

Service Design in the Delivery of Non-academic Services in Higher Education

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By

Robert Blizzard

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Head of the Department of Educational Administration

Department of Educational Administration

University of Saskatchewan

28 Campus Drive, Room 3079

Saskatoon, SK S7N 0X1, Canada

OR

Dean

College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

University of Saskatchewan

116 Thorvaldson Building, 110 Science Place

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 5C9 Canada

Abstract

The discipline of service design is increasingly used in public sector organizations but to date has rarely been used in the delivery of non-academic services in institutes of higher education. Though organizational culture has been identified as a barrier to operationalization in past studies, the intersection between organizational culture and service design methods has not received dedicated attention in past research.

This study used an interpretative phenomenological analysis approach to better describe the perceptions and experiences of staff members in a higher education setting regarding a service design project of which they were a part. Though the research was conducted in a university setting, the results will be of value to service design practitioners in other organizations that are either internally focused, as defined by Cameron and Quinn's (2006) competitive values framework, or loosely coupled (Weick, 1976).

After synthesizing the research data from this study, the relevant literature, and three conceptual frameworks, the researcher found that staff in such institutions place more value in collaborative and culture building activities than service improvement. The implication of this and related findings is that service design methods are best applied and presented as tools to bring staff together. The nature of change, methods of decision making, and organizational culture all come together to create novel applications for service design activity while also explaining why previous design efforts failed to operationalize. The researcher recommended that service design activities in the future could be used to: reframe students as community members; focus on incremental and local change; support policy and budget development; support organizational change processes; strengthen informal networks; and support long term change by changing the locus of service design activity from the point of enactment of a service

to instead the selection and retention segments of the sensemaking process within the organization. The dominant organizational culture of the site studied did indeed influence the perceptions of staff members when reflecting on a service design project. By exploring those perceptions and underlying beliefs and values of participants, this study can assist service design practitioners and educational leadership in future design and change management processes.

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Table of Contents

Permission to Use	ii
Disclaimer.....	iii
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	vi
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures.....	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Problem.....	3
Purpose of the Study.....	3
Research Question	3
Significance of the Study.....	4
Limitations	5
Delimitations.....	7
Assumptions.....	8
Definitions.....	8
Researcher Positionality	10
Summary	12
Organization of Thesis.....	12
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	13
Service Design.....	14
Mapping Exercises.....	20
Application of Service Design in Human Services	24
Service Design in Higher Education.....	28
Service Design in Library Systems.....	30
Service Design in Non-academic Services in Higher Education.....	35
University of Denver Colorado Service Design Recommendations	38
Change in Higher Education	43
Loosely Coupled Systems	45
Change in Loosely Coupled Systems.....	50
Organizational Culture in Higher Education	52

Four Archetypes in Competing Values Framework	54
Universities as Clans	56
Symbols and Artifacts.....	59
Gaps in Research	62
Summary	64
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	66
Choice of Qualitative Approach.....	66
Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.....	68
Truth and Meaning.....	68
Study Design	69
Journey Mapping Activity	69
Interviews	71
Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument	72
Purposeful Sampling	72
Data Analysis.....	74
Trustworthiness	76
Ethics	78
Dual Role Research	79
Summary	81
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	83
Participants.....	83
Themes.....	85
Perceptions of Service Design Methods	86
Lack of Familiarity with Service Design	86
New Ideas	87
Bringing People Together	88
Holistic View of Process	90
Empathy.....	92
Service Improvement	93
Program Delivery	94
Autonomy	95
Policies	95

Budgets.....	95
Change on Campus.....	96
Individual Motivations	96
External Factors	99
Organizational Factors	101
Uncertainty About Causes.....	103
How Decisions are Made.....	105
Collegial Decision Making.....	105
Use of Data in Decision Making.....	107
Responsiveness to Other Units	109
Summary of Findings	110
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION.....	113
Interpretation of the Findings.....	113
Perceptions of Service Design.....	115
Program Delivery.....	119
Change on Campus	120
How Decisions are Made	124
Research Questions	127
Relative Value of the Service Design Activity.....	128
Nature of Change on Campus.....	130
Existing Systems of Control.....	132
Implications for Practice.....	135
Reframe Students as Community Members	136
Incremental and Local.....	138
Incorporate Service Design in Policy and Budget Development	139
Incorporate Service Design in Organizational Change Processes	140
Use Service Design to Strengthen Informal Networks	142
Reverse Typical Service Design Process	144
Implications for Future Research	145
Concluding Thoughts	148
REFERENCES	150
APPENDIX ONE.....	161

Interview Schedule	161
Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument.....	162
APPENDIX TWO.....	165
Consent form.....	165
APPENDIX THREE	167
Transcript release form	167
APPENDIX FOUR	168
Initial email invitation.....	168
Response to interested participants	168

List of Tables

Table 1: Themes and sub-themes.....	114
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List of Figures

Figure 1: Relationship between journey mapping activity and theoretical frameworks.....135

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Service design is a relatively new field which concerns itself with the intentional design, development, and ongoing assessment of services. Service design differs from traditional process or product design in one striking way: successful service delivery depends not just upon the organization delivering the service, but also the experience of the recipient of the service (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011). This fluid and often intangible relationship requires a thorough understanding of the customer needs and motivations in order to properly design an exceptional experience (Shostack, 1982). Service design as a set of methods was first applied to the private sector but has since been used extensively in the public sector as well, especially in the provision of health services (Brown, 2008).

The adoption of service design practices in higher education has been uneven to this point (Ostrom, Bitner, & Burkhard, 2011). The research literature has numerous examples of pilot projects but, especially in the provision of non-academic services, few instances of sustained success with the approach. Researchers analyzing these past projects have made a series of recommendations to future practitioners with the hope of increasing and sustaining success with the application of service design (Andrews & Eade, 2013; Roberts, 2017). Many of these recommendations suggest that the implementation barriers are not technical but rather are cultural (Brown, 2014).

Often unstated, but implicit, in the literature surrounding service design is the idea that these design activities are also a change process for an organization (Junginger, 2008). In the act of designing and developing a service of the organization for the market, often the organization itself must change as well. Whether it comes in the form of new processes, structures, or more broadly perspectives, service design is ultimately an act of deliberate and considered change.

The relationship between organizational change and organizational culture has been explored through many lenses. From Lewin's (1947) field theory to the social constructivism of Berger and Luckmann (1966), organizational climate and culture together have been richly described by the existing literature in the context of change management (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Using Cameron and Quinn's (2006) competing values framework, the intentions and outcomes from service design activities can most easily be matched against organizations that naturally look to the external market for organizational direction. Many of the service design case studies in higher education have made recommendations that align with Cameron and Quinn's recommended approaches for introducing change to internally focused organizations (Roberts, 2017).

Universities have variously been described as clans (Obendhain & Johnson, 2004), using the competing values framework, and loosely coupled systems by Weick (1976). The attributes of such systems, including a focus on employee satisfaction and the independence of individual units, do not always support transformative or planned change activities. Successful change in these settings often requires the change to be small, incremental, and adapted to local circumstance, a far cry from a traditional approach such as Lewin's freeze-change-unfreeze model (Root-Robbins, 2005; Lewin, 1947). Service design activities that are proposed as transformative opportunities will likely be resisted in such environments, and existing evidence suggests that projects do not survive a change in leadership or loss of an executive sponsor.

Delving further into the nature of organizational culture, Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld (2005) described the central role of sensemaking within an organization. This act is both interpretative and explanatory. When people and groups engage in sensemaking activities they are collectively rationalizing actions of the past and informing future action. This subtle

approach is both informed by and informs the organizational culture. Many service design exercises can be understood as sensemaking acts, and the visual artifacts created have the potential to become cultural signifiers within an organization.

Problem

Many attempts at introducing service design approaches fail in the higher education setting. The rationale used to promote service design in the private sector has as yet been insufficient to motivate staff within post-secondary institutions to adopt service design principles and practices (Ostrom et al. 2011). There exists the possibility that by applying modern understandings of change theory and organizational culture, service design approaches can be introduced in a culturally responsive way that minimizes the inherent resistance to change evidenced so far. Unfortunately, the interplay between organizational culture and service design has not been explicitly studied in higher education.

Purpose of the Study

This research study explored the relationship between organizational culture and the practice of service design. Using a phenomenological, qualitative approach, the researcher interviewed administrative staff members of a university who participated in a service design exercise with the intention of better understanding their perceptions of the process. Particular attention was be paid to how participants expressed the instances where a service design approach either challenged or reinforced aspects of the underlying organizational culture.

Research Question

In the field of higher education, service design principles and practices have been experimented with but rarely incorporated into ongoing operations. Numerous barriers have been identified in the existing literature, but the specific role of organizational culture in this

phenomenon has not been subject to intense study (Roberts, 2017). Therefore, the overarching research question for this study was: How does organizational culture affect the adoption of service design approaches?

Two sub-questions were also explored through this study. First, how do staff in internally focused organizations perceive culture building and service improvement? In other words, did the shared, common activity of a service design project provide value as a process which brought staff together for a common purpose and shared understanding. Further, will such a project be valued for the future enhancements to the student experience such work might provide? The definition for internally focused organizations was based upon the work of Cameron and Quinn (2006). The second sub-question is closely related to the first: How do staff understand the purposes and outcomes of a service design exercise?

Significance of the Study

Post-secondary institutions are under increasing pressure from multiple stakeholders to meet the needs of both students and society and, further, to do so in an efficient manner. The field of service design does offer an opportunity to allow an organization to look beyond past practice and reimagine services in a way that emphasizes value to the end user (Brown, 2008). There exists however an occasional hostility to customer-centric principles in higher education. Education, as a process, can often be understood as one internal to an individual. The role of faculty and an institution in the learning process is not one of service provider but of facilitator (Bain, 2004). The students themselves are expected to be responsible for their learning and development. It is arguable however that this approach should not carry over into non-academic services. The act of registering for a class, for example, should not be dependent on a student's resilience, self-motivation, and support network.

The design and delivery of non-academic services at a post-secondary institution can benefit from an intentional, holistic approach based on user research and participation (Ostrom et al. 2011). Many process improvement approaches in the past have struggled with adoption, often due to resistance to change within the organization (Roberts, 2017). With a better understanding of how service design approaches are perceived in an internally focused organization, future change agents will be better placed to introduce such measures in a way that reflects rather than challenges the underlying culture.

This study will also contribute to the relatively new field of service design by exploring alternate uses for such practices beyond the obvious design of a service. Though the interaction between culture and the success or failure of design exercises has been noted in past studies, no study has been designed specifically to investigate the phenomenon (Cunningham & Kempling, 2009; Davis & Fifolt, 2018; Roberts, 2017). Further, dedicated studies examining service design in higher education are relatively rare. Finally, service design has most commonly been used in organizations to support market-oriented goals (Brown, 2008). The use of a service design approach with the intention of supporting the creation of a new organizational culture is novel and worthy of deeper study.

Limitations

The central research question in this work is broad, but this study naturally focused on a small sample of individuals. In the spirit of phenomenological work, the researcher examined the perceptions of a few individuals deeply rather than surveying a large population and making sweeping statements. This approach limited the results of the study to be an interpretation of the phenomenon in question through the dual lens of both the participant and the researcher. The results are not expected to be immediately transferable to other contexts but nevertheless should

shed light on both the higher education setting and other organizations with similar cultures to the site being studied.

As both a practitioner and a researcher I brought a definite bias to my interpretations. Personal experience, reviews of past literature, and professional practice all contributed to a genuine interest in the relationship between service design and organizational culture. Both culture and service design have been subjected to numerous definitions and can be seen as fluid frameworks. These two factors presented a strong opportunity for me to ascribe what may be a personal belief on the part of a participant to an expression of organizational culture, in other words, I was tempted to see or infer relationships in the data that are unsubstantiated. The small sample size used in the study also contributed to this potential bias. I managed this bias through reflexive activities throughout the study. Finally, negative cases received particular attention during data analysis as they had the potential to reveal not just researcher bias, but also deeper insight into the role of organizational culture or subcultures in a communal activity such as service design. The negative cases that did not conform to other patterns could in fact reveal the complexity of the underlying relationships, informal structures, and other normally hidden aspects of culture.

The participants of this study brought their own biases into this project. These biases however were not a limitation to the research as it is precisely these biases, perceptions, and understandings that addressed the primary research question. The participants may though be not just biased but also untruthful. This potential deception is a limitation that must be accepted in such a qualitative approach and was managed by observation of strict ethical best practices. The participants' interviews were treated confidentially, and their participation or lack thereof in the research project was not disclosed to either other participants or other staff members in the

organization. As a facilitator of the associated service design project, I had an opportunity to observe participants during the project over a length of time beyond the interview itself. This additional exposure mitigated the risk that participants were untruthful in their retellings of events. The risk of a participant being untruthful in their relation of perceptions was managed by providing a safe environment for the interview, protection of the participants' right to privacy, and establishing a rapport in the interview itself.

Delimitations

This study explored the perceptions of university staff members who participated in a service design project at a mid-sized university in Western Canada. The staff members were predominantly from a newly formed student affairs portfolio and represented a range of units. They had been brought together in this project for the purpose of not just improving service to students, but also to create common understandings of the student experience to be shared across the units.

The associated service design project took place over the course of three months. Participants were involved in workshops, user research, and student interviews with the intention of co-creating a customer journey map that could be used to inform future activities as well as educate other staff members who did not participate in the project. Those who participated in the project were then invited to be interviewed about their experiences.

These in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to deeply explore the perceptions of the participants. Focusing on a single site allowed for richer data to be obtained and permitted the research study to be completed in a reasonable amount of time before participants' memories of the experience became less clear. The location was chosen in part for the convenience, but also the unique opportunity presented by having the researcher embedded within the organization in

question. This choice allowed the associated service design project to be initiated and framed in a way that can contribute to the existing research literature by being more explicit about the cultural implications and motivations of the initiative.

Finally, it is worth noting that the organizational units involved in the service design project had recently undergone a reorganization of functions and staff. A new model of centralized student recruitment had been introduced on the campus. Also, a large enterprise IT system was in the process of being implemented to support the dual functions of recruitment and admissions. These organizational changes presented a unique opportunity to apply service design approaches in a fluid environment in a way that could support the establishment of a new organizational culture as well as informing process work underway.

Assumptions

For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that reality is at least in part a social construction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and that people's perceptions of reality can be interpreted through a phenomenological approach (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Further, it is assumed that in the process of interviews, participants will not intentionally deceive the researcher by providing false data about their own perceptions of their experiences.

Definitions

Service design: is a new, evolving field which, although subject to many interpretations and definitions, is nonetheless marked by a diversity of approaches, tools, and philosophies. The intention behind service design is the deliberate creation of services and systems from a user-centric perspective. Stickdorn and Schneider (2011) identified the following five principles as core to service design:

- User centered: services should be designed and experienced from the perspective of the customer
- Co-creative: stakeholder engagement should be inclusive during the design process, and include customers themselves
- Sequencing: the service should be seen as not a point in time, but a series of steps and actions
- Evidencing: artifacts should be created in the service design process to visualize intangible services
- Holistic: the broader environment around a service should be considered when the service is being designed (p. 34)

Loosely-coupled system: systems, such as organizations, that are composed of parts that are responsive to each other but retain their own identity and autonomy (Weick, 1976).

Competing values framework: a particular theoretical framework to describe an organizational culture. Organizational culture is described along two value axes: flexibility and discretion versus stability and control; internal focus and integration versus external focus and differentiation (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, p.35).

Customer journey map: a specific and commonly used tool within the field of service design. Customer journey maps are visual representations of a customer's experience with an organization. In contrast with process maps, the locus of the tool is moved to the customer's perspective rather than that of the offering organization (Kalbach, 2016, p. 52).

Organizational culture: Schein (1990) described organizational culture as:

(a) A pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (e) is to be taught to new members as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 111)

Sensemaking: the act of creating meaning from past events to inform future action (Weick et. al., 2005). The act of sensemaking is richly informed by these past events and in turn informs organizational contexts including culture.

Researcher Positionality

As a user experience designer working at a university, I have a particular interest in the application of service design approaches in the higher education sector. Many practices that are commonplace in the private sector have been met with ambivalence at post-secondary institutions (Davis & Fifolt, 2018). Designing and developing services in a customer-centric manner is often difficult in an environment where the use of the word customer itself is met with hostility (Saunders, 2015). Many services are designed and delivered independently from other units on a campus without regard to the overall experience of a student (Obendhain & Johnson, 2004).

I have a personal belief that design thinking, participatory design, and service design principles could counteract the occasionally siloed nature of both academic and non-academic services on campus. I also have a suspicion that the resistance to such approaches has less to do

with financial or temporal constraints, but rather is a result of culture. Using the competing values framework articulated by Cameron and Quinn (2006), many of the organizations that first used service design approaches were externally focused and primarily concerned with meeting consumer or market needs. Universities can be better described as internally focused organizations, which seek answers to organizational problems from within (Obendhain & Johnson, 2004). This cultural distinction, among others, suggests that implementing a service design program with the intention of improving customer satisfaction could be viewed as accessory rather than central to organizational needs.

Service design and organizational culture are both also closely associated with change management (Junginger, 2008). The former is intended to change the products and services of an organization, which can often result in a change of the organization itself. The latter, organizational culture, is often addressed as a component of larger organizational change. In my own working environment, I have been a part of a relentlessly changing part of the larger organization. In the latest incarnation, I am a part of a new teaching, learning, and student affairs portfolio. A challenge for this portfolio is not just to educate other divisions of the campus about the new structure, but also to create a common vision and understanding of mission amongst staff within the portfolio. The new structure provides a unique opportunity for original research on the interplay of organizational culture and service design. Weick et al. (2005) have argued that culture is often created through sensemaking exercises within organizations. As past events are interpreted, a common story is created and promulgated through the organization. In a fluid organizational climate, would a service design exercise that was proposed not just as a service improvement measure, but also as an opportunity for internal visioning be better received? In a

new organization without shared stories from the past, is there a place to use service design approaches to help build a common culture?

Summary

The intersection between service design and organizational culture is still relatively unexplored. The specific challenges in the adoption of service design practices in the post-secondary sector can be investigated through that lens of organizational culture. By taking a phenomenological approach, the perceptions of staff members within the higher education setting can be better understood. Service design practitioners will be able to use these insights to better frame such activities in a way that will mitigate natural resistance to change. Further, practitioners may also be able to provide value beyond the improvement of a service itself by engaging the underlying culture of the organization in a contextually appropriate way, reinforcing rather than challenging the accepted ways of knowing and doing.

Organization of Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. In this chapter, the research question and sub-questions have been identified and the overall context of this inquiry was presented. In chapter two, I provide a review of the relevant literature pertaining to service design in higher education, change in loosely coupled systems, and organizational culture. Chapter three contains an overview of the methodology used including the epistemological foundations for this work. Chapter four presents the data from this study, supported by relevant quotes from the interview transcripts. Finally, chapter five is a rich description of the findings as well as the implications for practice and future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Service design is a new field that has not yet been fully applied to the delivery of non-academic services in higher education. Though service design has its roots in the private sector, it has since been used in public services and most extensively in healthcare (Donetto, Pierri, Tsianakas & Robert 2015). These new design approaches are in fact change processes and often have the intended result of changing the underlying culture of the organization making use of the methods. One of the most profound changes that service design promotes is a change of perspective on the part of staff from an organizational centric to a customer centric viewpoint (Shostack, 1984). As service design is experimented with in the higher education sector, there are challenges that have arisen due to the loosely coupled nature of most higher education institutions (Roberts, 2017). Though these challenges have reduced the impact and effectiveness of previous service design projects, they may also provide opportunities to modify service design methods so that they are better suited to the unique needs of the sector.

This study will explore the following research questions:

1. How does organizational culture affect the adoption of service design approaches
 - a. How do staff in internally focused organizations perceive culture building and service improvement activities?
 - b. How do staff understand the purposes and outcomes of a service design exercise?

In order to better understand the relationship between organizational culture and service design, I will review the relevant literature for both areas below. In addition to that, I am interested in the perceptions of staff members in internally focused organizations such as

universities to change management processes. Thus, particular attention will be paid to studies in both the public sector in general and post-secondary sites specifically.

Service Design

The concept of service design is relatively new compared to allied disciplines in industrial or product design. As articulated by Shostack (1984), designing services presents significant challenges compared with the design of more concrete products. Often, it is not the service itself that a customer is purchasing, but either an experience or support for a greater goal. Fulfilling the needs of customers requires an in depth understanding of those needs. This approach marks a difference between traditional process design and improvement because of the engagement with the customer rather than the organization providing the service (Shostack, 1984).

That is not to say that process design occurs without thought to the customer experience. Levitt (1960) noted that it is natural for organizations to become focused on what they do rather than who they serve. In other words, organizations become product or service focused rather than market focused. Levitt (1960) used the railway industry as an example of a group of companies that had forgotten that they provide transportation services to the market rather than railway services. At the time of his writing, growth in the broader transportation sector was immense yet railway companies, by focusing their skills, development, and investment in a single segment had ceded the market to new entrants.

Following Levitt's work, there has been an increase in approaches used to improve processes within organizations such as Business Process Re-engineering, Total Quality Management, and Organizational Transformation (Aguilar-Saven, 2004). Many of them have a relentless focus on providing value to customers and aligning organizational structures to that

end. Early approaches, such as Hammer's (1990) Business Process Re-engineering advocated for a complete elimination of work that fails to provide concrete customer value. Central to Hammer's (1990) philosophy was that many organizations over time have "organized work as a sequence of separate tasks and employed complex mechanisms to track its progress" as a natural reaction to the industrial revolution and the opportunities which arose from economies of scale and an unskilled workforce (p. 107). Left to their own devices, staff within functional organizations will use automation tools to improve existing processes, rather than re-evaluate the need for the function itself. Hammer thus encouraged leaders to consider the possibilities provided by computers and telecommunications to completely reinvent processes rather than marginally improve existing ways of working.

Hammer (1990) provided an extreme example when Ford sought to reduce headcount in their accounts payable department of 500 staff members (p. 105). They estimated potential reductions of twenty percent of staff through automation of work. Before embarking on a typical information technology implementation project, analysts first looked at competitor models. They found that Madza's accounts payable department was composed of five staff members. No amount of automation would provide the Ford company a 99% decrease in staff required to fulfill the function: complete reengineering of the function and associated processes was required.

In the years following Hammer's (1990) rather radical approach to service and organizational design, there has been a tempering of expectations and moderation exercised in such projects. Davenport and Stoddard (1994) noted that few organizations are willing or able to conduct the massive reengineering espoused by Hammer and that most opt for a more realistic approach to reducing inefficiencies in process. In one example, a participant in Davenport and

Stoddard's (1994) study related that the estimate for their organization's complete reengineering project would exceed one billion dollars over seven years (p. 123). Though the return on the investment, estimated conservatively, would still be quite high, management could not afford neither the investment nor the risk. In cases such as this, organizations are more likely to pursue piecemeal redesign of services and processes based upon immediate needs rather than an idealized transformation of their entire model.

Through the 1990s, a common language was developed to articulate these various improvement processes (Kettinger, Teng, & Guha, 1997). Driven by consultants and proprietary methods, nonetheless a shared set of approaches evolved. This development allowed for a more complete articulation of the goals of such exercises: "improved process products and services measured in terms of cost, quality, customer satisfaction, or shareholder value" (Kettinger et al., 1997, p. 56). Kettinger et al. (1997) developed a model that describes the typical stages of a process improvement exercise. Where such process improvement initiatives differ from service design approaches is the foci: on the process rather than the customer experience. Although customer satisfaction may be an end goal, process design achieves that goal through analyzing and understanding the business processes that may be measured by satisfaction, as well as cost and shareholder value. Xiao and Zheng (2012) identified two major drawbacks to process design. First, stakeholders do not directly model the business but rely on analysts to translate knowledge to the project. Second, process stakeholders themselves sometimes lack knowledge about the processes in which they are involved (Xiao & Zheng, 2012). Xiao and Zheng proposed alternate approaches that minimize both phenomenon, but returning to Shostack's call to action in *Designing Services that Deliver*, there is perhaps a deeper shortcoming to process design: "what they miss is the consumer's relationship to, and interaction with, services" (Shostack, 1984, p.

135). There remains a need to understand not just the process a customer interacts with, but also the experience of the customer during the interaction.

The relatively new field of design thinking has evolved out of industrial, product, and process design to meet the challenge above: inclusion of customer perspectives in the development of products, services, and systems. Brown (2008) described the field as a methodology...

powered by a thorough understanding, through direct observation, of what people want and need in their lives and what they like or dislike about the way particular products are made, packaged, marketed, sold, and supported (p.86).

The human-centered aspect of design thinking is paramount and distinguishes it from previous approaches that would consider customer satisfaction, but would study the organization for solutions. As an example, IDEO, a leading consultancy in design thinking, worked on a reengineering project to improve nursing shift changes at a series of hospitals (Brown, 2008).

The project began in a similar fashion to a typical process engineering project: a cross-functional team was assembled to work with frontline practitioners (Brown, 2008). Working with nurses, the team found that the first 45 minutes of a nursing shift was a debrief from the departing nurse about the status of patients. This process, and the information conveyed, was non-standard, inefficient, and error prone. The team did not stop at that point however and seek out a solution. Instead they worked with patients as well and discovered the information which was most critical to the patients was also not being conveyed in that shift change. Information such as how the patient felt, the family members that were with them, and which tests had occurred were more important to the patients themselves and further coloured their perception of care or lack thereof. In the end, a system was developed and introduced to make it easier for nursing staff to make

and pass along notes regarding patients. More importantly however, the time between a nurse's arrival at the hospital and their first interaction with a patient was halved (Brown, 2008).

Within the broad scope of design thinking methodologies, there are a variety of specific techniques. Though Brown (2008) identified three major spaces in design thinking projects: inspiration, ideation, and implementation, Kumar (2012) further refined the field into seven modes: sense intent, know context, know people, frame insights, explore concepts, frame solutions, and realize offerings. Each of these modes have occasionally overlapping methods, all with the goal of better understanding and exploring problems, contexts, and solutions in a human centered way. Many methods, such as ethnographic interviews or field visits, would be familiar to qualitative researchers. Other methods, such as puppet scenarios or role-play ideation are intended to lower the barriers for engagement among stakeholders but lack a rich history in social science research (Stickdorn, Hormess, Lawrence, & Schneider, 2018). Most of these methods seek validity over reliability (Martin, 2009). Martin found that many businesses, through process design approaches such as Total Quality Management or Six Sigma, have developed incredible capacity for increasing the reliability of outcomes and information. Martin (2009) noted though that organizations who excel in this capacity “increase the risk of cataclysmic events that occur when the future no longer resembles the past” (p. 42). Optimization is a worthy goal when the external environment is unchanging. Unfortunately, in fluid environments, organizations often need to change fundamental aspects of their business and offerings to continue competing in the marketplace.

Ultimately, design thinking represents an alternate and inclusive way of solving problems. Martin (2009) posited that design thinking is a reconciliation of two schools of thought regarding innovation. One belief is that value in organizations is driven by analytical

thinking. Elimination of personal bias, assumptions, and emotions from decision making is valuable and the way forward when creating new products and services. On the other hand, some feel that systemization, automation, and quantitative research eliminate not just inefficiency, but innovation as well. Martin (2009) advanced a theoretical model of knowledge in organizations as a funnel with three stages: mystery, heuristic, and algorithm. The natural inclination of organizations is to move through the knowledge funnel. Using MacDonald's as an example, Martin traced the origin of the company as successful in the creation of an entirely new market category working through the mystery space of the knowledge funnel. In this phase, the founder needed to be innovative, open to new ideas and processes, and flexible. The continued success of the company however required development of repeatable heuristics and finally a polished algorithm to be handed to each franchise (Martin, 2009). This example represents both extremes of the analytical versus intuitive approach to innovation. The challenge for organizations is that as they achieve efficiency at the end of the knowledge funnel, they lose the capacity to navigate in the mystery space.

Martin (2009) offered Proctor and Gamble (P & G) as an example of a company that experienced just such a decline in capacity for innovation. In 1999, after a series of mergers and restructuring the board fired the chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The new CEO, Lafley, was faced with a scenario where P&G still invested heavily in research and development yet was losing market share to competitors. Many of P&G's greatest successes, such as disposable diapers or fluoride toothpaste, came decades earlier (Martin, 2009). In the time since, the company became better at improving existing products rather than creating new ones. Changing this dynamic would require significant changes to organizational culture as well as to compensation and promotion policies. Though P&G started work on that larger need, infusing

design capacity across the divisions, in the short term, Lafley had to look outside the organization. Lafley and his newly appointed Vice President for Design Strategy, Kotchka, instead developed a new model where staff would connect with outside inventors and support them in developing the ideas for market (Martin, 2009). This example illustrates two important points regarding design thinking: first, organizational culture can be a barrier to design thinking; and second, that transformative knowledge and innovation often occur outside of an organization. As the field evolves, it is becoming clear that design thinking is more than a set of methodologies, but also a culture and further that “building such a culture may require a fundamental transformation — not only in the way an organization approaches innovation, but in how it conceives of itself” (Gobble, 2014, p. 60). This intersection between culture and service design will be explored further below.

Gobble (2014), in tracing the evolution of design thinking, identified its immediate application to service design. Though much of the previous work of companies such as IDEO was with products, services benefit even more from a holistic, human centered approach. IDEO itself in time was asked to solve problems more complex than how a new product could fit into an existing marketplace, from restructuring health care facilities, to creating new learning environments at universities (Brown & Wyatt, 2010). The abstract nature of services lend themselves to more open approaches in design.

Mapping Exercises

In the still growing field of service design, there are numerous approaches and methods in use. In a comprehensive review of visualisation methods used in the design of human-computer interaction projects over 400 methods were identified, suggesting a diffusion of approaches (Li, Tiwari, Alcock, & Bermell-Garcia, 2016). Despite this multitude of methods,

Segelström (2009) found that practicing service designers almost universally used one particular group of methods regardless of the project: customer journeys. Though designers rarely limit themselves to a single approach during a project, the customer journey visualization is one of the rare methods used consistently in a field which seems to lack convention. At first glance, any such consistency should be surprising, given the volume of approaches available. Candi and Saemundsson (2008) though found that in new technology-based firms, where service design saw its first period of growth, organizations exhibit a surprising degree of institutional isomorphism, or the tendency to exhibit similarities. They originally hypothesized that new technology companies from their two sites, Iceland and San Francisco, would differ dramatically as a response to their unique geographic, social, and political situations. Nonetheless, the authors instead found that the internet in particular acted as a moderator of divergent behaviour (Candi & Saemundsson, 2008).

Of all the possible service design practices available, I will focus then on a specific set of tools: the alignment diagram and customer journey map in particular. Kalbach (2016) defined such alignment diagrams as maps to align an organization with the experience of their customers. The goal of such exercises is the very same as the broad discipline of design thinking described above: as a reaction to the natural introversion of organizations, or as Kalbach (2016) put it:

Organizations get wrapped up in their own processes and forget to look at the markets they serve. Operational efficiency is prioritized over customer satisfaction. Many simply don't know what their customers go through (p. 1).

Mapping the experience of a customer as they interact with a system changes the focus of effort and improvement away from internal processes. Kalbach (2016) identified three major benefits of such exercises: the viewpoint of services is changed to outside-in; alignment of internal

functions across the organization is accomplished; and shared reference points are created that can inform strategy (p. xiv).

Within the broader group of alignment maps, Kalbach (2016) identified five specific tools: service blueprints, customer journey maps, experience maps, mental models and spatial maps (p.4-11). The first three maps are all distinguished by their chronological nature, making them of particular use when understanding how a customer interacts with an ongoing service. Service blueprints have a long history of use, first articulated by Shostack (1982). Shostack saw service blueprints as an extension of Taylorism, time/motion engineering, Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) from project management, and systems or software design. Those earlier tools were useful to describe the manufacturing of products. The need and value for a business to visualize and conceptualize a service drove this next innovation. At its core, a service blueprint describes front and backstage processes which interact over a period of time in the delivery of a service to a customer. In the decades following, service blueprints have been refined and enhanced with additional dimensions such as a customer's emotional state (Wreiner et al., 2009). A natural limitation of service blueprints is that the resultant diagram is a simplification of reality. In addition to this, blueprints are best used to evaluate the process which is mapped rather than the customer experience. Wreiner et al. (2009) conducted a joint study with a car parking company, Linköping University, and a design consultancy to address the gap in academic literature relating to the practice of creating service blueprints. They found that the resultant maps could diminish the role of the customer but that this can be valuable if, as was the case in their study; the business to business relationship between actors presented the greatest design challenges (Wreiner et al., 2009).

In contrast to blueprints, customer journey maps instead focus on the customer rather than the process. Derived from service blueprints, customer journey maps share the chronological nature but differ in terms of content and use by practitioners (Kalbach, 2016). Kalbach (2016) identified many of the antecedents of customer journey maps such as experience blueprints, moments of truth, and touchpoints. Kalbach further attributed the consultant Bruce Temkin for popularizing the method in North American businesses. Temkin highlighted four reasons for conducting customer journey mapping exercises (as cited in Forrester, 2010). First, companies struggle with ensuring their staff share a common understanding of the organization's customers. Second, without that understanding, employees and teams tend to presume that the organization's customers look and behave like themselves, which is rarely the case. Third, internal divisions are routinely identified as a barrier to delivering a positive customer experience. Finally, and partly as a result of the above, companies typically disappoint their customers (Temkin, as cited in Forrester, 2010). In response to these tendencies, Temkin advocated the use of journey maps to refocus teams on the customer experience. He defined customer journey maps as "documents that visually illustrate customers' processes, needs, and perceptions throughout their relationship with the company" (Temkin, as cited in Forrester, 2010, p. 2). Done well, such maps are intended to be co-created, rely on research, and be shared broadly across the organization. The salient difference between the definition above and that of service blueprints is the focus. Both activities will map the experience of a customer interacting with an organization. The customer journey map will do so from the perspective of the customer.

Kalbach (2016) also described experience maps as the final chronological visualization tool used to illustrate a service experience. Though language is often fluid and Kalbach admitted that the definitions of experience maps and customer journey maps can overlap, he attributed the

difference between the two to scope. A customer journey map is concerned with the series of interactions, emotions, and exchanges a customer has with an organization. An experience map is more fully centered on the customer, not as a customer, but as a person with goals and needs independent of a given organization. The experience map attempts to visualize the domain surrounding a topic, such as health, fitness, or productivity. This approach allows the map to showcase the full environment of tools, services, and strategies that a person uses to achieve their goal. The role of a service designer is to then use this tool to identify opportunities for a given organization to provide value within the ecosystem (Kalbach, 2016).

Application of Service Design in Human Services

In the decades since Shostack's (1982) seminal article, adoption of service design approaches in the design, delivery, and assessment of services has increased alongside the growth of the service sector itself. Dickson (2015) found, however, that the increase in the adoption of practices has been uneven across industries and organizations. Customer service improvement tended to coevolve with the size of the organization. Dickson attributed this to the selective nature of the external markets organizations exist within; those organizations that invest in and increase capacity for service improvement tend to grow while those that do not tend to lose market share to competitors. Across industries, Dickson noted that public sector services are less likely to make use of improvement practices due to the homogeneity of the supply side of the market. Lacking market competitors, government services also lack the incentive to improve the customer experience. However, as Brown and Wyatt (2010) noted, "businesses were first to embrace this new approach —called design thinking —now non-profits are beginning to adapt it too" (p.31). These sectors represent a growth area for service design approaches.

Health care is a public sector that has formally adopted principles of service design. The National Health Service (NHS) of the United Kingdom (UK), for example, responded to a call in 2000 from the UK government to modernize its operations and focus on patient centered design (Carr, Sangiorgi, Büscher, Cooper, & Junginger, 2009). Though NHS staff had acknowledged that the organization designed and delivered services, it was not until this point that methods from the field of design were formally introduced. Carr et. al. (2009) described the movement from traditional quantitative approaches such as process maps and surveys to experience based tools, specifically participatory design methods developed for the Experience Based Co-Design project. In a later study of the same project, Donetto et al. (2015) found that the service design approach was powerful, but also brought new challenges to the organization. Specifically, the flexibility and complexity of experience-based design approaches led to confusion and diversity in approaches across projects. Some participants viewed this as a positive element of the design approach, allowing them to adapt the common toolkit provided to their own local circumstance. For example, an ER unit and a nursing home each would be able to execute and find value in different approaches. On the other hand, however, this complexity could also prove challenging to navigate for clinical professionals without previous exposure to design methodologies (Donnetto et al., 2015). Both studies found another common challenge with experience-based design: challenges to existing power structures. Donetto et al. noted the need for further research into this dynamic as the effect was already noticeable and pronounced in the cases studies. Renegotiation of power relations between staff and also between staff and patients can become a barrier to implementation when those with the pre-existing authority resist the activity. Similarly, Carr et al. (2009) called attention to the need for reaching agreement amongst stakeholders. They found that the time required to create a common vision was often underestimated and further that

narrative and scenario-based exercises helped overcome pre-existing biases. Allowing staff and patients to redefine their role in the design and delivery of healthcare can be liberating, challenging, and disconcerting for all parties.

Beyond health care, other human services have also experimented with and adopted service design approaches to improve societal outcomes. Though government services are not often exposed to the market pressure which might drive an organization to improve customer experiences, politicians are exposed to public scrutiny and criticism. The Healthcare.gov project is an exemplar of a failed government service on launch (Gogan, Davidson, & Proudfoot, 2016). Despite a colossal budget, the final service of a single online source to purchase health insurance was unable to handle the traffic and crashed repeatedly from day one. Given the importance of the Affordable Care Act to the White House administration at the time, it was nonetheless remarkable to see public figures apologizing for the poor performance of a website in front of Congressional hearings (Gogan et al., 2016). Though there were many contributors to this public failure, a common theme was the siloed nature of the work and lack of commitment to the end-user, or public, experience. In the following hearings, contractors testified with statements such as “our portion of the application worked as designed” (Gogan et al., 2016, p. 109). These statements betray an internal focus to work at the expense of the customer. In response to this event, the executive branch of government created the U.S. Digital Service that would use design thinking approaches to modernize government services (United States Government, n.d.).

At a smaller level, local governments as well have experimented with participatory design approaches to solve problems and provide value to their citizens. In but one example, the borough of Lewisham co-created a service with citizens to allow the public to report and monitor environmental crimes such as graffiti online (Prendiville, 2009). The success of this site

demanded a change in approach from traditional government services. Previously this business function was an opaque complaint line with no public visibility. If a traditional process improvement project were conducted, it may have analyzed how a complaint was received, directed to a cleaning crew, and reported back to the community member. It may also have decreased the time to resolution or the effort needed on the part of city staff. Instead, using service design approaches, a different model was created: citizens would take an active role in the process. By engaging citizens in the documentation, reporting, and follow-up of environmental crimes, transparency and efficiency of the system improved (Prendiville, 2009). More importantly however, by renegotiating the customer – service - provider relationship, the community partnership was strengthened. This digital and participatory service is also an example of what Janssen and Estevez (2013) referred to as *lean government*. Lean government is a response to tightening budgets, increased demands, complex problems and digital opportunities. Janssen and Estevez (2013) described the new role of government to “focus on information flows, mobilization of actors to stimulate collaboration and innovation, and on monitoring what is happening”. Rather than provide all services a citizen may need or want, local governments can collaborate with their community and provide the data, tools, and platforms for social innovation.

These individual examples are a part of a larger trend in the evolution of government, spurred by digital opportunities. Janowski (2015) described four stages of digital government: digitization, transformation, engagement, and contextualization. These stages are measured along three axes. The first stage, digitization, involves no change to how the government operates or how stakeholders engage with services. Analog processes are replaced or supplemented by digital processes; for example, a form may be emailed or scanned. The second stage involves

internal government transformation, when organizations change their structure and function based on technology. The third stage is marked by the transformation affecting external relationships. The example above from Lewisham is an example of open government, one that is made up of transparent and participatory processes (Wirtz & Birkmeyer, 2015), which is also changing the way citizens and their government interact. The final stage described is contextualization, when capacity and expertise in the technological systems reaches the point where novel solutions can be applied to unique and difficult problems. In but a single example, Lee, Tsohou, and Choi (2017) explored the use of alternative e-participation tools and approaches to create public policy. The authors noted the standard approach to public participation in policy discussion is to make use of a website to communicate a policy issue and await responses passively. This method is an example of a stage one digitization of a standard government function. By instead focusing on how to maximize engagement the role of the government actor has changed as well as the possible solutions. With a goal of allowing a participant to be in contact with policy makers when they find issues that affect their daily lives rather than when a consultation occurs, outcomes improve.

Service Design in Higher Education

Bitner, Ostrom, and Morgan (2008) called for the widespread adoption of service blueprinting and other service design approaches in the services sector as a response to the lack of innovation in the field. This call to action echoed the sentiments previously described from Brown (2008), Kumar (2012), and others by asking staff within organizations to change their perspectives from inside out to outside in. Beyond perspective, Bitner et al. (2008) also asked that organizations be deliberate and systematic when creating new services. Since services are often “intangible, variable, and delivered over time and space”, staff often use words, and words

only, to describe the service offering (Bitner et al. 2008, p.70). Unfortunately, because of the complexity of most human reliant services, words often fail to capture the complete experience including the broader network of actors, services, and systems that customers must navigate to achieve their goals.

Ostrom et al. (2011) later adapted this same call to action to the field of higher education specifically. Working from an assumption that higher education is in need of transformation, the authors proposed service blueprinting as a useful tool to assist in organizational change and service innovation. The pressures on education systems are of course not identical to private sector industries or even examples such as the health-care industry outlined previously. Nonetheless, larger trends such as globalization and new public management have increased the demand that universities be more accountable to both the public and other stakeholders such as students, parents, and employers (Austin & Jones, 2016). Bitner et al. (2011) acknowledged the concern that naturally arises when suggesting that universities apply a service lens to operations. They, however, gracefully sidestepped the political debate about academic freedom and government interference by framing the discussion differently. Returning to earlier thoughts about service design and the nature of services, the authors contrasted service design thinking with product or goods producing thinking. They argued that most institutions, universities included, think in the same terms as manufacturing companies when describing, designing, and delivering services. The recurring challenge with this approach is that a good can be produced without reference to the end customer. In the worst case, this can lead to two scenarios: either staff and faculty at universities conceive of their offerings as a set of degrees and academic programs to be consumed by students, or the students themselves are the final product packaged to future employers and society at large (Bitner et al., 2011). Both scenarios are problematic and

are at odds with current learner-centered literature on educational theory (Bain, 2004). If instead, education is best thought of as a co-created experience, not a transmission of knowledge, then service design principles seem a natural fit for solving problems and improving the overall system.

The challenge that arises when using the word customer in the context of higher education may thus be understood to be a semantic one. For the purposes of this project, when I refer to customer-centric approaches, I do not mean to suggest that students are passive consumers of educational services. Rather, I intend the opposite meaning; I seek to place students at the centre of decision making as partners in the system with which they interact. In service design literature this is referred to as customer centricity, and the parallel in higher education literature is learner-centred. As Bain (2004) demonstrated, education functions best when instructors view themselves as facilitators of learning, depending upon the intrinsic motivations of students themselves. It stands to reason that if the preconditions of learning are intrinsic to the learner, the solutions to challenges are best explored with reference to the student's perspective, as suggested by service design. This, more nuanced, view of the term customer in higher educational contexts is also supported by Saunders (2015) who found that students did not view themselves as customers in the educational system, informed in no small part by elementary and secondary systems which reinforce education as a public service, not a commodity.

Service Design in Library Systems

Despite the exhortations of Bitner (2011) and others, use of blueprinting and other service design approaches are still rare in higher education (Roberts, 2017). The exception to this gap in practice and the literature can be found in the library services on campuses. Libraries are

increasingly moving beyond traditional anthropological tools to participatory and service design approaches when developing services (Marquez & Downey, 2015). Marquez and Downey (2015) described the typical model of designing services within a library as a librarian focused exercise: librarians would communicate between departments the decisions which were made internally, then assess the service after it was in place. Of course, service design demands a reversal of this process, by co-creating the service with all participants, not just the staff involved.

Specific methods used in enhancing services within libraries are varied. At Oklahoma State, formal user feedback methods were eschewed in preference for a more accessible and public ideation exercise (German, Ippoliti, & Nykolaiszyn, 2017). Using a physical and online sticky-note wall, researchers asked library users the open ended question, “what if the library...?”. From this exercise, the researchers found immediate opportunities to improve service such as by purchasing higher quality hole punches and staplers. They also crowdsourced the final analysis for more expensive items allowing students to vote on which items would have the highest impact. The results were shared with the library’s fundraising association, Friends of the Library, which was able to raise required funds. Interestingly, a large number of ideas were for services that already existed but for which the participants were unaware. This design exercise was thus also able to increase knowledge and understanding amongst participants by providing a venue for such information exchange; the staff were able to learn about easily solved problems such as poor staplers, and students were able to learn about services that already existed but were poorly advertised (German et al., 2017). German et al. (2017) also noted that this informal approach to service improvement was more cost-effective and generated a higher level of engagement than previous approaches. In a similar study, participatory and service

design methods were used to better understand graduate student interactions with a library system (Johnson, Kuglitsch, & Bresnahan, 2015). As with the Oklahoma State example, Johnson et al. (2015) found that the process was educational for all participants. There often existed a difference between actual offerings and perceived offerings on the student side, and staff occasionally held misunderstandings of how students interacted with services. The authors also found that there were immediate and low-cost opportunities of which they were able to take advantage. The authors of both studies also found limitations in the possible impact of their findings. Specifically, the research found instances of service failings that could not be solved by library staff alone. At Oklahoma State, for example, students identified quality of food services and restroom facilities as in need of improvement (German et al., 2017). This finding illustrates that students do not always differentiate between actors in a system when they reflect on their experiences with the system.

As a response to the systemic problems that can be identified in service design projects, mapping exercises are often used to provide a more holistic view of the broader service ecosystem. Pretlow and Sobel (2015) embarked on just such an exercise at the Auraria Library which serves the University of Colorado Denver, the Metropolitan State University of Denver, and the Community College of Denver. Using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, the authors facilitated the creation of service blueprints to allow staff to better understand the student experience across service offerings, silos, and organizational structures. This exercise focused staff, resources, and action on authentic student needs and created consensus on which problems the group sought to solve, ever a challenge in service delivery where different actors in the system have a different understanding of the service and associated fail points. This study represents a response to Bitner's (2011) call to action for higher education

to consider blueprinting as a useful tool in the design of services. Unsurprisingly, the authors of this study themselves make reference to Bitner's work.

Just as the broader service design community has begun to use customer journey maps instead of service blueprints, so too have the library communities. To reiterate, the two tools are closely related, occasionally described with interchangeable terms, but can be differentiated by their focus: a service blueprint describes the provision of a service including front and backstage actors (Bitner et al., 2008) and a customer journey map describes the experience of a person as they interact with an organization (Kalbach, 2016). The difference is subtle, but nonetheless represents a further reframing of services in support of customer, rather than organizational, goals. For example, Marquez, Downey, and Clement (2015) used journey maps to explore common yet complex tasks that users of a library conduct. By focusing as an object of the study on the task that a user is trying to perform rather than the service that a user might interact with, different enhancement opportunities arise. Of particular importance in this study was that the authors noted that the final artefact, the map, was not as important as the act, the mapping. Such exercises increase both staff knowledge of student experiences as well as empathy for their experiences and challenges. In this particular example, common problems surfaced included wayfinding within the library and lack of awareness regarding the role of librarians (Marquez et al., 2015). Solutions to the latter problem would be difficult to find through a blueprinting or process mapping exercise. The problem itself, students not realizing that librarians could assist in finding research literature and references, likely would not be uncovered in a service blueprint activity because the services provided are often the baseline for the activity itself. By focusing instead on the customer journey, the researchers found that students would employ a variety of

strategies to accomplish their tasks, which may not include the services intended to support the activity.

In addition to the case studies of journey map exercises, literature in the library sciences has also addressed the methodology itself. Andrews and Eade (2013) provided a rich assessment of the customer journey map approach alongside suggestions for future improvement of the tool. Of note was that benefits of the exercise were such that the low cost of the activity would not be a barrier for future use. Staff who participated in the exercise found value in the fresh perspective offered by student participation and were able to make immediate changes to current practice (Andrews & Eade, 2013). The exercise was also a useful starting point for a continuous improvement project and assisted in future planning efforts by identifying the key issues from a student's perspective. Andrew and Eade (2013) cautioned that engaging students can be a challenge and recommended the use of multiple communication channels to fill the sessions. The informal, but accessible, data collection methods used at Oklahoma State (German et al., 2017) are perhaps a good example of libraries addressing this challenge without sacrificing validity. Andrews and Eade (2013) also recommended validation of session information with other student groups. In their case, a standing staff/student forum was available to review the findings.

The challenge Andrews and Eade (2013) identified regarding student participation raises additional considerations. If an organization were to incorporate service design methods as an ongoing and regular part of operations there would exist the danger that stakeholders could become fatigued with the process. As Porter, Whitcomb and Weitzer (2004) found with institutional surveys, students can become overexposed to assessment tools, reducing the validity of the instrument. This issue has not been mentioned in the studies above within the health care sector, perhaps because many improvement projects are centrally coordinated and holistic by

design such as with the Experience Based Co-Design project by the UK NHS (Carr et al., 2009). In higher education, given the loosely-coupled nature of most institutions (Austin & Jones, 2016), many improvement projects are likely to be initiated at a local level. Unfortunately, this local level of decision making hinders the ability to improve a student experience across levels and divisions of the organization. It also poses the risk that the same student could be asked about their experience through the lens of each academic department or faculty as well as each administrative unit. The answers to such questions are likely similar and thus more valuable if shared. Much as with survey design, there is a need for coordination of activity to maintain a high response rate and reduce duplication of effort.

Service Design in Non-academic Services in Higher Education

Literature on the application of service design methods for non-academic services in higher education remains limited. When Ostrom et al. (2011) suggested that blueprinting specifically be adopted in higher education, they provided a case study from Arizona State University. In this small-scale study, a traditional course was redeveloped into an online course and blueprinting was one of the tools used to inform decisions, communicate research results, and build a common understanding of the problem. The authors also provided hypothetical examples of how blueprinting could be used in non-academic services such as financial aid. In the time since this article, there have been a few published papers exploring this subject.

Baranova, Morrison, and Mutton (2011) described a service design project at the University of Derby. Unlike many other higher education examples, at Derby the project team attempted to map a large segment of the student experience across departments and divisions. The results were dramatic. Researchers found that the blueprinting exercise helped increase student satisfaction, online enrolment, and led to the creation of a number of successful programs

and services. This project is also notable for the extent of research conducted to inform the blueprints. The project team worked with over 100 student and staff members and made use of existing student surveys, focus groups, ethnographic video recordings, student video diaries, and mystery shoppers to evaluate the student experience (Baranova et al., 2011). The authors noted four major benefits of the process, many of which have been found in the other sectors above. First, blueprinting allowed for a comprehensive view of the student experience as opposed to traditional process mapping techniques. Second, the exercise allowed staff to learn about different departments and find duplication and gaps in service. Third, blueprinting focused staff attention on the human aspect of their work rather than the process. Finally, the authors identified the use of blueprinting as a “silo-breaking” tool that provided a holistic view of an experience (Baranova et al., 2011, p. 124). In contrast to the library case studies which also identified occurrences of lack of information on the part of the student, this study noted that staff came to an “understanding of the root causes of students being referred between multiple services, rather than experiencing a coherent, student-focused approach” (Baranova et al., 2011, p.124). This observation suggests that by mapping a larger segment of the student experience, the proposed solutions are more likely to include realignment of services rather than increased communication about the underlying complexity. Many of the above studies have mentioned improvements of wayfinding which also suggests that the distribution of services in a physical space is not always intuitive.

When a service is already defined and operational but the student is unable to access it because they are either unaware of it or it is inconvenient to use, the organizational centric approach would be further education or communication to the student. This approach allows the organization to avoid making changes to the underlying service offering and shifts the

responsibility for use of the service to the student. A student centric approach would involve a deeper understanding of the student needs and a reorganization of the services themselves. For example, the Derby example found that new students were faced with many queues in their first week at school and one of the worst situations was the wait for a student ID card (Baranova et al., 2011). Rather than communicate with the students to recommend that they get their student ID card early or in off-peak hours, the service itself was redesigned eliminating the line up altogether with a combination of self-service and confirmation processes.

Baranova, Morrison, and Mutton (2011) also outlined a number of limitations they found in the application of blueprinting on non-academic student services. Not surprisingly, since a high level view of the student experience was modelled, they found the blueprint did not provide an in-depth description of processes. They also noted that processes are often dynamic but the mapping exercise is a static artifact. Each of these observations has implications for future practitioners of this method. First, a decision should be made about the scope of the project. Some of the case studies presented here focused on a very particular experience, explored the subject in detail, but occasionally found problems that could not be solved by the staff involved. In the Derby case, the scope was large but the final blueprint could not capture the detail of specific services. Given that a recurring benefit of these exercises is the opportunity for staff to work across the organization to solve problems, the latter, large scale, approach seems advisable. Of course, such an approach increases the size of the project and the Derby example was a funded exercise, a luxury which not all service design projects will have. The second limitation, the static nature of the map, can also guide practitioners in proper use of the tool. Baranova et al. (2011) suggested that a service blueprint should be updated on an ongoing basis, echoing results from Andrews and Eade (2013). The literature suggests that service design is best used when

operationalized, rather than as a single point in time project. Many of the higher education examples still seem to be pilot activities as compared to health-care organizations that have more often approached design of services as an ongoing program(Carr et al., 2009).

Roberts (2017) found that beyond the above examples, there are also instances in professional, but not academic, literature describing blueprinting initiatives in non-academic services in education. These initiatives were focused on a single department or service such as parking on campus. Roberts further found that, outside of the Derby case above, there was but a single example of an American university applying service blueprinting on a large scale across many departments: the University of Colorado Denver. Unfortunately, the only published results of the blueprinting project came from the library services previously described. In response to this gap in the literature, Roberts conducted interviews with staff at the university to better understand the challenges and opportunities in such activities when applied to non-academic services at a large scale. The work of Roberts is of direct relevance to the present study, which will build upon his conclusions and recommendations for future research. As such, we will examine his findings in detail below.

University of Denver Colorado Service Design Recommendations

Before detailing recommendations for future service blueprinting exercises at other universities, Roberts (2017) first addressed the underlying question: is blueprinting a worthwhile activity within the context of non-academic student services? Both the previous literature and the Denver interviews conclude that it is (Roberts, 2017). If anything, a frustration expressed by research participants was that not enough of the opportunities identified in the project were realized due to leadership changes and other barriers. Roberts noted no less than 15 specific

action items for staff at other universities that would like to apply the blueprinting method but would also like to avoid some of the barriers to success.

First, Roberts (2017) recommended that sufficient project management resources are set aside for the project. Many participants suggested the project would have been more successful if the project manager had been assigned to work on the project full-time. Roberts suggested however that alternatives could be used such as limiting the project manager's other responsibilities or hiring a graduate student assistant. This recommendation disagrees with other research which suggested that blueprinting can be a low-cost activity. These conflicting ideas can be reconciled by considering the relative scope of projects. A smaller blueprinting project can indeed be relatively low cost. When applying service design across functions and departments, however, the administrative overhead is worth accounting for to set the project up for success.

Second, it was recommended that a steering committee be formed for such activities (Roberts, 2017). In Denver, a committee was used to provide guidance, support and consistency across activities. Committee members also used the information gained in the blueprinting exercise to inform higher level strategic decisions at the university. Roberts suggested that such a group could coordinate the funding requests that could be generated by the mapping activities. Although it was not mentioned in the study, the group could also alleviate the potential participation fatigue by coordinating and occasionally limiting workshops, surveys, focus groups, and other student engagements.

Third, institutions embarking on a blueprinting initiative should dedicate funding to training the blueprint team leaders (Roberts, 2017). Formal training was provided to a small group of staff but training a wider group would have better prepared both the staff and the organization for the activity. Again, this recommendation conflicts with a possible benefit of the

approach, its cost-effective nature, but is perhaps better understood as a method of encouraging the continuing use of the tool to inform practice as an ongoing rather than a singular activity. One participant in Roberts' (2017) study described the investment of time and money as worthwhile, saying "When you change the conversation to 'This is what is happening for our students. This is why it doesn't work', you can't put a price on that" (p. 125). Treating a blueprinting exercise not as a low-cost pilot, but as a worthwhile investment is perhaps the next stage of use within higher education contexts.

Fourth, Roberts (2017) recommended recruiting directors of student affairs as both participants and leaders of the blueprinting project. This suggestion is related to the fifth recommendation that team leaders be able to select team members, preferably from the area where process changes would occur. Roberts stressed that all participation be voluntary in part so that participants remain enthusiastic about the project. Along with the recommendations to fund the project with both training budgets and staff time, this advice echoes what was found in the health sector: when approaching service design as a major initiative, sponsorship and support are required. Carr et al. (2009) found that in National Health Service general practitioners were often best placed to drive patient-based design activity but lacked training, access to data, and the managerial skills required to conduct such exercises to their fullest effect.

The next recommendation is that at the beginning of a project, the team should focus on a single department instead of an interdepartmental process (Roberts, 2017). After this initial blueprinting exercise, working groups should be formed to create blueprints for cross-unit processes. Roberts (2017) also recommends that low hanging fruit be identified early, hopefully as part of the single department exercise, and changes be immediately implemented. These three recommendations allow a project to start small and demonstrate value early while building the

skills of participants before launching a more complex and potentially frustrating exercise.

Though blueprinting exercises benefit from working across units, internal resistance to change is a potential barrier and empowering a single unit to make changes could mitigate future resistance (Roberts, 2017). McKendall (1993) noted that organizational development efforts often fail because they “create uncertainty, interfere with the informal organization, reinforce the position of management, and further entrench management purposes” (p. 93). In Roberts’ recommendations, we see particular strategies for each of these potential issues. Uncertainty can be mitigated with the additional formal training, informal organizations can be respected by allowing team leads to choose their members and finally starting with a single unit allows the project to feel like a local rather than managerial initiative. The renegotiation of power dynamics between managers, staff, and students will still likely cause anxiety, as it had in the health-care sector (Carr et al., 2009).

Roberts (2017) next recommended that blueprint projects involve students when identifying external pain points. Given the current state of research into service design methods, this recommendation seems almost redundant. Stickdorn and Schneider (2011) acknowledged that the field of service design is evolving, along with the language and definitions used to describe the practice. Nonetheless, they lay out five principles of service design practice: user-centered, co-creative, sequencing, evidencing, and holistic. The co-creative aspect requires that the customer be involved in the process (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011). Surprisingly however, the Denver project did not make use of student input within their project. Pretlow and Sobel (2015), when describing the library component of the larger project, mentioned a mixed-methods approach to collecting information to inform the project. These methods included analysis and coding of help desk questions, observation and interviews with front line staff, and a review of

comment cards. Though these activities are no doubt valuable and contributed to the success of the project, students themselves were not involved in the data collection, analysis, prototyping, or decision-making phases. Roberts (2017) recommends that greater involvement of the customer could provide additional qualitative insight into the observations of staff.

The fact that such a major, inter-departmental project could be executed without greater student involvement is perhaps a sign of the subtle distinction between blueprinting and journey mapping exercises. As Kalbach (2016) described them, blueprints are an older method and have been supplemented by journey and experience maps, each placing the focus of activity more firmly in the customer's perspective. Service blueprints, with a focus on a process can be successfully created with user-centered intentions on the part of the staff involved, but without the direct involvement of the users. A journey map, since it describes a journey in a narrative format composed of the touchpoints with an organization, cannot be created from staff input alone (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011). Rather than a focus on front and backstage processes, the focus is on the experience of the user.

Next, Roberts (2017) recommended that blueprinting projects take a number of actions to encourage continuation of the program: track change implementation using scorecards; train new employees in the use of blueprinting; review blueprints annually and create new ones as needed; hold regularly scheduled meetings indefinitely; and make use of blueprinting accomplishments in annual reports and performance reviews (p. 116-119). Taken together, these recommendations all support the entrenchment of service blueprinting within an organization by creating positive feedback loops and leveraging existing reward structures. This advice also seems a response to challenges faced in the Denver project as many of these action items were planned for but not carried out. Alongside the suggestion that blueprinting projects be supported by leadership

sponsorship and formal training, Roberts acknowledged that success requires organizational change. If service design methods are an interesting side project, but not formally incorporated into a unit's operations there exists a risk that, when leadership changes, the project will be abandoned. As the project manager of the Denver initiative described: "It fizzled because it didn't have enough legs to make it through a leadership change" (Roberts, 2017, p. 99).

Interestingly, leadership buy-in seems a prerequisite for the start of such a project, but from that point on a great deal of effort must be spent to insulate the project from the possible retraction of that sponsorship.

The final recommendation proposed by Roberts (2017) was that funding requests be made through the project for high priority changes in future budget years. This suggestion, again, is an opportunity to operationalize the efforts of the staff involved in the blueprinting work and incorporate existing internal processes for change management. In the Denver project, no funds were dedicated at the beginning, or requested at the end (Roberts, 2017). Dozens of changes were implemented and documented, but only those that had no cost implications were pursued. Though finding low hanging fruit such as zero cost opportunities is laudable, the fact that at no point was a department or director willing to take an actual risk to support the project is worrisome.

Change in Higher Education

Some of the challenges experienced by the University of Colorado Denver in their blueprinting project can be explained by understanding the nature of change within higher education institutions. First, it is important to acknowledge that service design exercises are indeed a form of organizational change. Junginger (2008) described product development as an act of aligning an organization with its market. The external market factors that force an

organization to change its public offerings also change the organization itself. The design of services, as well as the redesign of services, is primarily an exercise in changing what an organization offers to its stakeholders. Junginger suggested that product development can be an opportunity for an organization to think about change since the same methods and approaches will surface hidden assumptions, misaligned effort, and market needs.

The higher education sector can often exhibit resistance to change. In part, this can be understood as a tendency towards mimetic isomorphism and a desire for legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Mimetic isomorphism is often found in situations where organizations are presented with problems that have “ambiguous causes or unclear solutions” (p. 151). The fluid nature of knowledge creation balanced against complex stakeholder demands explains the tendency for higher education institutions to mimic each other. In this situation, when a novel approach is presented, this isomorphism becomes a barrier to change. For example, Davis and Fifolt (2018) described the perceptions of staff in higher education institutions who had completed Six Sigma training and an associated project. They found that many participants, although supportive of the process, were nonetheless ambivalent about its practicality in the higher education environment. Since the methodology came from a manufacturing background, there was distrust that it would be applicable to higher education. Also of interest was that change was difficult to achieve in this project because Six Sigma required participants to find problems and solutions that crossed organizational boundaries. Participants in the project lacked the authority to implement such changes, and the structure of higher education institutions were in conflict with the goals of Six Sigma (Davis & Fifolt, 2018).

This example is perhaps a warning to facilitators and practitioners of change processes working in the post-secondary sector: staff within the sector do not always acknowledge the

legitimacy of approaches that have not been tried within educational contexts. Six Sigma and other approaches involve specific language and rituals; Roberts (2017) noted within the blueprinting exercise at the University of Colorado Denver that more staff should have been formally trained in the methods used to create a shared language. Instead perhaps, the facilitator should have adapted the language. For example, rather than engage with the ‘students as customers’ debate in order to import customer focused methods, using the contextual language of the institution may decrease resistance. For example, learner centered teaching approaches are already well understood and supported within the field (Bain, 2004). Co-opting that term would allow the isomorphic tendencies of the institutions to work for rather than against the project.

Beyond isomorphism, it is also useful to think of higher education institutions as loosely coupled systems to explain the difficulties in enacting managed change processes. Weick (1976) described loose coupling as connected units that are responsive to each other but nonetheless maintain their own identity. This phenomenon introduces latency in a system, where a change in one area does not immediately elicit a response in another. It also however introduces a preservation mechanism: when the organization changes and one system is disrupted or eliminated, the others continue to function (Weick, 1976). Weick identified some areas of education that are tightly coupled and controlled, for example credentialing, and others that are not, such as the act of teaching. If we accept Weick’s thesis that educational systems are to be viewed as loosely coupled systems, it is worth exploring the implications for change management.

Loosely Coupled Systems

Orton and Weick (1990) presented loosely coupled systems as a solution to the paradox of rational and indeterminant behaviour on the part of organizations. Previous theories had

difficulty reconciling the simultaneously open and closed nature of organizations. At times, organizations are tightly controlled with strict policies, procedures, and mechanisms for enforcing consistency, yet at other times individuals exhibit remarkable amounts of independence and openness to change (Orton & Weick, 1990). Orton and Weick described two axes to understand the phenomenon: responsiveness and distinctiveness. Two systems that are not responsive to each other and are not distinct from each other would be a non-coupled system. Responsiveness without distinctiveness describes a decoupled system. Finally, two systems that are distinct, yet responsive to each other are loosely coupled (Orton & Weick, 1990). Educational systems, including higher education ones, are often composed of elements that certainly respond to each other yet can maintain remarkable levels of identity and distinctiveness suggesting that the theory is applicable.

Weick (1978) further described a number of features of loosely coupled systems that are of relevance here. First, loosely coupled systems are adept at buffering themselves against change. Though each system is responsive to the others, there is often a delay and at the very least a translation as change percolates through the organization. Facilitators of a change management process must then need to be aware that changes initiated will not be effected immediately, and may not take the same form from unit to unit. In contrast with the buffering feature, loosely coupled systems are also good at sensing the environment. Weick (1978) provided the metaphor of a stretch of fine sand compared to a single large rock. The former, though made up of diverse elements, would more readily show the wind patterns than the latter. For change management, this sensitivity could be harnessed. By involving informal networks within the organization, changes and new approaches in one area will be noticed and reacted to in others, preparing them for formal involvement later. Though not articulated by Roberts

(2017), this is supported by his recommendations to begin a blueprinting project in a single unit, create an oversight committee, and allow team leads to select members. These actions would allow staff to make use of their informal networks and in so doing strengthen those same networks. All of these recommendations prepare the organization for wider scale change without causing undue disruption.

Weick (1978) also described the ability of loosely coupled systems to partake in localized adaptation. Since the elements of the system are distinct, there is space in the system for each actor to adapt to their own contextual environment. In the higher education context, it is easy to imagine a faculty of medicine and a faculty of fine arts having different approaches to the same challenges of research and teaching. In loosely-coupled systems especially, organizations may present one culture to important stakeholders, but have a multitude of competing subcultures behind the façade (Jermier, Slocum, Fry, & Gaines, 1991). Even in nominally bureaucratic organizations, there can exist separate cultures that actively resist the overarching narratives espoused by the organization. This phenomenon can be applied to higher education using the six faces of the institution outlined by Bergquist and Pawlak (2007). Bergquist and Pawlak (2007) described the at times competing cultures within the academy. With complex governance structures, academic and non-academic divisions, and multiple stakeholders and funders, higher education institutions could almost be expected to form subcultures to rationalize the diversity within the organization. This autonomy has two implications for service design: first, local changes should be easier to make since units have such autonomy; second, large scale, cross-department changes will be more difficult to make unless both departments are in agreement about the problem and solution.

Next, Weick (1978) stated that elements of a loosely coupled system can maintain a form of cultural insurance in cases of radical change. Given the number of distinct elements in the system, each adapted for their local environment, the system as a whole will exhibit a great resilience to large change. Weick (1978) summarized the situation eloquently: “adaptation can preclude adaptability” (p. 7). The diversity of the system means that as units have adapted to their own needs, they have also lost capacity in areas that may be of need in the future. This situation would introduce a real risk to the organization if not for the next feature of loosely coupled systems, insulation from breakdown (Weick, 1978). If a single element of the system finds itself maladapted to current needs and ceases to exist, other elements remain unaffected. The maladaptation that caused issues in one unit would be unlikely to be spread systemically. This pattern of behaviour in loosely coupled systems explains the focus of Roberts (2017) on mechanisms to demonstrate value through scorecards and annual reports. It would be important in a service design project to signal to the rest of the organization that the changes introduced are positive and rewarded.

The sixth feature of loosely coupled systems defined by Weick (1978) was the self-determination of individual actors. In educational systems, educators must reconcile the interests of diverse stakeholders and link those intentions to the act of teaching. This balancing act involves a high level of negotiation and thus results in a similarly high level of self-determination since the act of teaching has ambiguous consequences. In this state, and of importance to the current topic, “intentions of the action serve as surrogates for the consequences” (Weick, 1978, p. 8). Put another way, intentions do not guide action, but rather follow it. In tightly controlled systems, plans and policies are created and enacted across the system. In loosely coupled systems, actions come first and then intentions are created to describe

what occurred. This act of sensemaking is more fully explored by Weick in later work (Weick et al., 2005). Service design projects may have an as yet unrealized opportunity to support the creation of intention in loosely coupled systems and articulate the unsurfaced organizational culture beneath staff actions.

As an extension of loosely-coupled theory, Mossberg (2001) used chaos theory to approach the difficulties of planned change as an opportunity. Rather than despair at the complexity of the system and the inability to predict the effect of changes in the long term, Mossberg recommended that leaders appreciate the natural intelligence of the system and take heart in the system's ability to survive. Instead of focusing on long term objectives, a leader can instead look to short term improvements and attempt to foster and encourage the natural feedback mechanisms that both chaos theory and loosely-coupled systems theory suggest are active in such systems (Mossberg, 2001). This approach is an optimistic response to the conception of organized anarchy previously espoused by authors such as Chaffee (1983). Though universities may not always exhibit rational decision-making markers, the suggestion that instead decisions are made in an anarchic way can be disheartening for a change agent. The appeal of chaos theory, despite the name, is that change is not random but rather complex (Barnett, 2001). The time horizons in which a leader could effectively predict the outcomes of change are shorter than many strategic planning approaches assume. For practitioners of service design, this feature of organizations means that iterative approaches are paramount to success. In support of this idea, Burke (2014) recommended change in loosely-coupled systems be continuous and small. Unfortunately, as Roberts (2017) found in the case study at the University of Denver Colorado, service design approaches do not often survive leadership changes, a not uncommon event on university campuses. The challenge then for a practitioner is to position

service design in a way that will not be rejected by the system so that small scale, iterative changes can be made over a long period of time instead of as a single project.

Change in Loosely Coupled Systems

If we accept that higher education institutions can be understood as loosely coupled systems, then the existing literature about change in such systems can provide insight to the current research question. Burke (2014) identified a number of principles for change in loosely coupled systems that respect the nature of organization. These principles are in contrast to many traditional organizational design exercises that are often centrally planned and executed as well as being large in scope. Burke noted that organizational design first developed in an era when large organizations were more regimented and controlled. Many theories and change processes assumed that the object of change were organizations such as “Sears, the military, and the Episcopal Church” (Burke, 2014, p. 424). In the past half-century, organizations have increasingly become looser in structure and agents have become more independent. The challenge for change processes is to adopt the new set of principles. Service design methodologies are well suited to exploratory and improvisational change as they encourage practitioners to adapt the methodologies to their local situation without prescribed outcomes. More broadly, the set of principles that Burke laid out suggests that the role of leadership in a change management process may have less to do with articulating the change that must occur and ensuring it is carried out in a particular way; instead, leadership may in fact play a more supportive role by providing the tools and platform for change to happen in a considered and local way.

To give a more practical example, Root-Robbins (2005) studied change on university campuses through the lens of loosely coupled systems theory. As a result of this study, Root-

Robbins identified a number of strategies and topics of importance when considering change in higher education. The first, and central, theme was sensemaking as an enabler of change. This thought echoes the arguments of Weick et al. (2005) that organizing is a form of rationalizing what people do, an act of sensemaking (2005) In the uncertain environment of education with conflicting goals and stakeholder needs, the shared narrative within the organization does more than describe the past, it informs future action.

Root-Robbins (2005) also described a number of other themes of importance when creating the conditions for change. She recommended engaging the governance structure, allowing time for deliberation, identifying issues, activities, policies, practices, and procedures, using department chairs as catalysts for change, and finally improving orientation and mentoring. The twin approach of engaging the governance structure but additionally using department chairs was recommended by Brown (2014) who noted that neither top-down nor bottom-up approaches to change work well on campuses. Brown instead advocated for a distributive change approach where direction may come from above, but implementation occurs locally. The risk in the approach is that the final product of the change may not be what was originally envisioned, but the benefit is that the change will not be resisted. The other recommendations of Root-Robbins parallel those of Burke (2014) and reinforce the idea that change on campuses must be done slowly, deliberately, and in a consultative manner. Again, with the recommendation for orientation and mentoring, we see situations where the role of a central group would be in providing support for change rather than enacting it. There is also a theme of information sharing in the recommendations that is closely tied to the act of sensemaking. In a loosely coupled system, directives are less useful than increasing opportunities for units to communicate and come to common understandings.

The work of Brown (2014) in describing a technical change process in higher education highlights another important aspect of change: organizational culture. Though evaluating policy and technical changes in university environments, Brown (2014) nonetheless noted that these changes require a cultural change to be successful. Further, “engaging with the culture of an organization is harder than redesigning policies and systems” (Brown, 2014, p. 212). From this challenge came the suggestion to use a distributive change approach since top-down decisions are likely to be resisted in university settings.

Organizational Culture in Higher Education

If organizational culture is a key component to change efforts, then it is worthwhile exploring the topic further. Tierney (1988) described organizational culture as not just the structure and actions of an organization, but the interpretations of that structure by the actors within it. Tierney further noted that often culture is only noticed in instances of crisis rather than as part of consensual change processes. Denison (1996) made a distinction between the understanding of organizational climate, with its quantitative roots in Lewin’s field theory, and the symbolic interaction of Mead as well as the social constructivism of Berger and Luckmann. Put simply, the organizational climate describes the environment within which human actors work. Implicit in this approach is the idea that the climate and staff are distinct entities and further that leaders or change agents are capable of influencing the environment. Denison (1996) then contrasted climate with culture. The study of organizational culture has roots in qualitative, anthropological approaches and is concerned with symbolism, beliefs, and values within an organization. Central to the many theories is that the environment organizational members find themselves in is socially constructed. The belief systems shape and are shaped by a myriad of factors, are often deeply held, and are resistant to change.

Jung et al. (2009) found that there are a multitude of theoretical frameworks to understand organizational culture and many tools and instruments to diagnose it. The authors articulated, as Denison (1996) did, that there are competing philosophies behind the instruments and their application is often determined by expediency. Many consultants prefer quantitative survey approaches, along with the implicit theories of knowledge and culture packaged with those approaches, because they can be administered easily by an agency (Denison, 1996). Jung et al. (2009) recommended choosing an approach based upon the needs of the situation and organization instead. In addressing the culture gap between service design methodologies and higher education institutions the social constructivist approach is likely preferable. If the barrier to adoption of service design was unstated and deeply held values, as suspected by Detert, Schroeder and Mauriel (2000), then a richer understanding of the organizational culture in higher education would be desirable.

Cameron and Quinn (2006), in their competing values framework, proposed two major axes for describing organizational culture: internal versus external focus and stability versus dynamism. These competing values produce four archetypes that can be used to understand how members of an organization behave and respond to change. These four archetypes are the clan, the adhocracy, the hierarchy, and the market (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Of interest in this approach to culture is the motivation of the authors. Cameron and Quinn (2006) described the recurring failure of total quality management initiatives in a multitude of companies and contexts. They further posited that “the failure of reengineering occurred in most cases because the culture of the organization remained the same” (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, p. 10). Each organization type in the competing values framework demands different approaches for change

efforts to be successful. Before looking at higher education institutions in particular, it is worth exploring each of these archetypes.

Four Archetypes in Competing Values Framework

Organizations that value stability and have an internal focus are described as hierarchies (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Hierarchical organizations are structured formally and often have goals related to efficiency and reliability. When it comes to improving the quality of operations and services, hierarchies often look to measurement, control, and error detection. These approaches are a natural fit to total quality management exercises such as Six Sigma (Martin, 2009). Detert et al. (2000) however found that these approaches did not translate to other environments and in fact struggled to reconcile private sector values with public sector cultures. Total Quality Management initiatives, an allied discipline to service design, have in the past not acknowledged the cultural contexts in which they have been applied. This lack of awareness can extend to very basic assumptions about the nature of reality. For example, Total Quality Management approaches presume a rational model of truth which can conflict with an educational organization that views truth as “specialized and tacit, so teachers tend to gauge their effectiveness through personal experience and intuition” (Detert et al., 2000, p. 853). In situations where the culture of an organization disagrees with the underlying assumptions of the process improvement process, change initiatives are difficult to implement. Service design, as a relatively new field, has not yet articulated this challenge in the same way; nonetheless Detert et al.’s call for further research into the intersection between culture and change through the lens of an improvement process seems relevant to service design as well.

The next organization type outlined by Cameron and Quinn (2006) is the market culture. Organizations exhibiting these cultures are externally focused but still value stability in the same

way that hierarchies do. Valued within these organizations are measurable results such as profitability, market share, and sales targets. These organizations are often defined by their competitive nature and productivity (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). When looking to improve, staff within these organizations look to enhancing competitiveness, involving customers, and measuring customer satisfaction and preference. Here we can begin to see how service design approaches have supplanted total quality management as the customer focus of such activities aligns well with market-driven cultures (Shostack, 1982). Shostack (1982) encouraged traditional organizations used to looking internally at performance management to instead look outside and become market focused when designing services. Unlike product design, services are ongoing and rely upon a relationship with the customer. A complete focus on internal processes may improve efficiency at the risk of becoming remarkably efficient at a process that delivers no value to the end customer.

The third organizational culture described by Cameron and Quinn (2006) was the adhocracy. This culture developed during the information age as a response to rapid change and shortening product lifecycles. By maintaining an external focus and an acceptance of change and flexibility, adhocracies work in dynamic environments. Quality improvement strategies at such organizations involve anticipating needs, iterative approaches, creative solutions, and delighting customers (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). These are a natural fit to service design approaches, and perhaps betray the roots of the discipline in adhocracy dominated sectors such as technology and software development (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011).

Finally, organizations with an internal focus that value flexibility and discretion are described as having a clan culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Post-war Japanese firms were the prototype for these family-like structures which were identifiable by “shared values and goals,

cohesion, participativeness, individuality, and a sense of ‘we-ness’” (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, p. 41). Implicit in this culture is a belief that taking good care of its members is the path to success. When seeking to improve operations, a clan culture can be expected to empower employees and make use of open communication and heavy involvement of members.

Universities as Clans

The higher education sector is diverse and it can be expected that there is a variety of different cultures both across and within institutions. Nonetheless, Obendhain and Johnson (2004) in an extensive survey of over 900 four-year, non-profit colleges classified a surprising 50% as a clan culture. The next most common culture at 22% was no dominant culture at all and the third most common at 14% was the market culture. Hierarchy and adhocracy cultures were only dominant in 7% each within the responses. Though such homogeneity is surprising, it is perhaps best explained by the common pressures on institutions. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) hypothesized that there exist a number of predictors for institutional isomorphism, the tendency for otherwise independent institutions to change behaviour or structures to be more rather than less similar. Among the many predictors were the following situations: ambiguous goals; reliance on academic credentials in choosing personnel; dependence on similar sources of support; the extent that organizations interact with the state; and the extent of professionalism in the field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). All of these situations can be applied to the higher education sector and perhaps explain the tendency for similarities in organizational cultures.

Of course, simply because universities have a tendency to model each other’s structures and cultures does not alone provide a reason why a particular culture is favoured. Liebenberg and Barnes (2004) found that although there is incredible pressure on higher education institutions to become more customer focused, the nature of education challenges such an approach.

Ultimately, the nature of the relations in particular between lecturers and students is unlike that of most organizations and their customers. In some ways, the student is less of a customer and more of a product of the system. As a result, Liebenber and Barnes (2004) found that many markers of strong customer orientation culture had no significant effect on student satisfaction. This finding is strengthened by the work of Berger (2002) who found that both market-oriented organizational structures and collegial environments in fact had a negative impact on student learning. The best learning may in fact happen when students are not treated as customers of an organization, but as members. He rationalized the negative effect of collegial environments by suggesting that a student can become an outsider to a tightknit faculty. In both of these studies, an overt market focus, with the attendant values implicit in such an outlook, seems ill-suited to learning.

Beyond higher education, Hartnell, Ou, and Kinicki (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of the relationship between the competing values framework and organizational effectiveness. They found that though market cultures were the most innovative, it was in fact the clan cultures that produced the best products and services. The value placed in clan cultures on collaboration, open communication, and participation are essential ingredients in providing complex services. This study also noted that though the theoretical framework is of competing values, the values expressed are in fact complementary (Hartnell et al., 2011). Successful organizations find and express values in all quadrants rather than focus on only a single stream of activity.

If then, the goal of a service design exercise should not be to change an existing organizational culture, how can such an approach be best used within the context of a clannish university? Davis and Fifolt (2018) found that change management processes “must be deliberately designed to meet specific needs in postsecondary systems or tailored to be

effectively applied to institutional environments” (p. 82). They noted that without well accepted change models in the sector, many business practices have been adopted with mixed results. Much as Roberts (2017) found with service blueprints, Davis and Fifolt (2018) noted that university staff appreciated a great deal about the Six Sigma methodology but struggled to internalize and operationalize such an approach. In another commonality, leadership support for the initiative flagged after an initial interest. There exists a recurring pattern of higher education institutions entertaining, but then respectfully rejecting change.

The competing values framework provides an alternate way of understanding this challenge, as well as suggesting a solution. First, it is important to understand the preconditions of a clan culture. Alvesson (2001), when discussing the nature of knowledge in knowledge intensive industries, noted the importance of values, beliefs, and identity in the organization. In knowledge intensive work, traditional approaches to management are insufficient to effect organizational goals. Knowledge work is inherently difficult to quantify and requires flexibility as well as rather independent workers. Instead then, management approaches emphasize cultural-ideological or clan control through values and identity (Alvesson, 2001). It may seem counterintuitive that knowledge intensive organizations do not resort to rational or scientific approaches, but Alvesson (1993) in an earlier paper noted that in fact knowledge itself is not necessarily important in such sectors. Instead, the appearance of knowledge is. In highly ambiguous work environments, where the outputs of an organization are difficult to determine, expertise and knowledge become social constructs rather than absolute truths. Even in technical knowledge environments, Alvesson (1993) found that communication was more critical in project work than skill or knowledge. To cope with the ambiguity of work, knowledge workers and “experts” rely instead on rhetoric to create the image of competence and mastery not just for

external clients and customers, but also for themselves. This phenomenon described by Alvesson can help explain the tendency for higher education institutions to exhibit clan tendencies. As professional organizations with ambiguous outcomes, staff within the organization are more likely to depend upon values and symbols to find meaning in both themselves and their work rather than depend on market measures. In but a single example of such behaviour, the critical responses of universities to league tables or ranking systems can in part be explained by this phenomenon. As one participant in a study conducted by Hazelkorn (2007) noted, “it’s not the tables themselves, but how the institution uses those tables/ranking in representing itself to the marketplace” (p. 11). Here we see an example of a higher education administrator converting a purportedly objective qualitative tool into narrative instrument.

Symbols and Artifacts

It is through the creation of symbols or artifacts that perhaps service design has an opportunity to better fit within and be accepted by clan cultures. Instead of focusing on improving efficiency or customer experiences, service design approaches instead can be presented as an opportunity to find common meaning and create shared experiences within an organization. As Rafaeli and Worline (2000) put it, “symbols are things that can be experienced with the senses and used by organization members to make meaning” (p. 73). The act of sensemaking is critical within the context of organizational culture because understanding of past events shapes future behaviour. Peterson and Smith (2000) described the process of sensemaking in four steps: occurrence of an event; experience to noticing; constructing to interpreting; and finally storing, deciding, intending and acting. Many of these steps are socially constructed, or at least are given meaning by the social context. If change managers are frustrated by the difficulty in sustaining change processes due to cultural conflict, the sensemaking process represents an

opportunity to smoothly integrate changes into an environment. By shaping the perception, interpretation, and passed on narratives of prior events, a change manager can influence future action within an organization.

Dougherty and Kunda (1990) found that the stories within organizations are powerful and often unique. In a photographic analysis, they found that four companies in the same industry had dramatically different stories about the same customers which reflected the internal culture of the organization. Importantly, “organizations do not simply adapt to new markets. They also act out their theories of customers, so the theories can play a significant role in their survival” (Dougherty & Kunda, 1990, p. 185). The implication of this work is that when an organization holds incorrect beliefs the organization itself can be at risk. The role of leadership in such a situation may be to introduce new narratives and help shape the sensemaking process to challenge preconceived theories at a moment when staff within the organization are able to receive the new information, before rather than after the interpretation has taken place.

Weick et al. (2005) further explored the idea that sensemaking informs not just future action, but identity as well. Through the process of sensemaking, actors in a system begin by creating a narrative of what had occurred and then ask themselves what should be done now. The story creation necessarily involves curation, selection, and discarding of information to simplify a complex situation. Those, often subconscious, decisions then provide the framework for future action (Weick et al., 2005). Weick et al. described this as a form of organizing through communication. Beyond this descriptive analysis, sensemaking can also be viewed as a conceptual process. In this approach, the final stage of sensemaking, retention, also involves the creation of identity (Weick et al., 2005). Identity creation is recursive, and the opportunity for leaders is clear:

If managers can change the images that outsiders send back to the organization, and if insiders use those images to make sense of what their actions mean, then these changes in image will serve as a catalyst for reflection and redrafting of how the organization defines itself. (Weick et al., 2005, p.416)

Implicit in this thought is that the sensemaking process is bi-directional. Ravasi and Schultz (2006) described the role of sensegiving as a new role for leadership to influence internal perceptions of the organization. The authors noted that artifacts can be used as a platform for sensegiving by providing concrete clues for staff within the organization to interpret organizational identity.

The topic of artifacts in organizational culture literature has often focused on physical entities that are easily observed (Schein, 1990). Schein and others would contrast these artifacts with the values, thoughts, and meanings that underlie the artifact itself. Within these values can be found a deeper organizational culture. The work of Weick et al. (2005) however suggests that if the creation of an artifact in an organization is a sensemaking exercise then the artifact will be more than simply a representation of the culture; the artifact will also inform the culture. The act of creation, when also an act of sensemaking, is a part of the ongoing dialogue with an organization's socially constructed culture.

It is in this space that service design could be helpful in an as yet unexplored way. One set of common service design tools is the visualisation of the customer experience (Segelström, 2009). Harkening back to Shostack (1982), visualisations allow an articulation of a service experience, which when left unsaid is often misunderstood by those responsible for delivering aspects of the service. This ambiguity in service delivery parallels the thoughts of Alvesson (2001) regarding knowledge workers in that when faced with such fluid concepts people rely

instead upon image, rhetoric, or representations of the thing that is valued. With Alvesson (2001) and knowledge work it was not knowledge that was promoted, but the appearance of knowledge. In service design, it is not the service itself, but the image of service through a visualization exercise that becomes important. Segelström (2009) found that service designers use visualizations not to describe processes, but rather to interpret them and it is here that we can see the value in this approach.

If service design approaches have not worked in higher education in the past (Roberts, 2017), perhaps organizational culture is part of the cause. With these approaches having roots in organizations that value innovation and customer service (Brown, 2008), it is unsurprising that there has been a clash with the typically clan cultures of university (Obendhain & Johnson, 2004). When faced with uncertainty or change, it can be expected that a clan culture will look inwards for solutions and assurance. It is at such a moment that opportunity presents itself to a leader or change agent. Though Schein (1990) argued that culture is deep and difficult to change, Ravasi and Schultz (2006) suggested that in the acts of sensemaking and sensegiving identity, values, and future behaviours can be shaped. Segelström (2009) described the current use of service design methods, and mapping exercises specifically, as acts of interpretation. Such exercises could be presented, not as change processes or quality management approaches, but rather as tools for understanding or sensemaking. In this way, a participatory exercise could align with the preferred method in clans of working and introduce outside ideas in a safe, constructive, and non-threatening manner.

Gaps in Research

The extensive work of Roberts (2017) in exploring the case study of the University of Colorado Denver nonetheless suggested a number of future opportunities for further research. A

few suggestions for research questions that are of particular relevance include: comparison of process mapping techniques; effects of senior leadership turnover; effect of project scale on success; and the effect of and inclusion of student input. In addition to these possibilities, the particular context of service design methods in non-academic student services remains underdeveloped in the research literature. Newer methods in the evolving field of service design have not yet been studied in this environment. Finally, the interaction between service design initiatives and organizational change have not been fully explored, especially in the field of higher education.

Although service blueprints now have an, albeit short, history in higher education literature, the newer and widely adopted method of customer journey maps has not yet received academic attention. As Segelstöm (2009) found, journey maps are a staple in the service design field and to follow Roberts' (2017) suggestion, are worth investigating as an alternate tool to service blueprints. This approach would also address another challenge faced by the University of Colorado Denver, the lack of student input in the process. The creation of customer journey maps, as described as a best practice by Kalbach (2016), and Stickdorn and Schneider (2011), require substantial user research and validation.

A key benefit of journey mapping exercises is not just the process or service changes that may result from the findings, but also the change in organizational culture. Junginger (2015) suggested that a design activity can be an opportunity to align an organization's vision and purpose with the work of the activity. For example, "although government organizations have a general mandate to be human-centered, they rarely follow this mandate" (Junginger, 2015, p. 214). Design exercises are opportunities to explore how services are delivered in a deliberate way and further make new decisions about how such activity will occur in the future. Shifting

the perspective of staff members from internal to external, or market-focused involves a cultural change. Junginger (2015) warned designers to be aware of the existing design systems in place, even if they lacked traditional markers of professional design. This statement echoes McKendall's (1993) warning that informal structures in an organization can be threatened by organizational change efforts, causing resistance. The reverse phenomenon has not been fully studied: can a service design project reinforce existing culture and informal organizations? Were Weick et al. (2005) correct in suggesting that an act of sensemaking can create culture? Would the creation of journey maps contribute to the stories, language, and rituals that compose an organizational culture or would the process be rejected by the system as was in the case with the University of Colorado Denver?

Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed much of the relevant literature pertaining to the central research question: How does organizational culture affect the adoption of service design approaches? Particular attention was paid to the evolution of service design, the adoption of service design practices in public sectors and higher education specifically. The work of Roberts (2017) was examined in detail due to the applicability of his research to the current topic. The nature of change in higher education and loosely coupled systems was also covered as there is a growing awareness that service design can be understood as a change management process (Junginger, 2008). To provide a theoretical base for this project, the work of Cameron and Quinn (2006) was used to better describe organizational culture in practical terms. Specifically, university environments can be understood as “clans” within the competing values framework (Obendhain & Johnson, 2004). Finally, the work of Weick et al. (2005) suggest that acts of sensemaking within organizations can not only describe past events, but also existing culture as

well as inform future organizational actions. Returning to service design, there exists a possible connection between some service design tools, specifically journey maps, sensemaking activities, and organizational culture that has yet to be fully explored. In chapter three I will provide the methodology to be used in this research project to begin this exploration.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The previous two chapters have provided an overview of this research project alongside a review of the relevant literature. In this chapter, more detail regarding this project and specific methods that were used will be provided. The purpose of this study was to explore how organizational culture affects the adoption of service design approaches. The two sub-questions were:

1. How do staff in internally focused organizations perceive culture building and service improvement?
2. How do staff understand the purpose and outcomes of a service design exercise?

A qualitative approach was best suited to address this project's primary research question. Previous attempts to introduce service design approaches in higher education have produced mixed results (Roberts, 2017). Many authors have noted the cultural barriers to such approaches (Cunningham & Kempling, 2009), but have not studied the relationship between organizational culture and service design in a post-secondary setting. Given the lack of previous literature on the subject, a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question is required before a robust quantitative study could be undertaken.

Choice of Qualitative Approach

Mertler (2016) identified five key attributes of qualitative research, all of which are pertinent to this study. First, qualitative research is naturalistic. The environment in which the phenomenon in question occurs is itself a subject of study. Observations of participants in an authentic act of service design forms a source of research data.

Second, the descriptive nature of qualitative research is of importance in this study (Mertler, 2016). The cultural barriers and catalysts for service design projects are currently too

poorly understood to be effectively captured quantitatively. Participants were given space and time to articulate their thoughts in words and stories that made sense to them. An interview was better able to capture these stories than a pre-defined survey.

Third, Mertler (2016) identified the importance of process in addition to the natural outcomes of a situation. In examining the underlying how and why a phenomenon occurred, understanding the entirety of the process that led to a specific outcome is required. This attribute of qualitative research aligns very well with the nature of service design approaches and the creation of journey maps specifically. Both the general approach and the creation of journey maps are concerned with not just the final results of the project, but also with the value of the act of creation as well (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011).

Fourth, qualitative research is an inductive approach (Mertler, 2016). When investigating relatively unknown subjects, this approach allows the researcher to uncover new information and relationships that could not be predicted in advance. By focusing deeply on a few participants at a single site, an appropriate depth of analysis was achieved which could not be done in a similar timeline with a broader sample.

Finally and most importantly, Mertler (2016) described qualitative researchers as “primarily interested with how people make sense and meaning out of their daily lives” (p. 90). Such an approach is a requirement to address the primary research question in this paper. Since organizational culture is so often hidden from plain view (Schein, 1990), understanding the sensemaking process of individuals in a complex organizational environment is a fruitful way of studying the underlying cultural assumptions.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Of all possible qualitative approaches, interpretative phenomenological analysis was chosen as the specific approach to be used in this project. Smith et al. (2009) describe IPA as an examination of how people make sense of events. Since organizational culture, as noted by Schein (1990), is often hidden from plain view and socially constructed, IPA is an ideal tool to uncover the perceptions of staff members in organizations. More detail on the application of IPA will be provided below in the study design section.

Truth and Meaning

The epistemological basis for this work is grounded in the work of Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur (as cited in Langdridge, 2007). This project is concerned with the correlation between the *noema*, what is experienced, and the *noesis*, the way it is experienced (Langdridge, 2007). Rather than take a transcendental view which might presume that the researcher can remove themselves from this experience, this project will draw from existential phenomenology and explore the lived experiences of the research participants more deeply on their own terms.

This project does not presume to create a useful definition of service design, the *noema* in this instance. The field is relatively new and practitioners themselves acknowledge that any such definitions should be fluid, inclusive, and open (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011). Instead, the central research question here explored the relationship between organizational culture and service design in a very specific context. An interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach was used to collect data on the perceptions and understandings of staff members, the *noemias*, as well as the intentionality that exists between the service design project and the staff's perception thereof. An interpretative rather than descriptive approach was preferred to better address the research question. Smith et al. (2009) recommended IPA in instances where the

researcher wished to “focus on personal meaning and sense-making in a particular context, for people who share a particular experience” (p. 40). A descriptive approach would have required participants from diverse backgrounds and a process of imaginative variation (Langdridge, 2007) which, if done well, would have reduced the *noema* above to its essential characteristics. Such an approach would be interesting, but would fail to address the central question.

Here, we presume that the relationship between subject and object are key to understanding reality, and that neither can be properly understood outside of that relationship. Further, the language used to describe a past event conveys meaning in itself and a rigorous interpretation of the discourse will yield relevant research data. The goal here was not to capture the essential essence of a thing through a process of *epoché*, but rather to dive deeply into the lived and authentic experiences of people and their perceptions in a narrow and defined context.

Study Design

To explore the relationship between organizational culture and service design, interviews were conducted with staff members at a university who recently participated in a facilitated service design exercise. The specific service design exercise was the co-creation of a customer journey map.

Journey Mapping Activity

For the benefit of future researchers and in the interest of supporting transferability through transparency, a description of the journey mapping activity conducted is given below. Note however, that this journey mapping activity itself was not a subject of the research study. Rather, this service design activity occurred before a research study had been approved. The original research presented in this document relates to the interviews conducted after the fact with staff members who had participated in this journey mapping activity.

The journey map was chosen as design tool for two reasons. First, it has been identified in previous research as one of the most commonly applied service design methods amongst user experience professionals (Segelström, 2009). Second, a mapping exercise has both a creation process, and also results in a final artifact. Both of these elements have potential cultural significance. The act of creation of a customer journey map can be understood as a sensemaking exercise for the organization, and an opportunity for diverse staff to come together and create a common story about the same past events (Weick et al., 2005). The final map itself could become a physical artifact of use in the organization to orient new members who did not participate in the exercise and remind those who did of the common purpose once shared.

The intent behind the journey mapping activity was twofold: to enhance the experience of prospective international graduate students and to provide an opportunity for staff in diverse offices to collaborate. The project began with approval from leadership in the relevant portfolios and an email invitation to managers in units that had a stake in the process. These managers then asked for volunteers within their units to take part in a series of workshops.

In the first workshop the purpose of the activity was introduced and participants co-created a journey map of international graduate students based upon their own knowledge and experiences. Participants were given index cards and were asked to illustrate steps of the student journey up to the point of arrival on campus. The focus of the first stage of the mapping activity was to capture what a student was *doing*. Each illustration was accompanied by a brief description. These cards were co-created by groups of four to five participants and arranged, rearranged, and discussed collaboratively. Once each group had described the steps a student progressed through in this journey, the group then revisited each card and added a second layer of information: what the student was *thinking* at that stage. For example, if a step in the process

was to decide which countries to research higher education opportunities within, participants then noted some of the possible considerations in that activity. Finally, a third dimension was added: what the student was *feeling* at that stage of the journey. This first workshop assisted the staff in understanding what a journey map was and why one was being created. Finally, homework was assigned to each participant; they needed to have a conversation with an international graduate student about that students' own journey.

A month later, the second workshop occurred. Staff returned with the student stories that they had collected and present in the room this time were international graduate students. The same co-creation exercise was done but this time was informed by the student stories and the presence of students in each working group.

The third workshop took place an additional month later. The group was provided a draft map that was a synthesis of those created in the second workshop. The groups discussed this draft, made additions, deletions, and edits. Finally, a brief discussion of opportunities occurred. For the participants, this was the end of their formal participation in the service design project. The draft map was finalized then shared with all participants and units that were represented. Opportunity workshops were conducted with certain key groups to discuss in more detail where change effort would most fruitfully be applied.

Interviews

To better understand how staff view such exercises, and to discover if there was any connection between the underlying organizational culture and the organization's response to service design, staff members who participated in the above exercise were interviewed. Data was collected through the use of one on one, semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 1). This partially guided approach gave enough space to the participants to reflect on their experiences,

but also ensured that the research question could be addressed. The participants were asked about their perceptions of the exercise, what they gained from it, if they saw any value in the approach, and if they would recommend such an approach for another division of the university in the future.

Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument

In addition to the above interview, participants were asked to complete the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), a six question survey from Cameron and Quinn (2006) which diagnoses the current and desired culture of an organization (see Appendix 1). The results from this survey were used to deepen the analysis of the interview data. Did staff members who desire the organization to be more externally focused respond to a service design exercise differently than others? It was not expected that this survey would provide quantitative data in sufficient volume to be worthy of analyzing from that perspective. It was instead intended to assist in the triangulation of the interview data, by providing an additional perspective with which to understand the phenomenon in question.

Purposeful Sampling

Participants were found through a form of purposeful sampling. The service design exercise was chosen based on perceived need within the university and an opportunity to bring formerly different departments together in a new organizational unit. Staff members who were involved within that service design project were invited to participate in this associated research project. Participation in the research study was voluntary and the request was made on the behalf of the graduate supervisor and academic department, not from the researcher's dual position as project manager. The experiences and perceptions of these staff members represent an ideal subject of study for the proposed research question. As administrative staff in a changing

university structure, their reactions to a service design approach are of relevance to those who seek to understand not only whether certain cultures naturally resist market driven change processes, but also if service design exercises can play a role in the creation of a new culture.

Following the recommendations of Smith et al. (2009), a small purposeful sample of participants was acquired for this study. The associated service design project involved 15 staff. On the advice of the Research Ethics Board invitations were sent out to all staff working in administrative units and interviews were conducted with five respondents. Research participants each came from different administrative units. The sample was homogenous in that the research subjects had all been participants in the same service design project, are all staff members of the same institution, and are all involved in student support in some way. The participants differed in terms of age, ethnicity, and the specific unit they work within. The consent process was carefully explained and each person who agreed to participate signed a participant consent form (see Appendix 2).

If insufficient data were collected, a number of approaches would have been used. The service design project was approved by staff in leadership positions and the information collected was disseminated to the units that were involved in the project. The managers and directors of these units could provide valuable data of relevance to the topic since they acted as sponsors of the work and recipients of the recommendations collected. This would provide a different perspective that nonetheless could contribute to understanding of the research topic. Alternatively, as a staff member in the organization, the researcher could invite others who had participated in past service design activities that were very similar in nature. Depending on the time between those past projects and the interviews, the risk of poor data due to the inability of staff members to recollect their experiences would increase. Finally, if insufficient data was

collected, a second service design project could be initiated within the organization which would provide a new set of staff members to draw from at the cost of an overall delay in this research project. In any event, the researcher would consult with their advisory committee and supervisor in particular to ensure that the quality of the final research is not sacrificed. In the end, a sufficient number of staff volunteered to participate in the interviews and thematic saturation was achieved.

Data Analysis

Each interview was recorded and transcribed. Participants were given an opportunity to review the transcript for accuracy before analysis began. Once they approved of the transcript, they signed a transcript release form (see Appendix 3). After the raw data was collected, a synthesis of the six iterative steps outlined by Smith et al. (2009) and the four stages described by Langdrige (2007) were used to analyze the data. Smith et al. (2009) proposed the following six steps in IPA projects: reading and re-reading; initial noting; developing emergent themes; searching for connections across emergent themes; moving to the next case; and finally, looking for patterns across cases.

The above steps broadly align with Langdrige's (2007) four steps of a descriptive phenomenological analysis. He suggested "reading for overall meaning, identifying meaning units, assessing the psychological significance of meaning units, and synthesizing meaning units and presenting a structural description" (Langdrige, 2007, p. 88). For the purposes of this project, rather than assess the psychological significance of the meaning units, reference to organizational theory was used to understand and describe the meaning of the text. Below is a more detailed step by step process that was undertaken in this research project.

First, the text was read closely in its entirety. In addition to the interviews and transcription, which was also done by the researcher, engaging in a deep reading of the transcriptions provided a holistic overview of the material. No serious attempt at analysis was done at this stage intentionally, but a journal of possible themes was started. Time was set aside to read, re-read, and explore the transcriptions fully. This process aligns with the advice of Langdrige (2007) to separate the act of describing versus interpreting the data. Impartial description was more easily accomplished when the researcher had become intimately familiar with the content.

Second, a single transcript was read again and comments added to the text. A focus was placed on the meaning of the text with particular attention to the field of educational administration and theories of organizational culture. Interpretation was limited at this stage, but again a journal was kept for notes of interest and possible themes.

Third, in a final read of a single transcript themes were identified within the text itself. Initial notes were expanded to provide additional interpretation and theoretical implications were noted more comprehensively.

Fourth, themes developed in the previous stage were removed from the text, retaining their sequence, and then reordered and restructured to provide broader relevance and meaning to the collection. Themes were consolidated, clustered, or broken apart as needed with frequent reference to the original text.

The above steps were then repeated for each case. In many instances the development of themes in future cases required revisiting previous cases. This process was done in an idiographic and inductive way, one case at a time. The researcher remained open to new themes and thoughts and furthermore, allowed new data to inform analysis of previous transcripts.

From these transcripts and themes a structure was built to visualize the relationship between themes and theories. The coding and thematic analysis retained references to the original documents allowing the research supervisor and the researcher to see the development of themes from conception to final articulation. At this stage, the research supervisor was involved to test the rigour of the approach and validity of the interpretations.

In the penultimate step, the research analysis was transformed into a narrative account of themes to be found in chapter four. Finally, the researcher engaged in a self-reflection exercise to interrogate their own methods, beliefs, and understandings. Though time was specifically dedicated at the end of this process for self-reflection activities, it is important to note that reflection was a critical part of each previous step as well. The researcher was in a constant state of engagement with both empathetic and questioning hermeneutic stances when reading, coding, and analyzing each transcript.

Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness of the qualitative research, the researcher deferred to the strategies proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The four aspects of trustworthiness identified were credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility was attained through member checks, thick description, prolonged engagement, and persistent observation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Participants were given copies of their transcripts to check if their thoughts were accurately captured. By interviewing a relatively small number of participants, as recommended by Smith et al. (2009), a more fulsome thick description of their experiences could be communicated, allowing a reader of the final thesis to see how the themes were developed. The researcher was a part of the same

organizational context as the participants which permitted a deeper rapport with participants and understanding of their situations than would have been possible in an otherwise short project.

Though this is of course an idiographic study executed without the intention of generalizing about other contexts, Lincoln and Guba (1985) nonetheless identified the need to support transferability of findings. This transferability can be done through the provision of context. Information about the site studied can be found in the introduction chapter and provides sufficient detail to inform other researchers as to the applicability of these findings. By restricting the sample to a relatively homogenous group of individuals, some measure of trustworthiness can be assured. As further research is done in other similar, adjacent, or contrasting contexts, the findings presented here potentially can contribute to the development of a grounded theory.

Dependability was addressed through an inquiry audit with the researcher's graduate supervisor. The researcher kept detailed notes through the transcription and analysis phases in part to allow the graduate supervisor to audit the process of coding and interpreting the data, a process supported by Lincoln and Guba's (1985) approach. This process ultimately improved both the quality and dependability of the final findings.

Confirmability is more difficult to achieve and demonstrate within the project due to epistemological and practical constraints. As an interpretative rather than descriptive phenomenological project, there is an acceptance that the researcher will live in the data, explore it with an acknowledgement of their own contexts, and seek to empathize with the research participants' situations rather than assume a transcendental perspective. The goal in this project was not detachment and a robust *epoché*, the process which allows a researcher to "describe the 'things themselves' and set aside our natural attitude or all those assumptions we have about the

world around us” (Langdrige, 2007, p. 18-19). Since this project was not intending to describe the “thing itself”, but rather the meaning and understanding of service design from a staff perspective the researcher’s ability to empathize and understand that perspective was valuable. That being said, bias still exists and was moderated by self-acknowledgement in reflexive activities as well as maintenance of detailed audit trails which served the dual purpose of supporting confirmability and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethics

Participants were invited to the research project via email (see Appendix 4). This email outlined the academic department, investigator, graduate supervisor, research purpose, data collection method, and how the research data would be stored. It was made clear to participants that their involvement would be voluntary, and that they could withdraw at any time up until the point that data analysis commenced. Each participant was granted confidentiality but not anonymity as the interviews were conducted face to face and the researcher had a prior working relationship with all participants. Nonetheless, pseudonyms were used in the project and the participation or lack thereof of subjects in the study was known only to the researcher and researcher supervisor, not to other research participants.

Since the participants were known to the researcher in advance, it was made explicit before beginning each interview that the researcher was acting as a graduate student and not a co-worker and further that they should not feel an obligation to participate. Finally, their participation would not be known to others, including coworkers and supervisors. If any of their answers would identify them personally, those answers were redacted in any published context. Prior to conducting each interview, participants were given a common consent form which outlined the above (see Appendix 2). The interviews were recorded digitally on a password

protected smartphone. Participants were provided with a transcript release form to complete after the transcriptions were completed. This allowed participants a final opportunity to withdraw from the study as well as confirm that the transcripts reflected their thoughts and perceptions accurately. The paper consent forms, transcript release forms, as well as the sole digital copies of email correspondence and transcripts will be kept secure with the graduate supervisor for a period not less than six years. Digital working copies of the files were deleted once the original material was safely secured with the academic department.

Dual Role Research

It is critical to acknowledge the dual role of the researcher in this study. The study's author was also a professional colleague to the research participants as well as the facilitator of the service design method with which the participants engaged. This scenario introduces both benefits and risks in the study. Below are the strategies used to mitigate the latter.

The University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Office (2008) identified two core issues for the dual role researcher: power-over relationships and risks to confidentiality when publishing information and results drawn from one's own practice. Though each issue is common to all human behavioural research, extra care is required in cases where a dual role researcher is involved.

Power-over relationships threaten the principle of free and informed consent. In this circumstance, as opposed to teachers conducting research with a student population, the research participants were not identified as a vulnerable population. Nonetheless, care was taken that no supervisory relationship existed between any invitees to the study and the researcher. Further, from the initial invitation to the final offer of withdrawal, care was taken to distinguish between the researcher's role as a graduate student and staff member. Each participant was reminded that

their participation, or lack thereof, would not be shared with other staff members, especially their supervisors. Any suspicion that either participation or non-participation would be rewarded or punished in the work environment was addressed through a firm emphasis on confidentiality. Participants were reminded of their freedom to withdraw at each step of the research study up until the point of their providing written approval of the veracity of their transcript. All written correspondence with participants referenced both the academic department and local ethics office involved in the study as neutral parties that participants could reach out to for further questions, clarifications, or expression of concern. In person, prior to the interview itself, the researcher discussed the dual-role nature of the research in order to support free and informed consent.

Maintenance of confidentiality was also of utmost concern in this project. To support this, the researcher limited their analysis to the data collected in the above interviews. Though the pre-existing relationship was a benefit in conducting the interview as a rapport was already established, no secondary data from the workplace was used to inform the findings in this study. Additionally, though there were opportunities to more deeply analyze the research results on the basis of the culture, gender, age, or other dimensions of the participants, the researcher intentionally passed on these opportunities. Given the small pool of potential participants, deeper analyses on these dimensions may have allowed staff members involved the opportunity to identify individuals. Similarly, though a cultural assessment survey was conducted with each participant, the results of that analyzed data would have revealed the administrative units of individual participants and was considered an unacceptable risk to introduce in the published study. Finally, as recommended by the University of Victoria task force on research ethics in education (2008) additional measures were taken to protect the research data such as securely

storing all documents, transcripts, and correspondence at the researcher's residence instead of workplace during the analysis phase. At the completion of the study, all such material was transferred to the academic department for safekeeping in alignment with ethics board guidelines.

In contrast with the above concerns about dual role research, it is also important to note the anticipated benefit. Within an interpretative phenomenological study a dual role researcher is well placed to engage richly in the double hermeneutic of sensemaking. As Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) described, an IPA researcher must be able to adopt a participant's view of the world in addition to a critical one. The research participants in this study were homogenous in the sense that they were all administrative staff members with roles related to international student recruitment at the same university. The researcher shared this trait, permitting a deeper engagement with the hermeneutics of empathy. Reflective activity was then the strategy most often used to return to a critical position.

Summary

This qualitative research project, using an interpretative phenomenological design gathered data via semi-structured interviews with university staff members who had recently been a part of a service design project. The data was analyzed using an interpretative phenomenological approach in an effort to more fully explore the perceptions staff members had of the service design activity conducted. The number of participants was intentionally kept small to allow for deeper analysis of the transcripts. All research activity was conducted with approval from the researchers institution's ethics review board and in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. A variety of strategies was

used to ensure validity of both the data and the analysis, with a heavy focus on a complete audit trail and reflective journaling.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Included in this chapter is an overview of the themes that arose in the analysis of the participant's interview transcriptions. Both the interviews themselves and the following analysis were conducted with the overall research questions in mind:

1. How does organizational culture affect the adoption of service design approaches?
 - a. How do staff in internally focused organizations perceive culture building and service improvement?
 - b. How do staff understand the purposes and outcomes of a service design exercise?

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and processed via an interpretative phenomenological analysis. An emphasis was placed on understanding the perceptions of the staff members of their experiences during and after a service design exercise. The resulting themes were then related to existing theories of change management, organizational culture, and sensemaking.

Participants

In order to address the above research questions, a purposefully chosen sample of staff members at a university were invited to participate in a semi-structured interview. The staff members had all recently been a part of a service design activity, a journey mapping project. The journey mapping project brought together a group of 15 staff members from various units across the university together in three workshops. In those workshops, staff worked alongside students to map out a student experience from the perspective of a student. The student experience being mapped was that of a prospective international graduate student from the point of interest to arrival on campus. In between workshops, staff interviewed international graduate students to

collect authentic stories to bring into the project. The first workshop saw the staff learn about the journey mapping method and allowed them to practice creating a map. In the second workshop the maps were made. Finally, in the last workshop staff were given an opportunity to refine their maps and reflect on opportunities for improvement in the experience. The completed maps were synthesized together by a designer and shared within the organization as a tool to discuss how to elevate the student experience. A few months after the project was completed, the staff were invited to participate in this associated research project.

The site of the research was a mid-sized university in Western Canada. At this university the student affairs portfolio had recently undergone a reorganization. In addition to this, the function of graduate student recruitment had recently been moved from an academic unit to a centralized recruitment group. Finally, a major IT system was in the process of being implemented to support student recruitment. All of these factors made for a unique opportunity to study the perceptions of staff members as they navigated through a changing environment.

The staff themselves worked in diverse offices but all had some role in the prospective international graduate student experience, the journey which was being mapped. These offices included admissions, recruitment, international, residence, information technology, communications, accessibility, and academic units. Of these 16 potential staff members, five responded to the request to participate in this research project. In the findings below, they will be identified by the following pseudonyms: Kit, William, Julie, Bronson, and Horatio. Intentionally, no further details about their demographic information or which unit they work in will be provided to maintain confidentiality. In cases where participants used the names of other staff members, the unit they worked in, or the university, that information was removed from any quotes below for the same reason. It is also worthwhile to note that the pseudonyms ascribed to

the participants are not intended to communicate the gender of the participant. In the summary of data below Bronson, Horatio, and William will be referred to by the pronouns he/him and Julie and Kit will be referred to as she/her. This procedure is done only to make it easier for the reader of this thesis to follow and does not necessarily describe the self-identified gender of participants in any way.

Themes

Through the initial coding and analysis of the transcripts, four major themes and 16 sub-themes were identified. Below is a description of each theme, supported by relevant quotes. A focus is placed here on the text itself, separate from the researchers own interpretations and positionality. A more detailed interpretation of these results will be done in chapter five alongside the connection to relevant theories. The four main themes are: perceptions of service design methods; causes of change in an organization; the nature of program delivery; and perceptions of decision making. Though there were commonalities across the interviews, this was an inductive process and particular attention was also paid to outlier data. These themes were developed iteratively. The researcher began by transcribing and re-reading each interview in depth. Next, the transcripts were read individually with preliminary notes made. Finally, on a third reading themes were identified. Themes were then removed from the text, organized independently from the transcript to create a deeper meaning. At this point the themes were often combined, split and restructured with reference back to the original text. This approach was repeated for each individual case and prior transcripts were revisited as new themes and meaning emerged.

Perceptions of Service Design Methods

Participants were asked to reflect on their initial expectations of the service design exercise and walk the interviewer through the various stages of activity. In describing their experiences, the participants touched on a number of similar sub-themes relating to the project.

Lack of Familiarity with Service Design

The majority of participants in fact had little expectation of the activity due to a lack of familiarity with the process itself. The one exception was Bronson who recalled a card sort exercise previously facilitated by the same staff member. A card sort is a service design or user experience method where people are asked to sort index cards representing ideas, information or services into a logical categorization schema. The method is used to facilitate discussion and better understand the mental models of users or stakeholders to inform information architecture. Mentioning the collaborative nature of the card sort, Bronson projected that the journey mapping exercise would be an opportunity to explore the topic at hand, international graduate student experiences, across a number of units. The other staff members' expectations were coloured by the initial email inviting them to participate in the journey mapping exercise and mentioned the possibility of improving that same experience.

Interestingly, this lack of awareness led two participants to a feeling of ambivalence about the project. William did not initially wish to join the service design activity, but eventually volunteered to avoid a lack of representation of his unit. Horatio was more direct in the reasons for his desire to not participate:

To be honest it would just be another one of these big meetings where nothing is accomplished. Where people just give their opinions. I didn't know what journey

mapping was, it was just a really busy time in the year and I wasn't enthusiastic to attend at first (personal communication, February 14, 2019).

Horatio, unaware as to the nature of a journey mapping project, related it to past experiences in large group meetings on campus and was concerned that the value in the activity would not be worth the lost time where other work could have been done.

New Ideas

A number of participants remarked on the warm-up exercises used within the kick-off meeting. Those exercises were intended to create a non-judgemental space to better explore new ideas and the participants identified both the concrete techniques and the overall tone as valuable. Both Bronson and Julie pointed out that they have since used the practical techniques in other contexts.

At a higher level, all participants referenced the opportunity to brainstorm new approaches alongside other staff and students. Julie articulated a common thought that diverse viewpoints can enhance program development:

There's a danger in being stuck and being comfortable with how you do things. In most units, one person has probably been doing the same work for a number of years. Now if you're not open, if your unit doesn't have the resources for professional development opportunities then how do you find innovative ways to progress in your work (personal communication, March 4, 2019).

Similarly, Bronson mentioned that when developing programs, a diverse set of perspectives is required: "just yourself, you're going to have your blinders, you're not going to be able to see certain things" (personal communication, February 12, 2019). Kit went further and said that by exploring ideas as a group, she felt more comfortable presenting the ideas to management. The

process of collaborating provided, in her opinion, a greater validity than if the ideas were personal.

Within this theme, the staff noted the culture of trust in the room, the activities used to create that space, and some of the opportunities that presented themselves because of the open nature of the workshops. Brainstorming ideas was viewed as an opportunity to identify new approaches, overcome the limitations of a single viewpoint, and provide credibility to ideas when advancing them outside of the working group.

Bringing People Together

Every staff member commented on the value of bringing staff together from across the organization. Building understanding of what other units do, how those units perceive their own contributions, and the thoughts of individual staff members from other units were all thought of as important. Kit emphasized further that “I don’t think it’s just a good experience, I would go further to say it’s an essential experience” (personal communication, February 13, 2019). Though all staff saw value in the collaborative nature of the exercise, the reasons expressed differed.

At times, staff mentioned the specific act of referring students to different services on campus. Bronson recalled times in the past where students were incorrectly sent to his office and attributed that to a lack of understanding across campus. He further noted that “to be honest, I think it reflects poorly on the institution when one office refers incorrectly” (personal communication, February 12, 2019). Julie also mentioned that she struggled with referring students to different offices. Specifically, Julie illustrated the difficulty in following up after a referral if she lacked a personal connection with the office. More broadly than the difficulty of referrals, Horatio pointed out that the siloed nature of campus can also be detrimental to

employee satisfaction: “I think [journey mapping] just increases employee engagement and happiness. It’s not just you and your little bubble of 10 coworkers working away for students. There’s other people across campus” (personal communication, February 14, 2019). He identified the effects on morale of a siloed environment and how journey mapping brought people together and created a feeling of being a part of a larger team.

Many members also expressed a desire to include more voices in the activity. Horatio mentioned doing a similar exercise but with faculty in the room, and Kit mentioned involving non-academic college staff in future program planning. Participants could clearly see the value in multiple perspectives in the room and quickly moved to imagining who else could be involved to make the process richer.

Within the idea of bringing people together, staff members also commented on the value of a shared vision across groups. Alongside Horatio’s note regarding siloes, William mentioned specific upcoming initiatives where the journey mapping could assist the group in creating a shared understanding. Beyond initiatives or programs, Julie also spoke of a newly reorganized student affairs division and the lingering questions of how her work contributes to the larger division. Speaking of the exercise, she said, “it lets people understand how you fit into the general organizational structure” (personal communication, March 4, 2019). Bronson articulated the reverse as well, describing how valuable it is to understand how others see their own work. He contrasted the difference between a high-level description of an office and personally understanding what a single staff member does. All participants shared at least one story of a conversation during these workshops with a staff member in another unit that was surprising or illuminating. The majority of participants had plans to use the newfound information in their own work.

Regarding the theme of bringing people together, the participants had a nuanced and positive set of observations. Broadly, they viewed the service design activity as a valuable activity to allow staff to better understand their own roles in a process, the role of others in those same processes, and further identified the benefits of creating a shared understanding of the process itself. Most staff found immediate, concrete value in speaking with other staff members and could imagine times in the future when such an activity could be expanded for the benefit of their work. The few times a staff member mentioned the challenges of working with other staff, it was in passing and was viewed as an acceptable cost of making new connections.

Holistic View of Process

Related to the theme of bringing people together, every participant also noted the value of seeing the entire prospective graduate student process laid out systematically. Specifically, participants commented on the holistic view of the process, the visual nature of the completed artifact and the opportunity to acknowledge the journey from both student and staff perspectives.

Participants appreciated the opportunity to view the prospective graduate student experience at a high level. Kit contrasted the day to day approach to work with that done in the journey mapping workshops: "... because as staff we all look at things from our desk ... I think as a team [journey mapping] was a great thing. For me personally, just seeing it on a map, some of this stuff that I had been thinking about it in pieces" (personal communication, February 13, 2019). William also mentioned the rarity of the experience: "It was actually enjoyable, I don't know how often a lot of folks actually sit down to think about the whole process and all of the pitfalls, anxieties and frustrations" (personal communication, March 12, 2019). Both participants suggested that a holistic approach is uncommon in their typical work.

Both Bronson and Kit mentioned that they are visual people. From that point of reference, they expressed an appreciation for seeing a complex process laid out in a visual way.

Bronson tied this thought back to communication amongst staff:

On a personal level, I have an idea of when things are happening but it's not visually laid out. I am a visual learner but I don't always create the visuals for myself. I think sometimes in our unit we all have our own responsibilities but we're working in concert on a variety of programs that are all working towards common objectives (personal communication, February 12, 2019).

Bronson provided insight into the challenge of sharing knowledge in the organization. Horatio also mentioned the value of a journey map as something "that anyone across the organization could look at and understand..." (personal communication, February 14, 2019). Having a visual tool to describe an experience was understood to be helpful not just as a tool for understanding but also as a tool for communication.

Finally, many participants noted how viewing the entire process made it easier to see how other people experienced the process, both staff and students. As Bronson noted, "from an internal perspective, it kind of helped me see which units, which stakeholders were involved... how many bodies that takes" (personal communication, February 12, 2019). William went further to also note the immediate feeling of empathy generated with the student's experience, "it was valuable I thought to take a moment to just acknowledge why the frustrations existed" (personal communication, March 12, 2019). Viewing the process holistically allowed staff to immediately think beyond themselves and consider the needs, frustrations, and experiences of other actors in the system.

Empathy

The final service design subtheme that was universally acknowledged in the interviews related to empathy. All participants remarked on feelings of empathy towards students and most also mentioned a similar feeling towards other staff members who support the same student journey.

Two participants made reference to their personal situations. When speaking about the struggles of students a participant noted how “it was very humbling to see what these international grad students go through, just to get here while for me it was very simple, I basically just filled out a form, and got a scholarship” (personal communication, February 14, 2019). Another, who was an international student themselves, spoke of reinforcement of their existing beliefs:

I think it’s just familiarity. What I mean by that, I moved here as an international student so I understand the struggle students go through so the way I’ll address a situation where the student is maybe panicked about a certain situation will be different than someone that doesn’t understand (personal communication, March 4, 2019).

In both instances the staff members related the student experiences with their own and expressed not just empathy but the desire for other staff members to adopt a similar mindset.

When staff spoke of their empathy for the student’s experience, it also manifested in very practical examples. Most staff recounted specific stories that were shared in the journey mapping exercise about struggles that international students had with the institution. Moving beyond that, the participants identified how staff could improve the situation. Kit for example encouraged staff to “be more empathetic, to not be as rigid, while realizing that we still have procedures and policies that we need to follow but you can enter into that with a different understanding”

(personal communication, February 13, 2019). Kit, Julie, Horatio, and William all shared stories where strict observance of policy came at the cost of the student experience. Both Kit and William used the example of needing a transcript to be sent directly from another institution as part of the admission process. Unfortunately, not all international universities provide that service.

Beyond empathy with students, a number of participants also mentioned staff empathy as a benefit of the exercise. Both Kit and Bronson talked about the volume of information as a challenge for staff. Bronson for example said, “You’re not aware of the breadth of referrals or what is necessarily required in that moment of need when a student needs a referral. I always empathize with new employees that start with us” (personal communication, February 12, 2019). Kit spoke in similar terms about the challenges her team faces in needing to know so much information but often starting with little. In addition to information overload, staff also identified work overload. Horatio was surprised by the volume and variety of emails that a graduate administrator received and Bronson mentioned similar feelings about recruitment staff. Being exposed to staff members from other areas created an appreciation for their work and empathy with their situation.

Service Improvement

A final subtheme that emerged in discussion about a service design method, was the opportunity for service improvement. As staff progressed through the workshops, their perceptions about the effect of the activity changed.

The initial expectation of most staff of the service design project was that it would improve services to students. A few staff thought that the project was specific to website content, in part because the facilitator supported institutional websites. Julie’s response was typical when

she said “my expectation was that journey mapping was being done for the good of students, to help them navigate the grad studies website a bit better” (personal communication, March 4, 2019). The participants in general viewed the activity as one that they would contribute to, which would then lead to improvement. They did not however envision their own agency in those improvements at the outset of the project.

Once the workshops began, participants started to see gaps in the existing service offerings. Horatio for example mentioned that “what I noticed was the very last step when they arrive on campus, yeah we do an orientation with them, but then what” (personal communication, February 14, 2019)? Julie recalled that a student in her group “recognized a hole in the student experience from when they’re interested in the university until they arrive here” (personal communication, March 4, 2019). During the act of mapping and afterwards when reflecting on the finished journey map staff took notice of moments when the student experience was in need of support.

Once the map was completed though, some participants felt that their initial expectations were not met. Julie for example commented that “to be honest, I thought there was something else coming after that” (personal communication, March 4, 2019). When discussing the benefits of the exercise, all participants could articulate personal growth and the opportunity to connect with other staff. No staff member however spoke about specific process changes that resulted from the work.

Program Delivery

Turning aside from staff perceptions of service design methods and journey mapping itself, participants were also asked to reflect on how programs and services are currently delivered. Within this theme, three ideas arose: autonomy, policies, and budgets.

Autonomy

Both Horatio and Bronson spoke of events they were involved with where they needed to gather input from other units on campus. Final decisions regarding the event however would remain within their own home unit. Kit mentioned another dynamic at play, “I feel this a lot, whenever we’re in cross-unit conversations I hear about what *we* need within the unit, but I keep coming back to, yes, but what does the *student* need” (personal communication, February 13, 2019)? William spoke about the implementation of a system where much of the work was to understand other units’ needs so that the correct decisions could be made. This involvement was important because those units were not making the decisions themselves, but were nonetheless identified as stakeholders in the system.

Policies

Julie and William brought up the importance of policies on campus when delivering service. William spoke about the challenges that international students face when factors outside of their control make it difficult to adhere to the university’s timelines: “We have processes we try to adhere to, we try to be consistent with, I suppose those processes aren’t always the most forgiving” (personal communication, March 12, 2019). These policies, from various levels of the university and occasionally from external agencies like immigration authorities put restrictions on how a service can be adapted to an individual student’s needs.

Budgets

Finally, a few participants mentioned the influence of budgets on how their programs are delivered. Horatio, when reflecting on how priorities are established said “right now I think they are mainly made by budget” (personal communication, February 14, 2019). Another participant made the broader point that, to them, budgets are an upstream activity: “next year we’re deciding

where we're going it's not going to be based on how many students we get, because budget may not allow us to. So even though we got more students from there, it's not affecting our budget" (personal communication, February 13, 2019). The participant is describing a frustration that though budgets constrain activity, activities do not later inform the budget in future years. Regardless of the successes of the activity, this participant did not believe that new resources would be made available to them.

These three subthemes all represent constraints on change within the university environment. The autonomy units have over program delivery prevents rapid change without the socialization of ideas, especially complex change that affects multiple units' activities. Existing policies are often intended to restrict the flexibility and discretion of individual staff members when reviewing student cases. Finally, budgeting processes are often opaque to staff members who feel the effects of budget constraints but did not express an ability to affect the budget itself. In contrast with these constraints, the next theme describes the perceived drivers of change.

Change on Campus

As part of the semi-structured interview, all participants were asked what currently prompts change within the services and programs their unit offers. Three types of change agents were identified: internal or individual, external factors, and organizational change. There was also another theme of uncertainty as many participants felt like the root causes of change were unknown to them.

Individual Motivations

Many staff recounted internal motivations to either sponsor or inhibit change. These motivations ranged from a desire to improve a service, fatigue with the existing approach, and

alternatively comfort with the current way of doing things. Participants also spoke about requirements of individuals to be change agents and the risks associated.

Bronson spoke at length about how he has run many events on campus. After overseeing the same programming year after year “change is kind of coming from fatigue. It’s like, we’ve done things like this a long time, we need to do new things” (personal communication, February 12, 2019). He expressed a skepticism of solely focusing on satisfaction-based assessment to judge if programming is successful:

If we do a big presentation at orientation about what [our unit’s] services are, students will be fine, they will likely respond satisfied to it because they have nothing else to inform that thought. They are under the impression that they received all the information they need to be prepared for life here at [this university], but their understanding and their window of what’s appropriate to understand at that time is very narrow (personal communication, February 12, 2019).

Horatio also reiterated the need for change when a service is continued without examination. When speaking about prioritizing work, he said, “we can’t just be doing nice to do things or things we’ve always done. I find a lot of stuff on campus is because there is this expectation, this has been happening for all these years, yes, but what results does it have and does it actually help students” (personal communication, February 14, 2019). Both participants mentioned the lack of information about outcomes of activities which then led them to question if the activity itself is the most useful way to support students.

Some staff, however, also were aware of the comfort provided by stability in a service offering. William spoke about how “some folks just don’t want things to change. Because it’s how they understand it and it’s how they prefer it... I do find that some faculty are resistant to

change because the existing process suits them” (personal communication, March 12, 2019). Julie also noted that the campus has “a very comfortable culture” (personal communication, March 4, 2019). Interestingly, when staff spoke of comfort being a barrier to change they referred to other groups of people, not themselves. Bronson, speaking for himself, used the very same topic of comfort to imply a driver of change:

I think I’ve become more accustomed in my role, I don’t think it’s a larger institutional question, but just for myself I’ve been in the role long enough now that I’m more secure in it and can prompt those questions (personal communication, February 12, 2019).

The participants’ perception of comfort or stagnation internally was a motivating force. When projected to other staff members though it became a rationale for inaction.

Staff also identified internal drive and initiative as a precursor to change. Julie for example mentioned:

It usually takes someone who is bold enough and who is persistent enough to push for change within the campus community. If that person is not a manager, then it is difficult. It has to take a manager who really wants to stick their neck out, regardless of consequences (personal communication, March 4, 2019).

Here, Julie identified a number of internal pre-conditions for change to happen. She framed change as a struggle which requires a champion. That champion needs authority based on position within the organization. Julie, when prompted, expanded on the idea of consequences by naming poor relationships with other staff and units as a potential cost of agitating for change. Kit also took up this theme by saying “a lot of people who have great ideas don’t have the motivation to do the whole networking thing... they’re not doing it from a crafty mindset where if I navigate this relationship then that’s where I can have that conversation” (personal

communication, February 13, 2019). They also mentioned that if a staff member is not in a leadership role they may not know where to take the conversation. Both participants describe the act of change in terms of conversations with others and positional authority seems to be a factor in the success or failure of the conversations or even more fundamentally whether the conversation can be had at all. Regardless, individual initiative is the intrinsic driver of change in these instances.

When speaking about change in higher education, staff clearly identified internal qualities that a change agent needs. When speaking about their own motivations, staff identified fatigue with existing programs and a motivation to discover a better way of doing things. However, when speaking about others, staff identified a sense of comfort which prevents change and lack of authority or skill in navigating change processes as barriers to change. Numerous staff spoke of change in terms of conversations, dialogue and relationships on campus.

External Factors

Outside of the individual, research participants spoke of external factors that could prompt or prevent change. Budgets and policies were already identified above in the presentation of program delivery themes and were very real restraints on change. When asked for specific examples, most participants responded with changes that occurred after a problem was identified. Rather than respond to opportunities, participants felt that the organization was more responsive to complaints and negative feedback.

Beyond budgets and policies, staff spoke about times when a complaint or issue was raised in the organization. As Julie put it, “in extreme cases, it’s usually when there’s a complaint to a higher level, they usually drive changes” (personal communication, March 4, 2019). William was less diplomatic and said change occurs when “somebody gets pissed off. It

could be faculty, it could be [unit] staff ” (personal communication, March 12, 2019). The language and tone used by staff to describe these situations was more forceful than when discussing internal factors and motivations. Staff perceived that existing change processes or procedures could be bypassed when the right person receives evidence of a poor experience. Of interest, out of the examples given, it was as likely for a faculty or staff member to initiate this sequence of events as a student.

Another type of problem that staff spoke about was underperformance. Bronson for example spoke about a program they offered that failed to meet its own goals in terms of number of students reached and learning outcomes among those students who did participate. This failure led to an internal examination of the program to find alternate ways of delivering the content. Note that this judgement was one that Bronson placed on himself, “from my perspective it was a failure, so that spurred me to say ‘what can I do differently’” (personal communication, February 12, 2019). Julie also spoke of enrolment driving change such as if fewer qualified applicants are received to a program by adjusting deadlines that year or averages the next. These examples contrast with another staff members perception who noted that:

I think in a corporate [environment] they’re a lot more focused on profits and in order to have a successful product you’re constantly evaluating it. At the university that doesn’t happen. I feel like there’s the status quo here, oh we’ll always have students here regardless, we could try to get more students, hey let’s try this. But I don’t find that there’s that drive here for student engagement (personal communication, February 14, 2019).

In this we see mixed perceptions of university staff’s ability to respond to challenges. He held the belief that, as opposed to corporate contexts, university staff lack a common goal and source

of truth for evaluating success. In the absence of such, Horatio suggested that inertia is a more powerful force.

When speaking about external factors of change, the participants noted individual instances where problems were identified and action taken. They also, however, noted a general sentiment that the university system can have difficulty identifying problems in a systematic way. The problems noted were elevated due to individual actions and reactions, not quantitative measurements.

Organizational Factors

A final factor that arose in the interviews with respect to change on campus was organizational. Many staff related recent experiences of changes in leadership or structure of their units which then influenced changes in programs and services.

Kit, when speaking of change mentioned two moments in particular. First, she described the change of a dean and the new direction to do certain things in a different way. Second, Kit spoke of a recent organizational change that saw a business function move from one division to another. She described the change as sudden, occurring in a short amount of time:

When the one arm within [unit] was basically shut down on a day. It didn't affect a lot of staff initially, one hugely, but then the process of moving [the business function] then, the decision happened quickly, but the processes are still folding out (personal communication, February 13, 2019).

Kit describes an interesting phenomenon where a major change was a surprise to affected staff and the immediate effects were not obvious. Even when major change occurs, the pre-established processes take time to respond. Horatio reflected on the same event but from a different perspective. When asked about changes he said "I haven't actually seen that... I'd be interested

in seeing that. I feel like we always hear that change is going to come, but then it doesn't happen" (personal communication, February 14, 2019). They followed with specific examples of promised change that had not been realized and reflected on the frustration of not being able to strategically plan into the future with unknowns hovering on the horizon. As a counter example another participant mentioned that a new leader was hired in their unit and "the previous [leader] was about doing what's best for the students, and that hasn't changed. It's not like there's new space" (personal communication, February 12, 2019). In this instance, a change of leadership did not change the trajectory of the office and the internal goals were maintained.

A possible rationale for why an organizational change did not immediately prompt process changes was provided by William. Rather succinctly, he shared the following insight:

A lot of things are interconnected. Changing one is going to have an impact on others to a greater or lesser degree. It becomes a matter of not only do we change this one thing, but we have to look at the five things connected to it, and look at the changes to those or at least consider how the single change will affect those. Anything you do, instantly widens in scope (personal communication, March 12, 2019).

Here, William suggested that the complexity and interconnectedness of processes can become a barrier to change. When combined with the previous noted tendency towards autonomy in delivery of services, making changes across units would rarely be sudden.

Within this theme participants noted that organizational factors can influence change in service delivery. Change within the organization, either at a leadership level or by changes within the structure of the organization can inform services and programs. The interconnected nature of the organization however can still delay or minimize the effects of even significant organization change.

Uncertainty About Causes

Finally, there was a consistent and significant theme of staff members not being sure exactly how change is instigated in university systems. Participants expressed a skepticism that the journey mapping exercise could effect change. They also described why change agents can fail in the university system. Finally, they also spoke about moments when the hierarchical structure did not communicate information both up and down the organization.

When specifically asked how they could see a journey mapping exercise informing change in services or programs, a number of participants were uncertain. William said, “I don’t really know how those workshops could inform existing processes any more than just being aware. There is only so much we can really do, I feel” (personal communication, March 12, 2019). Julie as well expressed that the project was not fully resolved, “It felt like what was the intention at the start had been achieved at the end, but I did feel like there was something else coming after that, or maybe it’s still in the works” (personal communication, March 4, 2019). Participants drew a lot of value over the shared experience of the exercise, but had difficulty imagining real change occurring as a result of the service design activity.

Already described above, but worth repeating here, Kit mentioned the difficulty some staff have in bringing forward their ideas. She explained that the challenge was “sometimes people not knowing where to take that conversation and feeling like having within such a large institution, unless they are in a leadership role, [a place] where their little idea can germinate” (personal communication, February 13, 2019). Again, there is a theme present where staff perceive that leaders within the organization have more ability to execute their ideas than typical staff. The subtext as well is that good ideas can be lost within the organization when staff lack the correct connections.

Following up on this, Horatio spoke at length about how information is communicated within the organization. Specifically regarding change he said:

I think a change will go to a manager, who will take it to a director, and then to whoever higher and those people have just so much on their plates that nothing happens. I find on the university that there's such a big gap between workers and management compared to where I used to be (personal communication, February 14, 2019).

When asked about a specific change process occurring, William also alluded to this communication pathway, "it's too much of an unknown for us right now, what that process is going to look like. [William's supervisor] would have a better idea, but I would not" (personal communication, March 12, 2019). Staff believe that those in leadership positions receive a great deal of information and are aware that this could present a bottleneck. Unfortunately, staff also had the feeling that this bottleneck can affect the quality of work. Horatio had this to say about the lack of information coming back down the organizational ladder:

It's frustrating because then we can't plan and then we're just doing things as they come instead of strategically doing things. I think if we can start planning major projects at least six months before and then we can develop what our outcomes are, like key indicators as to whether or not our project was successful, instead of rushing around from project to project (personal communication, February 14, 2019).

Knowledge transmission is viewed as a challenge amongst participants and change processes are often described in terms of the people who will need to make executive decisions. Only a single participant spoke about governance bodies and processes, and that with the caveat that "it's a really slow, deliberative process getting to the point of that change, it could take years" (personal

communication, March 12, 2019). Outside of the slow formal mechanisms, leadership decision making was opaque to the interviewed staff.

When it comes to change, participants identified a number of themes around the causes and barriers. Overall, change is often viewed as personally motivated and depending on the relationship building skills or hierarchical authority of the change agent. Organizational change can be a catalyst for change, but often not immediately. The barriers are significant and revolve around the interconnected nature of university functions and gaps in knowledge transmission. Participants also expressed an uncertainty about how change effectively happens, whether service design activities did have any effect, and how change is communicated within the organization.

How Decisions are Made

The final theme that arose during the interviews was how decisions are made regarding programs and services in the university environment. Overwhelmingly, a sense of collegial decision-making structures emerged from the transcripts. Regarding data-based decisions, the participants were ambivalent. In some instances rich quantitative measures were used to inform decision making, and in others no data at all was used. There were also examples provided of decisions being made to satisfy other units or staff members. Overall, the nature of decision making aligns closely with the model proposed by Cameron and Quinn (2006) for internally oriented, adaptable and organic organizations, also described as clans.

Collegial Decision Making

Every participant reflected on moments when decisions were made through discussion and meetings with other units on campus. Ideas of representation, territory, consultation, and effective use of time came out of those reflections. Staff had a clear idea of the reasons why

collaboration and inclusion are important to decision making but also recognized the costs in terms of time and productivity that occur with larger groups.

Bronson described how he organizes major events, involving a planning committee. A chair is named, academic and non-academic units are invited to participate, and biweekly meetings were setup. As Bronson gained comfort in his role over the years, he scaled back the size and frequency of the engagements. Initially, however, without the confidence that came from running the program over time, Bronson erred on the side of inclusion and higher levels of engagement. As he put it:

It was the first time I had run those events and I thought it warranted heavy information gathering and sharing when you can do that through other means without bringing people together... I think this is consensus for anything, the smaller the committee, the more you can get done, but the less holistic it is and the less viewpoints, less experiences you can consider (personal communication, February 12, 2019).

Bronson felt more comfortable finding a balance between including different viewpoints and keeping the size and frequency of committee meetings down to a manageable level. An inverse relationship exists between the quantity of work being done and the number of stakeholders involved. Another participant had a more cynical perspective on the situation, saying, "I find that at the university there are meetings where stakeholders from across campus will all be in a room talking about something and nothing gets accomplished. I call it hot potato, they always pass it to someone else" (personal communication, February 14, 2019). The same participant also felt that not being included within meetings is also a problem. They recounted specific instances where decisions were made without involvement of the right people in the room.

Even in instances where a change was instigated from observation of quantifiable data, inter-office meetings were used to arrive at a collective decision. A participant detailed a change to admissions processes instigated by year over year changes to enrolment. Despite the participant's office already having a clear idea of what would be an appropriate change to make based upon that data, meetings were held with the relevant academic units for consultation and approval. The actual change was one recommended previously but required the collection of sufficient data to be presented to a larger group before action could be taken.

All staff had instances where they described collegial decision-making processes in action. Though some were frustrated by a perceived lack of action out of that approach to collective discussion, everyone was very aware of the risks of both being left out of important conversations and excluding others.

Use of Data in Decision Making

Through the course of the interviews, participants expressed different approaches to the use of data in decision making. Some made full use of both qualitative and quantitative data sets. Others did not believe that data informed decision making at all. Many were bemused by the idea of incorporating student perspectives in decision making as a logically positive approach but one rarely taken.

Bronson provided the fullest picture of effective and thoughtful use of data to inform choices about programs and services, including a natural skepticism and critical examination of the assessment. He explained that “we have enough quantitative data from a variety of sources” (personal communication, February 12, 2019) while highlighting numerous surveys done by both off-campus and on campus groups. He wanted to further explore ideas about programs through focus groups with different segments of the student body to “elicit the qualitative responses from

each one to see what recommendations come or anything in particular that is not being addressed in those surveys” (personal communication, February 12, 2019). Despite this mixed-method approach, Bronson still had concerns about his office’s motivations for assessment. Primarily, the worry is that “we do the assessment for the sake of doing the assessment” (personal communication, February 12, 2019). As mentioned above, the danger expressed is that assessment could be used as a tool for measurement of satisfaction alone. When asked to expand on that though, Bronson spoke about how this could turn into an answer to the wrong question:

I think “did this go well” speaks to job efficacy. Did I do my job well to do this program, which is vital and I’m not saying it’s a self-indulgent thing, I think everyone wants to know did what we put together were the students satisfied with what it was. But again the question of “what is it” is more important (personal communication, February 12, 2019).

From here, he described concerns about programs lacking relevancy after being offered year after year. Questions like, is there an alternate mode of delivery or a new model for programming, were raised along with the thought that typical assessment methods wouldn’t uncover the answers. Ultimately, Bronson, though well versed in methods of assessment, was concerned about the risk that they were delivering the wrong program very well.

As an alternate perspective, Horatio did not believe that their unit used data in a meaningful way. Despite that, he still thought there would be value in doing so, “I think moving forward we have to start working more with assessment and seeing what students’ experiences are with the various products and strategies because right now we don’t do that” (personal communication, February 14, 2019). When asked specifically about how student perspectives are captured in planning, the response was a short “none at all” (personal communication, February 14, 2019).

Responsiveness to Other Units

Related to the collegial approach to decision-making, there was also an awareness that staff needs had to be accounted for when major choices were being made. Though there were instances where other units were involved solely to inform them, in most instances the invitation of participation also presumed a shared authority and accountability. While all participants emphasized the importance of putting students first, it was very common to also express that the needs of other staff members had to be balanced against those student needs in order for the activity to be successful.

Horatio described a situation where many stakeholders on campus needed to be involved in the delivery of an event, but final decision-making authority remained within the sponsoring unit:

Usually we have big committee meetings for [the event] and the event coordinator will go through the schedule of the day and ask for feedback on certain areas. But it is mainly [the sponsoring unit's] event and it's what they say. It's how they want the day to go and how it will benefit them most (personal communication, February 14, 2019).

Bronson however described the danger of inviting but not involving others. As he put it, “if you're bringing people to the table, there has to be a buy in. When you invite them to be a part of the discussion for the planning, you've given them a voice, you can't negate that voice when they want to contribute to it” (personal communication, February 12, 2019). William as well suggested that the diversity of viewpoints is valuable to arrive at the right decision. Broadly speaking, the participants felt that the opinions and thoughts of staff from other units were important, even in instances where they disagreed with those thoughts.

One point of disagreement came from the concern that other units would represent selfish interests over the needs of students. Kit described in both general and specific terms instances where staff in other units would advocate for a situation that benefited the unit rather than the student. The delivery of a large campus event was changed to occur on a single Friday compared to previous offerings over two days including a Saturday. Kit felt that this choice was made for staff members' benefit rather than being student centered. Interestingly, many participants would express their disagreements with other units' staff decisions in similar terms. The consistent concern was that other units do not always consider students first. Yet, instead of this line of thought leading the participant to dismiss or reject the other units' choice, our participants would instead suggest that a balance of needs is important. Unfortunately, this balance was in most cases arrived at by preferring the needs of other staff members over students.

Summary of Findings

The results from interviews with staff members at this university can be thematically broken down into four major themes. These themes are perceptions of service design, how programs are delivered, how change happens, and finally how decisions are made in a university environment. Particular focus was paid to the perceptions of staff members as they described university dynamics.

Broadly, staff exhibited a lack of awareness of service design methods prior to this project. Their expectation was that the process would be used to improve the student experience but were unsure how that would happen. They did perceive very real value in creating empathy for the student experience, bringing staff together from different areas of campus, exploring new ideas, and seeing a complex process holistically. The tangible value that staff gained often had little to do with immediate improvements in an existing process or program. Instead, staff

expressed appreciation for the opportunity to come together and share ideas in a constructive and safe environment.

When describing how programs are currently delivered on campus, participants spoke of autonomy, policies, and budgets. The latter two sub-themes represented constraints on the ability of staff to deliver programs. Despite those constraints however most staff also described significant autonomy on the part of units and individual staff members to make decisions about their programming as long as those decisions were made within existing policy and budget frameworks.

Participants also expressed their views on how change occurs in the campus environment. In agreement with the previous theme of autonomy, individual motivation featured strongly. Whether stemming from a desire to try something new, or to improve the student experience, participants recalled many instances where the instigation for change is personal to a staff member. The staff also described instances where external factors prompted a change. Interestingly, these external factors were often characterized as negative events such as complaints or underperformance such as an undersubscribed program. The staff did not mention instances of external motivation being spurred by an opportunity or changing landscape in external markets. The study participants also commented on organizational change, but were ambivalent when it came to the effects of such shifts on operations. Even when multiple staff spoke about the same event, perceptions differed dramatically when it came to whether the organizational change had a meaningful impact on day to day activities. Many participants noted how the complexity of a university made change difficult as it would often take time for a change process to percolate through the system. Finally, on the topic of change, many participants spoke of challenges in knowledge transmission within the system. This issue

happened both laterally and horizontally across the organization. Staff felt that superiors often did not have the best information to make decisions, yet also felt themselves left out of conversations. Across the organization, there was a solid understanding that opportunities for sharing knowledge were needed and valuable across units. Change, and barriers to change, were complex in the eyes of participants.

Finally, and related to change processes, participants spoke of how decisions are made in a university environment. Unsurprisingly, collegial approaches and methods were common and valued. The costs of such collaborative approaches were also well understood and described in terms of slowing activity down or shifting the focus of conversations into organizational needs over meeting the needs of students. Data was unevenly used based on the perceptions of the staff interviewed. In some instances, staff felt that there was no evidence of data informed decision making, and in others very rich data sets were described. Of note, systematic approaches to collecting and using student perspectives were absent. Conversely, multiple instances of decisions made to placate or respond to the needs of other units were provided. In what had become a pattern in the research results, in the absence of systemic approaches to activity, group and collaborative behaviours were exhibited to inform decisions and share accountability.

In the following chapter we will revisit these results in light of existing theory and practice. In addition, we will propose future research suggested by these findings and of course most importantly answer the original research questions proposed by this project.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This research study set out to explore the intersection of organizational culture and service design methods within higher education. Previous research had consistently identified cultural barriers as significant when explaining the lack of widespread adoption of service design approaches in the industry. Using an interpretative phenomenological approach, we sought to answer the following questions:

- How does organizational culture affect the adoption of service design approaches?
 - How do staff in internally focused organizations perceive culture building and service improvement?
 - How do staff understand the purposes and outcomes of a service design exercise?

In this chapter, we will discuss the interpretation of the findings, answer these research questions, provide suggestions for further research, discuss the implications for theory and finally make recommendations for the practice of service design within the context of higher education.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this section we will revisit each of the themes uncovered in the previous chapter's data and provide a deeper analysis with reference to the relevant literature and our central research questions. To reiterate, the four main themes are (a) perceptions of service design activities, (b) program delivery, (c) change on campus, and finally (d) decision making.

Below is a summary of the findings explored in the previous chapter. Four themes and sixteen sub-themes were identified. In Table 1, the number of participants that spoke to each

subtheme is recorded alongside the total number of times that sub-theme arose in the overall project.

Table 1:
Summary of themes and sub-themes

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Sub-theme</u>	<u>Number of participants</u>	<u>Frequency of sub-theme in transcripts</u>
Perceptions of service design methods			
	Lack of familiarity with service design	3	6
	New ideas	5	10
	Bringing people together	5	16
	Holistic view of process	5	9
	Empathy	5	21
	Service improvement	4	7
Program delivery			
	Autonomy	4	4
	Policies	2	4
	Budgets	2	4
Change on campus			
	Individual motivations	3	6
	External factors	4	5
	Organizational factors	3	5
	Uncertainty about causes	4	5
How decisions are made			
	Collegial decision making	5	15
	Use of data in decision making	5	12
	Responsiveness to other units	4	6

Table 1. Summary of themes and sub-themes

The overall themes were unsurprisingly guided by the semi-structured interviews themselves. Thus, the sub-themes are of greater importance to this study as they grew organically from the conversations and were driven by the participants themselves. For example, all participants were asked to reflect on how programs are designed and delivered within their units. Not all participants though spoke of the role of policies in that conversation. Some common sub-themes such as empathy, bringing people together and collegial decision making were present in all interviews. In the interpretation of data below we will also spend time on less prevalent themes and those instances where participants viewed the same phenomenon differently.

Perceptions of Service Design

The participants in this research study did not come into it with strong ideas about the purposes of service design methods. Most were unfamiliar with the terms associated and had not been involved in such projects in the past. Their fresh perspectives are valuable to analyze as the absence of prior views may expose underlying cultural values present in the environment.

As noted earlier, Kalback (2016) had suggested three specific purposes for the creation of alignment diagrams such as journey maps: changing the perspective of the organization from inside-out to outside-in; creating alignment across functions in the organization; and finally creating shared reference points to inform strategy. When asked about their expectations, our participants felt that the journey mapping project would improve student outcomes and result in changes to how students are supported. This expectation was not met and broadly speaking the participants were disappointed in the lack of tangible outcomes. Nonetheless, the staff did express appreciation for the value they gained in interacting with other staff members and viewing the overall process from a holistic point of view.

Kalbach's (2016) first purpose in alignment activities, changing perspectives to outside-in, conflicts with the description of clan cultures by Cameron and Quinn (2006). If clan cultures prefer to seek answers from either within their organization or by mimicking similar organizations, a journey mapping exercise has the potential for creating a cognitive dissonance. The participants experienced this friction. Though all thought it was critical for the organization to be more receptive to student viewpoints and to seek solutions in novel ways, this approach did not align with current institutional practices and operations. The natural solutions to complex problems within this environment are cross-unit meetings and creating opportunities for engagement amongst staff. It is through diversity and collegiality that progress is made within the system. This finding then begins to answer the questions raised by other researchers when cultural traits are identified as barriers to change. When Davis and Fifolt (2018) described the issues a six sigma process had in a higher education context, the root causes likely lay in the deeply held values of the organization: a prioritization of accommodation and inclusion over efficiency. Unfortunately, the participants noted that these behaviours also increased the internal focus of the organization. When a large number of staff need to come together there exists a tendency for the staff to begin representing their unit rather than advocating on behalf of the student experience. This phenomenon is echoed by one of our participants who did not initially wish to participate in the project but worried that if they did not, their unit would not be represented in the discussion. As noted by Orton and Weick (1990), loosely-coupled systems are composed of units that are not just responsive to change elsewhere in the system, but also perceptive of changes. The desire of staff to be included when discussions are taking place is a tangible example of the information gathering hypothesized by the theory. This incredible desire to know what is happening within the organization can preclude or limit the ability of staff to

know what is happening without. Many participants noted the large amount of time they needed to devote to this sort of activity and the overall constraint of such a time commitment on their ability to carry out their normal work.

The second purpose of a journey mapping exercise is to create alignment across the organization (Kalbach, 2016). In this purpose we see a clear overlap between the organizational culture and the stated intentions of this service design exercise. Participants all saw value in aligning efforts with other units when supporting the same students. Another feature of clan cultures is the fluid environment, especially compared with the other internally focused culture, the bureaucracy (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Our participants had experienced various and significant amount of organizational change in terms of unit names, manager turn over, new leadership, and functional reporting lines. In the context of this change, many expressed a need for understanding where they fit into larger processes and the overall system. They also had a similar desire to understand both where others fit in, and interestingly, how those other staff viewed the system as well. Our participants had a nuanced view of the system and were as interested in the perceptions of others as they were in the official or formal roles. The journey mapping activity was a unique opportunity to create a better understanding of how different units and staff viewed the same process in a non-threatening and focused way. Many participants noted and appreciated the relative safety of the environment within which the service design activity took place. By shifting the focus of attention on the student experience, staff were able to more easily share their viewpoints and stories in a constructive and collaborative manner. These findings support the work of Cross, Ernst, and Pasmore (2013) when they described the need to engage the power of informal networks in an organization to effect change. The limitations of formal structures in complex environments can be circumvented through boundary spanning

connections. The only frustration expressed within this theme was that the activity did not go far enough. The participants wanted to see similar approaches used, but immediately thought of other stakeholders such as faculty, college staff, and more senior staff as possible participants. This finding suggests that the same desire for information gathering, sharing, and empathy building extended to a curiosity about these other internal groups.

The final primary motivation for conducting a journey mapping exercise articulated by Kalbach (2016) is to create a shared point of reference to inform strategy. This intention strongly aligns with the work of Weick et al. (2005) who suggested that sensemaking activities do not simply describe the past but also inform the future. Indeed, a common refrain from participants after seeing the final journey map produced was to ask the question, what now? The act of synthesizing and articulating the student journey immediately prompted a desire to act on the information. Unfortunately, the sheer complexity of a university setting makes it difficult to make immediate and widespread changes (Burke, 2014). Both Orton and Weick (1990), when describing loosely coupled systems and researchers such as Roberts (2017) who studied blueprinting activities in higher education recommended that change be done incrementally and locally. If such a change approach is preferable in this setting, then the act of creating shared reference points through storytelling, journey mapping, and other alignment activities is likely even more valuable than would be immediately obvious. If the organizational culture is more receptive to small and local change, the challenge for change agents would be to ensure all of the local activity is aligned against larger organizational goals. Unfortunately, our participants did not express a feeling of becoming aligned through this activity. Though they valued seeing the process laid out in front of them, they did not reconceptualize their work or the work of others through the new lens.

Overall, the perceptions that staff had of the service design process were positive. The frustrations were that the process itself did not initiate immediate change or did not involve more stakeholders. The dominant organizational culture present within this university had two effects on the perceptions of the service design activity. One, the act of bringing staff together from different units was greatly valued by participants. They appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the role of others in supporting students and exploring new ideas in a safe space. On the other hand, however, this same culture which values the autonomy of different units, and appreciates any insight into their activities, also inhibits significant change and the creation of shared values. Ultimately, the perceptions of staff regarding service design is of less importance than their perceptions of their own organization. Since the feelings participants had regarding service design were not deeply held, it behooves us to examine in more detail the thoughts, values, and beliefs of participants with regards to change, decisions, and program delivery in university contexts.

Program Delivery

Participants characterized how programs on campus are delivered both in terms of constraints and overall approach. Again, the sub-theme of autonomy was present when describing unit activities, but our participants also detailed both the policy and budget environments as constraints on unit and individual autonomy. This theme has implications for service design approaches as it represents important considerations for how programs are perceived to be designed and delivered, thus how they may be changed in the future.

Of interest, the participants spoke of both budgets and policies not as enablers of activity but as constraints on it. Both levers can be viewed as mechanisms for central control within an organization, and in a loosely-coupled system represents a relative rare set of tools (Orton &

Weick, 1990). In this context, change can be viewed as something that central controls aim to restrict rather than sponsor, or at least staff perceive such to be the case. To address the challenge of change within a complex system it seems as important to the organization to inhibit undesirable change as it is to encourage desired change. This scenario of course, is one of the central problems that service design as a field was meant to solve; in the face of internal controls, policy environments, and reward systems that encourage efficiency over innovation, how can an organization avoid irrelevance, albeit cost-effective irrelevance, in the broader marketplace (Shostack, 1982)? Service design activities that are conducted without regard for the broader budgetary and policy environments within their institutions will face significant challenges as evidenced by this study's data.

On the other hand, the autonomy that units have in delivering programs does represent an opportunity for service design approaches to have a noticeable impact. As Johnson et al. (2015) found at Oklahoma State, when low or no cost changes could be identified in a service design activity, the changes were often made immediately. Staff were receptive to small changes that they had the authority to make within their existing activities. Participants in this study similarly mentioned specific cases of small changes that they have since incorporated into their work as a result of the activity. Unfortunately, to reiterate the theme yet again, this autonomy has the opposite effect when it comes to systemic change. As our participants noted, many changes affect multiple units and it is viewed as undesirable in this cultural context to make changes unilaterally within the system.

Change on Campus

Though widespread change is difficult to execute on campus, our participants had a significant amount of thoughts to share about how it does happen. They described individual

motivations, external instigators, organizational shifts, and finally they described the ways and times in which they did not know how or why change happens. These thoughts are valuable to service design practitioners looking to ground their activities in the existing mental models of university staff members.

If staff feel that the overall university system resists change, the same is not true of their own personal feelings regarding the phenomenon. Our participants often ascribed change to their own desire for personal growth within their profession and wish to improve their own practice. When describing the motivations of other staff, participants would describe the lack of evidence for change to feelings of comfort or inertia. This insular perspective where the “other” or unknown actors are perceived as having different motivations than the individual perceiving the situation is perhaps an opportunity for journey mapping activities. The participants often commented on the value of seeing the same process through the eyes of other staff members and the shared perspective created empathy for the other staff members’ situation. The assumption that other staff members did not want to change for negative reasons was real, but also easily discarded once an in-person connection was made. At that point, the human-centered values expressed by participants took over and staff genuinely tried to understand the perspectives of the other. The organizational value of collaboration, which the work of Cameron and Quinn (2006) suggested would be present in this system, provides a clear opportunity for journey mapping to seamlessly support the institution. The unhealthy assumption that other staff do not change due to laziness was present only due to a lack of opportunity to dispel the notion. The overall culture of the organization encourages and values open communication, networking, and empathy with other members.

In addition to the desire to improve professionally, staff also described other factors that made it possible or not for an individual to inspire change. Many described the need to have the right conversations with the right people. The qualities such a change agent needs were also described in ambivalent terms. Change agents, in the views of our participants at times need to be crafty, strategic and willing to accept negative consequences. Again, we see instances where change is not necessarily fostered by the formal organization and is dependant on informal networks and activities. This finding calls to mind the work of Soda and Zaheer (2012) who described the power of informal networks within organizations. In contrast with the advice of both Junginger (2015) and McKendall (1993), these informal networks are, in this context, potential vehicles for change as opposed to inhibitors. Perhaps in the context of clan cultures when the formal mechanisms within the organization seek to control and limit change, it is the informal networks that carry out this essential activity. Of note, our participants did not have negative feelings towards agents that carried out change activities even though they described the way in which such agents would have to go about their work as almost subversive. Amongst our participants, negative language more frequently arose when describing staff or cultures that were content to do the same thing as they had in the past. There existed a strong desire for positive change, but also a concern that it would not be broadly supported in the environment.

Participants in this study also spoke of how they thought external factors initiated change in the university environment. At the institutional level, change was often viewed as responding to negative events such as a drop in the number of applicants to a program. Staff provided examples of student feedback prompting change but in the context of a complaint that reached a high-level staff member, bypassing normal processes. Noticeably absent was a mechanism for collecting external feedback or information to pursue opportunities. Many staff felt that the

university system was reactive and would only respond to events once they had escalated. These perceptions are in agreement with qualities of clan cultures described by Cameron and Quinn (2006). Though there is perhaps an opportunity to introduce positive feedback loops into a university system through service design approaches, these results suggest that such a strategy will not necessarily be successful as it would be at odds with the dominant organizational behaviours.

Also in accordance with typical clan qualities (Cameron & Quinn, 2006), our participants described many instances of significant organizational change. Though in some instances the direction of the unit they worked with remained the same through leadership changes, in other cases functional responsibilities dramatically changed due to restructuring or executive turnover. In the face of this significant and sustained organizational change the reactive nature of the system is more understandable. Many staff noted a concern that long-term planning was difficult if not absent in their work. With notable exceptions, such as the work of Junginger (2008), it is relatively rare in the existing research in service design to find examples where service design approaches are intentionally used to support structural change within organizations. The idea is straightforward, as intentional change of a service often necessitates a change in the organization providing the service. For most outwardly focused companies, such as adhocracies or market organizations (Cameron & Quinn, 2006) it is natural to start with a change process first with the customer, their needs, then go to the service or product provided, and finally arrive at the organizational context. There is perhaps an opportunity to reverse that process when using service design approaches within inward focused organizations. In a field like education ideas such as products, services, and customers are already alienating descriptions for the central functions of teaching and research (Saunders, 2015). Given that organizational change is an

ongoing process, it is perhaps through this venue that service design has value. Further expansion of this idea will occur in a later section.

Finally, on the theme of change, our participants also expressed uncertainty about how change occurs. They described scenarios where information is not passed either up, down, or across the organization. The previously mentioned constraints such as policy or budgets were generally opaque to our participants. Even instances of major organizational changes were described as sudden and surprising. In this we see more clearly why our participants had concerns regarding the effectiveness of service design. Without seeing a path towards change, the participants did not see how their involvement in a journey mapping project would contribute to any such changes. Though as an interface for knowledge transmission, the activity was valued, as an opportunity to improve a service it was disappointing. Again, we see clearly a situation where because of how participants viewed the system they worked within, the journey mapping activity provided more value for culture building than service improvement.

How Decisions are Made

A further theme that arose from this study's data concerned how staff felt decisions were made within the university. Three sub-themes emerged including collegial approaches, use of data, and responsiveness to other units. The results from these themes align strongly with Cameron and Quinn's (2006) competing values framework, Orton and Weick's (1990) loosely coupled systems theory and Alvesson's (2001) description of knowledge intensive organizations.

It is entirely unsurprising that in a university environment staff exhibit an appreciation for the collegial model of decision making. Though many described situations where the collegial process slowed down activity, participants described many situations where they did not wish to be left out of any such discussions. The staff also described situations where they needed

additional support or guidance in a project and used collegial approaches to mitigate the perceived risk. In this, staff would agree with the strengths and weaknesses of collegial cultures expressed by Bergquist and Pawlak (2007). In such a culture, a journey mapping activity could be used to facilitate such conversations but the outcomes of such an activity would be resisted if applied to another group on campus. The extent of a change process would be limited by the extent of involvement in the activity.

In this phenomenon though there is perhaps hope as well. As both Orton and Weick's (1990) description of loosely coupled systems and Mossberg's (2001) description of chaos theory applied to management of higher education suggest, the university system is highly sensitive to changes elsewhere within the system. Though the exact interpretation of a problem identified and possible solutions will differ unit by unit, staff within the university are well versed in noticing activity elsewhere and introducing small local changes if they are deemed valuable. Of importance is that the receiving unit needs to see the value. This evidence aligns with the recommendations Roberts (2017) made when providing advice to facilitators of blueprinting activities in a university environment. Among those recommendations, there is a suggestion that such activities begin within single units before being expanded outwards and further that effort should be made to share successes up the organization in part to encourage participation from other areas. A change agent wishing to conduct a prescriptive and systemic change process will be disappointed and frustrated. If, however, that agent is willing to give up control of the change process to the various arms of the institution there is an opportunity for widespread effects.

Participants spoke as well about the use and non-use of data in decision making. The perceived limitations of post-event assessment present an opportunity for service design

approaches to fill a need within the system. Many participants were concerned that existing efforts to quantify activity were focused on validation for the unit or person conducting the assessment or only measuring satisfaction of the student. This finding calls to mind the work of Alvesson (2001) in that within knowledge intensive organizations it is not always the outcomes that are measurable and so staff become more adept at managing the perceptions of their work. Nonetheless, staff identified a need to explore adjacent conceptual spaces when designing services and programs, rather than simply evaluating what was done before. Of course, such activity is one of the primary purposes behind service design thinking (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011). By focusing on the student experience rather than staff activities, the common practice of presenting one's work in the best light may be minimized, producing more valuable data for future change. As an organization, not all units actively sought out information to inform their work, but the journey mapping activity was well received due in part to the non-threatening and high-level nature of the data presented. This phenomenon is of course double edged, participants did not feel attached to the information, thus were not threatened by it, but conversely the lack of attachment also meant that they did not know how to immediately act on it either.

The final sub-theme that emerged in this study was that of responsiveness to other units when making decisions. This sub-theme ties strongly yet again with loosely coupled systems theory (Orton & Weick, 1990) and the clan cultures of the competing values framework (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). As predicted by both theories, our participants detailed multiple examples where decisions were made to accommodate the expressed needs of other units. The motivation was two-fold; in some instances it was viewed as a positive action to involve and accommodate other units. In instances where the staff member felt that the other unit's needs

were not necessarily the most important, it was still necessary to be open to their ideas. There existed a strong cultural preference for being seen to work with other units.

Research Questions

At the outset of this study, one research question and two sub-questions were proposed. How does organizational culture affect the adoption of service design approaches? How do staff in internally focused organizations perceive culture building and service improvement? How do staff understand the purposes and outcomes of a service design exercise?

Beginning with the sub-questions, our participants expected that the journey mapping project would result in tangible and identifiable changes to existing services and processes. Staff were surprised and disappointed that no such major changes occurred. Interestingly, those same staff expressed unequivocally that they found value in the opportunity to work alongside others across the organization and enjoyed a novel approach to collective activity. Creating a shared sense of purpose through the development of a student story was where the value in the activity lay.

This result is informed in part by the nature of university activity, as perceived by the participants. Though the staff members all had significant autonomy in their own roles, and made reference to changes they had personally made in their own activities, the mechanisms behind collective action in the organization were relatively opaque. The overall culture of the groups these staff worked within placed great value in collaboration. Conversely, change agents were often characterized as subversive within the same context. Effective change on the part of an individual was chalked up to the ability to risk negative consequences and engage informal networks. Our participants did not identify the journey mapping project as an opportunity to effect change by developing such a network though many described how connections they made

during the project could help them in their own work. Our participants viewed their own work as the limit of their influence and tended to see larger scale change as something for which another actor, such as a member of a leadership team, would be responsible.

With regards to the central research questions, there are three salient factors where the clan culture intersected with the service design project. These factors were the perceived value of the activity, the nature of change on campus, and finally the existing systems for control within the organization.

Relative Value of the Service Design Activity

As has been mentioned multiple times, our participants placed more value in collaborative activity than in service improvement. The nature of the culture and work environment meant that participants had difficulty seeing how large-scale change would occur. On the other hand, the large amount of autonomy that individuals had when making decisions about their own work meant that they valued learning more about other unit's activity and perceptions of the same process.

As loosely-coupled systems theory would have predicted, successful large-scale and planned change efforts are rare in the university setting (Brown, 2014). The participants in this study had difficulty understanding how such change occurs and how high-level decisions are made independent of the journey mapping process they undertook. They may have valued the smaller scale changes in their own work as a consequence of learning more about the process in question, but they did not identify the possibility that sixteen staff making small changes could in fact be viewed as a large one.

When Kalbach (2016) described the fundamental uses of journey maps as tools to change perspectives within the organization, create alignment across teams, and develop shared reference points for action, he was also describing a nuanced approach to change management. As other researchers have found, change is not a mechanical process within complex organizations. Burke (2014) for example noted, the days of Taylorism or Lewin applied to bureaucratic organizations are well past. The delivery of services in particular demand that change agents understand the culture and context of change. Journey maps address those cultural factors rather than solely identifying specific processes to alter. The route to service improvement when using these methods is via staff development. Despite this, at the outset of such service design projects the stated goals are often related to service improvement. When, as Brown (2014) put it, “cultural change underpins effective innovation and that cultural change is harder than technical innovation” (p. 208), it is perhaps surprising that practitioners of service design activities have not been more explicit in the staff development goals of the activity.

Fully immersed in a higher education culture, our participants deeply understood the value of collaborative activities. They desired to see this same project duplicated but with involvement of other groups that they were curious about such as faculty or other student profiles. A common challenge expressed by the participants in delivering student services was not understanding the roles of other staff members and what else was being done. This project addressed those concerns. Our participants noted existing approaches used for collaboration on campus, primarily meetings, yet expressed concern that those methods were inefficient or ineffective.

As a tool to improve the service a student receives from an institution, our participants had difficulty seeing this journey mapping activity as valuable. The indirect nature of change

through staff development made it difficult to observe progress for our participants. Beyond the nature of the tool though, this finding also relates to the nature of change in a post-secondary setting.

Nature of Change on Campus

The second most salient intersection between organizational culture and service design activities observed in this study relates to the nature of change on campus. Most change described by participants was either local, often personal, or organizational. The autonomy staff and units had in their roles meant that the route to large scale change was often obscure to individuals.

Without belabouring the alignment of these findings with loosely-coupled theory (Burke, 2014), it is also worthwhile to point out the connection to the competing values framework. Cameron and Quinn (2006) defined clan cultures as environments that are fluid, amongst other characteristics. Change is common as opposed to the other internally focused organizational culture, that of the bureaucracy. Confirmed by our participants, instances of large-scale change had less to do with process changes and more to do with organizational ones. Changes to functions or implementations of new IT systems were described in terms of the teams and individuals involved. The end service to students was perhaps a motivation in making a change, but to our participants the effects and conceptualization of the change was articulated through the lens of the staff involved.

Change in a clan culture is rooted in the people initiating and being affected by that change. Our participants felt that change did not come from outside of the organization but from within it. Even if a change may be made in response to external trends, the medium by which the change occurs is the individual who is then expected within the system to advocate and socialize

the idea. If that individual lacks the positional authority or informal networks required to effect the change, it is expected that the change will be limited to the individual's area of responsibility. This finding brings to mind chaos theory applied to higher education, as the overall system is not necessarily centrally managed and planned (Mossberg, 2001). Each individual within the community has a role in analyzing inputs to the system, considering possible changes, and advocating for that change to others. The likelihood of a change occurring depends on not just the quality of the idea but also the qualities of the individual. Taken further, it is easy to imagine a scenario described by the garbage can theory (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972) of multiple colliding problems and solutions circulating within the system waiting for the opportunity to gain traction.

It is within this chaos that service design activities provide an opportunity. In such a system where decisions are decentralized, the need for alignment grows. Knowing that individuals and units will make autonomous decisions about their own activities while advocating for the broader change they believe will benefit the university suggests that opportunities to socialize such ideas will be welcomed. Further, as Weick et al. (2005) suggested, the act of sensemaking can be a powerful alignment tool. Creating a common understanding of what was will anticipate the question of what should be. Going through such processes in a shared space with representations across units would also increase the likelihood of any potential changes being accepted on a wider scale. Services are difficult to describe and conceptualize (Shostack, 1982). When considering student services, opportunities for improvement, or moments when students are not enjoying the best possible experience, there is a strong possibility for individuals across the organization to come to a dramatically different conclusion about not just the possible ways forward, but also the problem itself. Journey mapping is an

elementary sensemaking exercise to, at the very least, find common language to describe the experience students have interacting with the institution. The work of Weick et al. (2005) suggested that such an activity will also inspire action. Creating a journey map is more than an act of description. The series of choices about what elements of a complex experience to include, ignore, or emphasize is meaningful in generating alignment within the organization. Once completed, the range of possible future actions will be constrained compared to what existed before the sensemaking activity.

The nature of change in a campus environment both supported and conflicted with the goals of the service design activity. As an opportunity to bring people together and share knowledge, the service design project was well received and appreciated. As a foundational element to future change, this act of sensemaking is critical. In terms of affecting large-scale change, the service design project was restricted by the overall difficulty within the system to conduct such changes. Our participants felt that their autonomy and agency did not extend beyond their own unit's activities. Beyond the local level, higher education systems though decentralized still do have controls in place to limit or encourage action. Our participants found these systems opaque and beyond them, but that fact makes it more interesting to consider within the context of this study.

Existing Systems of Control

Though from the outside, decisions within higher education settings can appear chaotic, strong systems are in place for the exercise of central authority. Our participants viewed these levers as limiting, rather than enabling, factors but nonetheless expressed an awareness of the mechanisms. Our participants also viewed these systems as uni-directional and opaque, with implications for change management on campus.

Roberts (2017) and others noted that service design projects in higher education settings can result in immediate local and no or low-cost change. Deeper, structural change is less likely to occur as a result of such projects. Mimicking the academic freedom enjoyed by faculty, our participants were able to make significant change within their own areas of responsibility. Faculty in the act of teaching can choose how to achieve the learning outcomes of a course but when desiring to offer a new course need to engage with the larger governing structures on campus. So too our non-academic staff are unable on their own to alter budgets or policies without engaging the rest of the organization.

Our participants viewed budgets and policies as things they needed to adhere to, but not something that they had the privilege of influencing. Many times they indicated that there needed to be instances where more flexibility was granted to individuals in order to make the system better and more humane, especially in instances where the student experience suffered. A few participants noted the existence of governing bodies but only to the extent that change through those avenues was fraught and lengthy. In what can otherwise be thought of as a fluid environment, at least in the perceptions of our participants, the governing structures of the university were viewed as insulators to change. If universities were to become more innovative and responsive to student needs, more effective engagement with these functions of the institution are required. Without that engagement, change efforts and service design activities risk meeting significant resistance at the very point where large scale change can be conducted.

If the governing bodies are inaccessible to the staff members in this study, in a truly bureaucratic organization it should be expected that those staff members' superiors are the link to leadership. In the clan culture of a university, there were significant perceived barriers for the exchange of such information. Our participants expressed numerous instances where information

was not effectively flowing between the staff and the management. One of the root causes identified was the volume of information that needed to be transmitted. A key part of the organizational culture was the need to involve others in decisions. The most common tools for such involvement were meetings and emails. This approach produced a perceived chokepoint in the system where management were unable to be at once accessible to their own staff and effective at engaging the rest of the management layer of the campus. Our participants highlighted specific instances of, in their views, poor decisions made due to either the wrong people being in the room or a lack of knowledge on the part of either staff or management due to a disconnect. In the fluid organizational structure, there was a clear need for constant communication between units that had two effects on the adoption of service design practices: first, the opportunity to coordinate was welcomed by those who participated, and second, the existing mechanisms for coordination within the organization made any additional time commitments a significant barrier to participation. Any service design project in such a setting would need to be conducted in a way that was cognizant of the overwhelming pressures on staff's schedules which only increases as you move up the organization.

In sum, the organizational culture of this research site had significant effects on the service design activity. Understanding the way staff members perceive of and approach change is critical in the execution of any change management process, service design processes included. Such processes were well-received as opportunities for staff to share information across units, for such an activity is well understood to be valuable and desirable. Similarly, service design approaches are appreciated within this setting as tools to create alignment amongst multiple staff and units with the possibility that future local changes will be supportive of changes made

elsewhere in the organization. Larger scale changes will however likely fail unless they engage the natural governing structures of the institution.

Implications for Practice

By combining the research results from this study and the theoretical frameworks presented in chapter two, we can see where journey mapping activities can be best applied within higher education institutions. Broadly speaking, Burke’s (2014) description of change in loosely coupled systems should be considered within any service design exercise. Similarly, Cameron and Quinn’s (2006) identification of values in a clan environment should also inform the intention behind those same design activities. Finally, the map from Weick et al. (2005) of sensemaking processes in organizations provide a practitioner with the opportunity to target a service design exercise to an appropriate moment in the organization’s learning cycle.

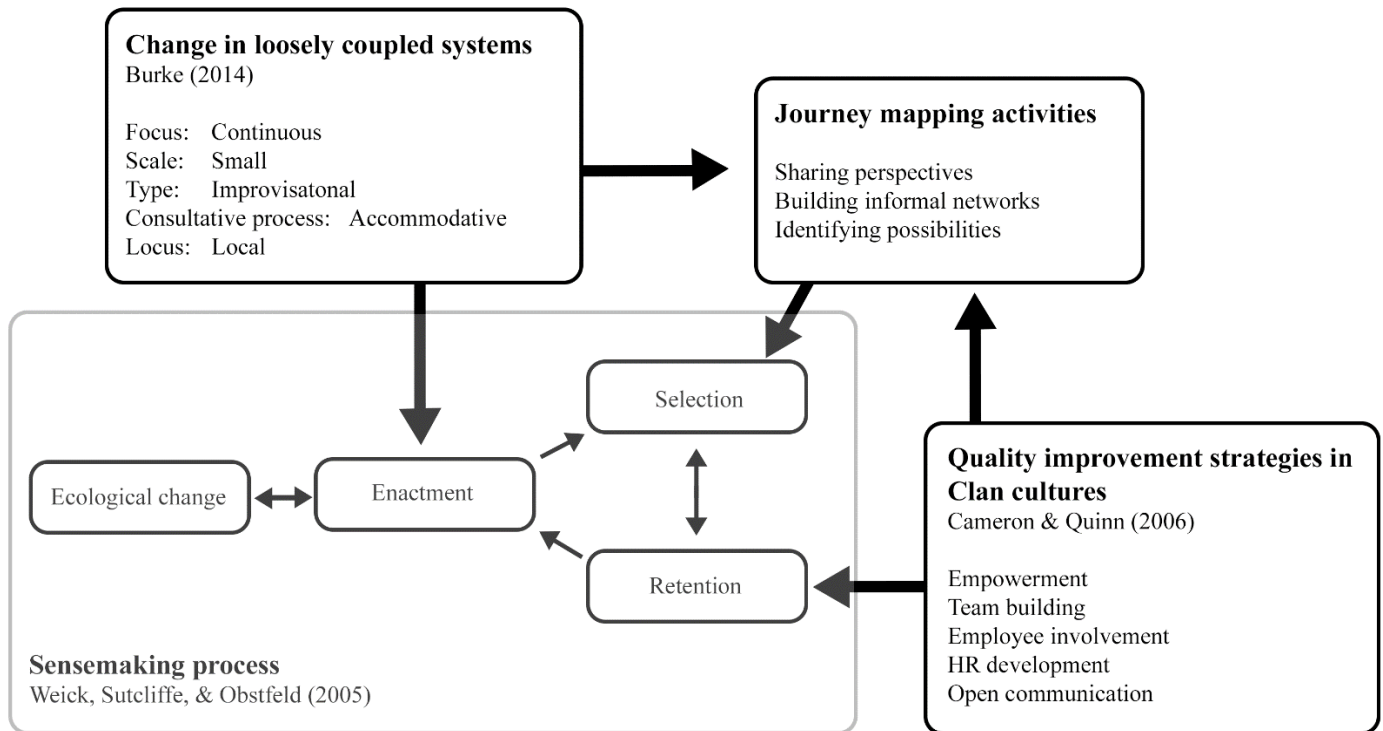


Figure 1. Relationship between journey mapping activity and theoretical frameworks

It may be logical to imagine service design and journey mapping specifically to be used in the enactment phase of the sensemaking process. Weick et al. (2005) however suggest that the opportunity lies deeper in the system. After an event, staff within the organization will selectively interpret and analyze the phenomenon. The choice of what is learned and retained by the system is filtered by the organizational values deeply held by the participants. Future action is then informed by this interpreted version of past events. Rather than intervene at the moment of enactment, journey mapping instead may be more powerful as a tool to guide the selection process as the organization makes sense of both past activities and external influences. The specific recommendations below describe in more detail opportunities that were identified by analyzing the perceptions of staff members in a loosely-coupled, clan environment.

Reframe Students as Community Members

The participants in this study were naturally empathetic with student perspectives and valued the opportunity to learn more. Given the natural inclination towards inclusion and discussion as a method of making decisions, there exists a possibility to more deeply involve students in activities by understanding the students not as customers, but as community members.

When Ostrom et al. (2011) called on higher education institutes to make full use of service blueprinting they did so with the intention of improving the customer experience. Though Cameron and Quinn (2006) suggested that a balance of perspectives and approaches is desirable regardless of the dominant organizational culture, there is still a place for honouring the local culture. The assumption of Ostrom et al. (2011) that improved customer experience is a worthwhile goal is problematic in a clan culture. By focusing on an external audience, customers

in this case, practitioners would be missing the more natural opportunity to engage the organization and culture. The word customer itself can be offensive to academic sensibilities. As Saunders (2015) asserted, students themselves do not always view their relationship to their school as a commercial transaction. More importantly, educators rarely view their roles as service providers, instead viewing themselves as facilitators for learning (Bain, 2004). Liebenberg and Barnes (2004) and Berger (2002) all found that customer focused approaches and cultures were not necessarily successful or healthy within higher education. Instead, one of the more successful models is when students are elevated as community members within the educational system. Importantly, Berger (2002) in particular found that the risk of a collegial culture was that the definition of community may not extend from faculty to include students. In such cases, where students are viewed as outsiders, the learning environment is sacrificed. Though it may seem like semantics, there is a profound difference between learner centered and customer centered approaches. A practitioner of service design working in higher education must be able to distinguish the two and associate their work with the former. A learner centered approach acknowledges the difficulty and challenge implicit in learning activities. Rather than strive for ease in the learning itself, service design can strive to remove barriers to learning.

Most importantly, this research found that the methods staff within higher education use to make decisions and improve programs and services involved collegial approaches. Staff were highly sensitive to the ideas of inclusion and exclusion and were very aware of the implications of a certain party being present or absent from any discussion. If clan cultures can be understood as family like groupings (Cameron & Quinn, 2006) then a goal of service design practitioners should be to define students as part of that family. This approach would then engage those

natural tendencies to observe and respond to the needs of other internal communities that this research found to be ever present in decision making activities.

Incremental and Local

Past service design studies in higher education have found that local and incremental changes are necessary to create quick wins within a service improvement programme (Andrews & Eade, 2013; Roberts, 2017). This pattern aligns strongly with the implications of loosely coupled theory (Weick, 1976) as applied to post-secondary environments. Acknowledging that such systems operate at an autonomous, local level does mean that change targeted at such a level will be most effective.

This research reinforces the idea that local and incremental change will be well received in a clan culture. Though this finding has already been documented in other studies, it is worth reiterating as service design methods provide great value in cross-silo improvements and activities (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011). Given such value, practitioners will be tempted by professional best practices to expand the scope of their activities. In this study as well, the participants themselves thought that the goal of the journey mapping exercise was to change processes across units to enhance the student experience, creating a cognitive dissonance at the end when no such change obviously occurred.

Our study's participants had difficulty describing how large-scale change occurs in higher education. Outside of organizational restructuring, the mechanisms of control were opaque to staff. Though both loosely coupled (Weick, 1976) and chaos (Mossberg, 2001) theories suggest that small local changes do indeed result in larger scale, albeit decentralized, changes across the system, our staff understandably had difficulty associating the two phenomena. Educating staff with these theoretical frameworks may have assisted with the

perceived success of the project. Alternatively, a service design practitioner could trust in the tenets of loosely-coupled and chaos theory and simply focus in empowering units to make local changes knowing that there will be a more widespread effect in due course.

Incorporate Service Design in Policy and Budget Development

If large scale and centrally planned change is an intended outcome of service design activities then the few controls available in higher education settings should be engaged fully. Our participants generally had difficulty in identifying how large-scale change occurred in the setting, but did identify barriers that both policy and budgets had on innovative activity. Reversing this dynamic is an unexplored area of research and practice.

If policies and budgets are limiting factors on change, then service design approaches should perhaps be applied at this level of organizational activity. In cases where centralized change is desired, rather than conduct service design exercises at a local level to improve local services, such exercises should be done to inform policy or budget discussions. The exact form of such an engagement goes beyond the scope of this research but the key finding remains the same: though staff have incredible autonomy within their own work, that same autonomy prevents widespread planned change in the environment. Budgets and policies were identified as the few institution wide tools of leadership that inhibited behaviour. However, service design approaches such as participatory design have been used in policy development in civic government (Lee et al. 2017; Prendeiville, 2009). Unexplored is the possibility to view them as tools to empower desired behaviour.

These governance mechanisms would be the natural target of activity to make cross-silo changes at an institution. This stands in contrast with the previous research implication which recommended making changes locally. Reconciling the local nature of university functions with

the institution wide impact of governance is a worthwhile, if ambitious, cause. Roberts (2017) recommended involving leadership in blueprinting activity, but chaos theory suggests that even leadership will have difficulty making widespread changes given the very local nature of most activity (Mossberg, 2001). Our participants as well noted the disconnect between leadership and service provision and provided examples of past changes that were initiated without the input of local staff to ill effect. The existing research and these findings come together to suggest that a hybrid approach would be meaningful in the existing organizational culture. If leadership can use the results of a service design activity to inform policy and budgets while staff can use those same results to make meaningful and immediate local changes, the overall system may become more tightly aligned. At the very least, the perceived disconnect that staff felt which existed between policy, budgets, leadership, and their own activities would be ameliorated, a worthwhile goal in its own right.

Incorporate Service Design in Organizational Change Processes

Broadly speaking our participants had difficulty identifying large scale changes in the post-secondary system. A notable exception to the perception related to organizational change specifically. In alignment with the description of clan systems (Cameron & Quinn, 2006), our participants described their own setting as one that experienced frequent and significant organizational change. Much like with policy and budget development, this finding perhaps represents an opportunity for new applications of service design methodologies.

Service design naturally places a focus on customer experiences and services offered by an organization. Though this is an appropriate way to begin such a process, especially when building understanding amongst staff, the next phase of activity may in clan environments demand a shift in focus. Weick et al. (2005) in describing sensemaking activities described how

once sense is made of an event, the next obvious question is ‘what do we do now’? The act of sensemaking initiates action within the organization. Our participants felt this need to do something with what they had learnt but lacked the authority to initiate such systemic changes themselves.

If policies and budgets are constraining factors on change, and further leadership are often limited by the same patterns that paralyze staff, that individual autonomy makes widespread change difficult, then organizational change is an alternate path for effecting dramatic change on campus. By reorganizing staff and units, activities can become aligned in new ways. Since collegial processes depend upon connections, networks and meetings, by making deliberate choices about the hierarchical proximity of units, leadership have an opportunity to further certain goals over others. To successfully answer the question of ‘what now’ that sensemaking activities raise, organizational restructuring is a meaningful answer. Junginger (2009) has proposed such an approach but the existing service design literature does not offer significant case studies of the approach applied in practice. If there exists concern that such organizational change is disruptive or too dramatic for frequent application, this concern should be balanced against the perceptions of staff members who feel like such organizational change is already a constant state of affairs.

Service design practitioners should consider how service design approaches could be used to support or inform organizational changes. Structural change is common in higher education, and is, compared with policy development, a proactive approach to improving outcomes. If, as Kalbach (2016) described, mapping activities are a useful tool for creating alignment within an organization then more closely associating such service design activities with reorganizations is an approach that warrants further investigation.

Use Service Design to Strengthen Informal Networks

Our participants often described situations where individuals could effect change by engaging with informal networks within the organization. Further, they also described the value of making connections with staff in other units to enhance their own work and better support students. Finally, our participants spoke of instances when formal hierarchies failed to transmit information across the organization, and informal networks were needed to do so. Taken together, there exists an opportunity to use service design activities to create, support, and strengthen these informal networks.

As found by Jermier et al. (1991), large organizations such as universities will often have subcultures within the institution. Combining these subcultures with the informal networks that McKendall (1993) identified as a major barrier for centrally planned change processes, change agents will find a fluid and complex system to navigate. Specifically, McKendall found that professional development offerings within an organization can clash with pre-existing informal networks and in turn be less effective. This finding echoes the persistent failure of service design activities to become operationalized in higher education practice; the complexities of organizational culture can interfere with centrally coordinated activities. Based on the data collected and analyzed in this study, staff greatly value the opportunity to develop such networks and use them to effect change and compensate for an overworked management layer which cannot always handle the volume of information that needs to be communicated in a complex organization.

Rather than view informal networks as a barrier to planned change, again the chaos theory approach suggests that service design practitioners should aim earlier in the design process. Instead of focusing on the outcomes of a design activity, consider the value in the

activity itself. Being purposeful about who participates in a service design activity will create new networks or support existing ones. This approach could be a subtle way for a change agent to create alignment within the organization and create the preconditions for future change efforts. For example, if two functionally related, but organizationally distant, groups were brought together in a service design exercise the immediate service changes or recommendations may be less important than the new connections made between staff in those units. As our participants noted, service design activities, with a focus on the experience of a student, created a different group dynamic than our staff experienced in meetings or committees. By drawing participant's attention outside the organization, questions of territory or internal need are less prevalent.

Clan cultures are often signified by a value placed on professional development (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). For service design practitioners, the expected outcomes of a design activity should take this value into account. The system expects autonomy within units and trust that supported staff will make good decisions. A centrally planned change process that does not accommodate these values will be resisted. When Brown (2014) detailed the challenges in implementing IT systems in a higher education setting, cultural barriers were identified as significant, but the reasons why were not fully explored. This thesis' data suggests that any campus wide IT system will face such barriers as the premise conflicts with organizational values of local autonomy and authority. Indeed, our participants critiqued specific IT projects in no small part due to lack of consultation and perceived inflexibility. The goal of leadership and change agents in such systems may be to create the preconditions for success by creating alignment in mission, vision, and values. Though this will not eliminate concerns about inflexible systems or loss of autonomy, it may mitigate those concerns.

Reverse Typical Service Design Process

Following the advice of Shostack (1982), it is natural to focus a service design process on the customer's experience. Much of the value of the activity is in capturing those experiences accurately and then designing services and organizations around the provision of an exceptional experience. Unsurprisingly, Bitner et al. (2008) suggested such an approach for higher education. Though there is incredible value in deepening the organization's understanding of the student experience, the ways in which decisions are made in clan cultures suggests an alternative approach would be more successful.

As our participants found, a traditional service design activity will be valued for the opportunity to build networks across the organization while gaining a better understanding of the student experience in a collaborative setting. Unfortunately, disappointment arrives at the point of action. Service design practitioners may want to consider using these methods for the explicit purposes of networking, professional development, and team building. The best understood avenue for service improvement in a clan culture is in staff development. A practitioner must take a long term, sustainable approach to service design in higher education settings. Framing activities as professional development opportunities will be a way to reduce the disillusionment that arises from a lack of concrete action. Building up staff will rarely be considered a failure, only an opportunity cost and the participants within this study thought the project they were a part of was a good use of their time, specifically when compared with traditional meeting structures. For the practitioner, such a long view means that they must trust that staff, when given the tools and data, will make good decisions about programs and services. Even if such improvements do not spring directly from a service design activity, the ongoing networking,

information exchange, and sensemaking activities will be subtly guiding such decisions in an aligned, if not a planned, way.

Implications for Future Research

This research study was designed as an inductive, in-depth exploration of staff perceptions of a service design activity in a single university. These intentional limitations naturally provide a path forward for future research. There is an opportunity to replicate this study in other institutions allowing for cross-site analysis. There is also room to analyze different design methods. Finally, the focus of this study was on the perceptions of staff members at a coordinator level rather than leadership. Capturing the perspective of staff in leadership roles would be a valuable addition to this study's data.

Selecting participants from a small, local pool allowed for in depth analysis of the words, reflections, thoughts, and subtext of those participants' transcripts. This approach naturally limited the comfort with which conclusions could be applied to other contexts. This study played a small part in revealing and exploring the relationship between organizational culture and service design methods. The next step will be to expand the scope of study to both challenge the conclusions of this paper and expand our understanding of the topic. A cross-site analysis with interviews of staff at different universities or colleges would provide the data to tell if such cultural interactions are common to the industry or local to a site. Larger sample sizes would also allow quantitative analysis using tools such as the Organizational Cultural Assessment Inventory to identify differences in participants' perceptions and subcultures within the organizations. Taken together, scaling up the size of this project would produce more reliable results that could then inform both theory and practice.

Beyond higher education, exploring the intersection of organizational culture and service design is of relevance to other industries. Conducting a similar study within other public sector organizations may lead to deeper understanding when divorced from the local context. The results from this study were influenced by the nature of the educational field but the extents of that influence could be better understood by stepping away from it. A partner study in a public library system, health authority, or government organization would highlight the unique characteristics within educational administration. Similarly, seeking out organizations dominant in other quadrants of the competing values framework would be ideal to be able to test the extent to which the conclusions of this study are due to the clan nature of higher education. Here in this work, both the competing values framework and loosely-coupled theory were the basis for observations and many results were interpreted through those dual lenses. This study did not however have a control of any kind, preferring to live in the perceptions of the participants and accept those viewpoints as valid. Though this allowed a rich exploration of those perceptions, it also limited the reliability of the results.

The specific design method that this study's participants took part in was the creation of a customer journey map. The choice of method was certainly opportunistic but also aligned with the needs of this research study. A journey map can involve a large number of staff and is often a foundational tool within service design work (Segelstöm, 2009). The nature of the activity has an obvious relationship to the work of Weick et al. (2005) on the role of sensemaking within organizations as well as the relationship between sensemaking and organizational culture. The results of this study may have been different if another design process was implemented. It is entirely possible that the sub-questions of this thesis would have had different answers if our participants had conducted a different activity with a different focus. Customer journey maps are

often used as exploratory methods early in a design process when basic understanding of the design problem is needed. Later stages of a service design process that are more practical such as prototyping, future state mapping, or others may have inspired different feelings and perceptions from our participants.

One of the conclusions of this study was that there would be merit in applying service design methods to higher level governance activities of an organization. Since the mechanisms of control in a loose, distributed system exist at the policy and budgetary levels, utilizing design processes in these contexts would be both novel and potentially transformative. For both of those reasons, if any institution were to experiment with such an approach, an associated research study would be valuable.

The participants in this study had much to say about leadership within their organization. The reverse perspective would be interesting to capture. The perceptions of staff in leadership positions to questions of organizational culture, program development, assessment, and innovation would be a worthwhile dimension of data to analyze in the context of the coordinator perceptions already collected. Many of the implications for practice identified in this study would be of particular value to those in leadership positions and a dedicated study on their own perceptions of this work would provide a richer context to refine these initial conclusions.

Though this study did not seek out information regarding informal networks within the organization, the data collected suggests that there is more to explore on the subject. Our participants noted the limitations of the hierarchical structure in transmitting information across the organization, the need for change agents to have the right conversations with the right people, and finally the value in making personal connections with staff horizontally across the university. Given the power of journey mapping activities to create shared vision and alignment (Kalbach,

2016), the potential to use such an activity to strengthen or create informal networks is worth further investigation. A future project using social network analysis could provide insight into how local change occurs in such systems and further our understanding of how units in a loosely coupled system exchange information and knowledge.

Concluding Thoughts

It is my belief that the field of service design can assist staff in higher education institutions in designing and delivering learner centered programs and services. The cultural barriers to operationalizing such approaches have been acknowledged but not fully explored prior to this study. By creating a better understanding of staff members' perceptions of such projects through the lens of loosely coupled systems theory, the competing values framework, and theories of sensemaking in organizations, this study provides recommendations for practitioners to deliver service design in a way that supports rather than competes with the dominant culture found in post-secondary environments.

Higher education institutions are ever changing environments marked by autonomous units and activity (Root-Robbins, 2005). In such an environment, service design approaches can provide incredible value, but only if the approaches are presented and delivered in a way that matches the values of the organization. Activities which focus overmuch on outcomes will struggle when working in an area where outcomes are ambiguous, such as the field of education (Alvesson, 1993). The findings of this study however point to another opportunity. Our participants understood and valued collaborative activity, even if the outcomes could not be articulated. A critical function in loosely-coupled, complex environments is the exchange of information and the opportunity to build informal networks across the organization (Orton & Weick, 1990; Cross et al., 2013). Collaboration itself as well as the opportunity to be seen as

collaborative, provides the value. Journey mapping activities in particular, but other service design approaches as well, could be leveraged more fully as supports for collaborative sensemaking within higher education. Creating and curating common stories within the organization will strengthen bonds between units and align activities over time. More importantly, they can be used to introduce a key stakeholder that is often missed in meetings and working groups: the students themselves. Incorporating student voices at an appropriate time when the organization can make sense of the needs expressed is an important design challenge that merits effort. Infiltrating a clan environment by reframing students as internal stakeholders already aligns with learner centered values present in the system. What is missing are practical opportunities to do so not when programs and services are being evaluated but as they are being designed. It is here I believe that service design can be valuable to post-secondary institutions in strengthening the community and enhancing the student experience.

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APPENDIX ONE

Interview Schedule

1. You recently participated in a journey mapping exercise. What do you think the goals of such exercises are?
2. Tell me about your experience.
 - a. What was the most engaging part of the exercise?
 - b. How did the experience match your expectations for the exercise.
3. What value or benefits did the activity have for your unit and/or for you personally?
4. As part of the project, you interviewed a student and also co-created a map with a different student. Describe what it was like to collaborate with students directly.
 - a. Were there any challenges working with students?
 - b. Did the students see any processes differently than our staff?
5. As part of this project, you also worked closely with staff from a large number of units from across campus. Describe that experience.
6. Would you ever want to participate in a similar activity in the future? Why or why not?
7. How are decisions about programs and services in your unit normally made?
 - a. How are student perspectives captured?
 - b. How are other units involved?
 - c. What data is most often used?
 - d. What usually initiates change?
8. From your perspective, how can such journey mapping exercises influence decision making in your unit?
9. What are the biggest barriers to change in programs or services at the university?

10. Given everything you have already mentioned, is there anything you would like to add regarding this type of activity for organizational decision making?

Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument

For each of the following items, distribute 100 points among the four options. Score an option higher if it is more similar to the university portfolio that you work within.

1. Dominant Characteristics

- a. The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves.
- b. The organization is a very dynamic and entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick their necks out and take risks.
- c. The organization is very results-oriented. A major concern is with getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement-oriented.
- d. The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.

2. Organizational Leadership

- a. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing.
- b. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk taking.
- c. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify a no-nonsense, aggressive, results-oriented focus.

- d. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency.
3. Management of Employees
- a. The management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation.
 - b. The management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.
 - c. The management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.
 - d. The management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.
4. Organization Glue
- a. The glue that holds the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high.
 - b. The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.
 - c. The glue that holds the organization together is the emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.
 - d. The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smoothrunning organization is important.
5. Strategic Emphases
- a. The organization emphasizes human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist.

- b. The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.
 - c. The organization emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.
 - d. The organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control, and smooth operations are important.
6. Criteria of Success
- a. The organization defines success on the basis of the development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concern for people.
 - b. The organization defines success on the basis of having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.
 - c. The organization defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key.
 - d. The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling, and low-cost production are critical.

Adapted from *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture Based on the Competing Values Framework* by R. Cameron & R. Quinn, 2006, San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

APPENDIX TWO

Consent form

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled:

Service Design in the Delivery of Non-academic Services in Higher Education

Researcher and Principal Investigator:

Robert Blizzard,
Masters' student
Department of Educational Administration
306-966-7595
Robert.blizzard@usask.ca

Purposes and Objectives of the Research:

The purpose of this study is to explore how staff perceive service design methods such as journey mapping exercises.

I want to hear from staff members regarding service design methods, such as journey mapping exercises. The purpose of this study is to explore how staff members perceive such methods. The results of this study may assist other service design practitioners in conducting such activities in a way that is sensitive to the organizational cultures found in higher education.

Procedures:

This study involves an individual interview with the principal researcher. The discussion will take approximately one-half of an hour. The discussion will be audio recorded and later transcribed.

Potential Risks:

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Potential Benefits:

While this study will have no direct benefit to you, there will be an immediate, practical contribution of this research to administrators in universities. A better understanding will be gained regarding how staff respond to service design methods and the general field of design thinking.

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality will be maintained. You are free to contribute to only the questions with which you are comfortable. For the purposes of the study, pseudonyms will be given to each participant. Once the transcripts are completed, you will be contacted by email and given your

transcript and a transcript release form. The data will be reported in aggregate form; if direct quotes are used, they will be attributed to a pseudonym and any potentially identifying information will be removed. Failure to reply to the emails regarding transcript release forms (after 3 attempts) will imply consent to use the transcripts as they are with a given pseudonym.

Right to Withdraw:

You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort. The transcript release form will identify that particular statements can be removed from the transcript as well.

Follow Up:

Should you want a copy of the results of this research, please contact the researcher and they will email you a copy of the report when it is completed (anticipated completion: June 2019).

Questions or Concerns:

Please contact Robert Blizzard using the information at the top of this letter.

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board (BEH # XXX). Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office: ethics.office@usask.ca or (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Consent

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the description provided, I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my/our questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

_____	_____
Researcher's Signature	Date

Robert Blizzard

APPENDIX THREE

Transcript release form

Title: *Service Design in the Delivery of Non-academic Services in Higher Education*

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with Robert Blizzard. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Robert Blizzard to be used in the manner described in the Consent Form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature of Participant

Signature of researcher

APPENDIX FOUR

Initial email invitation

Heading:

Participants Needed: Study on service design methods in higher education

Content:

We are looking for volunteers to take part in a study investigating how university staff view service design activities, such as the recently completed learner journey mapping project in which you were a contributor. As a participant in this study, you will be asked to participate in a ½ hour interview.

In appreciation for your time, you will receive a \$10 gift card.

Please note that this research study is being conducted by the Department of Educational Administration, independently from the journey mapping project conducted for the Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience portfolio. Your participation or non-participation in this study will be confidential and will not be shared with other staff members at the university, including your supervisor.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer, please contact:

Robert Blizzard

Robert.blizzard@usask.ca or 306-966-7595

This study has been reviewed by, and received approval through, the Research Ethics Office, University of Saskatchewan (BEH #xxx).

Response to interested participants

Thank you for contacting me regarding possible participation in this study. I appreciate the opportunity to provide more information on this research.

I want to hear from staff members regarding service design methods, such as journey mapping exercises. The purpose of this study is to explore how staff members perceive such methods. The results of this study may assist other service design practitioners in conducting such activities in a way that is sensitive to the organizational cultures found in higher education.

Participation in the study involves:

- Participating in an individual interview with the researcher (lasting up to approximately one half of an hour)
- Reading your transcript when it is completed and signing a release of transcript form.
- Receiving a \$10 gift card in appreciation for your time.

You will have an opportunity to share any information that you wish to share about your experience; however, you may choose not to contribute to particular questions and you are free to leave the interview at any point. Any information will be reported in aggregate or group form. Individual comments may be included but will be attributed to a pseudonym, and no individually identifying information will be included.

The following dates and times are set aside for conducting the interviews.

XXXX-XXXXX

Please let me know which dates and times work for you. If none of them work, we may be able to determine another time that works for the research team and yourself. I will send you a copy of questions when we confirm the times and dates so that you can read them ahead of time. I really appreciate your willingness to participate.

Sincerely,

Robert Blizzard