Ernest, B. W., Obery, A., Sullivan-Walker, M., Reaves, M. & Dahle-Huff, K. (2023). Why did we do this? Collective faculty motivations to engage in accreditation work. *Educational Research: Theory and Practice, 34*(1), 69-81.

Why Did We Do This? Collective Faculty Motivations to Engage in Accreditation Work

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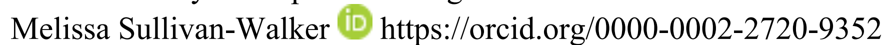
Melissa Sullivan-Walker  https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2720-9352
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Abstract: *Teacher education faculty are often expected to engage in accreditation work. Our purpose was to document the collective driving mechanisms of junior faculty who volunteered to redesign key accreditation assessments. Specifically, we explored the values and expectations for success that led junior faculty to engage in and persist through key accreditation reform. Findings include eleven themes organized into three categories: drivers to join, hurdles, and drivers to continue. We interpret the results through Eccles and Wigfield's (2020) Situated Expectancy Value Theory and highlight the critical role that other colleagues and internal and external pressures played in undertaking the accreditation process.*

Key Words: accreditation, assemblage, higher education, teacher educator, program evaluation

INTRODUCTION

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2021), "the goal of accreditation is to ensure that institutions of higher education meet acceptable levels of quality" (para. 1). Through external review, accreditation ensures a program "meets standards set by organizations representing the academic community, professionals, and other stakeholders" (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP], 2020, para. 1). Higher education institutions often seek accreditation to publicly demonstrate the quality of a particular program such as an Educator Preparation Program (EPP; Hail, 2019). CAEP is the largest national professional accreditor of EPPs in the Unites States. Not all EPPs who apply for accreditation are approved by this body; many are either asked to address issues or are only approved conditionally

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(Ginsberg & Kingston, 2014). Achieving and maintaining accreditation is critical for higher education institutions to demonstrate accountability and transparency (Feuer et al., 2013; Ginsberg & Kingston, 2014; Nichols 2020).

To meet accreditation standards, many EPPs use key assessments to measure student progress and report learning outcomes, which may include diverse measures such as test scores, grade point average, performance assessments, curriculum development, or other projects (Feuer et al., 2013; Nichols, 2020). These key assessments must be of high quality and administered throughout the program to determine student growth at key points (CAEP, 2020). While some states mandate particular assessment strategies or approaches such as the edTPA, drawbacks exist to using such nationally standardized approaches (e.g., Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; De Voto et al, 2021). To avoid issues around creating an *invisible hand* (Weick, 1995) and adding additional costs onto students (e.g., the 2021 rate for edTPA is $300 per student; edTPA, 2021), some programs opt for designing their own key assessments, as did the team of faculty members who conducted this study.

BACKGROUND

EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS AND ACCREDITATION

While accreditation and program improvement have been long-standing parts of higher education, the role and scope of these processes continues to grow and impact EPPs (Bardo, 2009). Institutions seeking accreditation currently face "nearly continuous scrutiny," (p. 47) more detailed data collection and reports, growing costs, and an increasing need for organization of accreditation processes (Bardo, 2009). How institutions navigate meeting accreditation standards and program improvement varies widely, though there are some recurring themes. In a large-scale qualitative study, Hinchcliff et al. (2013) identified four factors as "critical enablers of effective implementation" (p. 1) of accreditation programs: collaboration and validity, favorable reception, support from leadership, and alignment.

Outcomes of the assessment process are also varied (e.g., Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Feuer et al., 2013). In a study on edTPA, DeVoto et al. (2020) found that when the culture of the EPP aligns with the goal of the assessment, it can act as a focusing tool for the program. Unfortunately, they found that key assessments can also narrow the curriculum and take away from field-based experiences. Moreover, the overall cost of accreditation, including financial and human resource costs, are considerable given the outcome of prestige (Hail et al., 2019).

ACCREDITATION AND THE FACULTY-ADMINISTRATION RELATIONSHIP

There is a dearth of in-depth research on faculty-administrator relationships in higher education (Del Favero & Bray, 2010). The little research that does inform this area indicates that these relationships are most often characterized by adversity and conflict (Del Favero & Bray, 2005), uncomfortable alliances (Guffey & Rampp, 1997), and "predetermined" decision making on the part of the administration (Lewis, 2011, p. 37). Specifically, these relationships are marked by conflicting views on governance, particularly when cooperation is needed (Campbell & Bray, 2018). Unfortunately, faculty often feel their input in the decision-making process is pointless or unwanted (Campbell & Bray, 2018), despite the critical role they play in the success of shared governance (Del Favero & Bray, 2010; Oliver & Hyun, 2011). This establishes a "dynamic us versus them mentality" (Cambell & Bray, 2018, p. 903) and deters faculty engagement in high-stakes intuitional processes such as accreditation (Grunwald & Peterson, 2003).

This split between faculty and administration makes the challenging work of program improvement and accreditation even more daunting. It is compounded by the decreasing numbers of tenure-track faculty; by 2015, 70% of faculty appointments were not tenure-track

(AAUP, 2017). Moreover, as contingent faculty have fewer protections compared to tenured and tenure-track faculty, this trend has contributed to the "erosion of shared governance" (Curnalia & Mermer, 2018, p. 131) and an increased sense of powerlessness among all faculty. The overall result is fewer tenured and tenure-track faculty to take on the significant work that institutions and programs require such as accreditation.

Many faculty members are expected to engage in research, teaching, and service. The requirements for teaching and research are generally clear, depending on the institution. However, service requirements, especially those specific to gaining tenure, are far more ambiguous, frequently creating balance issues for faculty (Bailey et al., 2017). Expectations for service are often unrealistic and, in fact, faculty members report they are performing more service than what they perceive their university requires them to do (Teater & Mendoza, 2018). To reiterate Kezar & Maxley (2014), most academic groups understand that the traditional structure of tenured faculty expectations of engaging in research, teaching and service bundled together is no longer sustainable (p. 17).

Faculty Involvement in Accreditation

Much of the literature on faculty involvement in accreditation focuses on strategies to get faculty involved (e.g., Muljana et al, 2020). Hinchcliff et al., (2013) suggest that successful accreditation begins with systems-level elements, such as engaged and supportive leaders who foster a culture of improvement. In a study about factors that support faculty buy-in, Germain and Spencer (2016) called for "leadership [to make] accommodation for the extra workload undertaken by faculty" (p. 91). A minority of studies include stories of accreditation leading to positive outcomes. For example, Miller (2013) found that faculty who valued how students were being assessed in the program, including the goals and outcomes, were significantly more likely to be involved in the accreditation process. Caudle and Hammons (2018) reported similar results with community college faculty.

Ultimately, faculty often resist participation in accreditation activities due to lack of interest, time, knowledge, incentives, resources, or information (Muljana et al., 2020). Thus, leaders must know how to engage faculty in the accreditation process without imposing mandates or overburdening faculty members (Calegari et al., 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Identifying other motivating factors for faculty members to become active in large scale assessment and accreditation work may be useful in encouraging broader participation. Motivational theories, such as the Situated Expectancy Value Theory (SEVT; Eccles & Wigfield, 2020) offer a nuanced and holistic approach to individual and group experiences and their achievement-related choices. Updated to include a more comprehensive take on value and expectancies for success to include the importance of social cognitive theories, the SEVT enables both the choice and subsequent experiences to link (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). Similar to previous iterations (e.g., Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), affective reactions and memories are a central feature of the SEVT and directly impact a person's goals, self-schemata, and subjective task value. The role of an individual's interpretation of and reactions to an experience is a critical lens when considering future achievement-related choices. Thus, when exploring reasons why faculty would engage in accreditation work, the SEVT may be a useful frame to understand both a faculty member's/group's initial choice and their sustained engagement with the work.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to document the collective driving mechanisms of junior faculty who volunteered to redesign key accreditation assessments.

We explored the following research questions:

1. What are the values that led junior faculty members in an educator preparation program to engage in key accreditation assessment reform?
2. What expectations for success do the junior faculty hold that allow them to persist in key accreditation assessment reform?

METHODS

Using qualitative self-study (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009), we engaged in critical, personal, and collective inquiry regarding the processes involved in creating new key EPP accreditation assessments. Specifically, we explored our personal and professional motivations to engage in and persist though the accreditation work process. As described by Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009), self-study allows us to "make the relationship of self to the other a central part of the focus of our work" (p. v). In essence, this design supports our desire to know ourselves in relation to the EPP, colleagues, and administrators.

CONTEXT

The key assessment redesign was completed at a small, regional university that began as a normal school in 1927 and continues as a teaching-focused institution. The university's College of Education has a CAEP accredited EPP that offers both undergraduate and graduate programs of study. We began the current study in the fourth year of a seven-year accreditation cycle.

The College of Education is structured as one department that contains EPP programs of various disciplines. At the time of the study, the College of Education was led by a dean and two co-chairs of the department. Additionally, the College of Education had an assessment, accreditation and data coordinator whose duties included collection, management, and analysis of the accreditation key assessments. At the time of the study, there were 17 faculty members in the College of Education: four tenured, nine tenure-track, and four non-tenure-track. Faculty members have varying areas of expertise, including literacy, social studies, science, math, early childhood education, educational psychology, counseling, special education, and applied behavior analysis. The faculty members in the College of Education are responsible for the vast majority of the development and implementation of accreditation work for the EPP.

PARTICIPANTS

We are five faculty members who were tenure-track junior faculty when we agreed to redesign key assessments and who conducted this study. Four of us identify as White and one of us identifies as White and a registered member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. Four of us identify as female and one of us identifies as male. At the start of our work, two of us were in their fifth year toward tenure, one was in their fourth year toward tenure, one was in their third year towards tenure, and one was in their first year towards tenure. All of us have completed terminal degrees (i.e., Ph.D. or Ed.D.) within educational fields. Two of us specialize in literacy, one of us specializes in science education, and two of us specialize in special education.

We had varying levels of experience with accreditation. Only one of us had prior experience developing and implementing an EPP summative key assessment. Three of us had participated in previous accreditation reviews at various universities. Two of us had prior experience collecting and reporting accreditation data at different universities. One of us had no specific prior experience with accreditation.

As we engaged in this study, all five of us came to see ourselves as an a*ssemblage* or "an arrangement or layout of heterogeneous elements" (Nail, 2017, p. 22) that exists as a mechanism to accomplish something. Unlike a unity made of dependent parts (e.g., a heart and

a body), an assemblage is a “multiplicity, neither a part nor a whole” (p. 23). The various expertise and experiences we five individually brought to our work over time made us more than the sum of our parts; our personal agencies were distributed among the group but also were affected by each other as well.

Data Sources and Analysis

We collected and analyzed data in four phases. During the initial phase, we individually journaled in response to a set of four reflective questions, based on Rolfe’s (2001) model of asking What? So what? Now what? key questions: (1) What drew you to participate? (2) What kept your interest for continued participation? (3) What challenges did you experience that made you question your motivation? (4) What effects did you have on others and how were you affected? These questions are aligned with our research focus for the study, to understand our motivations to participate and the challenges we experienced. We imported the journal responses into Dedoose, a cross-platform application for analyzing qualitative and mixed methods research (Dedoose, 2021).

During the second phase, three of us engaged in collective, open coding for one of the journal responses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The group discussed each sentence of the journal response, comparing each of the codes we developed individually. We discussed if sentences, partial sentences, or groups of sentences held meaning, and came to full consensus on codes for the entirety of the first journal response. We then individually coded the remaining journal responses using the same codes and making notes of when we created a new open code.

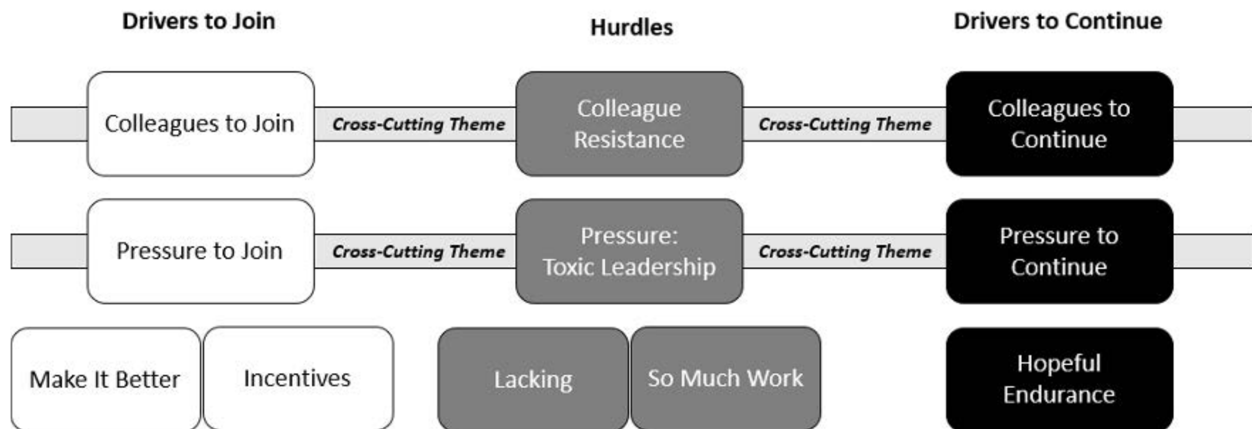
During the third phase, we engaged in enhanced member checking (Chase, 2017) to improve reliability and to create new data sources in a collective manner. This process involved the individual who coded the data discussing the codes with the author of the reflective journal for accuracy in data analysis. The entire Assemblage was present during this member checking to ask additional probing questions. We recorded the enhanced member checking and additional probing to create additional data sources and repeated this process for four rounds until consensus was reached. Additionally, we employed analytic memoing (Miles et al., 2016) throughout the initial three phases as a measure of credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Upon completion of the third phase, we identified 184 excerpts and labeled them with 34 initial codes.

During the fourth phase, we thematically analyzed (Braun & Clarke, 2006) the codes in a collaborative manner using a digital whiteboard (i.e., Google Jamboard). The digital whiteboard allowed us to manipulate the codes visually to explore relationships between and among the codes. This facilitated a conversation about collapsing codes into themes, resulting in a graphic representation of seven themes organized into three categories (Figure 1). Finally, we collectively discussed and revised theme names to ensure they were sensitive to the data (Merriman & Tisdell, 2016).

Results

We organized the results into three categories: Drivers to Join, Hurdles, and Drivers to Continue (see Figure 1). ‘Drivers to join’ includes qualitative themes describing the reasons the Assemblage cited for our initial involvement in the key accreditation assessment reform. ‘Hurdles’ encompasses themes of challenges we faced while engaging in the process. ‘Drivers to continue’ includes themes describing how we persevered through the hurdles to completion of the key assessment reform. Two themes, Colleagues and Pressure, cut across all three categories. We also identified five additional themes: Make It Better, Incentives, Lacking, So Much Work, and Hopeful Endurance (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Results



CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

COLLEAGUES

Colleagues was the first of two cross-cutting themes (Figure 1). As a Driver to Join, we defined this theme as how relationships with coworkers positively influenced our desire to join. One member of our Assemblage identified their "primary reason" for joining the key assessment reform as "the other people who were raising their hands." Another of us described the effect of being around colleagues who "are passionate" as getting "swept up [because] it's too much fun not to."

However, Colleagues also emerged as a hurdle to the key assessment reform process. We defined this theme as how some faculty outside of our Assemblage actively and/or passively resisted and complicated the work. Some faculty members were actively "oppositional," leading one of us to note how they were "not prepared for the some of the unkindness that came out." Another member of the Assemblage perceived some faculty's "inactivity as indifference – a slight on both our efforts and a disservice to our students."

Finally, we identified Colleagues as a Driver to Continue the key assessment reform process. We defined this theme as how relationships with coworkers positively induced our ability to persevere. Several members of the Assemblage referenced how being "part of a team" was a key factor in our ability to continue. One of us even likened the key assessment reform process to combat, stating, "It felt like we went through a battle together and emerged victoriously."

PRESSURE

The second cross-cutting theme was Pressure (Figure 1). As a Driver to Join, we defined Pressure to Join as how external and internal stressors influenced our desire to join. Members of the Assemblage identified external pressures such as "to meet accreditation requirements" and responding to calls for action from the department chair. We also described placing pressure on ourselves due to the perception that no other faculty members would be willing to engage in the key assessment reform process. Moreover, one member of the Assemblage that had prior experience with key accreditation assessment revision felt obligated to "just kept on saying 'yes' to additional accreditation work." This created a sense that our "participation...was not purely voluntary."

Pressure, as a Hurdle, was specifically linked to toxic leadership; we defined it as how a single leader created trauma that complicated the work. This was the most densely coded theme and represents 37% of excerpts in the hurdle area. Members of the Assemblage recalled

specific "barriers" created by this individual, including, "refus[ing] to meet with us," "pressuring us with so-called CAEP deadlines and the potential loss of accreditation," and "refus[ing] to stand by their word – at times even undermining and causing distrust in us." "The "lack of understanding and support from" one member of the leadership team became the "primary challenge" our Assemblage had to overcome. This not only impacted our work on the key assessments, but also triggered traumatic responses in some of our members, such as "an anxiety attack (heart palpitations, uncontrollable crying, and a migraine headache)." One member of the Assemblage was undergoing cancer treatment and, as a result, had a modified duty arrangement "to step away from all service; however, this was not honored by [administration] and I came very close to filing a grievance with our union."

We also felt Pressure to Continue participation in the key assessment reform process. We defined this theme as how ongoing external and internal stressors influenced our ability to persevere. We listed external pressures to continue such as "to meet accreditation requirements" and to "make the [educator preparation] program better." Similar to Pressure as a Driver to Join, we also described internal pressures due to perceptions that "the college was counting on us" and that "the CAEP pressure was real."

Additional Drivers to Join: Make It Better and Incentives

Two additional themes emerged as Drivers to Join: Make It Better and Incentives (Figure 1).

Make It Better

We defined the theme of Make It Better as how our desire to improve our assessments, and thereby improve our program, drove us to join. This theme was comprised of three child codes: Current Assessments are Flawed, Improve Program, and Cohesive Program. Of note, each of us included this ideal in our reflective journaling, and Make It Better represents approximately one-third of all codes in the Drivers to Join.

Current Assessments are Flawed. We were aware that our current key assessment was not sufficient, and changing it was a Driver to Join the key assessment reform effort. A member of the Assemblage described this as being "part of a system that I knew to be broken. I feel the need to practice what I preach, and I want to be a part of a program that truly does help train better teachers."

Improve Program. We also identified a desire to improve the EPP as a Driver to Join. A member of the Assemblage portrayed this as a "desire to make our program better; particularly student teaching and field experiences." Another member explained how they are "heavily invested in making field experiences the best they can be." By joining the key assessment reform effort, "we started the process of truly creating the program we wanted to see."

Cohesive Program. The last Driver to Join was a desire to make EPP more cohesive by persuading all faculty to include key assessment content, knowledge, and skills into their courses. Many of us saw the opportunity to create a summative teacher preparation assessment as a type of "trojan horse." We deliberately embedded skills into the key assessment that were not currently or consistently being taught in our program. This was done to "push forward" these skills in a way that "faculty would be forced" into "complete buy-in...to changes across field experiences and across course-work."

INCENTIVES

We defined Incentives as how compensation and service toward tenure positively influenced our desire to join. This theme was comprised of two child codes: Compensation and Service Toward Tenure (Figure 1).

COMPENSATION. The key assessment reform effort required work outside of our contract terms (i.e., during the summer session) and we were financially compensated for some of this work. This was a Driver to Join for one Assemblage member who remarked, "It also helped that I would be compensated for it since we are so rarely compensated adequately."

SERVICE TOWARD TENURE. The remaining work associated with the key assessment reform effort (i.e., on-contract time) was considered service toward tenure and not financially compensated. Knowing that "this would count as significant service toward tenure" was a Driver to Join as all of us were tenure-track junior faculty.

ADDITIONAL HURDLES

Two additional themes emerged as hurdles: Lacking and So Much Work (Figure 1).

LACKING

We defined Lacking as how lack of support and acknowledgment from peers and leadership complicated the work. This theme was comprised of two child codes: Lack of Support and Lack of Acknowledgement (Figure 1).

LACK OF SUPPORT. "Very little support" from leadership and some faculty outside of the Assemblage represented a hurdle. One member of the Assemblage described how other faculty did not follow through on work they had committed to and, as a result, "We had to spend a week developing what we needed and making adjustments to the [key assessment] before we could even begin [the next phase of our work]."

LACK OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT. For many of the Assemblage, the lack of acknowledgment for this work represented a major hurdle. One member of the Assemblage lamented, "The worst part for me wasn't so much the lack of compensation, but it was for how little these efforts were recognized and applauded."

SO MUCH WORK

We defined So Much Work as how the scope of the task and how it conflicted with other personal and job duties complicated the work. This theme was comprised of two child codes: Scope of the Task and Conflict with Job Duties (Figure 1).

SCOPE OF THE TASK. A significant Hurdle identified by the Assemblage was the scope of the key assessment reform process. The service expectations "ranged from 10-40 hours per week, every week. It was crushing..." One member of the Assemblage expressed that "Burnout is real. This was a long and intense process. And there always seemed to be an 'oh, yeah, there's this we need to do, too' moment in the wings."

CONFLICT WITH JOB DUTIES. We also faced the Hurdle of balancing this large project with our other job duties. The time and energy required for the key assessment reform process "definitely negatively impacted both [our] teaching and certainly [our] scholarship."

ADDITIONAL DRIVER TO CONTINUE

One additional theme emerged as a driver to continue: Hopeful Endurance (Figure 1).

Hopeful Endurance

We defined Hopeful Endurance as how hope for our students and learning from each other influenced our ability to persevere. This theme was comprised of two child codes: Growing and Hope (Figure 1).

Growing. Each member of the Assemblage brought unique experiences and expertise, allowing us "to learn and borrow from [others] in the process." This growth became a Driver to Continue and persevere. It included professional growth such as developing a more "holistic perspective [which would] therefore allow my students the benefit of a more holistic perspective when I did communicate information around lesson planning or around data-based decision making." Another member of the Assemblage acknowledged how they became "a better teacher for having worked with our Assemblage." Additionally, the Assemblage also reported personal growth, such as learning to "make folks feel valued...to be more flexible and understanding." We each became a "better person (not just educator)" the more we worked as an Assemblage.

Hope. Despite the hurdles, the Assemblage remained hopeful "this work will lead to meaningful program improvement and better field experiences for our students." The core of this hope resides within each other, because "for the [Assemblage], this was all about students and making sure they were being given the best teacher education possible."

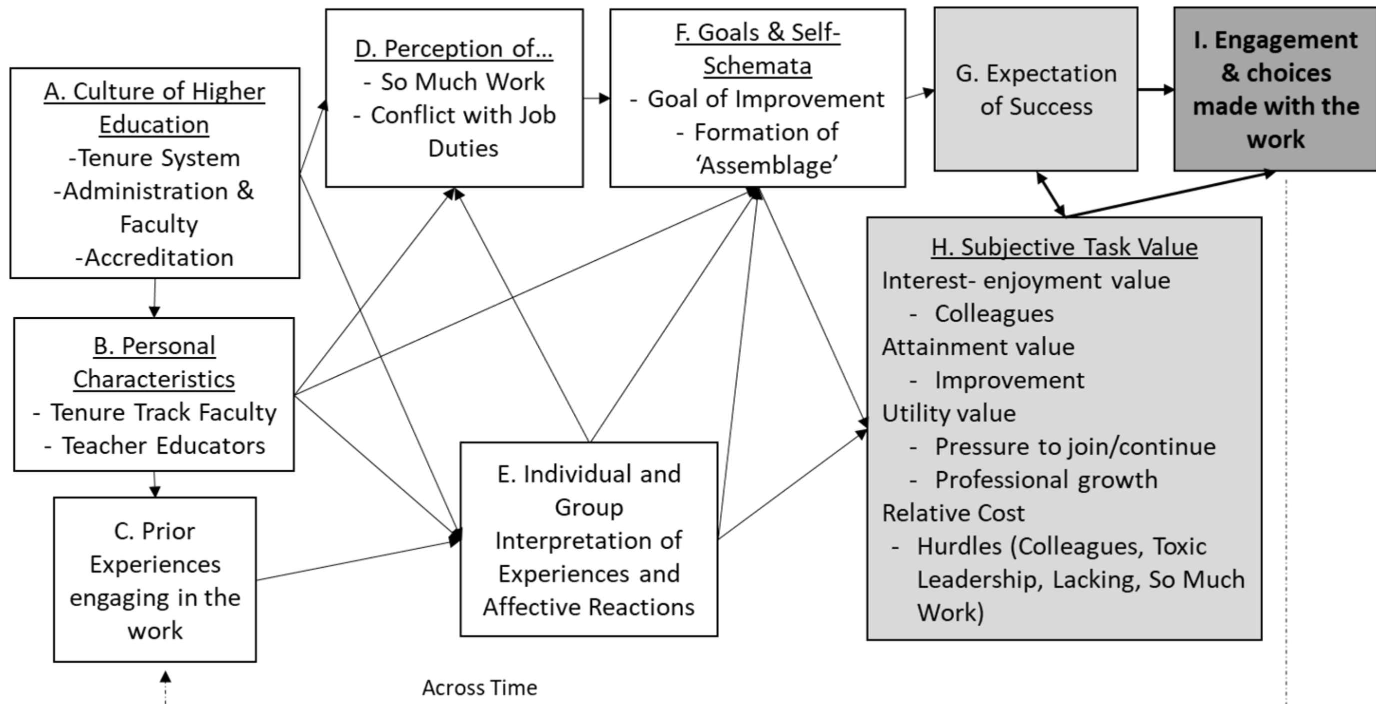
Discussion & Conclusions

The driving purpose of this study was to explore the motivations of junior faculty members to engage in collective, sustained accreditation work through the redesign of key assessments. The cross-cutting themes highlight the critical role that colleagues as well as internal and external pressures play in the decisions to engage and persist in accreditation work. Additionally, though each individual had their own values and expectations for success, many commonalities arose amongst those engaged in the work.

Collective Motivation to Engage in Accreditation Work

Rather than solely relying on the cross-cutting themes (Colleagues and Pressure) and additional themes, we used Eccles and Wigfield's (2020) Situated Expectancy Value Theory (SEVT) to interpret the findings. Expectancy-value models (e.g., Eccles & Wigfield, 2000) posit that the task-related choices we make are motivated through a combination of our expectation of success and subjective task value. The updated SEVT helps to uncover the role of social and contextual factors that influence those expectations of success and subjective task value, both collectively and individually as a function of time. Thus, the SEVT offered a model to explain our behavioral choices and served as the architecture to process our stories individually and collectively (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Model of Junior Faculty's Motivations in Accreditation Work



First, the context of this work occurred in higher education (Figure 2, part A) and was conducted by tenure-track faculty members in an educator preparation program (B). Further, the pressure to join was driven by the need for programs to maintain accreditation (A) and, depending on the institution, these processes are directed by administration (A). Some of the faculty involved in the work had previous experiences with accreditation work (C, E), while others did not, which impacted individuals' perceptions of the work (D) and, ultimately, their expectations of success (G). The scope of the work undertaken combined with the other expectations of tenure-track faculty members (B, D) became incredibly important to consider and certainly challenged one of the most frequent drivers to join the project of program improvement (F). Especially at the onset of the project, each individual faculty member entered the work with a different expectation for success (G).

Second, considering the subjective task value, or the degree to which individuals ascribe value to a particular task, was broken into four different components (H). Interest value refers to "the anticipated enjoyment one expects to gain from doing the task" (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020, p. 4), and faculty who engaged in the work enjoyed being around one another to the extent that a collective Assemblage was formed. As a driver to join, the notion of attaining a better program was highly valued by all of us who engaged in the work. Utility value, or the extent to which a task aligns with personal goals, was important to consider as faculty members felt pressure to join based on their experiences with or knowledge of accreditation processes (A, E). Finally, both at the onset of the project and throughout the process, investigating the relative cost was critical to understand to better support or bolster efforts to encourage faculty to engage with the work. Four themes of hurdles (i.e., colleagues, toxic leadership, lacking, and so much work) were present at the start of the process in terms of the internal and external pressures of accreditation.

The SEVT model became particularly useful in exploring these changes over the course of the accreditation work. Our 'expectation for success' (G) and 'subjective task value' (H) shifted from individual choices (I) to a strong group or collective experience and interpretation of experiences and affective reactions (C, E) as we engaged in the work over time. We began

to value (H) each other more, which fostered the development of an Assemblage (F), leading to an increase in our expectation of success (G), which led to different work choices than would have occurred otherwise (I). These feedback loops continued throughout the process; the more we worked together as an Assemblage, the more likely we were to value the work (H), believe in our success (G), and make decisions accordingly (I), especially when the costs (H) increased and created individual stress (B).

Conclusions

We explored our motivations as junior, tenure-track faculty to engage in accreditation work. We volunteered without completely understanding how the workload involved would compete with other tenure-earning responsibilities and for diverse reasons such as program improvement or financial incentives. As we engaged in the collaborative work, we came to see ourselves as an Assemblage. This strong faculty group connection created positive feedback loops for individuals, allowing them to persist through difficult challenges. These challenges included hurdles such as colleague resistance, pressures from toxic leadership and colleagues, lack of support and acknowledgment, the scope of the task, and how it conflicted with other personal and job duties. As a result, we were able to overcome these hurdles, learn from each other, and persist in program improvement for our students.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

In this study, we explored the experiences of faculty through reflective journaling and collaborative analysis. The resulting stories "describe and explain the world as those in the world experience it" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 250). Inherent in the methodological approach, our voices and lenses are inseparable from the data, analysis, and discussion. We wrote reflective journals at one point in time, after the initial assessment redesign, rather than representing an ongoing narrative of the process. Additionally, we wrote these reflective journals independently and collectively analyzed them. Other approaches, such as group interviewing and apriori coding using the SEVT, may yield other views.

We conducted the study at a small, regional, comprehensive institution in a rural state that requires national accreditation. In the future, researchers should capture the stories of faculty members at different points in their careers (e.g., pre-tenure vs. tenure) who are engaged in collective accreditation work at institutions of various sizes, urbanicities, and locations. Moreover, they should also capture faculty experiences at various points throughout the accreditation cycle.

Additionally, researchers may want to explore the relative weight associated with the expectancies for success and the subjective task values to develop impactful practices that increase faculty engagement in accreditation work. The SEVT underscores the need for support to evolve alongside the accreditation process as the subjective task value and expectancies for success shift over time, individually and collectively. Additionally, researchers may explore how effective support systems are paying attention to these transition points in the accreditation process (e.g., accreditation years, initial implementation, data collection, program change). The process of engaging in this study has great implications for the collaborative work that faculty take on together as there is value in engaging in reflective processes in accreditation work. Ultimately, results from our work point to the need for a strong sense of connection amongst faculty members and a multitiered support system.

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