

Building and Mobilizing Social Capital: A Phenomenological Study of Part-time Professors

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Abstract

This paper explores the experiences of new part-time professors (instructors hired on a semester-by-semester basis that have been working at the institution for less than five years) and considers the phenomenon of how they connect with peers. It examines whether a lack of connection exists among part-time professors at the University of Ottawa and how this may affect their experience (i.e. teaching and career), lead to barriers to connection, and affect their social capital (i.e., their ability to access or use resources embedded in their social networks). Using Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological approach for collecting and analyzing data and Creswell's (2007) approach for establishing validity, we uncovered several thematic patterns in participants' experience that indicate barriers to connection and affect the ability to access and mobilize social capital: Feeling uncertain or impermanent, isolated, overwhelmed, and like second-class citizens. The paper concludes that inadequate social capital may not only influence part-time professors – it may also have problematic implications for students, the department, and the University as a whole.

Keywords: Social capital, barriers to communication, phenomenology, qualitative methods, part-time professors

1. Introduction

Social connections – which we define as relationships with peers, support staff, faculty members, and administration – determine the quality and quantity of a person's resources. We use social connections to access or use these resources: the stronger and more extensive our network, the greater resources we can access and use. The resources embedded in our networks are known as

social capital (Lin, 2008). A high amount of social capital increases the likelihood of being able to achieve goals since it allows us better access to and use of resources, both in quality and quantity; conversely, a lack of social capital may limit the ability to complete objectives such as increasing one's status or gaining additional capital. Therefore, social capital is an important concept to examine in organizational groups that may lack social connection, such as part-time professors in universities. By examining this group, this research may serve as an exploratory foundation for organizational communication among part-time professors in Canadian universities. Also, it can provide insight into other areas of the scholarship, such as social capital among contract employees.

1.1. Communication and social connection

Communication is an integral aspect of social connection; relationships cannot be made and maintained without it. In order to have social connections with peers, communication must be maintained consistently and on a frequent basis. Therefore, examining a part-time professor's social connections can help us to understand any communication barriers they face and help us to understand how this affects their experience as a part-time professor.

1.2. Communication barriers

Communication barriers are obstacles that impede the communication process (Button & Rossera, 1990, p. 337). These could be interpersonal (such as a difference in opinion) or physical (e.g. working in a different country). Communication barriers impede the ability to build social capital because they lower the quantity and quality of connections. In other words, communication barriers obstruct the path to connection.

In their study of teacher-student communication, Klimova and Semradova (2012) found that interpersonal differences resulted in communication barriers and these barriers prevented teachers from being able to effectively communicate with their students in virtual learning environments. To compensate, teachers used teaching aids to improve communication with students (Klimova & Semradova, 2011, p. 208).

Button and Rossera (1990) found in their study of communication barriers that a difference in language or age was still the most prevalent communication barrier for individual-to-individual communication. However, they added that a high amount of trust and confidence in an individual improved the chances of effective communication (p. 346). Conversely, a lack of trust led to a "distortion of information" and disrupted information flow, which would prevent people from receiving important information about their practice (Button & Rossera, 1990, p. 346). Therefore, building rapport and trust should have an effect on a part-time professor's ability to receive important information and improve their chances of effective communication.

1.3. A Lack of Connection

New part-time professors (those hired on contract from semester to semester with less than five years of employment at an institution) are rarely tenured or on a tenure track. This gives them a very different experience with peers than full-time or tenured staff. Moreover, new part-time professors often have limited connection with others compared to their full-time peers, and are therefore a vulnerable population for social capital deficit. Additionally, there is limited research into the experience of part-time professors in relation to social connection – especially their relationships with colleagues. Most research has been in small American colleges, and has studied adjuncts (i.e. part-time employees with long-term contracts) (e.g. Burk, 2000; Dolan, 2011; Feldman & Turnley, 2001; Gordon, 2002; Thirolf, 2012). Therefore, we hope to contribute to the scholarship by examining the experience of being a new part-time professor and looking at their connections, the effect of these connections (or lack thereof), and how their connections affect their social capital.

Many part-time professors say they feel disconnected from their peers and the administration (Dolan, 2011). Despite playing an integral role to the functioning of the university, many part-time professors do not feel they are part of the community (Burk, 2000; Dolan, 2011). Burk (2000) shared her experience in an academic talk on the disconfirming communication that part-time professors experience in community colleges. She suggested that adjuncts, or professors who have been at the institution long-term but work part-time, often feel like low-level employees despite high qualifications or a lengthy employment at the organization. Burk said that the majority of adjuncts she interacted with feel marginalized and often have negative relationships with fellow colleagues and their administration. A lack of connection – or only having low-quality connections – may prevent part-time professors from building or mobilizing the social capital they need to flourish in the institution.

A lack of connection also holds potential implications for a part-time professor's quality of teaching. Part-time professors' connection with others could affect their teaching expectations, understanding of institutional norms, access or use of resources, and emotional support. Therefore, understanding the experience of part-time professors could help guide policies for orientation, as well as opportunities for the provision of resources and emotional support. Addressing a part-time professor's social capital is significant – inadequate social capital correlates with less job satisfaction (Burk, 2000; Putnam, 2000), less productivity as a team member (Dolan, 2011; Henttonen, Johanson, & Janhonen, 2014), and less access to resources or opportunities (Curley, 2010). Therefore, in the case of universities, part-time professors' lack of social capital would be detrimental to a university's goals of quality education.

In effect, quality connections not only provide a sense of support and belonging to peers and the organization, but help part-time professors learn organizational norms and receive information about socialization or job opportunities (Dolan, 2011). Grubb (1999) found that part-time instructors described mentors and colleagues as “powerful forces” for improving teaching and learning “tricks of the trade,” but did not connect often enough to maintain a relationship (p. 49). If part-time professors have stronger connections, they can increase their chances to build or mobilize social capital. In turn, they would have access to more resources (e.g. class materials) and support (e.g. vouching, empathy) for teaching.

1.4. Hiring trends and practices

All institutions of higher education in Canada now make use of part-time instructors, and are increasingly hiring to compensate for rising student enrolment (APTPUO, 2014; Somers, 2007). At the University of Ottawa, the total number of part-time teachers is approximately 60 per cent of total faculty (APTPUO, 2014). Often, part-time professors are hired on an ad hoc basis, which means that unlike full-time or adjunct professors, they may have difficulty planning their finances and lives and they experience more precariousness when gaining employment. Part-time professors may also have less time to plan their lessons than full-time professors if hired shortly before they have to teach their first class. In other words, part-time professors face a different reality than full-time professors in regards to hiring methods and course preparation.

Hiring more part-time professors has increased gradually, with the exception of the brief dip during the recession (APTPUO, 2014). It follows that the universities may continue to hire more part-time staff in order to meet two problems higher learning institutions face today: increasing student enrolment and declining public funds.

A spike in student enrolment correlates with the hiring of more part-time professors. Since 2006, UBC's general teaching positions have increased by more than 40 per cent to compensate for the growing amount of students. However, there has only been a 12 per cent rise in tenure-track hires (Simona, 2015). In Ontario, the number of university students has grown by 42.7 per cent since 1993, while the number of full-time faculty has only grown only by 16.1 per cent (Academica.ca, 2015).

Another reason for a higher amount of part-time professors may be due to declining government allocated funds. Puplampu (2004) argues that many universities use funding to provide salaries for professors – without it, they cannot afford to hire enough full-time instructors. Conversely, part-time instructors can teach the same courses as full-time professors, but for lower pay (Cbc.ca, 2016). Therefore, many institutions may use part-time professors to not only provide quality undergraduate instruction, but to stabilize tenured faculty salaries and advance research (Simona, 2015).

Unlike full-time professors, part-time instructors lack the guarantee of a job each semester, as well as the ability to progress through to the highest levels of academia (Simona, 2015). Although part-time instructors teach and may be encouraged to do research depending on the institution, they may not enjoy the same benefits as full-time professors (Puplampu, 2004). It follows that these hiring trends make it less feasible to attain a full-time position than in the past. Additionally, with the majority of staff on contract, there is less opportunity for connection. Both of these outcomes could prove problematic for academic communities.

Part-time professors have a huge impact in shaping the students' experience as well as the University's reputation, so it is imperative to understand how they make connections in order to access or use resources for their teaching. This, in turn, may help us understand how to improve that experience, which can extend to the university as a whole. Because we were interested in

understanding access to and use of resources through connection, we looked at this through the theoretical lens of social capital.

2. Theoretical Overview: Social Capital

Pierre Bourdieu (1986) and James Coleman (1994) gave social capital its distinct definition. Both agreed that social capital was a way of systematizing the effects of social relations, which they had observed in their applied research (Castiglione et al., 2008). Social capital may refer to a variety of features in a social structure, but for our research scope we used Bourdieu's definition of social capital as "the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 19). Resources came from belonging to a group, and often forward an individual's goals (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243).

Bourdieu also maintained that a person's power is created and constantly re-legitimised through agency and structure. This happens through *habitus*, or socialised norms or tendencies that guide behaviour and thinking (Bourdieu, 1977; Wacquant, 2005). We often do this without conscious effort (Bourdieu, 1986). In effect, socialized norms and structure shape how we think, feel, and act in specific contexts. For example, if part-time professors are never contacted after hiring, they may feel unimportant or lacking power in the university. In turn, they may act on this by reaching out less to peers within their network, and this lack of communication could prevent improvements in policy or working conditions.

Many other scholars have contributed to social capital as a social theory (e.g. Putnam, 2000; Woolcock, 1998), but we draw on Lin's (2011) approach for measuring social capital. Specifically, Lin measures how much social capital individuals have by understanding the degree they access or use their resources. Accessed social capital estimates an actor's degree of access to resources or a potential pool of resources (Lin, 2011). Access depends on an actor's ability to connect with others who have and are willing to share resources (Lin, 2011). Mobilized social capital, on the other hand, reflects the actual use of a particular social tie and its resources (Lin, 1999). People's ability to access or mobilize social capital depends on how close they are to a person in their network (strength of ties) and the richness of that network (extensity of ties) (Lin, 2011).

2.1. Research Method and Questions

Our research examined how part-time professors create and build connections in relation to social capital. In order to understand this phenomenon, we looked at the experience of being a new part-time professor (teaching for one to five years) at the University of Ottawa using a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is the study of an experience as lived by the research participants (Smith, 2012; Zahavi, 2012). The method examines the structure of a person's experience (i.e. perception, memory, emotion, linguistic and social activity) to understand the occurrence or phenomenon (Smith, 2003). Husserl (1970) maintains that our experiences are represented through particular concepts, images, or perceptions which make up the meaning or

content of a given experience. The structure of a person's experience is usually directed towards things in the world, which he called *intentionality*. We used the same structure representations to understand the phenomenon of being a new part-time professor.

Phenomenology is best suited for research in which it is important to understand a variety of individuals' common or shared experiences (Creswell, 2007). Because part-time professors are a diverse group who have a shared experience (i.e. being a new part-time professor), it was an apt method for this study.

Twelve part-time faculty members were purposively sampled on a first-come, first-served basis and were asked about their experience at the University using semi-structured interviews. Each interview was conducted by the researcher at a convenient place and time for the participant. Participants were chosen on the basis that they had worked as a part-time teacher at the institution for five years or fewer. They were predominantly women (83 per cent) and many were between 25-35 years old (58 per cent). All participants had a Master's degree or higher, with over half holding a Ph.D. (54 per cent). Many were former University of Ottawa students.

We extracted the significant statements from 11 verbatim transcripts. A statement was considered significant if a participant spoke directly about the phenomenon in question (being a new part-time professor, connections with peers), as recommended by Creswell (2007). We interpreted the meanings of these phrases as an informed reader of the literature and with context from the participant.

We validated our data using Creswell's (2007) methods of staying reflexive throughout the research and evaluating the phenomenon using peer-reviewed literature for analysis. We also used his recommendations on evaluating the data accurately and objectively by "bracketing," or setting aside our own experiences with the phenomenon. We also used a well-trusted and peer-reviewed method for phenomenological analysis (see Moustakas, 1994). Finally, we quoted the interview transcripts verbatim, ensuring that nothing was taken out of context and that the phenomenon was accurately described.

Three main questions guided this research. First, we wanted to know what part-time professors' experiences were with social connections at the University; second, we wanted to know what barriers they faced in forming social connections, if any; and last, we wanted to know how this affected their social capital. All of these questions helped to understand their experience with connection in relation to social capital.

3. Results

The part time professors' overall experience was measured by the barriers they faced, how they navigated such barriers, and how this affected their social capital. The results encompass aspects that frequently show up in the literature about part-time professors: feelings of isolation, uncertainty and impermanence, and communication barriers (most notably, a difference in geographical distance, age, values or language). Thus, themes for this research emerged from a combination of the literature and the data results. An interpretation of the statements revealed four overarching features of the phenomenon, which formed the main themes:

1. Feeling Overwhelmed
2. Uncertainty and Impermanence
3. There's no Place like Home
4. Second-class Citizens

"Feeling Overwhelmed" represents a part-time professor's perceived struggle to meet the minimum requirements of their lives (i.e. social and teaching duties). The second theme, "Uncertainty and Impermanence," was composed of two areas: "Uncertainty" was used to describe feelings of insecurity or ambiguity, and "Impermanence" was used to describe a feeling of not being permanent or enduring. They were combined into one theme because they overlapped frequently in part-time professors' experiences. The third theme, "There's no Place like Home," focused on the relationships of part-time professors and their sense of belonging. The fourth and final theme, "Second-class Citizens," focused on how part-time professors perceived their status. Each of these themes are discussed in detail below and structured through the research questions.

3.1. Experience with Connection

In order to understand a part-time professor's lived experience, we inquired about their connection with peers. In our results, we found that participants mostly formed ties with former supervisors, other full-time and part-time instructors, or administrative staff in their department. Part-time teachers reached out for three reasons: *interpersonal support* (mentoring, empathy), *teaching materials* (course outlines, presentations), *pedagogical or technological support* (labs, training and certifications), and for *career opportunities* (information, influence for positions).

About half of participants had a diverse strength of ties; they built weak ties with administration, faculty, and management, and strong ties with former thesis supervisors, other part-time professors, and full-time faculty members. However, most participants seemed to face difficulty forming an extensity of ties – most did not speak with more than one or two colleagues, showing a lack of network breadth. This may have prevented them from having access to a rich pool of resources, a reality which many participants stated as a difficulty they had to navigate.

Another interesting result was that participants did not seem to express an overt sense of connection (i.e. belonging) to the University of Ottawa. One participant said she felt like "un electron libre," or a free agent, that was not bound to the institution in a meaningful way. Most participants happily described their ability to leave the institution for a semester and return without consequences. Not being consistently affiliated with an institution – or going to different universities in order to meet ad hoc employment needs – could prevent participants from forming a group identity through a sense of belonging. If part-time professors cannot form a sense of belonging, they may have less access to career opportunities, information about their job, or emotional support or advice. Additionally, faculty with a sense of belonging are more likely to thrive in teaching and research and feel connected to the student body (Dolan, 2011). In effect, a lack of connection may have larger repercussions for the university.

Participants also felt a great deal of uncertainty and impermanence. Uncertainty, according to Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), is a feeling of hesitation that encompasses three aspects: a lack of clarity in information; long time spans of waiting before receiving definitive feedback; and general ambiguity of causal relationships. All three aspects occurred among participants. Some felt hesitation because they “did not know” what was expected for teaching quality, and only received feedback once a year from students, which was too long of a time span to make changes to the present course. They did not receive feedback from administration or management at all unless there was a problem or specific concern (for example, one participant said she never heard from the Dean until she gave too many high grades to her students). Many part-time professors felt able to approach their peers, but most did not pursue connection because of the ambiguity of their position. This lowered their ability to access information or empathy, which would have alleviated some of the uncertainty of their practice.

Impermanence, a feeling of not enduring or feeling temporary, also fed into the feeling of insecurity. According to Sylvain Schetagne, the director of research and political action for the Canadian Association of University teachers (CAUT), “More than 30 per cent of academic staff in Canadian post-secondary institutions are faced with short-term, insecure employment and struggle to find decent work” (CAUT Bulletin Online, 2015). Similarly, many participants in this study said they were struggling to find an ideal (i.e. permanent) position and, as a result, dealt with insecure employment. Others described the unpredictability and stress of planning for finances, starting a family, or having relationships. One said after she achieved tenure at another university she felt “physically better” because she would no longer have to deal with the “precariousness” of being a part-time professor. Many felt “expendable” and that they could “easily be replaced,” and therefore were less likely to build new relationships at work. Thus, part-time professors found themselves in a cycle of having less social capital, and being unable to build their social capital due to a continuing lack of connection.

3.2. Barriers to Connection

Social connections among part-time professors were also affected by communication barriers, or obstacles to successful communication (Button & Rossera, 1990). Aside from not being able to communicate effectively, communication barriers also impede connection because they lower the quantity or quality of communication (Button & Rossera, 1990). In effect, the severity of a person’s communication barriers determines how well and often they can connect with peers.

Many participants faced obstacles to communication in the form of physical barriers (i.e. not being on campus enough), speaking a different language (e.g. not being fluently bilingual at the University of Ottawa, a bilingual university), or having a difference in values (i.e. using different teaching methods). Many of these barriers resulted in isolation. Consequently, some participants struggled to receive departmental communications, contribute in official labs or meetings, or had difficulty building connections with peers.

3.3. Effects on Social Capital

Lin (1999) defines social capital's resources as "valued goods in society, however consensually determined" (p. 467). In our research, we found that the main resources valued among part-time professors were interpersonal support from peers, teaching materials (e.g. previous course outlines, presentations), technological and pedagogical support (e.g. method workshops, tech support), career support (e.g. vouching, guidance), a preferred course, and on-campus office space. Lin (2008) argues that social capital serves two functions – to obtain resources (instrumental action) or preserve existing resources (expressive action). For part-time professors, instrumental action included getting a better job or teaching materials; expressive action included maintaining a relationship, usually a former thesis supervisor (Lin, 2008).

The results uncovered that the limited connection of part-time professors did affect their ability to build and mobilize social capital. Two indicators of this were that participants felt overwhelmed due to a perceived lack of access to resources (such as retrieving teaching materials when building new classes), and some felt like second-class citizens in their department who had "no leverage" or influence in the institution (for example, they could not participate in departmental meetings which would alter policy). Since Lin (1999) argues that the amount of resources a person can access and use is the best way to measure how much social capital they have, it follows that part-time professors lack social capital for specific actions, such as status attainment. This is important to note because status often allows more access to resources in order to attain a higher socioeconomic standing, leading to other social gains (p. 467).

There was significant evidence to suggest that part-time professors have less social capital than their full-time peers. According to Cohen and Prusak (2001), this could have an effect on the University's reputation. Although the University of Ottawa may be able to choose from a large pool of part-time professors, their lack of social capital reduces job satisfaction, causes feelings of being undervalued, reduces commitment to the organization, and increases turnover. In effect, these aspects could waste training resources because it encourages employees to take learned skills elsewhere in order to find a stable position.

Social capital can be built through organizational practices such as training, employee orientation and social events (Fang et al., 2011). Although training is offered at the University, it is not mandatory for part-time professors. In turn, many do not participate or even have knowledge of such practices. According to one participant, orientation was nonexistent and part-time professors were rarely invited to social events. Not only does this lessen the opportunity for connection, but it prevents part-time professors from building a substantial foundation for knowledge of their practice. Such connections must be encouraged in organizations in order to build social capital; however, this must be built organically through encouragement rather than through manipulative means.

3.4. Limitations of Study

This research was influenced by four limitations: the sampling method, the recruitment method, the bias of the researcher, and the scope of analysis. First, purposive sampling can be a subjective process in choosing participants; this makes it more susceptible to researcher bias than probability sampling. There is a risk that the researcher will choose a participant based on their own perceived bias of the population. The researcher chose participants on a first-come, first-served basis, which lowered the risk of bias; however, those who answered the study may have done so with a specific purpose in mind, such as using it as an outlet to voice specific concerns. For example, many said they came forward to voice dissent about the organizational structure of the university, such as the hiring process. Therefore, this research should not be considered representative of all part-time professors' experiences, since their own reasons for stepping forward may skew the representability of the population. Additionally, there were no part-time professors who were currently teaching during an advanced degree such as a Masters or PhD. In other words, although the sample is appropriate for a phenomenological study, the data is not generalizable. Each experience is unique to the participant; therefore, we cannot assume that these experiences represent those of part-time professors as a whole. However, we discovered that the findings in the results overlapped with many aspects of the literature – for example, the importance of strong and weak ties, a lack of group and organizational identification, feeling less valued than full-time faculty, and experiencing isolation due to communication barriers. In turn, the literature supports the validity of the results.

The recruitment methods were far-reaching for part-time professors if they were on the mailing list for APTPUO, but may have not reached all part-time professors at the University of Ottawa if they were not subscribers or they filtered out APTPUO emails. The APTPUO was not able to confirm how many part-time professors may have received the invitation to participate; therefore, it is possible that some could be excluded, which may have shaped the explanation of the phenomenon. To balance this possibility, the researcher interviewed the sample until saturation (e.g. receiving the same data multiple times), ensuring that the phenomenon was explained in full.

A small amount of the population responded to the inquiry, which the data may explain – many said that they felt unheard, but at the same time acknowledged that they did not have time or motivation to reach out for opportunities to voice their opinion, such as this research. Therefore, not as many part-time professors may have reached out for the opportunity to participate.

These results are based on the interpretations of the researcher. Although the researcher attempted to bracket her past experiences with the phenomenon, there is always a risk of bias. In order to reduce bias, the interpretations of the significant statements were confirmed with a peer. Confirming the meanings of statements with a peer reduces the risk of researcher bias; it allows the researcher to ensure that she is describing the phenomenon accurately. In conclusion, it ensures validity because the interpretations do not rely solely on the researcher's perceptions.

Additionally, the scope of analysis could have been strengthened if it included a higher degree of detail in specific areas such as how many courses participants taught, the culture of the campus, or whether specific departments were more well-connected than others. Additionally, although the

views and perspectives of full-time professors would provide some insight into the conclusions of this research, collection of this data was outside of the scope of this project. In future studies, it would also be prudent to explore other barriers to social communication such as gender, race, and class.

These findings should be taken as an exploratory measure to understand the connections of part-time professors. Because of the limited scope and sample size, the results may not be generalizable to different parts of the population, other careers, or social situations. However, this study is ideal for academics as it examines their social capital and is published in an academic journal. In effect, these results are significant to part-time and full-time professors, but also to those in university administration, faculty organizations, and branches of government dealing with education policy.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, part-time professors may face a lack of social capital because their connections are sparse or limited. Some admitted that their lack of connection and fragmented employment history with the University may make long-term, permanent employment more difficult. Additionally, an inequality of social capital may exist between full-time and part-time professors due to a difference in status. Both groups have different access to social capital because of their structural positions or social networks. This can decrease the ability to build trust and a sense of belonging, and can increase segregation between groups (see Durlauf, 2008).

This research indicated that most part-time professors have the necessary tools to communicate to peers virtually, but there is still a large gap in connection due to an inability to meet face-to-face on a regular basis. Many spend sporadic time on campus and lack permanent office space; this affects the ability to build a variety of relationships, which is necessary for accessing and using different types of resources in social networks (Granovetter, 1973; Lin 2008).

Second, if part-time professors face a discontinuity of courses, they may have challenges with communicating ideas clearly. They are in a constant cycle of learning new material in a short time span, which could affect depth and breadth of the subject. However, many part-time professors expressed enthusiasm and passion for their craft, which may provide a positive experience for students.

Third, feelings of being overwhelmed, isolated or inferior may have a negative impact on job attitudes for part-time professors. Because Feldman and Turnley (2001) argue that job attitudes directly affect job satisfaction and occupational performance, the negative job attitudes expressed by part-time professors – despite their love of the craft – may have negative consequences on their job satisfaction and occupational performance.

This study confirms that part-time professors face numerous barriers to connection leading to perceptions of being overwhelmed, uncertain, or impermanent. They perceive their status as lower than full-time faculty or part-time professors with more seniority, and face barriers to communication that affect their ability to connect with peers. Although many part-time professors were able to form weak and strong ties, they did not have a healthy extensity of ties, which Lin

(2011) argues is the only type to directly affect status attainment. Due to a lack of connection, part-time professors seem unable to build and mobilize social capital in order to improve their situation (e.g. secure permanent employment) at the University.

A lack of connection or status recognition from peers can also leave part-time professors feeling like outsiders and less likely to identify with their organization or peers. Since faculty are more likely to thrive in teaching and research if they have a strong sense of belonging to the institution (Dolan, 2011), it is imperative to foster relationships in order to ensure teaching quality. However, more research needs to be done to identify the ways that connections between part-time professors and their institution can be nurtured.

Without the ability to grow social capital from a strong and varied network, many part-time professors linger in casual labour, preventing them from growing within the institution to better their own status through academic research or a permanent position. Because part-time professors are increasingly becoming the standard of higher learning institutions, knowing how to better their experience could have profound effects on not only their practice – it could have larger repercussions for students, the university's reputation, and higher learning as a whole.

In the end, a dilemma exists for part-time professors – they have high expectations for their classes, but are unable to meet these expectations due to limited resources from a lack of connection. In turn, this warrants a closer examination in order to improve the quality of education for the University of Ottawa, as well as to enhance the experience of part-time professors.

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