated that when he was hired at his current institution, the former institution's teaching center director said, "…you will enjoy your time there because of CETL [a name designated for teaching centers], because [that] CETL is so prominent, and they're doing some great work…"

Consultation Procedure

Each consultation procedure revealed a unique structure based on the needs of the faculty participant. Half of the faculty participant consultations consisted of a class observation. The class observation appeared to be what initiated the consultation. When these six faculty participants asked for a consultation, either the consultant recommended a class observation or the participating faculty requested it. These six consultations began with a pre-observation meeting to establish the faculty's needs regarding an observation and possibly discuss additional teaching issues. The class observation followed this meeting in which all six were conducted in-person and pre-COVID-19 pandemic. Next, in the follow-up consultation, the consultant and faculty shared their thoughts on the

observations. In four of these consultations, the consultant also conducted a Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID). This is a focus group for students to express their feeling about their learning without the instructor being present. These focus groups usually take 15-20 minutes and consist of small group discussions with learning-related questions and a round of consensus voting with the entire class. Additionally, all six faculty who participated in a class observation received documentation from the consultant regarding the observation and SGID, if conducted, including recommendations for improvement.

The other half of the interviewees participated in a range of consultations from formal to informal. One participant received an online course review with a pre and post consultation as well as documentation. Two of the interviewees participated in a series of discussions with their consultant in order to resolve their specific problems. One participant worked together with their consultant and a small group of faculty. Two consultations consisted of several informal meetings, hallway discussions, and sometimes lunch. As a whole, seven interviewees had more formal consultations and the remaining five were less formalized. Regardless, all 12 interviewees had positive consultation experiences.

Presence of Teaching Center on Campus

Overall the participants shared that their teaching centers had a presence on their campus. Several participants mentioned they received email communication from their teaching center, which alerted them to the instructional consultation service or to the website where they could find the information. Mike shared that he thought his center is "viewed very positively." He said, "I think most of my colleagues are comfortable going there and engaging in the work." Similar to that, Donna said her center is "highly, highly

visible for sure. Faculty know where it is. [They] received notices almost each week on another session that's available." Molly revealed in her analysis that "I still feel like there are a whole bunch of faculty that don't really know about it." Tom shared that he initially "did not see [the teaching center] as useful" but now has "a much higher appreciation after the experience." Regardless of the level of presence on each campus, all 12 interviewees knew of the teaching center and services on their campus, even the interviewee that participated in a non-teaching center consultation. All enjoy working with their teaching center and the consultation services, but at least three mentioned the need for the administration to promote the teaching centers more to their faculty.

Findings for Research Question 1: Motivation and Emotions

When exploring the faculty participants' experiences and perceptions about instructional consultations, we discussed the emotions of the faculty participants during the consultation. I wanted the participants to truly reflect on the consultation and describe how they felt right before the consultation and right after it concluded to understand their motivation and emotions regarding the consultation. It appeared that the participants truly opened up and shared their feelings about the consultation and the consultant. I did not experience hesitation from the interviewees to share this data. However, to get the faculty participants to be honest with me about their feelings, I had to spend a considerable amount of time building trust prior to the interview. We discussed different topics, such as my research, their teaching semester, and how they and their students were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the system-wide mandate to convert classes to remote instruction due to the pandemic. When we began talking about the emotions surrounding consultations, I had to set the stage for them to recall their feelings. I restated what they

told me about how the consultation happened and the meaningful findings from the consultation, and then I asked about what feelings or emotions they had experienced. One faculty participant was overwhelmed with the discussion on her feelings and reliving the consultation. I verbally recognized her feelings and said we would move on to a different question to reduce her anxiety. By considering the emotions and motivations of the faculty participants, we learn more about what led them to participate in an instructional consultation.

Feelings Prior to or During the Consultation

Through Descriptive and In-Vivo Coding, I discovered that four participants shared excitement in the consultation experience. Donna was “confident and excited about learning something new.” She experienced the consultation process with a small group of colleagues. Kathy remembered that she was “excited for the feedback.” She went on to explain:

> We don't grow if we don't get feedback, even if it's feedback that we don't necessarily want. Like … if it's harder feedback for us to hear. And I just value [the consultants’] opinion and her knowledge a lot. So I was really excited.

Betsy and Tom both said they were ready to hear more, with Tom proclaiming, “there was nothing … to be anxious about.”

Six others expressed apprehension and nervousness. Sam expressed he was "a little uncomfortable" but grateful and compared this experience to being peer-reviewed for an article. Alan and Goldie shared that they were anxious because of their teaching challenge. Both communicated concern about their students and wanted to find an answer to their problem. Goldie had extreme feelings stating that the situation "was a little

stressful, because I felt overwhelmed." Initially, she "was worried" and thought, "this is going to be a catastrophe." Fran had similar "trepidation" since she was hosting a significant event that needed technology support. Fran stated that she was "confident" that the consultation team could help her find a solution to her large institution-wide event; however, she was not as confident that she could make it happen. Molly expressed that she was "a little nervous" before the class observation, as was Mike. Mike pointed out that he was "anxious" because he had "someone from outside of the department" observing him.

Feelings After the Consultation Revealed

At the conclusion of the consultation, the 12 participants had a sense of relief and guidance. The majority stated they felt supported and that they experienced positive feelings after the consultation. Molly was excited to get the feedback and get started. Donna felt confident but "just need[ed] time" to enact the consultant's suggestions. Sam was on board as well, saying he was ready to make changes. Sam said:

> I guess I was thinking in my mind, before I even went in there that I probably should make this change in the course. And that … did come up in the consultation saying you should make this change. And so I did it.

Kathy expressed, "I felt empowered, honestly. I felt like I had an ally." Kathy was referring to the consultant and that she had an ally to work with to improve her teaching challenges. Betsy made changes immediately after the consultation, as did Howard. Tom noted that the feedback from the consultant was "valuable input" and that he would not have been able to solicit that information on his own. Alan said that the process reminded him of going through surgery stating, "you have to be ready for the pain. And then only

you can heal." Violet felt encouraged after the consultation and reading the materials that the consultant shared with her. Howard stated he was "ready to dig in" to the consultants' suggestions.

Goldie had a different experience when she sought assistance from her consultant. In the beginning, she said she was "struggling a little bit." Goldie said:

> I doubted myself, somewhat, you know, like, maybe I'm just totally misunderstood, [but] then I also knew that I knew what I was talking about. So I had all kinds of mixed feelings about it. And it was really frustrating.

Goldie sought assistance from her consultant regarding her Learning Management System gradebook. Elevated emotions regarding the students' final grades were the reason for Goldie's frustrations and anxious feelings. Goldie confided in me that she was still struggling with the consultation even months after, just by talking about it with me again. She questioned, "Have I misunderstood percentages my whole life? My whole adult life?" After discussing her emotions in the interview, we decided to move to another topic so that Goldie could feel some relief.

Findings for Research Question 1: Rapport of Consultant and Faculty Participant

When interviewed, the faculty participants shared about the rapport between the consultant and themselves. I found that the relationship of the interviewee and the consultant prior to meeting for the consultation helped to determine their level of emotion or ease of talking with their consultant. We discussed uncomfortable feelings or rapport changes throughout the process of the consultation as evidence of rapport building. Additionally, the faculty participants expressed their perceived knowledge level or

expertise of their consultant. Understanding rapport gives insight into the participants' perceived experiences in the consultation.

Effect of Prior Connections with Consultant

When exploring the rapport between the consultant and the consultee, I discovered that many participants knew each other beforehand or shared special interests outside of their professional persona, which added to their connection. Seven interviewees knew their consultants before the consultation and most of those met through teaching center hosted FLC's or previous work. Donna, Mike, and Howard shared common disciplines with their consultants, which they perceived to be vital to the consultant/consultee relationship and seemed to build instant trust and comfortable rapport. Donna's connection to her consultant allowed them to sympathize about course redesign when restricted by course requirements. Additionally, some met for lunch or had informal conversations frequently which added to their comfort level during the consultation. Alan shared that he felt the consultant/consultee "relationship is important" and "if there is any hesitation along those lines, then … there will be things that will be lost in the process." While previous relationships seem to help when creating rapport for consultations, Violet did not know her consultant. She called the teaching center to request a class observation and was assigned a consultant. She stated that did not regret it because the consultant "rose to the occasion" and proved to be "an expert professional."

Collaboration in the Consultation

During the interviews, a few participants shared that they felt the consultation process was a partnership between the consultant and the faculty. They did not see any power differential in the relationship. One approach to consultations is the

Collaborative/Process model. Three out of 12 faculty participants expressed that they felt this process was collaborative (Brinko, 2012; Rutt, 1979). During consultations, faculty sometimes feel judged or evaluated by the consultant. Those experiences align more with the Product or Prescriptive model.

Through In-Vivo and Descriptive Coding, I discovered three participants who expressed this idea. Mike said, “we were both cooperating on the same project, rather than me being a subject and she being the observer." Howard shared that he felt it was like "one teacher talking to another teacher" at some point during the consultation process. Betsy began to feel a sense of obligation to recognize the work of the consultant stating:

> You have to realize that this is a collaborative process and an effort and that [the consultant’s] contributions were not just going unnoticed, that they were actually informing the project at the level where if I were publishing or presenting at that point, there were things that I needed to say and give her kudos in a presentation or publication.

While no faculty participants expressed that they felt judged or that the feedback was too prescriptive, only three participants express the collaboration idea.

Uncomfortable Feelings and Rapport Change

Some faculty participants reported feeling uncomfortable during the consultation process. Goldie expressed:

> I was stressed…feeling like I couldn’t get my point across. You know, but it wasn’t because she wasn’t letting me talk. That wasn't what it was at all. It was

just my inability to say, here's what the problem is. Because I mean, I wasn't sure myself.

However, this situation did not appear to reduce the good rapport that Goldie had built with the consultant. She said, “I still find it that I think our relationship is very stable, you know, and I could call her up and today, and it'd be the same.”

Alan also felt discomfort during the consultation because he did not completely agree with the consultants' suggestions. He shared with me his thoughts on the suggestions:

> …certainly not all of it, because the consultant was very deliberate in highlighting this is what you did great and this is perhaps what you should consider changing. Uh, I think the part that perturbed me the most were certain suggestions, certain direct suggestions that were made, that I knew from the get go, that's not how it works. That's not how it works, because or rather, that will not work for my discipline, because there's already a significant amount of data in the education research, to point to the fact that what you're suggesting is not going to work.

Alan went on to say that he appreciated the consultation, but that this was just one piece of data from one day and felt that he needed more evidence to make changes to the course. He expressed this by saying, "this cookie is half-baked right now."

Mike expressed feeling some sense of discomfort when he had to leave the room during the SGID facilitated by the consultant; however, that did not affect his consultation. Tom expressed he found the consultation made a “change [in the rapport] for the better not for the worse.” He did not have any uncomfortable moments in the consultation. Tom felt he created a stronger connection with the consultant afterward.

Mike, Kathy, and Betsy shared that there was no discomfort, as well, and that they even felt a sense of collaboration with the consultant, as mentioned in the previous section. Molly said her relationship with her consultant developed, and she chose to attend another FLC facilitated by this same consultant and participated in a conference associated with the consultant. All of the faculty participants stated they did not sense a change in the rapport. Most felt comfortable during the entire consultation process.

Perceived Expertise of Consultant

Consultants at this level are generally well-trained in the consultation process. Guidelines, techniques, opportunities for practice, and peer-mentoring to facilitate these consultations frame a typical training process (Brinko, 2012; DiPietro & Norman, 2014; Rutt, 1979). Tom, Kathy, Sam, and Violet explicitly shared what they perceived as their consultant's knowledge and level of expertise.

Tom felt that his students would not have opened up to him in the manner they did with the consultant saying, "I think [the consultant] has the experience of opening students up… Not everyone could do that job easily, but [the consultant] has the proficiency... She knew how to open student's feelings and make them feel comfortable." Kathy was very excited to work with her consultant. She had heard many good things about her and had even consulted with her previously, but this time Kathy wanted a class observation and a more formal, intense consult. She said, "I was so excited to sit down. I just I value her opinion. I just know how learned she is." Sam considered both of his consultants to be "professional" and that the consultation "was very thorough… and the instructional designers took it very seriously and really put the work in on it." Additionally, Violet was impressed with her consultant. She shared, "I worked with [the

consultant] and realized how she was helping me and knew her stuff and gave me good references." Violet's reaction, along with Tom, Kathy, and Sam, shows the need for the consultant to be skilled and experienced about the process and understand how to work with different types of faculty and faculty teaching needs.

By exploring the consultation process, emotions during the consultation, and rapport of the faculty participants, we begin to understand the experiences and perceptions of what led these faculty to participate in an instructional consultation. Many participants shared similar consultation experiences; however, some had polarizing feelings during the consultations ranging from "empowerment" to "perturbed." By examining their true reactions, we uncover the honest and authentic participant experience.

Findings and Connections to Research Question 1a: Teaching Challenge

An aspect of the first research question includes discovering what teaching challenge led these higher education faculty participants to request an instructional consultation. A teaching challenge or teaching issue often drives consultations. Faculty may ask for a consultation for one reason and end up finding out other issues exist, as well. Knowledgeable consultants trained to uncover and dig deep into teaching practices often facilitate these consultations. They are skilled in deep listening and should explore any areas that may be causing a teaching challenge with the faculty. The actual motivation to attend the consultation is important to determine exactly what is happening within the faculty's teaching practice.

In this research study, faculty participants had a wide range of needs and motivations for requesting a consultation. Only one participant, Tom, shared that the

consultation process was required of him. He stated that he did not request the consultation and felt the FLC facilitator requested it of him since it was required. When I asked about this, he said:

> You need to understand whoever of us attending the faculty learning community received a stipend. And, and therefore, it is not just I like to do it…because I did it with compensation, therefore, I do have a responsibility to fulfill.

The table below (Table 4) shows the different teaching issues that drove the faculty participants to request a teaching consultation. While readers can find helpful information about improving their teaching through these interviews, the recommendations to improve are not as crucial for this research. This research seeks to understand the participants' holistic experience and perceptions of instructional consultations. Part of understanding their holistic experience is to understand what motivated them to ask for a consultation.

Table 4

Reason for Consultation Participation

Participant	Teaching Challenge/Issue
Alan	Poor exam scores; Alan and his students frustrated
Betsy	Institutional assessment on how to teach summary writing
Donna	Small changes to make big impact on course with required content
Fran	Technology for a large institution-wide event involving 500 students
Goldie	Issues with LMS grade book
Howard	Show relevance and connections with content
Kathy	Improve teaching of less engaging material

Mike	Show evidence of good teaching for annual reviews; determine if delivery is effective
Molly	Baseline class observation before course redesign
Sam	Revitalize online course materials and align to best practices
Tom	Mandatory experience
Violet	Learn how to ask engaging questions and time management of lectures

Ten faculty participants requested a consultation to improve courses and encourage student success, and one participant requested a consultation to correct student's final grades in the Learning Management System. Of these ten faculty participants, Fran and Goldie were the only two faculty participants seeking a consultation related to technology. Fran's challenge did incorporate some teaching aspects with the skill of learning the technology; however, Goldie's challenge was strictly technologically based. Mike and Sam attended the consultation at the recommendation of their supervisor; however, not required to attend. Even so, they focused on particular challenges and looked at the consultation as a useful experience. Tom considered the consultation mandatory and he did not provide any type of teaching challenge that drew him to the consultation. In fact, when asked about this he responded, "…from my perspective, I didn't want to have any pre-observation inference."

When discussing the teaching challenges, Kathy admitted she felt she was hitting a wall stating that "there were a couple of units that were just harder" to teach and encourage student engagement. Kathy's consultation focused on the possible reasons for lack of student participation and strategies to improve. Betsy disclosed that her

motivation for the consultation was to improve an institution-required assessment for accreditation. After the consultation, Betsy worked to improve the assignment. In the end, the improved assessment benefitted her students throughout the entire semester.

Findings and Connections to Research Question 2: Beneficial

The second research question explores if the faculty participant perceived the instructional consultation as a benefit. I examined if the faculty participant perceived that the consultation positively affected their teaching practice. We discussed whether the participants felt the consultation fulfilled their goals and they understood how to enact the recommendations. I probed to see they agreed with the consultation outcome and made any teaching practice changes to courses based on the feedback from the consultant. Finally, to establish the consultation benefits, the participants shared if they discussed the consultation experiences with others or asked for additional consultations.

All 12 faculty participants stated that the consultation was beneficial to some degree. Some faculty did not incorporate any recommendations in to courses yet, due to the move to online learning because of the pandemic or other reasons. Some faculty immediately incorporated recommendations, and others said they were still thinking about the recommendations and figuring out how to make it work for their particular class or discipline. To assist faculty with incorporating the recommendations of a consultation, seven faculty participants received documentation about the consultation from their consultant. This documentation varied but mainly included the recommendations for improvement that they had already discussed in a follow-up meeting. Molly appreciated receiving the documentation because she returns to the information to gain “new insights about my teaching that I didn't have before.”

Meaningful Takeaways

In discussions with me, each faculty participant shared their perceived benefits or teaching practice changes. The following are quotes or summaries from each of the 12 faculty participants regarding the benefits and helpfulness of the consultation. These meaningful takeaways help to establish the faculty's perceived benefits of the consultation and the relevance of current and future work of teaching center consultants.

- When asked if the consultation was helpful, Alan said, "Oh, immensely. There is, there is absolutely no doubt about that. There's absolutely no doubt about that… First, within that class, I think it was for students who did really care that, you know, we want to succeed and this instructor wants us to succeed. That consultation communicated that idea very explicitly to them. And, and that, to me is more important than assigning grades to students." However, Alan was not wholly convinced of the recommendations of the consultant and stated he needed to "brew" on the information. He said, "it was absolutely good information. But it was given, it was provided from the perspective of someone who's not familiar with the discipline. And, and that's one data point. But it made all the more apparent that I should have another consultation with someone who is in fact familiar with the material, and is familiar with the challenges of that course." However, in the end, Alan made changes to his course based on what the consultant suggested, and he mentioned that these changes have helped him when teaching online last year during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Betsy received good feedback from her consultant and they continue to work together on additional projects. She said, "We run things by each other a lot, even if we are not involved in the same project."
- Donna shared that she could see the benefit in the suggestions provided by the consultant but was concerned about the time commitment to make the changes to her course. She stated, “I was weighing the benefits against the time it would take [to change] every assignment for every class, but I can certainly see the benefits,” however, Donna eventually incorporated the suggestions on her major assignments.
- Fran began teaching synchronously during the Fall 2020 semester due to the move to remote instruction because of the pandemic. She felt that the experience she had with the synchronous technology and the consultations helped her to “strengthen” her proficiency with the technology.
- Goldie was pleased that her grade book issues resolved. At first, she did not understand the emailed directions from the consultant but was provided more information through phone conversations.
- Howard found the consultation to be very helpful. He said it reminded him to evaluate his teaching more often and determine if students are "actually getting what they need from me."
- Kathy stated that after incorporating the suggestions she “had more classroom engagement. I also came away with more tools in my toolbox of things to try … I haven’t even gotten through all of them.” Kathy commented that one way to

improve her consultation experience would be to have a classroom observation every semester since it was such a positive experience for her.

- Mike said the consultation “confirmed there were no underlying problems" and that it was valuable to have someone to discuss the student responses from the SGID. Mike understood the recommendations but felt it "would be challenging to integrate some suggestions into the content.” Mike seemed hesitant about how to include more engagement and less lecture.
- Molly increased her self-reflection on teaching. She realized she should put in the same amount of work for each class that she did for her class observation. Additionally, she incorporated a change in her lecturing time due to feedback based on the class observation. Molly shared that “some of the feedback was very specific and constructive with particular ideas for how I could implement suggestions. And some of it was more broad and general.”
- Sam made changes to his course and other courses immediately after the consultation. He said the changes he incorporated “made the class easier to teach because I just removed some things from it…it probably made the students happier. Made me happier because I didn't have to deal with the grading of those, those exercises.”
- Tom felt the consultation provided “valuable information, and of course, relevant information.” Tom shared that the most valuable part was the feedback he received from the students through the SGID. In the follow-up discussion with the consultant, he realized his expert blind spot was getting in the way of student success with timed class assignments. He shared, “I adjusted my teaching. With

appreciation, of course." Tom did not agree with everything the consultant recommended. He said he agreed with "70%" and shared he felt the consultant was more "theoretical" and he is more "practical, especially in [his discipline]. There are things that can be done, there are things that cannot be done that she suggested."

- Violet found the consultation helpful because she incorporated the recommendations in her class, and the students engaged in the content because of her changes. After implementing the changes in her class, she realized that she is "more open and comfortable trying new things" in her classes.

Based on these explorations of the participants' experiences, all 12 found the experience beneficial, and all participants made a change in their course based on the consultation. Even though the consultation processes and procedures differed, the overall outcome showed instructor growth and focus on student success in their classes.

Seek Additional Consultations

When we discussed returning for another consultation, eight participants said they would return for additional consultations or they already had returned. Some wanted to request class observations and consultations every semester. Of those that would not ask for another consultation was Tom, who participated because it was a mandatory component of the FLC. He said that he completed the two consultations that were required. Sam said he thought that this consultation was his last one after having others prior, and he did not state if he would not engage in more. Donna shared that she would not be able to participate in another consultation with this particular consultant because the FLC concluded.

Share with others

Since several of the participants were involved in FLCs, many shared with their colleagues about their consultation experiences. Encouraging others to attend consultations is more evidence that these faculty see the benefit of the instructional consultation practice. Molly and Tom both provided positive information about the experience to their departmental and disciplinary colleagues. Donna, who was selected to attend her FLC experience, shared her experience with her colleagues. Mike shared that he would tell:

> … Incoming lecturers… who would like found themselves suddenly full-time faculty unsure about whether or not their methods were effective, just trying to get the content delivered or gauge the students. …Um, whether it's something you can contact an individual about, or join a workshop. Yeah, I definitely talk up [the teaching center] every chance I get.

Kathy said she tells people about her experience and several of her colleagues have also received class observations and consultations. Betsy tells people "all the time." She reminds her colleagues of the teaching center director's small library and that the director can help with their teaching needs. Howard talked to his FLC about his experience and said he reminds his colleagues that his teaching center director has "lots of strategies and … she is open to listening." Alan shared that he tells his faculty colleagues the pros and the cons of the consultation experience. He explains that the faculty should get two consultations, one from the teaching center consultants and one from a colleague in their department.

Additional Developments

While interviewing, collecting, and analyzing the data, I captured findings about the COVID-19 pandemic and also mandatory professional development. I interviewed the participants about the mandatory professional development in anticipation that more than one interviewee would have been required to attend a consultation. Regardless, the results can frame future research. The information collected about the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on the consultation was unexpected. The participants shared about their derailed improvement plans due to the move to online instruction. This unanticipated data could serve as future research for COVID disruption in education.

COVID-19 Effect on Consultations

The COVID-19 pandemic generated unexpected discussions and findings during the interviews. Ten of the 12 participants consulted before COVID-19 and of that, nine consulted for in-person classes. Since the pandemic forced all classes in the USG to move online, this modality limited the participants' ability to incorporate the changes or recommendations of the consultant. Alan shared, "…changing teaching modalities, when I'm not able to do all the things that I actually devised as a result of that consultation, I'm not able to do any of that as effectively as I would have in class." He felt like he is "back to square one." Molly started to build a collection of active learning techniques after her consultation and FLC experience, but when she moved her courses online, she found herself "struggling … to come up with new ideas." Mike shared that the improvements and changes to this courses just "kind of got put to the side" due to the course modality changing. Kathy and Howard both commiserated over not seeing the students in class. Howard said, "I did miss going to class, meeting my students face to face because

honestly with some of the students [they] actually needed face to face to encourage motivation."

Some of the participants found a bright side to the shift to online learning. Fran recognized that all of her work with the consultants regarding her technology issue helped when she started teaching in a synchronous modality. She learned how to use the technology to its maximum potential. Howard also had a bright outlook saying, "Even if I don't return fully face-to-face, even if we have some online components, there is still a way to do something similar, maybe like through the discussion board or something." Violet stated she continued working with her consultant through the move to online learning. In particular, she received assistance regarding technology and felt that by this point in their relationship and given the pandemic circumstances, the consultations presented as "a colleague helping a colleague."

Mandatory Professional Development

I explored the faculty's feelings about expectations and perception of attending mandatory professional, faculty, or educational development opportunities. Only one out of 12 participants in this research, Tom, disclosed participating in the consultation because it was mandatory. Tom had a great attitude about the consultation and learned "valuable information" from the experience. Kathy, Howard, and Mike all felt that faculty, especially new faculty, should be required to participate in a consultation. Howard even pointed out that the "veteran faculty members need more check-ins than the novice ones because the veterans are so set in their ways."

Eight of the participants viewed mandatory development as a chance for growth. Of the eight, three faculty participants suggested that if the development opportunity was

meaningful, they would not have an issue attending it. Donna, an experienced educator and facilitator of professional development, stated that faculty need to have "buy-in for it to be meaningful." She continued saying, "If the person is not willing and open to change, then they just won't no matter what you're providing to them." Violet shared that professional development needs to include "personal feedback." Of the eight, five of the faculty participants identified as life-long learners and said they would be open to a mandatory development opportunity.

The remaining four participants were more apprehensive than the other eight. Two were anxious about this type of situation. Molly expressed concern about being singled out for mandatory trainings. Mike stated it would create a less collaborative environment for the faculty than the one he experienced. Two additional participants, who had more teaching experiences than most of the faculty participants, appeared to have already been tasked with this type of development opportunity. Goldie stated that the acceptance of mandatory trainings depends on the culture of the faculty, while Sam felt that faculty might be unwilling to follow the recommendations.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the findings for each research question regarding the perceived experiences of faculty participants. Exploring the structure of consultations at different institutions, the connections to the consultants, and the teaching challenge framed the overall experiences of the faculty participants. Examining the use of consultations and perceived advantages for teaching framed the benefits of the experience. Two additional developments contributed to understanding the faculty's experience with the consultation.

Faculty participants experienced different consultation processes. They ranged from formal to informal consultations, where some provided a structured approach, and others formulated hallway and casual conversations. More than half of the faculty participants shared that they experienced formal consultations, some involving course reviews or class observations and documentation to support the process and outcome of the consultation. All of the participants were aware of the teaching centers on their campus, and most learned of the consultation process by working with the teaching center in other capacities.

The faculty participants shared their emotions and motivations for attending the consultation process. Only one participant disclosed he was attending because it was a requirement of the FLC. The other participants sought assistance regarding a specific teaching issue or challenge. The participants' emotions ranged from some feeling inspired to make the changes to their course and others needing more time to think about how to incorporate some of the suggestions.

A positive rapport between the faculty participants and the consultant developed when the group knew each other previously, which was the case for several participants. In addition, having things in common either outside of the profession or sharing a discipline brought about a comfortable rapport. No faculty participants reported feeling uncomfortable during the consultation. The different consultation methods and approaches align with the practice of rapport building and creating a collaborative experience.

Several different teaching challenges brought the faculty participants to the consultation. They ranged from in-person to online classes and teaching to technology

issues. Through the conversations with the consultants, faculty participants uncovered additional teaching issues presented during the consultation. Some participants discovered that there were different teaching issues than they anticipated. Also, the faculty participants shared with their colleagues about their own experiences with consultations, and nine out of 12 faculty participants sought additional consultations. These discoveries show how the faculty participants perceived the consultation experience to be beneficial.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted some of the faculty participant's plans to redesign their courses based on the feedback from the consultation. Others benefited from the consultation process during COVID-19 times because their teaching issue was technology-related. Other faculty participants shared that they were grateful for their relationship with the teaching center staff and consultants at that time. They knew whom to reach out to for support during the quick move to remote and online instruction mandated by the USG.

Finally, the interviews of the faculty participants shed much light on the experience of the consultations. The participants shared their perceptions about their consultants and the role they played in their course redesign. Most of the faculty participants sought the consultation to improve their student’s learning experience. They opened up about the motivation for participating in the consultation and the emotions and feelings they experienced during the consultation. Through these interviews, we can determine that the benefits far outweighed the challenges for these faculty participants.

Chapter 6

DISCUSSION

Through my experience in faculty development, I have worked with faculty as they grow and learn about their own teaching philosophy and practice. Some faculty seek out assistance to improve and progress; however, not all faculty recognize their weaknesses in the classroom and do not seek out support. Faculty often teach by emulating past instructors, regardless if their experience was for the better or worse. Most of these instructors have not received training in educational technology, pedagogy, andragogy, or learning science. Teaching centers at higher education institutions provide services that help faculty in these areas, as well as in course development and even with research (Brinko, 2012; Border, 2012; Malouff et al., 2015). In addition, instructional consultations are one service offered by teaching centers. Consultations are discussions between the instructor and the teaching center staff or mentors that assist faculty with teaching challenges or help them develop teaching skills and knowledge (Brinko, 2012). In a 2016 survey by the Professional and Organizational Developers Network Membership Survey Tiger Team, 90% of teaching centers reported offering one-on-one consultations. Because the COVID-19 pandemic caused institutions to close their physical space and teach remotely, many faculty have now connected with their teaching

centers at their institutions and sought out assistance with teaching in new modalities or with unexpected stressors (Mihai, 2021).

Summary of Study

This study explored the experiences and perceptions of 12 higher education faculty from the University System of Georgia and their work with instructional consultations. The findings from this study provided insight into the different types of consultation processed and approaches, the motivation to receive a consultation and improve the course, and the perceived benefits of consultations and consultants. While there are documented and researched consultation approaches, every teaching center can facilitate consultation differently and through this research, disparities in processes were exposed. In addition, the motivation that brings faculty to ask for a consultation varies, but in this research, I consistently identified faculty self-initiating consultations and seeking assistance on a specific teaching challenge. Eleven out of the 12 participants worked with consultants from teaching centers, appearing to be the most predominant hub for instructional consultations to occur. All 12 participants reported having a good experience and most participants planned to complete additional consultations.

In this qualitative case study research, I interviewed 12 faculty who participated in instructional consultations. These participants varied in rank, status, and institution-type. Seven participants taught at comprehensive universities and five taught at state universities, all working within the University System of Georgia. Four participants were ranked Lecturers or Instructors, five participants were Assistant or Associate Professors, and three were Professors.

I interviewed these participants using a semi-structured interview approach to allow the faculty to share their insights freely during the discussion. The interviews, completed synchronously using a video-conference tool, lasted approximately two hours. I recorded the interviews and wrote field notes during the interviews, transcribing the recording soon after the interview. The findings were derived from two rounds of coding which resulted in themes from the data collected. This qualitative research method allowed the faculty to share their complete stories about their experiences.

The timeline for this research was disrupted because in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic closed in-person learning at most schools across the United States. I interviewed the participants between November 2020 and January 2021. By this time, the faculty participants had been teaching remotely, online, or hybrid for at least one semester. Two of the 12 consultations in this study happened after the COVID-19 pandemic began. These two consultations took place after the Spring semester of 2020. The other ten participants shared about consultations that took place before the pandemic started. Several of these faculty were unable to implement recommendations gathered in the consultation because their teaching modality changed.

Restatement of the Problem and Research Questions

Currently, most research on instructional consultations in higher education teaching centers focuses on consultation approaches and satisfaction of the consultations (Brinko, 1988, 2012; Boye & Tapp, 2012; DiPietro & Norman, 2014; Jacobson et al., 2009; Little & Palmer, 2011; Rutt, 1979). By exploring the experiences of these 12 faculty from diverse institutions in the University System of Georgia, I sought to examine the overall consultation experience and research the perceived benefits to improve the

understanding of consultations. Also, since Jacobson et al. (2009) suggested future research regarding the motivation for requesting a consultation, this research attempted to identify the reasons or motivation.

Looking at this research from the lens of the faculty rather than the consultant brings new research to the field of faculty development. This research provides a faculty perspective about the consultant, the process, the perceived outcome of the consultation, and additional areas like mandatory professional development and teaching center presence. Through these case studies, faculty developers and consultants can learn how the faculty perceive the experience, which ultimately can help consultants better serve faculty.

In this research study, I sought to find answers to these three research questions:

RQ 1: What are the experiences and perceptions that led faculty from the University System of Georgia higher education institutions to participate in an instructional consultation?

RQ 1a: What teaching challenge led these higher education faculty to participate in an instructional consultation?

RQ 2: How beneficial did the faculty member perceive the consultation process in addressing the reason for the consultation?

Summary of Methods

In this qualitative case study, I conducted an in-depth investigation into the faculty's perception of instructional consultations. The unit of analysis was higher education faculty who participated in instructional consultations. I used the inductive method and semi-structured interviews to explore the perceptions and experiences of

faculty who participated in an instructional consultation (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This type of interview methodology provided me with details about the consultations and guided the interview questions, allowing each case study to be a complete story of each faculty's experience (Holly & Harris, 2019; Yin, 2018). The outcome of this research was not to generalize the findings to similar faculty populations but rather allow readers to determine for themselves the similarities, differences, and outcomes of the faculty experiences.

I used purposeful sampling to recruit faculty through listservs; however, this was unsuccessful. Next, I connected with participants through teaching center directors and their consultants. These people shared my information with their faculty who participated in consultations, and then those faculty who wished to participate in the study contacted me. I scheduled the first six interviews and began interviewing the participants. I conducted within-case analysis and collected field notes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I determined that I needed more data to reach saturation; therefore, I scheduled six additional interviews. By the end of the 12 interviews, I accomplished data saturation with a few outliers (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I intended to collect documentation in addition to the interviews to support the participant's case studies and triangulate the data; however, only two participants shared their documentation. Regardless, I conducted member checking on the transcripts and narratives in Chapter 4 which helped to validate the data. In the end, the detailed and informative interviews provided the data to answer my research questions. Each interview was conducted via Zoom, a video conference system, and the participants appeared comfortable with the interview technology before we began the interview.

While this type of technology may have been a barrier to the interview and data collection, it was not in this research because of our newfound familiarity with these products and methods. Prior to the interviews, I read and displayed the participant consent opening script (Appendix B) and answered any questions. In order to get the trust of the participants, I spent considerable time building rapport before the interview portion began. During the interviews, I asked questions; however, I let them tell their story on their timeline. As a result, I was confident that I was getting consistent data at every interview using the questions provided in the interview protocol in Appendix C. In addition, I often repeated what they said to set them up for the next question to keep them in the right frame of mind. I did not personally know any of the participants, but I did know some of their consultants and their teaching center directors. Because of this, I maintained a professional distance (Seidman, 2013).

Major Findings

Through the findings discussed in Chapter 5, three major conclusions emerged as answers to my research questions. All data collected, including the narratives in Chapter 4 and the findings in Chapter 5, aligned to answering the research questions; however, these three areas were shown to provide profound information regarding instructional consultations. They can help to inform consultants, teaching center staff, and others who mentor and work with faculty and provide a foundation for future research implications.

Approaches and Processes of Consultations

By examining the experiences and perceptions of faculty in instructional consultation, I found that most of these practices were aligned to the research-based approaches and processes. The consultation process experienced by seven of the

participants, whom all taught at comprehensive universities, included a pre-observation meeting, class observation or online course review, and post-observation meeting. In addition, four participants received a Small Group Instructional Diagnosis as part of the consultation process (Border, 2012; Erickson & Sorcinelli, 2012; Lenze, 2012; Millis, 1999; Rutt, 1979). Four other participants, who taught at state universities, received less formalized consultations; however, their experiences appeared to be just as meaningful. Two of these faculty, Howard and Betsy, expressed that they worked with the teaching center director and not a consultant or staff member. Another participant from a state university, Donna, shared about her small group consultation experience. Regardless of the formality or documentation received, all participants expressed they felt supported and had a positive experience with the consultant and consultation. This result is similar to the research survey conducted by Jacobson et al. (2009) on former consultation clients. They discovered that the rank, discipline, or years of experience of faculty who participated in consultations did not affect the perceived benefit. Additionally, Knowles et al. (2012) expressed in the Adult Learning Theory that adult learners need to understand what they are doing in order for the experience to make a difference in the outcome. This was done in an introductory meeting for eight of the participants. The remaining four participants understood the mechanism to get a consultation because they already built a relationship with the consultant, and therefore, already understood the process.

Several consultation models were used in these consultations. In addition, some models did not appear to be used at all. Rutt (1979) and Brinko (2012) established consultation approaches called the Product model, Prescription model,

Collaborative/Process model, Affiliative model, and Confrontational model. In addition, Boye and Tapp (2012) developed the Tough Love model, and DiPietro and Hutson (2009) discussed an approach highlighting complicated or entangled consultations. In the Product model, the consultant is the expert, yet the faculty is the one who identifies the teaching challenge, and then the consultant is expected to provide the solution to the problem (Brinko, 2012). Fran, Goldie, Donna, and Howard all approached the consultation in this manner to provide information to their consultant and asked for a solution. All four of these participants teach at state universities and received more informal consultations comparatively. In the Prescriptive model, which is similar to how people approach a doctor's appointment, the participants share their issues, and the consultant provides the teaching solution to assist them. Violet, Sam, and Kathy, all teaching at comprehensive universities, experienced this approach. They appeared willing to collaborate; however, they recognized the consultants' expertise and were open to their solutions. In the Collaborative model, the consultant and the faculty work together to identify the problem and solution. Mike, Alan, and Tom were involved in this model and were from comprehensive universities. In addition, they received an SGID, which is commonly used in collaborative models to gather as much evidence as possible for the faculty. Although these three participants, Tom, Mike, and Alan, did not completely buy-in to the consultation’s recommendations, I classified their consultations as collaborative and not hostile. Two of these participants actually used the word “collaborative” to describe the consultation and developed a solution with the consultants that they could put into action. The Affiliative model works in both instructional and professional consultations. Betsy and Molly experienced this approach because they collaborated with

their consultants; however, they began to build a deeper professional relationship based on their work in the consultations. The other approaches mentioned in this study, the Confrontational model, Tough Love model, or entangled consultations, were not utilized in this research of consultations. From this information, it appeared that the participants from a comprehensive university received a more formal consultation process and experienced a Collaborative or Prescriptive consultation approach. The state university consultants used a less formal process and Product model approach. One conclusion is that the state universities may have a smaller teaching center staff with multiple responsibilities besides consultations. This circumstance would limit the amount of time the consultant has to contribute to a more layered and formal consultation process.

By requesting a consultation, the participants changed their focus from apprehension about teaching to confidence in their teaching practice. Kathy was excited to talk with her consultant, stating that she knew her consultant was extremely knowledgeable in teaching and learning and knew she would learn from her. Like Howard and Sam, some participants commented on how they saw the consultants as approachable and skilled, which helped to reduce anxiety about the consultation. The participant's open-mindedness to work with a consultant was evidence that they "shifted their orientation to learn" and were ready in order to learn about to improve (Knowles et al., 2012, p. 66).

Discipline-specific consultations.

The research by Huston and Weaver (2008), Lee (2000), and Weston and McAlpine (1999) showed that when the consultant and the faculty are from the same discipline, the consultation proves to be more effective than when the consultant is from a

different discipline. In this study, two participants, Tom and Alan, expressed that the consultant offered suggestions that may not work with their discipline. Tom stated that his colleagues "have a quite different mentality compared to other departments…we want to have good learning outcomes rather than make students happy." He explained that his consultant focused more on the student's requests than they usually do in his department. He said, "demanding students to do something sometimes would cause some negative feelings. We are not shy on doing that." Alan did not agree entirely with all of the consultants' recommendations either. He stated that the consultation was helpful, but the recommendations made it clear to him that he needed to be observed by someone "familiar with the material, and is familiar with the challenges of that course."

Contrary to the research by Huston and Weaver (2008), Lee (2000), and Weston and McAlpine (1999), ten participants did not mention working with a discipline-specific consultant. Some employees at teaching centers, such as instructional designers and educational technologists, usually do not receive a faculty rank. However, these employees are capable of facilitating teaching consultations depending on their experience. Sam and Goldie from this study were consulted by instructional designers and an educational technologist. Goldie expressed the value of teaching centers and planned to continue using them and the consultant after her experience. Sam stated the consultants were "professional" and "very thorough" in their course review.

Motivation for Consultation

Requesting a consultation demonstrates eleven participants possessed the intrinsic motivation to improve and learn more. This is Knowles et al.'s (2012) sixth assumption about adult learners. Cox (2015) stated that the participant would accept the suggested

improvements if they believe that the change will make a difference in their course. Some participants in this study shared that they were ready and excited to learn more from their consultant or students through an SGID; however, some were apprehensive about the process. In the end, even the participant who was required to attend, valued the opportunity to receive a consultation and the recommendations to improve. Ambrose et al. (2010) proposed that faculty will be more likely to accomplish goals if they have an encouraging and helpful group of people supporting them. In this study, the consultant was the main person on the participant's support team. These consultants showed their willingness to serve the faculty and to care about the faculty's success in the classroom. Other layers of support include the faculty's Chair, Dean, or other academic administrator. In this research, two participants were told about the consultation service by an academic administrator. These two participants, Mike and Sam, did not appear to have a negative response. Instead, both appeared motivated and ready to engage with their consultants.

In examining the motivation of the participants to take part in a consultation, eleven requested a consultation on their own and one, Tom, was mandated to participate as part of a requirement from an FLC. Knowles et al. (2012) stated that adult learners are autonomous and self-directed, which is highly evident in this study because all of the participants showed their willingness to learn and improve, as well as share their experience. Five out of 12 participants identified as life-long learners and saw the potential of this opportunity. Regardless of the reason for the consultation, several of the participants shared they were encouraged by what they heard from the consultant and ready to make a change to their course. Donna, Howard, and Molly shared that they were

ready to put the recommendations into action after the consultation. Kathy felt "empowered" to make changes to improve her course based on the discussions with her consultant. Sam also shared he was already thinking of changing some things in his course and after the consultant's feedback, he was eager to do so. Betsy and Howard made changes to their courses immediately and continued to return to the consultant for follow-up consultations. Violet, Alan, and Tom all expressed how valuable the information was that they received. Goldie found the information helpful and her problem was resolved, even though she had a difficult time with the consultation. However, she did say she would work with the consultant again.

Teaching Challenges.

The type of teaching challenge that led these faculty to request an instructional consultation varied. Based on the interviews and information summarized in Table 4, the research participants asked for a consultation that I have classified into three areas:

- Satisfy a requirement
- Benefit their institution; Evaluate and improve course or teaching
- Evaluate and improve course or teaching

Tom was the only participant that shared he was required to participate in the instructional consultation based on the requirements of an FLC he was attending. Fran's consultation centered around an institution-wide event that required technical assistance. While this was the initial reason for seeking consultations, Fran mentioned in her interview that she used all of the information for this event to benefit her own courses being delivered the following semester synchronously. Also, Mike and Betsy's consultation benefited their institution as well as their courses. Mike was interested in

getting feedback about his own effectiveness in the classroom and intended to use the consultation process and information in his annual review to show evidence of high-quality teaching. Betsy sought assistance with improving a course requirement for her institutions' assessment data and identified that the course assessment redesign benefitted the students in her course. The remaining eight faculty requested the consultation to evaluate and improve their course or overall teaching. By examining the teaching challenges in this way, I determined that 11 out of 12 participants were motivated to request a consultation in order to evaluate and improve their courses or teaching.

Mandatory Educational Development.

Karabenick & Conley (2011) stated that mandatory trainings are commonplace in the K12 arena; however, data regarding how beneficial it is can be skewed because of that. When asked about attending mandatory consultations or educational development opportunities, the attitudes and feelings were mixed. Three participants from comprehensive universities and one from a state university stated they or their colleagues would not likely support mandatory training without understanding the reason or having information about the ultimate goal. Howard, an assistant professor at a state university, was in favor of mandatory educational development, pointed out that even veteran or experienced faculty should be recommended to participate in mandatory teacher training. Seven additional faculty supported the idea of mandatory educational development. Regardless of whether the consultation was mandatory or not, these participants still felt the consultation was beneficial and valuable. Some felt emboldened to do the work, and some were excited by the recommendations and solutions.

Benefit of Consultation

Determining the benefit of the consultation was based on if and when the participants made changes to their courses and if they returned for additional consultations. Knowles et al. (2012) fourth assumption in the Theory of Adult Learning stated that adult learners have a "readiness to learn" (p. 65). These participants placed themselves in a vulnerable space to ask for assistance about something very personal, their teaching practice. By continuing to work on their courses and potentially seek additional consultations, the participants are acknowledging the benefit of the consultation and the drive to continue to gather feedback on their teaching practice.

Making Changes

The 12 participants acknowledged the benefit of the consultation and planned to make teaching practice changes or already had by the time of the interview. Some made changes immediately after the consultation. Sam redesigned his online course for the next semester after receiving feedback. Betsy and Howard implemented the discussed strategies in their next class. Howard and Molly mentioned that the consultation process reminded them of the importance of evaluating and reflecting on their own teaching. Violet stated that by having the consultation and incorporating the suggestions of the faculty, she feels more self-assured making additional pedagogical changes.

A few of the participants were not yet prepared to make changes, needed more time to figure out how to enact the recommendations, or did not agree with every suggestion. Alan stated that the consultation was "immensely" helpful; however, he and Mike both expressed that they needed more time to think about the recommendations provided and how they would integrate them into their specific courses. Donna was

excited and agreed with the recommendations offered; however, she explained that she needed more time to incorporate the changes into her entire course. Finally, Tom stated that he agreed with 70% of the suggestions but found the consultation provided "valuable information." He did make changes to this course based on the SGID feedback suggestions from the students.

Emotions of Participants

An unexpected theme that I found throughout the interview process was the participants' emotions before and after the consultation. I included questions in the interview protocol to help faculty begin to recall their authentic experience and share an accurate story. I was not expecting to learn about the participant's passion and dedication to their work through these questions. I was interested in their mindset and connection to their motivation to attend the consultation as well. The emotions that the participants shared spanned a continuum from excited to anxious, inspired to unsettling.

Prior to the consultation, four faculty were eager and ready to get started. These faculty expressed their desire to learn more from their consultants. Kathy stated that she was "excited for the feedback." However, six of the faculty were anxious and expressed distress. Alan and Goldie were concerned about their actual teaching challenge and wondered if the consultant could help them solve their perceived difficult situation. Mike shared that he was nervous about having someone from outside of his discipline observe his teaching. These expressions and feelings are typical for professionals who are being observed regardless of their experience, need for the observation, or request to be observed.

The surprising themes developed when the participants shared the feelings they experienced after the consultation took place – immediately after the consultation and after some time had passed, such as a week. The intense feelings that emerged spanned from relief to angst. Kathy stated:

> I felt empowered, honestly. I felt like I had an ally. So even as I was thinking about, okay, how can I make this happen? You know, what can I do to change that situation? I felt like, well, gosh, I can try things and even if I get to another kind of mini roadblock, and I'm not sure exactly how to do it, [the consultant] knows what I'm struggling with. She's been in my classroom. I can reach back out.

Kathy felt she had created a relationship with someone who would continue to offer consultations about improvement if needed. In addition to Kathy, Violet also shared that she felt more comfortable taking risks in her courses and being innovative in the classroom after her consultation. This type of trust and relationship building is what instructional consultants should strive to achieve. Through the consultation experience, showing the faculty that they can try new instructional strategies and return to the consultant for additional support are key reasons for the sustainability of teaching centers.

In juxtaposition to Kathy, Goldie's anxiety grew exponentially throughout the consultation until her teaching challenge was resolved. Goldie reached out to her consultant regarding the final grades of her students. In comparison to the other teaching challenges of the participants in the study, this challenge needed more immediate attention and is one reason for the level of nervousness and frustration of Goldie. As

Goldie explored options with the consultant to resolve her issue, she grew more agitated because she did not think she was being heard. She stated that she knew she "wasn't crazy." She had calculated her grades like that "all of these years," and expressed that she doubted her grading scheme and math skills her "whole life." She stated that she was stressed recalling these facts and feelings because she had to set up her Learning Management System gradebook next semester and was already worried about it. At this point in the interview, I expressed that I would change the subject so that Goldie would no longer have to return to those feelings of anxiety.

These types of strong emotions shared by the study participants show the dedication they have for their profession. They want to be the best instructors they can be for their students and provide the best learning experience for their students to succeed. This was initially evident when these faculty asked for a consultation and sought assistance with their teaching. It is also expressed through the emotions they shared before and after their consultation experience.

Additional Consultations

Participants also shared if they returned for additional consultations or shared their experiences with their colleagues. Nine participants said they had received another consultation already or that they would in the future. Of the nine participants, Alan stated that he tells others about the consultation process, but says:

> I give them both sides of it. I certainly talked to them about the experience and I also tell them that, you know, have one of us come [from our discipline] and get something from the feedback that these two different people provided you.

Of the remaining three participants, Tom completed his requirement, and Sam had received consultations previously, but this was his last consultation as of the time of the interview and did not foresee other consultations. Donna would not be in the small group of faculty fellows after one year, so she could not return to that same consultant. However, Donna worked with her institutions' teaching center as a faculty expert.

Limitations of the Study

This research project has some limitations that may have affected the findings of the study. Researcher bias, population sampling, triangulation, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic are four areas that potentially caused some variability in the results had they not been present. I have examined the limitations to evaluate their impact on the research.

Researcher Bias

I have worked in faculty development and teaching centers for approximately eleven years. Consultations have always been a primary part of every teaching center position that I have held. Because of this, it was important for me to remain impartial when talking to the interviewees. At times, I felt inclined to offer my suggestions to improve their teaching challenge or explain why a situation probably occurred. I had to keep my personal information, opinions, and judgment out of the interview. However, after the interview concluded, I offered suggestions to a few participants. For example, I gave Howard the suggestion of using Padlet, a collaborative technology, to make his questions available in the online or virtual modalities. To counter any bias, I conducted member checking and provided the participants with the transcripts and the interview narratives from Chapter 4. They provided feedback about issues that they felt were not

indicative of their story. I also conducted peer checking and asked colleagues to read my study to determine any bias in the narratives or findings.

Population Sampling

I have worked in the field of faculty development in a University System of Georgia institution since 2010 and have many connections to the networks of professionals. Initially, I conducted purposeful sampling and tried to solicit participants for the study via a listserv request. After receiving no participants, I directly asked the teaching center directors and staff to send out my research request to their faculty. I began to receive emails from faculty offering to participate in my study. The limitation is that most faculty that would respond to a teaching center request for research on consultations would likely be faculty who are participatory in nature. These are faculty who probably had good experiences with the teaching center and their staff. Even though three of the 12 participants were hesitant to incorporate the consultant's recommendations, they still considered their experience beneficial and learned something from it.

Documentation

Initially, the research data was to be collected through interviews and documentation to establish triangulation and validity of the participants' stories. However, only two participants provided such documentation, even though six of the participants received documentation after their consultation. Therefore, I decided not to include documentation in the data analysis. However, the information-rich interviews, member checking, and peer checking provided consistent and accurate participant stories and findings.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unexpected limitation to this research study. I began my dissertation in January 2020. In the USG, all institutions moved to remote or online instruction beginning in March of 2020. During this time, I was the director of a teaching center at a small state college with approximately 300 full-time and part-time faculty. I was devoted to helping the faculty at my institution learn how to teach using new modalities and assisting faculty with managing student stress and anxiety through pedagogical practices. Over three weeks, my institution conducted approximately 70 workshops, webinars, or consultations. During the summer, we conducted four intensive workshops about online and remote instruction reaching over 100 faculty. Due to the level of stress and uncertainty experienced during this time, research participants were limited in their availability and mental compacity to work with me, so I began collecting data in late November 2020 until January 2021. Some faculty admitted to not using much of the consultant's recommendations because they were not teaching in the same modality which they had been pre-pandemic. Even though some consultations had taken place almost a year prior, they were confident in their narrative and told me when they could not recall a fact. I found it helpful during the interview to ask how they were doing regarding the pandemic and let them talk about it before beginning the interview questions. This helped to build rapport, but it also provided space for them to express their thoughts and feelings and then move on to a new topic with my interview questions.

Implications for Current Practice

As Menges (2000) stated, qualitative work and research are important to the field of faculty development and will help researchers discover more about the faculty

experiences and their work with teaching centers. This research provided detailed interviews of 12 faculty participants from which future research could be extracted. The consultation process and approaches commonly used in instructional consultations offered by Rutt (1979) and Brinko (2012) established different approaches and processes for the consultant to consider. Other approaches exist that can be used in consultations, as well. This research aligns with the current approaches and supports the work of previous theorists and researchers. There was not a need for additional consultation approaches in this research, such as "Tough Love" (Boye & Tapp, 2012) or entangled consultations (DiPietro & Hutson, 2009). However, this may be an effect of the limitation of my sampling population.

The participants shared their feelings about the benefits of consultations and teaching centers at their institutions. Through discussions, several participants shared how much they appreciated the experience and the opportunity to work with a teaching center consultant. Regardless of the type of institution – comprehensive university that focuses on faculty research requirements or a state university that focuses more on teaching than research – all participants valued teaching centers and instructional consultations. Participants shared that they tell their colleagues about their experiences and encourage them to participate as well. The participants explained that their teaching centers communicate their events primarily through email and that some participants sought out the teaching centers after experiencing an event from their institutions' center or a previous employers' center. However, some participants explained that they did not feel like the administration supported their teaching centers enough. Due to the positive

findings and beneficial responses of instructional consultations from this research, it would be prudent for institutions to support and sustain teaching centers.

Implications for Future Research

When I began this research study, I wanted to learn more about what motivates a faculty to participate in a consultation and how that motivation might affect the consultation. Examining the experiences of a more diverse population to include participants who had a negative experience or a population outside of the USG, we would find out more about the relationship between motivation and instructional consultation outcomes. Solicitation of anonymous experiences, in addition to a diverse population, may also help to gain a better understanding of different types of consultation experiences. Additionally, instead of looking solely at a teaching issue that drove the faculty to the consultations, we should widen the scope and examine other motivators.

Further research should be conducted on the benefit of a consultation with and without class observations. Six out of 12 participants experienced a class observation with their consultation. These participants expressed how the consultant shared findings from the observation and provided this as evidence of practice for the participants. The remaining six participants, who did not experience a class observation, usually went to the consultant with their teaching challenge in mind. Some consultants explored the teaching issue with the faculty and some did not. Future research could tell us how an observation affects the consultation, such as if the participant fulfills the recommendations and how they react to the consultation and consultant. Research in this area can also help determine the importance of providing evidence, such as observations or student focus groups, to support the consultation.

Conclusion

This research sought to explore the experiences and perceptions of higher education faculty from the University System of Georgia who participated in instructional consultations. Additionally, the research sought to explore the teaching challenge and possible motivation to participate in a consultation. Lastly, I hoped to identify how beneficial the participant perceived a consultation. These research goals were established in order for others to improve their overall understanding of consultations.

Through this research, I examined the current consultation approaches and discovered there is little need to change or expand on the work of previous researchers. However, the need for additional approaches could have been affected by the population sample. Additionally, I chose to take a deeper look into the experiences of the participants in a consultation beyond satisfaction. I found that some participants identified the work in the instructional consultation as collaborative rather than a power-play or judgment. Also, I identified that these participants reacted positively to the consultation experience and could see the benefit on their teaching practice. These findings occurred regardless of rank, status, or institution-type. All but one participant self-initiated the consultation; however, even that one person determined several advantages to participating in the consultation. I also sought to inform faculty developers in higher education about the implications of instructional consultations and share the experience from the faculty perspective instead of the faculty developer. Faculty development research is often seen through the eyes of the researcher or the faculty developer. It is unique that we can read about the experiences and perceptions of faculty

using the services of a teaching center. This research expanded on faculty mindsets about the consultation and teaching center staff and services.

This research provided information from distinct perspectives and shared the experiences from a diverse group of people in regards to status, rank, and institution. I hope that the narratives and findings will be used in future research to explore the experiences of faculty who participate in teaching center services. These participants provided a glimpse of their world as a faculty member at a higher education institution when challenged with a teaching issue and made their perceptions, emotions, and benefits known to us.

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Appendix A

Participant Recruitment Email

Subject: A Qualitative Study of the Experiences of Higher Education Faculty in Faculty Developer-Led Instructional Consultations

Greetings faculty and faculty developers,

I am writing to ask for your participation in voluntary research study about instructional consultations. This study is being conducted by myself, Josie Baudier. I am a doctoral student at Valdosta State University.

In order to further the qualitative research on faculty development on instructional consultations, I am conducting a research study about the experiences of University System of Georgia (USG) faculty who have participated in consultations.

I am seeking faculty participants from any USG institution who have recently participated in an instructional consultation regarding their teaching practice. Participants of the study are similar to you in only that aspect. Selection is not limited to faculty of any status, rank, discipline, or type of institution other than being USG faculty. This will allow me to examine each case study and the uniqueness to its context. Also, this research will be written from the perspective of you, the faculty. By examining consultations in this way, the research may be more relatable for faculty to discern the perceived benefits of consultations. An additional takeaway of this research for educational developers will be to identify how motivation plays a role in the perceived benefits.

Participation will require at least one comprehensive interview, followed by member checking. These interviews will be conducted via video-conference so as to maintain the health and safety recommendations of the Center for Disease Control due to COVID-19.

If you would like to participate in extending research on instruction consultation and faculty development, please contact me at jbaudier@valdosta.edu.

Thank you for your consideration, and once again, please do not hesitate to contact me if you are interested in learning more about this Institutional Review Board approved project. In addition, you can consult this linked informed consent document.

Josie G. Baudier

Principal Investigator

Doctoral Student, Valdosta State University

Director, CETL, Georgia Highlands College

Appendix B

Protocol: Opening and Closing Script

Opening Script

You are being asked to participate in an interview as part of a research study entitled "A Qualitative Study of the Experiences of Higher Education Faculty in Faculty Developer-Led Instructional Consultations", which is being conducted by myself, Josie Baudier. I am a doctoral student at Valdosta State University. The purpose of the study is to learn more about the instructional consultation process from the point of view of a faculty. You were asked to be part of this part of this study because you have participated in instructional consultations at a University of System of Georgia (USG) institution. Selection was not limited to faculty of any status, rank, discipline, or type of institution other than being USG faculty. You will receive no direct compensation from participating in this research study. However, your responses may help us learn more about a faculty's perspective of instructional consultations, the motivation to attend, and the perceived benefits of a consultation.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your participation in the interview will serve as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 years of age or older.

I am conducting the interview in a private office space. After this interview is complete, I will ask for you to review the interview transcripts in order to verify that your true story is being communicated in the research project. If there is anything you wish to change or correct, you can bring it to my attention in a subsequent interview. Also, the data from the study will be reported as an individual case study not associated with any

other research participants. Research participants will not be publicly identified. The identities of all study participants will be confidential. No personal identifiable information will be shared in publications or presentations attributed to this research. Pseudonyms will be used, as needed, in place of real names. Interview recordings and data will be stored on my home computer secured with a login and password, as well as networked on a Virtual Protection Network. The data will be kept until my dissertation is completed and I have graduated. All data in written or printed format may be used to further this research and continued publishing for relevant articles.

The interview is expected to last approximately two hours; however, less time may be required. Once the interview is complete, I will transcribe the interview and conduct member checking with you. At that point, I will determine if another interview is necessary to answer the research questions and complete your story.

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to myself at jbaudier@valdosta.edu. This study has been exempted from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review in accordance with Federal regulations. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-253-2947 or irb@valdosta.edu.

Closing Script

Thank you for participating in this research. Your willingness to share will provide a foundation of information from the perspective of the faculty involved in instructional consultations. From this research, faculty developers will learn more about

how to support faculty during consultations and develop more strategies based on the motivation of faculty. I'll be in touch to follow up on checking the transcripts and also if another interview is necessary.

Appendix C

Protocol: Interview Questions

Interview Questions that align to Research Question 1: *What are the experiences and perceptions that led faculty from the University System of Georgia higher education institutions to participate in an instructional consultation*?

Prior to consultation:

- How did you learn about the consultation process?
- Who conducted the consultation? Who was present during the consultation?
- How did you go about making an appointment with the consultant?
- What part of the process would you classify as the beginning of the consultation process?
- What did you think the consultation could do for you?
- Why did you decide to ask for a consultation?

During the consultation:

- Reflect for a moment on your consultation and tell me about it.
- How did the consultant begin the consultation and what did you share during the consultation?
- Think back to your consultation, how did you feel that day at the beginning of the consultation?
- What emotions did you experience when sharing with the consultant?
- At the end of the consultation, how did you know it was almost over or over?
- How did you feel right after the consultation was over?

After the consultation:

- What were your feelings or reflections after some days passed? Did you feel the same way? Why or why not?

- If you could classify different segments of the consultation process, describe the different phases you went through during the consultation?

Interview Questions that align to Research Question 2: How beneficial did the faculty member perceive the consultation process in addressing the reason for the consultation?

Benefits:

- Do you feel the consultation process was helpful or beneficial?
- How do you know it was helpful or not helpful?
- How much do you agree with what the consultant identified and recognized in your teaching practice?

Rapport:

- What was the rapport like between you and the consultant?
- Did the rapport improve throughout the consultation? Why do you think this is so?

Progression:

- How was your teaching practice changed as a result of the consultation process?
- How specific and constructive was the consultation process and feedback you received? Did you understand how to enact suggestions or plans?

Appendix D

Institutional Review Board Approval

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
For the Protection of Human Research Participants

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

Protocol Number: 04076-2020 **Responsible Researcher:** Josie Baudier

Supervising Faculty: Dr. Jamie Workman

Project Title: *A Qualitative Study of the Experiences of Higher Education Faculty in Faculty Developer-Led Instructional Consultations.*

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:

This research protocol is **Exempt** from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight under Exemption **Category 2**. Your research study may begin immediately. If the nature of the research project changes such that exemption criteria may no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- *Upon completion of this research study all data (email correspondence, interview data, transcripts, participant name lists, etc.) must be securely maintained (locked file cabinet, password protected computer, etc.) and accessible only by the researcher for a minimum of 3 years.*
- *The Research Statement must be read aloud to each participant at the start of each interview session.*
- *Exempt protocol guidelines permit the recording of interviews for the sole purpose of creating an accurate transcript. Once the transcript has been created, the recording must be deleted from all recording devises. Recordings are not to be stored and/or shared. The transcripts must be securely maintained with research data for three years.*

☒ ***If this box is checked, please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at irb@valdosta.edu to ensure an updated record of your exemption.***

Elizabeth Ann Olphie *09.20.2020*
Elizabeth Ann Olphie, IRB Administrator

Thank you for submitting an IRB application.
Please direct questions to irb@valdosta.edu or 229-253-2947.

Revised: 06.02.16

Appendix E

Consent Form

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
Consent to Participate in Research

You are being asked to participate in a research project entitled "A Qualitative Study of the Experiences of Higher Education Faculty in Faculty Developer-Led Instructional Consultations." This research project is being conducted by Josie G. Baudier, a doctoral student in the College of Education and Human Services: Curriculum, Leadership, and Technology at Valdosta State University. The purpose of this research is to comprehensively explore the perceptions and experiences of faculty from the University System of Georgia (USG) during instructional consultations, offered by teaching centers. Additionally, the research will study motivation and why faculty may be hesitant to seek a consultation. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

As described in more detail below, through interview(s), you will share your experiences about instructional consultations. This includes the instructional consultation process from the beginning to end, but does not include sharing specific tasks or action plans discussed with you and your consultant. Someone in your position might be interested in participating in this research to identify and share your experiences as a USG faculty member. Through interviews, similarities and differences of experiences between participants will be revealed. Your participation will help faculty learn more about consultations and also assist developers as they grow their consultation practice.

Because there are some risks, such as uneasiness when discussing difficult topics, you may not wish to participate. It is important for you to know that you can stop your participation at any time. More information about all aspects of this study is provided below.

This form includes detailed information to help you decide whether to participate in this research. Please read it carefully and ask any questions that you have before you agree to participate. Please be sure to retain a copy of this form for your records.

Procedures: Your participation will involve at least one interview. You will be asked to verify your responses through member checking, therefore, only one interview may be needed. However, if there are additional details needed to tell your entire story, then another interview will be conducted. Interviews should take approximately 2 hours. If you agree to participate, I hope to also collect documentation to support your interviews, such as student evaluations or class observation data that you received as part of the consultation. This research does not involve any experimental procedures nor concealment or deception.

Possible Risks or Discomfort: This is a minimal risk research study. That means that the risks of participating are no more likely or serious than those you encounter in everyday activities. Minimal risk in this research includes discomfort discussing sensitive topics. By agreeing to participate in this research project, you are not waiving any rights that you may have against Valdosta State University for injury resulting from negligence of the University or its researchers.

Potential Benefits: This qualitative study will identify and share the experiences of USG faculty who have participated in instructional consultations. The System includes diverse groups of faculty from diverse sectors and institutions. By examining a sample of this population, distinctions and differences in experiences will be discovered. When conducting this qualitative case study research, each case will be thoroughly explored so that the interviewee feels their entire story has been reported. In addition, most faculty development research

examines consultations from the consultant's or faculty developer's perspective. This research will dig deeper into the experiences of the faculty and explain their perspective on the process and benefits of instructional consultations. In the end, the case studies presented in this research could help educational developers create additional approaches for different types of consultations, as well as begin to connect motivation to attend to the consultation outcomes.

Costs and Compensation: There are no costs to you and there is no compensation (no money, gifts, or services) for your participation in this research project.

Assurance of Confidentiality: Valdosta State University and the researcher will keep your information confidential to the extent allowed by law. Members of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), a university committee charged with reviewing research to ensure the rights and welfare of research participants, maybe given access to your confidential information.

The private, individual interviews will be held either via phone or video conferencing, whichever is most convenient and comfortable for you. The interviews will be recorded so that transcription and data coding can take place. I will conduct the interview in a private office space.

The data from the study will be reported as an individual case study not associated with any other research participants. Research participants will not be publicly identified. The identities of all study participants will be confidential. No personal identifiable information will be shared in publications or presentations attributed to this research. Pseudonyms will be used, as needed, in place of real names.

Interview recordings and data will be stored and secured on a home computer secured with a login and password as well as networked on a Virtual Protection Network. I access my computer with a login and password. The data will be kept until my dissertation is completed and I have graduated from Valdosta State University with my doctoral degree. Recordings will be destroyed after transcripts are created. Data will be kept for up to three years.

Voluntary Participation: Your decision to participate in this research project is entirely voluntary. If you agree now to participate and change your mind later, you are free to leave the study. Your decision not to participate at all or to stop participating at any time in the future will not have any effect on any rights you have or any services you are otherwise entitled to from Valdosta State University. During the interview, you may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide to withdraw after data collection is complete, your information will be deleted from the database and will not be included in research results.

Information Contacts: Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Josie G. Baudier at jbaudier@valdosta.edu. This study has been approved by the Valdosta State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Research Participants. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-253-2947 or irb@valdosta.edu.

Agreement to Participate: Verbal agreement for consent to participate in the research study will be given and recorded during the first interview.

This research project has been approved by the Valdosta State University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Research Participants through the date noted below: